

# **Transfer and Articulation: Tracing Metalinguistic Development in Year 8 Writers**

**Submitted by Sharon Morgan, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the  
degree of Doctor of Education in Education, February 2018.**

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## **Abstract**

Through the use of action research methodology, this exploratory study examines the relationship between explicit grammar teaching and the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge. The research particularly focuses on exploring the transfer of new grammatical knowledge into the students' own writing, as well as charting their abilities to articulate the design decisions underpinning their linguistic choices. Throughout the research, students were encouraged to employ a range of supportive self-regulation strategies to meet the cognitive demands of writing.

The research was conducted over one academic year and involved three different teaching and reflection cycles. Three students, with differing attainment levels, were selected at the start of the research process to be case studies. Their written work was analysed at five different points during the year: a pre-test writing assessment; a post teaching test assessment and after each of the three teaching cycles. Students were also encouraged to write reflective commentaries outlining their linguistic and grammatical choices. These data sets were complemented by the addition of case study participant interviews which were conducted within a few weeks of completing their written assessments. Both the commentaries and interviews were used to elicit students' metalinguistic reflections regarding their written texts and the writing process as a whole. This data was inductively coded and analysed in order to identify patterns in students' reflections.

The findings are presented in case study form, highlighting individual student's transfer and articulation of their new grammatical knowledge. This study reinforces recent research into the complexities associated with bridging the gap between grammar transfer and grammar articulation and therefore contributes to the growing body of research in this area.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I need to thank the participants of this study, in particular my three case study students who were always willing to share their writing-based ideas with me. Thank you.

Secondly, I want to give thanks to both of my incredibly supportive, knowledgeable, and patient supervisors: Professor Debra Myhill and Dr Annabel Watson, without whose encouragement I would have found it hard to continue along this solitary road. In fact, it is Debra Myhill who I have to thank for many of my teacher-related journeys: PGCE in 1998, MEd in 2010, and finally, (during the MEd ceremony) for suggesting that I continue my pursuit of educational-knowledge by working towards a doctorate in Education. Furthermore, I want to give special thanks to Annabel Watson for her perpetual support and positivity – even when I wasn't 'feeling the love' myself! Thank you both for believing in me.

I would like to give thanks to my fellow EdD colleagues, in particular Julie and Rachel, who have nudged me on towards my goal; we have shared a very special journey!

My good friend Maggie Bamber deserves more than a mention in this acknowledgement, as she has been with me every step of the way and has read this thesis almost as many times as I have. Thank you for your friendship; I hope I am as good a friend to you as you are to me. However, it is at this point that I must mention my creative friend Robert Logan for his artistic endeavours (translating my teaching resource ideas into student-friendly writing aids) and endless cups of coffee – thank you!

And then, of course, there is my family for whom I am forever grateful and blessed to have in my life. To steal a phrase from Ben Jonson (1616), I give thanks to my '*best piece[s] of poetry*': my children, Samuel, Joshua, Eliza and Finnley, who have always known me to be studying towards 'something'. Thank you for putting up with me and for being such incredibly 'easy' children: I love you more than words can say. And thank you to my best friend and husband, Michael, who has

recognised that the drive to complete this labour-of-love process has been important to me: something which had to be done.

Finally, I would like to give thanks to my late mum and dad, Alma and John: I know they would be proud of me. ❤️



## Contents

<b>DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1) The Personal Drive for Grammar-Based Knowledge and Control	13
1.2) The Professional Context	13
1.3) The Research Problem	14
1.4) Thesis Structure	15
<b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1) The Turbulent History of Grammar	17
2.2) The New Debate: Which Kind of Grammar?	22
2.3) The Role of Metacognition and Writing Process	27
2.4) Metalinguistic Knowledge	34
2.5) Self-Regulation and Writer Control	43
2.6) Conclusion	49
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>PART ONE</b>	<b>52</b>
3.1) Research Questions	52
3.2) My theoretical Perspective	53
3.3) The Epistemology of Action Research	56
3.4) Action Research	57
3.4.1) Which Model of Action Research is Appropriate for my Research?	59
3.4.2) Possible Limitations of Action Research	62
3.4.3) What Does Action Research Involve?	62
<b>PART TWO: ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>64</b>
3.5) The Sample	64
3.6) Linguistic Knowledge	66
3.7) Intervention Methods: Developing Self-Regulation Strategies	68
3.7.1) Self-Regulation Teaching Sequences	68

3.8)	Data Collection Methods	69
3.8.1)	Students' written work	69
3.8.2)	Interviews	71
3.8.3)	Potential Problems with Interviews	74
3.8.4)	Teacher/Researcher Journal	75
3.9)	Action Research Reflection Cycles	76
3.9.1)	Action Research Cycle One	77
3.9.2)	Action Research Cycle Two	78
3.9.3)	Action Research Cycle Three	79
3.9.4)	Post Research Reflections	80
3.10)	Data Analysis	80
3.10.1)	Coding of Students' Original Writing	81
3.10.2)	Coding of Critical Commentaries:	83
3.10.3)	Coding of Interviews:	84
3.11)	Ethical Considerations	87
3.11.1)	The Teacher-Researcher: Ethical Implications	89
3.12)	Data management	89
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES</b>		<b>91</b>
<b>JODY</b>		<b>91</b>
4.1)	Profile of Jody: Higher Attaining Student	91
4.1a)	Pre-Teaching Writing Assessment:	91
4.1b)	Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview	92
4.1.1)	Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing:	94
4.1.1a)	Action Research Cycle One - The Assessment:	94
4.1.1b)	Action Research Cycle Two – The Assessment:	95
4.1.1c)	Action Research Cycle Three - The Assessment:	96
4.1.2)	Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews	98
4.1.2a)	Action Research Cycle One	98
4.1.2b)	Action Research Cycle Two	100
4.1.2c)	Action Research Cycle Three	103
4.1.3)	Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge:	106
4.1.3a)	Post Teaching Written Assessment	106
4.1.3b)	Post Teaching Commentary and Interview	107
4.1.4)	Summary of Jody's Findings	110
<b>HARRY</b>		<b>111</b>
4.2)	Profile of Harry: Middle Attaining Student	111
4.2a)	Pre-teaching Written Assessment	112
4.2b)	Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview	113
4.2.1)	Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing:	114
4.2.1a)	Action Research Cycle One	114
4.2.1b)	Action Research Cycle Two	116
4.2.1c)	Action Research Cycle Three	117

4.2.2) Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews -----	119
4.2.2a) Action Research Cycle One-----	119
4.2.2b) Action Research Cycle Two -----	121
4.2.2c) Action Research Cycle Three -----	124
4.2.3) Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge-----	127
4.2.3a) Post Teaching Written Assessment-----	127
4.2.3b) Post Teaching Commentary and Interview -----	129
4.2.4.) Summary of Harry's Findings-----	132
<b>DAVID -----</b>	<b>134</b>
4.3.) Profile of David – Lower Attaining Student-----	134
4.3a) Pre-Teaching Written assessment-----	134
4.3b) Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview-----	135
4.3.1) Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing-----	137
4.3.1a) Action Research Cycle One-----	137
4.3.1b) Action Research Cycle Two -----	138
4.3.1c) Action Research Cycle Three -----	140
4.3.2) Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews -----	141
4.3.2a) Action Research Cycle One-----	141
4.3.2b) Action Research Cycle Two -----	142
4.3.2c) Action Research Cycle Three -----	145
4.3.3) Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge:-----	149
4.3.3a) Written Assessment-----	149
4.3.3b) Post Teaching Commentary and Interview -----	150
4.3.4) Summary of David's Findings -----	153
4.4.) Case Study Conclusions-----	154
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: THE DISCUSSION -----</b>	<b>157</b>
5.1) Introduction-----	157
5.2) Tracing the Theoretical Threads -----	158
5.3) Metalinguistic Transfer and Control-----	160
5.4) Modes of Metalinguistic Articulation:-----	164
5.5) Reducing the Cognitive Load: The Role of Self-Regulation Strategies -----	169
5.6) Reducing the Cognitive Load: Role of Authentic Texts -----	173
5.7) Grammatical Metalanguage and Linguistic Labelling -----	176
5.8) Discussion Conclusion-----	180
<b>CHAPTER SIX: FINAL THOUGHTS-----</b>	<b>181</b>
6.1) Reflection on Action Research Process-----	181

6.2) Limitations of Study .....	181
6.3) Implications for Own Teaching Practice.....	184
6.4) Implications for Future Research.....	185
6.5) Contribution to Knowledge .....	186
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>188</b>
Appendix One: The Teaching Context .....	188
Appendix Two: Teacher After Thoughts .....	190
<b>THE TEACHING CYCLES.....</b>	<b>192</b>
Appendix Three: Cycle One - Theme Park Webpage Resources and Reflection.....	192
Appendix Four: Cycle Two - Building Tension Resources and Reflection.....	194
Appendix Five: Cycle Three - Newspaper Article Resources and Reflection .....	197
<b>CASE STUDY SAMPLE STUDENT DATA AND CODING FRAMEWORKS</b>	<b>201</b>
Appendix Six: Jody's Written Work .....	201
Appendix Seven: Jody's Completed Coding Frameworks .....	206
Appendix Eight: Jody's Commentaries .....	209
Appendix Nine: Jody's Commentary Coding Frameworks .....	211
Appendix Ten: Jody's Interview Transcripts.....	213
Appendix Eleven: Jody's Interview Coding Frameworks .....	229
Appendix Twelve: Certificate of Ethical Research Approval.....	236
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>242</b>

## List of Figures and Tables

### Figures

FIGURE 1 AND 2: KEMMIS & MCTAGGART ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE (2005:595) AND O'LEARY'S CYCLE OF RESEARCH (2004:141).....	60
FIGURE 3: MCNIFF (2006:46) ACTION RESEARCH SPIRAL.....	61

### Tables

TABLE 1: GRAMMAR CONCEPTS.....	23
TABLE 2: ACTION RESEARCH TIMESCALE .....	53
TABLE 3: ACTION RESEARCH INITIAL RESPONSES .....	63
TABLE 4: GRAMMAR TEACHING FOCUSES .....	67
TABLE 5: INITIAL WRITING REFLECTION PROMPT QUESTIONS .....	70
TABLE 6: INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	73
TABLE 7: DATA SETS COLLECTED .....	81
TABLE 8: INITIAL CODING FRAME FOR STUDENTS' WRITING .....	82
TABLE 9: CODING FRAME FOR WRITTEN COMMENTARIES .....	84
TABLE 10: INDUCTIVE CODES FOR INTERVIEWS .....	86
TABLE 11: FRAMEWORK FOR SECOND ROUND OF INTERVIEW CODING.....	86
TABLE 12: FINAL CODING FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVIEWS.....	87
TABLE 13: PROFILE OF JODY.....	91
TABLE 14: SUMMARY OF JODY'S FINDINGS .....	111
TABLE 15: PROFILE OF HARRY .....	112
TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF HARRY'S FINDINGS .....	134
TABLE 17: PROFILE OF DAVID.....	134
TABLE 18: SUMMARY OF DAVID'S FINDINGS.....	154

## Definitions and Explanations

**9-1 GCSE:** A new GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) was introduced to the UK in 2015 with the first round of external examinations sat in the summer of 2017. This version uses a numerical grading system whereby 9 is considered the highest grade. **GCSEs** are an externally assessed national examination which is (generally) taken at the end of year 11 when students are 16 years old. It is compulsory for all students to sit an examination in English.

**CAT Verbal SAS:** CAT stands for 'Cognitive Ability Test' and the 'verbal' represents 'verbal reasoning'. SAS stands for 'standardised assessed score'. Verbal cognitive ability tests have often been used in schools to give an indication of a student's performance in English. A score between 85 and 115 is considered to be 'normal' range.

**Key Stage 2 English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Tests:** These tests assess students' use of spelling, punctuation and grammar at the age of 11 years old. They were introduced in May 2013.

**Key Stage (including KS2 and KS3):** Key Stages were introduced in 1988 and coincided with the launch of the national curriculum. KS1 relates to students aged between 5-7; Key KS2 is for students aged between 7-11; KS3 for students between 11-14 years old and KS4 is for students aged 14-16. In the UK, there is also a KS5 which refers to the post 16 education of 16-19 year olds.

**Metalinguage:** In this study metalinguage (using language to talk about language) is used to refer to grammatical or linguistic terminology, including sentence grammar.

**Metalinguistic Knowledge:** This is used to refer to students' references to their own linguistic and grammatical choices. Students can demonstrate their metalinguistic knowledge without using a grammatical or linguistic metalinguage.

**National Literacy Strategy:** This was a teaching and learning strategy introduced by The Labour government in 1997. This strategy included a daily 'literacy' hour to primary aged students with the aim of raising students' literacy levels.

**National Curriculum:** A primary and secondary curriculum which aims to standardise learning for students at different ages. This was introduced after the Education Reform Act in 1988.

**Pupil Premium:** This is financial funding made to state schools for students who are identified as being economically disadvantaged and therefore considered to be at risk of lower attainment.

**SEN Code of Practice (2001):** The introduction to this document describes this policy as providing *‘a framework for effective school based support with less paper work for teachers and an emphasis on monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs towards identified goals. It covers the special educational needs provisions of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and provides a framework for developing the strong partnerships between parents, schools, Local Education Authorities, health and social services and voluntary organisations that are crucial to success in removing barriers to participation and learning.’* This additional support is offered at two levels: **School Action (SA) or School Action Plus (SA+).**

**School Action:** when a pupil is identified as having a special education need, interventions are put in place to provide additional support. At this point students are often given an individualised learning plan which outlines the strategies used to support the student (SEN code of practice 2001 p.206).

**School Action Plus:** when specialist (often recommended from an outside agencies ie, educational psychologist) interventions are required to help develop alternative or different provisions/strategies for a student who is persistently experiencing a learning difficulty (SEN code of practice 2001 p.206).

**SpLD:** ‘Specific learning difficulties’ is an umbrella term for a range of literacy-based learning difficulties. In reference to the student identified in this case study, it is used to refer to dyslexia. In this instance, the particular case study student has difficulties with spelling and finds it hard to express his ideas both verbally and in written forms.

**Teacher Assessed Levels:** In the UK, teacher assessed levels are used to grade students’ work at different key stages and ages. At the time of data

collection, (pre GCSE reform) year 8 students were generally expected to be working around a level 5. At that point, levels were broken down into three components: 5c (just moving into this level); 5b (secure level 5); and 5a (indicates that the students are working at the top of this band and is almost moving into level 6).

### **Interview Transcription Explanation**

The interviews have been transcribed following general transcription conventions.

#### **Key**

(.) short pause

(2) numbers in brackets indicate the length of pause in seconds

Emboldened words represent a student reading aloud examples of their own writing

Furthermore, in the interviews, students frequently discussed elements of their writing which were not found in the first 135 words and were therefore not part of the data collection process. However, samples of one of the students' writing, commentaries and interviews can be found in the appendices starting on page 199.

### **Explanation of Students' Writing**

In the *Findings and Analysis of Case Studies* chapter, pages 88-153, extracts of students' writing has been typed. However, these texts are represented in the same way as they were in the handwritten version: Spelling and grammatical errors have been included as have words which have been crossed out.

#### Key

■ crossed out words which are indecipherable

~~Was~~ words crossed out but decipherable



## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1) The Personal Drive for Grammar-Based Knowledge and Control**

My interest in grammar and writing not only stems from my professional interests as an English teacher, but also from my own personal experiences as a 'remedial' English student growing up in the 70s. My childhood lack of literacy knowledge and language control rendered me a 'low' attaining student and prevented me from participating in a wide range of school-based subjects and events. Consequently, I was denied much of what was offered to others. I was not like many of my peers who seemed to learn how to read and write with apparent ease. For me, these processes were not so transparent; I needed to be explicitly taught the mechanics and nuances of my native language. Ironically, this did not happen until I was 22 years old when studying for an A level in French to complement my Access to Higher Education qualification. As a result, the transition from bottom-set secondary student to English teacher has been long and arduous. However, as someone who has traditionally found English difficult, developing knowledge and understanding of how my language system works, has been invaluable.

### **1.2) The Professional Context**

Fast-forward 25 years and I still find myself seeking out grammar-based knowledge. I am fascinated by these 'hidden rules' of language use. Ultimately, I want my students to have the skills and knowledge to harness the power that language affords us. I want them to be able to express themselves clearly and successfully in whatever situation life places them. And I want them to be able to have control over their language use and to understand its power.

This drive for student grammar enlightenment coincides with recent curriculum reforms regarding grammar teaching. Over the past few years, grammar knowledge has become part of the assessment processes at primary and secondary school level. Primary school-aged students are required to sit 'English Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar' tests in year 6 (DFE, 2013), whereas at GCSE, students are now required to specifically analyse writers' uses of language and grammar. Therefore, given this recent swing in the grammar-pendulum, there is not only a need for teachers to develop their own linguistic

and grammatical knowledge, but there is also a need for research to develop a theorised account of grammar teaching which moves beyond basic grammar identification and linguistic labelling and instead privileges how grammar can be used to contribute to textual meaning.

Therefore, the age-old debate of 'should we, shouldn't we' teach grammar is now defunct. Instead, as practitioners, we need to focus our attentions on identifying which kind of grammar is of most use as well as how best to support our students in their journey towards grammatical and linguistic control and suitability (Clark, 2010).

### **1.3) The Research Problem**

The demand to build on and develop students' grammatical knowledge has increased significantly in the past few years. On entrance to secondary school, students now know more about grammatical constructs than their peers entering in recent years. Year 6 students have been prepared to sit the new KS2 grammar tests and therefore, should be more comfortable operating within this area in the English classroom. However, there is a distinct difference between grammar-item identification and viewing grammar as a '*meaning-making resource*' (Myhill, 2005:92) which also provides students with opportunities to take a '*rhetorical view of grammar, focusing on grammar as choice*' (Myhill et al., 2013:105; Weaver et al., 2006).

However, at the other end of the secondary school spectrum, Year 11 students are currently facing the recently reformed 9-1 GCSE assessments which now includes a more specific focus on how language and grammar function in context. Students need to move beyond simple identification of a linguistic item and be able to give a fuller exploration of how language and grammar is used to influence the reader.

This coincides with recent research which has identified the importance of developing students' metalinguistic understanding. For example, Cremin and Myhill (2012:79) argue that not only do students need to be able to explain their linguistic choices but they also need to be able to elaborate on '*why*' they have made specific design decisions. It is this in-depth exploration of language use which aids students' metalinguistic understanding and provides them with the

skills and knowledge to be able to analyse the language use of others and therefore aid their transition between procedural and declarative metalinguistic knowledge.

As a result, this action research seeks to explore the relationship between explicit grammar teaching and the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge. Furthermore, the study differentiates between different facets of metalinguistic knowledge through its distinction between the *transfer* of linguistic knowledge into students' own writing, as well as their abilities to *articulate* the reasons underpinning their linguistic choices. It is this process of articulation or verbalisation which demonstrates students' '*higher-level metalinguistic understanding*' (Chen and Myhill, 2016:100). In order to foster students' writer-independence, they will also be provided with opportunities to learn and engage with a range of self-regulation strategies in the classroom. These self-regulation strategies have been specifically modified to support students' developing linguistic knowledge.

#### **1.4) Thesis Structure**

This thesis is organised into discrete chapters with differing focuses in each one. **Chapter Two** provides an important framework to the wider debates and discourses underpinning different aspects of grammar instruction and the writing process. It opens with an historical tracing of grammar pedagogy primarily since the 1970s up until more recent times. This is followed by a review of the literature exploring which type of grammar should be taught; metalinguistic knowledge; metacognition and the writing process; as well as a section outlining the merits of self-regulation and writer control.

**Chapter three** is divided into two parts. Part one is centred on identifying my own ontological views as a researcher as well as exploring the epistemology of action research. The limitations of action research are also considered in this section. Part two outlines the specific details of the research process and identifies the research sample; teaching intervention; core action research reflections and actions; data collection methods; data analysis and data management, as well as outlining any ethical considerations.

**Chapter four** presents the research findings and analysis of case study data. The findings are presented as three individual case studies focusing on data collected during the writing and interview processes. Each case study opens with an analysis of the student's prior teaching intervention writing, commentary and interview. This is followed by an exploration of students' original writing which focuses on their '*transfer*' of new linguistic knowledge. The next section in each case study analyses '*articulation of metalinguistic knowledge*', highlighting students' abilities to verbalise their linguistic choices. The post teaching data is then explored, and each section is completed by a case study summary. The findings also present students' references to acts of self-regulation.

The discussion takes place in **chapter five** whereby the central threads from this research are discussed in more detail with reference to findings from the wider research community.

**Chapter six**, the concluding chapter, offers a reflection on the research process, the limitations of this study, as well as indicating implications for future teaching and research. This study's contribution to existing knowledge is also identified.

**The Appendices** contains samples of one of the case study student's original writing, commentaries and interview transcripts, along with accompanying coding frameworks. This section also includes samples of the grammar-based and self-regulation teaching interventions, resources and evidence of ethical research approval.

## Chapter Two Literature Review

### 2.1) The Turbulent History of Grammar

*'It is a truth universally acknowledged by the English teaching profession, but studiously ignored by government policy makers, that the activity of teaching pupils grammar in isolation does not of itself have any effect upon pupils' own writing ability. Until now, that is.*

Clark (2010: 189)

As an English teacher, who grew up in the 1970s (when grammar had no place in the English classroom), tracing the theoretical threads which underpin the oscillating pendulum of grammar instruction is not only enlightening but also provides a necessary educational backdrop to the current demands of the English curriculum. Today, in 2018, grammar-teaching has made a return to the classroom and now forms an integral part of English assessment procedures, both at primary school level (Gov.UK, 2017) and later at GCSE (AQA, 2016). However, in order to fully comprehend current theorized concepts of writing, it is important to acknowledge that there have been various 'grammatical' milestones along the way. Even before delving too far into the past, it is necessary to acknowledge that the English teacher's historical relationship with grammar is long and most definitely turbulent.

The discourse of whether or not to teach grammar (and if so, how?), is a much debated and politicised topic in the UK as well as in other English-speaking countries (Myhill, 2016:36). Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the term 'grammar' emits connotations of 'correctness' suggesting that other forms of language use are somehow deficient. To a certain extent, this 'fear' of grammar stems from the codification of the English language dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century which heralded the age of prescriptivism. It was during this period that Britain saw the introduction of grammar books conveying prescriptive rules of how to write grammatically 'correct' English based on the Latinate grammar system. It is clear from the titles of these instructional manuals that there was considered a right and a wrong way of communicating. In 1750, Ann Fisher's book entitled *'A Practical New Grammar with Exercises of Bad English or, an Easy Guide to*

*Speaking and Writing the English Language Properly and Correctly* clearly suggests that 'incorrect' grammar use was something to be avoided. Undoubtedly, the application of 'correct' forms of grammar was a sign of social prestige and therefore pragmatically garnered power for its users. Furthermore, once this set of prescribed grammar rules had been cast into print, a clear template of how the English language should be used was formally established. This prescriptive approach dominated grammar instruction for the next few hundred years.

In 1921, The Newbolt Report into teaching English highlighted the need for a '*pure grammar*' to be taught as part of a Standard English (Clark, 2005:33; Norman, 2010:40). At this point, grammar teaching was still heavily rooted in the prescriptive Latinate approach which continued to persist well into the 1960s (and in some classrooms beyond). However, during the 60s, grammar-related concerns were also emerging in other anglophone countries, such as the US (Kolln and Hancock; 2005:16). As a result, in 1966, 60 international professors and educators attended an Anglo-American conference at Dartmouth College, USA, and concluded that grammar teaching was ineffective (Squire, 2003:10; Muller, 1967:68; Locke, 2009:183). Kolln and Hancock (2005:16) maintain that this conference '*gave rise to the "learner-centered" view of education*' and promoted '*personal expression*' and '*free writing*' and as a result, contributed to the dismantling of prescriptive grammar teaching in many Anglophone countries.

In the UK, the 70s was an era of change when boundaries between class, race and gender were being contested (Clark, 2005:33, Norman, 2010:39). Contextually, grammar's hierarchical association with power and status was no longer favourable. As a result, prescriptive grammar, with its set of arcane rigid rules, was discarded in favour of a more creative approach to written and spoken responses and in 1975 The Bullock Report called for the formal elimination of grammar teaching from the English curriculum.

This message was reinforced in 1976 by the research of Elley et al. whose influential, yet small scale, research project investigated the role of grammar and concluded that given the demands of the curriculum, there was no longer a place for grammar in formal education (p.20). Despite the relatively small size of the

sample (8 classes of 31 students), the findings of this study have been cited by many researchers over the last 40 years and are often used to reinforce the anti-grammar discourse.

Whilst the 70s saw movements to breakdown social boundaries, the 80s introduced movements to re-establish 'difference'. During this period, the right-wing think-tank, The Centre for Policy Studies, produced a pamphlet entitled '*No Going Back*' in which it states that education is not about making children equal:

*'There is a widespread and pernicious myth in the education profession that it is somehow important to make children more equal. This is not what parents want and it is not what children need...We need a system which will not make children equal, but will make them better educated (CPS, 1985: 13).*

At this point in time, educational equality was something to be discouraged and led to the return of selective entry tests to prestigious schools (Clark, 2005:38-39). Clark suggests that the decision to make formal education more prescriptive was politically motivated: '*The objective was to prepare children for their place in a formal and class-stratified socio-economic order which was not the same for all, aided by the introduction of the national curriculum*' (p. 39). For Clark, the Conservative policy at this time overtly promoted notions of quality and opportunity whilst implicitly masking ideals of social and educational inequity as it was their intention to ensure that students received '*knowledge without also giving them the power which goes with it*' (ibid.).

However, it was the 80s which began to see the turning point in terms of the grammar-debate as the government '*blamed*' teachers and the curriculum for failing '*to teach standard English and Canonical Literature*' (Clark, 2005:33). As a result, the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 reignited the grammar debate by stating that its aim was to '*eliminate "bad grammar"*' (Myhill, 2005:78). Despite decades passing since the 1960s Dartmouth College Conference, and despite the emergence of a more functional approach to grammar teaching (Halliday, 1985), the government's view of grammar instruction was still one of a

broadly prescriptive nature (Dean, 2016: 41), the '*kind taught in schools until the 1960s*' (Clark, 2005:41).

This focus continued when the Conservative ideals of formal grammar teaching was built on during the 1990s by the Labour government who introduced '*The National Literacy Strategy*' to primary-aged children. This was soon complemented by the addition of the '*Framework for English for Key Stage 3*'. Both of these initiatives made direct reference to grammar terminology and even outlined specific word, sentence, and text level learning objectives (DfES, 1998).

Whilst it could be acknowledged that these two programmes of study led to an expansion of students' grammatical knowledge, it could also be argued that what they neglected to focus on was grammars' '*meaning-making*' potential (Myhill and Jones, 2011a:54). Even in the 1990s, these initiatives still centred on accuracy rather than the contribution to meaning, consequently continuing to subject students to decontextualised activities, focusing on grammar correction and terminology labelling.

The current educational climate has seen further moves towards ensuring students leave school with an understanding of grammar. In 2012, Michael Gove, the then Minister for Education, introduced new '*English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling*' tests for 11 year olds. The grammar endorsed by Gove was heavily reliant on prescriptive forms (Dean, 2016:46) which continued to focus on 'correctness' rather than meaning. Examples for the 2017 Key Stage Two, Paper 1 test include questions such as: '*Which sentence is punctuated correctly?*' and '*Label each of the clauses in the sentence below as either main (M) or subordinate (S)*' (DfE, 2017). Both these question frames echo the prescriptive values of the pre-1960s with no room for explorations of impact and meaning.

Changes have also taken place at GCSE level, with spelling, punctuation and grammar now being awarded a total of 20% of the English GCSE (Ofqual, 2014; Torrance, 2018:17). However, alongside the focus on 'correct' forms of grammar, this new qualification also requires 16 year olds to explore writers' uses of language '*using terminology*' as well as rewarding them for using grammar-skills '*effectively in their own writing*' (Watson & Newman, 2017:382).



In many ways, the grammar debate today is less to do with '*should we/or shouldn't we?*' teach grammar, but instead focuses on '*which type of grammar?*' Clearly, given that the government's drive to embed grammar teaching into the curriculum, there is a need for researchers (and teachers) to explore which approach (contextualised or decontextualized) provides students with the greatest opportunity to develop and harness their knowledge of grammar and its potential as a '*meaning-making resource*' (Jones et al, 2013:5).

## 2.2) The New Debate: Which Kind of Grammar?

The study of grammar teaching today is not only relevant because of the recent reforms in KS2 and KS4 assessments, but also because the grammar debate, regarding which type of grammar, still rumbles on. Research over recent years still reveals a divide in opinion as to whether grammar instruction actually improves students' writing.

In order to reconsider the grammar debate for a contemporary educational climate, Andrews et al. (2006:39) reviewed international research into the effectiveness of grammar teaching to 5-16 year olds. This research was conducted in association with the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) which set out to answer the question: *'What is the effect of grammar teaching in English on 5–16-year-olds' accuracy and quality in written composition?'* (p.40). In order to answer this question, researchers predominantly focused on the earlier works of Elley et al. (1976), Bateman and Zidonis (1966) and Fogel and Ehri (2000) – all of which were conducted outside of the UK and in two cases over 40 years ago when the educational landscape was very different to today's.

They conclude that grammar teaching does not improve writing and that *'there has been no clear evidence in the last hundred years or more that such interventions are helpful'* (p.52). Despite their selection and interrogation of only a small sample of investigations, Andrews et al. insist their study is *'conclusive'* (p.44). However, perhaps the reduction of studies examined in their meta-analysis has subsequently limited their ability to make generalisations. Moreover, their selection of studies could be seen to be out-dated and irrelevant to the UK context.

However, despite the findings of the EPPI report, researchers have continued to explore the relationship between grammar and writing. In general, there are two forms of grammar instruction which are often debated: grammar which is taught out of context (decontextualized), and is often linked to more traditional, prescriptive forms of grammar instruction, and contextualised grammar which examines language in the wider context of the whole text. Watson (2002:29)

outlines the differences and similarities of ‘traditional’ and ‘contextualised’ grammar in the table below:

Approach	Grammar	Pedagogy	Aims
<b>Traditional</b>	Prescriptive, Latinate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deductive</li> <li>• Decontextualised Exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy in the production of written standard English.</li> </ul>
<b>Contextualised</b>	Descriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inductive.</li> <li>• Mini-lessons.</li> <li>• Embedded teaching of relevant grammar points during writing lessons or writing conferences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit awareness of choice</li> <li>• knowledge of grammatical structures and ability to manipulate them for effect.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Grammar Concepts (Watson, 2002)

The above table highlights the key principles of each approach and we can see that a more contextualised method to grammar teaching takes an ‘*inductive*’ and ‘*embedded*’ form, with the focus being on developing students’ awareness of grammatical choices and how these can be ‘*manipulated*’ for a particular ‘*effect*’; whereas the more prescriptive and traditional approach focuses on accuracy.

Much of the current research indicates that teaching grammar in context is more beneficial to students than a decontextualized approach (see Jones et al, 2013 for further information). One of the central principles of decontextualized teaching centres on students exploring language in a detached and sterile way, which is often devoid of contextual meaning. For example, when exploring decontextualized forms of teaching, Leftstein (2009:379) asserts that ‘...*rules are typically taught through teacher transmission, whole class recitation, and individual pupil practice on grammar exercises*’ and that ‘*Topics tend to focus on parts of speech and “common mistakes” related to them*’. Wheeler (2006:18) refers to this deficit approach to grammar teaching as ‘*broken*’ and ‘*deficient*’ as it in turn considers speakers to also be ‘*broken, deficient, non- starters*’.

Myhill et al (2011b:2) state that this form of grammar teaching, which privileges grammar ‘*identification and labelling*’ is unhelpful to students as it does not provide them with opportunities to reflect on and improve their writing. Instead, they advocate an English curriculum which focuses on exploring the language

embedded within real texts as this leads to students' awareness of the "*infinite possibilities*" language affords us. Similarly, Weaver (1996:19), who takes a more rhetorical approach to grammar teaching, suggests that a contextualised approach should entail forms which value '*inductive lessons, wherein students may be guided to notice grammatical patterns and derive generalizations themselves.*' This kind of language exploration focuses on 'real' texts and 'real' language use rather than artificially constructed examples used as teaching aids for demonstration purposes.

In terms of locating evidenced-based research which heralds the success of context-based grammar teaching, Jones et al's (2013) large scale research study demonstrates grammar-teaching's potential. This randomised controlled trial indicated positive increases in students' writing levels after exposure to a series of contextualised lessons produced as a part of a scheme of learning. For this study, researchers set out to answer the research question: '*What impact does contextualised grammar teaching have upon students' writing and students' metalinguistic understanding?*' The study included 31 teachers and 744 year 8 students, from 32 different schools and demonstrated a 5.11% point improvement between the comparison group and intervention group (2013:6, 10, 12).

As a result, Jones et al. put forward their theorized account of writing and highlight writing's '*communicative*' process in '*supporting writers in understanding the social purposes and audiences of texts and how language creates meanings and effects*' as well as conceptualising '*grammar*' as '*a meaning-making resource*' which supports writers '*in making appropriate linguistic choices ... to satisfy their rhetorical intentions*' (p.5). This '*meaning-making*' approach is, in comparison to the traditional prescriptive approach in the UK, refreshing, as it suggests students can develop their grammatical knowledge through understanding how the words or patterns they use, affect a text's overall pragmatic meaning.

However, as identified in the previous section, new governmental initiatives and assessment procedures are reliant on students being able to identify, label and correct grammar forms. Therefore, despite research indicating the merits of a contextualised approach to teaching grammar, it is entirely possible, given that these assessments require students to explore grammar in a decontextualized

manner, that teachers are also encouraged to teach grammar thorough decontextualized activities and *'teach to the test'* (Sandiford, 2016:3).

Undoubtedly, the introduction of end of key stage tests has also pathed the way for a growth in grammar manuals enabling teachers (and parents) to cover a range of grammar terms in short bursts. As a result, some teachers develop mechanistic approaches to teaching grammar by creating 'checklists' or 'writing recipes' as a way of ensuring students can implement a range of 'techniques' in their writing (Cremin and Myhill; 2012:2). In turn, this approach can often lead to writing feeling unnatural and mechanical. In fact, Cremin and Myhill (2012:74) warn us against using *'formulaic recommendations'* as they can prevent students from taking *'ownership of the choices they make.'* It is therefore ironic that many of the *'officially endorsed'* resources *'circulated to schools'* also focus on the use of writing formulas (ibid. p.71).

Clearly, improving writing is not about citing one form of English as being better than another. Improving writing is about giving students opportunities to use a variety of language and to develop an understanding and an appreciation of how language works to create a particular effect, in a particular context, for a particular audience, and to be able to adapt writing to suit a multitude of forms and purposes. As Freire and Macedo (1987:105) state:

*'Educators must understand fully the broader meaning of student's "empowerment." ... educators should understand the value of mastering the standard dominant language of the wider society. It is through the full appropriation of the dominant standard language that students find themselves linguistically empowered to engage in dialogue with the various sectors of the wider society.'*

If knowledge of the dominant language plays such an integral role in self-empowerment, how do we, as educators, provide our students with the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently explore grammatical and linguistic features? One possible way of engendering grammatical awareness is through the

development of students' metalinguistic knowledge as well as harnessing students' metacognitive awareness of the writing process.

## 2.3) The Role of Metacognition and Writing Process

*'As every writer knows, having good ideas doesn't automatically produce good prose.'*

Flower and Hayes (1981:367)

Not only do most writers know that 'good' writing is more than just 'good' ideas, they also know that creating a written text is far from an effortless process; it involves an almost laborious and agonising cycle of monitoring, evaluating and decision-making. Squandering time whilst deliberating over possible ways of expressing a simple idea, or earnestly searching for the 'right' word, is something I can personally identify with, and as a teacher I have encountered numerous students who go to great lengths to avoid committing their ideas to paper. Unlike the ephemeral quality of spoken language, the written word is permanent. As Myhill (2011:247) states: *'The process of creating well-crafted written text is rarely achieved without pain. The act of writing is variously described from cognitive perspectives as complex, effortful, and cognitively costly'*. Often in the classroom setting, what is written is assessed and measured in terms of not only its content, but also for the micro and macro textual features of writing. Undoubtedly value judgements are made and therefore writing, for some students, is a high-stakes process.

So, if as Myhill (2011) suggests, writing is '*cognitively costly*', how can we, as educational practitioners, ease this demanding and complex process of writing? How can we support students in their mission to take control of their written words? Other than being a means of communication, a way for us to express ourselves, what other cognitive function does writing perform? Is it purely a means to demonstrate knowledge and understanding or a way to share ideas? Or does it serve a deeper process – does it support our thinking?

Cognitive models of writing have primarily focused on writing as a '*problem-solving*' activity (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; Deane et al., 2008:3). Bereiter and Scardamalia focus on distinguishing between two contrasting models of written composition: the '*knowledge telling*' process of writing and the '*knowledge transforming*' (p.143). Essentially, in order for students to progress into strong writers, they need to transfer from the '*knowledge-telling*' stage (where they

primarily focus on simple topics and straightforward ideas) into the '*knowledge-transforming*' stage (where they engage in a complex process of problem-solving). Moreover, stronger writers are seen to '*problematize*' their writing in order to set themselves rhetorical goals which they then work towards fulfilling (p.156). Weaker writers, who are still functioning in the '*knowledge-telling*' model, do not readily have these strategies at their disposal and therefore are considered to need more support in terms of reviewing and improving their written work (p.151, p.156; Deane et al., 2008).

Like, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Kellogg (1994) argues that the writing process allows the writer to '*transform*' their knowledge but he moves this idea a step further and suggests that writing also improves the writer's thinking about a particular topic (Kellogg; 1994:16; Horton, 1982). He states that '*By writing about a subject, one learns what one thinks about the subject. This property of transforming knowledge is a fundamental component of writing skill...*'. For Kellogg (1994:13), the interdependent relationship between writing and thinking is clear: '*I regard thinking and writing as twins of mental life.*' The "*I don't know what I mean until I see what I say*" quote from Flower and Hayes (1981:377) resonates here as it suggests just how important the role of writing is for some writers. Thinking and writing go hand in hand and are inseparable, therefore as we write, we think, and for some writers, the opportunity to write enables them to lay out their ideas on paper and begin to filter which ones are relevant until they are able to articulate their own ideas (which have been shaped and whittled down by the writing process). According to Flower and Hayes (1981:380) the process of writing can also act as an ideas 'generator'. They suggest that the processes of '*generate and evaluate*' have the ability to intervene in the writing process and consequently interrupt it with new knowledge. Through the thinking/writing process, new ideas come to mind and become woven into to the fabric of the text.

In comparison to Flower and Hayes, Galbraith (1999:137) perceives writing as a '*knowledge-constituting process*' whereby the act of writing aids the writer's generation of new ideas and helps to strengthen their prior knowledge. In a small-scale study, Galbraith measured the extent of students' '*discovery*' throughout the writing process. Before, during and after the act of writing, students were asked to list relevant ideas related to their topic and to rate how



much they felt they knew about these topics (p.140). He found that through the writing process *'low self-monitors'* generated *'twice as many new ideas as the high self-monitors'*. Whilst planning does help to move some students towards meeting their rhetorical goals, it would also seem that Galbraith's *'spontaneously articulating thought'* is linked to the increase in writers' knowledge and understanding of the topic. Flower and Hayes (1981:377) refer to this unstructured and seemingly chaotic approach to writing as *'serendipitous experience, an act of discovery. People start out writing without knowing exactly where they will end up; yet they agree that writing is a purposeful act.'* For many, writing is not simply about recording a written record of knowledge – it is also about finding it.

Hacker, Keener and Kircher (2011) build on the problem-solving concept of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) and suggest that identifying possible problems and undertaking implicit acts of control and monitoring are central elements of written language production (Hacker et al., 2011:157-8; Flower, 1994). They propose that the extent of implicitness towards the act of planning and monitoring varies between experienced and novice writers. For stronger writers, many of the writing acts are almost instinctive and automatic and are completed with little conscious awareness. For the weaker writer, these necessary implicit acts of planning and monitoring are less secure and consequently the writer's focus is placed on the act of language production rather than on what is being produced (ibid.). However, Hacker et al. (2011:158) assert that in order to create a meaningful piece of writing, implicit knowledge of how to construct a text is not enough:

*'Only through explicit reading and re-reading, reviewing, revising, editing, and deliberate production and reproduction of text can the writer gain confidence that the written text is a good representation of his or her thoughts.'*

Therefore, in order to be able *'to monitor and control a production of meaning'* there needs to be some kind of *'goal'* (ibid.). Hacker et al. see these *'goals'* as being fluid and acknowledge that they are liable to change throughout the writing process: as the writer reviews and reflects, writing goals shift and evolve (p.159).

In the 1980s, Flowers and Hayes (1981:366) also explored what makes 'good' and 'poor' writers. They criticise the linear approach of planning, writing and re-drafting, (which coincidentally is the model bestowed upon schools in the UK), because it fails to take into consideration '*the inner process of decision and choice*' (p.367). Thinking about what is written and how to write it is a continual process with no clear end point. Instead, the cognitive processes model advocated by Flower and Hayes stresses the importance of the '*mental processes*' (p.369). Writing is not just a series of linear activities which need to be performed in a set order. This approach would be too simplistic and not take into account the mental process involved in metacognitive reflection.

Alternatively, Nystrand (1989:66-7) suggests that whilst the 1970s focused on the composing processes of writing, the 1980s explore the function of social contexts (Hacker et al., 2011:155). The social-interactive model sees writing as a social act. As writers, we cannot help but be influenced by the world around us – our social interactions, our shared language, our culture, our historical contexts (Hacker et al., Vygotsky, 1991; Bakhtin, 1981). However, conversely, whilst writing could be considered a social act, it is also a deeply personal act unique to each individual (Hacker et al., 2011:155). In order to explain this dichotomous and dual nature of writing, Hacker et al. refer to semiotics where the individual links objects and signs. This constructed process of carefully selecting relevant signs to express ideas is also influenced by an awareness of the reader and a desire for them to read the same signs and deduce the same meaning as the writer (Kellogg, 1994; Hacker et al., 2011:156). However, it is worth noting that the over-lapping theories as to whether writing is solely an action of the writer, as suggested by Hacker et al., (2011) or whether it is part of a socially shared act between writer and reader, as advocated by Nystrand (1989), are heavily influenced by their opposing ontological perspectives. It is evident that Hacker et al. take a psychological view of writing which is in continual search for conclusive meanings or truths, whilst Nystrand's perspective is heavily influenced by sociocultural philosophies based on the assumption that there are multiple meanings and versions of 'truth' - not just one measurable or definable version.

As a result, reader awareness is central to Nystrand's social interactive model

(1989:78) as he perceives written composition as a social construct. Consequently, he rejects the formalist and idealist theories of writing in favour of a social-interactive model where a text's meaning is socially constructed through the writer-reader-text relationship (1989:66): *'the reader and the text – figure integrally and not just ancillary into the composing process...the relationship between the writer and reader is essentially reciprocal and social'* (1989:82). Nystrand states that if we accept this negotiation between reader and writer, as opposed to the cognitive model of translation, then we also have to reconsider theoretical concepts underpinning the writing process (p.76). Instead, as writers we should avoid considering that a text's meaning is solely based on its *'semantic content'* but rather we should consider it through its *'semantic potential'* (p.77).

Viewing texts through this wider perspective allows us as to consider Fish's postmodernist statement that texts cannot have one single meaning (Fish, 1980) and therefore the writer-reader-text relationship offers us potential for multiple meanings dependent on a range of contextual factors. As a result, Nystrand (1989:70) suggests:

*'Cognitive models of writing depict writers as solitary individuals struggling mainly with their thoughts. While audience has been viewed as a relevant constraint by composition theorists (e.g., as part of Flower & Hayes' "task environment"), it is usually not seen as central to the writing process.'*

However, how exactly can the meaning be a shared process if the writer is writing as a solitary individual? Nystrand (1989:74) explains that there is a convergence between the reader and the writer whereby their corresponding purposes (as a writer and a reader) momentarily overlap. Therefore, the creation of a text's *'meaning'* is derived through a shared process between the writer and the reader:

*'Written communication is a fiduciary act for both writers and readers in which they continuously seek to orient themselves to a projected state of convergence between them. The process of writing is a matter of elaborating text in accord with what the writer can reasonably assume that the reader knows and expects, and the process of reading is a matter of predicting text*

*in accord with what the reader assumes about the writer's purpose' (1989:75).*

To put it simply, the writing and the reading process is a symbiotic act whereby one depends on the other for the creation of its meaning. As a result, it is clear that writing is undeniably multi-faceted, requiring many thought processes before, during and again at the end, when reviewing the final product.

Over the last 40 years, a variety of writing process models have been presented – but whilst different approaches might consider the writing process through different lenses, there seems to be a commonality between them – the role of thought. According to Kellogg *'writing is a tool for thinking. Writing not only demands thinking, it is also a means for thinking'* (Kellogg, 1994: 16; Nickerson et al., 1985). Despite writing being a highly metacognitive act much of the focus to date has been centred on the planning and drafting stages as well as the end product of writing, with relatively less interest being placed on the actual process of writing (Hacker et al., 2011:154; Cremin and Myhill, 2012: 103). Whilst exploring the issue of metacognition, Cremin and Myhill (2012:100) state that it *'is a conscious process which gives a learner more active control over his/her learning, and as such it is a higher order form of thinking.'* It is this 'consciousness', which enables students to develop their awareness of their own *'thinking and learning processes, and so have some influence on them.'*

Whilst earlier cognitive models do not necessarily encourage students to actively engage in self-reflection or encourage students to purposefully consider their textual choices, Flower and Hayes (1981: 374) also suggest that this is imperative. They propose that for many students the writing process is not *'automatic'* therefore they argue that it is necessary for them to become consciously aware of their *'individual thinking tasks'*, which good writers tend to take for granted. Similarly, Hacker et al. (2011: 154) reinforce this message and state that *'metacognitive monitoring'* is essential and that the actual act of writing is in fact applied metacognition. They suggest that the acts of *'Reading, re-reading, reflecting, and reviewing'* are strategies which enable students to ensure that their writing is *'production of meaning'* and consequently allows them to meet their writing goals (2011:157).

One of the ways to foster metacognitive thinking is to encourage a learning environment where students and teachers regularly discuss and reflect on the writing process (Cremin and Myhill; 2012:105). Developing students' metacognitive awareness, or as Kellogg (1994:17) puts it, *'thinking about thinking'* seems a necessary strategy for writers to ensure they have competently completed a range of complex process when they write. Arguably, there are many complex processes which occur when writing – some implicit, some explicit. But to encourage students to actively reflect on their linguistic choices is to enable them to become pragmatically aware of their role as writers in a wider social context.

As mentioned earlier, for many students, writing is a 'high-stakes' process, therefore it is important that they are willing to take risks and take the opportunity to actively reflect on and articulate to themselves and others their design choices - whether they are 'good' choices or 'poor'. The process of reflection and careful consideration as to why which language feature was used at a particular point and the reasoning behind this choice is an effective strategy for considering the overall effect that the text has on the reader; it also helps decide whether or not the text has satisfied the needs of the genre and purpose. This process enhances a sense of authorial intent. As Freire (1972a:29) states:

*'...language is impossible without thought, and language and thought are impossible without the world to which they refer, the human word is more than mere vocabulary – it is word-and-action. The cognitive dimensions of the literacy process much include the relationships of men with their world.'*

As metacognition involves thinking about our thinking, it seems natural that the next step in the journey towards writer autonomy is the *'thinking about language'* (Cremin & Myhill; 2012:103) - also known as metalinguistic knowledge.

## 2.4) Metalinguistic Knowledge

*'If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables, words, and phrases, but rather of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself, and on the profound significance of language.'*

Freire (1985:49)

Before delving too far into the merits of developing students' metalinguistic knowledge, it is important to identify exactly what it is. From a linguistic point of view, metalinguistics is concerned with *'language about language'* (Gombert, 1993:575) or as Cremin & Myhill (2012:103) put it *'thinking about language'*. Developing metalinguistic knowledge can be considered as an integral component in the development of being consciously and critically aware writers as it offers us an opportunity to explicitly reflect on the linguistic process and design choices (Myhill, 2011b:251; Gombert 1992:13). In order to explore this concept further, Gombert (1992) identifies subcategories of metalinguistic activity:

- metaphonological
- metasyntactical
- metalexical/metasemantic
- metapragmatic
- metatextual.

According to Gombert, metasyntactical development needs to be explicitly taught because it is not generally acquired through subliminal processes (Gombert, p62; Myhill, 2011b:251). Furthermore, in terms of the wider acquisition of skills, metapragmatic and metatextual knowledge are developed last, possibly because in order to reflect on pragmatic or whole text cohesion, writers need to first be aware of the lexical, semantic and syntactical choices they have at their disposal. This would suggest that having a metalanguage helps to support this transition from word level to whole text and pragmatic awareness of the combined effects of language choices.

However, unpicking the concept of metalinguistic knowledge further is crucial to this investigation. For example, Gombert (1992) makes the distinction between the epilinguistic and metalinguistic stages and states that the preceding epilinguistic stage centres on the unconscious level of linguistic development whereas the metalinguistic stage operates on the conscious level (Myhill and Jones, 2015). This process is also referred to as '*procedural*' and '*declarative metalinguistic knowledge*.' Gombert also suggests that the term '*declarative*' indicates knowledge which is verbalisable. As a result, this dichotomising definition of metalinguistic knowledge conflates what is '*conscious*' with what is '*verbalisable*'. Therefore, this conceptualisation of metalinguistic knowledge clearly creates a distinction between what is '*conscious*' and '*unconscious*' knowledge along with what is verbalisable and non-verbalisable.

Evidently, metalinguistic knowledge allows us to think carefully about our language choices and as Micciche (2004:718) suggests, allows us to explore '*the interwoven relationship between what we say and how we say it*.' Moreover, a shared metalanguage, which comprises of '*the vocabulary of technical terms associated with the process of writing (e.g. sentence, clause, phrase)*' (Dean; 2016:98), enables students to develop the sophistication of their language-based discussions through enhancing their specific awareness of their design choices.

Similarly, the research of Chen and Myhill (2016), and more recently Watson and Newman (2017), indicates that having a grammatical metalanguage can help to sharpen students' metalinguistic reflections. In their study, Watson and Newman (2017:394) found that whilst students did not necessarily have to use a metalanguage to be able to discuss the impact of their language choices, they also found that '*the ability to identify and articulate syntactic patterns, and then to relate these to effect on the reader, was clearly supported by the use of terms such as 'noun phrase' or 'parentheses'*'. Therefore, having a shared metalanguage in an English classroom can also work as a tool for metalinguistic development as well as a teacher-instrument for identifying possible ways of moving students' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge forward.

However, for some, the precise teaching of linguistic terms does not necessarily play such a central role in the drive for improving writing. Van Gelderen (2006: 44-47) questions the effectiveness of teaching linguistic awareness as he considers *'implicit'* learning of language to be more effective than *'explicit'*. As a result, he is sceptical regarding the merits of developing primary and secondary aged students' metalinguistic knowledge and argues that:

*'Although everybody agrees that knowledge of the structures of words and sentences is necessary for children's skilful use of language, there is no agreement on the need of their learning explicit linguistic rules (for producing these structures) or metalinguistic terminology (for talking about them)'* (2006:47).

Therefore, whilst Van Gelderen values some *'implicit'* grammatical knowledge, he does not value the use of a grammatical metalanguage (2006:49). In order to support his argument further he refers to cognitive researchers Hayes and Flower (1980) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). Although they propose that writing is essentially a process of ideas *'translation'* or *'generation'*, which requires reviewing and re-evaluating throughout, he concludes that these sub-processes of writing have little, if anything, to do with linguistic choice:

*'With the knowledge we now have about children's writing processes, the idea that the explicit teaching of linguistic structures improves students' writing is highly suspect. This is not only because empirical studies fail to show any effect, but also because the underlying mechanism is mysterious'* (2006:53).

Whilst Keen (1997:436-7) recognises the possibilities that a grammar-based metalanguage offers student learning, he also makes a distinction between different types of metalanguage: non-technical and technical. For him, non-technical metalanguage takes an evaluative approach to language, primarily focusing on patterns and connections between words or sentences, whereas a technical discussion of language takes a more descriptive approach. Although Keen suggests that when increasing metalinguistic knowledge, educators need to start with the students own *'natural'* metalanguage first, Clark (2010) argues



that using a systematic metalanguage which helps students to be consciously aware of their linguistic choices is in fact, a powerful act. Crafting and shaping a piece of writing is not just about careful selection of words; it is much more than that. Students need to be encouraged to recognise the connections between genre, form, content and audience. As Clark (2010:197) states: *'Providing pupils with the terminology to talk about language enables them to discover the relation between various language structures and their literal and symbolic meanings, not only in their reading but also in their own writing'*. This links back to Freire (1987:105) who asserts that it is essential for teachers to ensure students are prepared for life in wider social spheres by ensuring their *'mastering'* of the *'dominant standard language'*.

Moore and Schleppegrell (2014:93) also make an interesting point; as English teachers we are already used to teaching technical terms through encouraging students to identify and discuss stylistic features of literature, such as the use of similes, metaphors, juxtaposition. Evidently, we already expect students to adopt an 'unnatural' literary metalanguage, yet it appears that this type of metalanguage is rarely contested.

However, if we acknowledge the affordances of developing students' and teachers' metalinguistic knowledge for communication in the shared environment of the classroom, perhaps the question should now be centred on what kind of metalanguage should be taught and shared? As already established, there are different kinds of grammatical approaches, from traditional prescriptive grammar, to Halliday's (1985) more contextual and processes based systemic functional linguistic approach. It is clear that basing metalinguistic knowledge purely on prescriptive grammar approaches, which value labelling words and syntactical elements out of context, is of little value in the modern classroom. As Derewianka (2012:139) reminds us: *'The research evidence indicates that traditional grammar taught in traditional ways does not improve students' writing.'* In contemporary society students are bombarded daily by a range of multimodal texts through a range of multiple media platforms and therefore need to be equipped to meet the demands presented by these diverse literacies. As a result, Macken-Horarik (2009b:35) questions, *'What kind of metalanguage will be 'good enough'?' What*

kind of system will support students in their linguistic development and equip them with the skills which are needed in a multiliterate and multimedia society?

In Australia and the US, a systemic functional linguistic approach to grammar has gained popularity. Moore and Schleppegrell (2014:93) favour Halliday's approach to grammar and explain that it: *'offers a functional grammar metalanguage that connects language forms to meanings in contexts of use'* and it therefore *'provides a means of being explicit about the ways different meanings are realized in choices at multiple levels (word, clause, and text).'* It is clear that this approach values the meaning-making process of language systems in social contexts (Macken-Horarik; 2009b:34). Schleppegrell (2007:123) explores the potential that language offers us further, and reinforces the message that precise language focus does not equate to engendering connotations of *'etiquette'* or *'correctness'*, but rather it can be seen as a *'meaning-making'* tool:

*'Functional grammar provides a metalanguage for analyzing language that highlights issues of overall organization and voice and goes beyond structural categories such as noun and verb to show the meanings that follow from different language choices. It offers a set of coherent constructs related to the systems of grammar that writers draw on to make meaning'* (2007: 123).

In conjunction with this, Schleppegrell (2007:121-122) suggests that when we elicit students' metalinguistic knowledge, we, as educators, are able to gauge what students' value in their own writing as well as enabling us to track how their language use changes over time. Essentially, this process of developing metalinguistic knowledge provides an opportunity for students to articulate their own unique design choices. As writers, it is easy to take our language choices for granted and we do not always recognise that overused expressions are not necessarily the best way to voice our ideas (Van Gelderen, 2006:52). Perhaps the process of actually having to explicitly explain linguistic selections reveals possible problems or inconsistencies which had previously gone undetected.

Because the systemic functional approach to language is primarily focused on language use in context, Moore and Schleppegrell (2014: 92) suggest that it gives students a metalanguage which allows them to have meaningful discussions

about their linguistic choices in relation to a text's purpose as well as considering authorial intent. Whilst exploring similar issues, Derewianka (2012:142), states that: *'Ultimately, the question is not so much 'which terminology to use?' but what that terminology allows our students to do.'* Although Derewianka also supports a functional model of language study, she acknowledges that many of the terms used in traditional grammar are still relevant; however, the main focus for her is not on labelling abstract features, instead it is on *'the meanings being created'* through language use. As Derewianka (2012:129) explains, *'A functional model describes how language varies from context to context.'* For the functional linguist, context rules supreme.

In the US, during recent years, another grammar-based pedagogy has emerged: rhetorical grammar (Weaver, 1996; Micciche, 2004; Myhill et al; 2008). This approach also values exploring grammar use in context. For Micciche (2004:719) one of the strengths offered by the rhetorical grammar approach is that it teaches *thinking* about language. She suggests that our linguistic choices demonstrate our relationship with the reader and that our *'Word choice and sentence structure are an expression of the way we attend to the words of others, the way we position ourselves in relation to others.'* Central to this approach is encouraging students to explore their individual craft as writers by giving careful consideration to their linguistic choices in relation to contextual issues such as the intended audience and purpose (Micciche; 2004:723). Actively thinking about authorial intent in a given context and possible impact on the reader is a priority.

Similarly, In the UK, Myhill also takes a contextualised approach to grammar instruction and theorises metalinguistic activity as: *'the explicit bringing into consciousness of an attention to language as an artefact, and the conscious monitoring and manipulation of language to create desired meanings grounded in socially shared understandings'* (2011:250). Providing students with the opportunity to openly consider their linguistic or rhetorical devices by themselves or others engenders a wider and more purposeful awareness of new ways of *'text effectiveness'* (Van Gelderen,2006: 52). Undoubtedly, developing an understanding of how subtle linguistic changes can alter or reinforce meaning is an invaluable tool for any writer.

In relation to this, Myhill's 2011 (p.253) study analyses students' metalinguistic knowledge by focusing on '*how metalinguistic activity is manifest in writers at school*' (also see Jones et al., 2013). This three year nationally funded project in the UK researched whether contextualised teaching of grammar improved students' metalinguistic knowledge. The study primarily focused on Gombert's (1992) four subdomains of metasemantic, metasyntactic, metatextual and metapragmatic knowledge as well as one other, new category – '*metalinguistic declarative knowledge*'. Evidently, Myhill's findings echo those of Gombert's (1992) earlier works as most students primarily focused on identifying and exploring their metalexical and metasemantic choices as opposed to the syntactical, textual and pragmatic elements of their writing, consequently suggesting that students have less secure knowledge of these sub-domains (2011:256-260). Additionally, Myhill's research also correlates with Gombert's assertion that metapragmatic and metatextual knowledge is acquired last; she concludes her paper by suggesting there is a need for further research exploring whether it is necessary for students to have a wider metapragmatic understanding of how their linguistic choices have the potential to create meanings (2011:266).

Clearly, there are many commonalities between these differing approaches – the privileging of language in context and the acknowledgement of writing being considered as a socially shared construct is apparent. Furthermore, when considering what kind of metalanguage might be relevant, it is interesting to note that Moore and Schleppegrell (2014:104) do not see it as an 'either/or' approach to grammar pedagogies: '*Research and practice could benefit from exploring the ways that traditional grammar and the functional grammar of SFL presented here might inform and complement one another*'. This emergence of fluidity between differing metalanguages is echoed by Macken-Horarik (2009:55) who states that: '*any navigational toolkit needs to make space for both convention and innovation, but that this process requires careful thinking, dialogue across different grammars and substantive research into semiosis in school English*.' It is evident that whilst Macken-Horarik takes a functional approach to grammar, there is recognition that there needs to be flexibility between the different metalanguages. This 'fluidity' is further reinforced by Cope and Kalantzis (2000:24) who suggest that: '*A metalanguage needs to be quite flexible and open-ended*' and that we should

*'comfortable with fuzzy-edged, overlapping concepts.'* After all, our metalanguage today needs to equip students with the knowledge of how language works in a wide range of texts. As a result, Macken-Horarik (2009b:35) warns us that as educators, we have to ensure our metalanguages allow students to expand their knowledge and skills for the changing roles in wider society: *'This is essential if our multiliteracies English is not going to 'short change' students, especially those who depend on schooling to optimise their life chances. For this student group, getting access to a useful metalanguage for exploring the different dimensions of multiliteracies is vital.'*

More recently, research has focused on the role of metatalk or 'writing conversations' as a way of developing students' metalinguistic knowledge and metalanguage. Love and Sandiford's (2016:215) recent Australian study, found that the use of metatalk provided students with opportunities to verbalise their grammatical and linguistic choices. It was also found that the process of conducting interviews with students scaffolded their metalinguistic reflections. The act of discussing their grammatical and linguistic choices, helped to sharpen their metalinguistic knowledge. Similarly, Watson and Newman's (2017) study found that the process of conducting interviews enabled students' reflection and articulation of their grammatical choices in an in-depth way, particularly when compared to their written reflections on their writing.

Evidently, if we, as English teachers, are to encourage students to fully engage with the writing process and articulate individual and unique design choices, we need to provide students with opportunities to engage in metalinguistically-orientated discussions as well as promote the use of a *'meaning-focused grammatical metalanguage'* (Moore and Schleppegrell; 2014:103). Developing metalinguistic knowledge is not only about raising awareness of our linguistic choices and how they might be received by the reader, but it has a deeper purpose as a tool to critically reflect on the texts around us (Keen; 1997:433). This of course is an enlightening and powerful action because fundamentally, it provides writers and readers with a knowledge and understanding of how language use plays an intrinsic role in shaping our social identities (Keen; 1997:439). Through the use of metalinguistics, students have access to deeper

explorations of language use which subsequently enables them to challenge possible pragmatic meanings encoded within the body of a text (Keen, 1997:433).

However, the thinking about language choice and its implications is just one integral element in the writing process. Behind metalinguistics and the metacognitive act of writing, is the role of self-regulation and writer control.

## 2.5) Self-Regulation and Writer Control

As we have already established, writing is a multifaceted process placing many cognitive demands on the writer. It is apparent that metalinguistic knowledge and metacognition play central roles in the writing process. However, whilst there has recently been a high level of focus on writing processes, there has been comparatively less explicit emphasis on the role of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1990:4; Graham and Harris, 2000:3).

As self-regulation is a metacognitive process, Zimmerman (1990:4) explains this interwoven relationship further as well as identifying the key attributes of a self-regulated learner:

*'In terms of metacognitive processes, self-regulated learners plan, set goals, organize, self-monitor, and self-evaluate at various points during the process of acquisition (Corno, 1986, 1989; Ghatala, 1986; Pressley, Borkowski, & Schneider, 1987). These processes enable them to be self-aware, knowledgeable, and decisive in the approach to learning. In terms of motivational processes, these learners report high self-efficacy, self-attributions, and intrinsic task interest (Borkowski et al., in press; Schunk, 1986, Zimmerman, 1985).'*

For some writers, self-regulated learning occurs almost naturally; they are highly motivated and acutely aware of gaps in their knowledge and will actively seek out strategies to ensure they equip themselves with this new information or skills. As Zimmerman (1990:4) explains: *'Unlike their passive classmates, self-regulated students proactively seek out information when needed and take the necessary steps to master it'*. A self-regulated learner actively and purposefully takes control of their learning and ensures that they continue to make progress and evolve.

Through the social interaction of dialogue, we learn not only the social etiquette of spoken communication, but we also develop an understanding of language use in context (Torrance, Fidalgo and Garcia, 2007:266). However, the contextual social support system offered to us as language users in the spoken arena is absent when we begin to transfer our knowledge and skills to writing –

particularly in formal contexts. Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997:73) reinforce this solitary notion of writing and state that:

*'Becoming an adept writer involves more than knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, it depends on high levels of personal regulation because writing activities are usually self-planned, self-initiated, and self-sustained.'*

As a result, some writers are in need of a support mechanism which enables them to 'manage' their 'solitary' writing processes. This is where self-regulation plays a central role in writing development. Research conducted by Graham and Harris (1992) has shown there is a definite causal link between the implementation of self-regulation strategies and writing improvement. Over the last 20 years, Graham and Harris have developed a series of self-regulation strategies which they refer to as the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model (Harris, Graham & Mason, 2006:296). In their 2006 research into the use of self-regulation strategies at elementary and middle school level, Graham and Harris explain that SRSD has shown positive impacts on writing and suggest that the third-grade students were subsequently able to write '*longer, more complete, and qualitatively better*' pieces of writing than that of the control students. In fact, they state that their effect size exceeded 1.78 (p. 297).

The SRSD model involves a range of carefully scaffolded strategies which encourage increasing independence. Some of these strategies include the use of: mnemonics, guided questions, planning instruction, genre requirements, self-monitoring exercises and modelling of writing by the class teacher (Harris, Graham & Mason (2006:307-9). Graham and Harris (2000:3) explain that self-regulation enhances student writing in two ways: firstly, through the development of '*self-regulatory mechanisms, such as planning, monitoring, evaluating, and revising,*' and secondly, that these new '*mechanisms may act as change-inducing agents, leading to strategic adjustments in writing behavior* (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985; Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997).'

As a result, the SRSD model scaffolds learning and enables students to feel various degrees of '*success*' which positively impacts on their '*writing behaviour*'



through an increased level of self-efficacy. This enables writers to feel confident when approaching new writing tasks: they know what they have to do – and how to do it. These writers have learnt a ‘writing strategy’. This is particularly important for weaker writers who find writing based tasks difficult. Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997:80) see this explicit level of confidence and self-belief as being essential to a writer’s success. In fact, they see self-efficacy as a distinguishing factor between strong and weak writers:

*‘Students who have a strong belief in their writing capabilities will not only set higher goals for themselves but will persist longer on writing tasks in the face of difficulties and achieve more than their less self-efficacious counterparts (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivee, 1991; Collins, 1982; Schunk, 1984; Zimmerman, 1995).’*

Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997:73) put forward a social cognitive view of writing which is reliant on a triad of interwoven and indispensable forms of self-regulation: environmental, behavioural and covert/personal. They explain these different processes by stating that: *‘Environmental processes refer to writers’ self-regulation of the physical or social setting in which they write,’* whereas *‘behavioral processes pertain to writers’ self-regulation of overt motoric activities associated with writing,’* and finally that the *‘personal processes involve writers’ self-regulation of cognitive beliefs and affective states associated with writing.’* For them, this *‘triadic system of self-regulatory processes’* is linked to *‘a sense of self-efficacy’* (p77). This *‘triadic’* process is recursive, whereby writers monitor their progress on a *‘self-regulatory feedback loop’* and respond accordingly: if the writing outcomes are pleasing – writers continue. If it they feel their writing is less successful, they react and make changes (ibid). Zimmerman and Risemberg break each element of the triad down even further and outline 10 sub-processes (p78-9).

#### **Personal or Covert**

time-management  
goal setting  
self-evaluation  
cognitive strategies such as organisation  
use of mental imagery or recall

#### **Behavioural**

self-monitoring  
self-consequence (reward/  
punishment)  
self-verbalisation (eg, saying  
dialogue aloud)

#### **Environmental**

creating effective setting  
self-selected books/  
tutors/resources etc

All of these self-regulation processes are continually moderated throughout the writing activity and adjustments are made where necessary.

Whilst Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) consider external influences on writing and self-regulation, Harris et al. (2011:189) primarily focus on the actual writing practices and suggest that the writing process is '*a recursive, strategic, and multi-dimensional process centric to (a) planning what to say and how to say it, (b) translating ideas into written text, and (c) revising what has been written.*' Harris et al (2011:189) reinforce the message that self-regulation is an essential part of the writing process and like Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) they suggest that comparatively, better writers use a range of self-regulation strategies compared to weaker writers.

Despite Graham and Harris' (and colleagues') research into the impact of self-regulated learning on 'struggling writers', De Milliano, van Gelderen and Slegers (2012:304) suggest there has been comparatively fewer in-depth research studies into the writing processes of weaker writers. As a result of their own empirical study, De Milliano et al. (p. 303) suggest that weaker writers appear to exhibit similar writing processes to writers operating in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) '*knowledge-telling*' phase. Their 2006 research suggests that '*struggling writers*', who spend more time and attention during the planning stage, often achieve better outcomes than '*struggling writers*' who do not plan. However, it is worth noting that there were clear limitations to Milliano et al.'s (2012: 321) research as the students' length of writing was only 50 words. Additionally, the students in their sample only produced one piece of writing therefore their results might have been more robust if students had written a range of texts which were also longer in length.

These findings are reinforced by research conducted by Ferrari, Bouffard and Rainville (1998:474) who examined the differences between good and weaker writers' self-regulation activities and found that weaker writers started to write more quickly than stronger writers who seemed to gather their ideas before writing. They suggest that stronger writers often draw on existing pragmatic knowledge of differing discourse structures whilst weaker writers are unable to readily tap into this prior knowledge (p.485).

In their own research, Zumbrunn and Bruning (2012:91) examined the effectiveness of Graham and Harris' (2005, 2006) Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). Their sample consisted of 6 first grade students who were shown visual images as writing prompts and asked to write stories. They also confirm that young and inexperienced writers tend to rely on the '*knowledge-telling*' form espoused by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) where they often create short uncomplicated texts lacking in detail (Zumbrunn and Bruning, 2012 p. 92). As a result, they suggest that if self-regulated strategies were taught earlier, than perhaps many of the writing difficulties associated later on would be eliminated (p.92).

Like Harris et al. (2006), Zumbrunn and Bruning's (2012:99) research also entailed teachers encouraging students to use mnemonics to enable them to become more metacognitively aware of the writing process and the need for them to actively take control. However, whilst they state that self-regulation strategies helped to improve students' writing, it is also worth noting that some students found memorizing and recalling the mnemonic difficult and that the students in their sample were already '*typically-achieving writers*' (p.106 - 107). Therefore, it is unclear whether low achieving writers would in fact benefit from such an approach. Additionally, the research only focused on one genre – story writing, so there was no indication whether or not these strategies would be transferable to other types of writing.

Careful planning seems to play an integral role in writing success, but there has been relatively little evidence of the impact of self-monitoring. In their research, Milliano et al. (2012: 309-11) found little evidence of self-monitoring and it was also apparent that any textual revisions made during the writing process were generally at word level (p.314). Evaluative self-regulation acts were only superficial and were mainly centred on whether the writer was pleased with the end product (p. 318). Reflective and evaluative consideration of the written text, either whilst in progress or at the final stage, are equally important to ensure a written text is clearly developed and cohesive. Critical reflection on the completed draft is an essential strategy for writers (Christie and Dreyfus, 2007; Ryan, 2011) as it allows them opportunity to step back and view a completed text from the

reader's perspective. Ryan (2011:104) advocates a need to equip students with strategies to support critical and evaluative reflection: *'A good strategy for assessment of a piece of writing is to analyse and annotate the writing according to the conventional structure and linguistic features. This strategy is also a powerful self-assessment technique that students can be taught to use on their own writing...'* Zimmerman and Risemberg's (1997: 75) earlier research is relevant here as they too found that weaker writers rarely monitored whether their final written product related to their writing goals.

Encouraging students to develop specific strategies, such as those advocated by Harris and Graham (2006) to ensure that they have consistently and cyclically reviewed their own writing, should enable them to produce 'better' pieces of writing which, according to Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997), helps to improve a sense of self-worth as a writer. However, Ferrari, Bouffard and Rainville (1998:480) remind us that part of the problem when analysing students' self-regulation repertoire is that many of these processes are implicit and not necessarily observable to an outsider or even consciously aware to the writer. So as teachers, a student's unique self-regulation strategies are not always obvious to us - or even to themselves as they write. This contrasts with Zimmerman (1990:4) who suggests that students have some recognition of the acquisition of knowledge differences between themselves and others because when they *'encounter obstacles such as poor study conditions, confusing teachers, or abstruse text books, they find a way to succeed.'* Naturally, a stronger sense of self-worth leads to growing confidences and perhaps a willingness to take risks as a writer. Evidently, a diverse and multifaceted range of self-regulation processes come into play when we write and it is clear that as Myhill (2011:247) suggests, writing is indeed *'cognitively costly'*. As Freire (1970:212) states:

*'If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables and phrases, but rather of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself, and on the profound significance of language...'*

## 2.6) Conclusion

'I worry about versions of "grammar" as creaky conventions of another time, when other rules and kinds of respect had their place. It's a room kept locked for too long, too musty, too mouldy. We need air and light and movement, the means to keep up with the ferocious pace of change.'

Gunther Kress (*The Guardian*, 2004)

Through this exploration of recent and relevant research into writing, it is evident that the three interwoven threads of metalinguistic knowledge, metacognition and self-regulation strategies are vital components in the pursuit of writing success. It is also clear from the literature that there is little evidence to suggest traditional grammar approaches improve writing (Derewianka, 2012:139). However, what has become evident is the success of contextualised grammar approaches (Derewianka, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2012; Myhill, 2005, 2009, 2011a; Janks, 2009). As Derewianka (2012:142) states:

*'Future research needs to go beyond traditional concerns regarding the structuring of sentences to address such matters as how students' knowledge about language might be implicated in their use of oral language, their ability to comprehend, critically analyse and compose written and visual texts from the discourse level down to the word and below, their ability to make discerning linguistic choices in relation to context, and their perceptions of the value of such knowledge.'*

As a result, the emerging questions which arise from this literature review, are not so much focused on 'should we be teaching grammar?' but instead: What kind of grammar and metalanguage will allow students to develop in-depth knowledge of language's '*meaning-making*' potential? and which self-regulation strategies can help support this developing knowledge and scaffold learning as students migrate into independent writers?

Evidently, the literature clearly suggests that a contextualised approach to grammar can impact positively on students' writing. For example, research

conducted by Jones et al (2013) into metalinguistic knowledge, documented a rise in writing levels by 5.11%. Furthermore, Gombert's (1992:62) earlier findings indicate that having a metalanguage supports the development from word level knowledge to whole text and pragmatic awareness of the combined effects of language choices. As Clark (2010:197) states: *'Providing pupils with the terminology to talk about language enables them to discover the relation between various language structures and their literal and symbolic meanings, not only in their reading but also in their own writing'*. Therefore, developing students' metalinguistic knowledge, which allows them to explore language use in contexts through the exploration of genres, audiences and purposes, will provide them with a diverse range of language features relevant to 'real life' social contexts and will thus extend the breadth of their writing skills and linguistic knowledge.

Furthermore, it is clear from Graham and Harris' (1992 & 2005) Self-Regulation Strategies Development model that self-regulation also produces positive effects on writing outcomes. Through the use of a range of carefully scaffolded procedures, students were able to actively take more control of their own writing and develop their own independence as writers. As a result, it seems reasonable to consider whether specific self-regulation strategies might also enable students to develop their own metalinguistic knowledge and support them in their journeys to become increasingly autonomous writers.

Moreover, through the exploration of writing processes and the role of metacognition and self-regulation, it is clear that much of the research to date focuses on cognitive approaches to writing (Hacker et al, 2009; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987) with fewer investigations from a sociocultural perspective (Nystrand, 1989). Developing a range of teaching strategies which not only supports the development of students' metalinguistic knowledge, but also privileges a sociolinguistic approach (whereby meanings are formed as part of socially shared context) is an empowering way for students to explore their own language use as well as how language operates in wider contexts. The literature indicates that there are currently no studies which explicitly connect developing metalinguistic knowledge and self-regulation as a tool for improving writing. As a result, my original contribution to this growing field will be through the exploration of this relationship in more detail through the research question:

**Does the explicit teaching of grammar, with the use of self-regulation strategies, support the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge?**

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Part One

#### 3.1) Research Questions

This research centres on exploring the question: **Does the explicit teaching of grammar, with the use of self-regulation strategies, support the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge?**

In order to fully explore the combined impact of explicit grammar teaching through the support of self-regulation strategies, it is useful to break this question down even further into two subset questions which focus on students' ability **to articulate** and **transfer** their new knowledge into their own writing:

- Does the explicit teaching of grammar with the use of self-regulation strategies support students' ability **to articulate** their metalinguistic knowledge?
- Does the explicit teaching of grammar with self-regulation strategies support students' ability **to transfer** their metalinguistic knowledge into their own writing?

As a result, this research seeks to explore the potential impact of self-regulation strategies (which encourages students to actively engage with their own writing processes) as well as the teaching and development of students' metalinguistic knowledge. The self-regulation strategy will provide students with various opportunities to articulate their own writing designs and linguistic choices – both verbally and in written form. In addition to this, students will be taught a range of new grammar-based terms throughout the action research cycle in an attempt to develop their own grammar-based knowledge. As the identified grammar terms will be inductively found in the model texts studied in class, the lessons aim to take a contextualised approach whereby each grammatical item will be explored in the context of the texts explored. Terminology will be used as a way of developing students' grammatical metalanguage and to support their emerging metalinguistic conversations in class. The development of their metalinguistic knowledge will be evidenced through students' reflective critical commentaries whereby they will focus on explaining their design choices in relation to contextual issues – primarily the text's genre, intended audience and purpose. In addition to this, three students (high, middle and low attaining) were interviewed at five



points throughout the research cycle in order to gain insight into their developing linguistic knowledge. The table below demonstrates action taken and timescale:

Data Collection Timescale	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Pre-teaching written data collection:										
Pre-teaching interview										
Teacher Reflection										
Teaching cycle 1										
Data collection written data										
interview 1										
Teacher Reflection										
Teaching cycle 2										
Data collection written data										
Interview 2										
Teacher Reflection										
Teaching cycle 3										
Data collection written data										
Interview 3										
Teacher Reflection										
Post teaching written data collection										
Post-teaching interview										
Teacher Reflection										

Table 2: Action Research Timescale

### 3.2) My theoretical Perspective

Acknowledging my own view of 'reality' and what it is to 'know' is an essential process in identifying which research paradigm is relevant to me as a researcher as well as to my own investigation. What kinds of knowledge do I value? Which research paradigms coincide with my own 'world view' and will they support my own theoretical perspective?

Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) suggest that research paradigms can be defined as a '*basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways.*' Krauss (2005:758-9) builds on this and explains that: '*ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it.*' As a result, before moving on to fully exploring my research possibilities, I

need to establish my own ontological and epistemological stance because they underpin my own view of reality and knowledge and therefore influence my methodological decisions (Koshy, 2010:23).

First, I need to explore opposing concepts of knowledge and their underlying assumptions. Cohen et al (2007: 7) explain the key differences between the positivist and anti-positivist approaches:

*'The view that knowledge is hard, objective and tangible will demand of researchers an observer role, together with an allegiance to the methods of natural science; to see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique, however, imposes on researchers an involvement with their subjects and a rejection of the ways of the natural scientist. To subscribe to the former is to be a positivist; to the latter, anti-positivist.'*

For Gage (1989:4), the *'prediction and control'* approach often privileged in the natural sciences is not considered appropriate when studying *'human affairs'* and it is therefore considered unsuitable for educationally-based research: *'... scientific methods can be applied only to natural phenomena that are stable and uniform across time, space, and context in a way obviously untrue of the human world of teaching and learning.'*

Pine (2009:13) reinforces this idea and suggests that if practice-based research entails critical self-reflection, it could be potentially problematic for a researcher espousing positivist assumptions simply because there would undoubtedly be a need to explore *'the meanings and the purpose that human beings assign to their activities and experiences.'* Interpretations of teaching practices and outcomes will undeniably be context dependent and open to subjective reflections.

As an English teacher exploring possible developments in year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge, it seems that a research perspective which values knowledge as being *'personal, subjective and unique'* (Cohen et al., 2007: 7) will be relevant to my research design. A positivist approach which essentially values objectivity and views the world as an independent phenomenon from humans

(Grix; 2004:81) is therefore not in line with my own values and assumptions regarding reality and knowledge.

Under the interpretative paradigm, not only do researchers take a subjective stance, they often play an intrinsic role in their own research and do not remain a detached observer. As a result, there is recognition that the research cannot remain value-free, as the values and assumptions of the researcher could affect the outcomes. Furthermore, there is often an overriding stress on '*meaning*' and emphasis on the relationship between language and the construction of social reality. Essentially, the interpretivist paradigm takes the view that the world is socially constructed – it does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Grix, 2004: 83-4).

However, one of the main criticisms surrounding interpretivism is its intrinsic subjectivity as it is often considered unreliable or not producing valid knowledge (Ceci et al., 2002:715). It could be argued that by placing high value on subjectivity, researchers are opening up their research to a whole host of complexities and possible inconsistencies. This type of research is not governed by hypothesis and rule, and as a result it can be '*messy rather than nice and neat*' (Grix, 2004: 83).

However, as a teacher-researcher trying to identify which epistemology coincides with my world view, I have also encountered competing discourses which reject the polarity of positivism and interpretivism as well as the need to identify which paradigm underpins individual researcher's values and assumptions regarding knowledge. As an empirical researcher, I have found it useful to consider my perspective on differing ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies simultaneously. Through this exploration of different paradigms and methodologies, it has become clear that the action research methodology suits my proposed research question. However, it has also become clear that its epistemology is not easy to pigeon-hole. As a result, before moving onto fully examine the merits of action research, it is necessary to explore its own epistemology.

### 3.3) The Epistemology of Action Research

A common discourse surrounding action research is that due to its privileging of knowledge, generated through the reflections of a practitioner (in my case classroom-based practitioner), it is not easy to place into a traditional paradigm. Pine (2009: 24) suggests we need to move away from this 'pigeonhole' approach of classifying our values and assumptions and suggests that we need to free ourselves from the *'intellectual straitjacket of decontextualized experimental and process/product designs and recognize that meaningful research can be conducted in many different ways'* and that *'we need to recognize that there are different ways of knowing schools, classrooms, and teaching and learning.'*

McNiff (2006:42) takes a similar approach and suggests that traditional theory takes a *'mechanistic'* view of epistemology which tends to focus on:

*'fragmented disciplines of philosophy, psychology and sociology, its approach is essentially taxonomic. Action research accepts the taxonomy as part and parcel of the conceptual hierarchy inherent in its design, but moves on in perspective. The new perspective is in holistic terms. It is a shift from monocular to binocular vision; it is individual walls spreading into each other to form a house.'*

Consequently, action research requires researchers to explore a wide range of multifactorial elements which simultaneously co-exist, rather than taking a linear and mechanical approach. McNiff's concerns are echoed by Carr and Kemmis (1991:182-3) who also challenge traditional epistemologies through making a distinction between action researchers, who tend to take a more 'activist view of their role' as opposed to interpretivists *'who aim to understand the significance of the past to the present, action researchers aim to transform the present to produce a different future'*.

Clearly, Carr and Kemmis see the action research methodology as enabling the researcher to become more active and instrumental in initiating 'change'. They continue by suggesting that traditional epistemologies do not fully support the process of action research because it *'requires a different epistemology from positivist and interpretative approaches, both of which have difficulty relating retrospective explanation or understanding to prospective action'* (Carr and

Kemmis, 2003:186). Evidently, it is the prioritising of practitioner reflection and the knowledge it generates which presents a problem for traditional paradigms.

Just as Carr and Kemmis reject interpretivist paradigms for rendering researchers as passive, Koshy (2010:21) rejects positivist philosophies because action research values information generated through human interaction, such as questions and discussions rather than drawing on objective findings and searching for definite conclusions. Therefore, Koshy (2010:21) suggests that action researchers are more likely to function under the constructivist paradigm as it supports their 'active' role in the creation of new knowledge. As a result, they become '*actively engaged in a process of construction. Their constructions are based on all the data they collect. They negotiate meanings which will emerge from their interpretations. This position makes them work within the constructivist perspective.*' According to Koshy, these researchers do not seek to make definitive claims.

Whilst I value what the interpretative paradigm offers me as a researcher, it is clear to me that I perceive 'reality' as being socially and culturally constructed. Whilst I acknowledge that action research struggles to fit into traditional epistemologies, I also identify with Koshy and Carr and Kemmis's assertions, that action researchers work under the social constructivist paradigm.

### **3.4) Action Research**

Initially, when first planning my ideas for this research, I explored the possibility of a quasi-experimental design project. However, as this structure predominantly focuses on measuring 'impact' through the implementation of a pre- and post-teaching intervention assessment (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 282), it soon became evident that this approach would not fully support my research aims which are essentially, (as outlined earlier) to explore whether the explicit teaching of grammar, with the use of self-regulation strategies, supports the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge. Furthermore, as this empirical study spans three different teaching and reflection cycles, the cyclical nature of action research seems an appropriate methodology to enable me to develop my knowledge and understanding of students' writing and metalinguistic development over a period of time.

Action research started in the 1940s in America through the work of Kurt Lewin (1946). However, this practitioner-focused research did not fully materialise in the UK until the 1970s (McNiff, 2002). It was during this time, that Lawrence Stenhouse's (1975) works helped to support the increasing interest in action research and its relationship between practice and theory (Koshy, 2010:3). It was also a time when paradigmatic shifts were taking place and new types of research and research questions were emerging (McNiff, 2008). At this point, there was a growing dissatisfaction regarding how traditional educational philosophies met the needs of the empirical researcher. As McNiff (2008) explains: *'Instead of 'What are they doing? How can it be understood?', questions took the form, 'What am I doing? How do I understand it?'*. This reframing of research questions and approaches led to shifts in the theorizing of educational research as it essentially moved from involving an 'outsider' putting forward theoretical concepts based on *'other people's thinking,'* to focusing on *'the individual's own thinking and actions'* (McNiff, 2008). Coghlan and Brannick (2014:6) echo this sentiment and state that *'action research focuses on research in action, rather than research about action.'* It is precisely this focus on *'in action'* rather than *'about action'* which appeals to me. As a result, with its prioritising of *'in action'* research, this methodology also helps to bridge the gap between traditional academic research and classroom practice (Nolen and Vander Putten, 2007:401).

At the heart of action research is the desire to incur change and improve practice (Robson, 2002: 215). Carr and Kemmis (1991:165), suggest this process of change evolves through the practitioner's direct involvement in the research process:

*'Action research aims at improvement in three areas: firstly, the improvement of practice; secondly the improvement of the understanding of practice by its practitioners; and thirdly, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place. The aim of involvement stands shoulder to shoulder with the aim of improvement.'*

Whilst for some, the teacher-researcher placing themselves in their own research can be considered problematic, it is clear that the 'insiders' approach to research

is something to be highly valued by Carr and Kemmis. However, there is a recognition that some kind of system needs to be adhered to when undertaking this type of research. Firstly, the research needs to focus on '*a social practice*'; secondly, it needs to move through the cycles of action research, '*planning, acting, observing and reflecting*' and finally those who are '*responsible for the practice*' need to be involved throughout, with the additional aim of gradually including others who are affected by the research, as the project evolves (p. 165-166).

#### **3.4.1) Which Model of Action Research is Appropriate for my Research?**

Today, action research is not only a popular methodology in education, but it is also popular in other practitioner-led fields, such as the healthcare services (Nolen and Vander Putten, 2007:401). Permeating action research discourses is the drive for practitioners to develop their understanding of how to improve their own practice through a series of self-reflective cycles (Carr and Kemmis; 1991:162). The initial action research process proposed by Kurt Lewin (1946) focused on 4 steps: plan, act, observe and reflect. However, Carr and Kemmis (1991:185) suggest that a Lewinian approach to action research is too simplistic: '*In action research, a single loop of planning, acting, observing and reflecting is only a beginning; if the process stops there it should not be regarded as action research at all.*' As reflection plays a central role in the action research process, a '*single loop*' of research would not provide opportunities for the researcher to build on any knowledge generated by observation and reflection. If the intention is to improve knowledge and practice, a single cycle would not appear to be robust enough to provide opportunity to make meaningful improvements.

In addition to this, Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) also criticise Lewin's simple and linear approach:

*'In reality the process might not be as neat as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests. The stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience. In reality the process is likely to be more fluid, open and responsive'* (1998:21).

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:595) develop the Lewinian version and introduce more cycles to the action research process. However, despite these changes, this model still appears to take the linear approach of plan, act, reflect, act/observe, reflect. Whereas Koshy (2010:7) puts forward an alternative view of the process and suggests that each step in the cycle is rarely a self-contained unit as there is often a blurring between components and the relationship between one element and the other is more fluid than Kemmis and McTaggart's cycle suggests (Koshy, 2010:4).

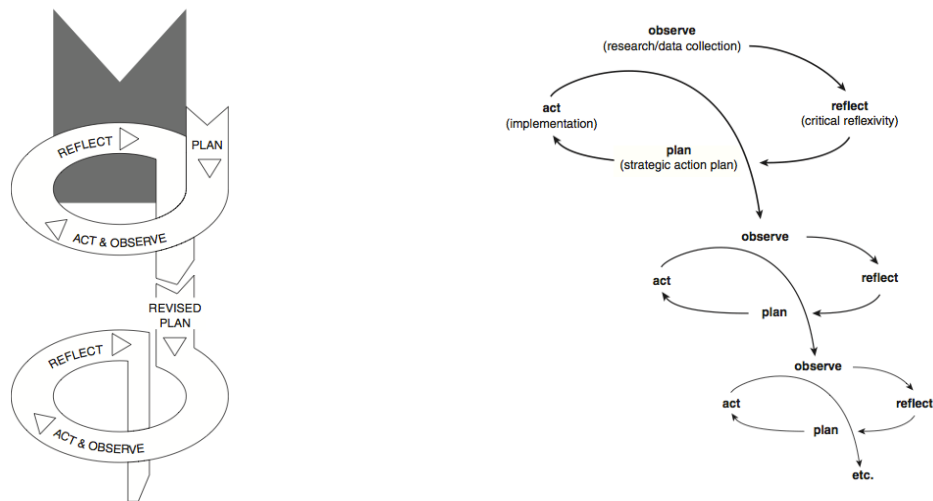


Figure1 and 2: Kemmis & McTaggart Action Research Cycle (2005:595) and O'Leary's Cycle of Research (2004:141)

However, O'Leary (2004:141) develops this model further by suggesting that new action research cycles evolve as new knowledge materialises (Koshy, 2010:7). There are two central differences between O'Leary's and Kemmis and McTaggart's version as O'Leary advocates the need to start the action research cycle with '*observe*' and '*reflect*' before the planning process commences. This cyclical process of '*observe, reflect, plan, act*' possibly leads the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the situation (O'Leary, 2004:140) rather than the 'single-loop' cycle espoused by Lewin. However, whilst these models put forward by Kemmis and McTaggart and O'Leary extend the action research process to encompass further research cycles, they both predominantly follow a linear approach which could be seen as restrictive to a researcher '*in action*'.

As a result, McNiff (2006:45) rejects the Lewinian problem-solving circle as well as dismissing Kemmis' (1981) linear approach and instead she puts forward a



spiral model which has different entry and exit points to allow for possible changes incurred through the self-reflective process (p.46):

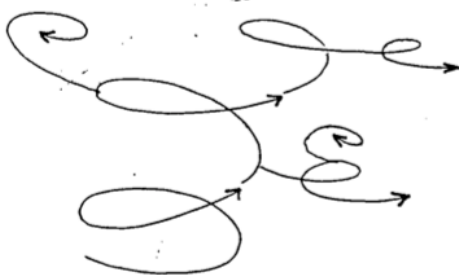


Figure 2: McNiff (2006:46) Action Research Spiral

Whilst at first glance this network of spirals might seem chaotic, McNiff asserts that this model enables teachers to break down their problems into small manageable units which can be tackled if and when they arise (p.46). Furthermore, this approach is not centred on the funnelling of ideas and actions suggested by a single spiral; instead, it suggests that different branches of issues can be explored simultaneously. The flexibility of this model is appealing to me as each point provides the practitioner with a range of options and as my investigation is classroom based, it is therefore heavily reliant on a whole host of contextual issues. Having the ability to respond and adapt to emerging situations or new findings as I progress through the action research process, would be incredibly beneficial to me and perhaps be more reflective of 'real' teaching - where the teacher is in a constant state of reflection and action.

Therefore, as I would like to focus on both the developing of my own teaching practice and the development of students' metalinguistic knowledge through the support of a range of self-regulation strategies over the duration of three separate sequences of work, the action research cycles suggested by McNiff seems to be more appropriate to my research aims. I would prefer to adopt a model that values an integrated and flexible approach, which consequently would provide opportunities to amend intended plans and action as the research cycles progress.

### **3.4.2) Possible Limitations of Action Research**

In the past, the action research methodology has been popular with many educationalists, but it has also been criticised for being too unsystematic and therefore producing unreliable results (McNiff and Whitehead; 2005:2). There are potential limitations and constraints entailed with this research methodology but there are also strategies to ensure that the research has been conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to ensure the reliability of its findings.

One of the criticisms against action research is the reporting of reliable and valid findings. Coghlan and Brannick (2014:33) refer to this as '*misperceiving what is happening*' and they suggest there might be a temptation for the researcher to make unfounded over-generalizations as well as to '*cherry pick*' relevant findings to suit their intended research aim. However, this could be a potential problem for all types of research, not just action research. Winter (2003) states that the self-reflexive findings of action research are not '*representative samples of universally agreed categories. These examples will be analysed, but no analysis will be final or complete, because inquiry will take the form of questioning claims, rather than making claims...The process of questioning claims provides a dimension of validity*' (p.14). My research does not seek to assert definitive claims but instead, it seeks to make explorations and further possibilities and connections. The findings of this research will undoubtedly prove useful for me as a reflective classroom-based practitioner, but the exploratory process of this empirical study has the potential to identify further teaching implications for other teachers and researchers, which could contribute to the growing field of grammar and self-regulation research, particularly when findings are positioned within the wider body of research within this domain. Furthermore, I am driven to complete this action research process because I have a genuine desire to improve an aspect of my own teaching. This labour-of-love process would be futile if I were to '*cherry pick*' evidence to assert false claims because essentially this research is for me. I am simply a teacher asking myself '*what am I doing and how do I understand it?*' (McNiff; 2009).

### **3.4.3) What Does Action Research Involve?**

In order to ensure that action research is rigorous, McNiff (2008; Whitehead 1989; McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006) suggests that

researchers should set themselves a range of questions to ensure they are being methodical and systematic. In the table below I have set out McNiff's questions and my own *initial* responses based on my proposed action research plans:

<b>McNiff and Whitehead's questions</b>	<b>My initial considerations</b>
<b>What is my concern?</b>	How do I improve my year 8s metalinguistic knowledge?
<b>Why am I concerned?</b>	Recent research shows that developing students' metalinguistic knowledge improves their writing (Myhill, Jones, Lines and Watson, 2012). Furthermore, with the increasing focus on language and grammar use in the new English Language GCSE, students will need to develop a deeper understanding of language use in context than was necessary in recent years.
<b>How do I show the situation as it is and how it unfolds?</b>	I will take a pre-teaching writing assessment and collect samples of students' writing throughout the three teaching sequences, followed by a final assessment. This will be complemented by interviewing three students at different stages of the action research cycle.
<b>What can I do about it?</b>	There are three writing schemes of work throughout the academic school year and I will explicitly teach grammar terms in each unit. I will ensure that the grammar-teaching takes a contextualised approach where students will explore a grammatical item's use in real texts and examine its possible effect in context. I will also develop self-regulation strategies to equip students with knowledge of what to do in their writing, when they do not know what to do.
<b>How do I check that any conclusions I come to are reasonably fair and accurate?</b>	By using a pre- and post-test piece of writing, it will enable me to ' <i>test the validity</i> ' (McNiff, 2008) of my claim which will be supported with interviews. Students' writing will also be accompanied by their own critical commentary which requires students to reflect on their design choices.
<b>How do I modify my ideas and practices in light of my evaluation?</b>	There are three cycles in this action research which will enable me to evaluate my teaching and the learning of the students at each point. This will help support the planning of the next mini-cycle.
<b>How do I explain the significance of my learning from my action enquiry?</b>	The significance of this enquiry will be published in my thesis.

Table 3: Action Research Initial Responses

## **Part Two: Action Research Design**

### **3.5) The Sample**

The sample was taken from a year 8 class which I taught three times a week. In year 8, there are eight English classes taught in three differing populations. Two of the populations have three classes consisting of one 'push' group and two with a mixture of attainment levels. The final population is entirely mixed as there are only two classes timetabled at the same time. The English class used for this study was taken from a population which had three classes. It is broadly mixed with the highest attaining students taken out and taught in the 'push' group. In addition to this, some of the lower attaining students were extracted from English lessons and taught in the school's personalised learning base (see Appendix pages 188 - 189 for more information regarding the class and the teaching context).

The participants in this research are students aged between 12-13 years old from a mixed ability English year 8 class, in which there are 13 boys and 11 girls. I was their sole English teacher during the 2014-2015 academic year. In this particular class, eight pupils were identified on the Pupil Premium indicator. Additionally, two students were on the autistic spectrum and another student was under-going an assessment for ASD.

At the end of year 7, seven students from the class were identified by their English teacher as not being 'on-track' in terms of their English progress. Key Stage 2 results in English ranged between levels 3 to 5 but their grades at the start of the research process ranged between (end of summer 2014 teacher grading) 4b to 5b. Verbal CAT scores taken at the start of year 7 ranged between 72 – 117. However, during the data collection year, identification and classification of students with special educational needs changed, resulting in many students no longer being identified as having a 'learning need'. As a result, it is worth acknowledging that eleven students in this class were identified the previous year as being either School Action or School Action Plus (see definitions on page 11). Therefore, prior student data used in this research consists of:

- Key Stage 2 English level
- Key Stage 2 Writing level

- Predicted Key Stage 3 English level
- Pupil Premium
- Students with special educational needs

My initial intention was to collect data from the whole class but it soon became apparent that this would more than likely provide me with too much data given the word-limit constraints for this study. Consequently, I reduced the sample size down to 4 students: Two boys (high and low attaining) and two girls (high and low attaining). However, as my aim was to provide an in-depth exploration of the data (rather than offer a breadth of information), it became evident that if I wanted to closely analyse the progress these students made, it would require me to narrow my focus even further. As a result, the sample was reduced to 3 students (top, middle and lower attaining students). These three students were purposively selected on prior attainment (as mentioned above).

The data collected during this research took the form of samples of students' work collected at five intervals throughout the year as well as students' reflective written commentaries and interviews. The aim was to investigate in depth, the impact of teaching on a small number of students and by reducing the sample size, this would enable me to garner students' individual reflections on their own metalinguistic learning-journeys. The combination of written texts and interviews provided me with a wealth of information regarding how these three students transferred and articulated their new metalinguistic knowledge.

### **3.6) Intervention Methods: Teaching Linguistic Knowledge**

#### **3.6.1) Model Texts**

Parakevas (2006:66) refers to the use of model texts as '*mentor texts*' and explains that students need to be exposed to a wide range of 'real' texts and be provided with an opportunity to '*imitate patterns*' of language:

*'In other words, students have apprenticed through imitating mentor sentences and understanding how each part contributes to the overall stylistic effect, and they can envision using these structures in their writing' (p.67).*

Model texts were used as an integral part of each scheme of work, providing students with an opportunity to explore real writers' writing. As a result, the selection of grammar terms was determined through my own exploration of model texts because essentially, I wanted students to explore how certain language features are relevant to certain types of texts. The students were encouraged to explore these language choices through the discussion of contextual issues which links to my self-regulation strategy. To enable students to consider how language choices are often affected by contextual issues, I devised the acronym 'GAPPSS' to help scaffold their discussions (see self-regulation teaching strategy on pages 66 and 186 for more detail). This encouraged students to consider how the knowledge of a text's genre, audience, purpose, perspective (who is writing this and why), structure and style, influences the writer's design choices.

The use of model texts and subsequent exploration of language in context provided the students with the opportunity to use their new linguistic knowledge as well as practising phrasing sentences which required them to specifically talk about their language choices. This opportunity to articulate their emerging linguistic knowledge was an important part in their learning process, as it provided them with the opportunity to talk (and therefore think) about their language choices. Furthermore, this structure of discussing linguistic choices was reinforced through both peer and self-assessment of their own original writing.

### **3.6) Linguistic Knowledge**

The teaching of linguistic knowledge focused on three writing schemes of work over the duration of a year – one 6 week unit per term. Whilst I initially planned to focus on exploring the use of two grammatical items in each unit of work, there were many occasions when the model texts highlighted other grammatical patterns too and as a result, these terms were also explored in their given contexts. Perhaps, in hindsight, this was too demanding for some of the students. In addition to this, as I had adopted McNiff's (2006) spiral model of action research, I was able to reflect and amend my plans at various stages throughout the research and data collection process (see page 74 for diagram of research cycles). For example, as it became increasingly evident that students were struggling to employ adverbial sentence openings in their own writing, I decided

to provide opportunities for students to build on and consolidate this knowledge in the next unit of work, for example, the newspaper unit. The table below demonstrates which language features were explored during each scheme of work:

<b>Theme Parks: Writing To Persuade</b>	<b>Creative Writing: Building Tension</b>	<b>Writing to Inform: Newspaper Articles</b>
Verbs of movement	Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	Noun phrases
Imperative sentence	Onomatopoeia and sound related words	Evidence of different verb tenses
Conditional sentence	Anadiplosis	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time
Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	Anaphora	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	Starting a sentence with 'But' to show contrasting idea	
	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	
	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	

Table 4: Grammar Teaching Focuses

After the pre-teaching assessment, it was evident that the majority of students did not have secure knowledge and understanding of some of the grammatical terms. For example, whilst many of the students had a vague idea of what a verb is, they did not have any secure knowledge when identifying or using them for a particular effect in their own writing.

As a result, the teaching sequences focused on developing students' written skills through expanding their knowledge of how to employ certain language features in different types of writing. Each unit completed by students required them to undertake a written assessment in silent, timed exam-conditions (1 hour) followed by a reflective commentary (20 minutes). Whilst students' creative writing enabled me to explore whether they were able to 'transfer' their new linguistic knowledge into their own writing, the role of the commentary provided students with an opportunity to 'articulate' their design choices, consequently, providing a source of metalinguistic reflection. These two forms of written data enabled me

to investigate whether or not the students were embedding their new knowledge into their own writing as well as exploring the students' developing metalinguistic knowledge and adoption of a grammatical metalanguage.

### **3.7) Intervention Methods: Developing Self-Regulation Strategies**

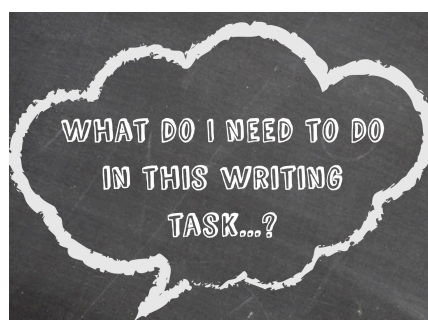
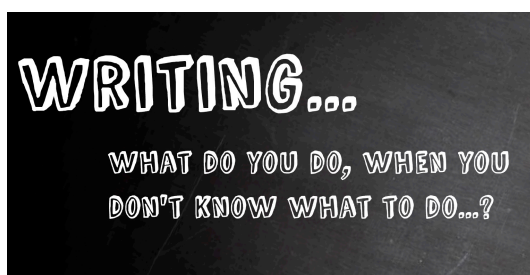
For this section of my research, I developed a bank of self-regulation strategies as an overarching approach to developing students' awareness of the writing process. At the heart of this approach was the focus on developing knowledge of the integral role and influence of genre, audience and purpose. The self-regulation strategies used in this research focused on:

- 1) Comparing their writing to model texts
- 2) Using GAPPSS as an acronym to ensure that they considered key aspects of writing
- 3) Establishing clear writing goals
- 4) Using reflective commentaries to prompt metalinguistic thinking related to audience and purpose
- 5) Using peer assessment to develop reflection on writing
- 6) Using positive self-statements
- 7) Using graphic charts to plot the development of their knowledge

Examples of teaching strategies and resources can be found in the appendices on page 191.

#### **3.7.1) Self-Regulation Teaching Sequences**

Before being able to introduce self-regulation strategies to the students, it was necessary to gauge which particular approaches (if any) students were already applying when facing lengthy written tasks. As a result, I started the first lesson by exploring how we, as writers, know 'what' to write as well as 'how' to express our ideas when given a writing task.





Throughout this introductory lesson, students reflected on their own writing processes and what they, as individuals, do when they write. This baseline lesson identified that most of the students in the class were not consciously considering how to approach a writing task or how to self-monitor whilst they wrote.

Therefore, throughout the three teaching sequences, students were introduced to the self-regulation strategies outlined above and provided with opportunities to use these strategies in lesson time.

### **3.8) Data Collection Methods**

When making data collection decisions, I found it useful to ask myself the question: *'What will the data tell me?'* (Pine, 2008:251). In order to answer my research question and aims, I identified four different types of data collection which would be relevant to this investigation:

- Samples of students' original written writing
- Samples of students' critical commentaries
- Interview transcripts
- Teacher/researcher journal

I had initially intended to use an end of teaching cycle questionnaire to gauge students' perceptions regarding the self-regulation strategies, but it became evident that I had collected too much data given the word count constraints of this research. The decision was made to omit this data set in favour of the interviews which provided more detailed and specific information.

#### **3.8.1) Students' written work**

The written samples of students' original writing informed me of whether the newly taught grammatical or linguistic constructions had been implemented into their own writing, whereas the critical reflective commentaries informed me of

whether the teaching intervention had supported the students emerging metalinguistic knowledge.

In order to be able to measure this, I needed to perform a pre-teaching intervention assessment at the beginning of the action research cycle. As a result, students were set an open writing task where they were given a simple title such as 'The Room' or 'The Box'. This was all the information students were given. Students wrote for 30 minutes and after that, they were asked to reflect on their own writing and language choices by writing a reflective commentary based on their creative writing. To help support the students' self-reflection and to ensure this activity was worthwhile, it was necessary to give them a series of prompts to help guide their reflection:

**Writing reflection Prompt Questions:**

- Which genre have you chosen and why?
- What have you done to make sure your writing suits this genre?
- Who is the intended target audience (the implied reader)?
- How have you tried to interest them?
- What is your purpose - why are you writing this text?
- Which language choices (words or sentences) have you used to help make your writing interesting as well as suit the genre and purpose?

Table 5: Initial Writing Reflection Prompt Questions

In addition to this, written samples of students' work were also collected after the three teaching cycles. The original data was photocopied so that it could be returned to the students. Each written piece of original writing data (not the reflective commentaries) was an end of unit assessment (which is part of the normal Year 8 English assessment procedure). Throughout the research cycle, it emerged that students found the reflective commentaries difficult and it was therefore necessary for me to amend some of the prompts for different cycles so that they were specifically guided to reflect on the type of text they had just written. In most cases, the reflective commentaries were conducted immediately after the writing process; however, for some students this might not have always been

possible due to general class interruptions such as reception duties or school events.

At the end of the action research cycle in July, a final post-teaching assessment was issued and used to form part of my data collection. This task was similar to the pre-teaching assessment and was also accompanied by a final critical reflective commentary.

To ensure that I took a systematic approach to analysing the written data and compared like with like, I analysed the same number of words from each of the sample students' creative texts. As a result, as the lowest attaining student in my sample wrote 135 words in one of his assessments, this meant that the other texts were only analysed for the same number of words, up to the end of that particular sentence.

### **3.8.2) Interviews**

Koshy (2010:85) suggests that interviews offer the researcher rich and informative data and states that, '*Interview transcripts provide powerful evidence when you are presenting your data and making conclusions*' (p.88). Whilst the written data informed me of students' writing development, and in the case of the reflective commentaries, their emerging metalinguistic knowledge, the interviews provided me with a deeper insight into how students responded to the various teaching strategies, as well as providing me with another opportunity to ascertain students' metalinguistic knowledge.

As interviews can take many different forms and structures, it was important to fully consider which interview structure would suit my research and context (interviewing teenagers). A structured interview requires the researcher to identify pre-determined questions before conducting the interview. However, this heavily structured interview process leaves little freedom for the researcher to divert from the set original questions and respond to any potentially interesting issues which might arise as a result of the conversation (Koshy, 2010:87). Alternatively, a semi-structured interview requires researchers to identify a range of pre-determined questions but also allows them the freedom to delve further into the participants' responses. As a result, I decided that this semi – structured

interview would suit my research because I wanted the freedom to listen and to build on my participants' responses.

Parsons (1984:80) refers to this kind of interview as being no different than a '*face-to-face questionnaire*'. I recognise that for some types of research projects which might interview vast numbers of participants, a highly structured interview would provide statistical information. However, for my small-scale qualitative research, which focused on exploring individual and personal responses to writing, a semi structured interview seemed the most appropriate form as it would provide me with a wider perspective of the students' own 'view' of grammar and the effectiveness of the self-regulation strategies, as well as providing them with the opportunity to share their work with me as their teacher.

In terms of the types of questions asked, Cohen et al (2007:354) refer to Patton's (1980: 206) strengths and weakness of the '*standardised open-ended interview model*' where the same questions are asked to each participant. Some of the strengths regarding this approach are that it is useful for comparing responses between participants and data sets. It also reduces interviewer bias as well as making the data easier to organise and manage. However, some of its weaknesses are that there is little room for flexibility and that this type of questioning might limit some student responses. Keeping this idea in mind, I tried to use this semi-structured formation with some pre-determined open-ended questions (Cohen et al., 2007).

As I was interviewing school-aged students (12-13 year olds) I needed to make sure that they felt comfortable with the procedure. Koshy (2010) recommends that the interview should not be too long. Additionally, in order to put the participants at ease (I recognised that whilst they are familiar to me as their teacher, they were not familiar with this experience and of being recorded) Koshy recommends starting the interview with a simple question. It is also important to avoid using leading questions which might potentially influence the participant's response (p.87).

Therefore, I initially identified nine pre-determined questions and was prepared to listen and respond to whatever the participants said in order to develop the

discussions further (the set of pre-determined questions are outlined below). I also ensured that I had the students' written assessments with me, so that we could discuss aspects of the student's own writing, such as, *'What bit of your writing are you most proud of?'*.

<p><b>Interview questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did you find the writing task?</li> <li>2. How did you make the decision as to what to write?</li> <li>3. Did you plan it first or just start writing?</li> <li>4. Did you think about the genre?</li> <li>5. Did you have a particular audience in mind?</li> <li>6. What is the purpose of this kind of writing?</li> <li>7. From whose point of view did you write from?</li> <li>8. If you think about the style of your writing, are there any particular words and sentences you are proud of? Pleased with?</li> <li>9. What changes might you make if you could do it again?</li> </ol>
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Table 6: Initial Interview Questions

However, whilst these questions were my initial focus, after reflecting on the first round of interviews, I realised that these questions were too restrictive (like the commentary prompts) and that I needed to ask more open-ended questions which would allow students a chance to talk more freely about their writing. Furthermore, it hadn't felt like a 'normal' teacher-student conversation when I had stuck rigidly to the set of questions I had planned, and it had also become evident that I should have woven in questions which related to the students' development of their self-regulation skills.

Whilst small group interviews might be useful, as they could possibly provide an opportunity for students to feel more at ease and openly reflect and build on each other's ideas (Cohen et al., 2007:374), I was primarily interested in the individual and the independent voices of each of my students. As I was the students' class teacher, they would have been used to having conversations with me about their work and would therefore probably feel at ease with me questioning them about their writing as it is something I would do informally in my role as their class teacher. The interviews took place in a corner of the school library which is a quiet, yet public environment which was familiar to them. Koshy (2010) recommends tape-recording interviews as this allows the researcher to focus on the interview and its context, rather than being distracted with note taking (p.87).

As a result, I ensured that all of the interviews were recorded with a small and unobtrusive device (phone) that would have been unlikely to distract the participants. Once the interview was complete, the recordings were downloaded at the nearest opportunity and stored onto a memory stick which was locked in a filing cabinet at school.

After the interviews, I transcribed the data using transcription conventions (see page 12 for further information). As an A level English Language teacher, I regularly work with transcripts and teach students how to transcribe their own data for their own language investigations. As a result, I felt confident that I would be able to transcribe the interviews according to general transcription conventions.

### **3.8.3) Potential Problems with Interviews**

However, whilst the interviews provided me with rich qualitative data, Koshy (2010:93) warns us that interviews are time consuming - not only because of the time it takes to interview participants but also the time that has to be given to typing up transcripts. This is something I became increasingly aware of as a teacher-researcher. Furthermore, as it was not possible for me to interview my three students during their English lesson, I had to arrange alternative times. For this, I needed to gain permission from students' class teachers (as well as from the student) and ensure that I did not take a student from the same lesson in subsequent interviews.

Furthermore, another potential problem associated with conducting interviews is that students might tell me what they thought I wanted to hear (Koshy, 2010:88). As I am the students' teacher, I would like to think that they are used to conversing with me regarding their work and would therefore not feel pressurised to say something which they do not actually believe. However, I do recognise that there might have been a temptation to 'please' and tell me that an element of my teaching was successful in improving their knowledge. This is something I was mindful of during the interview process. On reflection, I believe that the students were open with me regarding their responses and there are several occasions where they stated that certain strategies did not work for them or that they did not

recollect a certain language feature. As a result, I feel relatively confident that their comments are reflective of their true opinions.

However, one of the emerging themes which arose during the data analysis process, is that whilst the interviews did not fully function as '*writing conversations*' (Watson and Newman, 2017), they did enable me, as a class teacher, to help students develop their metalinguistic understanding (see p.40 for further information regarding '*writing conversations*'). It was not until after the interview process and during the data analysis that it became evident that the interviews could have been more useful to me as a researcher as well as to my students. For example, there are times where it is evident that I focus too much on grammar labelling rather than providing students with a framework to discuss and reflect on their individual language choices and intended impact. In hindsight, this form of questioning would have been more fruitful to this investigation and more useful to the students (see appendices, page 191 for more reflections).

#### **3.8.4) Teacher/Researcher Journal**

As this is action research, I decided that it would be useful to keep a field diary where I could record my thoughts and feelings about the research and teaching process. Koshy (2010:90-91) states that:

*'It is a place where you would keep an account of your reflections and write a personal commentary on your feelings as well as the beginnings of your interpretations. Your research diary could be extremely valuable when it comes to writing up your project as it contains your authentic voice as described during the research process. The reflective process involved in writing a diary contributes to the professional development of researchers'* (p. 90-91).

Pine (2008:193) reinforces the importance of reflection and states that through writing we make sense of things and discover and generate our '*personal knowledge*'. As a result, it was important for me to keep my own reflective journal as it provided me with the opportunity to reflect on wider contextual details which had the potential to affect student learning, for example, a long absence from

school as this would possibly impact on a student's development of self-regulation and metalinguistic knowledge. Furthermore, the journal also provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my internal thought processes in response to the teaching sequences (Pine, 2008:194).

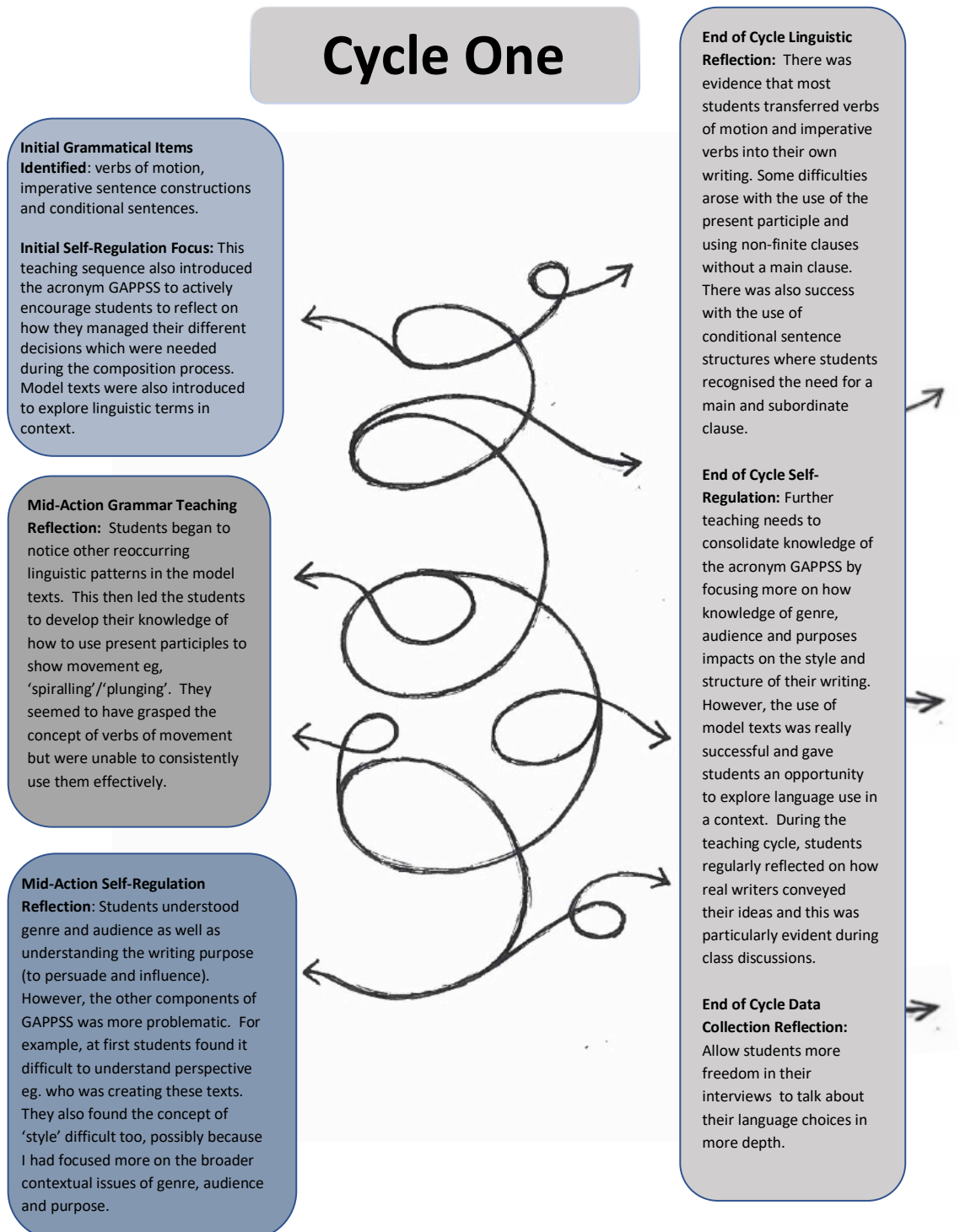
For this journal, I took a 'snapshot' approach whereby the researcher records key moments or thoughts (Pine, 2008:196). Pine suggests that these recollections should avoid focusing solely on problems – they should be broader than that. However, to ensure that I take a methodical approach, I reflected on how the students responded to the teaching interventions at regular intervals and how this affected the next stage of planning. During these reflective sessions, I considered the success and limitations of the teaching interventions and whether any changes could be made to further support student learning.

### **3.9) Action Research Reflection Cycles**

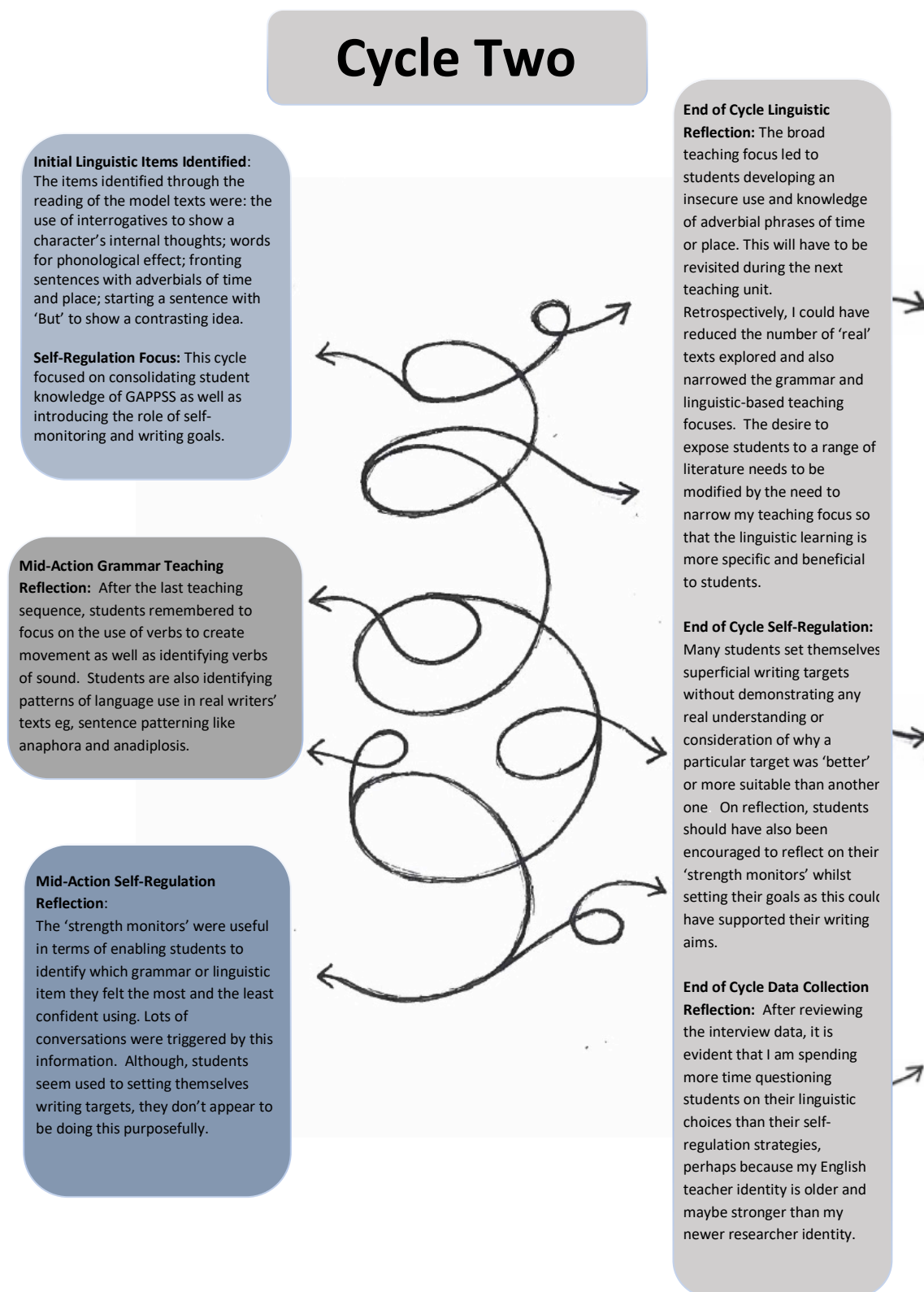
The three action research cycles consisted of teaching a range of grammatical and linguistic items, as well as introducing the year 8 class to a range of self-regulation strategies at different points in each cycle. As a teacher, reflecting is part of my daily practice; however, the action research processes, outlined overleaf, offers a snapshot of the core decisions and reflections made during each cycle. For more information regarding teaching resources and self-regulation-strategies, see pages 193 – 201 in the appendices.



### 3.9.1) Action Research Cycle One



### 3.9.2) Action Research Cycle Two



### 3.9.3) Action Research Cycle Three

## Cycle Three

#### Initial Linguistic Identified Items:

This was a problematic cycle because of curriculum changes introduced by my Head of Department. We had to teach two reading-focused assessments during the summer term and the writing assessment was therefore shoe-horned into the final weeks of term. The teaching of newspaper articles was time-constrained and I had to subsequently narrow my teaching focus to only noun phrases and verb tenses. I also needed to recap the use of adverbial phrases of time and place. These external influences undoubtedly impacted on my teaching and therefore possibly on the quality of students' writing. As a teacher, I realised the wider aims of the curriculum, but as a researcher I was frustrated.

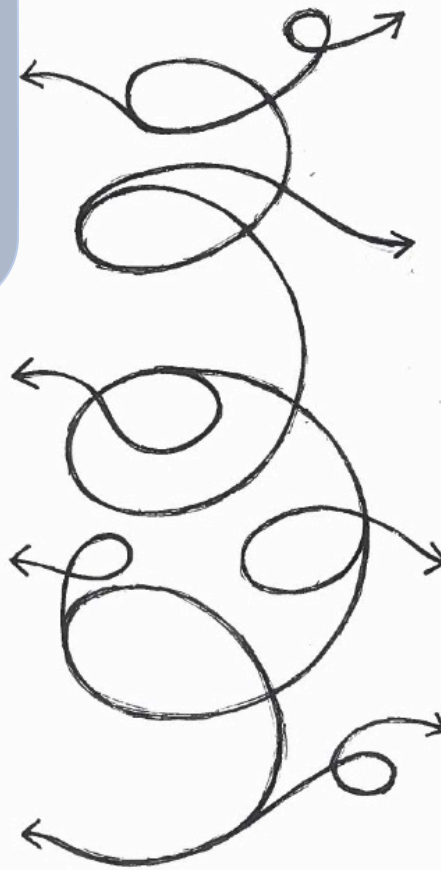
**Self-Regulation Focus:** The main strategy introduced during this teaching sequence was the use of self-positive talk as well as refocusing their attentions on how to create writing goals.

#### Mid-Action Grammar Teaching

**Reflection:** Whilst I initially thought students would find learning how to write in different verb tenses easier than constructing noun phrases, on reflection this was not the case. Given the time constraints, I should have focused on solely on developing students' knowledge and use of noun phrases rather than also introducing the idea of verb tenses. Teaching these two grammatical structures to year 8 students was something I was unfamiliar with on reflection the students needed more time to consolidate these new ideas and embed them into their own writing.

#### Mid-Action Self-Regulation Reflection:

Students did not really like the concept of using self-positive talk as they viewed it as something younger students would do. Instead, they preferred to focus on possible writing targets rather than focus on what they could already do. This was interesting because it suggested that students found it much easier to focus on their perceived 'weaknesses' rather than identify their strengths. I reflected on that whilst it was mature of them to recognise their potential weakness, it was also a shame that they found it difficult to articulate their strengths.



#### End of Cycle Grammar

**Reflection:** Out of all of the three teaching sequences, this was the hardest to complete and feel confident that the students were prepared for their assessment. One of the limitations in this teaching sequence is that the summer term final scheme of work changed at the last minute and it was decided that Sherlock Holmes' 'The Speckled Band' would be taught instead of the original writing based scheme. This presented me with two difficulties: 1. The school unit of work was essentially a reading assessment and 2. Given the time it took to cover the reading assessment, there were only a few weeks left to focus on writing a newspaper article. This meant that students did not have the time to fully develop their knowledge of noun phrases or verb tenses as there was not time to ensure students had fully embedded their knowledge and use of these structures.

#### End of Cycle Self-

**Regulation:** Perhaps self-positive talk might have been more successful if implemented in smaller groups rather than with a whole class.

#### End of Data Collection

**Reflection:** Again, when listening to the interviews, I either interrupted or didn't question students enough on some of their assertions. I also reflected that I didn't question the students enough about their self-regulation strategies.

### 3.9.4) Post Research Reflections

The process of completing the three action research cycles have been incredibly enlightening to me as a teacher and researcher. In hindsight, there are several things I would have done differently. As mentioned in some of the individual cycles, as the class teacher, I focused on teaching too many grammatical and linguistic items; it is likely that students would have embedded their new knowledge more securely if I had reduced the grammatical structures covered in each unit.

Furthermore, I recognise that my English teacher identity is strong and as a result, I dedicated more time to English-related learning activities than I did developing students' knowledge and use of a range of self-regulation strategies.

### 3.10) Data Analysis

Koshy (2010:112) states that there is no one way to analyse qualitative data but what is important is for the researcher to ensure that they have been systematic in their analysis. As a result, I have organised my data into 5 different sets and in the table below I outline when these data sets were collected, how many sets of data were collected, and how they were analysed:

Data Sets	When Collected	Number of texts	How analysed
1) Samples of students' creative writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>pre-teaching text</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 1 text:</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 2 text</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 3 text</b></li><li>• <b>post intervention</b></li></ul>	After each assessment	15	Content analysis using a deductive coding framework
2) Samples of students' written commentaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>pre-teaching commentary</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 1 text commentary</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 2 text commentary</b></li><li>• <b>Cycle 3 text commentary</b></li><li>• <b>post intervention commentary</b></li></ul>	After each assessment	15	Content analysis using a deductive and inductive coding framework. Thematic codes identified

3) Interview Transcripts:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>after pre-teaching assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>after cycle 1 assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>after cycle 2 assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>after cycle 3 text assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>after post intervention assessment</b></li> </ul>	After each assessment	15	Content analysis using a deductive and inductive coding framework. Thematic codes identified

Table 7: Data Sets Collected

### 3.10.1) Coding of Students' Original Writing

In order to ensure that I took a systematic approach to content analysis, I needed to create various coding frameworks for each data set. When beginning the data analysis, Koshy (2010:112) recommends reading the full set of data through to gain a general idea and to begin to identify possible emerging themes. Each data set was analysed in a similar way yet used a slightly different coding framework.

As a result, I created an analytical coding framework for the methodical analysis of data-set one (samples of students' creative writing). Before commencing the analysis, I already knew which linguistic methods were identified during the teaching sequences and consequently, the coding frame for the creative writing texts took a deductive approach. As Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000:114) state:

*'Qualitative research uses analytical categories to describe and explain social phenomena. These categories may be derived inductively—that is, obtained gradually from the data—or used deductively, either at the beginning or part way through the analysis as a way of approaching the data. Deductive analysis is less common in qualitative research but is increasingly being used, for example in the “framework approach” ...'*

In the analytical framework overleaf, each linguistic item explored in each teaching cycle is listed alongside a column for extracted examples from the students' written work. This grid ensured that I took a systematic approach to my data analysis of their written work. Furthermore, I ensured that I left an 'other' box to help me identify whether there were other language features used by

students which were not identified on the final grid. This also provided me with an opportunity to recognise individual students' language variation.

Data Set One: Creative Texts	Grammatical Item or Language Feature Explored in Model Texts	Examples from Students' Writing
Action Research Cycle One: Theme Parks Writing To Persuade	Verbs of movement	
	Imperative sentence	
	Conditional sentence	
	Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	
	Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	
Action Research Cycle Two: Creative Writing: Building Tension	Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	
	Onomatopoeia and sound related words	
	Anadiplosis	
	Anaphora	
	Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	
	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	
	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	
Action Research Cycle Three: Writing to Inform: Newspaper Article	Noun phrases	
	Evidence of different verb tenses	
	Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	
Other		

Table 8: Initial Coding Frame for Students' Writing

The pre- and post-teaching intervention coding frameworks included the grammar terms which had been taught throughout the 3 teaching cycles. This

provided me with evidence of the students' developing writing skills and whether or not they were using a range of grammatical patterns which we had explored in the teaching sequences. However, the frameworks used to analyse each text within a given teaching cycle only focused on the grammatical items of language features explored during that particular scheme of work. For example, to code the creative texts from cycle one, only the linguistic items listed in the cycle one category (Theme Parks) were used and so on, for each assessment cycle. Only the pre and post teaching texts were coded by using the entire coding framework for data set one.

### 3.10.2) Coding of Critical Commentaries:

In general, the critical commentaries were short, reflective pieces of writing where the students made brief comments on their own writing. Students were given prompts for the pre-test writing assessment, as the experience of reflecting on their linguistic choices was unfamiliar to them. However, subsequent critical commentaries were less structured as it was important for students to explore their writing in more detail and it was interesting for me to identify whether or not the students' reflections demonstrated metalinguistic understanding. As the individual language choices differed between students, it was necessary for me to keep the prompts broad to allow for individual responses. As a result of this broad structure imposed by me, the coding frames for the critical commentaries also took a deductive approach. Furthermore, as these critical commentaries provided me with information regarding their metalinguistic development, I coded phrases and sentences which referred to these linguistic terms, as well as any references to the self-regulation strategies. As students had been using the acronym GAPPSS to help them approach a writing task, I also coded for references to genre, audience, purpose, perspective, structure and style as well as looking for new emerging themes:

Reflective Commentaries	
Codes	Examples
<b>Genre</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	
<b>Perspective</b>	

<b>Structure</b>	
<b>Style</b>	
<b>Grammar/language term</b>	
<b>Self-regulation strategy</b>	
<b>Other</b>	

Table 9: Coding Frame for Written Commentaries

### 3.10.3) Coding of Interviews:

Whilst a deductive approach was used with the previous two data sets, the interview analysis was more complex and therefore required a slightly different approach. Naturally, as their class teacher, and as someone who was familiar with the grammatical items explored in the model texts and students' original writing, I was already aware of the potential themes which might arise in the interview data. I was also aware that this data set would be different as it was based on spoken interaction rather than a solitary writer committing their own ideas to paper; this time there was a two-way dialogue in real time which could alter or impact on the direction of the conversation, consequently rendering a purely deductive approach problematic. Saldana (2013:7) explains that the role of the interviewer, and his or her relationship with the interviewee, is crucial because this could influence the range of questions asked as well as the interpretation of the data. Therefore, as a teacher-researcher, I needed to ensure that I took a systematic approach by creating codes that captured the reoccurring patterns emerging during the coding process. Furthermore, I was also aware that there might be a need to take a 'cyclical' approach to the coding process and prepare to undertake several cycles of coding for the same data set (Saldana, 2013: 8-9). Saldana (p.8-9) explains that codes and categories are two different mechanisms of data analysis:

*'To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize. When codes are applied and reapplied to qualitative data, you are codifying – a process that permits data to be 'segregated,*



*grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation” (Grbich, 2007, p.21)...Coding is thus a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern.’*

As a result, my first approach to this data (after transcription) was to read through each interview several times and begin to highlight reoccurring themes by hand. This is something Saldana recommends. He suggests that 1<sup>st</sup> time coders (or when coding small-scale research projects), will find it useful to identify codes by hand first: *‘There is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencils that gives you more control over and ownership of the work’* (p.26).

As a result, my first cycle of coding identified a broad range of themes. The initial inductive codes are cited in the table below:

Inductive Codes for Interviews	Examples
Text organisation: planning/preparation	
References to Genre	
References to audience	
References to purpose	
Reference to uses of grammar or language choices	
Enjoyment of task	
Proud/pleased with/personal response on own writing - judgements	
Self-monitoring/goal setting including drafting	
Reference to reflection/reflective commentaries – after the event reflection	
Effects of language choices or grammar	
Reference to model texts.	

Reference to graphic aids	
Reference to strength monitors	
Reference to positive statements	
Content – retelling the content of writing	

Table 10: Inductive Codes for Interviews

As I continued to reread and analyse the data, I began to look more closely to determine whether some of the broader categories could be narrowed down to a more specific and focused area. I also considered whether some of the previously identified codes could be encompassed into a wider category. Saldana (2013:11) states that *‘As you code and recode, expect – or rather, strive for – your codes and categories to become more refined and, depending on your methodological approach, more conceptual and abstract. Some of your First Cycle codes may be later subsumed by other codes, relabelled, or dropped altogether.’* Therefore, as I continued to explore this data set, the broader codes subsequently became more refined during the coding process. The table below outlines the next stage of coding.

Categories	Codes	Text One	Text Two	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5
Pragmatic knowledge	<b>References to Genre</b>					
	<b>References to Audience</b>					
	<b>References to purpose</b>					
Linguistic and Grammar	<b>References to grammar choice</b>					
	<b>References to language choice</b>					
Self-Regulation	<b>References to model texts</b>					
	<b>References to self-monitoring</b>					
	<b>References to text organisation</b>					
Engagement	<b>References to being proud of writing</b>					

Table 11: Framework for Second Round of Interview Coding

However, this coding framework was narrowed even further during the writing up process as it became apparent that there was a need to reduce my focus so that the data analysis focused specifically on three main areas: the use of a metalanguage, metalinguistic knowledge and self-regulation. As a result, this refined coding approach provided me with more specific information required to answer the research question:

Categories	Codes	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5
<b>Metalinguistic knowledge</b>	Verbalisation or Justification of language choices in own texts					
	Verbalisation of linguistic choices in model texts					
<b>Evidence of metalanguage</b>	Reference to use of grammatical or linguistic terminology in own text					
	Reference to use of grammatical or linguistic terminology in model texts					
	Labelling/listing grammatical items without elaboration					
	Superficial verbalisation of linguistic choices					
<b>Reference to aspect of self-regulation</b>	planning					
	Goal setting					
	Self-monitoring					
	Model texts					

Table 12: Final Coding Framework for Interviews

### 3.11) Ethical Considerations

As this research took place in my own working context, I ensured that I gained permission for this study from the School Principal and the English Team Leader. I also gained parental and student consent for the interviews. In addition to these

permissions, I subjected my research plans to the ethical review board at the University of Exeter before any research was conducted (see pages 237 – 242 in the appendices). In relation to this, I ensured that I had read and followed the BERA guidelines (2011). As all the teaching and assessments were in line with my role as a teacher, it was not necessary to ask the parents for written permission to analyse their child's writing, but I ensured that all written data was anonymised.

All the audio files were stored as an encrypted document on my home laptop (and back-up hard drive) and all the transcribed data and samples of students' (anonymised) written work were stored in a locked filing cabinet at home. The data was not stored on a USB memory stick. Additionally, a list of students' real names and pseudonyms was stored at a different location (locked filing cabinet at work) and will be destroyed once the thesis and viva have been completed.

As the data collection is based on my general teaching duties, no student was put under undue stress. Class work was differentiated for students with special needs and students' written assessments was undertaken in conditions which would be consistent with their current assessment procedures and entitlement. Any student who required a laptop for written assessments had the use of one during the end of unit assessments. However, in order to ensure that no student was placed under undue stress, I did not ask the student with Autism to participate in the interviews because I know that this student finds interviews particularly stressful.

Student-assessed pieces of work were photocopied, and students kept their own original copies of the assessments. I ensured that anonymity was maintained by removing any student names on the photocopied written work used during my data collection phase. All the students were given a pseudonym. Additionally, when conducting interviews with a small sample (3 students), I removed their real names from the transcriptions and used their pseudonyms.

Every effort was made to ensure that no student would be identifiable if the data was used in any article, presentation or seminar. Additionally, any contextual

information which might make the educational institution recognisable was also be removed.

### **3.11.1) The Teacher-Researcher: Ethical Implications**

As a teacher-researcher, it is necessary for me to consider the possible ethical implications of this dual identity. Nolen and Vander Putten (2007:401-2) highlight potential difficulties surrounding the issue of ethics regarding teacher-researchers by making the distinction between *'insider'* action researchers and *'academic'* researchers. They suggest that an *'insider'* researcher *'without academic collaboration, is of concern'*. They explain that the teacher-researcher role is potentially problematic because both roles are in conflict with one another. They question: *'At what point does teaching become research? Where does the accountability for this research lie? Are teachers properly trained to see the possible ethical pitfalls in such research? How are the rights and freedoms of the research participants (the students) protected?'*

Whilst I accept this could be a potential problem, I am not purely functioning in this role as a teacher-researcher without academic instruction. I regularly liaise with my university supervisors and discuss the rigour of this research. Additionally, the EdD academic modules have prepared me to ensure that my own research practices are systematic and methodical. My identity is not solely that of a teacher and I see no problem with negotiating my teacher-researcher identity. As Bauman (2004:84) states: *'In our fluid world, committing oneself to a single identity for life, or even for less than a whole life but for a very long time to come, is a risky business.'* I do not perceive the teacher and researcher as dual entities being in conflict with one another – instead I see them as complementing each other.

### **3.12) Data management**

Once each round of written data collection was completed, students' writing was photocopied, as their original work remained theirs and will stay in their school folders. However, once each data set was collected, their names were removed and their pseudonyms were placed on each document. These initial photocopies will then be destroyed using the secure shredding facilities at school.

The audio files from the interviews will be uploaded on to a computer and then transferred to an encrypted external hard drive. This was kept away from the written data and list of pseudonyms and stored in a locked filing cabinet. The original data will be destroyed once the thesis and viva are completed.

## Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis of Case Studies

### Jody

#### 4.1) Profile of Jody: Higher Attaining Student

Learner Profile	5.1.1 Jody's Assessment profile	
<p>Jody was one of the higher attaining students in the class and was in fact the highest attaining girl. She was a positive and popular student who worked well in and out of lessons. Her attendance was high and no learning difficulties were identified. She could be a slightly reluctant reader, but was generally willing to persist with novels during out book-group sessions. Most of her extra-curricular activities were focused on sport and she frequently represented the school in team events.</p> <p>Jody entered year 8 with a teacher-assessed level of 5b though this level of attainment (for writing) was not evident during the first written assessment where she obtained a 5c. Her target level at the end of year 8 was a 6c which was met by the end of the year. Her Verbal CATs scored placed her at 111 which suggests that she has the potential to do well in English. The Assessment profile outlines her written assessment levels throughout year 8.</p>	KS2 Writing Score	4
	Yr 7 CAT Verbal SAS	111
	End of Year 7 level	5b
	SEN Status	N
	End of Year Attendance	97.8%
	Pupil Premium	No
	Year 8 Writing Assessment Levels	
	<i>Pre-test</i>	5c
	<i>Theme Parks</i>	5a
	<i>Narrative</i>	6c
	<i>Newspaper Article</i>	5a
	<i>Post Teaching</i>	6c
	<i>End of year 8 level</i>	6c

Table 13: Profile of Jody

#### 4.1a) Pre-Teaching Writing Assessment:

##### The Room

Until now, I never actually realised that i was standing in a room. Fields went on and on as I began to turn on the spot. Lambs, cows, horses and many other animals stood motionless on the rolling hills. Everything was frozen apart from me. There was no wind, no rain, nothing apart from me and a few still animals. I adventured out across the silent hills until I came to a stop, I couldn't go any further. I pushed against the only thing stopping me but nothing happened. How could there be something stopping me in the countryside. I turned away and carried on walking for what felt like years until I came to a stop. It was like I was in a giant, clear box. I lent against the clear wall and faced the acres of land in front of me.

In this pre-test assessment, it was evident that Jody used a range of grammatical features. She opened her narrative with an adverbial time phrase: *'until now,'* establishing that the protagonist had already been in the room for a while. This acts as a narrative hook and possibly demonstrates Jody's awareness of audience.

By fronting her subsequent sentences with noun phrases, it provided the reader with a clear description of the character's surroundings: *'Fields went on and on', 'Lambs, cows, horses and many other animals stood motionless on the rolling hills.'* Evidently, her character is isolated in the countryside surrounded by animals. Additionally, Jody used pre-modification of some of the later nouns: **'silent hills'**, **'a giant, clear box'**, **'clear wall'** possibly to add more specific descriptive detail, possibly indicating her growing awareness of how adjectives can modify nouns.

Even though Jody did not fully use anaphora, she did use sentence patterning: *'no wind, no rain, nothing apart from me...'* perhaps to reinforce the idea that her character is isolated and alone.

There are occasional lapses in her demarcation of sentence and paragraphing boundaries but she used a question to show her character's internal concerns (without using a question mark to demarcate it): *'How could there be something stopping me in the countryside.'*

In this short extract, Jody used a range of verbs of motion to demonstrate her character's movement: *'to turn', 'adventured out', 'pushed', 'walking', 'turned away', 'lent.'* The combination of these movement-related verbs possibly reveals that Jody was already aware that verbs can be used to develop descriptive detail: *'I adventured out across the silent hills.'* However, at this point it is unclear whether Jody was aware of the structural requirement to paragraph her writing, as this narrative was written in a single block of text.

#### 4.1b) Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview

##### Commentary

1. I chose to write in a story/diary genre because I am the most familiar to this genre and find it easy to write like this.



2. I think people who like to live in the countryside and dislike the city style of life would like this. I didn't think about the target audience for my story.
3. I don't have a purpose for writing this text.
4. I am writing from the 1<sup>st</sup> person.
5. I structured my writing by looking at things through the window. I had quite a strong idea in my head.
6. I don't think I thought about the language I used and I didn't use enough different starter sentences.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In this first commentary, Jody reflected briefly on her language use: '*I don't think I thought about the language I used and I didn't use enough different starter sentences.*' She seemed to be aware of the need to vary her sentences, but it is interesting that she viewed this through the use of '*different starter sentences*'. This is perhaps something she had learnt from her previous teacher. However, Jody was able to open her sentences in different ways but did not seem aware of it, such as questions, noun phrases and adverbs of time which possibly demonstrated her lack of metalinguistic awareness at that point.

Furthermore, during the interview, Jody did not demonstrate any evidence of a grammatical metalanguage or reveal metalinguistic knowledge other than to say that she used a few '*descriptive*' words. This could in part be because she was not used to articulating her design decisions, but it could also suggest that many of her decisions were made on an unconscious level.

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** Jody referred to her use of '**starter sentences**' in her commentary.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** In the reflective commentary, Jody explained that she generated her ideas through what she could see out of the classroom window. She also highlighted that she was writing without giving prior consideration to the audience, purpose or language choices. She suggested that she chose to write a '*story/diary*' because it was the one she was most familiar with – but this might have been because the suggested title easily lent itself to the narrative form.

In the interview, Jody echoed the statements made in her commentary and indicated that she did not set aside any time for planning her ideas before starting the writing process: '*I just started writing*' but then stated that she looked out of

the window to help her develop her ideas in terms of the content. She also indicated that she found it difficult to write something spontaneously without prior preparation or notice: *‘Just that you have to write without anything else’*

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** No evidence of use of planning or self-monitoring, but generated ideas by drawing on her immediate surroundings.

#### 4.1.1) Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing:

##### 4.1.1a) Action Research Cycle One - The Assessment:

Marvel Island:

Marvel Island provides families with a fun filled day, any age welcome and you must be 4+ years to enjoy the rides. Marvel is the biggest theme park in Devon and Cornwall and also owns the title for the steepest drop in England (17 meters!). There are over 15 different café/restaurants dotted around the theme park to enjoy.

Rides:

Marvel Island lets you enjoy over 23 different rides, all including your favourite superheroes to join you. *Scream*, as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing from no where. The spider -climb also provides you with England's first ever 17 meter drop, with is voted best ride of 2014. Grip to your seat as you parade up and down on the Hulk. Twisting and zooming around, your heart will stop as you escalate down into the black hole that leads to no-where, spiraling out the other-side you will then start dipping and weaving across the park.

In this persuasive extract, we can see that Jody has mainly emulated how verbs were used in the model texts, such as the use of imperative sentences as well as verbs to convey movement. For example, Jody used a range of verbs to help with this description:

- ***Scream***, as you ***plummet*** down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing from nowhere.
- ***Grip*** to your seat as you ***parade up and down*** on the Hulk.
- ***Twisting*** and ***zooming*** around...

By using words such as *‘plummet’*, *‘parade up and down’* as well as *‘twisting and zooming’*, Jody provided the reader with a range of adrenaline-packed movements (with the exception of *‘parade up and down’* which sounds much calmer!). This might possibly be because Jody drew on the knowledge gained from the model texts and how language choices need to match the audience and purpose of a text. Perhaps she had consciously or unconsciously transferred the teaching of verbs of motion into her own writing.

Additionally, when exploring the verbs above, it is clear that Jody used imperative sentences in her writing; this is something which frequently occurred in the model texts. By starting the sentence with 'scream' and 'Grip' Jody pragmatically conveyed to the reader that this ride was for thrill-seekers.

Furthermore, Jody demonstrated her use of non-finite clauses to open sentences with the use of present participles: *'Twisting and zooming around, your heart will stop as you escalate down into the black hole that leads to no-where, spiraling out the other-side you will then start dipping and weaving across the park.'* By placing the verbs of motion at the start of the sentence, the movement of this ride becomes the reader's focus possibly indicating a transfer of knowledge between the teaching and Jody's awareness of selecting words to suit the genre, audience and purpose.

Conditional sentences are frequently used in this type of promotional persuasive writing and Jody had embedded an example of this into her own text: *'Marvel is open all through the year and includes special offers and money off if you pick up one of our leaflets.'* This could be an indication that she had developed her awareness that this type of text often persuades the audience by informing them that something would happen on the condition of something else. This again acted as a persuasive feature.

Finally, this type of persuasive text is frequently seen to address the reader directly through the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun. This was something that Jody had woven into the body of her text as this extract uses 'you' five times and 'your' on three occasions.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** use of **verbs to convey sense of motion**, **imperative sentence constructions**, use of **present participle** at the start of a sentence, **conditional sentence** and direct address via the **second person pronoun**.

#### **4.1.1b) Action Research Cycle Two – The Assessment:**

It's only for a night.

It was my turn. Everyone else had got given a dare ~~except~~-except me, and it was worse than anyone elses. At first I said no but I eventually gave in when they threatened to leave me by

myself, in the woods. It had just gone 10.30pm and was pitch dark now, everyone knew I hated the dark but they begged to do the dares in the woods. I've always been afraid of the wood and the creepy house, located in the middle of the woods, which was owned by an old man who is now dead, but no one knows how. ~~My mum always told me~~ This is where my dare comes in, I really didn't want to do it because my mum always tells me not to go near it, but it's only for a night.

Jody chose to open her narrative with a short simple sentence which was a feature frequently seen in the two model texts. The text opened with: '*It's only for a night*'. Not only has she chosen to start this story with a simple sentence, she also decided to make this sentence a paragraph and separate it from the rest of the text. This was a common feature in Darren Shan's style of writing and therefore possibly indicates a transfer of knowledge gained through the analysis of this text into her own writing.

Additionally, she opened a sentence using an adverbial of time '*At first*' to possibly to demonstrate her character's reluctance to participate in the dare.

This text is the first of Jody's to show drafting/editing whilst composing. The most significant edit is the sentence where she moved '*my mum always tells me*' from the beginning to the end of the sentence. This consequently results in the sentence starting with '*This is where my dare comes in.*' However, whilst this is a comma spliced sentence it appears that she had taken the decision to add a simple sentence to help bring the narrative back around to the main topic: the dare.

In terms of transfer of other grammatical and linguistic based features, there was evidence of anaphora, onomatopoeia and interrogatives used later in the narrative. These were used as potential tools to gradually build tension.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** use of **short simple sentence** and **time related adverbial**.

#### 4.1.1c) Action Research Cycle Three - The Assessment:

**SHERLOCK HOLMES** Explores the death of loved family MEMBER Julia Stoner

Two deaths in two days occurred at the house owned by Dr Roylott. Intreigued Sherlock Holmes was called to the scene by Helen Stoner. While investigating he finds poisonous snake used as weapon against step daughters.

Destressed sister, Helen Stoner, arrives at the home of Sherlock Holmes to ask for his help to solve the crime of her sisters death.

After deciding on a plan, Helen Stoner left Sherlock's House and agreed to meet later on in the day. After leaving, Sherlock had realised that Helen had been followed as her step father was quoted 'Bursting into the room shouting at Sherlock and verbal abuse towards Watson.' He warned Sherlock and his assistant to stay away from his house. But a quote from Sherlock said – 'I have been asked to solve a murder and that is what I'll do.'

In the opening of Jody's newspaper, she has used a range of extended noun phrases. These phrases help to develop some of the descriptive detail:

- *Sherlock Holmes explores **The death of loved family member Julia Stoner*** (headline)
- ***Two deaths in two days** occurred at the house owned by Dr Roylott.*
- ***Intrigued Sherlock Holmes** was called to the scene by Helen Stoner.*
- ***...poisonous snake used as weapon against step daughters.***
- ***Distressed sister Helen Stoner** arrives at the home of Sherlock Holmes*
- ***The crime of her sister's death.***

However, whilst she had been focusing on extending the detail in her noun phrases, it was evident that she had less secure use of verb tenses. News stories frequently report past events in the past tense, yet Jody switches her writing from past to present when describing the same incident: '*Intreigued Sherlock Holmes was called to the scene by Helen Stoner. While investigating he finds poisonous snake used as weapon against step daughters*'. This switching between different verb tenses was a reoccurring feature in other students' writing, particularly in this form of writing.

Jody used the sequential adverb of time 'after' in two consecutive sentences which suggests the linear nature of retelling the events of the crime.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** noun phrases, past participle at the start of a sentences and time related adverbial.

## 4.1.2) Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews

### 4.1.2a) Action Research Cycle One

#### Commentary

The purpose of this writing is to advertise a theme park and persuade people to come. I have used movement verbs and imperatives to persuade the reader. Also I used words such as *'twirling and heart-stopping'* to make the the rides sound more interesting.

I have varied my writing by trying to connect with the target audiences which is teenagers and above and anyone who would go onto the website.

Words I have used:

- Twirling
- Zooming
- Weaving
- Escalate
- Drifting
- Gliding

all of those words make it interesting.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In this reflection, Jody demonstrated her growing awareness of the need to match her language choices to the intended audience. She made some references to the need to persuade her audience to visit the theme park and she also referenced some of the language and grammatical features used to do this: *'I have used movement verbs and imperatives to persuade the reader. Also I used words such as 'twirling and heart-stopping' to make the rides sound more interesting.'* At this point, Jody was able to identify that she had used verbs of movement and was able to give evidence for this, but she did not move on to give evidence for her use of imperatives or specify the impact of these sentence structures. Instead, Jody made a broad and generalised comment and stated that these features made the writing more *'interesting'*.

Jody made similar comments regarding the impact of her language choices in the interview. For example, when referring to her textual organisation, Jody referred to how she structured her writing: *'Erm well I like split it up into paragraphs (.) for different like rides and restaurants and then (.) just describe each bit.'* This was then followed by Jody's explanation of how she persuaded the target audience to visit her theme park:

**Jody:** Er like the persuasive techniques and (2) like using like (.) em movement words and that to persuade them

**Teacher:** what kind of movement words

**Jody:** um like **zooming drifting gliding plummeting**

**Teacher:** what kind of effect did you want to have when you did that

**Jody:** em just to make it seem like a good theme park

Even though Jody referred to her verb choice as '*movement words*' rather than verbs, she was still demonstrating her metalinguistic knowledge through her recognition that these words conveyed a sense of movement and had therefore been selected for meaning-making effect. However, when questioned further regarding the impact of these words, Jody was unable to give a specific response and instead replied: '*to make it seem like a good theme park.*'

Further on in the interview, when asked to comment on some of her linguistic choices, Jody referenced her use of imperatives:

**Jody:** um like lots of description words and imperatives to persuade them like **scream**

**Teacher:** so what was that sentence with scream

**Jody:** um **scream as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing from nowhere**

**Teacher:** and why is that a particularly good sentence

**Jody:** um (2) because its like describes a ride and verbs of movement to show how (3)

**Teacher:** yeah what about how (.) you started the sentence with scream (.) what does that suggest

**Jody:** um (.) it just makes it a bit more descriptive and draws the reader in a bit

Whilst Jody recognised that her use of an imperative at the start of the sentence, followed by her verbs of movement were potentially 'good' she was unable to elaborate on this and just like in the first interview, she replied with: '*it just makes it a bit more descriptive and draws the reader in a bit.*'

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage: imperative sentence constructions and verbs of movement** are used in the commentary and during the interview.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** There is evidence that Jody planned her writing for this assessment as she stated that: *'I planned this one out a bit more cos I know who I was writing it for as well.'* Furthermore, this assertion was later repeated: *'yeah I've planned this one better and I knew what to write about and that's easier.'* It appears that the process of having defined her target audience had made the planning process easier for her.

Additionally, when discussing the reflective process required for the completion of the commentary, Jody revealed that she found it useful:

**Teacher:** and how do you feel about your reflections at the end (.) do you feel actually your (.) compared to the first time I asked you to reflect on your writing are you getting more of an understanding of why you are doing that

**Jody:** yeah so I know what to include in the next writing

Later she adds: *'well it just makes me realise what I've like missed out and that.'*

Jody suggested that the act of reflecting provided her with an opportunity to reconsider her writing, but she also focused on what she could do 'next' time. However, this reflection could be because of the framing of the question which was closed and did not really provide her with an opportunity to elaborate in more specific detail.

**Use of Self-Regulatory Strategies:** Evidence of her use of planning.

#### 4.1.2b) Action Research Cycle Two

##### **Commentary**

I have used different sentence types in my writing such as short sentences eg, *'we all stopped.'* These sentences are used to build tension. Also I used anadiplosis eg *'we all stopped. Stopped to look at each other and think what to do next.'* This is used to create tension and create effect for the reader. I used onomatopoeia's such as 'creak' to create effect and let the reader know different noises in the location. I have also used adverbial phrases of time and place such as *'upstairs, suddenly, above, underneath'*. These phrases are used for suspension and to indicate to the reader whereabouts certain things were happening. I have also used questions to show internal thoughts and invites the reader and draws them into the story.



**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** Whilst the opening of Jody's narrative does not necessarily demonstrate the breadth of language features explored during the teaching phase, her reflective commentary and interview do because she frequently referred to grammatical items used outside of the sample 135 word count. In the commentary, Jody acknowledged that she had tried to vary her sentence lengths as a way to build tension but did not illuminate this point any further. She identified her use of anadiplosis, (used in the Marcus Sedgewick text): *'We all stopped. Stopped to look at each other and think what to do next'* but did not move on to explore the reasons behind this language feature other than to say it is used to *'create tension and create effect for the reader.'*

However, Jody gave a more detailed explanation of her use of onomatopoeia as well as the impact of starting sentences with adverbs of time or place: *'These phrases are used for suspension and to indicate to the reader whereabouts certain things were happening.'* This comment does show an awareness of impact, but it does not explore how the suspense is created. This lack of further explanation or verbalisation of the impact of her linguistic choices continued as she reflected on her use of interrogatives to reveal a character's inner thoughts: *'I have also used questions to show internal thoughts and invites the reader and draws them into the story.'* Evidently, Jody had some metalinguistic knowledge, but she was not able to fully articulate the impact of her writing choices.

This is a similar theme to that expressed in the interview; however, as the interview followed a question and answer format, there were opportunities for Jody to be prompted to elaborate her points. In this interview, Jody continued to demonstrate her growing metalinguistic knowledge by explaining how she had tried to create tension in her narrative. At first, she listed some of the items before moving on to elaborate in more detail:

**Jody:** um I was just trying to use a lot of short sentences and the (.) anadiplosis (.) and onomatopoeias to create tension

**Teacher:** could you just give me some examples of those (.) at what point did you use say onomatopoeia

**Jody:** um like if I was going up the stairs it would be creak or (.) like splash or something as an onomatopoeia and then anadiplosis is like we all **stopped (.) stopped to look at each other** and to use the same word you ended with at the start

**Teacher:** and so what was the impact of that using the same words twice

**Student:** um (.) well it just makes you like more interested because you are using the words together the same ones

**Teacher:** what was that word you used twice

**Student:** er **stopped**

Here, the justification of why she used anadiplosis is tenuous which possibly demonstrates insecure understanding of why writers might use it.

However, there was evidence of more metalinguistic understanding shown through her references to adverbs of time and place and the need to vary the way she opened her sentences rather than relying on subject openings:

**Student:** um well I also used like the adverbial phrases of time and place like **upstairs** and **suddenly above** and just used like difference sentence varieties to build the tension.

**Teacher:** and what difference do you think it made to introduce the idea of where the action was taking place by using those adverbs

**Student:** well I think it just involved the reader more as they have a better idea of where you are in the story

**Teacher:** um is there anything that you think you would have liked to have done differently

**Student:** um (5) probably use different sentence starters instead of like **we** and **I** all the time

**Teacher:** what kind of different ways would you (.) if you were now to reflect on it would you have liked to put in

**Student:** well I could have used like **suddenly** at the start instead of the middle and that like that and replaced the word with like a phrase of time or something

In several discussions with Jody, she frequently used the term '*sentence starters*' which was not a term used during the teaching of this unit; however, it was evident that this was something which had made an impact on Jody and her view of how to vary sentences. This is possibly an influence of the National Literacy Strategy and the associated support materials used when teaching sentence grammar.

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** During the interview, Jody makes references to '**sentence starters**', **short sentences**, and **adverbials of time**. Additionally, in her commentary she also made reference to these grammatical items, as well as referring to **sentence types**, **questions**, and **anadiplosis**.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** For this written assessment, there was evidence of Jody's use of planning as well as her lack of self-monitoring. Jody stated that she planned her ideas and made note of the things she wanted to put into her writing. When asked how useful she found the planning sheet (which was an option for students to use) she stated that it *'was easier because I'd like put in phrases and like the different sentence um (5) different sentence bits (.) what to include in it.'* Furthermore, Jody indicated that for future writing tasks, it would be useful for her to plan her ideas on a separate sheet and use this information as a way of self-monitoring her progress: *'just keep like write a paragraph and read it {planning sheet} again to see if I can change anything.'*

However, when asked whether she self-monitored during the writing process or just wrote without checking, Jody stated that *'I usually just write and then go back at the end if I have time.'*

<b>Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:</b> Evidence of use of <b>planning</b>
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#### 4.1.2c) Action Research Cycle Three

##### **Commentary**

For this assessment, I made sure I used the right type of writing to suit the genre, which is a newspaper article. I also thought about the target audience which was adults. I did this by using a good range of vocabulary and informative phrases. I really focused on the purpose of my writing which is to create an newspaper article.

I used the 3<sup>rd</sup> person to write this assessment, but the 1<sup>st</sup> person to write the interviews. I did this to create a variety in my writing.

One of my targets was to use a variation of sentence lengths which I think I included a few in my writing... I did this to make my writing more interesting and vairey sentences. Another one of my targets was to start sentences with a verb. An example of this is: Arriving at...or Talking to Helen...These make my writing more interesting and variey the start of my sentences.

In my writing I used a lot of quotations from characters to use as evidence against my opinion. Also I used nouns phrases such as 'loved family member Julia Stoner' and 'Destressed sister, Helen Stoner'. Using these help give the reader a clear picture of what the characters look like and their personalities.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** Jody's written reflections, unlike earlier ones, are more generalised as she does not really make any reference to specific detail other than her choice to write in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person for the article and 1<sup>st</sup> person for the interviews. This could suggest

that she had found articulating the pragmatics of this genre more difficult than other genres and forms of writing.

However, Jody did make reference to her use of noun phrases and provided evidence for these: *'Using these help give the reader a clear picture of what the characters look like and their personalities.'* Evidently, Jody was aware that noun phrases could be useful tools when trying to add extra layers of information and descriptive detail rather than overloading the writing with adjectives.

At the beginning of the interview, Jody explained how she had adapted her writing to suit the needs of the audience and purpose and indicated that she used *'more like informative and better words than like other things so you only get the main bits in the writing'* and stated that her aim was *'to use the verbs at the start of a sentence which I did quite lot in this one (3) and to use different lengths of sentences as well.'* On reflection, this was not a specific teaching focus in this scheme of work, but it was in the previous Theme Park unit. However, Jody also referred to her use of noun phrases: *'for the noun phrases is was **distressed sister Helen Stoner** and then for the like verb ones it was like **realising something** and then **arriving at the home** and that.'* Jody was questioned as to why noun phrases were important in newspaper articles and she stated: *'cos it gives quite a bit of information in just one sentence so its quicker.'* She was also questioned on her use of verb tenses: *'I think most of it was in the past and then at the end I put what I thought would happen next.'*

Here, it could be said that Jody is demonstrating her metalinguistic knowledge as well as her developing use of a grammatical metalanguage. She was able to give an explanation for her use of noun phrases and verbs at the start of sentences; however, part of her lack of elaboration is possibly my fault, as the interviewer, for not probing her further.

Furthermore, Jody revealed genre-related metalinguistic knowledge in terms of some content components of a newspaper article as she made reference to the need for a headline and to ensure that she informed the reader of who, what, where how: *'um so like for the who it's like two deaths in two days and then the house of Dr Roylott and (3) ah I didn't say when but...'*

Jody also showed some broad knowledge of verb tense and stated that news articles are written *'in the past and some of it in the future like what's going to happen next.'*

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** use of **verbs**, **different length sentences** and **noun phrases** were referred to during the interview as well as her use of **informative phrases**, **sentence variety** and **verbs at the start of sentences** in her commentary

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** In the commentary, Jody referred to her own writing goals which were to vary sentence length – but she did not give any more information on why or how she did this. She also stated that one of her writing goals was to start a sentence with the present participle but moved on to justify this choice by stating that it made the writing *'more interesting'*: *'One of my targets was to use a variation of sentence lengths which I think I included a few in my writing. I did this to make my writing more interesting and variey sentences. Another one of my targets was to start sentences with a verb. An example of this is: Arriving at...or Talking to Helen...These make my writing more interesting and variey the start of my sentences.'*

Jody returned to the theme of self-monitoring: *'on this one I think I did write and then stop and read it back otherwise I miss out words.'* When questioned as to whether her ability to self-monitor during the writing process was something she felt she had improved throughout the course of the year she stated 'yes' but gave no further information. She also stated that she did plan her writing for this assessment, and this was something relatively new to her but added that once she started to write she did not look at her plan again. However, Jody referred to setting writing goals during this assessment: *'my target was to use the verbs at the start of a sentence which I did quite lot in this one (3) and to use different lengths of sentences as well.'*

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** use of **planning**, some **self-monitoring** during the writing process and the setting of a **writing goal**.

### 4.1.3) Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge:

#### 4.1.3a) Post Teaching Written Assessment

##### The Box

His 15th birthday was the one he was dreading the most. His mother explained to him that every year, all the 15 year olds in the village were gathered in the courts to be chosen. Until this day Zack didn't know why 7 people were chosen at random. His mother had picked out his best clothes and advised him to do his hair, she kissed him on the head and they began to walk to the courts. Beginning to get worried as his mum said 'good luck' he asked her what this was for, she would not explain.

As the 500 15 years crowded together in the courts, Zack asked one of the girls stood next to him, why they were here. Her reply was 'to right the box.' Giving her a confused look he stared at the town leader who had presented himself in front of them.

As this was the opening to a narrative which focused on slowly building tension, Jody used the opening to set the scene for her story. The narrative seemed to have been influenced by Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*. In the opening, Jody relayed lots of contextual information to the reader regarding where her character was. Therefore, this explanation rather than description, provided little opportunity for her to demonstrate her use of verb variety. However, she did use two sentences starting with the present participle:

- ***Beginning to get worried as his mum said 'good luck' he asked her what this was for, she would not explain.***
- ***Giving her a confused (135) look he stared at the town leader who had presented himself in front of them.***

Despite Jody's comma splice in the first example, we could assume that she had intended to use a short simple sentence to juxtapose with the longer one which precedes it. Furthermore, she has also used one sentence starting with an adverb of time: '**Until** this day Zack didn't know why 7 people were chosen at random.' This gives the reader the impression that whatever is taking place, has happened before. However, it is worth highlighting that this seemed to be a pattern which was embedded in Jody's writing as it echoed a sentence in her first text: '*Until now, I never actually realised that I was standing in a room.*'

Furthermore, there were a few examples of verbs of movement – but most of the verb processes were relational rather than material, therefore there was little opportunity to use verbs of motion: '*Gathered*', '*picked out*', '*walk*.' Jody used

some short simple sentences even though she did not demarcate them with the necessary punctuation: *'Beginning to get worried as his mum said 'good luck' he asked her what this was for, she would not explain.*' It seemed to be that the final element of this sentence was intended to be a short simple sentence, to add further suspense to the unfolding narrative.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** use of **present participle** and **past participle** at the start of a sentence and **short simple sentence** to contrast with the preceding long one.

#### 4.1.3b) Post Teaching Commentary and Interview

##### **Commentary**

I wrote in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and in the present tense. I used a series of short sentences such as 'waiting. Waiting. Waiting, for the train to arrive...' This makes the reader focus on those sentences because they are different from the rest. I used questions in my writing such as 'Are they right?' these make the writing more interesting and interacts with the reader. Using verbs at the start of sentences is good because it varies the way you can start sentences which makes your writing more interesting.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In her final commentary, Jody referred to her use of short sentences (which were outside of the 135 word sample) such as: *'waiting. Waiting. Waiting, for the train to arrive...'* She did acknowledge her use of anaphora with the repetition of 'waiting' and indicated that she had considered the impact on the intended reader.

Jody explained that her use of interrogatives and verbs at the start of a sentence were used to engage the reader. Through the cycles, Jody repeatedly focused on her use of sentences, in particular how they open.

During this interview, Jody continued to demonstrate her use of grammatical metalanguage as well as her growing metalinguistic knowledge. When asked if there was anything she would like to talk about regarding her writing, she stated *'I was really focusing on like using different ranging of sentences like short sentences and beginning with verbs and time and place words.'* In the extract below, Jody tries to explain her use of anaphora (without actually using that term) which indicates a transfer of new linguistic knowledge despite not being able to label the term:

**Jody:** um for the like the short sentences I used **waiting waiting waiting for the train to arrive** and like (2) adverbs of time after something

\*\*\*

**Teacher:** and what kind of impression were you trying to give the reader at that point

**Jody:** um that time wasn't moving very fast and they were just waiting

**Teacher:** and you mentioned something about adverbs or adverbials of time or time related adverb (2) do you want to find an example

**Jody:** **after four days there was four of them left** which just like shows you like how long they have been waiting or something or how many there are

**Teacher:** that time has passed (.) is there anything else you focused on in your writing

**Jody:** I used like questions that the character was asking themselves like **are they right** which is just put different things into writing

\*\*\*

**Teacher:** anything else

**Jody:** just using like verbs at the start of sentences to show what the character is doing and then writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person

**Teacher:** ok so if you put a verb at the beginning of the sentence can you find an example to explain

**Jody:** (14) um oh **walking up to the stage all the people looked scared and terrified**

**Teacher:** ok and why did you decide to put the verb at the beginning of the sentence

**Jody:** um because it like makes the reader focus on what the character is doing or how they are doing it

The above extract demonstrated Jody's metalinguistic knowledge and use of a metalanguage when referring to her implementation of adverbial phrases. She also referred to characters' use of internal questioning to show the reader what they were thinking. Despite Jody not using the terms 'past participle' or 'non-finite clause', she does use the word '*verb*' when indicating her use of the present participle '*walking*' at the start of a sentence. She moved on to explain how this leads the reader to focus on the action, subsequently indicating her metalinguistic awareness of her own grammatical choices. However, the 14 second pause before answering the question reveals that she had to really think hard about her language use and intended impact.

When asked what she would do to improve her writing, Jody referred to using anadiplosis and showed that she understood its construction – even if she found it difficult to form:



**Student:** um I will try and use like the anadiplosis and that but I just find them quite hard to put in

**Teacher:** what is it about them you find hard

**Student:** um just like thinking about like the words to match

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** During the interview, Jody refers to her use of **short sentences beginning with verbs, adverbial phrases, and anadiplosis**. Additionally, in her commentary, Jody reflects on her use of the **present tense, short sentences, questions, and verbs at the start of sentences**.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** When discussing whether Jody spent any time planning her ideas before starting to write she stated: *'I did a bit but (.) like about half way through I just made it up.'* When discussing areas that she identified as needing to continue to focus on whilst in year 9, Jody recognised that planning her writing was something she needed to work on: *'planning at the start and just reminding to go back and read each paragraph and then go on.'*

In terms of goal-setting, Jody stated that her intentions: *'I just wanted to put in like short sentences and that but otherwise I just went with it'* and reflected on her need to plan her writing in more specific detail: *'I think I need to plan more and like keep going over my work cos I can some of them I like miss out words and it doesn't make sense cos I don't look back.'* When asked why she was not doing this regularly at this point she stated, *'just cos like if I think of something to write I'll just keep writing about it.'* On reflection, this probably indicated that Jody enjoys writing and perhaps sees planning as an obstacle to her enjoyment. As a result of this, we discussed what she could do to help her remember to check her work during the writing process and Jody stated: *'just look at my plan and see if I've like done some of it.'* She also made a broad reference to the use of model texts and stated that they are helpful:

**Teacher:** what do you think would make a difference to that to help you improve using more variety (.) what would help to get you used to using different things

**Student:** um just like reading articles with them in and just practicing it

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** Jody refers to her **use of planning** but admits that she veered away from it during the writing process. There is evidence of setting a **writing goal**, but it seems to be the reoccurring one to 'vary sentences'.

#### 4.1.4) Summary of Jody's Findings

Teaching Phase and Comment	Evidence of Linguistic Transfer	Evidence of Metalanguage	Evidence of Self-Regulation Strategy
<b>Pre-Teaching:</b>	<b><u>Pre-Teaching Evidence:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fronting sentences with <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• Fronting sentences with <b>adverbs of time</b></li> <li>• Use of <b>sentence patterning</b></li> <li>• Use of <b>questions</b></li> <li>• Interesting <b>verbs of movement</b></li> <li>• </li> </ul>	Referred to ' <b>starter sentences</b> ' in her commentary	No evidence of use of planning or self-monitoring, but <b>generated ideas</b> by drawing on her immediate surroundings.
Whilst grammar items are evident in Jody's pre-writing test, there was no evidence of metalinguistic awareness.			
<b>Cycle 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>verbs to convey sense of motion,</b></li> <li>• <b>imperative sentence constructions,</b></li> <li>• <b>present participle</b> at the start of a sentence,</li> <li>• <b>conditional sentence</b></li> <li>• direct address via the <b>second person pronoun.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>imperative sentence constructions</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs of movement.</b></li> </ul>	Evidence of use of <b>planning</b>
At this stage, despite implementing a wider range of grammatical items into her own writing, Jody still experienced difficulties in terms of verbalising the impact of these items.			
<b>Cycle 2:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>short simple sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>time related adverbial</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>sentence starters</b></li> <li>• <b>short sentences,</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbials of time.</b></li> <li>• <b>sentence types</b></li> <li>• <b>questions.</b></li> </ul>	Evidence of her use of <b>planning</b>
There is evidence of Jody's transfer of grammatical knowledge into her own writing as well as her developing use of a grammatical metalanguage, but she was not fully able to verbalise the impact of her linguistic choices.			
<b>Cycle 3:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>past participle at the start of a sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>time related adverbial</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>verbs</b></li> <li>• <b>different length sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>informative phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>sentence variety</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs at the start of sentences</b></li> </ul>	<b>use of planning,</b> some <b>self-monitoring</b> during the writing process and the setting of a <b>writing goal.</b>
During this cycle, Jody demonstrated her growing use of a grammatical metalanguage and articulated her use and impact of noun phrases.			

<b>Post Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>present participle</b></li> <li>• <b>past participle</b> at the start of a sentence</li> <li>• <b>short simple sentence</b> to contrast with the preceding long one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>short sentences beginning with verbs</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbial phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>anadiplosis</b></li> <li>• <b>present tense</b></li> <li>• <b>short sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>questions</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs at the start of sentences.</b></li> </ul>	Referred to <b>use of planning</b> but admitted that she veered away from it during the writing process. There was evidence of setting a <b>writing goal</b> , but it seemed to be the reoccurring one to 'vary sentences'.
At this point in the cycle, Jody was reflecting on her linguistic choices in more detail and was able to verbalise the potential impact of some of her design choices.			
<b>Summary:</b> Despite Jody already exhibiting a range of grammatical items in her writing at the start of the research cycle, she developed her metalinguistic knowledge and was able to confidently verbalise some of her design decisions. Furthermore, she had acquired a broader grammatical metalanguage and was able to use these terms in her reflective discussions. Finally, Jody adopted some self-regulation strategies, such as planning, writing goals (though not always sharply focused) and occasional use of self-monitoring.			

Table 14: Summary of Jody's Findings

## Harry

### 4.2) Profile of Harry: Middle Attaining Student

<b>Learner Profile</b>	<b>5.2.1 Assessment Profile</b>	
Harry was a middle-attaining student who was a quiet member of the class who got on well with others. He was keen to participate in drama-based activities and regularly appears in school drama productions. He enjoyed engaging in the creative aspects of English but was more reluctant to engage in the structural aspects of it. He was a creative writer and enjoyed generating ideas but tended to struggle getting these ideas down onto paper. He was an enthusiastic reader and had a varied vocabulary, but also had moderate Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLd) and therefore spelling words accurately was a particular problem for him as was the structural organisation of his writing.	KS2 Writing Score	<b>4</b>
	Yr 7 CAT Verbal SAS	<b>111</b>
	End of Year 7 level	<b>5c</b>
	SEN Status	<b>N</b>
	End of Year Attendance	<b>90.2%</b>
	Pupil Premium	<b>No</b>
	Year 8 Writing Assessment Levels	
	<i>Pre-test</i>	<b>5c</b>
	<i>Theme Parks</i>	<b>5c</b>
	<i>Narrative</i>	<b>5b</b>
	<i>Newspaper Article</i>	<b>5b</b>
	<i>Post Teaching</i>	<b>5a</b>

Harry entered year 8 with a teacher-assessed level 5c and his target level for the end of year 8 was 5b. However, Harry made significant progress throughout the year, in particular, in his reading assessments and his end of year level was 5a. His Verbal CATs score was the same as Jody, 111, which also suggests that he has the potential to do well in English.	<i>End of year 8 level</i>	<b>5a</b>
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Table 15: Profile of Harry

## 4.2a) Pre-teaching Written Assessment

The Room, it can be used for many things such as meeting or possibly a dining room but one man called Felix Johnson had a different idea!

He thought that regular room's are too boring so he used his scientific skills to create a mystical paint with the colour of luminus orange that instantly transformed the room into a Fun, Fantastic, Fabulous room with just one flick of paintbrush.

Although everyone thought it was "FAB-U-LUS'sssss" it had a dark dark secret, every month on the third tuesday it relese some odd luminus blue spikey balls that resembled plant spores (they were easy to see because they were, well, luminus) and graduly one by one, two by two people fell sick and didn't seem like they were going to get better.

Terrible rashes apeared on there (135 words) necks and arms but sumtimes bound to there pach room aswell.

Whilst Harry struggled to control his sentences and demarcate their endings, it was evident that he had focused on using two repeating narrative features in his writing: the use of words for phonological effect and the use of extended noun phrases.

The combined effects of alliteration, repetition of patterning, as well as the use of capitalisation and elongated words for prosodic effect, aided the narrative rhythm and suggested that Harry was (intentionally or unintentionally) aware of genre requirements and audience: *'Although everyone thought it was "FAB-U-LUS'sssss" it had a dark dark secret'*. In this sentence, it appears that Harry had considered the phonology of his language choices and how individual words are to be read. The use of capitals and the demarcation of syllables for added emphasis of their sounds informs the reader of just how great the room was. However, this image is immediately juxtaposed with the repetition of the monosyllabic adjective *'dark,'* informing us that perhaps the *'everyone'* in the narrative is misguided to believe the room is such a *'FAB-U-LUS'sssss'* place after

all. This suggests that Harry was possibly aware of narrative patterns which shift and turn to hook the reader and engage them into the story.

In addition to his use of phonology, Harry also used a range of extended noun phrases:

- *'mystical **paint** with the colour of luminous orange that instantly transformed **the room** into a Fun, Fantastic, Fabulous room with just one flick of **paintbrush**.'*
- *'some odd luminous blue spikey **balls** that resembled plant spores'*

These examples demonstrated Harry's use of pre and post-modifications to expand his chosen nouns. The first example is an expanded phrase detailing the visual and transformative nature of the '*paint*'. The phrase has been built up through the use of a combination of prepositional phrases '*with the colour of luminous orange*' and the relative clause '*that instantly transformed the room into a Fun, Fantastic, Fabulous room*' with an additional prepositional phrase at the end: '*with just one flick of paintbrush*'. Whereas the second example uses a wider range of pre-modification: '*some odd luminous blue spikey balls that resembled plant spores*' to indicate to the reader how unusual these balls are. At this pre-test point, Harry had already acquired the implicit grammatical knowledge required to expand noun phrases. However, his reflective commentary did not explicitly acknowledge this skill, so perhaps this was an unconscious choice.

#### 4.2b) Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview

##### Commentary

- The genre I wrote in the story is fantasy because of how strange it and also how unrealistic it is aswell.
- The intened target is for younger people from the ages of 10-15 vaguely, but i only just relised that was the age groupe I wanted to write for.
- In the story i'm writing from 3<sup>rd</sup> person because its writen in the perspective of some one that isn't acually in the story.
- I didn't particularly think about the structure.
- I belive its quite imaginative but could be more discriptive.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In his written reflection, Harry acknowledged that he did not consider the structure of

his writing during the composition process. His broad and generalised final reflection: *'I believe its quite imaginative but could be more discriptive'* suggests that he did not know how to specifically improve his writing. Furthermore, Harry suggested that writing improvement centred on the process of adding more description rather than by other means.

Similarly, when discussing his intentions as a writer in the interview, Harry found it difficult to give a clear explanation of his writing-choices. For example, when questioned whether he had given any consideration to his word or sentence choices, Harry stated that *'I like them to be interesting sentences sort of not just like boring and plain types I want them to be (2) interesting.'* Harry gave no further detail. At this stage, Harry demonstrated a vague awareness of the potential impact of language choices though he did not expand on what he had done to make his writing *'interesting'*.

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** none evident at this stage.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** During the interview, we discussed whether Harry planned his ideas before writing. Harry indicated that his way of organising his ideas was to use his immediate surroundings to help him organise and plan: *'Well yeah like in primary school people would always accuse me of cheating in like tests at English tests but I wouldn't like Miss knew that I would just look around and like think of what I should write.'* When asked whether he planned his ideas in his head or on paper, Harry stated *'I usually like to plan in my head.'*

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** No use of planning but generated ideas by drawing on his immediate surroundings. No evidence of redrafting during the writing process.

## 4.2.1) Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing:

### 4.2.1a) Action Research Cycle One

Tank Land

Fun for all the recrutes

Introduction

Role up and role out for an epic adventure of the words first Tank Land, Fun for all the recrutes. Embark on awsome rides and atractions for all ages.

At Tank Land we go all the way for our rides and [REDACTED] such as the Tank Floom. If you don't know what a Tank Floom is its basicly a ~~mor exstreamful~~ EXSTREAM log floom with a Real, Steal, Tank aqua Tank and Ready your sick bag because for other Exstream rides like the: Thrill seaker (2 minuet long ride, goes Roler Tank And many many more..

Scatered over Tannk Land there are other atractions for people who aren't adicted to the constant thrills, there are food stalls like "Tanky Chips that specalise in potatoes and other foods that taste good and are good, And and for people who have (135 words) had enough of the healthy foods we have 5 sweet shops around the centere of Tank Land near the giftshop in the centere of the park.

In this extract, there was evidence that Harry had tried to transfer some of his new knowledge into his own writing with varying degrees of success.

Whilst using three verbs of movement: *'embark'*, *'scattered'* and the phrasal verb *'roll up'*, Harry had not focused on using verbs of motion to describe the movement and sensation created by his theme park rides. Instead of using these verbs of movement, he reverted to using noun phrases: *'constant thrills'*; *'an epic adventure of the words first Tank Land'* and *'a mor ~~exstreamful~~ EXSTREAM log floom with a Real, ~~Steal, Tank aqua Tank~~'*. Perhaps Harry used a familiar strategy which he knew helped to build descriptive detail, rather than select verbs to help give a different layer of descriptive information.

However, Harry did use two imperative sentences in the opening of his text: *'Role up and role out for an epic adventure of the words first Tank Land, Fun for all the recrutes. Embark on awsome rides and atractions for all ages.'* His choice of the phrasal verb *'roll up'* was suggestive of a circus or theme park situation and therefore pragmatically appropriate for the genre, audience and purpose, whereas his relatively formal word choice of *'Embark'* did not fully match his more informal choice of *'awsome'*.

Furthermore, it appeared as if Harry had tried to use a conditional sentence - though it was syntactically unsuccessful: *'If you don't know what a Tank Flooom is its basicly a mor ~~exstreamful~~ EXSTREAM log floom with a Real, ~~Steal, Tank aqua Tank and Ready your sick bag because for other Exstream rides like the ...'~~*. This sentence would have been more successful if Harry had not explained what a log floom was and omitted the clause: *'its basicly a mor ~~exstreamful~~*

*EXSTREAM log floom with a Real, Steal, Tank aqua Tank and' and instead written: 'If you don't know what a Tank Flooom is, Ready your sick bag...'*

Harry did use a sentence starting with a non-finite clause: *'Scatered over Tannk Land there are other atractions for people who aren't adicted to the constant thrills.'* However, whilst the sentence would syntactically read better if he had omitted 'there', it is evidence of his developing awareness of sentence variety and verb choice. The past participle *'scattered'* suggests to the reader that there are many other non-thrill-seeking activities to choose from, therefore demonstrating his awareness of the link between word choices and the intended audience and purpose. Part of the assessment brief was to remember that whilst theme park webpages are essentially selling adrenaline-packed experiences, they also have to cater for secondary audiences with differing age groups and interests.

Despite this being a persuasive text, Harry only used the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person possessive pronoun twice. However, he did manage to convey a sense of audience address through his direct use of imperative sentences.

Finally, in the text, there was evidence of Harry rereading and amending his word choices as he wrote, demonstrating that he has some ability to self-monitor his work. However, these amendments are relatively simple, and he does not always notice when some sentences are syntactically difficult to read.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** imperative sentence constructions, noun phrases, conditional sentence, past participle at the start of a sentence and the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun.

#### 4.2.1b) Action Research Cycle Two

I drop my foot on the rotting wateloged step.

I wonderd wether it would hold my wait, and wether it would disintey beneth me.

Bang!

The large angled door pushed to a close by the evening wind banishing the moonlight from entering.

I stumble back up the Growstesk stairs to find out wether it would move but my eforts were to no avail.

"How am I going to see. How am I going leave. How am I going to live."



I think to my self in distress. "Nothing usually gets fixed, why?"

I proceed to acend down the old stairs to whiness the mounds of old possesions in boxes or on the ground.

A small glimmer of light peers through the dirty glass and shines apou the cold stone grownd.

"How did it turn into this?"

As this is the opening of Harry's narrative he only used a few of the linguistic features we had explored during lessons because the central focus was on building tension in a narrative. The main feature implemented in his own writing was the use of interrogatives to demonstrate his character's internal thought processes. This is a language feature used in the one of the model texts by Darren Shan. Even though Harry did not use a question mark to indicate its interrogative function, it is evident that the succession of 3 anaphoric sentences are questions to demonstrate the character's building fear: *"How am I going to see. How am I going leave. How am I going to live."*

Harry had also emulated Darren Shan's one word exclamatory and onomatopoeic minor sentence: *'Bang!'*. However, in terms of text cohesion, whilst the subsequent sentence outlines what closed *'the large angled door'*, his verb choice of *'pushed'* did not fully match the force conveyed by the word *'Bang!'*.

Again, as in the earlier examples, Harry built much of his description through noun phrases. Additionally, whilst it was not a specific feature explored in this unit, Harry used a wider range of verbs to convey movement which was a key focus in the last scheme: *'drop my foot', 'stumble' and 'acend'*. This suggests that he was continuing to consider his verb choices as he wrote.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** use of **interrogatives** to demonstrate a characters' internal thoughts, **anaphora**, **exclamatory minor sentence**, **noun phrases** and interesting **verbs of movement**.

#### 4.2.1c) Action Research Cycle Three

At the dead of dusk 53 year old Dr Roylott attempted to assassinate his 31 year old daughter using the Indian Swamp Snakes venom to prevent him from losing a large sum of money and occured at their family house of Stoke Moran.

~~At roughly 12 o'clock last night Dr Roylotts mysterious plan was born appart by Sherlock Homes and Dr Watson as they~~

Late last night Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson evacuated Mrs Helen Stoner from her sleeping quarters armed ready to atack Dr Roylotts horrible scaled beast and was able to shoo the snake back into his room and his own weapon was the end of him.

This all began At half 6 in the morning on the day of the attack when Mrs Stoner seeked the help of the very observant Sherlock Holmes accompaied by Dr Watson to solve a mystery.

Helen belives that her life is in danger due to her hearing the metalic clangs and a high pitch whistle that her sister (Julia Stoner) said she herd when she was almost at the point of death.

In the above extract, Harry still seemed to have issues with syntax and sentence boundaries, particularly in the opening sentence.

Under the title 'planning' Harry had written '*Plan turned to chaos*'. As he had no headline for his article, it could be assumed that this was his intended headline. If this was the case, he emulated the tabloid style of using noun phrases for headlines. Harry tried to embed some of these into the body of his text.

- 53 year old **Dr Roylott** attempted to assassinate his 31 year old daughter using the Indian Swamp Snakes venom to prevent him from losing a large sum of money
- the metalic clangs and a high pitch whistle that her **sister** (Julia Stoner) said she herd when she was almost at the point of death.
- the very observant **Sherlock Holmes** accompaied by Dr Watson to solve a mystery.

There was an inconsistent use of verb tenses, starting in the past tense, then moving on to the present: '*Helen belives that her life is in danger due to her hearing the metalic clangs and a high pitch whistle that her sister (Julia Stoner) said she herd when she was almost at the point of death.*' At this point he momentarily slipped into the present tense, a similar pattern in Jody's newspaper article.

Harry also used two adverbial sentence openings: '*At the dead of dusk*' and '*late last night.*' '*Late last night*' would be used in real news articles and so might be something he was familiar with. The second adverbial sentence opening replaced

an earlier one: *'At roughly 12 o'clock last night Dr Roylotts mysterious plan was born appart by Sherlock Homes and Dr Watson as they'*. This sentence was crossed out and therefore demonstrated Harry's developing awareness of language use and suitability as *'Late last night'* is more formal than *'At roughly 12 o'clock last night.'*

<b>Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:</b> expanded noun phrases and adverbial sentence openings.
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## 4.2.2) Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews

### 4.2.2a) Action Research Cycle One

I have writen in <del>different</del> a vary of writing styles to fit the audiences im going to be writing for: "New to 2015,, Tank Lands paintball...the Tanky cups that gently revolve round in a perfect circular motion.
---

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** Harry's reflections on his writing at this stage were very brief and his only real (yet broad) observation was focused on audience, demonstrating his pragmatic awareness that a theme park webpage would have differing audiences: *'I have writen in ~~different~~ a vary of writing styles to fit the audiences im going to be writing for.*

Whilst the majority of his 135 words focused on the thrill of theme park rides, the assessment brief also required students to consider how to target younger children and their parents. As a result, there was a need to vary language choices to persuade parents that there were age appropriate rides. Harry's second bullet point referred to an aspect of his writing which fell outside of sample word count but nevertheless indicated his knowledge of amending his word choice to suit a younger audience *'Tanky cups that gently revolve round in perfect circular motion.'* However, he did not explicitly reference his language-decisions or reflect on why the change of language might be relevant.

During the interview, Harry seemed to be self-critical regarding his linguistic choices. When asked why he did not like what he had written, he stated that *'just cos the way I like put out the sentences I didn't particularly like it'*, yet, as in the

previous interview, he was not able to articulate what he was unhappy with. Furthermore, when asked how he tried to improve his writing, Harry stated: '*I made it way more descriptive and interesting...I used better words to describe things (.) I describe things a bit more.*'

When questioned further and asked to elaborate on how he conveyed a sense of thrill to the reader, Harry still seemed to struggle to find the specific words to outline his intentions and language choices: '*um well your throat will clench up.*' As a result, Harry needed some further prompts to encourage him to verbalise his ideas in more specific detail:

**Teacher:** So when you say your throat will clench up what's that trying to show reader  
**Harry:** that like you're sort of (.) well I sort of get the feeling when I am about to throw up that just round here where my glands are (.) they close up a bit and I feel like I'm going to throw up  
**Teacher:** so that sort of physical sensation you get on a ride  
**Harry:** yes I did I did teacups but tanks that go round um perfect circular motion to create a peaceful atmosphere for your younger children  
**Teacher:** anything else you feel you did particularly well on that piece of writing  
**Harry:** um (8) I tried to put in as many army puns as possible like **roll up roll out for an epic adventure**  
**Teacher:** so actually you think about your play on words  
**Harry:** yes Lewis actually before we stared gave me that one

Here, Harry demonstrated some metalinguistic knowledge as he was able to express how he had considered the need to convey the physical sensation created by the rides. Furthermore, only at the final stage, do we learn that his ideas were scaffolded through discussing his initial plans with his friend and that this discussion led to his use of the pun.

#### **Use of Grammatical Metalanguage: Sentences**

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** Even though Harry identified that he had drawn on a previous real-life experience to help him generate his ideas (visit to Diggerland with a friend), it was also evident that he found it quite difficult to articulate his writing decisions. Harry was questioned further regarding his self-monitoring:

**Teacher:** so when you write do you reflect on what you are writing as you go or afterwards (.) do you think about it

**Harry:** well like I try to think about it like as I go and also afterwards but like then afterwards but then afterwards I can put a different word in there which is better (4) um I do think about it a lot when I'm going through that's why I take time to think about it before I write the sentence um (.) yeah that's sort of what happens in other lessons when they're trying to make us like write stuff and then I'm sort of I can't because I'm still thinking about how and plan out the sentence just so its not just oh like something something happened with the dog or this happened (.) something random .

Harry's comments suggested that he likes to take his time over his writing-decisions and not be rushed which can be problematic in assessment conditions. In class, Harry often found it difficult to get started and liked to think things through carefully before starting the writing process.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** only one or two simple corrections made during the writing process.

#### 4.2.2b) Action Research Cycle Two

##### Commentary

Within this section of writing I have used writing techeques like...

Anaphora and anadiplosis (Anaphora a bit more than Anadiplosis) and also short sentences to speed up the Reading and create tension which is good when writing I like this sort of genre because if moments go fast it doesn't allow you time to think meaning the moment hits you in one go.

I have also used one word sentences to tell the reader something (e.c. "Ting". Meaning the light has come on and you write about what has happened after. Adding upon the last sentence, you can use words that are also sounds to do a similar thing. ("Ting...The hanging light above me begins to flicker...the shadows run away from the light). An example of how I used words that are sounds to exsplain things to the reader and does it in a very hidden maner making the writing more interesting and draws them in to the story.

Genre = I think I did understand the genre fairly well but could be better if I followed the story that I had planned but my story had a fault due to it not giving me the accesability for certain writing teqneces. But I think its sort of spook my story.

Audience = The audience of my writing is roughly 13 – 17 years which I think I have met but possibly my age range should go one way (older or younger)

Perpose = the perpose of this writing is to entertain and to scare but now its more to spook.

Perspective = I have writen this story in 1<sup>st</sup> person to give the apearance that you are in the body of the character (nameless) and is most fitting with this type of writing.

Structure = The writing that I have produced has different sentence lengths, and punctuation to make tension also make the sentences better with their layout.

Did Not Finish Style = The style of the writing is short sentences and single word sentences, and made up of words not as used as they are today. And had very little comas to allow the sentences to be shorter.

I feel most confident about using short sentences and writing techneques like anaphora.

I feel least confident about using Adverbial phrases and onomatepia.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** This time Harry extended his reflective comments and tried to explain some of his language choices. Whilst this commentary demonstrated Harry's growing metalinguistic knowledge, he did not fully expand his points to explain the relevance of certain linguistic choices. For example, he indicated that his use of short sentences helped to increase the pace of his narrative – yet he was not able to clearly articulate this or give examples to demonstrate his point. However, Harry tried to explain his decisions to use sound related words:

'I have also used one word sentences to tell the reader something. (etc. "Ting". Meaning the light has come on and you write about what has happened after. Adding upon the last sentence, you can use words that are also sounds to do a similar thing. ("Ting...The hanging light above me begins to flicker...the shadows run away from the light). An example of how I used words that are sounds to explain things to the reader and does it in a very hidden maner making the writing more interesting and draws them in to the story.'

In the above extract, Harry is possibly trying to explain the effects of his post modification of the noun '*light*'. It might have also been useful for him to explore his use of ellipsis – which was another feature found in the model texts. However, his reference to the word '*Ting*' reveals a glimmer of Harry's metalinguistic understanding as he was aware that this is a sound-related word choice and is potentially effective in showing the reader what is happening in the narrative rather than simply explain it.

Harry acknowledged that he found sentence patterning such as anaphora easier to emulate as opposed to using adverbial phrases: '*I feel most confident about using short sentences and writing 'techniques' like anaphora. I feel least confident about 'Adverbial phrases' and onomatepia.*' This might be because understanding the composition of a phrase is possibly more challenging than understanding how to construct sentences. It is also interesting that he had identified onomatopoeia as an area which might need improving as many of his written texts demonstrated an awareness of a variety of language features used for phonological effect. Overall, the metalanguage uncovered during Harry's written reflection was primarily centred on labelling grammatical items rather than elaborating on them.

In terms of the metalinguistic knowledge revealed during the interview, Harry continued to speak about his language choices in a broad and non-specific way:

**Harry:** I (.) I (.) my vocabulary (.) I was trying to (.) I wasn't trying to make it sort of boring you might say like with how I wrote it because I tried to put in vocabulary that isn't used much in our age group and that's what I tried to do in most of the things that I write just so it is more interesting and that's why I think it wouldn't be as interesting for people being 13

**Teacher:** so vocabulary was one area you thought about (.) what about in terms of your structure or your style of writing or your sentence patterns

**Harry:** I was making sure I made sentences as short as possible just so because I could see other people's work where they would have like long paragraphs with like 9 lines or something which is a bit too much for this style of genre

Evidently, Harry showed a desire to ensure his writing was interesting. He also appeared to think that it was important to keep sentence and paragraph length short in this type of writing.

**Use of Grammatical Metalinguage:** During the interview, Harry makes reference to **short sentences, paragraphs, commas, vocabulary** as well as '**abnormal sentences**' which it appears he is referring to non-standard sentence constructions. His commentary extends this knowledge, by additionally citing **anaphora, anadiplosis, single word sentences, and adverbials.**

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** In the commentary, Harry referenced his planning but saw the content of his plan as not providing him with the opportunity to use a range of linguistic features: *'I followed the story that I had planned but my story had a fault due to it not giving me the accesability for cirtain writing teqneces. But I think its sort of spook my story.'* Perhaps this suggests that Harry was still driven by conveying the content of his narrative rather than considering the whole design and pragmatic elements of his writing. This theme was echoed during the interview when Harry stated that his plan had obstructed him from using a range of linguistic and grammatical variations:

**Harry:** yes I did (.) the way I had planned I couldn't use certain writing techniques as they couldn't fit in as smoothly

**Teacher:** such as

**Harry:** well (.) I can't actually remember these (.) it just fit into place a bit better than it would have if I had just went out and said where it was and things like that

Here, it appears that Harry was suggesting that the process of employing some of the grammar and linguistic features explored in the model texts, was in fact impeding his progression of ideas. Perhaps, at this point in his learning journey, Harry had not been able to fully acknowledge the relationship between style and content.

However, Harry did refer to the model texts and Marcus Sedgewick's use of short simple sentences to build tension:

**Harry:** it had quite short sentences and it was sort of quite brief in how it said things

**Teacher:** why do you think he chose quite short sentences because he didn't do it all the way through

**Harry:** yeah probably the reason why he did it was because it speeds up the speed of writing and

**Teacher:** did the speed reflect what was happening in the story at that point

**Harry:** yes it did cos it was quite a shock filled sort of moment and it tries to draw you in.

This suggests that as a writer, he was able to draw on his knowledge of how 'real writers' construct texts.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies: Planning** though sees it as restrictive and reference to **model texts**.

#### 4.2.2c) Action Research Cycle Three

##### **Commentary**

the audience for this piece of writing is adults as not many children read newspapers. The purpose is to give them reader information about the death of Dr Roylott it is also about Sherlock Holmes and how he solved the mystery case. Within my writing I used the what, why, when, where and how. Also I used noun phrases "53 year old Dr Roylott" and adverbs at the start of a sentence to tell the reader when it happened "Late last night". I also used quotes from different people. As it is telling about something which happened in the past I also wrote using the past tense "A local banker commented..."

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In this reflective commentary, Harry also referenced grammatical elements of his writing such as noun phrases and adverbs. However, he did not move on to explain why



the use of the noun phrase is important: *'I used noun phrases "53 year old Dr royloft" and adverbs at the start of a sentence to tell the reader when it happened "Late last night."*' Whilst he might state that as this article was reporting a past event and therefore he wrote using the past tense, this was not consistently the case as he did momentarily switch to reporting events in the present tense. Furthermore, whilst it was evident that Harry had some metalinguistic knowledge, it was less clear as to whether he fully understood why he was using different grammatical items.

During this interview, Harry explored a wider range of grammar and linguistic choices: adverbs such as, *'I put an adverb of sort of time late last night just there (4) basically I've said sort of where its happened where when (3) as in the 5 ws whats.'* He also made reference to his plan to use *'well designed verb tenses' and 'noun phrases'*:

**Teacher:** I see as your writing goal you've put down um noun phrases and adverbs of time (.) can you find a couple of them in there just just read them and show me what you have done  
**Harry:** (13) um is **late last night** one (2) um **at the dead of dusk**  
**Teacher:** yes (.) why are they important  
**Harry:** because it tells you when something happens instead of just say at 9 o'clock it's a nicer way to do it and also it mean (1) it tells them it tells reader when it happens but not exactly so like they can't really complain like if you said it was at 9 (.) but a witness said it was at 10 (.) it couldn't be anyone complaining that is was incorrect information

In the above extract, Harry demonstrated a generalised awareness of the impact of using time related adverbs. Further on in the interview, he stated that he was not *'good with verbs'* and struggled to articulate his ideas surrounding the construction of noun phrases:

**Teacher:** out of the language features that we focused on in this piece of writing there was a couple of things we decided to look at one was noun phrases one was adverbs of time and the other one was verb tense (2) which of those have you found the hardest to perhaps focus on  
**Harry:** um (3) probably noun phrases because um to (2) cos (2) to sort of extensively do like like to do them really well its difficult to do them if its mediocre its quite easy (3) and I found it quite difficult to do  
**Teacher:** to extend building on a noun  
**Harry:** like on both sides sort of instead of just saying the thing was d d d d instead of ddd the thing dddd

**Teacher:** and what about the (.) what kind of verb tense did you write in

**Harry:** (13) um I'm not good with verbs and stuff (.) I don't really understand them

However, he then stated that as newspaper articles tend to report past events, they use the past tense: *'writing about the past so its already happened so it's the past tense.'*

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** During the interview, there were several instances where Harry demonstrated his use of a grammatical metalanguage: **adverb, paragraphs, sentence types, verb tenses, noun phrases, past tense, future tense, present tense**. He also made reference to his use of **noun phrases, adverbs** and **past tense** in his reflective commentary.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** At the top of Harry's fourth assessment he wrote down some personal writing goals:

- *Using well distinguished verb tenses*
- *Implementing Noun phrases (mainly headline)*
- *Use who? why? where? when? and how? to make it detailed*
- *Fronting sentences to help with making writing more informative*
- *Range of sentence types to make writing more interesting*
- *Use quotes like real newspapers*

This demonstrates his awareness that there was an intended goal to work towards. The list indicated he had thought about the key components of a news article, for example, who, what, where, why and how, as well as showing knowledge of different types of language features which would be appropriate for this type of writing: noun phrases. However, he also listed: *'well distinguished verb tenses'*, *'fronting sentences to help with making writing more informative'*, and *'range of sentence types to make writing more interesting.'* These writing goals are still broad in focus, but they might have acted as reminders to vary sentences/sentence opening.

During the interview, we discussed the use of writing goals, planning and self-monitoring:

**Teacher:** I see you wrote some writing goals (.) what kind of goals did you set yourself

**Harry:** using well designed (.) well designed verb tenses (2) implementing noun phrases I mean in the headline and at the start (.) use who and where who why where when what how to um make it more detailed (1) um (2) use a range of different sentence types

\*\*\*

**Teacher:** did your writing goals help you keep focused when you wrote or did you did you look at them again did you keep them in mind or what did you do

**Harry:** I kept the majority of them in mind (2) I kept them all in mind and I just looked

Harry referred to his use of writing goals and there appeared to be a mixture of specific and generalised goals set. For example, '*well designed verb tenses*' is ambiguous and possibly unhelpful to Harry whilst writing. However, he indicated that he did refer to the writing goals throughout the writing process.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** evidence of **self-monitoring** during the writing process on original text as well as use of **planning/writing goals/prompts**.

### 4.2.3) Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge

#### 4.2.3a) Post Teaching Written Assessment

The door opened with a loud creek releasing the light into the shadow filled room.

The light revealed the decaying walls of the room.

A surge of fright ran down the mans spine resulting in him dropping his mop.

"Bang"

The cleaner never enjoyed going to this room! He gained his courage then knelt down and picked up his grey soggy mop that left a small puddle of water behind.

Through the dark door lay only blackness but fear allows your mind to wonder, especially when alone!

"Of course, theres no monsters in there. They're non existent."

He gently lowered one foot into the entrance of the door.

And slipped!!

He began to panic, beliving he had been captured by his nightmares as he flailed on. He fleot short of breath. But he started to reassess the situation and realised no harm was inflicted upon him.

In this final assessment, Harry used a range of verbs of movement to convey a more in-depth sense of movement or action:

- A **surge** of fright ran down the mans spine resulting in him **dropping** his mop.
- He gained his courage then **knelt down** and **picked up**
- He gently **lowered** one foot into the entrance of the door.
- And **slipped!!**
- He began to panic, beliving he had been captured by his nightmares as he **flailed** on.

In addition to this he also used a range of extended noun phrases:

- The **door** opened with a loud **creek** releasing **the light** into the shadow filled room.
- **The light** revealed the decaying **walls** of the room
- his grey soggy **mop** that left a small puddle of water behind.
- Through the dark **door** lay only blackness

Harry introduced a little more variety to his sentence types and lengths which was something new in his writing. In this text he started a sentence with 'But' to show contrasting idea: '*He fleot short of breath. But he started to reassess the situation and realised no harm was inflicted upon him.*' This sentence pattern is similar to Darren Shan's: '*The trees grew along both sides of the road home, making it very dark and dangerous for anyone who wasn't used to it. But Stanley had no fears.*' It is worth noting that Harry studied the Darren Shan text several weeks before this writing task.

In this extract Harry used an adverbial phrase of place: '*Through the dark door.*' This was the first time in the samples that he used this rather than an adverbial of time – which had been used regularly.

In the pre-test writing assessment, Harry used a lot of words for phonological effect. However, in this text the only word used (in the 135 word sample) is the onomatopoeic word '*Bang*'. Again this is a feature heavily used in Darren Shan's *The Vampire's Assistant*: '*Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. Snap*'.

In terms of noticing other linguistic or grammatical features not included in the coding frame, it was evident that Harry had also emulated another one of Darren

Shan's patterns where something is stated as if it were fact – which consequently leads the character and reader to question it. In Harry's story he wrote: *'Of course, there's no monsters in there. They're non existent.'* This is similar to Darren Shan's *'There were no monsters in the trees. Monsters didn't exist. Everyone knew that. Monsters weren't real'*. Harry also used minor sentences for effect – just as the model texts did: Harry used *'And slipped!'* whereas Shan used *'He smiled.'*

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** range of **verbs of movement**, **extended noun phrases**, **variety in sentence length** and **types**, **adverbial sentence opening**, opening a sentence with **'But'** to show a contrasting point from the one before and use of **minor sentences**.

#### 4.2.3b) Post Teaching Commentary and Interview

Within my piece of writing (The Room) I used lots of writing skills. But I noticed that in my writing the first day of writing I was writing in 3<sup>rd</sup> person and then second day it was in the 1<sup>st</sup> which isn't the best for the piece but in addition I missed a day of work due to reception duty. It could be changed to fit into the 3<sup>rd</sup> person view but at this point I don't have enough time, and was a complete accident.

In my writing I used verbs of movement "As he flailed on the floor...my heard spun with great speed." and verbs of movement are used to tell the reader how something is performed (movement).

Within my writing I used Anaphora.

**Grammatical Metalinguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** Harry's final commentary reflected on some of his language choices, but he was more focused on explaining some of his errors as a result of his absence during the assessment procedure. He acknowledged that this led him to make errors in terms of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective but also indicated that he did not reread his work when completing the task.

However, Harry focused on demonstrating his knowledge of using different verbs to convey movement and inform the reader of how something is to be performed: *"As he flailed on the floor...my heard spun with great speed."* Harry explains this by stating *'verbs of movement are used to tell the reader how something is performed (movement).'* Because the assessment was broken up for Harry due to illness and then reception duty, he did not have a single block of time to complete the task, and the commentary was very rushed which was evident in

his limited response. At the end of the commentary, he stated that he used anaphora but without elaborating on this use and intended impact.

During the final interview, Harry selected an interesting sentence: *'sometimes I have daydreams sometimes I have bad dreams sometimes I have nightmares.'* I then questioned him further regarding this linguistic choice:

**Harry:** I've used um (8) it's not anadiplosis its anaphora  
**Teacher:** so did you end it with anaphora  
**Harry:** yes  
**Teacher:** what was the impact of that  
**Harry:** um it sort of (8)  
**Teacher:** why did you decide to do that  
**Harry:** well it's a very useful writing technique cos it sort of um (3) I know what it does but I just don't know how to say it (.) it improves your writing by (5) I I don't know how to say it but it improves your writing and I can't remember (2) I had a good reason  
**Teacher:** well you've got the repetition of sometimes (.) what kind of thing are you trying to get across  
**Harry:** um (7) I I know this but I just (5) this is really irritating

This hesitancy and apparent inability to explain the impact of his language choices suggested that whilst he knew that it might be a 'good' strategy to vary his writing he was not able to verbalise why this might be the case. Further on, Harry explored some of his other language choices:

**Harry:** um I used just the word **bang** um (4) **a surge of fright ran down the man's spine resulting in him dropping his mop (.) bang (.) the cleaner never enjoyed going into this room.**  
**Teacher:** so what did you do there  
**Harry:** I used a word which is a sound (6) it's a noun (4) a verb of sound (.) is it  
\*\*\*  
**Teacher:** do you want to give me an example of that  
**Harry:** **of course there's no monsters in there they are non-existent**  
**Teacher:** so his internal thinking  
**Harry:** yeah so it's more human (8) **why is this room so empty why is this room so desolated why is this room so discarded**  
**Teacher:** so what have you done there  
**Harry:** I've used anadiplosis again  
**Teacher:** anaphora  
**Harry:** anaphora sorry  
**Teacher:** and also are they questions

**Harry:** yes

**Teacher:** so what's your intentions at that point (.) to show the reader what

**Harry:** cos people question themselves if they do something and it can often be because they are

Whilst Harry found it initially difficult to label some of the linguistic features, he did manage (with a little prompting) to explore his writing in more detail. He was able to verbalise some of his intentions in terms of impact on the audience as well as showing knowledge of the genre. We continued to discuss some his design choices by exploring some of the language choices he was most proud of:

**Harry:** um I like this bit **I look all around me in the mysterious room at all four walls and I begin to believe the area was shrinking (.) paint on the walls started cracking and peeling (.) I swung the door wide and rushed out the door with haste (4) walls crumbled behind me and the pain in my shoulder returns and I stumble I stumble on the ground looking at the wall opposite to the door**

**Teacher:** so why do you like that section

**Harry:** just because it sort of doesn't tell you exactly what happens at the start but it sort of evolves and then you realise oh yes like the room is disappearing that's why the door disappears

Another reoccurring pattern which emerged in other interviews was that Harry viewed focusing on grammatical and linguistic structures in his own writing as an additional add-on – something which is in addition to the writing process. When asked if he found anything difficult about this writing task he stated that:

**Harry:** (8) probably anadip (5) probably using one word which is followed by another

**Teacher:** the anadiplosis

**Harry:** just because it doesn't really work with most sentences so it is quite difficult to find words that actually fit

Interestingly, whilst this interview might have revealed Harry's growing grammatical metalanguage, his metalinguistic reflections were less secure as he frequently found it difficult to verbalise and justify his linguistic choices. However, he did show more willingness to engage in a conversation about his own writing and appeared happy to share examples of his work.

**Use of Grammatical Metalinguage:** In his commentary, Harry refers to his use of **verbs of movement** and **anaphora**.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** Throughout the interview, we discussed self-monitoring on two different occasions:

**Teacher:** when you wrote this one did you monitor (.) did you set yourself writing goals or did you think about them in your head or write them down

**Harry:** I sort of set myself sort of the same writing goals as that one to try and use noun phrases which was a bit more difficult cos just because it's a bit more difficult to do it like this whereas it's easier to do it in newspapers

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**Teacher:** and when you wrote this piece did you actually monitor when you wrote did you sort of self-monitor reread (.) the thing is I know you were away so you didn't get to complete it so you have to pick it up the next time you were in because you'd been away did that cause a problem for you

**Harry:** yes it did (.) quite a large problem (3) basically it started off in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person and went into the 1<sup>st</sup> person

**Teacher:** what would have helped make a difference there

**Harry:** if I had took my time a bit more but I didn't really have time to take

One of the potential problems with the second part of this extract is that I asked too many questions in one go and did not allow Harry time to answer the question regarding self-regulation. But it did appear that Harry felt that having more time to write would have made a difference to him. It is also interesting to note that Harry switched from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> person perspective which perhaps indicated that he did not reread his writing before restarting the writing process during the next lesson. This in turn, might suggest weak self-monitoring skills.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** use of writing goals and self-monitoring discussed.

#### 4.2.4.) Summary of Harry's Findings

Phase	Evidence of Linguistic Transfer in own Writing	Evidence of Metalinguage in commentaries and interviews	Evidence of Self-Regulation Strategy
Pre Teaching	<b><u>Pre-Teaching Knowledge:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noun phrases</li> <li>• Selection of words for phonological effect</li> </ul>	None evident at this stage.	No use of planning but generated ideas by drawing on his immediate surroundings.



			No evidence of redrafting during the writing process.
At this stage, Harry found it difficult to articulate his linguistic choices. His comments were often vague and generalised.			
Cycle 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Imperative sentence constructions</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>conditional sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>past participle at the start of a sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sentences</b>	Only one or two simple corrections made during the writing process.
Whilst Harry transferred some of the linguistic items into his own writing, he continued to struggle with verbalising what he did and why during the writing process. His comments were still broadly focused and vague. He focused on what he did not do well rather than what he did.			
Cycle 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>interrogatives</b> to demonstrate a character's internal thoughts</li> <li>• <b>anaphora</b></li> <li>• <b>exclamatory minor sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs of movement.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>short sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>paragraphs</b></li> <li>• <b>commas</b></li> <li>• <b>vocabulary</b></li> <li>• <b>'abnormal sentences'</b></li> <li>• <b>anaphora</b></li> <li>• <b>anadiplosis</b></li> <li>• <b>single word sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbials.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Planning</b> though he viewed it as restrictive and reference to <b>model texts</b>
During this cycle, there was more evidence of Harry's growing metalinguistic knowledge but there were still occasions where he found it difficult to elaborate and therefore labelled grammatical items without giving any further exploration.			
Cycle 3	<b>Expanded noun phrases</b> <b>adverbial sentence openings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adverb</b></li> <li>• <b>Paragraphs</b></li> <li>• <b>sentence types</b></li> <li>• <b>verb tenses</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>past tense, future tense, present tense</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases,</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbs</b></li> <li>• <b>past tense</b></li> </ul>	Evidence of <b>self-monitoring</b> during the writing process on original text as well as use of <b>planning/writing goals/prompts</b>
Again, whilst there was evidence of Harry's use of a grammatical metalanguage, there were several occasions where he found it difficult to articulate his design choices.			
Post Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verbs of movement</b></li> <li>• <b>extended noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>variety in sentence length and types</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbial sentence opening</b></li> <li>• opening a sentence with <b>'But'</b> to show a contrasting point from the one before use of <b>minor sentences</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verbs of movement</b></li> <li>• <b>anaphora.</b></li> </ul>	Use of <b>writing goals</b> and <b>self-monitoring</b>
During this final assessment, Harry was beginning to show glimmers of being able to verbalise some of his linguistic choices, but it was not always consistent as there are moments where he appeared frustrated when not being able to articulate the impact of a particular linguistic item.			

Summary: Throughout the research cycle, Harry has transferred a range of different grammatical items into his own writing and has developed his use of a grammatical metalanguage. However, he has found it difficult to verbalise the impact of these linguistic items. He recognised that their usage might be 'good' but found it difficult to say why.

Table 16: Summary of Harry's Findings

## David

### 4.3.) Profile of David – Lower Attaining Student

Learner Profile	5.3.1 David - Assessment profile	
David was a lower attaining student who entered year 8 with a teacher assessed level of 4a. Whilst his target for the end of year 8 was a 5b, my teacher's assessed level was in fact lower than this as he was awarded a 5c as an overall English grade (includes reading and spoken English). It is worth noting that his KS2 writing score was a level 3 and his year 7 CAT Verbal SAS was 103. Orally, David was a relatively strong member of the class and could be relied upon to make some perceptive comments in whole class discussions. He did find organising himself a particular challenge, as well as preparing himself for assessments. However, he was positive, enthusiastic and willing to give new tasks and learning experiences a go.	KS2 Writing Score	3
	Yr 7 CAT Verbal SAS	103
	End of Year 7 level	4a
	SEN Status	N
	End of Year Attendance	94.4%
	Pupil Premium	No
	Year 8 Writing Assessment Levels	
	<i>Pre-test</i>	4a
	<i>Theme Parks</i>	5c
	<i>Narrative</i>	5b
	<i>Newspaper Article</i>	5c
	<i>Post Teaching</i>	5c
	<i>End of year 8 level</i>	5c

Table 17: Profile of David

### 4.3a) Pre-Teaching Written assessment

#### The Room

I'm sat whistling passing time I don't know where I am the last time I saw a normal human was when I was making my amazon walking through the rainforest (TV programme) then all of a sudden my life flashed before my eyes as a rope took my feet high up into the canopy I was hanging for some few hours when a man with white stripes on his face walked climbed up to me

and started talking nonsense then took me to some tree houses like a village then put me in a room with a tree growing through it and tied my hands together round the tree and left.

That evening some one like there spiritual leader came into the room and was speaking my language she said-~~wy~~ “why did you come” a few gaurds came in ~~and~~ and replied “wasn’t my fault I fell in your trap.”

In David’s first pre-teaching assessment, it was evident that he chained his ideas with ‘*then*’ and took a linear and sequential approach to his narrative. This was also evident through his use of adverbial phrases of time at the beginning of some of sentences: ‘*then all of a sudden.*’ Additionally, David also found it difficult to identify sentence boundaries. There are occasions when he wrote in sentences, but had not punctuated them and there were also occasions when he chained sentences through the use of ‘*then*’ or ‘*when*’.

However, David used a few verbs of motion, for example: ‘*climbed*’ and ‘*hanging*’: ‘*I was hanging for some few hours when a man with white stripes on his face walked climbed up to me and started talking nonsense...*’

He also used some descriptive detail through the use of short noun phrases:

- Normal **human**
- my **life** flashed before my eyes as a **rope** took my feet high up into the canopy
- white **stripes**
- some tree **houses** like a village
- a **room** with a tree growing through

The second noun phrase: ‘*my life flashed before my eyes as a rope took my feet high up into the canopy*’ demonstrated David’s ability to weave figurative descriptive detail into his writing.

#### 4.3b) Pre-Teaching Commentary and Interview

##### Commentary

The story is a kind of real like horror.

The person I wanted to read this is a person that could help.

The perpose is one man was in a forest and wanted help.

I didn’t think about anything else.

I don’t now the structure or what style but I was writing in first person.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In his first critical reflection, David revealed that he did not really give any prior thought to what he wanted to write before beginning the task. Furthermore, he acknowledged that he did not think about the structure or the style of writing; however, he was able to identify that he wrote in the 1<sup>st</sup> person and that his chosen genre was ‘*a kind of real life horror.*’ However, it was also evident that David had confused who the intended audience of his text was; the statement ‘*The person I wanted to read this is a person that could help*’ suggests that he associated the audience with the imaginary audience of his first person narrator (the man who wanted help) rather than the actual audience of his text.

During this interview, David continued to demonstrate little, if any, explicit metalinguistic understanding as he was unable to refer to any of the language features he had used in his writing or explain what the intended effect was on the reader:

**Teacher:** and do you ever think about or when you wrote this task did you ever think about the words or your sentences or how you are going to write it

**David:** at the start I did a basic mind-map of who what where when and then I just started writing

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** none evident

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** Despite David suggesting that he created a ‘*basic mindmap*’ before writing, this was not evident on his assessment sheet. Additionally, David contradicted this comment by earlier stating that he thought through some ideas in his head, then started writing: ‘*I started to think about what I was going write where I was (.)but then after I thought of that I just started writing and my ideas came.*’ His comments suggested that at this point, he was thinking and writing simultaneously. When questioned as to what aspect of his writing he felt most proud of, he stated that: ‘*I thought umm I came out with the idea pretty...where am I...quickly and I wanted to get writing (.) well quite fast umm because sometimes I just don’t think of an idea and I just start just doing nothing for quite a while.*’ Towards the end of the interview, he reiterated this by stating: ‘*again the idea was what I feel proud of (2) how I managed to keep writing was also a good thing for me.*’

**Use of Self-Regulatory Acts:** None evident at this point

### 4.3.1) Transfer of Explicit Grammar Teaching into Writing

#### 4.3.1a) Action Research Cycle One

Twin Towers

The worlds best theme park. The only theme park with the best rides and unrivled amounts of fun for the whole family.

Twin Tower

15+ The most exciting pulse rising ride you have ever been on. It will take you 2 Towers 200 feet high buildings. You will come out of the top of one building then you will dive down 150 ft to the ~~bo~~tt-bottom of the other one. Do you DARE! (15+).

Twin Drop

If you dare. Rise slowly 50ft then fall. Rise 100 ft then fall. Cross the 50 ft bridge looking down at ~~the~~ your fellow family sawarks to 300 ft. Then plunge at 60 mph into the depths below (15+).

**What else**

There will be lot of places where you can have food and there will even be an arcade and free wifi in indoors areas restaurants ect.

David used a range of verbs of motion to convey a sense of movement to the reader:

- you will **dive** down 150 ft
- **Rise** slowly 50ft then **fall**
- **Rise** 100 ft then **fall**
- **Cross** the 50 ft bridge **looking down** at ~~the~~ your fellow family
- Then **plunge** at 60 mph into the depths below (15+).

All of the highlighted verbs have been selected to possibly help illustrate to the reader the kinds of movements to be experienced whilst on these rides. Three examples are also imperatives which act as a command to the reader and are preceded with the pragmatic taunting of '*If you dare.*' Perhaps David had intended to combine these to make a conditional sentence. However, the 3 imperatives work together to give a repetitive pattern to his writing. The final example uses the word '*plunge*' which reinforced the impression that these rides were fast paced and exhilarating.

David also made use of personal pronouns by directly addressing the reader as 'you' and 'your' (7 'you' and 1 'your'). It appeared that David had given thought

to his audience and addresses the reader through his use of a fun rhetorical question: '*Do you DARE!*'. It seemed that whilst David demarcated this sentence's boundary with an exclamation mark, rather than a question mark, he understood the pragmatic use of this sentence; it was to tempt and almost goad the reader into wanting to experience these rides. This was further reinforced through his use of capital letters which emphasises the goading of 'DARE'.

Furthermore, it appeared that David had considered how to structure his writing as he used several subheadings to help guide the reader. This was something frequently used in the model texts and is a common structural tool in writing to inform and persuade. Here, in this extract, David used the sub-headings to inform the reader that 2 of the sections focus on different rides ('*Twin Towers*'; '*Twin Drop*') whereas the final heading: '*What else*' suggests to the reader that there was much more to see than just the rides. This indicates that David was aware of the need to vary his writing to make it easily accessible for the reader.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** range of **verbs of movement**, **imperative sentence constructions** and use of **2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun**.

#### 4.3.1b) Action Research Cycle Two

It was around midnight I was walking from the pub, it was pitch black the street lights were flickering above me. A shimmer of light flashed across my eyes then. BANG! all the street lights were off it was pitch black. I searched for my phone. It wasn't there. Behind me a bush rattled. I was terified but curious. What could this be? Suddenly I snapped my eyes head back in the front of me two eyes were ~~standing~~ glaring at me. It was like staring into an empty soul. I asked him who he was, I could just make out a figure he was about 5ft 6 inch very small his hands were against his back he said in a low voice "no where to run now." I heard an engine start up but it was as power ful [REDACTED] loud enough to be a car but it was a .....

In this third assessment, it is clear that David was still struggling to demarcate sentence boundaries as many of his sentences are linked by commas. However, in terms of his use of language or grammatical features used, David implemented a range of features explored in the model texts.

In the opening to his narrative, David used adverbial phrases of time and place to open 3 of his sentences:

- *It was around midnight*

- *Behind me a bush rattled*
- *Suddenly I snapped my ~~eyes~~ head back*

This range of adverbial phrases demonstrates a shift from his simple and sequential adverbs of time used in his pre-assessment task: ‘*when*’ or ‘*then*’. As a result, the use of these adverbial phrases possibly demonstrates his growing awareness of how to relay extra layers of meaning to the reader as well as pragmatically understanding the need to vary his writing in order to make it more interesting and engaging to read.

Additionally, it appeared that David was continuing to think about how verbs can be carefully selected to convey a sense of movement: ‘*Suddenly I snapped my ~~eyes~~ head back in the front of me two eyes were ~~standing~~ glaring at me*’ and ‘*Behind me a bush rattled*.’ These verbs are of further interest because they also have phonological qualities which help convey a sense of sound to the reader, as does the emphatic and one-word sentence ‘BANG!’ As a result, it seems that David had been influenced by the writing of Darren Shan texts where similar strategies were used, eg, ‘*Bang!*’ or ‘*Crunch*’.

Another feature which David had absorbed from reading the model texts, was the use of a series of short emphatic sentences:

*‘I searched for my phone. It wasn’t there. Behind me a bush rattled. I was terrified but curious. What could this be?’*

Again, this is similar to the Shan and Sedgewick texts. David completed these series of short sentences with a rhetorical question to demonstrate to the reader the persona’s unease with the situation. This pragmatically helps to build tension and alert the reader to the idea that something is not quite right. This is a potential signal of David’s growing awareness of authorial intent.

<p><b>Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:</b> adverbs of time and place, verbs of movement, one word exclamatory sentences and use of series of short simple sentences.</p>
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### 4.3.1c) Action Research Cycle Three

#### Another one bites the dust

Slippery snake strikes again. Doctor Roylott's deadly plan back fires in an unfortunate turn of events. Dr Roylott's plan of killing both his step daughters with the ████ venom Deadliast snake individual back fires with the untraceable venom injected into Dr Roylott with the needle like teeth.

Dr Roylott's plan to kill his daughters just before their marriage is a clever idea to conserve money and Dig an early grave for both yourself and your family.

Dr Roylott's plan to kill his daughters would have worked if it wasn't for the mischievous, meddling Sherlock Holmes.

Dr Roylott's past ~~sud~~ suggests that it wouldn't be surprising if he did kill his daughter Julia Stoner because in his records it shows that he went to jail in India for suspected murder. And his wife also died in suspicious circumstances.

David's opening to his newspaper article demonstrated his awareness of the play on words often used in headlines: *'Another one bites the dust'*. The word 'bite' was a reference to a snake bite which links to the Sherlock Holmes story. David also used a similar sentence for his first opening sentence, almost acting as a sub-heading: *'Slippery snake strikes again'*. As well as being an example of a noun phrase, this second sentence uses sibilance possibly for phonological effect. This almost telegraphic way of writing is a common feature of newspaper headlines as is alliteration and play on words. This was something students also explored during lessons.

Furthermore, David appeared to have focused on using noun phrases as a way of enabling him to convey key elements of information:

- *deadly **plan** back fires in an unfortunate turn of **events***
- *Dr Roylott's **plan** of killing both his step daughters with the ████ venom Deadliast snake individual back fires with the untraceable **venum** injected into Dr Roylott with the needle like teeth.*
- *mischievous, meddling **Sherlock Holmes**.*

David's use of noun phrases extended the detail in his writing. By modifying the noun 'plan' with 'deadly', David has pragmatically influenced the reader by suggesting that Dr Roylott's actions were life-threatening, before the reader has had a chance to find out more information, enticing them to want to read on.



In the second bullet point, David used a noun phrase to explain how the snake's venom entered Dr Roylott's body: *'the untraceable **venum** injected into Dr Roylott with the needle like teeth.'* Here, as readers, we are given extra information: what kind of venom it was, who it was *'injected'* into and how. He could have just written 'Dr Roylott was bitten by a snake', but instead, David has crafted a noun phrase centred around the noun *'venom'*.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer: noun phrase**

### 4.3.2) Articulation of metalinguistic knowledge: Commentaries and Interviews

#### 4.3.2a) Action Research Cycle One

##### Commentary

I have tried to vary my writing from adults to young children  
 The purpose of this text is to advertise a themepark  
 To persuade people to come to my themepark  
 By in the adults section using words like plunge and in the childrens section using words like glide.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** There was a marked difference between the metalinguistic knowledge articulated during the reflective commentary and interview. In his commentary, David's comments were brief. However, his comment regarding how he tried to persuade an adult audience by his use of words like *'plunge'* demonstrated his growing metalinguistic knowledge. This reflection indicates David's growing awareness of the need to vary language use for different contexts.

However, in terms of his interview, David gave a more detailed outline of his language and grammar choices. His main focus was to explain how he adapted his language use to suit the different audiences (depending on the type of ride):

**David:** Er say in one of the rides was say a children's ride I put **gliding or prancing through the air** or something like that

**Teacher:** why did you do that why did you use **gliding or prancing**

**David:** so just to make people think that (.) just really want to go there (.) it's a really nice place and really enjoyable

**Teacher:** do you remember what those types of words are (.) **gliding and prancing**

**David:** they're motion words (.) imperatives

**Teacher:** they weren't imperatives but when you said motion words

**David:** *inaudible*

**Teacher:** yes they were weren't they (.) do you remember what they were particularly

**David:** I can't remember

**Teacher:** they were verbs weren't they

**David:** oh yeah

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**Teacher:** so what did you do to actually really persuade the audience to go on that ride

**David:** Err I used words like **plunged into depth** there's a bit like a mini pool at the bottom so you go through it (.) umm yeah I put words like **plunge** and **if you dare** and stuff like that

In the extract above, even though David recognised the words '*gliding*' and '*prancing*' as motion words, he did not label them as verbs. However, he does show some awareness of the possible impact his word choices might have on the intended audience. This is an interesting finding because even though David frequently struggles to 'label' the grammatical items used, he does appear to be able to verbalise some of his design decisions. This contrasts with Harry, who can often 'label' linguistic terms yet has difficulty articulating the thought processes underpinning his language choices.

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage:** reference to **motion words**. There is an incorrect labelling of **present participle** as an **imperative**.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** Towards the end of this interview we discussed the writing process. David explained that he found it difficult to think of an initial idea: '*I struggle to get the first idea then if what I am going to do next that's the idea I really struggle with*' but at the end of the interview, David expressed a sense of satisfaction and stated that he was '*quite proud about that that I managed to do that so well.*'

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** none evident

#### 4.3.2b) Action Research Cycle Two

##### **Commentary**

In this story one man was walking home and he found some one watching him.

In this story I have used verbs of sound and verbs of motion. I used an onomatopoeia. This isn't my best piece of work because I didn't do much planning.

I used a lot of words to build tension slowly instead of getting to the point.

I haven't used similes or metaphors in this piece of writing. I could have extended the piece of writing instead of ending it at hospital.

At the end I started to copy bits that had written before.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In his reflective commentary, David stated that he used a range of verbs of motion and onomatopoeia but did not give any evidence of this to reinforce his point and demonstrate his knowledge. However, he gave more detailed explanations during the interview, probably because he was prompted to do so. When discussing how he managed to convey a sense of fear or tension to the reader, David cited his use of onomatopoeia and verb choice:

**David:** I know I used onomatopoeias for the **light flickering** as one and well I used verbs of sound um from that as well (.) so it's all kind of verbs like that that'll bring the reader in

**Teacher:** so you used lots of verbs associated with sound and also there are other types of verbs I noticed you used

**David:** er verbs of movement (.) um (2) say you heard rattling from the bush and your neck snapped back at something else (.) that's all part of verbs of movement and sound

**Teacher:** and why would that be important

**David:** it's important because if you weren't using it (.) say **you looked at a bush** and then your eyes looked back isn't not as detailed as **your neck snapped back staring at something**

Here, David demonstrated his growing metalinguistic knowledge as he talked confidently about how a single choice of a verb could convey a certain message to the reader and explained the differences between the word choices of '*looked*' and '*snapped back*'. Towards the end of the interview, David asserted that his use of verbs was the element he felt most proud of in his text.

Further on in the interview, David also referred to some of the linguistic features of the model texts:

**David:** anadiplosis is the end of a sentence starting um with the (.) well the end of the sentence (.) the word at the end of a sentence then you start with the word at the beginning of the sentence

**Teacher:** yeah and why do you think a writer would use those

**David:** um well its again to build up tension but it's (2) um (.) really to go on back to the thought of what's going to happen to the character in the story

**Teacher:** so if a sentence said **I looked around and there was nothing full stop nothing as far as the eye could see** (2) by using that anadiplosis by repeating that word **nothing** (.) by ending a sentence and starting a sentence with it (.) what impact does that have

**David:** um it gives the reader a bit more um of a vision (.) say as it said um **nothing** then **nothing as far as the eye could see** it gives the reader a bit more detail in what to vision or what to see in their head

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**Teacher:** and do you remember anaphora what that was

**David:** anaphora is starting (1) two or three sentences with the same word (.) at the start of a sentences

**Teacher:** and what would be the impact of that or why would a writer chose to do that

**David:** one of the extracts (2) that we read the anaphora word was **something** (.) it gives you a lot more um detail of what that something is (.) it was **something was watching me** (.) **something big** and **something um** (.) but you could really (.) you knew more about what that something was then just saying something was watching me in a different sentence

**Teacher:** it built up the idea actually that it was something and he didn't know what that something was (.) and what about the adverbs because we did look a little bit at adverbs of place or time (.) do you remember that

**David:** ahh words like beneath or after

In the above extract, David demonstrated his growing knowledge of a range of grammatical and rhetorical items. Even though he stated that he was unable to use anadiplosis (because he was unable to put it into a sentence), he was able to verbalise what it was and how to use it, as he was with anaphora. This suggested that he had not only added these two words to his metalanguage but that he was able to verbalise how to use them and was beginning to secure his knowledge of their potential impact as a writer's tool. He was also aware that there are different types of adverbs and in this instance, he referred to time and place.

**Use of Grammatical Metalanguage: verbs of sound and verbs of motion and anaphora, simple sentences and anadiplosis**

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** In his commentary, David admitted that he did not plan his writing: *'This isn't my best piece of work because I didn't do much planning.'* It also appeared that David perceived his lack of planning as part of the problem and why he did not feel that this was a strong piece of writing.

This is a theme which reoccurs during the interview, as David indicated that if he were to rewrite this text, he would have wanted to plan his ideas in more detail:

**Teacher:** so did you plan your ideas before

**David:** I planned a couple of my ideas and then once I done those ideas I didn't have much to do so it kind of repeated itself a bit

**Teacher:** so do you think next time plan your ideas in a bit more detail

**David:** yeah and go on my ideas so instead of one scene or scenario where lots of things happen I should have a bit more scenarios where lots of things happen not just one

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**Teacher:** so planning was one issue (2) now maybe when you wrote it (.) when you write do you actually go back and read whilst you are writing or do you only read it again at the end

**David:** um (2) say if I am writing I'll just write the event if I hit a point where I'm not sure what to do next I'd read it through then I'd see what I can do

**Teacher:** so you do check as you go along

**David:** yeah that's if I'm stuck

**Teacher:** if you are stuck

**David:** yeah

**Teacher:** so would you say sometimes you don't reread as you write

**David:** ah no sometimes I don't

Here, whilst David is suggesting that he was aware of the importance of planning his ideas, as well as self-monitoring during the writing process, this had not necessarily become an embedded practice in his writing activities.

He also explained that on reflection, he would have made several changes to his story: *'I would um(.) short simple sentences definitely I would (.) I would use anadiplosis a lot more (.) something again (.) something (.) and I would use a bit more beneath or on top of or something like that a lot more.'* It is possible that he has identified these areas to develop because they are also linguistic items we discussed during the interview and are therefore familiar to him at that point in time.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** evidence of simple **self-monitoring** during the writing process with one or two instances of crossing words out.

#### 4.3.2c) Action Research Cycle Three

##### **Commentary**

I ha I have thought about making my ~~write~~-writing a newspaper instead of a story and to make the start interesting.

**Grammatical Metalanguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** In the fourth commentary, David gave very little information regarding his intentions as a writer as his reflection was only one sentence long. However, as in the previous research cycle, David was more willing to explain his design choices during the interview. The interview opened with David explaining what the writing task was and how this impacted on his language choices:

**David:** um with the newspaper article we focused a lot on getting the sentence types like the noun phrases in there (.) we also focused on making it more past tense so like **late last night** and adverbs of place like **beneath** and um alliteration and that kind of stuff to make the reader interested in reading

**Teacher:** you talked about noun phrases (.) can you tell me about a noun phrase you used and why that might be important

**David:** um noun phrases like say if I just said **Dr Roylott killed his daughter** um (.)it would be very boring but if I said **cunning Dr Roylott killed his unfortunate daughter** it makes the reader want to read on more as it makes it more interesting

When asked to give some further examples, David said, *'32 year old Helen Stoner devastated after she found the killer of her beloved sister was her step-father'* and stated that noun phrases made the writing more interesting and less dull to read. These above comments suggested that David had increased some aspects of his metalinguistic understanding and was able to verbalise his language and grammar choices.

At one point David made reference to the use of verb tenses, in particular, his use of the past tense: *'if you're not writing in the past you'd be writing in the present or the future and there is very little future in newspapers so it would be very hard to say Dr Roylott is killing his daughters (.) that's not really going to affect the reader as much.'* Again, this demonstrates his growing awareness of grammar use and genre.

We then moved onto discuss David's use of time related adverbs and emotive language:

**David:** so say Dr Roylott when he killed his last daughter I said **Dr Roylott's devious plan** but then I said **after this devastating desperate act of selfishness** (.) um shows the reader when it happened and the steps and stages that they happened in

**Teacher:** yes kind of like the chronology (.) the order they occurred (.) actually that sentence is quite interesting can you talk a little bit more about that one

**David:** after the devastating desperate act of selfishness it has become obvious that this act was simply for wealth and money (.) it's very descriptive of what kind of person Dr Roylott is (.) it shows that his act was horrific and that it should never be repeated

**Teacher:** so what words have you chosen to influence the reader of that kind of opinion

**David:** um words **devastating** and **desperate** definitely show that Dr Roylott isn't the kind of person to lay back and wait for a time (.) um he uses a very good plan (.) caught be Sherlock of course

In the above extract, David was able to identify some of the emotive words used (though he did not categorise them as 'emotive words') and explain why they were used and how they might influence the reader.

At the end of the interview, David stated that he felt that he had made the most progress with the use of noun phrases: *'definitely noun phrases (.) I've made a lot of progress with them (.) because at the beginning of the year I was completely oblivious to them.'*

#### Use of Grammatical Metalanguage: sentence types, noun phrase, past tense and adverbs

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** During the discussion, David was asked if he set himself writing goals to which he replied *'in this writing um I tried to make sure it was mostly in the past tense and to make sure all of it was descriptive and interesting to read um the first sentence I used alliteration to draw the reader in a bit more and I used quite a good title.'*

We also discussed his idea for his headline: *'Another one bites the dust'*. David indicated that it was a *'reference of a song my dad likes to play'* indicating that he drew on his wider cultural knowledge as well as his knowledge of puns. He explained its relevance to the story by stating that *'well **another one bites the dust** it shows that someone has been killed so it is relevant to the um the story well the newspaper (.) Julia Stoner's death.'*

After discussing his use of generalised writing goals, we discussed whether he self-monitored during the writing process. David acknowledged that self-

monitoring his writing was not something he used to do, but was now something he actively tries to focus on:

**David:** after the first paragraph (.) the first paragraph would be as descriptive as possible then the second paragraph I looked to see if I could put noun phrases and different sentence types in the writing and then every two paragraphs I just checked that I done good writing so

**Teacher:** before you move on

**David:** yeah

**Teacher:** so do you find that is something you used to do or have you tried to think about that a bit more frequently

**David:** I've tried to think of it a lot more frequently then well now because I used to just write and write and write without setting goals without thinking about I was doing so now me doing this has really helped my writing

As mentioned above, David's critical commentary was really short, so we discussed the reasons behind this as well as the potential impact of this reflection on him as a writer:

**Teacher:** what is it about the commentary because yours is quite short (.) is it just something you found difficult or just ran out of time

**David:** ran out of time and the commentary is really good because it's not just using (.) its showing how you know you can use the writing and how you know the effects of the different things like noun phrases

**Teacher:** has it made you think a bit more about the language you use or do you think it's made no difference

**David:** um it has definitely made me think about the language cos um (.) well earlier on in the year if I had wrote a newspaper article it wouldn't be nearly like this it would have been more of a story than to a newspaper because I wouldn't have used noun phrases or adverbs of place and time

In this reflection, whilst David recognised the importance of noun phrases and adverbs of time, there seemed to be an underlying message that by adding these grammatical elements to a piece of writing, it would automatically make it 'good'. However, he also indicated that he was beginning to understand that different grammatical or linguistic items might be more appropriate for particular genres.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies: writing goal, self-monitoring**



### 4.3.3) Post Teaching Grammatical Knowledge:

#### 4.3.3a) Written Assessment

Meet Ben. ~~Ben~~ Ben is an interesting boy with the attention span of a cat. He went to school one day fairly boring as usual. When he was talking to his friend Lewis, he got called in to reception, now Ben was the kind kind of child that always got in trouble with it was him or not. And this is where it gets interesting. Ben as told goes to reception as normal and she said "Theres a box for you from [REDACTED] we don't know. It'll be home waiting for you.

After that the incredibly bored boy who had just come for the most boring place on earth came home and saw this crate and was instantly drawn to knowing what was inside. Was it a person? Stinks like a dead one. Was it explosives? Why would some one wait to kill him overall ?????.

In this final assessment, David used a wider range of language and grammar patterns than in his first pre-teaching assessment. He opened his story with a minor imperative sentence: *'Meet Ben'*. This immediately introduced the reader to the main protagonist – Ben. Furthermore, as the following sentence started with 'Ben' this was also an example of anadiplosis where the writer chooses to use the last word of a sentence to start the next sentence.

Additionally, this sentence also sets the tone and formality of the story as it was clear that the narrative takes a conversational tone as if the narrator was speaking directly to the reader. David's use of short or minor sentences was something which was frequently used in Darren Shan's *'The Vampire's Assistant'* and had clearly influenced his range of sentences and length.

David also varied his writing through the addition of interrogatives to demonstrate a character's internal thoughts:

- *Was it explosives?*
- *Was it a person?*
- *Why would some one wait to kill him overall ?????*

This was again something used in the model texts for example, in *'The Vampire's Assistant'* Stanley heard a noise whilst walking home late at night: *'That had sounded like a stick breaking — but how could it have been?'* Similarly, in David's extract the protagonist not only asked the questions but also gave a brief answer to them – demonstrating his thought process: *'Was it a person? Stinks like a*

*dead one. Was it explosives? Why would some one wait to kill him overall ?????.'*

Furthermore, despite this only being a short extract, David used adverbs of time to start his sentence: *'When he was talking to his friend Lewis...'* and *'After that the incredibly bored boy...'* This was a significant improvement from his first narrative at the start of the year where he primarily chained his sentences with *'then'*.

Noun phrases were also used, for example, *'the incredibly bored **boy** who had just come from the most boring place on earth came home and saw this crate and was instantly drawn to knowing what was inside.'* This extended noun phrase is built around the noun *'boy'* and provided the reader with a range of information regarding what kind of character he is – easily bored and inquisitive. This pattern regarding how bored he was reoccurs throughout the extract, demonstrating David's narrative progression.

**Evidence of Linguistic Transfer:** anadiplosis, minor sentence, short simple sentences, noun phrases, adverbs of time, and a series of questions to show a character's internal thoughts.

#### **4.3.3b) Post Teaching Commentary and Interview**

*For this story I ~~used~~ tried to make the genre more for teenage thriller ~~because we~~ and young adult. I have used lots of descriptive words to describe the character in detail. I left it on a cliff hanger so if I did another piece.*

**Grammatical Metalinguage and Metalinguistic Knowledge:** Similarly, to the previous commentary, David's final reflection was very short and contained broad and generalised comments regarding his writing. Whilst he made references to some contextual factors such as genre and audience, he had not identified how this knowledge impacted on his linguistic choices.

However, during the interview, David spoke mainly about his linguistic choices. He explained that for this task, he started by making a simple plan of what to include in his narrative:

**David:** Um The Box I I did quite a simple plan um what I hoped to use um **the darkness (.) the trees above battling bushes to the side (.)** then I started off (.) I used quick short simple sentence to begin it to introduce the main character

**Teacher:** do you want to give me an example

**David:** so this first sentence was **meet Ben (.) Ben with the attention span of a cat**

**Teacher:** do you remember what that is called

**David:** ono...onomatopoeia

**Teacher:** when you've got (.) you've ended a sentence with the word Ben do you remember what we call that

**David:** anadiplosis

\*\*\*

**Teacher:** what's quite interesting about that though ending the sentence with the same word you start the next one

**David:** because it gives you more information about that (.) you are extending your writing more so if I said **meet Ben** and something like he went to school today or something it's not as interesting as **meet Ben Ben is something something** it extends what you know about the character

Despite David unintentionally using anadiplosis at the start of his story (Meet Ben. Ben...) he was able to give a broad explanation of its potential impact on the reader. This was a linguistic item he referred to during his previous interview and it appears that he had taken this knowledge on board and was beginning to consciously or unconsciously use it in his own writing.

When asked to identify any other interesting elements of his story, David identified his use of an adverb:

**David:** um for the second paragraph I started with an adverb of time **after that the incredibly bored boy who came from school** and so on (.) that was that paragraph (2) this isn't my best piece of writing (.) I tried to include everything I could from the plan but I just couldn't get anything there it just didn't work in the sentences I tried to make

Whilst he identified his use of an adverb to open a sentence, David did not expand on this point and moved on to discuss the difficulties he had faced when completing this assessment. However, he did briefly refer to his use of questions to show a character's thoughts as well as a verb of motion: *'I did get in two questions one after each other (.) for inner thought (.) like who sent it (.) why was it there (.) and (1) verbs of motion.'*

**Use of Grammatical Metalinguage:** short simple sentence, anadiplosis, adverb of time, questions and verbs of motion.

**Self-Regulatory Acts:** When discussing his self-regulation strategies, David referred to his use of a plan: *'Um The Box I I did quite a simple plan um what I hoped to use um the darkenss (.) the trees above battling bushes to the side (.) then I started off I used quick short simple sentence to begin it to introduce the main character.'*

Further on in the interview, we discussed his use of self-monitoring:

**Teacher:** did you monitor your ideas as you wrote (.) did you reread it as you write  
**David:** for this piece I just wrote (.) I didn't really go back to my plan as much as I wanted to  
**Teacher:** and do you think that has made a difference  
**David:** a very big difference because for my newspaper article I looked back at the plan every so often in this I just wrote and I think newspaper's a better piece of writing than this by a long shot  
**Teacher:** why do you think that is  
**David:** well this I couldn't get the sentences to work they just wouldn't get them to fit in (.) I used two questions for inner thoughts where a character is thinking but none of the sentences just work and I was just writing freehand  
**Teacher:** what was the problem here was it actually having an idea for a story line not thinking through an actual possible plot or a story line or trying to get language features in and you just didn't know how to do it which was it  
**David:** language features I just couldn't find any space for them to fit in and then whilst not having a full story line just going of one idea and coming back to it

Like Harry, David seemed to see the act of consciously thinking about his grammar and linguistic choices as something which gets 'added on' and has to 'fit' in rather than being a part of the act of writing. This was something David echoed again later in the interview:

**Teacher:** thank you David (.) is there anything else you'd like to say about your story  
**David:** no its very dull (.) I did get in two questions one after each other (.) for inner thought (.) like who sent it (.) why was it there (.) and (1) verbs of motion  
**Teacher:** so you did put some things in  
**David:** yeah I just couldn't get most of it (.) most of the language features in

At the end of the interview, we discussed whether he enjoyed the writing task, and this led us back to a self-regulation focus:

**David:** I enjoyed writing it but when I looked back on it I realised it wasn't a good piece of work  
(2) yeah I just couldn't get the work done

**Teacher:** so do you think (.) was this kind of a realisation after you finished it or when you were writing and you weren't sure what you could have done to improve it after a certain point

**David:** during the writing I turned over the page after that I couldn't find anything to put in (.) I couldn't find anywhere to write (.) to do any more anadiplosis or anaphora I couldn't find any places to write alliteration or onomatopoeias (.) it just got very dull after midway

**Teacher:** and in terms of your storyline did you know how to develop it

**David:** er the storyline (.) I had the idea that he was called into reception but after that it just fell down

Whilst David suggested that he did reread his work as he was writing, he seemed to find it difficult to make alterations or redraft as he wrote. Part of this might be as a result of completing the task in timed conditions. He was more aware of completing his work than he was of need to self-monitor and redraft his use of language and grammar. This was further reinforced by his earlier comments regarding his difficulties associated with '*fitting in*' his new grammatical knowledge. This suggests that he thought that if he was not monitoring his writing frequently enough, it could become a problem to make large-scale alterations in order to improve his writing at the end.

**Use of Self-Regulation Strategies:** use of **planning** and his reflection of now knowing how to improve his writing during the actual writing process suggests that he was **self-monitoring** though not necessarily knowing how to move forward.

#### 4.3.4) Summary of David's Findings

Phase	Evidence of Linguistic Transfer	Evidence of Metalinguage	Evidence of Self-Regulation Strategy
<b>Pre Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>Sequential use of <b>adverb</b> 'then'</li> <li>Interesting range of <b>verbs of movement</b></li> </ul>	<b>none evident</b>	None evident at this point
At this point, David did not really demonstrate any metalinguistic awareness or use of a grammatical metalinguage.			
<b>Cycle 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>range of <b>verbs of movement</b></li> <li><b>imperative sentence constructions</b></li> <li>use of <b>2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun</b>.</li> </ul>	reference to <b>motion words</b> . There was an incorrect labelling of present participle as an imperative	None evident

During the interview, David was beginning to demonstrate an awareness of his metalinguistic knowledge though he was not always able to label a grammatical item correctly.			
<b>Cycle 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>adverbs of time and place</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs of movement</b></li> <li>• <b>one word exclamatory sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>use of series of short simple sentences.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>verbs of sound and verbs of motion</b></li> <li>• <b>anaphora</b></li> <li>• <b>simple sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>anadiplosis</b></li> </ul>	evidence of simple <b>self-monitoring</b> during the writing process with one or two instances of crossing words out.
Whilst David's commentary was short, he revealed his metalinguistic knowledge during the interview as he was able to explore the potential impact of some of his linguistic choices.			
<b>Cycle 3</b>	<b>Noun phrases</b>	<b>sentence types, noun phrase, past tense and adverbs</b>	<b>writing goal, self-monitoring</b>
There was some evidence of labelling grammar items in the commentary, but David demonstrated his growing metalinguistic knowledge during the interview, in particular, his explanation of verbs of sound and his reflections on 'real texts'.			
<b>Post Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>anadiplosis</b></li> <li>• <b>minor sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>short simple sentences</b></li> <li>• <b>noun phrases</b></li> <li>• <b>adverbs of time</b></li> <li>• <b>series of questions to show a character's internal thoughts</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>short simple sentence</b></li> <li>• <b>anadiplosis</b></li> <li>• <b>adverb of time, questions</b></li> <li>• <b>verbs of motion.</b></li> </ul>	<b>use of planning</b> and his reflection of knowing how to improve his writing during the actual writing process suggests that he was <b>self-monitoring</b> though not necessarily knowing how to move forward
In the final interview, David did reveal some of his metalinguistic knowledge though perhaps not quite as much as in previous interviews; however, it did appear that David is thinking more consciously about his linguistic choices as he writes than at the beginning of the research cycle.			
<b>Summary:</b> It is evident that David's use of a grammatical metalanguage and metalinguistic knowledge improved throughout the action research cycle. Not only had he transferred a wide range of linguistic items into his own writing, but he had also developed his ability to articulate some of his design decisions as well as comment on the linguistic choices of real writers. He was beginning to see the value in planning his ideas before commencing the writing process but the initial generation of his ideas was still presenting him with difficulties.			

Table 18: Summary of David's Findings

#### 4.4.) Case Study Conclusions

Several interconnected themes have emerged from this findings section. Firstly, the data demonstrates that the students were able *to transfer* their new linguistic knowledge into their own original writing (with varying degrees of success). Secondly, they have developed the use of a grammatical metalanguage. However, whilst there is evidence of an expansion in their implicit metalinguistic knowledge and use of a grammatical metalanguage, the findings also suggest that students' ability to explicitly verbalise their reasons underpinning their

linguistic decisions is less secure. As the highest attaining student in the sample, Jody demonstrated some metalinguistic awareness at the start of the teaching sequence and throughout the research cycles; however, even though this knowledge developed as she expanded the repertoire of grammatical items implemented in her own writing, it also became apparent that Jody was not consistently able to articulate the reasons surrounding some of her linguistic choices.

Furthermore, Harry and David exhibited very little metalinguistic awareness at the start of year 8 but their learning journeys took slightly different routes. Harry was able to label and list a range of grammatical items and implement them into his own work (although artificially at times); however, he frequently found the articulation of his linguistic choices frustrating and therefore demonstrated only broad and superficial understanding of the links between language and contextual factors. Whereas David, (the weakest writer in the sample), might not have had the breadth of a grammatical metalanguage at his disposal, but he did develop an ability to verbalise some of his design choices (and those of real writers) and link these to the potential impact on the reader. By the 4<sup>th</sup> interview, David was beginning to elaborate on his linguistic choices, in particular, his use of noun phrases and fronting sentences with adverbials.

There were also instances where both boys perceived some aspects of this new grammatical knowledge as an 'additional extra' because they *'couldn't get them in'* and therefore, it became evident, that they viewed the implementation of this new linguistic knowledge into their own writing as an imposition which impeded them during the writing process. The interviews revealed that there were occasions where both boys considered the content of their writing and their language choices as two separate entities rather than cohesively viewing them as two sides of the same coin. As a result, there seems to be a slight disconnect between the acquisition of grammatical knowledge and its cohesive employment in writing to contribute to and to shape meaning.

Finally, in terms of the impact of the self-regulation strategies, most students began to independently plan their writing (though often on a superficial level) and implement some kind of writing goal. Even though Jody was beginning to take

more responsibility for self-monitoring during the writing process, all of the students found this aspect, during a timed assessment, difficult. One of the strategies which seemed to be most beneficial to the students, was the use of model texts as most of them were able to make connections between what they had read and studied in lessons with their own writing choices.

Naturally, as an action-researcher, I need to reflect on my own actions and how they could have impacted on these outcomes. In hindsight, too many grammatical items were identified and explored during the teaching sequences, and therefore, students might have felt a sense of frustration when they were unable to employ the full range in their own writing. Furthermore, students were asked to complete their assessments in timed conditions which would have imposed certain constraints on them during the writing process: lack of planning time, not enough time to review and self-monitor, as well as there being little opportunity to fully reflect and redraft their written texts – things which I value as a writer.



## Chapter Five: The Discussion

### 5.1) Introduction

At the start of this research journey, I sought to answer the question: *Does the explicit teaching of grammar, with the use of self-regulation strategies, support the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge?* Whilst the simple answer is 'yes', students have developed their metalinguistic knowledge, the answer to the two sub-set questions is more complex:

- Does the explicit teaching of grammar with self-regulation strategies support students' ability **to transfer** their metalinguistic knowledge into their own writing?
- Does the explicit teaching of grammar with the use of self-regulation strategies support students' ability **to articulate** their metalinguistic knowledge?

In terms of the first sub-question, the evidence indicates that the students did **transfer** their new linguistic knowledge into their own writing. All the students produced work which included some of the new grammatical items explored throughout the action research cycle. However, whilst there is evidence of transfer, there were occasions when the implementation of new knowledge was not constructed in a sophisticated and meaningful way.

Furthermore, this study also revealed that the **articulation** of new linguistic knowledge was more problematical than its actual transfer. Whilst the students began to employ the use of a grammatical metalanguage, and whilst some students developed more confidence in terms of verbalising their linguistic decisions, there were equally occasions where language-choice justifications were weak and superficial.

Additionally, when measuring the usefulness or impact of the self-regulation strategies implemented by sample students, the evidence suggests that whilst they might plan, self-monitor and make revisions, these were often on a broad and basic level. However, it was apparent that students drew on their knowledge gained through reading and analysing the linguistic choices used in the model texts and emulated certain linguistic patterns in their own writing. As a result,

this discussion seeks to investigate these core findings in more detail by exploring them in the context of existing research.

## 5.2) Tracing the Theoretical Threads

As this study has highlighted the complexities underpinning the interdependent relationships between grammatical metalanguage and *the transfer* and *articulation of metalinguistic knowledge*, it is necessary to unpick the theoretical threads which permeate the various conceptualisations of these linguistic components further.

To date, there has been little research into first language learners' metalinguistic understanding, in particular, students' abilities to reflect and explore aspects of their own writing (Chen and Myhill, 2016; Myhill and Newman, 2016). As a new researcher, unpicking the theoretical threads encapsulating the concept of metalinguistic understanding, is at first challenging, as these conceptualisations are infused with subtle similarities and differences. It is clear that part of this obscurity of meaning derives from how metalinguistic understanding is conceptualised in different academic fields (Camps and Milian, 2000; Myhill, 2016, Myhill and Jones, 2015; Jones and Wilson, 2016). Wang and Wang (2013:47) explain this conceptual diversity: '*Within the linguistic discipline, metalinguistic activity may be viewed as 'language about language', but within the psycholinguistic discipline, it may be referred to as 'language cognition', two separate constructs.*' As a result, before drawing further conclusions regarding the *transfer* and *articulation* of metalinguistic knowledge reported in this study, it is necessary to unravel this relatively opaque and multifaceted concept further; after all, there is a need to establish which theoretical lens is being used to determine students' metalinguistic progression.

Firstly, the literature indicates that metalinguistic understanding draws on two symbiotic components. Earlier works by Bialystok (1987:155-156), who explored metalinguistic development in bilingual learners, refers to these reciprocal elements as '*analysis of knowledge*' and '*control of processes.*' Essentially, in order to develop metalinguistic understanding, Bialystok specifies there is not only a need for a writer to know or recognise language patterns, but there is also

a need to incorporate and apply this knowledge into their own language use (Chen and Myhill, 2016:101).

However, subsequent definitions of metalinguistic knowledge specifically focus on the conscious and unconscious linguistic processes. For example, as mentioned earlier in the literature review (see pages 34-35), Gombert (1992) draws on the earlier works of the French linguist Culioli (1990), by adopting his term 'epilinguistic'. Distinguishing between the epilinguistic and metalinguistic stages, Gombert states that the preceding epilinguistic stage centres on the unconscious level of linguistic development whereas the metalinguistic stage operates on the conscious level (Myhill and Jones, 2015). He also describes this process as '*procedural*' and '*declarative metalinguistic knowledge*' with the term '*declarative*' further suggesting that this knowledge is verbalisable and can be articulated. As a result, what is '*conscious*' is conflated with what is '*verbalisable*', therefore distinguishing between what is '*conscious*' and '*unconscious*' knowledge along with what is verbalisable and non-verbalisable.

Moreover, the above conceptualisations distinguish between implicit and explicit knowledge, as well as equating explicit knowledge with that which can be articulated. Camps and Milian (2000) take a more nuanced approach to what constitutes explicit metalinguistic knowledge as they theorise that students can in fact have explicit metalinguistic knowledge whilst being unable to verbalise this knowledge. As a result, there is a suggestion here that students might be able to consciously select a grammatical item for a particular effect, but also be unable to explain why this specific item was selected or what its impact might be.

Similarly, and more recently, Myhill and Watson (2014) adopt the terms '*implicit*' and '*explicit*' metalinguistic knowledge with Myhill (2016:36) later distinguishing these components even further by referring to this knowledge as '*tacit*' and '*explicit*': being able to do something (through having '*tacit knowledge*') is not the same as being able to articulate and explain what has been done and why (explicit knowledge).

Whilst all of the above concepts focus on '*recognising and identifying patterns of language use*' (Myhill and Jones, 2015), there is also a sense of conceptual diversity underpinning metalinguistic understanding. However, it is this diversity which provides me with a range of discussion avenues. Bialystok's focus on '*analysis*' and '*control*' provides me with a framework to discuss students' control of the *transfer* of their metalinguistic knowledge. The concepts of the '*non-verbalisable*' and '*verbalisable*' or '*procedural*' or '*declarative*', as theorised by Gombert (1992), provides me with a context to discuss the *articulation* of their metalinguistic knowledge and whether there is evidence of conscious and deliberate application of new linguistic knowledge in students' writing, as well as indication of difficulties associated with the verbalisation of this new linguistic knowledge (Camps and Milian, 2000; Myhill and Watson, 2014; Myhill, 2016).

### **5.3) Metalinguistic Transfer and Control**

The findings in this study indicate that students were able to transfer their metalinguistic knowledge into their own writing. For example, in the persuasive theme park assessment students demonstrated their use of imperative sentences, verbs of motion and use of conditional sentences. In addition to this, students were able to extend their noun phrases to add extra descriptive detail in the newspaper articles as well as implementing a range of narrative components to convey a sense of tension in their creative writing texts:

#### ***Jody: Theme Parks***

*Scream, as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing from no where. Twisting and zooming around, your heart will stop as you escalate down into the black hole that leads to nowhere, spiraling out the other-side you will then start dipping and weaving across the park.*

#### ***Harry: Narrative***

*He gained his courage then knelt down and picked up his grey soggy mop that left a small puddle of water behind.*

*Through the dark door lay only blackness but fear allows your mind to wonder, especially when alone!*

**David: Newspaper Article**

*At the dead of dusk 53 year old Dr Roylott attempted to assassinate his 31 year old daughter using the Indian Swamp Snakes venom to prevent him from losing a large sum of money ...*

However, whilst this evidence indicates that the use of explicit grammar teaching contributed to the metalinguistic transfer of this new grammatical knowledge into students' own writing, issues concerning writer control were also evident. At this point, it is useful to refer back to Bialystok (1987:155) who explains that whilst the '*analysis of knowledge*' is centred on the '*ability to construct explicit representations of linguistic knowledge*' it is the '*control of processes*' which enables writers to consciously select and apply this knowledge. It appears that on occasions, whilst students in this study have been able '*to construct explicit representations of linguistic knowledge*', the quality of the implementation of linguistic knowledge has not consistently been monitored. For example, in the opening of Jody's newspaper article, she uses two sentences starting with the past participle in close succession as well as two sentences starting with the adverb, 'after':

**Intreigued** *Sherlock Holmes was called to the scene by Helen Stoner. While investigating he finds poisonous snake used as weapon against step daughters.*

**Destressed** *sister, Helen Stoner, arrives at the home of Sherlock Holmes to ask for his help to solve the crime of her sisters death.*

**After** *deciding on a plan, Helen Stoner left Sherlock's House and agreed to meet later on in the day. **After** leaving, Sherlock had realised that Helen had been followed as her step father was quoted*

Whilst Jody has demonstrated her ability to transfer the grammatical knowledge identified and analysed in lessons into her own writing, there is clearly a lack of self-monitoring or awareness of suitability. As mentioned in the literature review, Hacker et al. (2011:154) argue that '*metacognitive monitoring*' is crucial and that the act of '*Reading, re-reading, reflecting, and reviewing*' are strategies which enable students to ensure that their writing is a '*production of meaning*'

(2011:157). However, in this study, it is necessary to remember that students were writing in timed exam-style conditions and there is a possibility that these external constraints could have impacted on writer-control.

Furthermore, Sharples (1999:21) argues that between the ages of 10 and 13, students are still '*developing the ability to articulate their thoughts while they write*' and that the process of reflection whilst writing can lead to a roll-back in terms of writing quality: '*The implications for the teaching of writing are disturbing: help children to become more mature, reflective writers and the quality of their compositions may well go down*' (1999:30). As a result, he suggests that as educationalists, we should recognise what students do '*differently*' not necessarily what they do '*better*' (1999:31). Whilst the above extract indicates that Jody did not reflect on the suitability of her linguistic choices, it does indicate a willingness to do something '*differently*.'

However, Jody was not the only student who demonstrated lack of '*control*' as all three students made linguistic or syntactical errors at some point in the research cycle and appeared to be unaware of whether their writing demonstrated a '*fitness for purpose*' (Cremin and Myhill, 2012:66). Similarly, to Jody, David also found conforming to a newspaper article's form and style difficult; however, this in itself is not surprising as it is a sophisticated form of writing. Sharples (1999:95) reminds us of the various difficulties presented to writers when trying to emulate a particular style of writing:

*'What makes style so difficult to copy is that all the constraints must be satisfied simultaneously, at the same time as creating meaning...writing in a given style involves more than just assembling the linguistic parts; they must be merged into a coherent flow of language that satisfies the general constraints.'*

Whilst many of the students in class found the journalistic style of writing difficult, it is also evident that David was unaware that some elements of his writing demonstrated a lack of writer control. For example, three consecutive paragraphs open with '*Dr Roylott*' and there was also an incident where he momentarily lost his formal and detached writer's voice:

*'Dr Roylott's plan to kill his daughters just before their marriage is a clever idea to conserve money and Dig an early grave for both yourself and your family.'*

David's direct reference to Dr Roylott by using the term '*yourself*' indicates that he has been unable to consistently control his writing and consider what is appropriate in this particular context. When exploring the role of '*appropriateness*' it is again useful to draw on Sharples (1999:41), who argues that the knowledge of what is to be considered '*appropriate*' is governed by '*constraint*'. Therefore, in order for students to ensure the '*content and style*' of their writing is '*appropriate to the writer's audience and purpose*', students need to demonstrate control: '*Constraints allow us to control the multitude of possibilities that thought and language offer. There are so many ideas that we might have, and so many possible ways of expressing them, that we have to impose constraint to avoid thinking and writing gibberish.*'

Evidently, whilst the students demonstrate many of the taught linguistic structures in their writing, indicating that some level of knowledge has transferred into their writing on at least an unconscious, procedural level, it is unclear as to what extent they have deployed these structures deliberately and consciously purely from analysing their writing (though there is some evidence of deliberate choice in the commentaries and interviews). In several cases the writing lacks control in that students use forms incorrectly, or inappropriately, which suggests either that they have used them unconsciously, or that their conscious choices are not yet fully embedded so that they can be used with confidence and sophistication. Therefore, what this research does highlight is that whilst *transfer of knowledge* has taken place, it does not necessarily mean that a secure understanding of suitable or effective linguistic application has also emerged through this process.

Evidently, enabling students to elaborate and extend their linguistic knowledge is a vital component in the journey towards metalinguistic understanding. Whilst this study attempted to support the transfer and articulation of this knowledge through the range of self-regulation strategies, the evidence for students' verbalisability lies in the form of the written commentaries and interviews. Therefore, it is important to consider how these two modes of articulation have

supported the verbalisation and elaboration of students' metalinguistic knowledge as well as how these findings relate to the current research in this area.

#### **5.4) Modes of Metalinguistic Articulation:**

In order to have knowledge of what is suitable and appropriate or '*fit for purpose*', students evidently need to have deeper metalinguistic understanding; but how can we support students to make this transition from knowledge or language implementation into explicit and conscious language use? As already identified, there is an established assumption that metalinguistic knowledge can be '*explicit*' and yet non-verbalisable at the same time and that it is the verbalisable element which develops students' metalinguistic understanding (Myhill, 2016; Myhill and Watson, 2014). An important finding in this study is the marked difference between students' written reflections on their own writing (as demonstrated in the commentaries) compared to their spoken verbalisations which are evident during the scaffolded interview process.

Jody's first interview indicated that she gave no consideration to her linguistic choices before or during the act of writing; and whilst she might have obtained the ability to identify linguistic patterns in her own writing by the end of the second research cycle, her justifications for her language choices were still superficial: '*I also used anadiplosis eg 'we all stopped. Stopped to look at each other and think what to do next.' This is used to create tension and create effect for the reader.'*' However, by the final assessment, Jody's reflective commentaries and interviews were more linguistically focused:

##### **Post Teaching Commentary and Interview**

**Commentary:** '*I used a series of short sentences such as 'waiting. Waiting. Waiting, for the train to arrive...' This makes the reader focus on those sentences because they are different from the rest.'*

##### **Interview:**

***Teacher:*** *so if you were thinking about any particular language feature that you've used or sentence pattern what can you find in your writing to tell me about*



**Jody:** *um for the like the short sentences I used waiting waiting waiting for the train to arrive and like (2) adverbs of time after something*

**Teacher:** *you know the waiting waiting waiting why is that an interesting thing to put into your writing*

**Jody:** *um cos it like focuses on what the person is doing cos like you're like repeating it and it's like the short ones*

**Teacher:** *is it like a one word sentence each one*

**Jody:** *yeah*

**Teacher:** *and what kind of impression were you trying to give the reader at that point*

**Jody:** *um that time wasn't moving very fast and they were just waiting*

In the above two extracts, it is evident that the process of engaging in a linguistically orientated conversation has supported Jody's metalinguistic verbalisation and her awareness of language as a '*meaning-making resource*' (Myhill, 2005:92). For example, in the interview, Jody is able to demonstrate more insight into how her linguistic choices relate to the contextual requirement of creating tension. This was a similar outcome for David, (the lower attaining student), who also found it difficult to reflect on his design choices but gradually found his voice during the research cycles. David's fourth commentary consisted of one sentence: '*I have thought about making my write writing a newspaper instead of a story and to make the start interesting*' whereas the interview revealed a lot more detail in terms of the decisions David made during the writing process:

#### ***Interview Four***

**Teacher:** *so you used lots of verbs associated with sound and also there are other types of verbs I noticed you used*

**David:** *er verbs of movement (.) um (2) say you heard rattling from the bush and your neck snapped back at something else (.) that's all part of verbs of movement and sound*

**Teacher:** *and why would that be important*

**David:** *it's important because if you weren't using it (.) say you looked at a bush and then your eyes looked back isn't not as detailed as your neck snapped back staring at something*

\*\*\*

*David: um noun phrases like say if I just said **Dr Roylott killed his daughter** um (.)it would be very boring but if I said **cunning Dr Roylott killed his unfortunate daughter** it makes the reader want to read on more as it makes it more interesting*

As David's spoken reflections are a lot more detailed and linguistically orientated than his short-written reflection, it is evident that the social interactional element of spoken language (with a question and answer format) has scaffolded David's capacity to reflect on his writing choices. This harmonises with other research which suggests that metatalk scaffolds students' thinking and articulation (Cremin and Myhill, 2012; Watson and Newman, 2017). Chen and Myhill (2016:100) explain that the process of engaging in metalinguistic conversations '*enhances students' knowledge about language*' (p.101). Similarly, Watson and Newman's (2017:392) recent study into first language learners' metalinguistic reflections, found that writing conversations between interviewer and student provided an ideal scaffold to support students' emerging metalinguistic reflections:

*'As well as modelling how to talk about effect as in the example above, interviewers also used questioning to draw out students' ability to explain the impact of linguistic choices, with strings of 'what' and 'why' questions used to focus students on particular features and provoke more fully elaborated explanations. This was also driven by an ethical concern to ensure that students' felt empowered by the conversation which pushed them to the limits of their ability to discuss language. This scaffolded talk appeared to have a significant impact on some students' ability to analyse or explain.'*

Whilst the interviews in this study were not initially intended to take the form of 'writing conversations', (they were initially designed for intervention purposes) it is possible, that had the discussions taken this format and been focused less on linguistic-labelling and more on language choices, that the students might have developed their metalinguistic reflections in more detail.

However, it could also be argued that this study's cyclical series of interviews provided a repetitive and familiar conversation structure which sequentially supported students' articulations and thus enabling the transition from implicit to explicit metalinguistic knowledge. As Cremin and Myhill (2012:111) state whilst reflecting on the importance of providing opportunities for students to talk about their linguistic choices:

*'Developing young writers' ability to talk about their language choices and the reasoning behind those choices helps make visible the richness and the possibilities of language, and at the same time allows writers to see that they have agency and ownership of the texts they create.'*

In many ways, Cremin and Myhill's assertion regarding developing students' *'ability to talk about their language choices and reasoning behind those choices'* has been central to this study. The dual identity of teacher-researcher has required me to encourage students to reflect on their linguistic choices in a more systematic way (due to the action research cycle) than perhaps I had done previously. As an English teacher, operating in an educational system which seems to privilege demonstrable evidence of students' progression, mainly in the form of written work, providing time for students to engage in meaningful collaborative talk is a challenge.

Furthermore, whilst the evidence in this study suggests that both David and Jody benefitted from the opportunity to engage in metalinguistic conversations, even if they took the form of being intervention-based rather than *'writing conversations'*, the evidence is less secure when analysing Harry's data. Harry's written commentaries were a mixture of description and linguistic item identification; for example, in the narrative commentary, Harry referred to a range of grammatical items but only in a broad and superficial manner: *'within this section of writing I have used writing techques like...anaphora and anadiplosis (Anaphora a bit more than Anadiplosis) and also short sentences to speed up the Reading and create tension which is good when writing...'* This generalised approach to exploring his own language choices is also evident during the interviews. In the interview following the first teaching cycle assessment, Harry tried to elaborate

on some of his design choices but found it difficult to give specific information: *'I made it way more descriptive and interesting...I used better words to describe things (.) I describe things a bit more.'* Harry's inability to elaborate on his writing continued throughout the different cycles and in the final, interview his frustration was evident:

***Harry:** well it's a very useful writing technique cos it sort of um (3) I know what it does but I just don't know how to say it (.) it improves your writing by (5) I I don't know how to say it but it improves your writing and I can't remember (2) I had a good reason*

Whilst it is important to acknowledge that metalinguistic knowledge can be demonstrated without the use of a grammatical metalanguage (Chen and Myhill, 2016:102) what is evident is that Harry found it difficult to clearly explain his decisions regarding his writing either in the written and spoken form. Even though he had implemented some of the grammatical items in his own works, he does not appear to have been able to articulate the reasons for his linguistic choices. As mentioned in the student profile in his case study, Harry exhibited several SpLD tendencies and it might be that he finds it difficult to articulate his thought processes in general, not just his linguistic ones. As he often appeared frustrated by his inability to articulate his design choices with ease, Harry might have benefitted from a more tightly focused questioning approach.

At this point, it is useful to draw on Love and Sandiford's (2016:204) recent Australian study which focused on teachers' and primary-aged students' meta-reflections on their linguistic choices. In this study, students explored a range of narrative-based model texts as well as being provided with opportunities to engage in dialogic talk. Love and Sandiford suggest that the use of metatalk enabled their students to verbalise their linguistic choices (p.215). However, what is particularly interesting about this study is how the interview process was scaffolded to support the development of students' metalinguistic reflections. For example, students in the study were interviewed in small groups, provided with the questions in advance of the interview, and were also given their annotated copy of their original text. As a result, it could be argued that these students were provided with more opportunities to engage with metalinguistic reflective activities

during the data collection process which together combined to systematically support the consolidation and internalisation of their new grammatical knowledge and metalinguistic reflections. Whilst both Jody and David were able to find ways to explore their writing in the interviews, it is possible that this tightly and explicitly linguistically-focused approach might have provided Harry with the scaffolded structure required for him to verbalise his linguistic choices. Furthermore, the process of being involved in group interviews would have also provided him with the opportunity to listen to the verbalisation of other students as well as provide an opportunity to share his ideas with his peers which might have been less daunting than to his class teacher.

### **5.5) Reducing the Cognitive Load: The Role of Self-Regulation Strategies**

Whilst this study primarily focused on developing students' metalinguistic knowledge, it also entailed implementing a range of self-regulation strategies. As writing is a cognitively demanding process (Myhill, 2011), self-regulation strategies can be adopted to aid these cognitive burdens. Whilst outlining the role of metacognition during the writing process, Myhill and Cremin (2012: 101) state that: *'Becoming an independent learner demands what psychologists call self-regulation...It is a powerful aspect of metacognition – it moves the learner from self-awareness of a problem to being able to solve the problem'*.

However, previous research into the impact of self-regulation strategies during the writing process suggests a diversity of outcomes. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that to date, much of the research on the role of self-regulation has been centred on students with learning difficulties (Graham, 1990; Graham and Harris, 1989; Graham and Harris, 1993; Graham and Harris, 1996; Graham, MacArthur, Schwartz and Voth, 1992). As Leins et al. (2017:81) remind us: *'The self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) model of writing instruction, considered an evidence-based practice, is an effective strategy for enhancing the writing skills of students with disabilities, such as learning disabilities or behavioral disorders, at the secondary level.'* Arguably, in the past, there has been comparatively less evidence regarding secondary-aged students operating in mainstream classes and therefore making direct comparisons with similar

studies is problematic. However, there are a few studies which merit further exploration in relation to the findings presented in this study.

Whilst the self-regulation findings reported in this study might at first appear disappointing in terms of impact, when viewed in relation to similar studies there are emerging threads of commonalities. For example, findings in this study indicate that the sample students found the process of planning their writing much easier than making revisions or self-monitoring during the writing process. In the interviews, Jody admits that she did not plan her writing for the first assessment, but did implement a short plan for the second. However, in the final interview she reflects that *'I think I need to plan more and like keep going over my work....'* When questioned as to why she did not self-monitor, Jody stated that *'if I think of something to write I'll just keep writing about it'* suggesting that she is still caught up in the writing moment and finds it difficult to stop and review her work.

Interestingly, Harry viewed the construction of a plan constraining and asserted that it prevented him from implementing certain linguistic items: *'I followed the story that I had planned but my story had a fault due to it not giving me the accesability for cirtain writing teqneces.'* Evidently Harry did not view the symbiotic relationship between content and language as one entity which works together to construct meaning. This tension between meaning and form links to previous findings by other theorists and researchers. For example, Bourdieu (1990:31) explores this tension and states that: *'...the grammarian has nothing to do with language except to study it in order to codify it. By the very treatment he applies to it taking it as an object of analysis instead of using it to think and speak, he constitutes it as a **logos** opposed to **praxis**'* (emphasis Bourdieu's). In the above extract from Harry, it is evident that he has not yet made the transition to viewing grammatical structures and content as symbiotic elements in the pursuit of conveying meaning.

However, Sharples (1999:99) suggests that style, structure and content cohesively combine to create genre and that a specific genre's requirement provides the writer with a *'pre-prepared and labelled package of constraints.'*

These genre-based writer constraints support students during the construction of their written texts.

This is a similar finding to David, who at the start of the research cycle admits that he did not plan his work and that he found it hard to generate ideas: *'I struggle to get the first idea then if what I am going to do next that's the idea I really struggle with'*. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> teaching cycle David reflected that this lack of planning presented him with difficulties during the writing process: *'This isn't my best piece of work because I didn't do much planning.'* In the final interview, whilst David makes reference to a *'simple plan'*, it is evident that he still doesn't consistently plan his writing or self-monitor: *'for this piece I just wrote (.) I didn't really go back to my plan as much as I wanted to.'* Arguably, whilst there are occasions where there is evidence to suggest that some students considered self-regulation strategies, none of them applied these strategies consistently throughout the research cycles.

This finding of inconsistency echoes other studies. De Milliano, Van Gelderen and Slegers' (2012:303) examined the relationship between self-regulation strategies (*'planning, formulating, monitoring, revising, and evaluating'*) and the quality of texts produced by teenage *'struggling'* students and found that certain self-regulation strategies had more impact on writing outcomes than others: *'The findings indicate that within the group of adolescent struggling writers, monitoring, revision, and evaluation are not related to text quality'* (p.315-16). As a result of this finding, they suggested that the reason for the lack of monitoring and evaluation is possibly due to the fact that most of the students in their sample were operating in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987:143) *'Knowledge-telling'* phase (p.318). This suggestion echoes with the findings reported here as all three students exhibit a propensity to function in the *'knowledge telling'* phase as their writing processes are primarily driven by content rather than considering the interwoven need for meaning and style.

Furthermore, whilst a recent EFF study in the UK (Torgerson and Torgerson, 2014:24) found that self-regulation strategies significantly improved year 6 extended writing scores, the long-term impact is more obscure. In their

conclusion, Torgerson and Torgerson (p.3) state that *'These findings, in combination with existing evidence from the United States and elsewhere, suggest that the Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach has substantial promise as a literacy catch-up.'* However, whilst the headline statistic of this randomised control trial indicates an effect size of +0.74, the longevity of this writing-increase was not sustained once the teaching intervention ceased. It appears that in the cohort of students who only received intervention during year 6, without the follow-up session in year 7, their writing scores were not so positive:

*'To assess the impact on the writing skills of pupils who were not eligible to receive the intervention and thus only received the intervention in Year 6, the primary analysis was repeated using only pupils at Level 4a and above... There was no evidence of a difference in extended writing score between the allocated groups, with a non-significant increase of less than 0.01 marks for those in the intervention group when compared with those in the control group ( $p=1.00$ , 95% CI: -1.38 to 1.38). This relates to an effect size of approximately 0.00 (95% CI: -0.45 to 0.45). This could be due to a number of factors, for example the fact that these pupils did not receive the full intervention.'*

Even Gorard et al.'s (2016) review of this study states that *'The ES was +0.74, with at least 11% attrition but the reporting is unclear on this.'* As a result, this finding indicates that despite students being consistently exposed to self-regulation strategies in the classroom setting, these strategies did not become an automatic and embedded practice. More recently, a study by Foerst et al (2017:10-11) reports on the discrepancies between university students' knowledge and self-reported use of self-regulation strategies. They argue that whilst students might have acquired knowledge about how to self-regulate during the writing process, this knowledge is not always transferred into action and they suggest that as educators, we need to *'shift our focus from the mere transfer of declarative knowledge to the promotion of procedural knowledge and most of all, practice of SRL strategies.'* Therefore, it seems, that whilst students have gained knowledge of the different self-regulation strategies, transfer of these into their own writing is not an automatic process.



Clearly, self-regulatory processes are laden with complexities (Zimmerman and Risemberg, 1997:9) therefore, it is of little surprise that these complex processes take time to embed and become procedural knowledge. Moreover, whilst it is evident that the students in this study have not consistently applied a range of self-regulation strategies during the writing process, what is evident, is that their exposure to these strategies in lessons has enhanced their metacognitive awareness; by the end of the action research cycles, students were more aware of how they individually approached and monitored their writing during the composition process.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that some of the self-regulation strategies directly supported students' growing metalinguistic knowledge. For example, the use of the acronym GAPPSS provided students with a reminder to consider how their linguistic choices relate to a text's wider contextual issues. Additionally, the use of model texts gave further support to their developing knowledge and provided opportunities to explore grammatical and linguistic choices in 'real' texts, consequently providing them with a model of how to apply them in their own writing. The use of 'strength monitors' (see page 193) also provided students with an opportunity to reflect on their grammatical and linguistic knowledge.

### **5.6) Reducing the Cognitive Load: Role of Authentic Texts**

As identified in the literature review, writing is a '*cognitively costly*' process (Myhill, 2011:247) and it is of little wonder that it is a process which places huge demands on our working memory. As Kellogg (2008:2) states: '*The problem of content - what to say - and the problem of rhetoric - how to say it - consumes the writer's attention and other resources of working memory.*' This sentiment is echoed by Sharples (1999:92), who suggests that one of the ways of '*reducing the strain on working memory is to write within a familiar style and structure.*' It is possible, that as the study reported here took a genre-approach to the teaching of writing, including the teaching of grammar, the selection of model texts analysed in class were essential in scaffolding students' genre-based knowledge; therefore they played an integral role in easing the cognitive demands frequently encountered during the writing process. Furthermore, the evidence in this study suggests that

the model texts which appeared to have the most impact on the students during the writing process and during the reflective interviews, were the narrative texts. This could possibly be because these texts were aimed at a teenage audience, whereas the other two genre-based units of work drew on texts from a wider audience demographic. In the extract below, David refers to the Darren Shan text used during lessons:

**David:** *um if you look at writers like Darren Shan he's' very good with giving you clues as to what's gonna happen but he doesn't quite give you everything you need to know (.) I should have put a bit more of that into my writing*

**Teacher:** *and anything about the actual language or the patterns of sentences or the way they structured their ideas (.) is there anything you can remember*

**David:** *um the short sentences that Darren Shan puts in I could have put some more in of them um but I was going for longer sentences*

A key teaching and learning focus in the narrative unit of work was the exploration of how writers build tension. Whilst David's reflections are limited to Shan's use of short sentences, he is able to reflect on the author's writing as well as his own. Similarly, even though Harry is unable to recall the author's name, he is able to draw on his knowledge gained from analysing the model texts:

**Harry:** *I was making sure I made sentences as short as possible just so because I could see other people's work where they would have like long paragraphs with like 9 lines or something which is a bit too much for this style of genre*

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**Teacher:** *do you remember any of the writers*

**Student:** *I can't remember the name it was...it had the log cutter*

**Teacher:** *Marcus Sedgwick my sword hand is singing*

**Harry:** *it had quite short sentences and it was sort of quite brief in how it said things*

**Teacher:** *why do you think he chose quite short sentences because he didn't do it all the way through*

**Harry:** *yeah probably the reason why he did it was because it speeds up the speed of writing and ...*

**Teacher:** *did the speed reflect what was happening in the story at that point*

**Harry:** *yes it did cos it was quite a shock filled sort of moment and it tries to draw you in*

This engagement with real texts is important as it provides students with a wider knowledge of writing possibilities. Paraskevas (2006:65-66) sees the development of writing sophistication as an ‘*apprenticeship*’ and states that the selection of model texts, or as she refers to them ‘*touchstone texts*’ or ‘*mentor texts*’ are important tools when engaging students with writing-based choices. She also reflects on the importance of ‘*Pattern imitation*’:

*‘Pattern imitation helps writers create sentences—under careful guidance—that they would not necessarily create on their own, thus helping them expand their natural repertoire of syntactic constructions. Imitation is the first step toward giving writers choices that reflect their stylistic and rhetorical competence’* (p. 66).

Furthermore, it is through this continued exposure to imitation that students are able to internalise and embed language patterns for their own use (p.67). Myhill et al. (2013:108) also explore this issue of authentic text impact and argue that real texts provide students with opportunities to engage with ‘*language-in-action, rather than language-for-demonstration.*’ As a result, they suggest that the process of exploring ‘*language-in-action*’ enables ‘*young writers to explore what real writers do and the choices they make in order to nurture their own repertoire of possibilities as authors.*’

Evidently, the above findings taken from this study suggest that students were able to reflect on how the model texts supported their own writing. David demonstrated his wider pragmatic knowledge of how language operates in different genres by making the assertion that he is more aware of his language choices now and states that ‘*earlier on in the year if I had wrote a newspaper article it wouldn’t be nearly like this it would have been more of a story than to a newspaper because I wouldn’t have used noun phrases or adverbs of place and time.*’ Whilst David does not seem to be aware that noun phrases and adverbs

are transferrable to different genres, he is signalling his growing awareness of the relationship between linguistic choice and different forms of writing.

However, whilst Paraskevas (2006) advocates the role of imitation, Cremin and Myhill (2012:56) take a more cautious approach and raise the issue of formulaic teaching in the school setting and assert that students need to be judiciously aware that the analysis of model texts should not simply lead to textual reproduction – instead there is a need for an act of transformation during the writing process.

### **5.7) Grammatical Metalanguage and Linguistic Labelling**

As already identified, the engagement in metalinguistic conversations has been shown to benefit students' metalinguistic knowledge. However, what role, if any, does the use of a grammatical metalanguage play in this metalinguistic knowledge development? Do students need to be able to draw on a grammatical metalanguage to be able to engage purposefully with their writing-based reflections?

In addition to highlighting the transitional difficulties associated with bridging the gap between procedural and metalinguistic knowledge, this study also highlights the role of a grammatical metalanguage. All of the sample students acquired a grammatical metalanguage, yet the implications of this '*banked*' knowledge (Freire, 1970) on their metalinguistic understanding varied. In the past, many academics have warned against the use of a grammatical metalanguage and suggested that it does little to enhance students' metalinguistic knowledge (Richmond, 1990; Keen, 1997; Wyse, 2001). Furthermore, what appears to be central to the learning and implementation of a grammatical metalanguage is that students' knowledge and use of the linguistic terminology needs to move beyond superficial level of labelling and identifying grammatical terms without any further knowledge of a grammatical item's function. For example, Chen and Myhill (2016:100) maintain that the students in their UK and Australian studies were more likely to focus on '*identification*' of a grammatical item rather than being able to articulate their language choices and how they create '*meaning*' (p.106):

*'if metalinguistic understanding is to enable young learners to be more empowered and effective shapers of written text, then conceptual development of metalinguistic ideas needs to move rapidly from identification to the elaboration and extension of their thinking, thereby providing a fuller understanding of the way grammatical structures make meaning in written text.'*

This 'labelling' aspect of grammar knowledge development rather than focusing on grammar as a meaning-making tool, is evidenced in my own findings. Several of the commentaries and interviews with Harry revealed his proclivity towards labelling and listing the linguistic items he had used in the writing process rather than being able to fully elaborate on why he chose them or their intended impact. In the post teaching interview, he refers to anaphora or anadiplosis and states:

*'well it's a very useful writing technique cos it sort of um (3) I know what it does but I just don't know how to say it...it improves your writing by (5) I I don't know how to say it but it improves your writing and I can't remember...I had a good reason.'*

Whilst Harry signposts his use of a grammatical metalanguage, when asked to explain his language choices further, he is unable to. Similarly, when making a reference to his use of noun phrases and how complex he found them, Harry stated: *'um (3) probably noun phrases because um to (2) cos (2) to sort of extensively do like like to do them really well its difficult to do them if its mediocre its quite easy (3) and I found it quite difficult to do.'* He also stated *'um I'm not good with verbs and stuff (.) I don't really understand them.'* This is an interesting assertion from Harry, because his written work demonstrated his ability to construct noun phrases – even before the noun phrase teaching sequence and therefore directly links to Camps and Milian's (2000) suggestion that students can demonstrate explicit metalinguistic knowledge even if they are unable to verbalise this knowledge.

In addition, perhaps it is worth acknowledging that the students in this study would have all been exposed to the new KS2 assessment procedures, including the grammar test. Clearly, throughout their learning and assessment journeys, it is likely that the students in this study have encountered a formulaic or writing recipe

approach to writing. In her investigation into teachers' preparations and perceptions of KS2 grammar tests, Safford (2016:11) found that teachers frequently taught grammar *'in bite-size units where pupils are 'trained' to spot and identify word classes and sentence structures.'* However, as Hancock (2009:204) states, *'One problem with bringing complex knowledge about language into the teaching of writing is still the problem of time, the problem of managing resources.'* Teachers commonly experience time constraints when covering the curriculum and assessment content. So, perhaps there is a risk here for some teachers to implement formulaic approaches to writing or issue writing recipes as a time-saving system rather than provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their language use, or as Cremin and Myhill (2012:2) state, *'time and space to consider different ways of thinking about writing and of teaching writing.'*

However, despite the teaching in this study refraining from taking a formulaic or recipe approach to teaching grammar, (as the study focused on the rhetorical role of grammar in context), there is evidence to suggest that some of the students found forging the link between label and function difficult to retain. Even though students were exposed to reading and analysing a range of model texts as well as having opportunities to practise implementing their new writing-based knowledge in class and during their assessments, it is evident that some of the students seemed familiar with the recipe approach and felt a compulsion to implement all of the language features covered throughout the teaching cycles, regardless of their suitability and the construction of meaning. For example, in the final interview, David lists a range of linguistic features he felt he should have used in his own writing in an attempt to make it less *'dull.'*

**David:** *during the writing I turned over the page after that I couldn't find anything to put in (.) I couldn't find anywhere to write (.) to do any more anadiplosis or anaphora I couldn't find any places to write alliteration or onomatopoeias (.) it just got very dull after midway*

In the above extract, whilst it appears that David felt compelled to use a range of linguistic items regardless of relevance, there is also a sense that he viewed this new grammatical or linguistic knowledge as an additional add on – something

which was almost an afterthought rather than being a cohesive part of the writing process. Furthermore, both David and Harry exhibited instances where they explained the implementation of an aspect of grammar as something which almost hindered the writing process:

***Interview Three***

***Harry:*** ...the way I had planned I couldn't use certain writing techniques as they couldn't fit in as smoothly

***Interview Five***

***David:*** ... I couldn't get the sentences to work they just wouldn't get them to fit in (.) I used two questions for inner thoughts where a character is thinking but none of the sentences just work and I was just writing freehand

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***David:*** language features I just couldn't find any space for them to fit in and then whilst not having a full story line just going of one idea and coming back to it

In the above extracts, it is evident that whilst writing, David is struggling to combine the content of what he is saying with how he is saying it. In some ways, whilst this might seem to reinforce Sams' (2003:57) assertion that '*traditional and in-context approaches to grammar instruction fail for exactly the same reason: they treat grammar as something that exists apart from and outside of the writing process itself*' it is worth noting that in this study, students were consistently exposed to linguistic and grammatical choices in context. Furthermore, it is possible that Sams fails to recognise the cognitive demands placed on the writer at the point of composition. In fact, Sharples (1999:26), drawing on the earlier work of neurocognitive, Karmiloff-Smith (1992), argues that it takes several years for skills to become automatic: '*Evidence from a variety of tasks suggests it takes children roughly five years of regular practice to achieve a basic automated mastery of a complex skill, so if they learn to write at about age six we would expect the transition to reflective, controlled writing to begin around age 11.*' Evidently, embedding new skills and knowledge takes time.

## 5.8) Discussion Conclusion

Clearly, the above findings suggest that the relationship between ‘naming’ a grammatical item (metalanguage) and ‘understanding’ (declarative metalinguistic knowledge) is a complex one. Whilst metalinguistic knowledge can be transferred into students’ writing, the articulation of this knowledge is more problematic, and its transition needs careful scaffolding. Furthermore, the evidence from this study, as well as other research, indicates that providing students with opportunities to engage in metalinguistic conversations is essential in easing this transition from procedural to declarative metalinguistic knowledge (Watson and Newman, 2017, Myhill 2016, Love and Sandiford, 2016). Evidently as Chen and Myhill (2016:107) state, students need to be encouraged ‘*to move beyond basic identification to more elaborated or extended understanding*’ as a way of embedding their new knowledge.

Whilst it is worth acknowledging that there could be external factors which complicated students’ self-monitoring process, such as, writing in strict time constraints, evidence from other studies suggest that self-regulation strategies need to be continually maintained in order for students to apply these strategies and become independent (Torgerston and Torgerston, 2014). However, in this study, there is evidence to suggest that the self-regulation strategies focused on grammatical and linguistic items, (use of the acronym, model texts and strength monitors), supported students’ metalinguistic transfer.



## **Chapter Six: Final Thoughts**

### **6.1) Reflection on Action Research Process**

At the heart of action research is the desire to incur change and improve practice (Robson, 2002: 215). This sentiment is echoed by Carr and Kemmis (1991:165), who argue that practitioner change entails three components: *'...firstly, the improvement of practice; secondly the improvement of the understanding of practice by its practitioners; and thirdly, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.'* For me, the process of engaging in my own action research has had a significant impact on all three areas cited by Carr and Kemmis. Managing the dual identities of teacher and action researcher has given me deeper insight into how my role as an English teacher can impact upon the learning of my students; after all, one of the prerequisites of this methodology is to place my own teaching practice under the microscope by repeatedly asking myself: *"what am I doing and how do I understand it?"* (McNiff, 2000).

However, even though I adopted McNiff's spiral model of action research, where it was possible to enter and leave the cycle at any point, various limitations and constraints emerged during the research cycles.

### **6.2) Limitations of Study**

One of the main constraints experienced during this investigation was centred on the data collection and analysis process. In order to ensure that the data was analysed in a methodical and systematic manner, I made the decision to take an equitable approach to student word count and therefore only analysed students' original writing to the length of the shortest text produced. However, as the shortest piece of original writing only amassed to 135 words, it restricted the possibility of identifying a wider range of grammatical knowledge transfer. Naturally, this would have had implications for the data analysed as not all students demonstrated their new knowledge in the first 135 words and this is especially true for the narrative text, which required students to build tension into their writing. Nevertheless, whilst a longer sample of writing would have been more desirable when evidencing metalinguistic transfer, the writing samples were long enough to reveal that the students did transfer a variety of linguistic items into their own writing.

Other limitations centred on being too ambitious with the learning content. For example, too many linguistic items were explored during each teaching cycle. Taking a retrospective view of the teaching content, it would have been more beneficial for students to develop their metalinguistic knowledge of two grammatical items each teaching cycle, rather than introduce them to a broad range which might have been too cognitively demanding. The reduction in linguistic items would have provided students with more time to fully embed their new knowledge as well as possibly providing the class with more time to focus on the development of self-regulation strategies. Exploring too many linguistic items in one unit of work could have resulted in superficial understanding of how these grammatical items function, as well as their potential as a '*meaning-making resource*' (Myhill, 2005:92).

Closely linked with the over-teaching of linguistic knowledge, is the possible constraint afforded by encouraging students to implement a wide range of self-regulation strategies. Evidently, the development of a self-regulation strategy approach takes time and needs specific teaching. Finding the time to participate in a range of activities to embed students' knowledge of strategies is difficult for any class teacher implementing a departmental scheme of work. There are few opportunities to divert from curriculum plans. As a result, it is likely that it would have been a more beneficial and manageable process if I had modified the range of self-regulation strategies explored in lessons. This reflection is similar to Zumbrunn and Bruning (2012:107) whose research on the impact of self-regulation strategies on first graders in the US, state that there is a need to modify the '*SRSD instructional model*.' Whilst the students reported in my own study are much older, it is likely that they too would have benefitted from an amended approach to developing their writer autonomy. Furthermore, as Ferrari, Bouffard and Rainville (1998:480) remind us, identifying when students are drawing on their self-regulation strategies can be difficult as many of these acts occur implicitly and might not even been obvious to the student.

Another obstacle encountered was the logistical management of the interview process so that students were interviewed as soon after the writing process as possible. Unfortunately, there were times where this was not possible and consequently case study students were occasionally interviewed 2 or 3 weeks after the writing process had been completed. As a result, it is likely that this would have impacted on their ability to meaningfully reflect on their writing and linguistic choices made at the time of composition. However, in hindsight, this issue could have been ameliorated: students might have found the interview process easier if they had, like the students in the Love and Sandiford (2016) study, annotated their writing in advance and taken these annotations with them into the interview. However, despite this, the interviews did scaffold student articulation enough for them to be able to discuss some aspects of their writing as well as identifying and reflecting on some of their grammatical and linguistic choices. Furthermore, the conversational process provided them with the opportunity to re-familiarise themselves with the texts they had written and to reflect on their linguistic strengths and areas for further development.

Departmental curriculum changes also presented another significant problem which required the final teaching unit to be changed with relatively little notice. The decision was made to place a 'The Speckled Band' scheme of work at the end of the year. This was problematic in that the unit of work was essentially a reading scheme which did not focus on developing students' writing skills. As a result, there was a need to ensure that I adhered to the school's curriculum by completing the Sherlock Holmes reading unit first, then, and only then, could I weave in some writing-based teaching sequences centred on the journalistic style of writing presented in newspapers. As journalistic writing is a sophisticated skill, this 'shoe-horned' approach to preparing students for their writing assessment was limited in terms of the number of real texts analysed and time students had in class to engage in meaningful conversations about language choices. Again, it is likely that this impacted on the quality and suitability of their writing. Sharples (1999:92-3) reminds us of the complexities of adopting different forms and styles of writing and states that: *'Style is an elusive quality... writing in a given style involves more than just assembling the linguistic parts; they must be merged into a coherent flow of language that satisfies the general constraints'* (1999:95).

Given the limited amount of time students had, it is perhaps understandable why some of them struggled to write within the constraints of journalistic writing: they had not been provided with enough exposure to this very specific style of writing.

Finally, requiring students to write in exam-style conditions presented another potential problem. It is possible that the tight time constraint rendered it difficult for students to implement their self-regulation strategies or take the time to consider their linguistic choices. This would have also had a direct impact on students' opportunities to revise or redraft their written work. As Hacker et al (2011:158) highlight:

*'Only through explicit reading and re-reading, reviewing, revising, editing, and deliberate production and reproduction of text can the writer gain confidence that the written text is a good representation of his or her thoughts.'*

Students did not have the opportunity to significantly redraft their writing. Throughout the teaching cycles, students had been encouraged to reflect on the linguistic choices of real writers, yet when the focus turned to their own writing, they had little time to be able to meaningfully reflect on and redraft their initial ideas in their assessments. Whilst students have to operate in strict time conditions for national assessments, it would have been useful, as apprentice writers, to have the opportunity to focus more on the crafting of their writing.

### **6.3) Implications for Own Teaching Practice**

Evidently, given that the new GCSE exam focuses on students' abilities to analyse and articulate the impact of writers' language uses, being able to move students from identification into extended elaboration of linguistic choices is imperative. As an English teacher, it is important that I find ways of ensuring this transition takes place and as result, I feel there is a need to draw on the recent research which focuses on the impact of metatalk or metalinguistic conversation as suggested by Watson and Newman (2017). The research reported here evidences that students' metalinguistic reflections were scaffolded during the

interview process, enabling them to begin to reflect on and articulate their language choice-decisions in a more in-depth way than their written commentaries suggested. This disparity between the detail of their written reflections compared to their spoken articulations, indicates the potential that talk has in the journey towards developing students' in-depth metalinguistic knowledge. As noted in the discussion, this finding synchronises with similar research, which suggests that metatalk scaffolds students' thinking and articulation (Cremin and Myhill, 2012; Chen and Myhill, 2016:100; Watson and Newman, 2017; Love and Sandiford, 2016:204). Metatalk enables students to bridge the gap between procedural and declarative metalinguistic knowledge. Students need to be provided with opportunities to engage in language-focused articulations and to listen and build on the ideas of others.

Furthermore, the use of model texts also played a central role in developing students' metalinguistic knowledge and provided a great scaffold for linguistic-focused discussion. Essentially, as Myhill et al. (2013:108) state, real texts enable students with the opportunities to engage with '*language-in-action, rather than language-for-demonstration.*' The process of analysing the linguistic choices of real writers extends their bank of writing-based knowledge. Clearly, students need to be encouraged to move away from linguistic-labelling (Safford, 2016:11), or a recipe approach to writing (Hancock, 2009:204) and be provided with the opportunities to explore grammar as a '*meaning-making resource*' (Myhill, 2005). Perhaps then, when grammar instruction is fully embedded in the teaching process, enabling students to view it as an integral part of the language system, they will then begin to resist the temptation to view it as '*something that exists apart from and outside of the writing process itself*' (Sams, 2003:57).

#### **6.4) Implications for Future Research**

As already highlighted, several key points regarding the transfer and articulation of metalinguistic knowledge have emerged in this study. It is evident that whilst the case study students were able to transfer the grammar-based knowledge into their own writing, the articulation of this knowledge was more problematic. As the findings in this study indicate, in order to support students' navigation towards their procedural metalinguistic knowledge, it is evident that the role of metalinguistically-orientated conversations needs to be explored further.

In addition, whilst the implementation of self-regulation strategies could be perceived as having a negligible direct impact on students' metalinguistic development, it did raise their metacognitive awareness of how they approach the writing process and as well as supporting the metalinguistic transfer into students' own writing.

Furthermore, as this study centres on practitioner reflection, it is of little surprise that I have identified further questions which need further exploration:

1. If students have transferred their new linguistic knowledge into their own writing as well as developing a grammatical metalanguage, why have they found it so difficult to explicitly articulate their individual design decisions? What can be done to support this transition from grammatical use into verbalisable understanding?
2. Why do some students view the implementation of this new knowledge as an 'additional extra' rather than being fully embedded in their writing processes? Do students need to be actively encouraged to consider all language choices as a linguistic choice – not just the recently taught 'grammar-focused' ones?

Perhaps, the exploration of these questions, would provide a deeper insight into the potential barriers faced by students in their transition from procedural to declarative metalinguistic knowledge.

## **6.5) Contribution to Knowledge**

This investigation contributes to the growing body of research which has emerged since the commencing of this study in three ways. Firstly, the study complements previous findings regarding the role of talk in developing students' ability to articulate the impact of their linguistic choices by indicating that engaging in metalinguistically orientated conversations facilitates students' linguistic reflection. Whilst taking a '*writing conversation*' (Watson and Newman, 2017) format might have fostered deeper levels of metalinguistic reflections, the intervention-style interviews did enable some of the students to reflect on their

grammatical choices and often in more depth than they were able to when reflecting in the written form.

Secondly, Gombert's (1999) suggestion that procedural facility with language may precede declarative or verbalisable knowledge is supported by the findings highlighted in this study. For example, some students unconsciously incorporated linguistic structures into their own writing whilst others consciously employed new linguistic structures but were unable to articulate why or how they were used.

Finally, findings centred on the role of self-regulation indicate that the linguistically focused strategies had a positive impact on students' writing and the transfer of metalinguistic knowledge, in particular, the role of the model texts.

# Appendices

## Contextual Information

### Appendix One: The Teaching Context

As this study takes the form of an empirical action research investigation, which is heavily reliant on my own teaching context, it seems relevant to include wider contextual information regarding this class as well as the sample students.

One of the contextual influences which impacted on me as a researcher was the issue of teaching on a split site school. This presented me with difficulties in that after teaching this class I often had to commute to the other site to teach another year group. This was significant in that I was not able to stay behind after lessons and spend time with any students who might have found the content of the lesson challenging.

Related to this was the issue that this class was my only year 8 group, as the rest were either GCSE or A level classes. Until this point I had not taught a year 8 class for several years, so I was unfamiliar with the schemes of work and general familiarity of teaching students of this age-range. Therefore, as someone who was at that time more used to teaching A level English Language students, who were required to develop a grammatical metalanguage for their study, I was aware that I had to adapt my language use and teaching strategies to meet the needs of the students. As a result, there were a few lessons where I had to adapt my language and make it more accessible to the students.

The class was, as mentioned in the methodology on page 63, a mixed ability class. However, as the highest performing students in year 8 were placed into a push-group before the mixture of the other classes, this class was in fact a relatively low attaining class. There was a real mixture in terms of the students' application to study and willingness to participate in tasks. One of the key difficulties experienced was the willingness (or lack of) students' participation in group work. Developing mutually supportive group-work skills takes time – something I didn't really have much of. On the whole, students did not like sharing their ideas with others. Paired work was manageable, but group work, which privileged opportunities to talk and share ideas was more problematic.



It was evident early on that students' prior knowledge of grammar was vague. Many students asserted that they needed to use more 'adjectives' or 'sentence starters' but on further probing there was a lack of awareness as to why, as well as what impact this would add to their writing.

During the research cycles, students actively engaged in the creative writing tasks, but were less enthusiastic in terms of the commentaries. Students found it difficult to put their written reflections into writing and they weren't really used to having to reflect in this way.

In terms of the three sample students, they were very different in their enjoyment and approach to English. **Jody** was one of the highest attainers yet at times was reluctant to complete tasks in a detailed way. Some of this might be because the other girls in her social group struggled with English and did not exhibit some of the skills and knowledge that she did.

**Harry** was an avid reader and enjoyed engaging with narratives yet found the writing process difficult. As someone who often experienced difficulties structuring his writing, he was often frustrated with the writing process and when reflecting on his writing felt dissatisfied with the end result. In many ways, it appeared that Harry enjoyed learning the grammatical terminology and enjoyed the 'technical' side of language but often found it difficult to express his writing decisions.

**David** was a lower attaining student who showed enthusiasm for learning new things. He was always willing to give new ideas a go and try to embed new writing-based knowledge into his own writing. During class writing task, he often demonstrated his new knowledge and could discuss his language choice ideas with me on a one to one basis. Furthermore, whilst English was his home language, his mother's first language was not. This might have had some impact on his language in general, particularly if the two language were frequently spoken at home.

## **Appendix Two: Teacher After Thoughts**

As a teacher, who has been teaching English for 20 years, I was interested to explore when explicit grammar teaching supported students' metalinguistic knowledge. However, whilst I managed the dual identities of the teacher and the researcher, in hindsight the teacher identity was probably stronger. On reflection, I am aware that whilst my focus was to teach contextualised grammar – which I did through using an inductive approach to analysing model texts, I am also aware that my students possibly received mixed messages regarding how to use their grammatical metalinguistic knowledge and metalanguage. Interestingly, whilst the teaching centred on taking a contextualised approach to grammar teaching, the interview process often took a different approach.

On closer examination, there are instances where my line of questioning only focuses on grammar label identification rather than provide students with opportunities to discuss their language choices in more elaborated forms. When reflecting on this, I think one of the central drivers to me falling back on using 'labelling' is because there was often a gap in terms of time from the act of writing to the interview. As a result, I probably, due to anxieties associated with what the interview data would reveal, focused on aspects of grammar identification more than language choice impact. As a result, I too feel I have fallen victim to the drive for accountably and demonstrable evidence as if 'labelling' were to demonstrate 'learning'. If this was an autoethnographic study – I would find this of great interest!

Whilst the purpose of this study focuses on students' developing metalinguistic knowledge based on explicit teaching strategies, I am aware that one of the most significant changes is my approach to grammar teaching. Whilst I advocate a contextualise form of grammar teaching and whilst I seek out opportunities to explore language in context there are also occasions where my metatalk centres of grammar-label identification rather than language exploration. This is clearly, given the recent GCSE reforms, something I need to reflect on and reconsider.

If I were to undertake this study again there are several issues I would do differently because at the start of this investigation, I had not fully understood the importance of talk and writing conversations:

- Provide more opportunities for talk
- Focus on developing students' metalanguage through a range of contextualised tasks but also recognise that metalinguistic knowledge can readily be demonstrated without the verbalisation of a grammatical metalanguage.

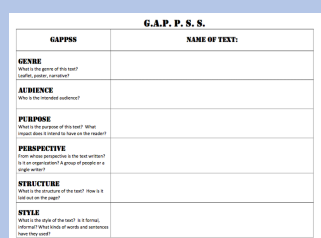
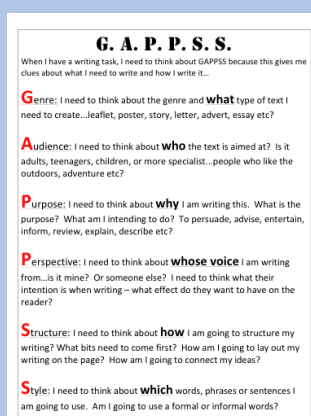
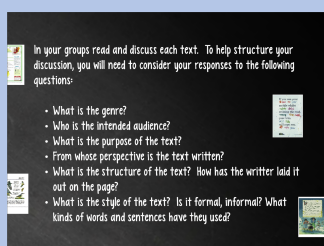
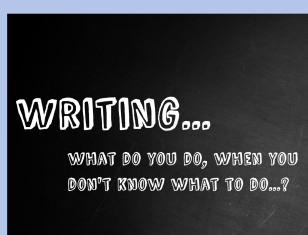
# The Teaching Cycles

## Appendix Three: Cycle One - Theme Park Webpage Resources and Reflection

### Teaching Cycle One

Students spent 5 weeks developing their knowledge of promotional persuasive texts with the aim of creating their own persuasive blub advertising their theme park. For this unit students explored model texts and as a class reoccurring language features were identified as being relevant to this particular genre, audience and purpose. These linguistic features were explored in terms of their effectiveness in their given contexts. Students' metalinguistic knowledge was then consolidated through a range of genre-based self-regulation strategies: graphic aids, planning, reflecting etc.

### Example Teaching Strategies and Resources



### Action Research Reflections

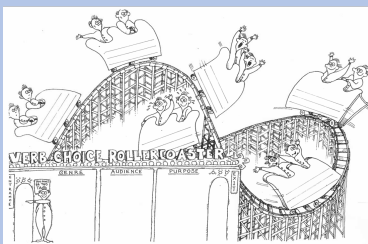
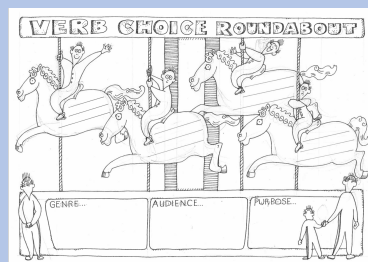
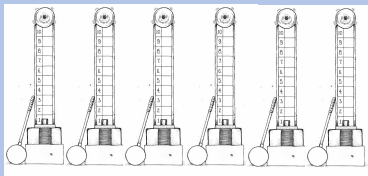
**Introductory Lesson:** Some of the interesting themes emerging from the group and class discussions during the beginning of this teaching cycle centred on what students considered to be a 'good' piece of writing. Interestingly, to begin with students focused on issues of 'correctness' eg, correct spellings or punctuation or by adding lots of adjectives etc. When discussing how we approach a writing task most of the students cited the need to plan their ideas before writing. I found this interesting – because there had been little evidence of this happening during earlier writing tasks. It is as if students know what they 'should' be doing – but haven't yet developed the necessary self-regulation strategies when completing a piece of work.

**Introducing GAPPSS.** When I introduced the acronym GAPPSS, some students found certain elements of this harder than I had first thought. Whilst many were familiar with terms like genre and audience, they were less secure with the other aspects: purpose, perspective, structure and style. Style became the hardest concept for them to grapple with, after all, pinpointing style is difficult – it is a sophisticated skill. However, the class did relatively well when putting this new knowledge into practice by using the GAPPSS analysis grid to help support their exploration of 4 very different texts. There were lots of useful learning conversations taking place at this point. The texts were scaffolded and some texts were easier to discuss than others. It soon became evident that the genre, audience and purpose was the easiest aspect for them to identify and this was followed by structure – particularly with the texts which were interwoven with different graphological aspects. This was an interesting starting point – but it was also evident that the pace of the textual analysis and group discussion was too much for the class and perhaps combining



#### GAPSS Strength Monitor Chart

In preparation for this writing task, colour in your GAPSS strength monitor chart by reflecting on how well you feel prepared to write your persuasive theme park rides blurbs...



a general reflection on how they approach their writing was too much when also introducing the acronym GAPSS.

**Model Texts:** Students spent quite a bit of time focusing on genre, audience and purpose before looking at the more specific linguistic items frequently used in persuasive writing – in particular promotional blurbs for theme parks. The class focused on two types of promotional texts with the same purpose but with different target audiences. Text type 1: texts targeting ‘adrenaline junkies’ whereas text type 2: texts promoting theme parks/rides for younger children. This one initially presented a few difficulties because whilst the images were often appealing to younger children (and parents) the writing specifically appealed to the adults.

#### Graphic Aids:

**Strength Monitor:** The first time I used the strength monitor it was to chart how confident students felt regarding their use of the acronym GAPSS. Students seemed to like this and I found it really useful as it gave me an idea of how confident individual students felt with this acronym. The second time I used the strength monitor was to record their confidence regarding the grammatical items explored in the model texts. On reflection, I think I was asking too much of the students by making them reflect on too many things in one go: imperatives, non-finite verbs, verbs of motion etc. However, the graphic aids were really popular and I found them useful as they were a quick visual record for me to gauge students’ knowledge as well as a tool for opening conversation with individual students.

**Verbs of Motion Sheets:** These two sheets were used as way of encouraging students to capture the various movements and sensations often experienced when on two different theme park rides. In order to help them develop their ideas, students watched a point-of-view rollercoaster ride on youtube. This was followed by them watching children on a gentler carousel ride. Students were asked to record the different types of movements experienced by the audience whilst on that ride. This also helped them to think about the different audiences and the possible ways of using language to appeal to them. I think these sheets worked well as they visually reminded students of the types of words they needed to record e.g., ‘plunge’ for the roller coaster or ‘glide’ for the carousel.

THEME PARK RIDES PLANNING SHEET		
G.A.P.P.S.S.	Roller Coaster Ride	Carousel Ride
Genre (What's the text aimed at?)		
Audience (What is the text aimed at?)		
Purpose (What is the purpose of this text... what is it trying to do?)		
Perspective (From whose perspective are you writing? Yours, an organisation, a customer?)		
Structure (How are you going to organise this text? What needs to come first?)		
Style (What words are you going to use? Formal, informal? Positive, negative? What kinds of sentences... short and snappy or long with detailed information?)		

**Peer Reflection:**  
Share your persuasive blurb with a partner. Use post-it notes to reflect on your partner's **verb choices**. Consider whether they have used verbs to convey sense of action or movement as well as an imperative sentence construction to encourage the reader to do something. Finally, consider if their language choices suit the target audience.

### Graphic Planner:

The graphic planner (planning sheet) was created to help students organise their ideas in relation to GAPPSS. The two columns were useful as it enabled them to see at a glance whether they had used a range of different strategies to target the two different audiences. In general, the students in this class found planning their ideas difficult, but they responded positively to this task and I think on the whole, most students felt prepared.

### Reflect and Discuss:

During the teaching sequences, students were actively encouraged to discuss their language and structural choices. This took many formats: peer assessment; peer review using post-it notes, group discussion and sharing of ideas etc. The school also has a specific marking policy which requires students to reflect on their work so they were used to undertaking self and peer assessment.

### Cycle One Final Reflection:

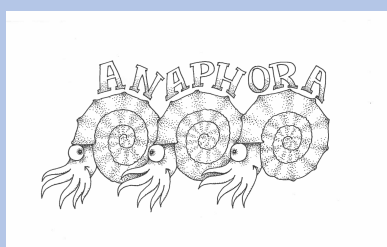
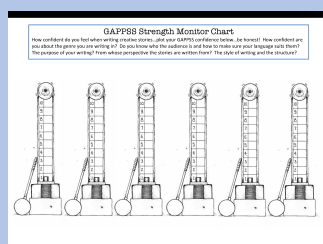
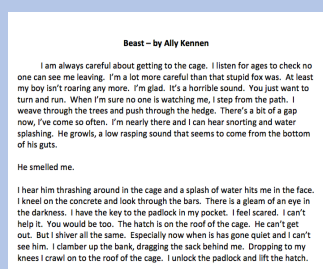
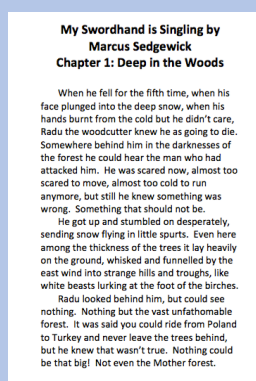
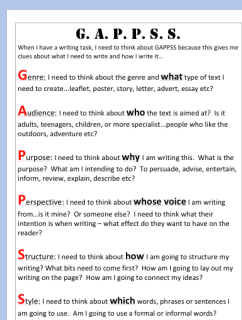
On the whole, I think students enjoyed this teaching sequence. However, writing to persuade is frequently taught and students were familiar with different ways to influence the reader. That said, the grammar knowledge was unfamiliar to many of them, particular narrowing the focus down to verbs of motion. This specific focus was really effective and manageable for the students. They also grasped conditional and imperative sentence constructions well. Asking students to adapt their writing to suit different audiences was useful as it highlighted the possible ways of appealing to different demographics. In terms of self-regulation, it appeared that students weren't really consciously aware of the decisions they make whilst they write. They recognised that planning is useful – but found it hard to organise their ideas before starting the writing process.

## Appendix Four: Cycle Two - Building Tension Resources and Reflection

### Teaching Cycle Two

Students spent 5 weeks focusing on a range of narrative grammatical and linguistic choices in model texts and in their own writing. The specific purpose of their narrative was to create tension. For this unit students explored model texts by Marcus Sedgewick, Darren Shan, Mary Shelly, and Dracula. When reading extracts from these texts, students identified a range of reoccurring language features used to build tension: sensory-based language choices (in particular sound and movement), a succession of short simple sentences in a row; the use of sentence patterning, in particular anaphora and anadiplosis; the use of interrogatives to show characters' inner thoughts and doubts as well as the use of 'But' to show contrast to the preceding sentence (again highlight character's insecurities. Again, after exploring model

texts, students' metalinguistic knowledge was then consolidated through a range of creative writing exercises.



## Acronym GAPPSS:

This time around, students were more familiar with the acronym GAPPSS and were therefore more comfortable in terms of identifying and discussing a text's audience and purpose. However, they have found the final PSS more problematic. In terms of the narrative structure, there is an understanding of 'Perspective' and to a certain extent, a broad understanding of structure – in a fairly simplistic way eg flashbacks/ time shifts etc. However, the hardest concept to grapple with is 'style'. This has been an ongoing issue but I think the use of different model texts helped their understanding a little more.

**Model Texts:** a wide range of model texts was used in this teaching sequence as to give the students access to a broad range of writers. Some of the texts include extracts from Darren Shan's Cirque du Freak and The Vampire's Assistant, as well as Marcus Sedgewick's My Sword hand is Swinging, Ally Kennen's Beast. These particular extracts explored were all texts which demonstrated different ways of building tension and creating suspense and anticipation. I think one of the reasons students found many of these texts appealing is because they were aimed at teenagers.

## Graphic Aids:

Just in the previous research cycle a range of graphic aids were used – some repeated and adapted from the last unit of work.

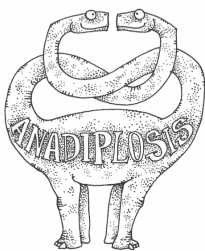
**Strength Monitor:** This time, the strength monitor focused on gauging confidence when using a range of grammatical items instead of charting their knowledge and confidence to use GAPPSS. Students focused on identifying their confidence when using the linguistic items mentioned above.

## Visual Prompts:

Visual prompts were created to reflect how the words are used. As anadiplosis requires the last word of a sentence to start the next sentence (and because it sounds a bit like a dinosaur!), an image was drawn to reflect the positioning of the same word.

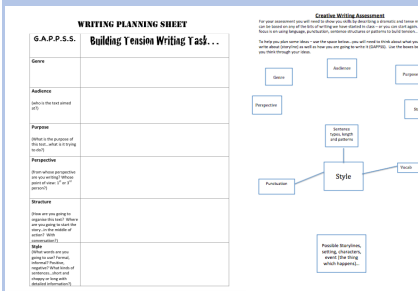
Similarly, as anaphora involves using the same word, phrase, sentence consecutively, the visual prompt involved a series of three shell-like images representing the repetition of the same thing.





## Sentence Patterns to Build Tension

Possible Sentence Patterns to Imitate	Example from Darren Shan
A series of short sentences to build tension.	Oh, that was silly. There were no monsters in the trees. Monsters didn't exist. Everyone knew that. Monsters weren't real.
Sentence suggesting possible danger... followed by a 'But' sentence to offer reassurance to the reader.	Trees grew along both sides of the road home, making it very dark and dangerous for anyone who wasn't used to it. But Stanley had no fears.
Use of questions to show internal fear.	Had the monster leaped ahead of him through the trees? Had it climbed down? Was it coming to finish him off? Was it...?
Onomatopoeia - sound related words	Crunch, crunch, crunch  Snap
Personification	The <b>fingers of fear</b> began to squeeze around his beating heart.
Anaphora – repetition of the same word at the start of consecutive sentences.	<b>Something</b> big was up there. <b>Something</b> that shouldn't be up there. <b>Something</b> that had never been up there before. <b>Something</b> that –
Verbs of movement	His head <b>shot</b> up.



Students used these sheets to help practise their writing of these two patterns as they wrote their own words/phrases around the outside of the diagrams. Students seemed to enjoy the graphological representation of the word and I think this helped to reinforce the repetitive patterns of these two rhetorical devices.

## Sentence Patterns:

The model texts provided the class with lots of different sentence patterns to emulate in their own writing. These sentences were taken out of the Darren Shan text which students had already read. The extracted sentences were then used to help them create their own examples of similar patterns. Previously, they had opportunities to explore language in context and these extracted examples (real examples from real texts studied) helped to highlight their individual construction.

## Goal Setting:

In many ways, students seemed to be used to setting 'targets' with regards to improving their own writing. However, it seemed that these targets had previously been set without any real in-depth consideration of what would benefit their writing or how to go about achieving this target. I felt that students were simply selecting targets which they thought 'sounded good' eg, use a range of sentence structures' without giving it any further thought.

## Planning Sheet:

The planning sheet was optional. It was interesting to see which students focused on planning their ideas before starting the writing process. This sheet encouraged them to think of GAPPSS and how this might affect language use as well as encouraging them to consider the content of their writing. There were two different options here – plan using a grid-like structure or plan using a mind mapping approach. Most students created ideas using the mind map approach.

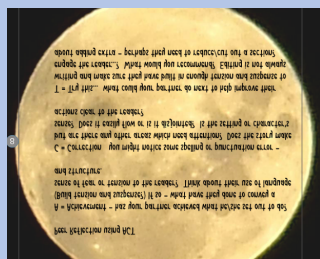
## Reflect

Throughout the unit students were encouraged to reflect on their own writing choices as well as their peers. I tried to vary this from lesson to lesson so that they were provided with a range of reflective opportunities. Furthermore, the school has a formative assessment marking policy called ACT. Teachers use this acronym to give



Reread your work and highlight any language or structural element you used to subtly build tension – or something that you are proud of!

Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class!



feedback and it is often used for peer assessment. A = achievement, C= correction and T = Try this. Students were often good at reflecting on what they or their peer did well and they were often able to identify a minor area for correction – normally a spelling error. However, the ‘try this’ was more problematic as it perhaps requires more thought and time. As this task is frequently given towards the end of the lesson, it became apparent that for students to meaningfully reflect on each other’s writing, there was a need to give them more time and structure when identifying ways of ‘supporting’ their peers. Furthermore, whereas the school like a written record of ACT feedback, it also became apparent that rather than reflect on someone’s writing in isolation – it was more useful to provide students with the time to ‘talk’ about their writing and their intentions.

### Cycle Two Final Reflection:

Again, as in the previous teaching sequence, students enjoyed reading the range of model texts and they liked analysing the ways different writers used language to influence the reader. One of the problems with this teaching sequence is that the range of grammatical and linguistic items explored were too broad; in hindsight, it might have been more beneficial for students to focus on fewer items and have time to embed this new metalinguistic knowledge fully before moving on to the next writing unit. Some elements were simply touch upon eg, adverbial phrases of time or place. As a result, these particular language items had to be revisited in the following unit of work. In terms of the self-regulation strategy, I was surprised that students found it difficult to intensify a specific writing goal which would have a positive impact on their writing. There were lots of superficial statements/targets being made without any real understanding or consideration of why a particular target was ‘better’ or more suitable than another one.

## Appendix Five: Cycle Three - Newspaper Article Resources and Reflection

### Teaching Cycle Three

For this unit, the assessment criteria and focus was changed last minute due to curriculum restructuring. As a result, students only had 3 weeks to focus on the writing of newspapers. Their assessment required them to write a newspaper article reporting the story of Sherlock Holmes and The Speckled Band story. Because of the time constraints (and it being close to the end of the school year), students focused on exploring the opening of newspaper articles, in particular the headline and stand first. As a class, we identified that noun phrases were used in the headlines and stand firsts as they are used to convey key information regarding who, what, where, when and why as well as how. As many students found difficulties when trying to identify and construct adverbial phrases of time and place, we continued to make this a focus of this unit as well.

**G. A. P. P. S. S.**

When I have a writing task, I need to think about GAPPSS because this gives me ideas about what I need to write and how to write it...

**Genre:** I need to think about the genre and **what** type of text I need to create: leaflet, poster, story, letter, advert, essay etc?

**Audience:** I need to think about **who** the text is aimed at? Is it adults, teenagers, children, or more specialist... people who like the outdoors, adventure etc?

**Purpose:** I need to think about **why** I am writing this. What is the purpose? What am I intending to do? To persuade, advise, entertain, inform, review, explain, describe etc?

**Perspective:** I need to think about **whose voice** I am writing from... is it mine? Or someone else? I need to think what their intention is when writing – what effect do they want to have on the reader?

**Structure:** I need to think about **how** I am going to structure my writing! What bits need to come first? How am I going to lay out my writing on the page? How am I going to connect my ideas?

**Style:** I need to think about **which** words, phrases or sentences I am going to use. Am I going to use a formal or informal words?

**How do I approach a writing task??**

I could use GAPPSS to help me know what kinds of things I should think about before I start writing...

When I plan my writing, I first need to think about the **genre**. What difference will the genre make to my writing... what will I have to do to make sure the genre is clear to the reader? I then need to think about who the **audience** is and what is the **purpose** of my writing (why am I writing it? What impact am I trying to have on the reader?).

Once I have thought about **GAP**, I need to think about the rest of **GAPPSS**. I need to think about **perspective**. Am whose perspective am I going to write? Am I going to use 'I' (first person) or am I going to use 'he or she' (3rd person)?

Next I need to think about the **structure**. Do I want it to be a long? Do I want it to describe a short moment in time? What would suit the writing task?

Finally – once I have made all of the other decisions, I need to think about the actual writing... what **style** do I want to use? What words? What sentence types? What patterns? What sort of verbs? What kind of punctuation? What style features would be really good in this type of writing?

**Positive Self Statements**

**Genre:** I know the genre I need to write in. This will help me think about my language choices.

**Audience:** I know who I am writing for. This will help me choose words which are suitable for them.

**Perspective:** I know why I am writing this text and what the purpose is. I need to think about what language choices will help get the message across to the reader.

**Style:** I know the genre, audience and purpose. This will help me think about how to structure my writing.

**Structure:** I know the genre, audience and purpose. This will help me think about how to structure my writing.

**Instead of thinking...**

This is too hard... I can't do this.

**I know I can do this... I just need to think it through. I just need to think about GAPPSS!**

**Convicted murderers escape maximum security prison using POWER TOOLS to cut through pipes**

**the guardian**

**Murderers used power tools to cut steel wall in New York prison break**

Blacksmith and more than 200 others involved in a maximum security prison break in New York state.

Two convicted murderers and power tools cut through steel pipes at a maximum security prison in New York state and escaped through tunnels. New York governor Andrew Cuomo said the escape was "a major security breach".

The escape route was from the Clinton Correctional Facility in the town of Dannemora, New York.

"It was an elaborate plan," Cuomo said after joining law enforcement authorities to search for the escapees.

Convicts said Michael Mori, 41, and David Brown, 34, were "very dangerous individuals".

Convicts using a mixture of this without going after any members of their group.

For the first time since the escape, the state's prison system has been in a state of emergency.

The escape route was from the Clinton Correctional Facility in the town of Dannemora, New York.

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The escape route was from the Clinton Correctional Facility in the town of Dannemora, New York.

**Transforming Nouns**

The **man** watched.

The mysterious **man** watched.

The mysterious **man** watched from the window.

The mysterious **man** in a black suit watched nervously from the window.

**Identifying Head Nouns**

Two convicted **murderers** make Shawshank Redemption-style escape from New York prison.

State **governor** Andrew Cuomo, described the breakout as "truly extraordinary".

Two convicted **murderers** have fled a maximum security prison in New York state after a Shawshank Redemption-style escape which saw them cut a hole through a wall and crawling out through the sewer tunnels.

## Acronym GAPPSS:

The acronym GAPPSS was used throughout the teaching of this unit – as was the focus on how to approach writing tasks. By this stage, students were getting used to reflecting on their writing and linking their language choices to the genre, audience and purpose.

## Self-Positive Statements:

In terms of self-regulation strategies, this unit focused primarily on positive self-statements/talk. The students didn't particularly respond positively towards this aspect of the self-regulation and seemed to think it futile. As a result, I tried to present it in different ways. The first strategy was to show the internal dialogue which goes on inside a writer's head when writing (linking to GAPPSS). Then the second teaching focus later in the unit focused specifically on positive self-talk when writing the newspaper article.

## Model Texts:

What became apparent when introducing the newspaper model texts, is that the students were generally unfamiliar with this type of writing. As a result, I tried to find an interesting news story which was presented in different types of newspapers at the time of teaching and consequently settled on the story of two convicts who escaped from a New York prison. Students examined how the story was presented in two different newspapers with different target audiences. This analysis led the class to focusing on the noun phrases used in the opening of the articles.

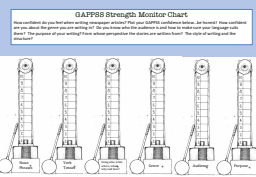
## Noun Phrases:

Despite the students in this class being the first cohort through of the new KS2 grammar tests, they demonstrated insecure knowledge of several grammatical items eg, nouns and verb tenses. Both these grammatical items were explored in relation to creating a newspaper article. At first, they found identifying the noun phrases in the newspaper articles difficult – but then we decided to focus on identifying the head noun in a sentence first then work out way out from that point. The whole time students were encouraged to explore how this particularly grammatical item impacted on the meaning of what was being communicated to the reader. Whilst students seemed to be able to create their

own noun phrases, they found it much harder to identify them in real writing.

### Verb Tenses:

On a basic level, students were able to identify the present and past tense as well as recognise how expressing our ideas about the future is constructed. However, when the tenses become more complicated and implement verb phrases, this then became problematic. In their final writing assessment, students struggled writing in a suitable tense. Part of this is probably because until this point, I hadn't really given much consideration to verb tenses and aspects. I had only taught this to A level students who seemed to grasp it relatively easily – whereas the year 8 students found this more complex. As this SOW was extremely short of time – this was the weakest area of my teaching and it was evident when reading the students work they had not fully grasped it.



### Adverbs of Time and Place

Adverbs of time and place were explored in the previous teaching sequence, but students found it difficult to make adverbial phrases. As a result, this grammatical knowledge was carried over and consolidated in the final teaching unit and it fitted well with the newspaper theme. On reflection, students found it easier to use time related adverbials than they did place.

### Strength Monitor:

The strength monitor was used again to chart student's confidence levels in preparation for the writing task.

### Planning Grid:

When analysing the model texts, students also explored the discourse structure of the texts. It was found that the opening of the texts included the who, what, where, when, why and how format. As a result, students used this format to help plan their ideas.

### Reflect:

As in the other units, students were encouraged to self and peer reflect on their writing throughout the lessons and during the assessment process.

Share and Reflect...  
In Pairs - Read each other's news article.  
Write a constructive comment reflecting on how  
your partner has used extended noun phrases.  
Do they refer to who, what where, when, why and  
how?  
Is there anything they should have added?  
What do you notice about their use of verbs?

### **Cycle Three Final Reflection:**

Out of all of the three teaching sequences, this was the hardest to complete and feel confident that the students were prepared well for their assessment. One of the limitations in this teaching sequence is that the summer term final SOW changed last minute and it was decided that Sherlock Holmes' The Speckled Band would be taught instead of the original writing based SOW. This presented me with two difficulties: 1. The school unit of work was essentially a reading assessment and 2. Given the time it took to cover the reading assessment, there were only a few weeks left to focus on writing a newspaper article. As a result, I feel that some of the teaching sequences were not as creative or exploratory as I would have liked.

# Case Study Sample Student Data and Coding Frameworks

## Appendix Six: Jody's Written Work

### The Box

Until now, I never actually realised that i was standing in a room. Fields went on and on as I began to turn on the spot. Lambs, cows, horses and many other animals stood motionless on the rolling hills. Everything was frozen apart from me. There was no wind, no rain, nothing apart from me and a few still animals. I adventured out across the silent hills until I came to a stop, I couldn't go any further. I pushed against the only thing stopping me but nothing happened. How could there be something stopping me in the countryside. I turned away and carried on walking for what felt like years until I came to a stop. It was like I was in a giant, clear box. I lent against the clear wall and faced the acres of land infront of me. I turned back to the wall, squashed my face against it and tried to see what was under me. All I could see was an industry estate, fumes blowing everywhere cars and buses stuck in traffic jams and shops with people rushing in and out. It was a whole different world just the clear air of the countyside to the deadly fumes of the city and realised how fresh it was up here.

### Text 2 Theme Park

#### Marvel Island:

Marvel Island provides families with a fun filled day, any age welcome and you must be 4+ years to enjoy the rides. Marvel is the biggest theme park in Devon and Cornwall and also owns the title for the steepest drop in England (17 meters!). There are over 15 different café/restruants dotted around the theme park to enjoy.

#### Rides:

Marvel Island lets you enjoy over 23 different rides, all including your favourite superheros to join you. Scream, as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing from no where. The spider -climb also provides you with England's first ever 17 meter drop, with is voted best ride of 2014. Grip to your seat as you parade up and down on the Hulk. Twisting and zooming around, your heart will stop as you escalate down into the black hole that leads to no-where, spiraling out the other-side you will then start dipping and weaving across the park. The wonder woman roundabout provides a safe and comforting ride for younger children. Gliding and floating around, this ride will take you drifting into the sky with your favourite superhero. This is an ideal ride for younger children and provides a safe and calming experience.

#### Restaurants:

Marvel Island provides over 15 different café/restaurants to stop for breakfast, lunch and teach. Each one is different while some are help yourself and others are sit down meals. Each are family friendly and provide 5\* service. Which ever

cafe you choose to visit, your favourite superheroes will be waiting for your arrival and you can even get an autograph!

Also, for the younger children who visit the park, there are a range of soft play areas ages 0-7 years, to enjoy. They include picnic benches around the side for quick stops for lunch. Your children will have lots of fun making all different things with the soft, foam blocks and there also includes climbing frames, slides and much more.

Marvel is open all through the year and includes special offers and money off if you pick up one of our leaflets. You can also grab a cheap offer on our range of café and restaurants. Come along any day of the week and enjoy our heart-stopping rides making you grip to your seat or choose the more relaxing ones. We hope to see you soon!

### **Text 3: Creative Writing**

It's only for a night

It was my turn. Everyone else had got given a dare ~~except~~ except me, and it was worse than anyone else's. At first I said no but I eventually gave in when they threatened to leave me by myself, in the woods. It had just gone 10.30pm and was pitch dark now, everyone knew I hated the dark but they begged to do the dares in the woods. I've always been afraid of the wood and the creepy house, located in the middle of the woods, which was owned by an old man who is known dead, but no one knows how. ~~My mum always told me~~ This is where my dare comes in, I really didn't want to do it because my mum always tells me not to go near it, but it's only for a night.

'I dare you to stay in this house for one night.' I didn't realise how scary it was until I saw it again, I remember always walking past it but never going in. We all agreed to stay in the house together because none of us would go in alone. We found the driveway and began to follow it up to the house, the gravel rubbed against our shoes as we trudged across it. It was hard to make out where the entrance was, eventually we found a small opening, we all helped move branches and ivy until we found a huge door. We thought to ourselves that the man who once lived here must have been unusually tall.

I grabbed the door handle and twisted gently as the door creaked open. I shook the cobweb off my hands and went through the door. There were holes in the floorboards everywhere so we got out a torch. The house was weird, it had about five staircases, three of them leading to nowhere. We stumbled into a room which must have been a kitchen and our mouths dropped. There were knives everywhere, on the floor, jammed into the wall and the weird thing was the cooker and all the counters were about up to our heads. This guy was strange. We had to get on each other's shoulders to actually see what was on top of the counter.

We decided to go upstairs and look in different rooms. I wasn't so sure about this because his body had never been found and it could be in this house. As we were going up the curved stairs, I saw a shadow about 7ft high sweep behind us. The others saw it too and we began to think this was a bad idea.

We all stopped. Stopped, to look at each other and think what to do next. We decided to carry on creeping up the creaky stairs. We got to the top and entered a bedroom. All the furniture was 4ft higher than any normal furniture and the bed was 6ft high and about 8ft long. Something wasn't ~~write~~ right.

We kept hearing the creaking of the stairs and little gusts of wind behind us, something was following us. By now we all admitted that we were scared and were thinking about forgetting this whole dare. After hearing more noises we decided to turn around and travel back down the stairs. Creak, creak. As the stairs came to a cure, the room went completely black, as if a huge shadow had blocked out our only light source. The torch. By now we were all freaking out, we got to the bottom of the stairs and stopped. The huge mirror in the hall had been smashed and there was glass everywhere. We looked closely at the mirror and wondered what had happened to it as it wasn't smashed when we came into the house, we saw a shadow. The shadow of a 7ft man.

The shadow was behind us but we didn't know where. How was it possible? The man who lived here was dead! We crept through the glass and along the hall and the shadow followed. Suddenly, we could all hear faint music, it sounded like it was coming from the neighbours house, but this house has no neighbours, we weren't alone in the house.

The music grew louder and louder until it was clear what the song was, it was the song played at the mans funeral. ~~This really creeped us out as it was a slow song and felt like we were in the movies.~~ We really wanted to get out but we couldn't find the door without are torch.

We looked behind and there was no shadow, it was gone but where? We all sighed in relief as the music came to a dead stop, we felt along the wall and eventually found the handle to the door. It was locked. We thought we must of had the wrong door buy when we got our phones out for light we reconised that it was the door we used to come in. We banged on the door buy obviously no one could hear us but thats what we thought.

The music grew louder buy still stayed quiet, we felt a gust of wind run down our spines. The person in the house had heard us buy no one else. In the corner of my eye I could see the 7ft shadow again, the music stopped as the shadow was about 2ft behind us, we could feel it breathing on our necks. We didnt dare turn round. When eventually the shadows were towering over us we knew we wouldn't be staying for just one night...

#### **Text 4 – newspapers**

I will use a variation of sentences such as a 3 word sentence

Remember to talk about all characters

Start sentences with verbs

SHERLOCK HOLMES Explores the death of loved family MEMBER Julia Stoner

Two deaths in two days occurred at the house owned by Dr Roylott. Intreigued Sherlock Holmes was called to the scene by Helen Stoner. While investigating he finds poisonous snake used as weapon against step daughters.

Destressed sister, Helen Stoner, arrives at the home of Sherlock Holmes to ask for his help to solve the crime of her sisters death.

After deciding on a plan, Helen Stoner left Sherlock's House and agreed to meet later on in the day. After leaving, Sherlock had realised that Helen had been followed as her step father was quoted 'Bursting into the room shouting at Sherlock and verbal abuse towards Watson.' He warned Sherlock and his assistant to stay away from his house. But a quote from Sherlock said – 'I have been asked to solve a murder and that is what I'll do.'

Arriving at the home of Dr Roylott, Sherlock and Watson began investigating the home. Every clue they found, they were trying to link it to their main suspects: the gypsies and Dr Roylott's pet cheetah and baboon. Sherlock checked for gaps in the windows, fingerprints, but nothing linked to the suspects. Arranging on another plan with Helen, Sherlock and Watson stayed the night in Julia's room to help solve the case.

Talking to Helen, she reminded Sherlock that Julia was found at 3am in the morning with no obvious clue to how she died. 'At first the doctors thought it was poison but no traces were found!' - Quoted Helen Stoner.

After staying the night in Julia's room, the two investigators realised that Dr Roylott had sent a snake down the unused bell to kill his step daughter. Surprised Sherlock realised that the Dr was not one of his suspects.

Realising it was Dr Roylott's snake, Sherlock and Watson went to interview him but it was too late as the snake had turned on him and strangled him.

Fortunately, Helen and her fiancée can proceed with their wedding. Next week many friends and family will be attending Julia's funeral.



## Text 5 The Box

His 15<sup>th</sup> birthday was the one he was dreading the most. His mother explained to him that every year, all the 15 year olds in the village were gathered in the courts to be chosen. Until this day Zack didn't know why 7 people were chosen at random. His mother had picked out his best clothes and advised him to do his hair, she kissed him on the head and they began to walk to the courts. Beginning to get worried as his mum said 'good luck' he asked her what this was for, she would not explain.

As the 500 15 years crowded together in the courts, Zack asked one of the girls stood next to him, why they were here. Her reply was 'to right the box.' Giving her a confused look he stared at the town leader who had presented himself in front of them. He had a bowl of names in his hand and began to pick one out.

"Sam Cart"

"Lucie Moore"

"Oliver Wilsberry"

"Mary Oberton"

"Jake Twin"

"Madilyn Cook and the last one...Zack Burns." There was a huge cry from behind the children, and when Zack realised it was his mother he began to think the box wasn't good. Walking up to stage, all the people picked stared petrified at their parents. They go given suits and sent to a room and were told to prepare themselves. The town leader came in said, 'follow me and I will take to the box.' "Don't we get to say a goodbye?" wondered Zack as he heard his mother screaming outside the door asking to see her son.

"You are a man now!" said the leader.

"If you survive the box you will return to the village as a strong man."

"Survive?" asked Zack.

"Don't you worry!" replied the leader.

The train took two days but eventually they were there. They had a different survival task each day. Zack soon realised he was one of the weakest of the group. The others warned him to keep up else he wouldn't return home. Are they right? He wondered.

The first task was one of the worst ones as Mary died. They each had a starting point ~~had~~ and had to reach the woodland without being shot. Mary was too slow.

After 4 days there was 4 of them left. Zack, Lucie, Sam and Jake all made it so far. Their last mission was known ~~for the~~ to be the hardest. They had to swim across the Nile while being shot at and attacked. Zack couldn't swim. He dived in after the other. He couldn't keep above the water.

Parents weren't informed of their children's deaths until they returned home.

Waiting. Waiting. Waiting, for the train to arrive with her son on. What she didn't know was that son wasn't alive. She had been waiting for 30 mins when she got a phonecall that her was ill in school and needed picking up. Knowing that her would arrive any second she rushed to pickup up her daughter. The last time she saw her son was at the funeral.

## Appendix Seven: Jody's Completed Coding Frameworks

### Pre-teaching Coding Framework

Linguistic and Grammatical Items	Number	Example
Verbs of movement	9	Adventured out, squashed, blowing, rushing, walking, pushed, turned, went, go
Imperative sentence	0	
Conditional sentence	0	
Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	0	
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	0	
Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	1	<b>"How could there be something stopping me in the countryside"</b> (no question mark used).
Onomatopoeia and sound related words	0	
Anadiplosis	0	
Anaphora	0	
Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	0	
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	0	
Noun phrases		
Evidence of different verb tenses	1	Past tense
Other		

### Teaching Cycle One Assessment

Linguistic and Grammatical Items	Number	Example
Verbs of movement	10	Plummet, parade up and down, twisting, zooming, spiralling, dipping, weaving, gliding, floating, drifting
Imperative sentence	3	Scream as you plummet down... Grip to your seat as.... Come along...
Conditional sentence	1	Marvel is open all through the year and includes special offers and money off if you pick up one of our leaflets.

Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	3	Twisting and zooming around... Spiralling out the other side... Gliding and floating...
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	22	You x 14      Your x 8 (‘we’ used in final sentence: “we hope to see you soon!”)
Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	0	
Onomatopoeia and sound related words	0	
Anadiplosis	0	
Anaphora	0	
Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	0	
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	0	
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	0	
Noun phrases	0	
Evidence of different verb tenses		Present: ‘Marvel is the biggest theme park in Devon and Cornwall and also owns the title for the steepest drop in England (17 meters!).’ Future: ‘Your children will have lots of fun...’
Other	0	

## Teaching Cycle Two Assessment

Linguistic and Grammatical Items	Number	Example and comment on effectiveness
Verbs of movement	11	Walking, going, follow, trudged, grabbed, twisted, shook, stumbled, sweep, entered, crept.
Imperative sentence	0	
Conditional sentence	0	
Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	0	
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	0	
Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	2	How was it possible? It was gone but where?
Onomatopoeia and sound related words	3	Creak, smash, banged
Anadiplosis	1	We all stopped. Stopped to look at each other and think what to do next.
Anaphora	0	
Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	0	
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	5	At first    suddenly    by now x 2    After

Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	0	
Noun phrases		
Evidence of different verb tenses		Past: 'It was my turn'.
Other		

## Teaching Cycle Three Assessment

Linguistic and Grammatical Items	Number	Example and comment on effectiveness
Verbs of movement	0	
Imperative sentence	0	
Conditional sentence	0	
Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	7	Intrigued, arriving, talking, distressed, arranging, surprised, realising,
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	0	
Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	0	
Onomatopoeia and sound related words	0	
Anadiplosis	0	
Anaphora	0	
Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	1	But a quote from Sherlock Holmes said....
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	6	After x 3      while      at first      next week
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	0	
Noun phrases	2	Distressed sister Helen Stoner The death of love family member Julia Stoner
Evidence of different verb tenses		Mainly written in the past tense. <b>Past:</b> two deaths in two days occurred at the house owned by Dr Roylott. <b>Future:</b> Many of their friends and family will be attending Julia's funeral.
Other		

## Post teaching assessment

Linguistic and Grammatical Items	Number	Example and comment on effectiveness
Verbs of movement	9	Gathered, walk, crowded together, sent, swim, dived, returned, arrive, picking-up
Imperative sentence	0	
Conditional sentence	1	If you survive the box, you will return to the village as a strong man.

Fronting sentences with non-finite clauses	5	Beginning to get worried.... Giving her a confused look... Walking up to the stage... Waiting for the train to arrive... Knowing that he would arrive...
Direct address using pronouns 'you' or 'your'	0	
Use of interrogatives to show internal thoughts	1	Are they right? he wondered.
Onomatopoeia and sound related words	0	
Anadiplosis	0	
Anaphora	1	Waiting. Waiting. Waiting.
Starting a sentence with But to show contrasting idea	0	
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of time	4	Until, the first task, after 4 days, the last time
Fronting sentences with adverbs/adverbials of place	0	
Noun phrases		
Evidence of different verb tenses		Past tense Present tense used in direct speech
Other		

## Appendix Eight: Jody's Commentaries

### Commentary One

1. I chose to write in a story/diary genre because I am the most familiar to this genre and find it easy to write like this.
2. I think people who like to live in the countryside and dislike the city style of life would like this. I didn't think about the target audience for my story.
3. I don't have a purpose for writing this text.
4. I am writing from the 1st person.
5. I structured my writing by looking at things through the window. I had quite a strong idea in my head.
6. I don't think I thought about the language I used and I didn't use enough different starter sentences.

### Commentary Two

The purpose of this writing is to advertise a theme park and persuade people to come. I have used movement verbs and imperatives to persuade the reader. Also

I used words such as *'twirling and heart-stopping'* to make the the rides sound more interesting.

I have varied my writing by trying to connect with the target audiences which is teenagers and above and anyone who would go onto the website.

Words I have used:

- Twirling
- Zooming
- Weaving
- Escalate
- Drifting
- Gliding

all of those words make it interesting.

### **Commentary Three**

I have used different sentence types in my writing such as short sentences eg, *'we all stopped.'* These sentences are used to build tension. Also I used anadiplosis eg *'we all stopped. Stopped to look at eachother other and think what to do next.'* This is used to create tension and create effect for the reader. I used onomatopoeia's such as 'creak' to create effect and let the reader know different noises in the location. I have also used adverbial phrases of time and place such as *'upstairs, suddenly, above, underneath'*. These phrases are used for suspension and to indecate to the reader whereabouts certain things were happing. I have also used questions to show internal thoughts and invites the reader and draws them into the story.

### **Commentary Four**

For this assessment, I made sure I used the right type of writing to the genre, which is a newspaper article. I also thought about the target audience which was adults. I did this by using a good range of vocabulary and informative phrases. I really focused on the purpose of my writing which is to create an newspaper article.

I used the 3<sup>rd</sup> person to write this assessment, but the 1<sup>st</sup> person to write the interviews. I did this to create a variety in my writing.

One of my targets was to use a variation of sentence lengths which I think I included a few in my writing.. I did this to make my writing more interesting and vairey sentences. Another one of my targets was to start sentences with a verb. An example of this is: Arriving at...or Talking to Helen...These make my writing more interesting and variey the start of my sentences.

In my writing I used a lot of quotations from characters to use as evidence against my opinion. Also I used nous phrases such as 'loved family member Julia Stoner' and 'Destressed sister, Helen Stoner'. Using these help give the reader a clear picture of what the characters look like and their personalities.

### Commentary Five

I wrote in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and in the present tense. I used a series of short sentences such as 'waiting. Waiting. Waiting, for the train to arrive...' This makes the reader focus on those sentences because they are different from the rest. I used questions in my writing such as 'Are they right?' these make the writing more interesting and interacts with the reader. Using verbs at the start of sentences is good because it varies the way you can start sentences which makes your writing more interesting.

## Appendix Nine: Jody's Commentary Coding Frameworks

Reflective Commentaries			
Codes	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
Genre	Refers to story/diary	In a generalised way relates text to an advert.	
Audience	Broad ref. to audience – people who live in the countryside. States didn't think about target audience before writing	Teenagers and internet users	Refers to impact on the reader but did not indicate who the target audience is.
Purpose	Didn't think about purpose	To advertise and persuade.	Makes links between her use of

			short sentence and building tension.
Perspective	Recognised it was written in the 1 <sup>st</sup> person		
Structure			
Style			
Grammar/language term	States she didn't think about language but also states she didn't use enough 'sentence starters.'	Refers to using movement verbs and imperatives as well as using present participles – but did not use this term.	Refers to using different sentence types eg, short sentence and gives an example. Makes reference to use of anadiplosis and gives an example. Refers to use of onomatopoeia with an example. Makes links between her language choices and impact on the reader. Refers to adverbial phrases of time and place – and gives examples and makes broad link to impact on the reader. She also makes reference to using questions to demonstrate the characters internal thought process.
Self-regulation strategy	Generated ideas by looking out of the window		
Other			

Codes	Text 4	Text 5
Genre	Refers to newspaper article. .	
Audience	adults	
Purpose	States the purpose was to create a newspaper article – but also makes links to using informative phrases.	



Perspective	3 <sup>rd</sup> person but also recognises 1 <sup>st</sup> person used in interviews.	3 <sup>rd</sup> person
Structure		
Style		
Grammar/language term	Used range of informative phrases and vocab. Refers to use of quotations and noun phrases – with examples.	States it was written in the present tense. States she used a lot of short sentences – the example demonstrate anaphora but does not reference this. Refers to use of questioning to interact with the reader as well as verbs at the start of the sentence. Here she states that verbs at the start of the sentence make writing 'good'.
Self-regulation strategy	Refers to writing goal which was to vary sentence lengths and to start sentences with a verb. Gives examples.	
Other		

## Appendix Ten: Jody's Interview Transcripts

### Interview 1 – The Box

**Teacher:** Hi Jody (.) thank you for coming to the interview (1) right (.) if we look at that piece of writing you did on The Room erm can you tell me a bit about it first of all

**Jody:** Erm (.) well it's basically just about being in a big box in the countryside and then comparing it to like to the industries

**Teacher:** so it is comparing it to

**Jody:** like cities and that

**Teacher:** ok and when you wrote it I didn't give you very much time but did you have (.) did you plan it first or did you just start writing

**Jody:** I just started writing

**Teacher:** And How did you get your ideas

**Jody:** er (.) just out the window

**Teacher:** by looking out the window

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** did you have an idea of who your...or what genre you're going to write in

**Jody:** Errr (5) yes it's like a story kind of diary thing because I prefer to write like that

**Teacher:** so like a narrative

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and did you have any idea of your target audience

**Jody:** No

**Teacher:** So you just started to write without thinking who would read it

**Jody:** Yes

**Teacher:** What about the purpose

**Jody:** No not really.

**Teacher:** Ok and is there anything you carefully chose in terms of your writing(.) your language your sentences (.) is there anything that you put in that you really thought about and are proud about

**Jody:** No

**Teacher:** any words

**Jody:** Errmm (3) there's a few descriptive ones but not a lot.

**Teacher:** No which ones would you say were good?

**Jody:** Erm, (9) I don't know, just ones that were describing like the difference and that

**Teacher:** Difference - the contrast

**Jody:** Yeah

**Teacher:** ok, and any particular words

**Jody:** not really

**Teacher:** did you enjoy that writing task or

**Jody:** Erm it was alright...yeah

**Teacher:** What's hard about it – is anything hard about it or

**Jody:** Errmm Just that you have to write without anything else

**Teacher:** yeah – so no preparation

**Jody:** Yeah

**Teacher:** thank you very much

### **Interview 2 – theme park writing.**

**Teacher:** Hi Jody thanks for coming for an interview (.) again (2) right we are going to talk about your last piece of writing er on theme parks (.) umm it was a piece of promotional writing to go on the website of your own theme park to try to persuade people to umm come visit (.) do you want to talk about it first

**Jody:** Erm well I like split it up into paragraphs (.) for different like rides and restaurants and then (.) just describe each bit

**Teacher:** What is the name of your theme park

**Jody:** Marvel Island

**Teacher:** Marvel Island umm and when you wrote this did you clearly think about the purpose of your writing

**Jody:** yes

**Teacher:** and what how did this influence you

**Jody:** umm well I planned this one out a bit more cos I know who I was writing it for as well

**Teacher:** who are you writing this for

**Jody:** Um like the adults who would be reading the website or like older children

**Teacher:** so they are your target audience (.)

**Jody:** yes

**Teacher:** Er so what was your purpose

**Jody:** Just to like make people come to the theme park

**Teacher:** yes ... is there anything in particular you think you did well to try and get them to come

**Jody:** Er like the persuasive techniques and (2) like using like (.) em movement words and that to persuade them

**Teacher:** what kind of movement words

**Jody:** um like **zooming drifting gliding plummeting**

**Teacher:** what kind of effect did you want to have when you did that

**Jody:** em just to make it seem like a good theme park

**Teacher:** yeah so you got your audience you got your purpose and obviously the genre is that webpage (.) did you think about the perspective of whose point of view this was coming from

**Jody:** um not really

**Teacher:** Who is writing this

**Jody:** (7) I think (.) I don't know (.) I think it's the first person

**Teacher:** you written it yeah but what about in terms of say the person who is producing this (.) is it (.) who is putting it forward

**Jody:** oh yeah like a company of the theme park

**Teacher:** and their intentions would be

**Jody:** to persuade people to come

**Teacher:** so you thought about ... did you think about that

**Jody:** yes

**Teacher:** yes um what else did you put think about in your writing (2) I mean what kind of words or word choices or sentence patterns did you put in which you thought might help

**Jody:** um like lots of description words and imperatives to persuade them like **scream**

**Teacher:** so what was that sentence with scream

**Jody:** um **scream as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing form nowhere**

**Teacher:** and why is that a particularly good sentence

**Jody:** um (2) because its like describes a ride and verbs of movement to show how..

**Teacher:** yeah what about how you started the sentence with scream (.) what does that suggest

**Jody:** um (.) it just makes it a bit more descriptive and draws the reader in a bit

**Teacher:** is there anything else that you are particularly proud of your writing

**Jody:** um (7) not really

**Teacher:** if you were to think back to your other text um the box do you feel that (2) you have done anything more in terms of planning or thinking about your writing then you did then

**Jody:** yeah I've planned this one better and I knew what to write about and that's easier

**Teacher:** so when you say you know what to write about is it actually your ideas as in the content or did you also think about how to structure it and the words that need to go into this kind of text

**Jody:** yeah for this one I know that I had to do persuasive words so it was easier to use them and just put them in a bit more

**Teacher:** out of all the kind of genres you know about in terms of writing actually how would you rank writing to persuade is that something you feel familiar with or how would you compare it to other types of writing

**Jody:** um yeah I quite like writing like this as you can use like different word choices and that

**Teacher:** yeah such as

**Jody:** like persuasive stuff and that

**Teacher:** what kind of persuasive things would you put in

**Jody:** er (5) just like sentences which make the park seem good

**Teacher:** is there anything else you'd like to say

**Jody:** no

**Teacher:** and how do you feel about your reflections at the end do you feel actually your ...compared to the first time I asked you to reflect on your writing are you getting more of an understanding of why you are doing that

**Jody:** yeah so I know what to include in the next writing

**Teacher:** yeah does it make a difference when you look back over your work and you analyse it to reflect on what you've put into it does that make a difference to your understanding

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and what does it do

**Jody:** well it just makes me realise what I've like missed out and that

**Teacher:** alright thank you very much Jody

### **Interview 3 –narrative – building tensions**

**Teacher:** Hi Jody, thanks for joining me um so now we are on piece number 3 would you like to tell me a bit about it

**Jody:** um well it's just like a story about creating tension and building it up

**Teacher:** so where did you set your story

**Jody:** I think in an abandoned house in the woods

**Teacher:** and what was the purpose of this

**Jody:** um (3) to create tension and (3) fright

**Teacher:** and did you have a clear idea of who your reader was (.) your target audience

**Jody:** um (3) yeah I think it was around my age group(.) not too young

**Teacher:** for teenagers

**Jody:** yeah

**Teachers:** and is there anything when you wrote this story that you really focused on trying to put into your writing to make sure your writing suited the audience and the purpose

**Jody:** um I was just trying to use a lot of short sentences and the (.) anadiplosis (.) and onomatopoeias to create tension

**Teacher:** could you just give me some examples of those (.) at what point did you use say onomatopoeia

**Jody:** um like if I was going up the stairs it would be creak or (.) like splash or something as an onomatopoeia and then anadiplosis is like we all **stopped stopped to look at each other** and to use the same word you ended with at the start

**Teacher:** and so what was the impact of that using the same words twice

**Jody:** um (.) well it just makes you like more interested because you are using the words together the same ones

**Teacher:** what was that word you used twice

**Jody:** er **stopped**

**Teacher:** and was that (.) why was that word important

**Jody:** um (3) well I think that was like in the middle of the build-up to the tension bit so it was just (2) um yeah a bit creepy

**Teacher:** and did you um think about these (.) strategies these features you put into your writing as you wrote (.) were you thinking about not just what you wrote but how

**Jody:** yeah I was on the like planning sheet I had all the ideas down

**Teacher:** and so how useful did you find the planning

**Jody:** yeah that was easier because I'd like put in phrases and like the different sentence um (5) different sentence bits (.) what to include in it

**Teacher:** so did you find that helped you to (.) well add a bit of variety to your writing

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and did you think about the perspective you were writing from

**Jody:** um yeah I writ this in the 1<sup>st</sup> person and I think that's what I had on my planning sheet cos I find that easier to write in the 1<sup>st</sup> person

**Teacher:** is that related to this type of genre

**Jody:** umm yeah

**Teacher:** um is there anything else you are particularly proud of in terms of that story

**Jody:** um well I also used like the adverbial phrases of time and place like **upstairs** and **suddenly above** and just used like difference sentence varieties to build the tension.

**Teacher:** and what difference do you think it made to introduce the idea of where the action was taking place by using those adverbs

**Jody:** well I think it just involved the reader more as they have a better idea of where you are in the story

**Teacher:** um is there anything that you think you would have liked to have done differently

**Jody:** um (5) probably use different sentence starters instead of like **we** and **I** all the time

**Teacher:** what kind of different ways would you (.) if you were now to reflect on it would you have liked to put in

**Jody:** well I could have used like **suddenly** at the start instead of the middle and that like that and replaced the word with like a phrase of time or something

**Teacher:** do you notice when you reread it do you see things differently

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and when you write do you kind of self-monitor as you write do you reread what you've written then think about it or do you just write



**Jody:** yeah I usually just write and then go back at the end if I have time

**Teacher:** so actually you don't necessarily stop half way through and reread

**Jody:** no

**Teacher:** so its quite interesting that you've picked out actually the way you start sentences and when you're looking at it now does it seem like you use the same patterns

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** that's quite an interesting reflections actually isn't it (.) so what do you think you could do next time to try and make sure you use more variety

**Jody:** um like have it on the planning sheet and just keep like write a paragraph and read it again to see if I can change anything

**Teacher:** yeah thank you Jody

#### **Interview 4**

**Teacher:** Hello Jody thanks for coming um I'm just going to talk to you about the 3<sup>rd</sup> assessment you've done now (.) the newspaper article you've done on Sherlock Holmes (.) could you tell me a bit about it

**Jody:** well we just had to write a newspaper article about the story and just use different words and sentences

**Teacher:** and what was your story (.) what was your newspaper article about

**Jody:** um the death of (2) Julia Stoner and how it happened

**Teacher:** um so the main genre for this is going to be the newspaper isn't it the newspaper article (.) what is going to be the purpose

**Jody:** just inform the readers about what is happening

**Teacher:** and who is the reader (.) who is your intended audience

**Jody:** um probably adults and older people

**Teacher:** adults (1) so if you've got the genre as newspaper article and your audience is adults and the purpose is to give information (.) did you think about how you are going to make sure your language is suitable for that

**Jody:** yeah like it has to be more um (8) more like informative and better words then like other things so you only get the main bits in the writing

**Teacher:** so what did you particularly do to help you with this type of writing

**Jody:** umm well my target was to use the verbs at the start of a sentence which I did quite lot in this one (3) and to use different lengths of sentences as well

**Teacher:** is that targets you set yourself

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** ok and did you meet those targets

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** do you want to read me some examples

**Jody:** um like for the noun phrases is was **distressed sister Helen Stoner** and then for the like verb ones it was like **realising** something and then **arriving at the home** and that

**Teacher:** um and is there anything else you tried to include in your writing

**Jody:** um (3) not really

**Teacher:** you wrote quite a lot actually

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** so when you write do you just write it or write a bit and reread it

**Jody:** um on this one I think I did write and then stop and read it back otherwise I miss out words

**Teacher:** do you think over the year this is something you have improved (2) rereading as you write

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and did you plan this

**Jody:** um yes

**Teacher:** and do you look at your plan as you go or do you tend to not bother

**Jody:** I did at the start but once I started I didn't

**Teacher:** and what else goes into a newspaper article can you remember how you know how to structure an article

**Jody:** um like you've obviously got the headline and then the first paragraph is like the main information and the main bits about the story

**Teacher:** what kind of information do you tend to focus on

**Jody:** um like who it was about where it was and like how it happened

**Teacher:** yeah so the who what where when

**Jody:** when

**Teacher:** and so keeping those in mind did it help you have a focus of what to write

**Jody:** yes

**Teacher:** can you give me some examples of the who what where when or how

**Jody:** um so like for the who it's like **two deaths in two days** and then **the house of Dr Roylott** and (3) ah I didn't say when but

**Teacher:** and are there any (.) what language features did we focus on when we looked at papers (2) can you remember (3) when we looked at the real texts

**Jody:** (7) not really

**Teacher:** do you remember we looked at the convicts (2) the two men who excepted from prison in Canada and there were certain things we noticed patterns or certain things

**Jody:** (7) no

**Teacher:** well what did we think every sentence was made up of (5) in the headline

**Jody:** it just had like all the information and that

**Teacher:** yes so what do we call them (3) they were made up of mainly what kind of phrases

**Jody:** noun phrases

**Teacher:** and why do you think noun phrases are importance in a newspaper article

**Jody:** um cos it gives quite a bit of information in just one sentence so its quicker

**Teacher:** yeah you do get a lot of information don't you (2) um and what do they focus on (3) what kind of information do you tend to get

**Jody:** um like what they look like or how the act or something

**Teacher:** so noun phrases (.) when we think about verb tenses what tends to happen in a newspaper article

**Jody:** um like where it happened

**Teacher:** yeah but do your remember a verb tense so is it in the present is it in the future is it in the past

**Jody:** um yeah like they write it in the past and some of it in the future like whats going to happen next

**Teacher:** yeah but so did you put anything in the past

**Jody:** um yeah I think most of it was in the past and then at the end I put what I thought would happen next

**Teacher:** and when you wrote your commentary what kind of language features did you focus on exploring

**Jody:** um (3) just about the noun phrases (6) and making sure I writ (.) wrote in the past tense and used the like verbs at the start

**Teacher:** so in terms of your overall aims actually you met those aims

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and out of the 3 types of writing we've looked at the theme parks the horror stories and now the newspapers articles um which have your preferred or found easiest to focus on or enjoyed

**Jody:** um probably this one cos yeah it's almost like a story but just a bit different

**Teacher:** ok anything else. Thank you.

### **Interview number 5**

**Teacher:** hi Jody thanks for joining me (2) this is your final piece of writing at the end of year 8 is there anything you'd like to tell me about what you chose to write about

**Jody:** um well I was really focusing on like using different ranging of sentences like short sentences and beginning with verbs and time and place words

**Teacher:** first of all what genre did you write in

**Jody:** um a story

**Teacher:** a story what kind of story do you know

**Jody:** um (5) well it's kind of (2) a bit tense in some places

**Teacher:** so did you set yourself any aims in your head or think about any writing goals or anything before you started to write (.) any kind of ideas or language patterns you wanted to get into your writing

**Jody:** um yeah I just wanted to put in like short sentences and that but otherwise I just went with it

**Teacher:** ok did you plan your ideas just before or

**Jody:** um I did a bit but (.) like about half way through I just made it up

**Teacher:** so if you were thinking about any particular language feature that you've used or sentence pattern what can you find in your writing to tell me about

**Jody:** um for the like the short sentences I used **waiting waiting waiting for the train to arrive** and like (2) adverbs of time after something

**Teacher:** you know the **waiting waiting waiting** why is that an interesting thing to put into your writing

**Jody:** um cos it like focuses on what the person is doing cos like you're like repeating it and it's like the short ones

**Teacher:** is it like a one word sentence each one

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** and what kind of impression were you trying to give the reader at that point

**Jody:** um that time wasn't moving very fast and they were just waiting

**Teacher:** and you mentioned something about adverbs or adverbials of time or time related adverb (2) do you want to find an example

**Jody:** **after four days there was four of them left** which just like shows you like how long they have been waiting or something or how many there are

**Teacher:** that time has past (.) is there anything else you focused on in your writing

**Jody:** I used like questions that the character was asking themselves like **are they right** which is just put different things into writing

**Teacher:** what does it show about the character when they are asking themselves questions

**Jody:** um just that they are kind of thinking about what they are doing

**Teacher:** and um it kind of suggests that perhaps they're not sure

**Jody:** yeah

**Teacher:** anything else

**Jody:** just using like verbs at the start of sentences to show what the character is doing and then writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person

**Teacher:** ok so if you put a verb at the beginning of the sentence can you find an example to explain

**Jody:** (14) um oh **walking up to the stage all the people looked scared and terrified**

**Teacher:** ok and why did you decide to put the verb at the beginning of the sentence

**Jody:** um because it like makes the reader focus on what the character is doing or how they are doing it

**Teacher:** so you mentioned as well that you decided to write in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person(2) why did you do that

**Jody:** um cos I unusually write in the 1<sup>st</sup> so I thought I would just change it

**Teacher:** and did you like it

**Jody:** yeah it was alright

**Teacher:** or do you prefer the 1<sup>st</sup>

**Jody:** um I probably prefer the 1<sup>st</sup> cos it's a bit easier

**Teacher:** if you were to look at your commentary what kind of things have you referred to

**Jody:** um about (3) like if I had written in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person and examples of all the different writing techniques I used

**Teacher:** so the commentaries has it made you think a bit more about your writing or your language choices a bit more this year or would you have thought about your language anyway

**Jody:** yeah it has because like I realise what I don't put in like after like I've read it back and compare it to other ones

**Teacher:** so if you were to look at your writing now and you think about (.) you can see what you put into your writing because you analysed it (.) what things emerge from that might make you think that maybe next time I could have done this or I should do this

**Jody:** um I will try and use like the anadiplosis and that but I just find them quite hard to put in

**Teacher:** what is it about them you find hard

**Jody:** um just like thinking about like the words to match

**Teacher:** um and anything else you think you could have put into your writing to make it interesting

**Jody:** not really

**Teacher:** if you were to think about setting yourself writing goals (2) I mean you mention the fact that you set yourself a goal trying to put in certain language

things but do you how do you manage the writing when you start do you write a paragraph and reread it or do you just write the story

**Jody:** um well I think I need to plan more and like keep going over my work cos I can some of them I like miss out words and it doesn't make sense cos I don't look back

**Teacher:** and why do you think you don't look back

**Jody:** um just cos like if I think of something to write I'll just keep writing about it

**Teacher:** so if you were to think about next year moving into year 9 what after this year and the different things you've learnt what things could you do to make a difference

**Jody:** um planning at the start and just reminding to go back and read each paragraph and then go on

**Teacher:** and is there anything like a reminder to help yourself think back when you are half way through the writing to kind of check that you've done things that you planned to do or to review your writing as you write

**Jody:** um just look at my plan and see if I've like done some of it

**Teacher:** over the year we've looked a wide range of language features in context and grammar things in context with other texts are there any ones that you kind of feel that you now can use them and you know when to use them and why (.) are there any in particular that stand out

**Jody:** um like I've started using a lot more verbs at the start so I've realised it's a lot better than using the or something and (3) like the one word sentences (1) or like the short sentences

**Teacher:** is there anything else you can think of that might help add variety to your writing

**Jody:** um (5) not really

**Teacher:** what do you think would make a difference to that to help you improve using more variety (.) what would help to get you used to using different things

**Jody:** um just like reading articles with them in and just practicing it

**Teacher:** thank you very much Jody you've been really helpful



## Appendix Eleven: Jody's Interview Coding Frameworks

Categories	Codes	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5
Metalinguistic knowledge	Verbalisation or Justification of language choices in own texts		<p>Metalinguistic knowledge when referring to text organisation '<i>Erm well I like split it up into paragraphs (.) for different like rides and restaurants and then (.) just describe each bit.</i>'</p> <p>When asked about her language choices, Jody demonstrated some metalinguistic knowledge by explain her use of persuasive techniques in particular movement words despite not actually referencing them as verbs.</p> <p>Er so what was your purpose</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> Just to like make people come to the theme park</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> yes ... is there anything in particular you think you did well to try and get them to come</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> Er like the persuasive techniques and (2) like using like (.) em movement words and that to persuade them</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what kind of movement words</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> um like <b>zooming drifting gliding plummeting</b></p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what kind of effect did you what to have when you did that</p>	<p>There is evidence of metalinguistic knowledge here. Jody explains she tried to use in lots of short sentences, anadiplosis and onomatopoeias to create tension. This was built on by giving evidence of anadiplosis. But the justification of why used was more tenuous: '<i>well it just makes you lie more interested because you are using the words together the same ones.</i>'</p> <p>Evidence for this: <b>Jody:</b> um I was just trying to use a lot of short sentences and the (.) anadiplosis (.) and onomatopoeias to create tension</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> could you just give me some examples of those (.) at what point did you use say onomatopoeia</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> um like if I was going up the stairs it would be creak or (.) like splash or something as an onomatopoeia and then anadiplosis is like we all <b>stopped stopped to look at each other</b> and to use the same word you ended with at the start</p>	<p>She makes links between the genre and her use of language</p> <p>When asked to give some examples and discuss them, Jody identifies her use of noun phrases: '<i>um like for the noun phrases is was <b>distressed sister Helen Stoner</b> and then for the like verb ones it was like <b>realising</b> something and then <b>arriving at the home</b> and that</i>'</p> <p>Here Jody is demonstrating her Metalinguistic and metalanguage evidence. She explains her use of noun phrases and verbs at the start of sentences the trouble is I didn't always probe her further to give more detailed explorations.</p> <p>Jody revealed some metalinguistic knowledge in terms of some the structural and content components of a news paper article as she made reference to the need for a headline and to ensure that she informs the reader of who, what, where how etc: '<i>um so like for the who it's like <b>two deaths in two days</b> and then <b>the house of Dr</b></i></p>	<p>Reference to metalanguage and metalinguistic knowledge. Here Jody is talking about her use of anaphora but she has but them into one sentence she is able to explain her intension on the reader:</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um for the like the short sentences I used <b>waiting waiting waiting for the train to arrive</b> and like (2) adverbs of time after something</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> you know the <b>waiting waiting waiting</b> why is that an interesting thing to put into your writing</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um cos it like focuses on what the person is doing cos like you're like repeating it and it's like the short ones</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> is it like a one word sentence each one</p> <p><b>Student:</b> yeah</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and what kind of impression were you trying to give the reader at that point</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um that time wasn't moving very fast and they were just waiting</p>

		<p><b>Jody:</b> em just to make it seem like a good theme park</p> <p>Then further on more metalinguistic knowledge revealed– she makes reference to her use of imperatives eg ‘scream’ when asked to comment on some of her language choices:</p> <p>Jody: um like lots of description words and imperatives to persuade them like <b>scream</b></p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> so what was that sentence with scream</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> um <b>scream as you plummet down the side of the wall with cobwebs appearing form nowhere</b></p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and why is that a particularly good sentence</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> um (2) because its like describes a ride and verbs of movement to show how..</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> yeah what about how you started the sentence with scream (.) what does that suggest</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> um (.) it just makes it a bit more descriptive and draws the reader in a bit</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> is there anything else that you are particularly proud of your writing</p> <p>Here Jody is beginning to articulate the impact of her</p>	<p><b>Teacher:</b> and so what was the impact of that using the same words twice</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um (.) well it just makes you like more interested because you are using the words together the same ones</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what was that word you used twice</p> <p><b>Student:</b> er <b>stopped</b></p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and was that (.) why was that word important</p> <p>When asked why she used the word ‘stopped’ twice in anadiplosis her explanation was ‘um (3) well I think that was like in the middle of the build-up to the tension bit so it was just (2) um yeah a bit creepy’. This is demonstrates not full understanding of why writers might use this writing tool.</p> <p>There was more metalinguistic understanding shown through her references to adverbs of place and the need to vary the way she opens her sentences rather than using subject openings.</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> um is there anything else you are particularly proud of in terms of that story</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um well I also used like the adverbial phrases of time and place like <b>upstairs</b> and <b>suddenly above</b> and just</p>	<p><b>Roylott</b> and (3) ah I didn’t say when but ‘</p> <p>When asked why she though noun phrases were important in newspapers she stated ‘um cos it gives quite a bit of information in just one sentence so its quicker.’</p> <p>She showed some broad knowledge of verb tense and stated that ‘um yeah like they write it in the past and some of it in the future like what’s going to happen next.’</p>	<p><b>Teacher:</b> and you mentioned something about adverbs or adverbials of time or time related adverb (2) do you want to find an example</p> <p><b>Student:</b> <b>after four days there was four of them left</b> which just like shows you like how long they have been waiting or something or how many there are</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> that time has past (.) is there anything else you focused on in your writing</p> <p><b>Student:</b> I used like questions that the character was asking themselves like <b>are they right</b> which is just put different things into writing</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what does it show about the character when they are asking themselves questions</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um just that they are kind of thinking about what they are doing</p> <p>The above para: demonstrates her metalinguistic knowledge and use of a metalanguage when refereeing to her use of adverbial phrases and is able to give evidence for these. She also refers to characters use of internal questioning to show the reader what they are thinking.</p> <p>Further on, whilst Jody doesn’t use the words past participle or non finite clause but does use the word verb and demonstrates some metalinguistic knowledge:</p>
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			<p>language choice by describing her use of verbs.</p>	<p>used like difference sentence varieties to build the tension.</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and what difference do you think it made to introduce the idea of where the action was taking place by using those adverbs</p> <p><b>Student:</b> well I think it just involved the reader more as they have a better idea of where you are in the story</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> um is there anything that you think you would have liked to have done differently</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um (5) probably use different sentence starters instead of like <b>we</b> and <b>I</b> all the time</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what kind of different ways would you (.) if you were now to reflect on it would you have liked to put in</p> <p><b>Student:</b> well I could have used like <b>suddenly</b> at the start instead of the middle and that like that and replaced the word with like a phrase of time or something</p>		<p><b>Student:</b> just using like verbs at the start of sentences to show what the character is doing and then writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> ok so if you put a verb at the beginning of the sentence can you find an example to explain</p> <p><b>Student:</b> (14) um oh <b>walking up to the stage all the people looked scared and terrified</b></p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> ok and why did you decide to put the verb at the beginning of the sentence</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um because it like makes the reader focus on what the character is doing or how they are doing it</p> <p>When asked what she would do to improve her writing Jody referred to using anadiplosis and showed that she understands that one sentence ends with the word used to start the next one:</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um I will try and use like the anadiplosis and that but I just find them quite hard to put in</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what is it about them you find hard</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um just like thinking about like the words to match</p>
	Verbalisation of linguistic choices in model texts					

Evidence of metalanguage	<b>Reference to use of grammatical/ linguistic terminology in own text</b>		Refers to use of imperatives and evidences 'scream'  Uses the word 'verbs'		Makes references to her use of verbs and different length sentences  She refers to her use of noun phrases and gives evidence of these	Explains that for this final assessment she focused on using a range of sentences – short ones and verbs at the beginning and time and place words. So some evidence of a metalanguage 'um well I was really focusing on like using different ranging of sentences like short sentences and beginning with verbs and time and place words'  when asked what she had learnt during the eywar she stated <b>'Student:</b> um like I've started using a lot more verbs at the start so I've realised it's a lot better than using the or something and (3) like the one word sentences (1) or like the short sentences
	<b>use of grammatical or linguistic term in model texts</b>					
Evidence of artificial understanding	<b>Superficial verbalisation of linguistic choices</b>					
	<b>Labelling/ listing grammatical items without elaboration</b>					
Explicit links to contextual factors...need to link language to them	<b>Reference to genre</b> <b>Reference to purpose</b> <b>Reference to genre</b>	Generalised reference to purpose 'it's like a story kind of diary thing'  No consideration purpose or audience	This time Jody acknowledges that she did consider GAP. She is speaking much more specifically about this in this interview	Jody states that the aim of this piece of writing was to 'um well it's just like a story about creating tension and building it up' and that ' <b>Jody:</b> um (3) to create tension and (3) fright  <b>Teacher:</b> and did you have a clear idea of who your reader was (.) your target audience	Makes references to genre audience and purpose  When asked how she adapted her writing to suit a newspaper article her first response was broad: 'like informative and better words etc.' but when probed further she was able to verbalise	She makes broad reference to genre being a story but explains that it was 'a bit tense in some places'


				<p><b>Jody:</b> um (3) yeah I think it was around my age group(.) not too young'</p>	<p>her design decisions in more depth. She states 'umm well my target was to use the verbs at the start of a sentence which I did quite lot in this one (3) and to use different lengths of sentences as well.' Interesting that she set herself a target to use more verbs at the start of sentences (not something we discussed during this unit of work).</p>	
Reference to aspect of self-regulation	<b>planning</b>	<p>Planning/ideas generation based on looking out of window – developed that strategy to help her find ideas</p>	<p>Jody states 'umm well I planned this one out a bit more cos I know who I was writing it for as well'</p> <p>She repeats this assertion later on: 'yeah I've planned this one better and I knew what to write about and that's easier</p>	<p><b>There was some evidence of planning: Student:</b> yeah I was on the like planning sheet I had all the ideas down</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and so how useful did you find the planning</p> <p><b>Student:</b> yeah that was easier because I'd like put in phrases and like the different sentence um (5) different sentence bits (.) what to include in it</p>	<p>She states that she did plan her writing for this assessment</p>	<p>Jody states she did do some planning but states that 'about half way through I just made it up.'</p>
	<b>Goal setting</b>				<p>Refers setting the goal: 'my target was to use the verbs at the start of a sentence which I did quite lot in this one (3) and to use different lengths of sentences as well.'</p>	<p>When asked about whether she set any writing goals, she states 'um yeah I just wanted to put in like short sentences and that but otherwise I just went with it'</p>
	<b>Self-monitoring</b>			<p>Reference to self monitoring when asked she states that she doesn't self monitor during the writing process</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and when you write do you kind of self-monitor as you write do you reread what you've written then think about it or do you just write</p>	<p>When asked whether Jody self-monitors she states 'um on this one I think I did write and then stop and read it back otherwise I miss out words'</p>	<p>Jody makes some reference to self monitoring and states: 'um well I think I need to plan more and like keep going over my work cos I can some of them I like miss out words and it doesn't make sense cos I don't look back</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> and why do you think you don't look back</p>

				<b>Student: yeah</b> I usually just write and then go back at the end if I have time		<b>Student:</b> um just cos like if I think of something to write I'll just keep writing about it.'
	<b>Model texts</b>					<p>When asked what she could do to improve her writing she made reference to reading real texts.</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> what do you think would make a difference to that to help you improve using more variety (.) what would help to get you used to using different things</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um just like reading articles with them in and just practicing it</p>
	<b>Reference to reflection</b>		<p><b>Teacher:</b> and how do you feel about your reflections at the end do you feel actually your ...compared to the first time I asked you to reflect on your writing are you getting more of an understanding of why you are doing that</p> <p><b>Jody:</b> yeah so I know what to include in the next writing And she adds: 'well it just makes me realise what I've like missed out and that.'</p>			<p>Reference to the use of the reflective commentary and how it made her reconsider her writing: <b>Teacher:</b> if you were to look at your commentary what kind of things have you referred to</p> <p><b>Student:</b> um about (3) like if I had written in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person and examples of all the different writing techniques I used</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> so the commentaries has it made you think a bit more about your writing or your language choices a bit more this year or would you have thought about your language anyway</p> <p><b>Student:</b> yeah it has because like I realise what I don't put in like after like I've read it back and compare it to other ones</p>

Summary of interview		<p>Summary:</p> <p>In the first interview, Jody does not demonstrate any evidence of a metalanguage or reveal metalinguistic knowledge other than to say she used a few 'descriptive' words. This could be because she is not used to articulating her design decisions at this stage but it could also suggest that many of her decisions are being made an unconscious level.</p>	<p>Summary</p> <p>In the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview, Jody is beginning to demonstrate her metalinguistic knowledge in terms of how she tried to influence the reader. She also demonstrates her use of a metalanguage by referring to her use of imperatives. She also reflects on the fact that she planned this writing task.</p>		<p>Summary</p> <p>In this interview, Jody demonstrated her metalinguistic knowledge by discussing some of her language choices. She mainly focused on her use of noun phrases and it is clear that she is making more links between her own writing choices and wider contextual factors which might influence these choices.</p>	<p>General summary</p> <p>Over the duration of the research cycles it is evident that Jody has developed her metalinguistic knowledge and is more open o discussing her design choices. She is not always able to give full and meaningful elaborations of her use but there has definitely been progress and some careful consideration shown at times. She has developed her use of imperatives, anadiplosis, sentences, adverbials of time and noun phrases.</p> <p>In terms of self reg – the main focus was she is beginning to plan more rerqueitly and sees the benefit of this. She hasn't fully mastered the art of self monitoring and checking her work as she writes – she still tends to reread after the writing process – whenit is too late to make big changes. She has also developed the use of setting herself rhetorical goals.</p>
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## Appendix Twelve: Certificate of Ethical Research Approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**EXETER**

Graduate School of Education

### Certificate of ethical research approval

**MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses**

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site:  
<http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

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**READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

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Your name: Sharon Morgan

Your student no: [REDACTED]

Return address for this certificate: [REDACTED]

Degree/Programme of Study: EdD

Project Supervisor(s): Debra Myhill and Annabel Watson

Your email address: [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

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I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Sharon Morgan date: 24<sup>th</sup> October  
2014

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Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
updated: March 2013



## Certificate of ethical research approval

### TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Does the use of reflective self-regulation strategies support the development of year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge?

- Does using self-regulation strategies support students' ability to articulate their metalinguistic knowledge?
- Does using self-regulation strategies support students' ability to transfer their metalinguistic knowledge into their writing?

### 1 Brief description of your research project:

This Action Research Project is designed to investigate whether year 8 students' metalinguistic knowledge of language is improved through the teaching of contextualised grammar and reflective self-regulation strategies. The Action Research cycle involves the teaching of three half termly Schemes of Work throughout the academic year. Each Scheme of Work will focus on two aims: firstly, the teaching and consolidating of different contextualised grammar terms and secondly, the teaching and developing of students' own self-regulation strategies.

### 2 Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The participants will be students aged 12-13 from a mixed ability English year 8 class, in which there are 9 boys and 11 girls. I will be their English teacher during the 2014-2015 academic year. There are 7 Pupil Premium students. Additionally, one student has autism and another student is under-going assessment for ASD.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

**3. informed consent:** Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: **Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.**

I have amended both the consent forms for students involved in the interviews and the form for parental consent for these interviews. The written data collection (samples of students' writing) is within normal teaching functions. The Head Teacher has approved the use of this year 8 class' written work in my data collection and analysis. I have explained that the audio data (interviews) will not be made available to the Head Teacher or to the school.

### 4 anonymity and confidentiality

The data gathered will be used specifically for the purposes of this research project and will only be made available to my supervisors and myself. However, as the written data will be

based on students' assessed piece of work, it may be used as part of the department's moderation and will therefore be seen by other members of the department or senior managers who perform lesson observations or monitor student assessment. As a result, student assessed pieces will be photocopied and students will keep their own original copies of the assessments. I will ensure that anonymity is maintained by removing any student names on the photocopied written work used during my data collection phase. All the students will be given a pseudonym. Additionally, when conducting interviews with a small sample (6 students), I will remove their real names from the transcriptions and use their pseudonyms.

Every effort will be made to ensure that no student will be identifiable if the data is used in any article, presentation or seminar. Additionally, any contextual information which might make the educational institution recognisable will also be removed.

**5 Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

**Written samples of students' work**

At the beginning of the Action Research cycle there will be an initial pre-teaching intervention test, for which students will be set a written task. After each of the three SOW there will also be a written assessment (which is part of the normal year 8 English assessment procedure). I will collect assignments from all students. Students will also be asked to write a written commentary/response to explain their design choices and the intended impact on reader. At the end of the Action Research cycle in July, a final post-test assessment will be issued and used in my data analysis. This task will be similar to the pre-teaching assessment. All 20 students' written work will be photocopied and used in analysis.

**Semi-structured Interviews:** After the pre and post teaching tests and after each stage of the teaching cycle (at the end of each SOW) 6 students from the sample will be interviewed about their reflections on their written work with a particular focus on metalinguistic knowledge and self-regulation strategies. The students selected for this sample will be based on a range of their National Curriculum levels and CAT scores as ideally I would like to interview : 2 low, 2 medium and 2 high attaining students. However, as this class is relatively small (only 20 students) the final selection of students will, in the first instance, be based on attainment but this will also depend on student and parental consent. These interviews will be recorded on an audio device and downloaded at the nearest opportunity. The data will be transcribed and stored as an encrypted file on my laptop as will the audio files. Although I will interview the students in pairs so that the students feel comfortable, the interview questions will akin to the questions which as their class teacher, I would ordinarily ask in the classroom.

The data will be reported on in my thesis and possibly at seminars, conferences, presentations and journal articles. My findings will also be shared with members of staff at my school.

The original data will be destroyed once the thesis and viva are completed.

**6 Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or**

All audio files will be stored as an encrypted document on my home laptop (and back-up



hard drive) and all transcribed data and samples of students (anonymised) written work will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at home. The data will not be stored on a USB memory stick. Additionally, a list of students' real names and pseudonyms will be stored at a different location (locked filing cabinet at work) and will be destroyed once the thesis and viva have been completed.

**7 special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.**

As the data collection is based on my general teaching duties, no student will be put under undue stress. Work will be differentiated for students with special needs and students' written assessments will be undertaken in conditions which would be consistent with their current assessment procedures and entitlement. Any student who requires a laptop for written assessments will use one during English curriculum assessments (which will be my written data) as part of their normal assessment procedure. However, in order to ensure that no student is placed under undue stress, I will not ask the student with Autism to participate in the interviews because I know that this student particularly may find interviews stressful. I will ensure that the students who are interviewed (and the parents of these students) have signed consent forms.

**8 Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

As this project is based on my normal teaching role with the addition of specific teaching intervention, there should not be any exceptional factors which may raise ethical issues.

I will interview students in pairs and in a room which is familiar with them (another classroom).

***This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.***

***N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor***

**This project has been approved for the period:** Oct 30th 2014  
**until:** July 31st 2015

**By (above mentioned supervisor's signature):** *DAMyhu*  
**date:** 24.10.14

***N.B. To Supervisor:*** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

**GSE unique approval reference:** *D 14/15/08*

**Signed:** *P. L. D.* **date:** 31/10/14

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
updated: March 2012

# Writing Reflections

## Parent/Guardian Consent Form



Dear Parent/Guardian

As well as being your son or daughter's English teacher, I am working part-time towards completing a Doctorate of Education with University of Exeter. My research focus is to improve students' writing. As a result, I am particularly interested in finding out what your son or daughter thinks about their writing. I am also interested in which strategies they found useful when writing. To do this, I would like to interview your son or daughter on 5 separate occasions throughout this academic year about their writing and how they are progressing.

In this letter I am asking you to confirm that you are happy for you son or daughter to be involved, and that you have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. Please read the statements below and sign to confirm your agreement. All data is kept anonymous and your child will not be identifiable.

### CONSENT FORM: participants' parents / guardians

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

- ☐ there is no compulsion for my child to participate in this research project and, if s/he does choose to participate, s/he may withdraw at any stage
- ☐ I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about my child
- ☐ any information which my child gives will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations
- ☐ if applicable, the information, which my child gives, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project
- ☐ all information my child son gives will be treated as confidential unless, he/she discloses any issue which needs to be reported to the school Child Protection officer
- ☐ the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my child's anonymity

.....  
(Signature of parent / guardian )

.....  
(Date)

.....  
(Printed name of parent / guardian )

.....  
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participants' parent or guardian; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

[REDACTED]

\* when research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

# Writing Reflections

## Student Consent Form



Dear Student

Thank you for being willing to take part in my project. As your English teacher, I am really interested in finding out what you think about your writing. I am particularly interested in what words and sentence types you use in different pieces of writing. I am also interested in finding out which writing tasks you thought helped improve your writing.

You are signing this letter to confirm that you know what the project is about and you are happy to be involved. Please read the statement below and sign to confirm your agreement.

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

- ☐ I do not have to participate in this research and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any time. I can also ask for my data be destroyed
- ☐ I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me
- ☐ any information I give will be used only for this of this project, which may include publications and presentations
- ☐ if applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form. This means my name will be removed from any data.
- ☐ all information I give will be treated as confidential unless, I disclose any issue which needs to be reported to the school Child Protection officer
- ☐ the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....  
(Signature of participant )

.....  
(Date)

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher: [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

[REDACTED]

\* when research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the research project and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without the University's agreement.



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