

**ENHANCING ENGLISH ACADEMIC LITERACY PROGRAMMES
FOR
FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

By

MOODIELA VICTOR MATHOBELA

B.Ed; B.Ed – Hons (UL); MA (SIT GRADUATE INSTITUTE)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**Philosophiae Doctor in Education
(Ph.D. Education)**

in the

**SCHOOL OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
BLOEMFONTEIN**

June 2015

PROMOTER: Dr D.J HLALELE

CO-PROMOTERS: Dr C.T TSOTETSI

: Ms M PAPASHANE

DECLARATION

I, Moodiela Victor Mathobela, declare that:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt and revolutionary appreciations to the following invaluable persons:

- ✚ The Almighty God for giving me the power, fortitude and audacity to continue and never succumb when fatigue set in.
- ✚ My ancestors who played a critical role in their blood tree that led to the nurturing of this branch called me.
- ✚ My promoter, Dr Dipane (DJ) Hlalele and the SULE and SuRLEC supervisory team for their guidance and continued support throughout this PhD journey.
- ✚ Co-promoter, Dr Cias (CT) Tsotetsi for his undying and unending tutelage and above all, his trademark words of exhortation that kept me going even during difficult times, “It is difficult, but doable”.
- ✚ Mr VFS Mudavahnu’s office in the UFS Qwaqwa Campus CTL office for such a speedy and professional response to my request to conduct the research with students and facilitators of English academic literacy programmes for first year university students.
- ✚ My wife Refilwe Mathobela (Charlene), our adorable children, namely daughter Tebello and sons Tshepiso and Bokang, for their patience and support during my research sojourn.
- ✚ My parents, brothers, sisters and relatives for their support.
- ✚ My friends, colleagues and comrades for their continued support.
- ✚ The M.Ed. and PhD SULE and SuRLEC cohort of candidates for years of intellectual and robust sharing, debating and growth.
- ✚ Mr Hlavisio Motlhaka for tackling the language editing.
- ✚ All the participants who availed themselves to make this study possible. Words can never be sufficient to express my appreciation for your invaluable contribution in this study!
- ✚ The University of the Free State Faculty of Education Post Graduate bursary for funding this study

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the following special souls who consciously and unconsciously formed a very critical support and motivation web in my academic journey since grade 1 (old sub A) to this stage of PhD:

Topela Sarah (late grandmother),

Maphehli (mother) and

Kapa (father)

Masilo, Mosibudi and Matseleng (late brother and sisters)

Kgashane, Maile and Maphoko (brothers and sister)

Refilwe, Tshepiso, Tebello and Bokang (family)

Evenrond Primary School teachers and learners

Sekolotome Primary School teachers and learners

Mabapa Primary School teachers and learners

Matseke Secondary School teachers and learners

Professor MJ Themane

Dr Beth Steinbach

Dr TN Mafumo

Friends, colleagues and comrades

All children of the downtrodden poor masses of the world who yearn for education, but due to their unbearable socio-economic circumstances, they are unable to access it.

The journey of a thousand miles that began with the first step has now reached its logical conclusion

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AL	Academic Literacy
ALC	Academic Literacy for Commerce, Education and Humanities
ALN	Academic Literacy for Natural Science
CBI	Content Based Instruction
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CER	Critical Emancipatory Research
CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CTL	Centre for Teaching and Learning
DQAU	Directors of Quality Assurance Units
DS	Discipline Specialist
EAL	English Academic Literacy
EALC	English Academic Literacy Course
EALP	English Academic Literacy Programme
EDP	Extended Degree Programme
ELL	English Language Learners
ESL	English Second Language
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FAI	Free Attitude Interview
LAS	Language Academic Skills
L2	Second Language
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NA	Narrative Analysis
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PSE	Post-Secondary Education
RSA	Republic of South Africa
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study aims at enhancing English academic literacy programmes for first year university students at the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. In order to achieve this, the following specific objectives were formulated to direct the study:

1. To identify challenges justifying the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students,
2. To identify and discuss the components and aspects necessary for such enhancement to occur,
3. To determine the conditions under which such enhancement can be successfully achieved,
4. To anticipate plausible threats that may hinder the enhancement operationalisation and the strategies that could be put in place to circumvent them,
5. To identify monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement, and
6. To propose strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as the theoretical framework was chosen to couch this study towards the operationalisation of the above mentioned objectives. CER's agenda of equity, social justice, freedom, peace and hope made it suitable for the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students that would include facilitators and students. These stakeholders are included in this study on the basis that their direct participation would likely enhance and promote their sense of ownership, legitimacy and also democratise and legitimise the process of enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Guided by CER as the lens anchoring this study, I reviewed the literature on EALPs for first year university students who learn through English as a second, third, fourth or foreign language in South Africa, Australia, Canada, UK and the USA because these countries represent the best practices with regard to academic literacy teaching at first year university level given their socio-economic contexts which are more or less similar to the kind of students we teach at this campus of the UFS. Literature revealed a number of challenges and mechanisms which were put in place to solve them. Informed by theory and guided by the objectives of the study, I also looked at the components and aspects necessary for enhancement of EALPs, the conditions that made these solutions to be operational, as well as the threats that scamped their

effectiveness in some instances and strategies put in place to circumvent them. The intent was to finally identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement so that strategies can be proposed and replicated in our context.

To complement the conceptualisation above, we generated empirical data through Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a research methodology and design which enabled the study to operationalise CER in action and to problematize issues of unequal power relations between the facilitators and the students. These power disparities seemed to be the most important factors that caused problems in the implementation of EALPs on the said campus. Through this the PAR approach, the voices of the marginalised and excluded stakeholders who were directly affected by the implementation of EALPs were given the opportunity to be expressed and heard. The empirical data confirmed that there were challenges in the implementation of EALPs at the Qwaqwa Campus as revealed in the literature elsewhere. These challenges included the exclusion of facilitators as EAL practitioners, as well as other beneficiaries in the implementation of these EALPs like students. There were also problems in formulating a commonly acceptable vision, hence no coordinated plan in implementation as well as lack of proper monitoring procedures to name a few.

In order to overcome these challenges, seven components and aspects necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students emerged to counteract the challenges. Thereafter, eight conditions conducive for EALPs enhancement to occur were identified. Threats to enhancement and strategies to circumvent them were also highlighted. Based on the above, monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs were also explored and examined. The study concludes by proposing strategies to effectively enhance EALPs for first year university students using data from the literature and from the empirical data emanating from this study.

Key terms: *English Academic Literacy, English Academic Literacy Course, English Academic Literacy Programmes, English Second Language, Extended Degree Programme, Enhancement, Critical Emancipatory Research, Free Attitude Interview, Narrative Analysis, Participatory Action Research.*

OPSOMMING VAN DIE STUDIE

Hierdie studie is toegespits op die verbetering van Engelse akademiese geletterdheidsprogramme (EAGPs) vir eerstejaarstudente op die Qwaqwa kampus van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat. Om die sukses hiervan te verseker, is die volgende doelwitte daargestel:

1. Die identifisering van uitdagings wat die verbetering van EAGPs vir eerstejaars regverdig.
2. Die identifisering en bespreking van komponente en aspekte wat noodsaaklik is vir die verbetering om te geskied
3. Die bepaling van die optimale toestande waaronder hierdie verbetering kan plaasvind
4. Die bepaling van moontlike hindernisse en die opstelling van strategieë om dit te vermy
5. Die identifisering van monitor-strategieë en aanwysers van sukses
6. Die voorstel van strategieë vir die verbetering van EAGPs vir eerstejaar universiteit studente

Kritiese Vrymakende Navorsing (KVN) is die verkose teoretiese raamwerk waarbinne hierdie studie die bogenoemde doelstellings wil bereik. KVN se agenda van regverdigheid, sosiale geregtigheid, vryheid, vrede en hoop maak dit 'n geskikte model vir hierdie studie. Fasiliteerders en studente is die belanghebbendes van die studie. Hul direkte betrokkenheid sal aan hulle 'n mate van eienaarskap oor die proses gee, en sal verder bydra tot die demokratisering en geldigheid van die studie. Deur gebruik te maak van KVN as lens, het ek gekyk na die bestaande literatuur oor EAGPs van eerstejaarstudente wat Engels as tweede, derde, vierde of vreemde taal studeer. Die omvang van die literatuur is beperk tot dié wat studente in Suid-Afrika, Australië, Kanada, die Verenigde Koninkryk en die VSA bestudeer. Die rede hiervoor is omdat hierdie lande se onderrig van akademiese geletterdheid die beste is, e nook omdat hul sosio-ekonomiese kontekste goed strook met dié van die studente op die UV se Qwaqwa kampus.

Die bestudering van die literatuur bring 'n aantal uitdagings aan die lig, asook meganismes wat in plek gestel is om dit te oorkom. Vanuit 'n teoretiese agtergrond en

met die doelstellings van die studie in gedagte, het ek verder gekyk na die komponente en aspekte wat noodsaaklik is vir die verbetering van EAGPs, die toestande wat hierdie oplossings operasioneel maak, sowel as bedreigings vir die sukses daarvan en strategieë om probleme op te los. Die doel was om monitor-strategieë en aanwysers van sukses daar te stel en in ons eie konteks te implimenteer.

Verder is daar 'n stel empiriese data opgestel deur gebruik te maak van Deelnemende Aksie Navorsing (DAN) as navorsingsmetodologie. Dít het die studie in staat gestel om KVN in aksie te sit en kwessies van ongelyke magsverhoudinge tussen die belanghebbendes te identifiseer. Dit wil voorkom asof hierdie ongelykhede in mag die meeste probleme veroorsaak in die implimentering van EAGPs op die betrokke kampus. Te danke aan die DAN-benadering kon die griewe van die gemarginaliseerdes gehoor word. Die empiriese data het bevestig dat daar probleme en uitdagings is met die implimentering van EAGPs op die Qwaqwa-kampus. Een van die mees prominente uitdagings is die uitsluiting van fasiliteerders en studente as praktisyns van EAGPs. Daar was ook probleme wat betref die opstel van 'n algemeen aanvaarbare visie. Gevolglik bestaan daar geen gekoördineerde plan van implimentasie of behoorlike monitor-prosedures nie.

Om hierdie uitdagings te oorkom, is daar sewe komponente en aspekte wat noodsaaklik vir die verbetering van EAGPs is, vasgestel. Verder is agt toestande waaronder EAGPs kan verbeter, geïdentifiseer. Moontlike bedreigings tot die proses, sowel as strategieë om dit te vermy, is ook bepaal. Op grond van die bogenoemde is monitor-strategieë en aanduiders van suksesvolle verbetering van EAGPs ondersoek. Die studie sluit af deur strategieë vir die verbetering van EAGPs vir eerstejaar universiteit studente voor te stel.

Sleutelwoorde: *Engelse Akademiese Geletterdheid, Engelse Akademiese Geletterdheid Kursus, Engelse Akademiese Geletterdheidsprogramme, Engels Tweedetaal, Verlengde Graadprogram, Verbetering/Bevordering, Kritiese Vrymakende Navorsing, Vrye Houding Onderhoud, Narratiewe Analise, Deelnemende Aksie Navorsing*

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY ON ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

1.1 INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

“Literacy arouses hopes, not only in society as a whole but also in the individual who is striving for fulfilment, happiness and personal benefit by learning how to read and write. Literacy... means far more than learning how to read and write... The aim is to transmit... knowledge and promote social participation.”

-UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany

In recent years many higher education institutions have experienced high numbers of student enrolment never anticipated before. This has also led to many challenges faced by institutions of higher learning, of which one amongst those challenges is the students' inabilities to peruse and write academic text with comprehension and coherence especially at first year level. Baik and Greig (2009: 401) claim that the increasing enrolment of English Second Language (ESL) students in Australian universities has led to increased competition among universities to attract these fee-paying students. They further argue that the said enrolments have led to concerns about bettering standards and the minimum English language requirements for entry into university. This view is also supported by Birell, Bretag and Watty in Baik and Greig (2009: 401).

On the other hand, some studies have showed that even when ESL students have achieved minimum entry requirements for university, many of them struggle to meet the demands of their mainstream university courses (Birell & Breitag in Baik & Greig 2009: 401), and their language skills, or lack thereof can cause considerable frustration for academic teaching staff (Bretag & Watty in Baik & Greig 2009: 401). According to Ransom, Larcombe, and Baik in Baik and Greig (2009: 402), international students themselves have also expressed concerns about the level of their English

proficiency and the linguistic demands of tertiary studies. Therefore, as the quote above suggests, ESL students who are entering universities and most of them are first generation university students from their families, academic literacy, in particular academic reading and writing become a huge challenge for these students to transmit knowledge and promote social participation in their different disciplinary discourses.

Therefore, in this study we (myself as the researcher and participants in this study) intend to make a contribution to the enhancement of English Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs) for first year university students. Ransom and Greig (2007) in Baik and Greig (2009: 402) found that almost all the Language Academic Skills (LAS) units surveyed offered considerably more generic skills services than discipline-specific ones in some universities in Australia. Hence, they argue for a discipline-based academic skills approach to teaching academic literacy as opposed to traditional de-contextualized one. Their study used questionnaires for surveying students' perceptions of the program, analysis of students' academic results on the first-year European Architecture subject, and tracking and analysis of students' academic progress through the course.

However, in Canada Marshall and Moore (2013: 472) conducted a longitudinal study interviewing 45 ESL students, five Academic Literacy instructors, five key university administrators, observations of classrooms, and ethnographic field notes of students' usage of English in class. This was a qualitative longitudinal study of interplays between the social, cultural, and linguistic in multiple languages and literacy practices of transnational students at a university in Canada. The findings question the role of academic English as the sole conduit to success for participants in higher education. The study further suggest that this relates back to how plurilingualism is defined and integrates the key idea that learning skills, multilingual literacies, (inter)cultural experiences, and different forms of knowledge are transferable and thus constitute assets and tools for better learning (Castellotti & Moore in Marshall & Moore 2013: 472). Furthermore, Marshall and Moore posit that through plurilinguistic approach to teaching academic literacy, ESL students in their study moved from contexts in which they mixed different languages and scripts freely to contexts which they adhered to

more normative senses of discrete monolingual practices in English and community languages.

In the UK, an ethnographic study was done by Lea and Street (1998: 160) using interviews for staff and students, participant observation of group sessions, attention to samples of students writing, written feedback on students' work, and handouts on essay writing data generation methods at two universities: one traditional and one new. Ten interviews were conducted with staff in the older university and 21 students were interviewed, either individually or in small groups. At the new university, 13 members of academic staff and 26 students were interviewed in the same way. The interviews at both institutions included the Directors of Quality Assurance Units and 'learning support' staff. The results of this study showed contrasting expectations and interpretations of academic staff and students regarding undergraduate students' written assignments. Therefore, Lea and Street (2006: 368) advocate for an "academic literacy" framework which takes into account conflicting and contested nature of writing practices as opposed to traditional models and approaches of skills-based and deficit models of student writing.

Gutierrez, Hunter and Arzubiaga (2009: 1) conducted a study in the USA at the University of California that was aimed at providing a framework for the development of robust learning ecologies organized around the cultural historical concept of "re-mediation" in contrast to traditional "remedial" approaches to students from non-dominant communities. Remediation involves a transformation of the learning ecology, including a shift in the way tools and forms of assistance function to incite and facilitate learning. Gutierrez, Hunter and Arzubiaga make a case for three key concepts, namely: re-mediation, a historicizing education, and Socio-critical Literacies and are discussed in the context of two cases that illustrate two learning ecologies developed for students historically excluded from robust learning and higher education. Luke (2003) in Gutierrez, Hunter and Arzubiaga (2009: 2) argue for a fundamental change in the education of students from non-dominant communities and illustrate the transformative potential of learning ecologies oriented toward powerful literacies and learning. This study was undergirded by a more expansive theoretical orientation, a

critical cultural historical approach (CHAT) that privileged robust forms of learning and powerful cognitive tools that transcend the boundaries of school learning. This CHAT approach focused on re-mediating a history of reductive learning by promoting the development of contexts of productive criticism in which participants could come to know why something is taught in the first place and how history and use of rules and tools come to be in their local setting.

Studies conducted on academic literacy in higher education institutions are not distant, international and immune to South Africa. South Africa is not an exception in as far as academic literacy challenges are concerned at universities. Jacobs (2005: 475) did a study of a literacy-as-social-practice approach at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) to Academic Literacies (ALs) which was implemented through an institution-wide project focusing on integrating language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum. To make the case for literacy as social practices embedded in context, as a new literacy studies, focusing on discipline-specific strategies, rather than approaches that decontextualize academic literacy, 20 Academic Literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists integrated AL teaching into various disciplines. The participants in this study reflected on their experiences of changing approaches to AL development over a three year project using a narrative methodology to produce data which was drawn from the work of Denten and Rip in Jacobs (2005: 479). This three year integrated approach to teaching academic literacy institutional project involved collaboration between different disciplines and Academic Literacy Practitioners (ALPs) who formed ten collaborative (language discipline) partnerships, exploring discursive practices of disciplines (ALPs & Disciplinary Specialists partnerships, transdisciplinary 'transaction space' institutional project where nineteen project participants were interviewed. Data generation involved stimulated recall; free writing, visual representation, and narrative interviews. The results of this study suggest higher education should create discursive spaces for collaboration of AL practitioners and disciplinary specialists to facilitate the embedding of AL teaching into disciplines of study.

In the context of the South African higher education terrain, there currently exist a renewed sense of urgency and vigour in debates regarding the language proficiency of students at universities (Van Rensburg & Weideman in Butler & van Dyk 2004: 1). This challenge of low levels of proficiency particularly in the language of learning and teaching (English) is viewed as a primary reason for lack of success at universities in South Africa. This challenge of students who arrive at tertiary institutions underprepared requires clear, bold, consultative and sustainable academic literacy programmes to ameliorate the situation. The EALPs are especially designed for this very purpose of orientating underprepared first year university students enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme (EDP) to familiarize themselves and adjust to the reading and writing discourses within their respective academic disciplines.

My observation of previous studies (studies mentioned in the preceding pages) done in academic literacy research at universities have been more of longitudinal institutional projects that involved administrators, academic staff, discipline specialists and students using surveys, interviews and analysis of students' written work. However, this study will be different in the sense that it follows a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology focusing on students and facilitators' experiences of academic literacy programmes and collaboratively working with students and facilitators as equal partners through focus groups Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) to collectively converse and develop strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the University of the Free State through the guiding lens of Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as a theoretical framework and Participatory Action Research as the methodology and design. Hence, this study aims to make a contribution in enhancing EALPs for first year university students through proposing strategies for enhancing such programmes through the juxtaposition of empirical data and literature.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS

Based on the above background, the following research question was posed:

How can we enhance EALPs for first year university students?

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa campus of the UFS. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were formulated:

1. To identify challenges justifying the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students
2. To identify and discuss the components and aspects necessary to provide solutions to such challenges
3. To determine the conditions under which such enhancement above could be successfully achieved
4. To identify plausible threats that may hamper the operationalisation of the enhancement of EALPs so that mechanisms are put in place to circumvent them
5. To monitor that enhancement of EALPs takes place so as to show indicators of successful enhancement.
6. To propose strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

EALPs for first year university students are offered in the institution where this study is undertaken within the content and context of mainstream disciplines (Content Based Instruction) as suggested and recommended by many previous studies (Ransom & Greig, 2009: 402; Jacobs, 2005: 475; Purser et al., 2008; James, 2010; van Wyk, 2014: 212). These EALPs (ALC108 and ALN108) for all first year students enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme (EDP) are offered to scaffold these students to cope and master academic literacy especially academic reading, writing and critical thinking within their disciplines. Despite all these efforts, students continue to struggle and fall short in reading, writing and their overall academic success at university and this is a cause for concern (UFS Integrated Report, 2012: 26). Hence, the relevance of this study to identify strategies that are conducive towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.4.1 My academic journey

I was born, bred and buttered in a farm area in the Mopani District Municipality near Tzaneen in Limpopo province. I began my primary schooling in 1983 and dropped and went back the following year and dropped again. In 1985 I never bothered going back to school and in 1986 I became serious and never dropped again until I passed my Grade 7 in 1992 (formerly standard 5). I grew up in a single parent family composed of seven siblings. Since my parents divorced when I was around three or four years old, things were very tough at home as we had to learn survival skills at an early age. After completing Grade 7, I had to relocate to my village to pursue my education at a secondary school. At that time my mother was struggling to make ends meet and to take me and my other two siblings to school was very tough. In terms of choosing which better secondary school to attend, I had to attend the only school available at my village irrespective of its bad reputation because that was the only school I could afford to attend as they only needed my school fees without expecting the building fund as I am the resident of the village. I could not afford to pay school fees and building fund in the so-called better schools and I had to settle for the one that was affordable in my village. Since I always excelled in my academic work since primary school days when I was still attending farm schools, I replicated that academic performance even at my new secondary school in my village. Through the survival skills I learned at an early age growing up in a single parent family of seven siblings, I knew at that age that education was the only opportunity I could use to improve the conditions at home.

My secondary school was characterized by student protests, shortage of qualified teachers, demotivated educators and students and a high level of ill-discipline amongst students. Five students had to share a textbook in a class of 150 students. Five students shared a desk or a table with two chairs. Despite all these challenges and obstacles, during and after school, I developed a habit of picking old newspapers and magazines written in English to improve my reading and writing skills as I realized that our school did not have educators who were qualified to teach many subjects

including English. Educators, parents and learners used to blame one another for the chaos and protests that were prevalent in our school. In other cases both sides were justifiable on the basis that on one hand teachers were sometimes not committed to their work in the school, because learners were ill-disciplined; and on the other hand parents as members of the community were not supportive and always blamed the school for all chaos that occurred. The blame was shifted by everyone from pillar to post without a single one of them taking ownership and responsibility for turning things around for the better. At some point the Representative Council of Learners (formerly Student Representative Council) would assemble all of us and march to the neighbouring primary schools to demand educators who would come and teach us and in most cases we succeeded in finding educators who came to teach us and left the primary schools. Some of us had to devise strategies to cope with the situation as nobody seemed to care about our plight starting with the SGB, parents and the Department of Education. We even had to organize and form after school and weekends study group with students from those so-called better schools to share with them what they have learned and had discussions.

Though there was always this perpetual reminder from the community and students from other schools that no one will pass Grade 12 in our school, I took this challenge personally that despite the challenges my school was facing, I wanted to prove critics wrong that “Where there is a Will, there is a Way” as long as one is focused, determined and working hard to achieve one’s goals. My regular reading of English newspapers and magazines helped me to do very well in English and History to an extent that my fellow students requested that I teach them specifically English and History in Grade 12 in 1998. At the end of the year, out of the 45 Grade 12 students who sat for the final examinations, only three of us passed and 42 failed. Out of the three, I was the only one who qualified to go to university on the basis of my Grade 12 results.

Despite the unbearable circumstances we were confronted with in our school, some of us did not give up and we used our own goals and dreams to motivate ourselves to overcome those challenges and we were able to utilise whatever that was available at our disposal in order to perform well academically. The shortage of resources and educators did not dissuade some of us as we realized that we could use the little

resources we had and take advantage of each individual student's skills and capabilities to turn things around and teach each other for our own benefit and it worked like a charm.

The testimony of my academic journey gives credence to the idea that people naturally prefer top-down approaches to getting help than bottom-up approaches wherein they themselves as communities take the centre stage and are in the forefront of initiatives to improve their circumstances. The academic success of three of us out of the 45 students who sat for the Grade 12 examinations in our school confirm and attest that if we truly need serious changes in our lives, we must be the first to be willing to sacrifice to achieve that change. Nobody is going to come from anywhere and solve our problems except ourselves. That is a very powerful lesson I learned throughout my academic journey that operating from a 'deficit' perspective is not helpful and not sustainable. We need to generate home-made solutions by ourselves for ourselves if we need serious and practical empowerment and emancipation in our daily work.

Fast forward to my University of Limpopo studies as a Bachelor of Education (Senior Phase & Further Education & Training) student from 2003 to 2006 majoring in English and Life Orientation and 2007 when I did my Honours degree majoring in Curriculum Studies, the same 'deficit' mentality was the order of the day wherein academics always complained about students as being underprepared for university studies even when they met university entrance requirements. As students we had to rely on ourselves through formulating groups and allocating each other tasks for presentations during group meetings on different courses and modules. This strategy of group work and self-reliance assisted most of us to complete our degrees in record time despite some negative comments by some of the academic staff who claimed that we would not make it as according to their observations, we were underprepared from high schools and our chances of succeeding at university were slim if not non-existent. Through sharing ideas as students in groups and allocating each other roles and responsibilities on our academic work, we overcame all the challenges and completed our degrees in record time both undergraduate and Honours degrees. All these experiences attest to the fact that many hands make light work. Therefore, instead of us going far seeking solutions to our immediate problems, we need to utilize the

manpower and resources at our disposal to find long lasting sustainable solutions to our own challenges. Homemade solutions seem to work better than imported ones.

Moving on to my Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL) at SIT Graduate Institute in the United States of America in 2008, I was introduced to Experiential Learning wherein awareness was central and core to the learning processes in the classroom. According to the Experiential Learning approach, students have to be aware of what they know and what they do not know in order for real learning to take place (Kolb, 2014: 27). Students are taken through a learning experience, thereafter reflect on it and rethink how they would have handled it if they were teachers facilitating such learning experiences. In this manner, awareness leads to more conscious and quality teaching and learning. In all these processes, team work has always been emphasized so that students are able to reflect on what they experienced and share each other's understanding and perspectives. Through such engagements, many of us completed our Master's degree in one year and half or two instead of the stipulated two and half years. Indeed working together and sharing ideas as students or individuals in a community enriches the work that is being done, unlike when only one person is doing the work. Playing solo does not help to improve conditions in the communities and society we live in. By coming together and sharing ideas on the challenges we are confronted with as students or communities, we will be able to come up with home grown ideas and solutions to our everyday challenges without relying on the outsiders to provide solutions for us.

The experiences of these institutions put team work and home made solutions as key to the success of any community rather than soliciting expertise from elsewhere that is detached and not familiar with the context of the community and the challenges experienced thereof. These experiences and the motivation for this study that follows below are consistent with Critical Emancipatory Research anchoring this study as it seeks to emancipate and empower communities (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011: 102) to take actions and find solutions to their immediate challenges and thereby experience ownership.

1.4.2 Motivation for this study

After joining the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus as a lecturer, researcher and coordinator for the EALPs (ALC108 and ALN108) for first year university students, I began to read and engage in conversations with colleagues on the language challenges confronting us as a university campus and our students in particular. To my expectation, many of the discourses we engaged in around students especially first years and their language challenges centred around 'deficit models' wherein colleagues blamed students for being undereducated and underprepared for university studies especially on academic reading and writing.

Week in and week out colleagues always complained that the kind of students we have are a burden to lecturers because they are 'deficit' in as far as engaging them in university discourses is concerned. Colleagues even went to an extent of claiming that students cannot utter a word in English in their classes and they felt that it is really unfair to expect lecturers to go through that kind of torture wherein their students cannot even say a word in English, let alone conversing in English unless they do so in IsiZulu or Sesotho. What perplexed me more was my own experience with these first year students that everybody labelled in 'deficit' terms. In my classes they were always articulate and at times I felt intimidated by their fluency in spoken English. That is when I realized that our students, contrary to a popular narrative on campus that they lack both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) according to Cummings (2008: 487), many of our students only lack the latter as it is an academic and more sophisticated language relevant to academic disciplines and not the former.

Realizing that the voices of the students are missing in this merry-go-round blaming game, I decided that I should conduct a study that would seek to get both sides of the story simultaneously so that solutions would be sought by all the stakeholders involved. The saying that 'nothing about us without us' guided me in my endeavour to conduct a study that would accommodate both first year students and their facilitators for them to collectively generate ideas on how EALPs for first year university students can be enhanced without blaming one another nor shifting responsibility. I wanted the study to promote empowerment and emancipation of the marginalized on issues that

affect them. Hence the birth of this study titled Enhancing EALPs for first year university students guided by CER as the theoretical framework and PAR as a methodology and design anchoring this study.

The narrative from my academic journey as a student and as a lecturer elaborated above point to the fact that role players or stakeholders need each other to address the common challenges they experience in their daily work. Without bottom-up approaches to addressing common issues in communities, the consequences are that different stakeholders will continue to label each other in 'deficit' terms rather than being proactive and pro-solutions working together to generate such solutions.

Instead of looking at students as 'deficit' and not ready for university, we should rather work with students and have conversations in order to help them achieve their academic goals. As lecturers we are all aware that many of our schools are failing our children and we should not be party to that agenda of seeing students in 'deficit' terms while we know that the system is the one that is deficit, not students. As lecturers, we know the kind of schools our students come from and instead of blaming them, we must rather find ways to assist them academically and if we need more training to effectively teach such students, let us do so without labelling students and blaming them (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Dei, 2007; Harklau, 2010).

1.5 ALIGNMENT OF THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The following subsections explain how each of the objectives assisted in achieving the aim of the study.

1.5.1 Challenges demonstrating and justifying the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students

The first objective of the study discusses challenges that demonstrate and justify the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Chapter two discusses what the policy documents say juxtaposing with what the literature say. The disparities between the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) Policy Revised document requirements and those found in the literature justify the

need to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Chapter four explores what is entailed in the MRTEQ Policy Revised document in contrast to what the collected data say (4.2.1). The disparities revealed by both the literature and the data justify the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

1.5.2 Identification and the discussion of the components and aspects necessary for such enhancement of EALPs

The second objective of the study in 2.2.2 looks at the components and aspects conducive for enhancing EALPs for first year university students used in five countries including South Africa. This is achieved through looking at conducive components and aspects used in Australia, Canada, UK, USA and South Africa. Section 4.2.2 scrutinises the operationalisation of the seven components and aspects which resulted in the successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. The seven components are the provision of background about the textbook before classes commence or provision of localized textbooks; creating harmony between teaching academic reading and writing and language usage; reduction of reading reactions from eight to five with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback; providing assurance and clarity at the beginning of the year that both British and American English are acceptable or one is acceptable; inviting facilitator or lecturer behaviour; acceptable student behaviour in class; and an improved institutional leadership, guidance and support. Section 4.2.2 further highlights and juxtaposes the distinguishing features in the seven components and aspects in 4.2.2 and 2.2.2.

1.5.3 Conditions conducive to the successful enhancement of EALPs

Section 2.2.3 explores the conditions which enabled the enhancement of EALPs in the five aforementioned countries from the literature. On the other hand, section 4.2.3 looks at the conditions which favoured the successful enhancement of EALPs in this study juxtaposed with those from the literature in 2.2.3. One of the conditions that supported the effective enhancement of EALPs for first year university students was facilitators treating first year university students as learners, not students. For the students, being treated as learners in their first year rather than students was an

enabling factor for them. Differences in conditions between section 2.2.3 and 4.2.3 are also pointed out.

1.5.4 Plausible threats to the operationalization of enhancement of EALPs and strategies to circumvent them

The fourth objective of the study is explored in sections 2.2.4 and 4.2.4. The threats in the enhancement of EALPs and mechanisms put in place to circumvent them are clarified. Section 4.2.4 examines the threats to the enhancement of EALPs in the campus under study. Mechanisms utilized to offset their effect are also cited from a literature perspective (chapter two) and through the empirical data (chapter four).

1.5.5 Monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs

The fifth objective of the study is interrogated in sections 2.2.5 and 4.2.5. Section 2.2.5 provides the evidence of the enhancement of EALPs through the literature review. Additionally, the evidence on the operationalisation of the enhancement of EALPs under study unfolds in 4.2.5. Furthermore, section 4.2.5 also highlights the differences in the evidence produced in sections 2.2.5 and 4.2.5. Having presented the aim and objectives of this study, the ensuing section concisely discusses the framework informing it.

1.5.6 Proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

The sixth objective summarized and presents proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students drawn from the literature and findings of this study.

The subsequent section discusses CER as the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by Critical Emancipatory Research (CER). The rationale for the choice of this framework is discussed below.

1.6.1 Theoretical framework informing this study

The study is informed by Critical Emancipatory Research (CER). CER is aimed at creating space for empowerment and change for the oppressed (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011: 102). As the researcher, I applied CER as a transformative framework clarifying my relation with the participants in all facets of the study. According to Mertens (2010: 8) CER emphasises the agency for change which rests in the persons in the community, working side by side with the researcher toward the goal of social transformation. Furthermore, Jordan (2003: 190) argues that CER places me as a researcher in a position to understand that human beings, unlike objects, have feelings and attitudes, and that these need to be considered when dealing with them. Human beings are therefore abled and empowered to interpret their words.

From an ontological lens, positivism assumes that there is one knowable reality, driven by natural laws. From a positivist perspective, the researcher is the only one who can determine the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students. In contrast, Mertens (2010: 32) argues that CER on the other hand contends that there are multiple realities shaped by social, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender and disability values. Social reality is ruled by unseen underlying structures. By employing CER in determining that there is a need to enhance EALPs for first year university students, I automatically place myself in a position to understand that participants' points of view need not just be heard, but also be considered. Moving from this perspective, it therefore becomes lucid that participants have the ability to express and interpret their opinions in determining the components and aspects necessary to enhance EALPs and that their views and opinions will be considered.

From an epistemological standpoint, positivism upholds the objectivity of the researcher, thereby dislodging and separating the researcher and the object of study as they are presumed to be independent of each other. From the CER perspective, the assumption is that there must be an interactive relationship between the researcher and the participants. In this study, the CER perspective placed me in a position of knowing and understanding that in order to determine the conditions conducive to successful enhancement of EALPs, I needed to consider and

acknowledge that there is a relationship between myself as the researcher and the participants. In order to determine the threats in the enhancement of EALPs, I also considered that I was not independent of the participants.

According to Higgs (1995: 49-50) and Mertens (2010: 10) Positivism uses quantitative methods and surveys in the collection of data while Chilisa (2012: 253) argues that CER uses dialogical methods of generating data. My choice of CER is based on the position of the researcher in relation to the participants in trying to hear the views, opinions and voices of the marginalized, and not only those in positions of authority, such as DHET officials. I wanted the voices of facilitators and students to be heard and captured. My aim was to bring to the fore the perspectives of the facilitators and students who are the direct people affected by these EALPs. My interaction with participants did not involve an expert and novices relationship, with the former having all the solutions to the challenges encountered or raised. Moreover, thorough and more elaborative argument for the choice of CER is provided in the subsequent chapter. After interrogating the framework informing this study, the next section concisely looks at the literature review. In-depth details of the literature review are presented in chapter two.

1.7 SYNOPSIS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Enhancement of EALPs for first year university students is necessary since there is no educator training that can train one for a life (Moswela, 2006: 626). Ongoing training is essential to the business of teaching and learning at any level. The first part of the synopsis of the literature review looks at the challenges encountered in the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. The rest of this section scrutinises and examines how Australia, Canada, UK, USA and South Africa experienced and attempted to solve the challenges that justified the need for enhancement of EALPs. These countries were chosen because they are globally regarded as developed countries with South Africa falling between developing and developed countries. Therefore, they are mostly sharing more or less similar socio-economic and educational experiences and challenges. This section is anchored by the five objectives of the study.

1.7.1 Challenges demonstrating and justifying the need for EALPs enhancement

The challenges that demonstrated and justified the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students drawn from the literature are deficit models of EALPs implementation which were mostly experienced in the UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006) and South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). ELLs and ESL students tended to be labelled in deficit terms by academic lecturing staff in Australian universities (Birrell, Hawthorne & Richardson, 2006), USA universities (Harklau, 2010) and South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). According to Birrell (2006a; 2006b), Birrell, Hawthorne and Richardson (2006), Callahan (2005), Gandara and Rumberger (2009) and Jacobs (2005: 476) the lack of academic success and high attrition for EAL students at universities in Australia, UK, USA and South Africa was a serious issue and an indictment on the universities concerned regarding the improvement of academic progress for ESL students.

The need for ELLs and ESL students to work long hours limited their engagement in collegiate activities in Canada (Jacquet, 2008) and the USA (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). ELLs and ESL students often had less than helpful guidance from the college in Canadian universities (Keat, Strickland & Marinak; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) while low Post Secondary Education participation and other academic underachievement issues were in the USA and South African universities respectively (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; South Africa, Jacobs, 2005: 476; Chireshe, Shumba, Mudhovozi & Denhere, 2009: 866). Moreover, colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual mainstream English speaking students and ESL students were experienced in Canadian universities (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) and USA universities (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Additionally, ESL students failed to meet the demands of mainstream university courses despite the availability of EAL courses in Australia (Birrell, Hawthorne & Richardson, 2006), Canada (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476). Having highlighted the challenges that demonstrated and justified the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students, the subsequent section provides the solutions in a form of components and aspects employed by the abovementioned countries to counteract the challenges raised.

1.7.2 Components and aspects necessary for enhancement of EALPs used in the five countries including South Africa

The first step towards addressing the challenges raised in the above section involved the adoption of content/subject/discipline/faculty-based EAL courses as was the case in Australia (James, 2010; Ashton, 2011: 80; Purser et al., 2008), Canada (Lea & Street, 2006: 376) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475). While ESL students were labelled in positive terms, rather than deficit terms in Canada (Sleeter, 2004; Dei, 2007) and the USA (Alderman, 2006), ongoing training for EAL practitioners and discipline specialists was conducted in order to arrest the challenges raised in the previous section by Australian (Ashton, 2011: 81) and Canadian universities (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007). EAL students' stay at college was extended by one year in the USA and South Africa (Alderman, 2006). Treating students in a fair manner and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of EAL students in Canada (Sleeter, 2004; Dei, 2007) and the USA Alderman, 2006).

Saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization was done in Canada (Sleeter, 2004; Castelloti & Moore, 2010) while the appointment of trained academic staff that understand embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions excluding minoritized students was done in Canada (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007) and Australia (Ashton, 2011: 81). Collaborations between EAL practitioners, discipline specialists and faculty lecturers were initiated in Australian (Ambery, Manners & Smith, 2005; Crosling & Wilson, 2005; Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226; Lamb & Visnovsa, 2012; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167), UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 376) and South African universities (McKenna, 2013: 64) as components and aspects necessary to address the challenges that justified the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students. Having outlined the components and aspects needed to address the challenges raised in the first objective of this study, the next section highlights the conditions that made these components and aspects to succeed in addressing the challenges.

1.7.3 Conditions under which EALPs enhancement worked

The conditions under which the components and aspects raised in the previous section in addressing the challenges justifying the need for enhancing EALPs, bottom-up approaches on university-wide curriculum initiatives from Australian (Evans et al., 2009: 600) and South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64) and the initiation of faculty and discipline committees involving all the stakeholders on consultations, planning, implementation and monitoring of curriculum initiatives formed a strong basis for the successful implementation of the components and aspects discussed above especially from the Australian universities (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167; Donnison et al., 2009).

Institutional leadership that communicate clear and bold steps to all campus stakeholders framing EAL facilitators and students in positive terms, as opposed to deficit terms was experienced in Australia (Birrell, Hawthorne & Richardson, 2006), USA (Harklau, 2010) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) while a shared and common vision amongst all the stakeholders involved in the collaborative project occurred mostly in Australian universities (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166; Donnison et al., 2009). The other important condition for successful implementation of components and aspects for enhancing EALPs involves institutions being explicit on modularity, assessment, and university procedures on student writing as was the case in Australia (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226) and the UK (Lea & Street, 1998: 170; 2006: 370). On the other hand, a coordinated and well developed plan of action was tried in Australia (Ashton, 2011: 600; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) including processes for identifying and recognizing good practice (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Funding to develop initiatives at the local level was provided in Australia (Harris & Ashton, 2011: 79; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) while authentic support from a high level champion was experienced in both Australia (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) and South Africa (McKenna, 2013: 64). Lastly, embracing academic advisors and treating them as experts with much to contribute as a condition for the successful enhancement of EALPs were done in Australian (Harris & Ashton, 2011: 79; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) and South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64).

1.7.4 Plausible threats to operationalisation of EALPs enhancement and strategies to circumvent them

In the process of addressing challenges through components and aspects together with the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, there were threats and strategies employed to circumvent them in an effort to enhance EALPs. This section starts with the threats that were encountered and ends with strategies employed to circumvent those threats to enhancing EALPs.

1.7.4.1 Plausible threats to enhancement of EALPs

The first two key threats to successful enhancement of EALPs are that it is very difficult to facilitate a whole of university initiative as seen in Australia (Evans et al., 2009: 600) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64) while also the lack of a common shared vision or collaborators not sharing the same vision of the collaboration threatens the successful enhancement of EALPs as affirmed in Australia (Cummings et al., 2005; Burnett & Larmar, 2011), UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 376) and South Africa (Jacob, 2005: 475). Additionally, lack of institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues in Australia (Bunch & Endris, 2012; Burnett & Larmar, 2011; Cummings et al., 2005) and the marginalization of EAL practitioners posed threats to successful enhancement of EALPs in Australia (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226) and the USA (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). Furthermore, top-down approach to initiate whole-of-university EAL programmes posed a serious threat in Australia (Evans et al., 2009: 602), UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 376), USA (Alderman, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475) while lack of the necessary preparation to serve minoritized ESL students was a threat in Australia (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) and the USA (Bunch & Endris, 2012).

Students' lack of attendance of EAL classes in the USA (Harklau, 2010) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476); colour blindness and denying differences in Canada (Sleeter, 2004; Jacquet, 2008) and conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in Australia (Cummings et al., 2005) and UK (Lea & Street, 1998: 170) posed serious threats to successful enhancement of EALPs. Moreover, institutional labelling of ESL students in 'deficit' terms in the UK (Lea &

Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476); EAL students often having less than helpful guidance from the college as in Canada (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009), USA (Bunch & Endris, 2012) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476); coupled with decontextualized and deficit models of EALPs in the UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) posed very serious threats to successful enhancement of EALPs. Finally, lack of faculty committees to address the collaborative process in Australia (Ashton, 2011: 80; Purser et al., 2008), Canada (Jacquet, 2008), USA (Alderman, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475, McKenna, 2005: 64) posed a threat towards successful EALPs enhancement. Given the threats highlighted in this section, the subsequent sub-section deals with strategies necessary and needed for circumventing threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

1.7.4.2 Strategies to circumvent threats to enhancing EALPs

In an attempt to circumvent the threats posed in the above sub-section, the strategies employed that made the enhancement of EALPs successful as mentioned in the literature include an understanding that whole-of-university initiatives develop over time, need nurturing and leadership as occurred in Australia (Evans et al., 2009: 600) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64); common shared vision amongst collaborators as was the case in Australia (Cummings et al., 2005; Burnett & Larmer, 2011), UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 376) and South Africa (Jacob, 2005: 475); and the provision of institutional leadership on contentious issues in Australia (Bunch & Endris, 2012; Burnett & Larmar, 2011; Cummings et al., 2005) amongst other strategies employed. In addition, embracing EAL practitioners as experts with much to contribute as in Australia (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226) and the USA (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumbereger, 2009; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) while bottom-up approaches to initiate whole-of-university EAL programmes were strategies tested in Australia (Evans et al., 2009: 602), UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 376), USA (Alderman, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475).

The necessary preparation to serve minoritized ESL students as a strategy to circumvent the threats indicated above was tried in Australia (Keat, Strickland &

Marinak; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) and the USA (Bunch & Endris, 2012) while students' lack of attendance of EAL classes in the USA (Harklau, 2010) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) were employed as strategies for circumventing the threats identified in the sub-section above. Making EAL class attendance compulsory in the USA (Harklau, 2010) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) while treating ESL students fairly and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit their academic needs in Canada, Sleeter, 2004; Jacquet, 2008) were strategies employed to circumvent the threats.

Clear, common and consistent advice or feedback given to students by academic staff in Australia (Cummings et al., 2005) and UK (Lea & Street, 1998: 170); institutional labelling of students in positive terms, as opposed to 'deficit' terms in UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476); and sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve minoritized students in Canada (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009), USA (Bunch & Endris, 2012) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) served as strategies to circumvent the threats highlighted above. Finally, the adoption of faculty/discipline/subject/content-based EALPs in UK (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 476) together with the initiation of faculty committees involving all stakeholders in the collaborative process in Australia (Ashton, 2011: 80; Purser et al., 2008), Canada (Jacquet, 2008), USA (Alderman, 2006) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 475, McKenna, 2005: 64) were also employed as strategies to curb the threats posed in the literature. This section has identified and highlighted threats towards the enhancement of EALPs and strategies that were employed by different institutions locally and internationally to circumvent such threats. The following section addresses the monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs as indicated in the literature reviewed in this study.

1.7.5 Monitoring strategies and indicators that showed that EALPs enhancement worked

As a way of devising and generating strategies for monitoring EALPs and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, early

identification and intervention for ESL students with weak academic language skills in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414; Peacock, 2008); comprehensive longitudinal studies to trace effectiveness and impact of faculty/discipline-based language programmes in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414) and the USA (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92); faculty committees involving all stakeholders in Australia (Burnett, 2006; Doham & Green, 2004: 314; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009) and the USA, Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009:); and support and monitoring of ESL students in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414; Burnett, 2006; Purser et al., 2008), USA (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92) and South Africa (Scott, 2001: 5) were employed as monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs.

Additionally, student and lecturer course evaluation at the end of the year in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414) and South Africa (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 7); strong institutional structures that support academic development and professionalism in Australia (Burnett, 2006; Scott, 2003; Doham & Green, 2004: 314; Cummings, 2005; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009), the USA (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009:) and South Africa (Scott, 2001: 5) served as monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs. There was availability of support from a high level champion in Australia (Cummings, 2005; McRoy & Gobbs, 2009; Burnett & Larmar, 2011: 25), USA (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92) and South Africa, (Scott, 2001: 5) while a coordinated and well developed plan of action for implementing whole-of-university initiatives in Australia (Greig & Baik, 2009: 414; Burnett, 2006; Dohan & Green, 2004: 314), the USA (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009:) and South Africa (Jacobs, 2005: 479-80) were utilized as strategies for monitoring the success of EALPs and as indicators of successful enhancement of these programmes.

Lastly, bottom-up management approach of whole-of-university initiatives in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414; Cummings et al., 2005; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Burnett & Larmar, 2011: 25), the USA (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92) and South Africa (Scott, 2001: 5); and adequate and timely support given in Australia (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414; Purser et al., 2008; Burnett & Larmar, 2011: 25), the USA (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92) and South Africa (Scott, 2001: 5) were also some of the strategies used for monitoring the success of EALPs as well as indicators that EALPs were successfully enhanced.

Having provided a concise summary of the literature aligned to the five objectives of the study, the next section looks at the methodology and design adopted in this study.

1.8 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

In order to fulfil the aim of this study, which is to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS, I employed Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a methodology and design guiding this study. Dworski-Riggs and Langhout (2010: 216) posit that PAR is a research approach that seeks to promote social justice by creating conditions that foster empowerment. It addresses the differences between power structures and allows researchers to put critical emancipatory research into practice by ensuring that everyone who has a stake in the outcome of the partnership has a voice in the process of decision-making. Participants in this study participated in problem identification and definition.

Myself as the researcher and the participants defined the problems to be examined, co-generated relevant knowledge about them, learned and executed social research techniques, took actions, and interpreted the results of actions based on what they had learned (Dentith, Measor, O'Malley, 2012). Empowerment of participants, problem-solving, active participation and recognition of inputs happened as the research process unfolded as advocated in CER (Mertens, 2010: 30). Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) were administered in this study, by which participants had an opportunity to say more than they would have said in responding to a closed questionnaire (Buskens, 2011:1). For anonymity the participants were given the pseudonyms ALC Participant 1 and ALC Participant A; ALN Participant 1 and ALN Participant A for both students and facilitators respectively (ALC108: 2 facilitators and 10 students and ALN108: 2 facilitators and 10 students). The 24 participants constituted two separate teams of 12 each (each group with 2 facilitators and 10 students) for both ALC108 and ALN108 groups driving the process of enhancing EALPs for first year university students in the mentioned campus and their views constituted empirical data for this study.

1.9 ANALYSIS OF DATA

For analysis of the collected data, I drew up a coding frame. Bell (1993:107) and Monyatsi, Steyn and Kamper (2006: 219) encourage verbatim reporting of responses where appropriate, therefore I transcribed tape-recorded data for coding. From the codes (categories) I looked at the patterns, identified and described themes in an effort to have an understanding of the meanings from the perspectives of the participants. To get a better understanding of the meanings from the perspectives of the participants, I used Narrative Analysis (NA) which Riessman (2008: 1) defines as a multidisciplinary qualitative analysis that comprises the analysis of text and talk in all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. While there are different kinds of data that can be used in narrative inquiry, Riessman focuses on interviewing and the process of transcribing interviews. She positions her discussion of interviewing and transcription on the premise that "interviews are narrative occasions" (Riessman, 2008: 23), and that transcription inevitably involves interpretation. She argues for interviewing methods that afford participants the opportunity to tell their story in their own ways, therefore sharing power within the conversation. The issue of power relations is of paramount importance in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Flicker, 2004) and narrative researchers need to create an atmosphere that fosters "reciprocal and empowering interaction" (Cohn & Lyons, 2003: 41) if they are to produce rich and meaningful data. NA matches CER in that both seek to find the origins of a problem and find solutions to the problem at hand (Riessman, 2008: 1; Chase, 2005). To avoid misinterpretation of the spoken words, member checking was carried out.

1.10 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING EALPs

In the presentation and discussion of data, the five objectives anchoring this study are used as organising principles in order to systematise the discussion.

1.10.1 Challenges justifying the need for EALPs enhancement

Chapter five justifies the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students by unpacking the challenges participants' experience. The words of students and

facilitators involved in the teaching and learning of EALPs are analysed using the NA, and the generated data showed disparities between what the policy documents like Norms and Standards for Educators and recently MRTEQ Policy Revised stipulate and what takes place in the classes. The challenges justifying the need for enhancing EALPs include irrelevant module content to students' background and life experiences; EAL courses' focus on academic reading and writing at the expense of language usage or grammar; EAL classes scheduled late in the evening; confusion brought by EAL courses' content which is taught through American English while the assessment is done in British English; lecturer behaviour, student behaviour, and lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support for EALPs and students.

1.10.2 Components and aspects needed for EALPs enhancement

In order to counteract the challenges alluded to above, the following were generated by participants as components and aspects necessary to respond to the challenges above: provision of textbooks background before classes commence or opt for localized textbooks; creation of harmony between teaching academic reading and writing and language use or grammar; reduction of reading reactions writing from the current eight per semester to five with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback; assurance and clarity provided at the beginning of the year that both American and British standard English are acceptable for assessment or one is acceptable; inviting lecturer/facilitator behaviour in class; acceptable student behaviour in class; and an improved institutional leadership, guidance and support for EALPs and EAL students.

1.10.3 Conditions conducive for the operationalization of EALPs enhancement

The conditions that made the enhancement of EALPs practical as alluded to by the participants in this study are the increased schema activation and building about the course content; provision of more language practice activities through classroom presentations, language usage, and vocabulary building exercises; creation of an engaging and active classroom environment; competent and interactive lecturer with a positive attitude towards students and the course; facilitators treating first year university students as learners, not students; availability and provision of engaged and

improved institutional leadership, guidance and support; creation of collaborative work between subject lecturers in faculties and English academic literacy facilitators; integration of English academic literacy reading and writing skills within disciplines in faculties through collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching; and alignment of academic reading and writing activities in English academic literacy courses, other subjects in the faculties and the Write Site.

1.10.4 Threats to the EALPs enhancement and strategies to circumvent them

The threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students were lecturers/facilitators' negative attitude and low expectations from students; students' negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course; lecturer and students' lack of regular class attendance and coming late to class; traditional teaching that does not embed technology in the class; uncomfortable learning environment for students; uninterested and de-motivated students; clashes between English Academic Literacy courses and mainstream courses (Timetabling); and negative attitude of university management towards students and lack of proper guidance, support and leadership for EALPs and EAL students.

The strategies for circumventing the above threats were alluded by the participants as follows: lecturers/facilitators' positive attitude and high expectations from students; students' positive attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course; lecturer/facilitator and students attending class regularly and being punctual; innovative and up to date teaching that embed technology in teaching and learning; comfortable learning environment for students; interested and motivated students; clashes free timetable between EAL courses and mainstream courses; and positive attitude of the university management towards EALPs and students coupled with the provision of proper guidance, support and leadership.

1.10.5 Monitoring strategies of EALPs enhancement and indicators that they worked

The monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students dealt with the challenges experienced through the saying that

'many hands make light work' or alternatively, from Tabane's perspective in chapter two where he talks about 'confluent thinking' wherein a team come up with better ideas than one person. The monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs included course evaluation by students and facilitators/lecturers; monthly evaluation of students' performance by facilitators/lecturers; selection of specific books (graded readers) to be read for reading reactions; continuous assessment with early detailed feedback; general reviews of assessment on student feedback; facilitator monthly or quarterly individual interviews with students to check progress and students' experiences of the course; and facilitators encouraging the spirit of a healthy academic competition in class through extrinsic motivation (rewards, incentives).

1.10.6 Proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. Guided by the findings from both the literature and empirical data emanating from the previous chapters, strategies are proposed for enhancing EALPs for first year university students. The strategies proposed in this study may not be limited to EALPs alone. Those who are involved and affected by the teaching and academic progress of first year university students may also test and put into practice the strategies proposed in this study. The proposed strategies consist of four levels, namely: class level, discipline level, faculty level and institutional level. At all these levels, the strategies involve concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation extracted from Kolb and Kolb (2005: 198)'s experiential learning cycle.

1.10.6. 1 Class level

The findings from the literature and empirical data aligned to the five objectives of this study informed the following proposed strategies at classroom level informed by concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

The content of EAL courses must be disciplines and faculties-based to help students to transfer skills they learn in the EALPs to their mainstream courses in their respective disciplines and faculties. The need for establishing classroom rules agreed upon by all students and the facilitator in the class is central to enhancing EALPs. Regular class attendance and punctuality by both students and facilitators must be adhered to and in cases of inconveniences, protocols have to be observed as outlined in the EAL course guides. In order to comply with the MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015) regarding teacher competence and expectations, ongoing training and upgrading of skills for facilitators is encouraged. Giving students early and detailed feedback on their assessment coupled with whole class general reviews of common and prevalent on assessment must be done. Facilitators must consciously create a comfortable classroom environment for students through their competence, treating students fairly and equally, being enthusiastic and playing their pastoral role. Facilitators must facilitate individual or focus group interviews with students in their classes on monthly or quarterly basis to solicit students' experiences of the course and how they think about their academic progress.

Facilitators must lead by example through developing a positive attitude towards students and the course that fosters mutual respect, trust and confidence between students and the facilitator. These should be done through facilitators celebrating diversity and adjusting pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of EAL students. Facilitators must make it their daily habit to keep reminding students that they are capable of succeeding academically and avoid labelling them in deficit terms. Lastly, both facilitators and students must evaluate the course in the middle and at the end of the semester or year. These strategies emanating from the previous chapters are not exhaustive, but point to some of the strategies facilitators and students can employ in an effort to make the teaching and learning experiences worthwhile and beneficial to all with the ultimate aim of applying these strategies to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

1.10.6.2 Discipline level

From the discipline level, the strategies sourced from the literature and the empirical data in the previous chapter that this study proposes are discussed below.

Collaborations between ALPs and DSs are needed to enhance EALPs and the overall academic performance of students in their mainstream courses. EALPs must be linked and integrated within the content of a course or discipline. Disciplinary committees must be initiated to oversee the planning and meetings of the transdisciplinary collaborations. For these interdisciplinary collaborations to work, the following must happen:

- Coordinated and well-developed plan of action;

- Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;

- Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;

- and authentic support from a high level champion on academic issues at the university.

Upskilling of academic staff throughout the embedding process of interdisciplinary collaborations is a necessity. There must be both formal and informal opportunities to meet, share and learn from colleagues; and the spaces for detailed consultation on planning and reflecting on teaching within these collaborations. For these collaborations to work, the following must be agreed upon and adhered to:

- EAL facilitators must be involved in these collaborations as they have much to contribute;

- Collaborations require a change of thinking and attitudes;

- Collaborations must be allowed to develop organically over time;

- Collaborations require nurturing and leadership;

- and ongoing training for EAL facilitators and discipline specialists.

Collaborations between EAL facilitators and discipline specialists require that they all share common assumptions and understanding of assignment titles between students and tutors, tutor feedback on students' feedback, and the importance of students' own

identity as writers rather than the acquisition of academic skills. Disciplinary collaborations must furthermore adhere to the following:

Regular interactions between the collaborative partnerships;

Participation in the transdisciplinary project team;

All participants must feel and experience a sense of belonging;

Processes of transdisciplinary engagement must be discussed and agreed upon;

All the participants should use the opportunities to learn through the transdisciplinary engagements.

Lastly, discipline specialists and EAL facilitators should involve all stakeholders in these processes including students, departments, faculty and institutional management responsible for academic issues. The next sub-section discusses the strategies necessary to enhance EALPs at faculty level.

1.10.6.3 Faculty level

On faculty level, the following strategies are highlighted as extracted from the literature and empirical data and this study proposes them as suitable strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Collaborations between the Unit for Academic Literacy, faculties, library and the Write Site are encouraged. There must be a creation of a culture of collaboration between faculty lecturers and EAL facilitators that entails values, purposes and past assumptions. Faculty committees must be initiated collaborating with EAL facilitators, discipline specialists, library, Write Site, and top university management responsible for academic issues. These faculty collaborations must adhere to the following:

There must be regular interaction between the collaborative partnerships;

Participation in the transdisciplinary project team;

Every participant must feel and experience a sense of belonging;

Processes of trans-faculty engagement must be discussed and agreed upon;

All the participants should use the opportunities to learn through the trans-faculty engagements.

EAL content must be faculty based to help ease the collaborative processes. Curriculum initiatives at faculty level should include the following:

- A coordinated and well developed plan of action;
- Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;
- Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;
- and authentic support from a high level champion.

Elements for effective faculty collaborations are both formal and informal opportunities to meet, share and learn from colleagues, and the spaces for detailed consultation on planning and reflecting on teaching. Faculty collaborations need the following in order to succeed:

- EAL facilitators must be involved as they have much to contribute;
- Collaboration requires a change of thinking and attitudes;
- Collaborations must be allowed to develop organically over time;
- Collaborations require nurturing and leadership.

The strategies highlighted at faculty level are not necessarily conclusive, but rather strategies that this study proposes for further implementation in an effort to enhance EALPs for first year university students drawing from the literature and the empirical data. The subsequent sub-section elaborates on the proposed strategies applicable at the institutional or university management level.

1.10.6.4 Institutional level

At the institutional level, special efforts must be undertaken to integrate academic administration and academic support programmes utilizing the bottom-up approaches to engagements. Through bottom-up approaches, the whole-of-university curriculum initiatives must include the following:

- Coordinated and well developed plan of action;

Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;

Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;

and authentic support from a high level champion responsible for academic issues.

The institution can make special efforts in saturating educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization. The institution must be explicit on modularity, assessment, and university procedures on student writing. Moreover, institutional leadership must communicate clear and bold steps to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, as opposed to 'deficit' terms. University leadership must be represented in faculty committees to provide nurturing and leadership. University-wide initiatives and collaborations must adhere to the following:

Interaction between the collaborative partnerships;

Participation in the university-wide project;

A sense of belonging felt and experienced by all the participants;

Processes of university-wide project engagement must be discussed and agreed up by everyone;

Every participant must utilize the opportunities to learn from the university-wide project engagement.

University-wide projects and initiatives take time and therefore, the programmes must be given time to develop and ongoing resources must be provided. Above everything else, the university leadership or management through bottom-up approaches should lead a shared institutional vision by all academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries. As it has been indicated at the beginning of this section that deals with the proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students from a class, discipline, faculty and institutional level using Kolb and Kolb (2005:)'s experiential learning cycle characterized by concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, some of the strategies repeat themselves at these various levels so

as to maintain a shared vision, commonality and consistency between academic writing expectations in the EAL courses, disciplines, and faculties and meeting the institution's expectations.

1.11 VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge, that is, knowledge in English academic literacy studies, more especially for first year university students. The study revealed challenges and the gap in the implementation of EALPs for first year university students and policies revealed by the literature review and generated data. The results of this research may be used by EALPs facilitators/practitioners, lecturers, policymakers, researchers, universities, Department of Higher Education and Training and any organisation interested in English academic literacy programmes for first year university students. It is also anticipated that the results will propose strategies for overcoming challenges in enhancing EALPs for first year university students. While this study does not subscribe to broad generalisation, the belief is that readers will find resonance with their own contexts and determine where "moderate generalisation" is appropriate (Payne & Williams, in Biputh & McKenna, 2010: 280).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs regarding what is morally good or bad, right or wrong, proper or improper (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 196; Opie, 2004: 25; Van Niekerk, 2009: 119). In order to adhere to this requirement, I obtained permission to conduct the research from the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State and the University of the Free State Qwaqwa Campus's CTL Manager and all participants involved were given consent forms (Appendices A-H). I made it clear on the consent forms that people were not coerced to participate. They were all assured of anonymity with regard to the information they should supply and informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the study without giving reasons. Such withdrawal would not have any negative results on them. The steps I have taken are supported by Opie (2004) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001), according to whom the researcher must show respect and care when conducting research with human beings.

1.13 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 has focused on the orientation of the readership. The introductory background on EALPs for first year university students and policies, problem statement, aim of the study, research methodology, ethical considerations, value of the study, as well as the layout of the chapters were presented.

Chapter 2 gives a clear indication of the possible theoretical frameworks and the justification for the chosen one guiding this study. The chapter also clarifies the operational concepts used in this study. It also provides a concise synopsis of academic literacy background and models. It concentrates on reviewing the related literature on enhancing EALPs for first year university students. The chapter also brings the following to the readership: challenges in the implementation of the MRTEQ Policy Revised document, components and aspects necessary for enhancement practices, conditions under which the components and aspects enhancement were successfully achieved, threats to the successful enhancement and strategies to circumvent them, as well as the monitoring strategies and indicators that there was successful enhancement.

In **Chapter 3** methodology used to carry out research is presented. Specifically, the approach, design, instrumentation and data generation method are presented.

Chapter 4 discusses the analysis of data, presentation and discussion of findings on the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

Chapter 5 provides findings, recommendations and conclusion on enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Chapter 6 presents the proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

1.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the orientation to the study. The background to the study as well as the research question, aim, research design and the proposed strategies has been indicated. The significance of this study and the structure of the chapters have also been given. The gist of this chapter has been to show the importance of EALPs for first year university students and their implementation. The MRTEQ Policy Revised document has been put in place as a mechanism and guiding tool to improve the quality of teaching in South Africa.

In this study, I propose strategies that can effectively enhance EALPs to be implemented and aligned to policies. The focus of the succeeding chapter is on the theoretical lenses and the relevant one guiding this study, clarification of the operational concepts used in the study, academic literacy background and models, as well as related literature aligned to the six objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE THAT INFORM ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs) for first year university students is the aim of this study which seeks to bring transformation in how these programmes are being implemented currently at the institution under study. To achieve the aim of this study, chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks (TFs) that could possibly guide this study with the primary purpose of justifying the appropriateness of Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as the most suitable and appropriate TF that informs this study and discusses the literature pertaining to EALPs at universities. This is done through short descriptions of their main ideas including their strengths and weaknesses. The choice of the applicable TF for this study is justified in its historical background, objectives, nature of reality, the role of the researcher, and the relationship between the researchers and researched.

The operational concepts, as the pillars that this study is grounded on are expounded and defined lucidly so that they are understood within the context of this study. Furthermore, the literature pertaining to EALPs is reviewed in order to discover the best practices from South African and other countries' universities (locally and internationally) to serve as a base as the study seeks to enhance EALPs for first year university students. The discussions therefore highlight pertinent international and local experiences on EALPs. Finally, the chapter provide a summary of what it entails and the highlights of what the subsequent chapter covers.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS (TFS)

According to Lassa and Enoh (2003: 3) a theoretical framework is a set of theories put together to provide a base or support for explaining, viewing or contemplating phenomena. Therefore, the role of the theoretical framework can be viewed as the

not assist the researcher and participants to achieve the aims and objectives of this study.

The subsequent sections give short highlights of what these TFs entail and justifications for the selection of the most relevant for this study which is CER, starting with Positivism, followed by Phenomenology and finally, the relevant and suitable TF for this study which is Critical Emancipatory Research.

2.2.1 Positivism

The historical background, objectives, nature of reality, role of the researcher, and the relationship between the researcher and participants in positivism are discussed in this section.

2.2.1.1 Historical background

According to Aristotle who is known as the inventor and father of positivism, human knowledge originates from experience and not the other way round. He further stated that the first duty of the philosopher must be to describe experiences, observations, and classify them (Younkins, 2003: 1). According to Higgs and Smith (2006:3) this is how the scientific method, positivism originated. As positivism evolved, two British philosophers came into the picture; John Locke (1632-1704) and David Hume (1711-1776), and later the Vienna Circle (1907 – 1938) led by Friedrich Albert and Moritz Schlick (1882-1936). All these proponents of Positivism were very concerned to answer the question: 'what makes an empirically confirmable statement true?' which basically means: 'what is the nature of scientific truth?' A very significant observation was made by Schlick that scientific truth was based on two very important things: logic and experience. Thus, for this study Positivism is irrelevant because we (the researcher and participants) are not concerned with logic and experience, but rather participants critically engaging their own realities and together generating solutions to address their own immediate challenges and in the process empower and emancipate themselves, hence CER is the most appropriate TF for this study.

2.2.1.2 Objectives

Positivism in its comprehensive sense is about logic, experience and a rejection of meta-physics. Metaphysical statements are statements that seek to provide us with information about non-physical worlds. An example of a metaphysical statement would be; 'God is love'. Such a statement would not make sense to positivists and would be rendered useless as it could neither be confirmed nor refuted (Higgs et al., 2006:7). Positivists maintain that a factual statement is a meaningful statement because it is possible to find out if it is affirmed or falsified. According to Positivists, the goal of knowledge is simply to describe phenomena that we experience. Over and above, its purpose as a science is simply to stick to what can be observed and measured. Any knowledge beyond that, a positivist would deem it beyond possible. Thus, Positivism falls short on this study as it devalues participants' individual and lived experiences in their own immediate environment by being judgemental to their own individual experiences as they do not comply with Positivism's logic, experience and cannot be tested. Therefore, CER is the most relevant TF as it values and respect participants' experiences, knowledge and respects their thoughts regarding their own challenges and proposed solutions.

2.2.1.3 Nature of reality

Positivism rejects the drawing of knowledge from multiple truths or realities, intuitions or insights, and speculations unless if they can be verified. Nkoane (2009: 28) argues that methodologically, positivism discourages reflection because the focus is on rules and procedures in finding the truth at the expense of human value systems and social issues as they are overlooked. This implies that if this study has to be conducted using the lens of Positivism, only meaningful statements which can be proved or negated would be considered to make this study while any knowledge beyond that would be rejected. One would then pose this question: can truth be absolute? CER therefore values, respects and tolerate different interpretations, knowledge and experiences of individual participants within their own lived communities. The participants' social issues and value systems and beliefs are valued by CER, unlike Positivism; hence CER is the most appropriate TF relevant for this study.

2.2.1.4 Role of the researcher

The researcher in Positivism is expected to apply deductive reasoning, or deduction which moves from general to specific. It moves from a pattern that might be logically or theoretically expected to observations that test whether the expected pattern actually occurs. According to Babbie (2007: 46) he describes the process as “From a general theoretical understanding, the researcher derives (deduces) an expectation and finally a testable hypothesis.” Neuman (2006: 59) argues that to theorise in a deductive direction, the researcher begins with abstract concepts or theoretical proposition that outlines the logical connection among concepts and then moves toward concrete empirical evidence.

Positivist researchers use deduction as a form of reasoning where two premises are relevant. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 31) premise refer to statements or assumptions that are self-evident and widely accepted “truths”. The first premise states the case and the second states the generalization of which the case is one example. Consequently, the deductive conclusion is drawn logically by a Positivist researcher, appearing almost self-evident. The process is called *sylogism* and the classical form is usually presented as follows:

First premise (the case): *Socrates is a human being*

Second premise (the generalization of which the case is an example):
Humans are mortal

Deductive conclusion (following logically, is self-evident, and adding no new knowledge): *Therefore Socrates is mortal*

If the case is not mentioned by a Positivist researcher, the reasoning in deduction will be incomplete and it will not be possible to draw the conclusion. Nevertheless, as soon as both premises have been stated, deductive conclusion is inevitable. In fact, it is built into the premises, which is why it is said that deduction does not add any new knowledge. Deduction, although it cannot be viewed as a “creative” reasoning mode, it however plays a key role in all scientific and professional thought of Positivist researchers. Moreover, it is vital to remember that Positivist researchers use a deductive form of reasoning and will thus begin with hypotheses or abstract

generalizations and move towards proving these (Neuman, 2006: 59; Babbie, 2007: 46; De Vos et al., 2011: 48).

As a researcher, I am of the view that knowledge is created by people and people are humans with feelings, intuitions and speculations. For this reason, in the process of knowledge creation, feelings, intuitions and speculations are bound to form part. One can never suspend feelings and emotions when creating knowledge, hence Positivism would not be an ideal theoretical framework to help us (myself as the researcher and participants in the study) enhance EALPs for first year university students as their voices and unique experiences are sought and valuable to this study. Therefore, CER is the most suitable TF and not Positivism.

2.2.1.5 Relationship between the researcher and co-researchers/participants

In Positivism research, participants are regarded as “subjects” and they do not have a say in how the research is conducted. Since in Positivism only meaningful statements that can be proved or negated are the only ones that are acceptable, this renders subjects of the research as mere objects who are used by the researcher to negate or prove meaningful statements. Therefore, this limitation on the part of Positivism paved a way for the emergence of phenomenology as the latter did not deny the existence of this real world, but sought to clarify the sense of this world which everyone accepts as actually existing. A Positivist perspective regards research participants as subjects who cannot have a say in how the research is conducted and falls short of the goal of this study which seeks to actively involve the participants in all the processes of data generation. CER values participants’ voices and allows their voices to be heard for them to experience empowerment, emancipation and social justice on issues they are confronted with on daily basis in their community.

The next section deals with Phenomenology.

2.2.2 Phenomenology

This section focuses on phenomenology’s historical background, objectives, nature of reality, role of the researcher, and the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

2.2.2.1 Historical background

Edmund Husserl, known as the father of phenomenology claimed phenomenology as the TF that does not deny the existence of the real world, but seeking instead to illuminate the sense of this world which everyone accepts as actually existing (Moustakas, 1994:13). He believed that phenomenology could provide a firm basis for all human knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and could establish philosophy as a rigorous science. My understanding of Husserl's view regarding phenomenology is that phenomenology does not appreciate information and insight to come only from large amounts of data, but should arise from intense study of experiences performed through phenomenological methods. Phenomenology, just like Positivism falls short of the purpose of this study as it only values and validates data that originate from phenomenological methods and disregards anything else. Furthermore, Positivism and Phenomenology talk about accurately describing the phenomenon and that is not the purpose of this study and therefore, both are irrelevant. Unlike CER that values all kinds of knowledge and experiences, both Phenomenology and Positivism are not relevant to this study as it values and respects all kinds of knowledge, experiences and knowledge and is not judgemental.

2.2.2.2 Objectives

The goal of the researcher within phenomenological context is that of accurately describing the phenomenon, renouncing from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts (Groenewald, 2004:5). This implies that the reality to phenomenologists is determined by their experience. Furthermore, it involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Sokolowski; Stewart & Mickunas in Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1373). Phenomenology contributes to deeper understanding of lived experiences by exposing taken-for-granted assumptions about these ways of knowing (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1373).

2.2.2.3 Nature of reality

Though phenomenology takes into account experiences of people and trying to accurately describe the phenomenon, relinquishing from any pre-given framework, but

remaining true to the facts; the fact of the matter is that the researcher is the one explaining/interpreting these experiences of the subjects based on reality that is confined to his/her immediate experiences (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1374). Although the origins of phenomenology can be traced back to Kant and Hegel, Vandenberg in Groenewald (2004: 3-4) regard Husserl as “the fountain head of phenomenology in the twentieth century”. Husserl rejected the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and that the information about objects is reliable. He argued that people can be certain about how things appear in, or present themselves to, their consciousness (Eagleton & Fouche in Groenewald, 2004: 4). To arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness. Realities are thus treated as pure ‘phenomena’ and the only absolute data from where to begin. Husserl named his philosophical method ‘phenomenology’, the science of pure ‘phenomena’ (Eagleton in Groenewald, 2004: 4).

In other words, the participants’ voices and personal experiences are not heard as the researcher is the only sole interpreter of these experiences of subjects based on reality confined to his/her immediate experiences and disregarding those of the subjects. On these bases, this theoretical framework falls short of helping this study to bring about transformation in the lives of the participants as their voices are not captured and heard for real empowerment to occur.

2.2.2.4 Role of the researcher

In this way, phenomenology like positivism allow for one person (the researcher) to create knowledge which in the case of positivism would be derived from numerical data and in the case of phenomenology from the textual data, while the subjects’ contribution to knowledge creation is non-existent and very distant. Mahlomaholo (2009: 225-226) argues that both Positivism and Phenomenology respectively cannot make it possible for critical reflection, deeper meaning, and a plethora of perspectives to be advanced due to their numerical and textual nature, and on that basis, they are unable to guide this study to achieve its objectives. Though Phenomenology like CER allows participants to share their own perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon, Phenomenology falls short as it ends at textual level analysis while CER

goes beyond and provides critical reflection, deeper meaning, and a plethora of perspectives to be advanced from textual, social, political and discourse levels.

2.2.2.5 Relationship between the researcher and co-researchers/participants

The researcher poses questions to several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon and the participants' role is to respond and give the researcher answers to questions posed. Thereafter, the researcher describes what all the participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon (Cresswell, 2006: 60). In this process, the individual experiences of participants with the phenomenon are reduced by the researcher and not by them to a description of the universal essence (van Mave in Cresswell, 2006: 58).

Therefore, the researcher identifies a phenomenon and then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develop a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals. This description consists of "what" they experienced and "how" they experienced it from the perspective and understanding of the researcher and not participants (Moustakas in Cresswell, 2006: 58). Researchers in phenomenology study the lived experiences of persons in the view that these experiences are conscious ones and the development of descriptions of the essences of those experiences, not explanations or analyses (Cresswell, 2006: 58). The subsequent section focuses on Critical Emancipatory Research and its justification why it is the best and suitable theoretical framework anchoring this study.

2.2.3 Critical Emancipatory Research (CER)

The ensuing section deliberate on CER as a theoretical framework and provide justifications of its selection for this study, starting with its origins as a point of departure, its objectives, nature of reality, role of the researcher, researcher versus participant relationship, and finally, justification for its selection as the most convenient theoretical framework underpinning this study.

2.2.3.1 Origins of CER

CER originates from Critical Theory (CT) of which the first group of people who developed CT are from the Frankfurt school (Higgs et al., 2006:68). This group opposed the idea behind science as being the only way of getting to the truth as positivists claimed. Their opinion was that knowledge is created by human beings through their experiences which science does not take into cognisance. The Frankfurt school group contended that our search for knowledge must be based on the desire to refine and transform the quality of human life. Habermas (one of the critical theorists) also criticised and challenged the view held by empiricists that all knowledge was based on things that could be experienced and measured. Echoing his earlier critical theorist predecessors, he claims that this ignores the fact that it is human beings who create knowledge. Steinberg et al. (2010: 140) assert that this knowledge that is created by human beings, within the context of critical theory serves to reduce human suffering in the world. As a consequence, CER was conceived and born as a way of improving people's lives through emancipation.

According to Deeper (2012: 9) the most important action that is encompassed by CER is that it engages all the people including the ones that are oppressed, marginalised and have been deprived of their freedom to participate (in activities which involve them) so that they could also be freed from oppressions. Mahlomaholo (2009: 225-226) and Dold et al., (2011: 512) concur that all the people engaged particularly the marginalised have to be treated with respect and their voices must be heard and respected. Key two issues here pertaining to CER are; *respect for the marginalised* and *hearing of their voices*. My point of view on the first issue as expressed by Mahlomaholo is that people are human beings with feelings, opinions and experiences regardless of status or stature and their feelings, opinions and experiences should never be overlooked nor undermined. Regarding the second issue as articulated by Dold *and* associates is that people have something to say irrespective of whether they are of higher or lower status. The bottom line is that they must be listened to and be heard. In this regard, CER assists in understanding humans as capable speaking beings and not seeing them as mere objects which can never think or do anything for themselves (Campanella, 2009: 2).

I am tempted to concur with the two authors because it is the respect that we offer people that makes them feel free to talk; and that it is only when these people are given a chance to talk by being carefully listened to, without being judged according to their status or stature in the communities they live or work in, that we can discover the value in what they have to say and learn from what they say and share. CER in this way affords all the people an opportunity to be part of transformation. Jordan (2003:186) maintains that the most important element in this case is that people who experience the challenge also generate solutions to their own situations by bettering or improving them.

Personally, I am of the view that people can only be able to take charge and better their circumstances if they are empowered enough to understand their struggles. Understanding plays a critical role because even if people can be engaged; if they do not understand their struggles and the role they need to play, they will not be able to make a significant contribution of transforming their situation. However, the nature of CER which allows for people to work together and to freely talk makes it possible for empowerment to take place. Within this context, the participants are afforded freedom to freely air their ideas and participate, and that power sharing amongst the participants which prevails, makes the whole process to be educative, emancipative, transformative and empowering. In my view, CER affords people an opportunity to learn about their struggles, understand them, reflect on what they can do about them, act, realise a difference and rejoice about the achievements of the outcomes of their own efforts.

The research question for this study which is, 'how can EALPs for first year university students be enhanced?' resonates with the transformational nature of CER. The study seeks nothing but transformation on the current state of the EALPs' effectiveness into an enhanced and more effective one. Therefore, it is only through CER which places more emphasis on social and power structures, emancipating and empowering human beings as human, not subjects that transformation can be experienced (in this context, the change in EALPs' delivery and student performance for the better). The purpose(s) of this study can therefore be mostly achieved through CER, the transformational lens that guides this study, and not through Positivism and Phenomenology.

2.2.3.2 Objectives of CER

Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) is founded on anti-oppressive philosophy. It is a lens that seeks to identify and change the root sources of oppression. It focuses more on the causes of oppression and not the signs of oppression. The practice of a more rigorous research that overtly intends to be liberating simply calls for a critical look that sets current practice within the bigger picture, building theory in action and acting theory (Ledwith, 2007:605). Nkoane (2009: 22) observes that one of the objectives of CER as part of critical pedagogy is to foster modes of enquiry that convert information into actions that address the problems. Biesta (2010: 43) further notes that to emancipate people one has to gain understanding of the power relations that constitute their situation, which in turn requires demystification and Stahl (2008: 4) that leads to transforming the status quo, overcoming injustice, alienation and promoting participation.

Kinsler (2010: 175) adds that it is to emancipate the participants engaged in the strategic action from the dictates of compulsion, tradition, precedent, habit, coercion and deception. Over a decade ago, Kemmis (2001) also affirmed that it is to connect the personal, political and transform situations so as to overcome felt alienation, dissatisfaction, ideological distortion, and the injustices of oppression domination. In this way, Ledwith (2007: 606) asserts that practice moves beyond the ameliorative changes of local action towards the transformative potential of greater collective force for change.

Recently, Nkoane (2009: 22) the objectives of CER as explained above will help the participants in this study to be empowered so that the information they have can be converted into actions that address their problems. The emancipatory agenda that CER promotes (Kinsler, 2010: 175) will help the participants to be able to fully control their situation especially because the context in which they will be operating will be the one in which they are treated as equals and are given their much needed respect (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 225-226) and their voices are heard and respected (Dold et al., 2011: 512).

2.2.3.3 Nature of reality

CER's engaging nature promotes collaborative or team work amongst all the participants. In this context, knowledge is formed by the members of a team instead of an individual, though individual views and ideas are still important as they contribute to team views and ideas. According to Dold and associates (2011:512) these diverse people provide different meanings and solutions to a problem as CER encourages people's voices to be heard and consequently, it is possible to get as many solutions as possible. In this way, one can safely say that CER is founded upon a plethora of realities or truths. In other words, this would imply that within the context of CER, there can never be one neutral or absolute truth because knowledge construction depends on a myriad of perspectives coming from a group and not from an individual. According to Mahlomaholo (2009: 225) it is within this context that people will be able to present different solutions to a problem (according to how they perceive it) through a shared debate which would ultimately make it possible for the researcher to be analytical and to be able to go for deeper meaning and look into all sides of the story from diverse and numerous perspectives in an effort to solve a problem. Though as the researcher I am responsible for the final analysis and writing up of the results of the study, participants in CER are consulted at various stages of planning, data generation, data analysis and final report to afford them the opportunity to confirm or correct the researcher's misinterpretations so that their views and ideas are correctly captured and reported.

The research question for this study begins with 'how' which means that it seeks to find in which way(s) EALPs can be enhanced. It thus requires those involved to look into all possible sides of the debates in order to come up with amicable solutions. The expectation from this study is to come up with as many solutions as possible in an endeavour to make success of these EALPs and it is only through CER that allows for all perspectives to be looked into and rigorously analysed that different solutions can be obtained (Mahlomaholo, 2009).

2.2.3.4 Researcher's role

Mahlomaholo (2009: 226) maintains that the role of the researcher within the CER context is that of engaging the participants in the research project with the aim of empowering, transforming and liberating them from futile practices and thoughts and

consequently meeting the needs of a real-life situation. Jordan (2003:186) posits that it is also to help them take control of their situation by bettering it; hence Kemmis (2006) adds that this will lead to them owning the outcomes of the research project of their own efforts.

Ledwith (2007:111) argues that CER theory is participative and collaborative in nature because it requires both the researcher and the participants to take part in the process of change. However, it is essential for the researcher to be genuine, thus adhering to ethical issues and ultimately establishing mutual trust among the participants (Campanella, 2009: 4). She believes researchers must be compassionate, patient, and mindful of the issues that communities are faced with, and should allow the participants to air these issues in a manner that is convenient to them. She further maintains that critical researchers must work with the people rather than work on the people, thereby allowing them to be more human and developing the ability to listen and respect one another. According to her, this maintains reflexivity and humility among the participants.

On the other hand, the researchers' role is that of interpreting other people's interpretations and trying to make sense of them (Mahomaholo & Nkoane, 2002: 2). This way, the framework informs analysis and guides investigation towards a deeper meaning from various perspectives of the research question. In order to alter the status quo of the EALPs at universities, CER is deemed appropriate as it not only emancipates, but also empowers, restores inequities and endorses individual freedom within a democratic society. The role of the critical researcher is critical in this context because it makes it possible for the strategies to be geared towards yielding the desirable results, particularly because all the stakeholders are engaged, operate within the context wherein there are equal power relations and therefore, own the programme that is put in place (Shangase, 2013:15). According to Shangase (2013: 45) this is because the researcher within this context is more than anything a facilitator and an enabler who shares expertise rather than impose it.

2.2.3.5 Researcher and participants' relationship

Gustavsen (2001:126-127) posits that within the context of CER, the division of the powerful and the powerless dissolves into egalitarianism between the researcher and the participants and both share a common interest in the site of community need. This kind of a shift is more of a 'lover model' wherein the relationship between the researcher and the participants exists in a state of mutual concern, caring for one another and trusting each other; leave-taking occurring when it must and being painful to both the researcher and the participants and both missing each other's friendship and experiences (Reinharz, 1978).

According to Mahomaholo (2009:13) CER opposes the notion that there is absolute one truth, hence it allows for different ideas coming from different people within the context in which the participants interact with the researcher as equals and are also treated with respect equivalent to that of the researcher. According to Kemmis (2006: 472) this enables the participants to gain the status equal to that of the researcher and the relationship becomes a closer one wherein there is an open dialogue or 'communicative spaces'. This close kind of a relationship emboldens transparency and openness particularly because of the platform generated by CER which at all times advances the agenda of peace, freedom, hope, social justice and equity in all its forms (McGregor, 2003). Ledwith (2007: 599) argues that CER enables both the participants and the researcher to act in the interest of the whole and subsequently affords them all a mutual process of discovery wherein both contribute to the expansion of each other's knowledge.

It follows on this that one could regard CER's nature of awarding the 'researched'/ participants the status equal to that of the researcher and a respect of what they have to say as a shrewd way of transfiguring the participants into becoming researchers and the researcher into becoming the participant (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 225-226 ; Dold et al., 2011: 512). This suggests that the participants are empowered while the researcher is depowered to achieve egalitarian collaboration.

The CER's agenda of making the participants and the researcher to interact as equals (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 225) eliminates the perception of 'the powerful and the

powerless' and subsequently considers social justice, democracy and liberatory principles for all (Gustavsen, 2001:126). According to Campanella (2009: 5) both the participants and the researcher work collaboratively as equal partners across the entire research process in order to transform their position through challenging their marginalisation. Shangase (2013:16) affirms that in this way, CER promotes praxis and fosters the researcher and the participants to strive to find solutions rather than dwelling on the problems in a more participatory mode.

The research question for this study is the one which requires people's responses on ways in which the effectiveness EALPs for first year university students can be enhanced. According to McGregor (2003) CER in this context will create a more relaxed platform where both the researcher and the researched interact as equals within a context where there are elements of respect and humanity and also, where the social justice and equity agenda is advanced.

2.2.4 The choice of Critical Emancipatory Research over Positivism and Phenomenology

From the discussions above, it is clear that when people work together (what CER requires), the possibilities of achieving the goal are high and quick to attain. According to Tibane (2007:158) this is because in teamwork there is what is called '*confluent thinking*' which he refers to as '*a shared thinking*'. Confluent thinking breeds innovation and maximises productivity (Tibane, 2007:96). He asserts that if we could trace the origin(s) of a great idea; we will most likely discover that it came from many ideas, and this idea now brings great returns. Moreover, he declares that when people share their thoughts, they are bound to produce a greater energy that will help them share their efforts. Tibane's conclusion in this regard is that if thinking is a precursor of every action, then shared thinking is definitely a forerunner of shared action which is the only one that can produce greater returns.

On this basis, CER is preferred as the most apt lens to direct this study for it encourages team work where people are bound to share their thinking. Greater solutions to enhance EALPs for first year university students emanate from the many

ideas and perspectives that people bring forth to the discussions. The objectives of this study can therefore be mostly achieved through CER which promotes shared thinking, which Tibane (2007:96) regards as the only mechanism for breeding innovation and producing greater returns.

CER's engaging nature through shared debates makes it possible for the participants in this study to receive enlightenment that make them understand the problem. Its empowering and transforming nature makes it possible for the participants to deliberate and formulate possible solutions to the problem and to define the conditions that will make these solutions work (Nkoane, 2012: 99). Furthermore, its nature of allowing multiple realities and perspectives to be considered and allowing one to go for a deeper meaning (Mahlomaholo, 2009) make it possible for the participants to identify the challenges and recognise the possible and plausible threats that could possibly impede the successful implementation of EALPs, hence put measures in place or conditions that will help circumvent them. Lastly, CER also makes it possible for the participants to engage in the process of monitoring whether the enhancement strategies work or not and to subsequently point out the indicators of success.

According to Gustavsen (2001: 126) CER is the most appropriate TF for this study because it fosters mandates for action, presses for social justice, fosters a close relationship between the participants and the researcher, fosters mandates for what constitutes ethical practices, and advances the agenda of expanded epistemologies for mutual learning. Over and above, CER is chosen for this study because it will make it possible for a variety of solutions to be found in attempting to enhance the effectiveness of EALPs for first year university students since it requires people to work as a team collaboratively. CER makes it possible for the research question for this study to be fully answered.

The succeeding section provides definitions of the operational concepts for this study as the main pillars on which this study is anchored.

2.3 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section provides the definition of operational concepts for this study by explaining or defining them comprehensively so as to ensure that they are understood as they are the main pillars on which this study is anchored. The operational concepts are enhancement, English Academic Literacy Programmes, first year university students, and Extended Degree Programme respectively.

2.3.1 Enhancement

According to Juengst in Savulescu (2006: 322), the word 'enhancement' means interventions designed to improve human form of functionality beyond what is necessary to sustain or restore good health. On the other hand, Pellegrino (2004) uses a similar definition of 'enhancement' grounded on its etymological meaning, i.e., to increase, intensify, raise up, exalt, heighten, or magnify. Each of these terms carries the connotation of going 'beyond' what exists at some moment, whether it is a certain state of affairs, a bodily function or trait, or a general limitation built into human nature.

From these definitions the commonality is that 'enhancement' is about improving or making better the value and quality of something. The word 'enhancement' appears to be defined in a similar way judging from the definitions provided by the aforesaid sources. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study the word 'enhancement' would mean and signify an intervention that goes beyond the ends of EALPs as they traditionally have been held at the institution under study. This would mean an increase or an improvement in quality, value or extent of the implementation of EALPs for first year university students. This is necessitated by what the EALPs are designed for, which is to help students improve their academic performance in their respective disciplines through mastery of academic literacy discourses within their disciplines and faculties, in particular focusing on academic writing, reading, critical thinking, and language abilities within disciplines or subjects in the faculties.

2.3.2 English Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs)

Before I can define EALPs, it would first be appropriate to define what academic literacy is. According to Warren (2003) academic literacy is the complex of linguistic, conceptual and skills resources for analysing, constructing and communicating knowledge in the subject area. Yeld (2003) further defines AL as the ability to comprehend information presented in various modes, to paraphrase, to present information visually, to summarize, to describe (e.g. ideas, phenomena, processes, change of state), to write expository prose (e.g. argument, comparison and contrast, classification, categorization), to develop and signal own voice, to acknowledge sources, and to form basic numerical manipulations. Van Dyk and Weidemann (2004: 7) define AL as the knowledge of how academic discourse is structured and presented through interactional vocabulary and grammar; knowledge of how academic discourse is produced, communication, creative and critical thinking, independent learning, and respect for the work and effort of others. Hirst et al., (2004) define AL as the ability to read and write the various texts assigned in university.

Based on the four definitions above, AL for the purposes of this study refers to the development of academic reading, writing, critical thinking, and language abilities within a discipline or subject area. For the purposes of this study, Academic Literacy, Academic Skills and English Academic Literacy Programmes will be utilized interchangeably to refer to academic literacy programmes for first year university students who are not native speakers of English. The former two versions of academic literacy are used in global contexts and the latter is used for the local context in which the study is conducted.

The justification behind the adoption of this definition is informed by the EALPs course aims, which focuses more on academic reading, writing, critical thinking, and the development of language abilities within a discipline or subject area. The main reason behind the adoption of EALPs by universities is to improve students' performance particularly those in the first year Extended Degree Programmes (EDP), reduce attrition and withdrawal rates (Zaritsky *et al.*, 2006) and to increase the retention rates (Zeger *et al.*, 2006).

These academic literacy programmes are referred to in this study as English Academic Literacy Programmes to differentiate them from the Afrikaans Academic Literacy Programmes offered at the University of the Free State. Therefore, EALPs for first year university students in this study refer to the two courses offered at the University of the Free State, namely: Academic Literacy for Commerce, Education and Humanities students (ALC 108) and Academic Literacy for Natural Science students (ALN 108). These two courses are offered to all first year university students who are enrolled in the EDPs of four or five years instead of the normal mainstream of three or four years of university undergraduate studies respectively. Students are enrolled in the first year EDPs on the basis of their university entrance points of between 25 and 29. Those students who enter university with 30 or more points are not eligible for EALPs since their entrance points suggest that they do not need these EALPs. Though EALPs are only done by students with 25 to 29 points, this does not imply that those students with 30 or more points possess EAL skills to navigate smoothly through their undergraduate studies as English academic literacy is no one's mother or home tongue. This also implies that even native speakers of English do need English academic literacy courses in their first year at university irrespective of the 30 or more points they achieve in their matriculation (grade 12) examination results. The issue of which category of students needs English academic literacy remains a contentious issue as admission points at universities are not related to academic literacy skills.

ALC 108 and ALN 108 courses together are called EALPs for first year university students in this study. The aim of these two EALPs is to develop reading, writing, critical thinking, and the language abilities within a discipline or subject area. Even though these two courses help students to develop a multitude of skills that they will need throughout their academic journey at university, the main focus and thrust is on academic reading, writing and critical thinking. These courses argue that of all the skills needed for academic success at university level, academic reading and writing may be the most crucial.

2.3.3 First year university students

First year university students are those students who enter university for the first time after graduating from high school (Grade 12) and enrolling in an undergraduate degree. For this study, however, first year university students refers to that group of students who are registered in the Extended Degree Programmes (EDPs) and they are expected to complete a three or four year degree programme in four or five years respectively. Furthermore, according to the University of the Free State enrolment requirements, a student is admitted into an EDP if their Grade 12 results are between 25 and 29 points as per UFS Grade 12 points calculations. Those students with 30 or more points are admitted in the mainstream degree courses and ineligible to enrol for the EALPs (Kovsies Programmes, 2015).

For that reason, first year university students in this study refer to all the students admitted into EDPs with 25 to 29 points and are required to do EALPs (ALC 108 and ALN 108).

2.3.4 Extended Degree Programme (EDP)

In the South African higher education system, most general undergraduate programmes comprise three years of study (e.g. Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce and the Bachelor of Science) and four years of study (e.g. Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Pharmacy). Students following an academic development programme such as an EDP, typically have one year longer in which to complete their studies and, therefore, in the case of the Bachelor of Arts, register for a four-year period of study as opposed to the three-year norm, while in the case of a Bachelor of Education, they register for a period of five years instead of a four-year norm. For the purposes of a student who pursues a four year degree course, it will then spread over five years instead of the normal four years as the first year courses are spread over two years and are less intensive (Kovsies Programmes, 2015). These programmes give students the opportunity to follow a less intensive first year as it is spread over two years, together with additional support or foundation-type modules.

The format of these programmes, however, differs substantially from one institution to another and even from one faculty to the next. However, the specific format and structure of the EDP in all the faculties at the University of the Free State are structured in the same way as the main focus is on academic reading, writing, critical thinking, and language abilities within a certain discipline or subject. ALC 108 and ALN 108 as EALPs at the University of the Free State follow a Content Based Instruction (CBI) as an approach and methodology for teaching EALPs. This CBI is necessitated by the fact that in recent years many universities globally are adopting academic literacy programmes for first year university students that foster the teaching of academic literacy within discourse disciplines or subjects students are enrolled in towards achievement of their degrees. CBI is relevant this kind of academic literacy approach as students learn reading, writing, vocabulary, language skills, critical thinking and discourses relevant to their own disciplines and specializations so that they are able to navigate successfully throughout their university studies. In order to differentiate between the EDP students and the other first-year students in this study, the latter group is referred to as 'mainstream'.

South African Higher Education Policy (1997) and Republic of South Africa (2009) on EDPs:

- i. *S37 of The Higher Education Act, No 101 of 1997 provides that the admissions policy: "must provide appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way".*
- ii. *This is also required by the Department of Higher Education and Training. Statistical reports require UFS to report on South African applicants and on all students by "race".*
- iii. *Our use of these categories does not and must not be taken to imply that we accept the notions of race that were the basis of race classification in pre-1994 South Africa. We suggest that South African citizens and South African permanent-resident applicants who wish to do so should categorise themselves as they would, and as an employer would have to do, under South African employment equity legislation.*
- iv. *As for note ii above*

The next section discusses literature pertaining to EALPs for first year university students.

2.4 LITERATURE PERTAINING TO EALPS FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

This study is intended to make a contribution towards the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students at the University of the Free State (UFS), Qwaqwa Campus. This section commences with a brief background of academic literacy, academic literacy in the context of this study, and academic literacy models particularly in the context of South African universities. Secondly, related literature is examined focusing on justification, components and aspects sought locally and globally for the enhancement of EALPs in order to learn from the experiences gained. Furthermore, conditions that circumvented successful implementation of EALPs, threats to successful enhancement, and finally; monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement are explored and discussed in details.

2.4.1 Academic Literacy Background

Academic Literacy is a complicated and conflicted term. It does not enjoy a universal definition as researchers view it from multiple perspectives. Its evolution over time led to it being loosely used in a plethora of situations by those who lagged behind the pace of the recent definitions, models and approaches. As someone wearing an academic practitioner's shoes, I trace the dual concept of academic literacy from different perspectives that have contributed in shaping and reshaping this concept for our current understanding as academic literacy practitioners and researchers and further position the academic literacy perspective informing this study.

Literacy on its own is an adaptable concept and its meaning differs according to the disciplinary lens through which one looks at it (Kern, 2000: 23). In this fundamental basis, it is quite less likely that two people hold the same conceptual framework of this term.

Hewings (2004: 133) talks about practices that have influenced work on what is known as academic literacy. A greater challenge to define academic literacy is because of its multiple perspectives that characterize the discourse, which can be referred to as 'conventions' (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988), 'codes' (Bourdieu et al., 1994: 4) and 'ground rules' (Amos & Fischer, 1998). The term itself is used as a noun and adjective, where researchers talk of 'literacy in the university' (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988), 'academic literacy practices' (Baynham, 1995) or 'competencies mostly in reading and writing' (Amos & Fischer, 1998).

Since the term itself is not universally agreed upon by researchers and scholars, its understanding in this study is drawn, examined and described from some extensive body of research. The adjective 'academic' suffices with a dictionary definition from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2004: 7) which defines it as: 'relating to education, especially at college or university level.' According to Weingartner (1993: 14) literacy refers to 'ancient proficiency.' This definition goes beyond educational setting, implying for longer historical perspective. In contrast, Baynham (1995: 2) argues that literacy is not something that can be neatly and easily defined and it is not the same thing to everyone.

In recent years, particularly in the context of academic literacy, some researchers assume the placement of the adjective on literacy even when it is not there, hence the confusion and contradictions of the meaning of academic literacy. For the purpose and context of this study, academic literacy is reviewed and conceptualised through the framework by Baynham (1995: 1) which set out a number of basic premises for literacy which provide a useful context for this study. Baynham's list of basic premises of academic literacy is:

- 1) Literacy is shaped to serve social purposes in creating and exchanging meaning;
- 2) Literacy can be critical;
- 3) Literacy needs to be understood in terms of social power;
- 4) Literacy is best understood in its contexts of use;

- 5) Literacy is ideological: like all uses of language it is not neutral, but shapes and is shaped by deeply held ideological positions, which can either be implicit or explicit.

Baynham's point relates with the work of Bourdieu in Janks (2010: 11-12) that talks of power that is in the hands of the literate and out of reach of those who are not. This is a very essential theme in this study as active participants share a platform with the researcher as equal partners in shaping how they view and experience their own academic literacy acquisition and what they think work or does not work for them with the sole aim and purpose of enhancing EALPs for first year university students. The saying that, 'nothing about us without us' seems to ring very true in this situation. This implies that participants play a very big role in terms of planning the activities of the research, contribute ideas and generate knowledge during data generation, participate in data analysis feedback session and final report to confirm or correct misinterpretations by the researcher.

Academic Literacy in the context of this study refers to the English Academic Literacy Programmes offered at the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus for students enrolled in the Extended Degree Programmes as opposed to the mainstream. These two EALPs follow the framework and approach of academic literacy as a social practice which is subject and discipline specific. These academic literacy courses engage students in academic discourses relevant to their respective subjects or disciplines, hence their conceptualization as Academic Literacy for Commerce, Education and Humanities (ALC108) and Academic Literacy for Natural Science (ALN108) students. Content Based Instruction (CBI) is the teaching approach and methodology used to deliver these EALPs with content relevant and related to their subjects and disciplines. The academic literacy as a social practice approach adopted by the UFS in the implementation of these EALPs links well with Baynham's (1995: 1) basic premises for literacy and framework.

Drawing from the above, it is quite clear that academic literacy may mean different things for different people depending on their conceptualisation of this highly contested dual concept. Despite all these multiple perspectives of academic literacy, it is clear

that for the purpose of this study, academic literacy is viewed as a social practice that involve discourses that are content-based and discipline/subject specific. Baynman's (1995: 1) basic premises of academic literacy fairly capture and summarize the academic literacy perspective adopted in this study. This view of academic literacy seeks to take into account the ways academic literacy is negotiated, constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in historical, cultural and political contexts. In the process of reconstruction of academic literacy, it becomes critical to understand who decides what counts, what gets included and excluded, what is privileged and what is marginalized (Heap, 1985). According to Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) for students to perform successfully in their university studies, they are required to enter into the academic discourses of particular disciplines. Rex and McEachen (1999: 71) and Gee (2007: 15) and Janks (2010: 23-24) argue that this means that students have to know "how to engage with and construct texts strategically and procedurally within particular interactional contexts", because literacies represent socially developed and culturally embedded ways of using text to serve particular cultural or social purpose. Therefore, this view has serious implications for the learning of literacy by diverse populations of students.

According to Lea and Street (1998) traditional approaches to academic literacy have tended to focus on ways of helping students "adapt their practices to those of the university." However, in today's world, The New London Group (1996) advises that since more students attend universities and most university degree programmes have a specific vocational focus, it would seem essential that we re-assess the literacy practices that students might need in their working lives, in their public lives as citizens and their personal lives. From these viewpoints, academic literacy must not be seen as irrelevant, but it must be viewed as a range of multiple literacy discourses and practices that students should develop. Gee (2004: 94) argues that academic literacy is at best a necessary, but not sufficient condition for success in society. This then behoves us as university educators to constantly audit and reflect on the literacy requirements that students will need for their future lives in consultation with students. We need to also move with times and understand that the world is in motion in a constant state of flux and that:

The very practices, demands and relationships of citizenship, legal rights and responsibilities, and civic participation are shifting in relation to globalization, debates over national governance and reconciliation. Cultures and cultural heritages are changing and blending under the influences of new technologies and economies, and those of a highly mobile, increasingly polyglot and cosmopolitan population (Department of Education, Queensland, 2000: 111).

In Paulo Freire's words, we should strive as educators to not just "teach the word, but the world." This study therefore takes a situated view of literacy which foregrounds disciplinary specific practices and the teaching-learning relationship (Henderson & Hirst, 2007: 28). In this study, deficit views of student diversity are substituted by developing ways for students to engage and participate successfully with their specific literate practices of a community. Their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are embraced and seen as assets and social capital for their successful learning, rather than as barriers and obstacles to their academic literacy engagement and successful participation. This view of academic literacy integrates the space of the discipline with the space of literacy. This manifests lucidly in apprenticeship models (Rex and McEachen, 1999; Greenleaf, Schoenback, Cziko & Mueller, 2001; Hirst et al., 2004) and embedded approaches (Alverman, 2001; Green et al., 2005).

Drawing on Gee's (2003, 2004, 2005) critique of traditional schooling, this study argues for a deliberate paradigm shift towards the consideration of academic literacies within a theory of learning that grants a perspective about literacy learning within a broader field that takes the social, cognitive, cultural and linguistic dimensions of literacy into account (Henderson, 2002). Furthermore, it is my view that if as educators at universities we fail to critique academic literacy through involving all stakeholders and soliciting students' views, that will be tantamount to selling students short and short changing them. The saying that, 'nothing about us without us' rings true in this instance. We need to problematize academic literacies and consider alternative literacy practices and discourses that students bring to the university and their effects on academic conventions (Ivanic, 1998).

The next section sheds some light on academic literacy models

2.4.2 Academic Literacy Models

Since academic literacy concept is viewed from multiple epistemological perspectives by different scholars, practitioners and researchers, the same applies for academic literacy models. There are quite a number of academic literacy models that have been used reflecting and meaning different perspectives and the evolution of this dual concept. Baynham (1995: 15) clearly illustrates and summarises the evolution of academic literacy models up to the time of his writing.

Table 2.1 Academic Literacy Models illustrated

Model	Description
The skills development model	Acquisition of literacy related to the acquisition of a set of discrete skills
The therapeutic model	Literacy development through a psychological lens working through problems
The personal empowerment model	Literacy development linked to confidence building and self-esteem
The social empowerment model	Beyond personal empowerment, literacy development provides for social change
Functional models of literacy	Emphasize social purpose and context, providing the student with the abilities to fit in and achieve within the prevailing social framework
Critical models of literacy	Also emphasising social purpose and context, but not accepting these uncontested, rather seeking to analyse them critically within the educational process

(Baynham, 1995: 15)

Table 2.1 above demonstrate of the evolution of academic literacy models shows the history of how the concept of academic literacy was viewed from the earliest scholars and researchers until recently. Moving from the skills development models to the current critical models of academic literacy shows that there has been a major shift in terms of the conceptualisation of this dual concept. The skills development models where more focused on 'deficits' that students brought to educational institutions that needed to be remedied and corrected while the recent critical models of academic literacy emphasise social purpose and context that are contested and analysed critically within the educational process.

With all these multiple views of academic literacy models and how they are evolving, what then would best capture what constitute 'academic literate' in the conceptualisation and context of this study? According to Van Dyk and Weideman (2004b: 16-17) to be academically literate involves different competencies (conventions) that imply being academically literate, suggesting that students should be able to:

- 1) Understand a range of academic vocabulary in context;
- 2) Interpret and use metaphor and idiom, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity;
- 3) Understand relations between different parts of texts, be aware of the logical development of (an academic) text, via introductions to conclusions, and know how to use language that serves to make the different parts of a text hang together;
- 4) Interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and show sensitivity for the meaning that they convey, and the audience that they are aimed at;
- 5) Interpret, use and produce information presented in graphic or visual forms;
- 6) Make distinctions between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments; distinguish between cause and effect, classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons;
- 7) See sequence and order, do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information, that allow comparisons to be made, and can be applied for the purposes of an argument;

- 8) Know what counts as evidence for an argument, extrapolate from information by making inferences, and apply the information or its implications to other cases than the one at hand;
- 9) Understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing; and
- 10) Make meaning (e.g. of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence.

Jacobs (2007a: 59) has also developed a useful model of a collaborative process of integrating academic literacies into disciplines. She observes that this “unfolding model presents factors to be considered when designing integrated approaches to the teaching of academic literacies”. The model identifies the following key factors in collaborative partnerships between and amongst disciplinary lecturers and academic literacy practitioners:

1) Collaborative interactions

Collaborative interactions help both AL practitioners and discipline lecturers to identify what they might be taking for granted in their teaching and what might be hindering students’ accessing the disciplinary discourse. For example, the presence of the AL practitioner in a Physics class with his limited background in Physics becomes an advantage as he would see things from a perspective of the students and in the process, will help students and the discipline lecturer in asking relevant questions for clarity that would have been impossible for students to ask or the discipline lecturer to think about. These collaborative interactions help to enrich students’ experiences and access to disciplinary discourses.

2) Nature of relationships

Nature of the relationships between AL practitioners and discipline lecturers determines successful collaboration. The team has to be united by a shared educational vision and a commitment to their students. Although some strong personalities are often found in teams and rigorous debates sometimes ensue, respect and tolerance of each other’s contributions to the success of students help them to

carry out their discussions in a constructive manner. The common understanding and the spirit of working together assist a lot in making sure that when the AL practitioner asks a question for clarity from the discipline lecturer; it is not viewed as a challenge to the discipline lecturer, but it is seen as wanting the students to follow what the lecturer is teaching. The common understanding that it is not about them, but the students clarifies the nature of the relationships between AL practitioners and discipline lecturers.

3) Power relationships

Power dynamics in collaborative partnerships are influenced by notions of expertise. The AL practitioners and discipline lecturers must be quite open to learn from each other from their different expertise. This partnership becomes a two way learning process wherein the AL practitioner feels that he has much to learn from the discipline lecturers and in turn, the discipline lecturer is eager to raise awareness of academic literacy issue, and together they develop their capacity as Discourse teachers, rather than as AL practitioners and discipline lecturers. Levelling power dynamics within the team using the flat space fosters student interaction and engagement, while simultaneously levelling space for lecturers. It creates an opportunity for lecturers to blend with the students in a non-authoritative and non-threatening collegial space.

4) Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities within the collaborative team and in classes are discussed, established and agreed upon at the outset. Though the AL practitioners and discipline lecturers can take the lead on certain activities that are inherent to their expertise, all activities are seen as involving helping students access the various representations of a discipline, for example Physics. Students are told and taught from the onset and learn to see the collaborative team and they are at liberty to consult either the AL practitioner or the discipline lecturer about assignments and tasks. Successful collaborative partnerships of this nature are preceded by a common, shared understanding of themselves as Discourse teachers, framed by Gee's notion of Discourse as encompassing far more than merely reading and writing.

Jacobs (2007a: 69) further identifies factors influencing lecturers' conceptualization of academic literacies, including:

- 1) Lecturers' implicit theories underpinning their educational principles (e.g. Knowledge as discursively constructed as opposed to knowledge to be transmitted)

The departments within which discipline lecturers belong to and their scholarly approaches to teaching and engagement are critical to successful collaborative partnerships. If the departments adopt approaches to teaching that encourage student engagement rather than transmission of content knowledge, it is highly likely that they will be receptive to viewing academic literacy not as a generic skills, but in terms of the social practices of the discipline.

- 2) The academic literacy discourses prevalent in the particular institution

The overall university discourses of academic literacy have a critical role in influencing successful collaborative partnerships between AL practitioners and discipline lecturers. How the university conceptualizes academic literacy will play a very important role in these collaborative partnerships, whether they succeed or fail. If the university practices point to the importance of explicitly helping students access the discourse of disciplines, through a literacy-as-social-practice approach, that would mitigate some of the challenges with multidisciplinary collaborations.

- 3) The characteristics of integration

Lecturers new to academic are often more receptive to innovative approaches to integration. Criticality in lecturers regarding the nature of knowledge production in both their own discipline and in other disciplines is central and key to integration. Insight into how knowledge was produced within their own disciplines and the implications of this for teaching and learning, are important characteristics for successful integration.

4) As well as lecturers' understanding of integration.

Her research demonstrate and makes lucid how collaboration that occurs between AL practitioners and discipline lecturers has the propensity to transform both AL practitioners and discipline lecturers' understandings of their roles and identities beyond that of literacy or disciplinary lecturer, to encapsulate that of Discourse teacher.

Table 2.2 below outlines Lea and Street (2006)'s Academic Literacy Model Of and For a Diverse Society: Genre/mode switching

Table 2.2: Lea and Street (2006)'s Academic Literacy Model Of and For Diverse Society: Genre/mode switching

Thoughts/Ideas	Free flowing; not sentences
Talk/Discussion	Some explicitness; awareness of speaker's communicative needs, language mode/speech patterns
Notes	Some structure, headings, layout, use of visual as well as language mode
Overhead	Key terms, single words, layout, semiosis (use of signs or symbols)
Written text	Joined up sentences, coherence/cohesion, if academic then formal conventions; editing and revision

(Lea & Street, 2006: 372)

Table 2.2 above shows how academic literacy evolves from Lea and Street's (2006) academic literacy model of and for a diverse society with its genre/mode switching. This model begins with the orientation of the student into the discourses of the university through sharing thoughts and ideas the student brings to the university. Thereafter, talk and discussion ensue between students and lecturers. Collaboratively, lecturers and students co-construct knowledge by forming structures and layouts to be used for their academic discourses. Students get familiarized to key concepts to be able to function effectively within the discourses of their disciplines or content areas. Lastly, students are able to function through the acceptable written text within the discourses of their field of study and succeed academically.

On the other hand, Gee's Social Linguistics and Literacies Model: Ideology in Discourses as outlined in the following Table 2.3 below highlights the fact that discourses vary from context to context, are dynamic and their conventions can always from time to time be undone, contested and changed as per the demands and needs of the participants as role players.

Table 2.3: Gee's Social Linguistics and Literacies Model: Ideology in Discourses

1 Can vary across contexts of use.
2 Are composed of changing stories, knowledge, beliefs, and values that are encapsulated in cultural models, not definitions.
3 Are a matter, as well, of social negotiations rooted in culture if only in the broad sense of a search for common ground.
4 For many words at many points in their histories meaning is relatively stabilized thanks to the fact that many people accept and share a convention about what they mean in different contexts of use.
5 These conventions can be undone, contested, and changed.
6 Finally, it takes social work to enforce and police the meanings of words, work that never in the end ensure their meanings will not change or to be contested.

(Gee, 2007: 15)

Table 2.3 above demonstrates how Gee's Social Linguistics and Literacies Model can vary across contexts of use influenced by varying degrees of knowledge, beliefs and values embedded in cultural models that are socially negotiated, contested and keeps changing.

Deducing from the multiple perspectives and academic literacy evolution illustrated by Bayman (1995: 15); Jacobs (2007a: 59-69), Lea and Street (2006: 372), and Gee (2007: 15), it is quite lucid that from the earliest scholars and researchers in the area of academic literacy, the perspectives have been piling and adding on one another like the layers of an onion. The illustration by Baynman helps in tracing the history and evolution of academic literacy models and to fathom current thinking and dominant perspectives within this area. Van Dyk and Weideman (2004b: 16-17); Jacobs (2007a: 69), Lea and Street (2006: 372) and Gee (2007: 15)'s conceptualisation of being academically literate concisely and precisely capture the tone and perspective of academic literacy model informing this study, which views academic literacy from an angle of social and academic discourses prevalent or pertaining to particular disciplines or subjects.

The subsequent section addresses literature related to EALPs and objectives of this study.

2.4.3 Related Literature aligned to the five objectives of this study

The literature aligned to the objectives of this study is derived from five countries including South Africa. To start with, attention is given to challenges experienced that justified and demonstrated the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students. Thereafter, components and aspects necessary for EALPs enhancement are examined and elaborated. Thirdly, conditions for enhancement of EALPs are explored and plausible threats that may impede successful enhancement are identified in order to reverse them. Finally, monitoring strategies and indicators that enhancement succeeded are deliberated and the tone is set for the subsequent chapter.

2.4.3.1 Challenges justifying the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

For the purpose of this study, Academic Literacy Programmes are used synonymously with English Academic Literacy Programmes. This is deliberately done to distinguish between Afrikaans Academic Literacy Programmes (AALPs) and English Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs) offered at the University of the Free State. The need for Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs for this study) has been a worldwide phenomenon in recent years. Key amongst this development in demand of EALPs particularly for first year university students is as a result of a growing number of English Second Language (ESL) students in universities globally (Baik & Greig, 2009: 401; Birrell, 2006; Bretag, 2007; Department of Employment, Science and Training, 2002, 2007). Since this group of ESL students learn through the medium of English at these universities that were historically not structured to cater for this group's academic needs at tertiary, it becomes imperative that EALPs that cater to the specific academic circumstances of these ESL students are developed to respond to their academic needs.

In Australia, the growing number of ESL students enrolling at universities from Southern and Central Asia has been a major concern to better standards and minimum English language requirements for these groups of students (Harris & Ashton, 2011: A-74). Some studies have shown that even when ESL students achieve the minimum entry requirements for university, many of them still struggle to meet the demands of their mainstream university courses (Birrell, 2006a; Birrell, 2006b; Birrell, Hawthorne, & Richardson, 2006). Also, their language skills, or lack of can cause serious frustration for academic teaching staff. In support of these concerns by universities in Australia, ESL students have as well expressed concerns about the level of their English language proficiency and the linguistic demands of tertiary education. These concerns have pushed universities in Australia to support students to develop the necessary language to progress through their courses. Moreover, research into the impact of these programmes on student learning outcomes is limited. Despite the language and academic support provided by Australian universities, the effectiveness of these EALPs has been questioned by numerous scholars.

Similarly, in Canada there has been an increase of diverse cultural and linguistic students at universities in recent years. Most often, there has been lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students, in this case ESL students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009). Colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual English speaking students and ESL students has served to entrench socio-political power relations of the dominant academic discourses that favour mainstream students. In addition, time constraints and the need for expertise, while managing demands for greater accountability has worsened the plight of ESL students in Canada and calls for a need for EALPs that will cater for their academic needs (Jacquet, 2008).

In the United Kingdom, just like in Australia and Canada, there have been numerous changes at universities and increasing numbers of non-traditional entrants. Since most of EALPs in the UK have been more of skills based, deficit models of student writing at degree level in universities, as a starting point, an academic literacies framework was adopted for understanding university writing processes. An academic literacies approach to teaching academic literacy was chosen by UK universities as it sees student writing as a process of meaning making and contestation around meaning rather than skills or deficits in an effort to enhance student academic writing at universities (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006; Van Dijk, 1997).

Similar to Australian universities, in the USA English Language Learners (ELLs) and ESL students' limited English proficiency has been singled out as the usual explanation for their low Post Secondary Education (PSE) participation and other academic underachievement issues (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). In contrast with the Australian, UK and Canadian universities, ESL and ELLs at universities in the USA often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Apparently, the need for ELLs and ESL students to work long hours limits their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). In the USA, universities as institutions of higher learning tend to label ELLs and ESL students in

deficit terms, just like in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, which leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization (which leads to a demotivated ELL and ESL student) (Harklau, 2010).

South African universities, just like their counterparts in Australia, Canada, UK, and USA, there have been major changes and shifts regarding EALPs for first year university students and undergraduate studies in general. Many EALPs at universities in South Africa were decontextualized, generic, and were added on as extra subjects to an already over-burdened curriculum (Jacobs, 2005: 476). The practice of EALPs teaching at tertiary level in South Africa and internationally, has been through separate, generic, skills-based courses traditionally taught by Academic Literacy Practitioners (ALPs) based in the field of education with language/literacy expertise (Jacobs, 2005: 476). Similar to Australian, Canadian, UK and USA universities, South African universities tended to label and frame students in 'deficit' terms. Hence all these factors contributed to high attrition and lack of success of ESL students at universities.

This section on the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students has shown that there are quite a number of challenges and issues faced by universities internationally in providing academic literacy for first year university students. The experiences at the universities in Australia, Canada, UK, USA and South Africa provide sufficient information to show that indeed there is a need to enhance these EALPs for first year university students if we are to succeed in helping ESL students to successfully navigate through their university studies without resorting to dropping out as a result of incessant failure of their courses. At the centre of all these challenges in these five countries is the fact that ESL students, despite them meeting the university entrance requirements, the fact that they receive their university studies through the medium of English which happens to be the second, third or even fourth or fifth language, it has become a norm if not an imperative for universities to design English academic literacy programmes that will cater for these diverse groups of students entering universities today.

The next section focuses on components and aspects necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

2.4.3.2 Components and aspects necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

Components and aspects necessary for EALPs to be enhanced are explored and discussed worldwide focusing on five countries including South Africa. In Australian universities, special attention was given to the collaboration between unit coordinators, learning advisors, and librarians and proved to be successful (Ambery, Manners, & Smith, 2005; Crosling & Wilson, 2005). The proliferation of literature around first year education in Australian universities called for integration of academic administration and support programmes into the curriculum as critical processes to make EALPs more successful (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226). It was further argued that language and communication practices of EALPs should be linked to the discipline and be taught alongside and integrated within the context of a course (James, 2010). At Macquarie University the bottom-up approach to enhancing EALPs was noted as crucial to the success of ESL students (Evans et al., 2009: 602). This success occurred naturally as academics sought assistance, listened to colleagues to discuss the embedding project, and invited the Learning Advisor (LA) into their classes. According to Wingate (2006: 467), the embedded approach to teaching English Academic Literacy (EAL) at first year university level is highly effective in developing student learning for university and beyond. On the other hand, Jones et al, (2001) noted four aspects of faculty collaboration to enhance EALPs:

- First, adjunct (context specific – weak),
- Bolt-on or adjunct (also context specific – strong),
- Integrated, and
- Embedded.

Of all these four aspects of faculty collaboration, the combination of embedded and integrated include Language and Academic Skills (LAS) support by the LA in class with the lecturer taking an active role. This type of collaboration allows the LA to work with discipline teaching staff on curriculum design and this embedded and integrated

project of EALPs has been both successful and innovative in Australian universities (Ashton, 2011: 80).

Some of the reasons for the growing body of research supporting the embedded and integrated approach as a necessary component and aspect to enhance EALPs delivery are: a move towards contextualized learning support to address lack of, relevance of general workshops; limited attendance at adjunct (voluntary) sessions, even when material is contextualized; increasing numbers of EAL students in universities; and the up-skilling of academic staff throughout the embedding process (Ashton, 2011: 81).

A collaborative interdisciplinary approach towards enhancing EALPs at Flinders University in Australia seemed to indicate that it best meet the students' needs and creates optimum student learning (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Kezar, 2005; Lamb & Visnovsa, 2012). According to Burnett and Larmar (2011) there is a range of strategies designed to enhance the first year student experience which can be utilized to implement positive long-lasting whole-of-university curriculum initiatives. These include: coordinated and well-developed plan for action; processes for identifying and recognising good practice; funding to develop initiatives at the local level; and authentic support from a high-level champion. Elements of effective collaboration involve both formal and informal opportunities to meet, share and learn from colleagues, and the spaces for detailed consultation on planning and reflecting on teaching (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). There is also a growing consensus that the development and enhancement of students' academic literacy is best addressed in the content of faculty-based courses (Purser, Skillen, Deane, Donohue, & Peake, 2008). Therefore, a requisite element and aspect in successfully integrating academic literacy skills into faculty courses involves collaborative efforts between faculty lecturers and academic advisors. This is necessitated by the fact that academic support departments clearly have a vested interest in students' academic success and retention (Pan, Valliant, & Reed, 2009: 139). Interactions born out of this type of partnership can enhance the students' capability to generate and apply knowledge, and foster a deeper engagement with the expected graduate qualities (Gunn, Hearne,

& Sibthorpe, 2011). Creating a culture of collaboration between faculty lecturers and academic advisors entails values, purposes and past assumptions (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). This will involve bridging the gap between sets of hierarchically valued pairs: thought and expression; knowledge and skill; theory and practice; and teaching and research (Chanock, 2007). Examples of effective collaborations have resulted in changes in additional components to the curriculum and topic assignments (Donham & Green, 2004), and teaching practice, motivation, and enhanced staff engagement (Donnison et al., 2009). All in all, for collaborations to work and be effective in an effort to enhance EALPs for first year university students, these issues must be considered: first, academic advisors must be involved as they have much to contribute (Chanock, 2007). Second, collaboration requires a change of thinking and attitudes. Third, collaborations must be allowed to develop organically over time. Last, collaborations require nurturing and leadership (Cummings et al., 2005).

In Canada, the West Coast University used Plurilingualism as an approach towards enhancing the delivery of academic literacy for diverse cultural and linguistic students. Plurilingualism integrates the key idea that learning skills, multilingual literacies, (inter)cultural experiences, and different forms of knowledge are transferrable and thus constitute assets and tools for better learning (Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 1997; Castelloti & Moore, 2010). Canagarajah (2011) argues that there is a need for educators to consider dialogical pedagogy shifts that include peer and instructor feedback to help students to question their choices, think critically about these choices and their assessment, and develop meta-cognitive awareness. In order to foster practices supporting academic achievement and successful inclusion for minoritized students, it requires understanding embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions (Dei, 1996, 2007; Harper, 1997; Nieto, 2002). Therefore, adequate and ongoing training for academic staff both for EAL practitioners and discipline specialists is crucial to EAL students' success. This further implies that educational institutions must be saturated with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization (Sleeter, 2004). Over and above, treating students in a fair manner and celebrating diversity through adjusting

pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of the EAL students will go a long way in providing the necessary cushion for this group of students at universities.

In the United Kingdom, aspects and components of an academic literacies model are described in the Open University. They involved the collaboration between the Academic Literacy Development Programme and the law faculty on a range of genres, modes, shifts, transformations, representations, meaning-making processes, and identities involved in academic learning within and across academic contexts (Lea & Street, 2006: 376). These understandings, if attended to and made explicit, they provide a nurturing environment for successful academic literacy practices and epistemological issues for students who are learning through English as a First Additional Language (FAL). Lea and Street (1998: 170) posit that aspects of enhancing EAL for first year students involve sharing common assumptions and understanding of assignment titles between students and tutors; tutor feedback on students' feedback, and the importance of students' own identity as writers rather than the acquisition of academic writing skills. Moreover, at an institutional level, Lea and Street argue for implications of modularity, assessment, and explicit university procedures on student writing.

In the USA, EAL students' entrance university points are recommended to be utilized effectively and an extension of their stay in college by one year is suggested to be the norm if they are to succeed. According to Alderman (2006) student behaviour and campus experiences have an important bearing on college attainment and therefore, necessary for ELLs and ESL students' success. Furthermore, it is recommended that clear and bold steps must be taken and communicated clearly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, as opposed to deficit terms. Initiation of faculty committees collaborating with EAL practitioners and discipline specialists are also seen to be beneficial to the success of these students. This implies the involvement of all stakeholders starting with students, departments, EAL practitioners, discipline specialists, and top university management responsible for academic issues.

At the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in South Africa, a study of academic literacy suggested that universities should create discursive spaces for collaboration of AL practitioners and disciplinary specialists to facilitate the embedding of AL teaching into disciplines. From this perspective, academic literacy is seen as social practices embedded in context, and the case for new academic literacies is viewed as part of the components for enhancing EALPs at universities. The study conducted at CPUT identified the following to be critical aspects and components for enhancing EALPs for first year university students:

- 1) Interaction within the collaborative partnerships
- 2) Participation in the transdisciplinary project team
- 3) Sense of belonging
- 4) Processes of transdisciplinary engagement
- 5) Learning through transdisciplinary engagement

From the above regarding aspects and components necessary for enhancing EALPs, it is clear that many universities globally have taken steps to enhance EALPs for first year university students and South Africa is no exception. Collaborations between different stakeholders within the university starting with the academic literacy practitioners until top university management seem to be important aspects and components necessary for enhancing EALPs.

Similarities prevalent in all the five countries are the adoption of subject or discipline-based academic literacy content and collaborations which are institutional in nature, faculty and Academic Literacy Development Programmes, and collaborations that are between AL practitioners and discipline specialists. The differences in terms of the strategies implemented in these countries are as follows: In Australia universities used a bottom-up approach to implement the academic literacy programmes; in Canada, Plurilingualism was adopted as an academic literacy approach, dialogic pedagogy was applied for ESL students, universities were saturated with educators of similar background experiences with ESL students, students were treated fairly and diversity was celebrated through the adjustment of pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of EAL students. In the USA clear and bold statements were communicated to

all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms as opposed to deficit terms, EAL students' university studies were extended by one year to maximize their chances of success at universities and the initiation of faculty committees that involved all the stakeholders from students to university management.

The following section elaborates on the conditions necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

2.4.3.3 Conditions necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

In Australia, the conditions necessary for enhancing academic literacy programs at universities are collaborations between unit coordinators, learning advisors and librarians (Ambery, Manners & Smith, 2005; Crosling & Wilson, 2005). Also, the integration of academic administration and support programs into the mainstream curriculum as much as possible made the academic literacy programs a success (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226). The introduction of a 'bottom-up approach' by the English staff at Macquarie University ensured that staff became active partners in the project, thereby taking ownership and making it to succeed (Evans et al., 2009: 600). The Macquarie University team noted that the bottom-up approach was crucial to its success (Evans et al., 2009: 602). This progress occurred naturally as academics sought assistance, listened to colleagues discussing the embedding project, and invited the LA into their classes (Harris & Ashton, 2011: 79). The Macquarie model, University of Canberra initiative and similar undertakings prove what can be accomplished if a program is given both time to develop and ongoing resources. According to Wingate (2006: 467) the embedded approach is regarded as highly effective in developing student learning for university and beyond.

Edith Cowan University, similar to Macquarie university, an integrated model of academic literacy proved to be a necessary condition for a successful academic literacy program (Harris & Ashton, 2011: 76). On the other hand, the University of Melbourne initiated and brought forth a case for discipline-based academic skills

programme which served as a condition necessary for enhancement of this programme (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403).

Flinders University initiated a faculty based academic literacy programme to enhance academic literacy for ELLs and ESL students (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). One of the conditions that made this academic literacy programme to be a success was the use of a collaborative interdisciplinary approach similar to Edith Cowan and Macquarie universities. Also, a shared institutional vision by academics and professional staff that formed sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries made the enhancement of the academic literacy programme possible. According to Pourshafie and Brady (2013: 166), other conditions that made the programme to progress are:

- 1) A coordinated and well developed plan for action
- 2) Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice
- 3) Funding to develop initiatives at the local level
- 4) Authentic support from a high-level champion

According to Donnison, Edwards, Itter, Martin, and Yager (2009) effective collaboration calls for unity in diversity, a shared vision through mutual support and participation, and core acceptance of different perspectives. According to Lichtenstein, Alexander, Jinett and Ullman (1997: 415) this occurs when:

...members understand and feel comfortable with their respective roles in the team...feel comfortable sharing their point of view with other team members and participate freely in team discussions and decision making processes, and they feel positive about the team's overall goals and functioning.

According to Pourshafie and Brady (2013: 167) conditions that made collaboration work at Flinders University are:

- 1) Academic advisors were embraced and treated as experts with much to contribute

- 2) A shared thinking and understanding that collaboration requires a change of thinking
- 3) A common understanding that collaborations need to develop organically over time
- 4) An understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership

In Canada, the West Coast University adopted Plurilingualism as an approach to academic literacy. Plurilingualism involves learning skills, multilingual literacies, [inter]cultural experiences, and different forms of knowledge which are transferrable and constitute assets and tools for better learning (Marshall & Moore, 2013: 476). Similarly, Andrews (2013: 36) argues for a Critical Discourse Analysis as an academic literacy framework or model for enhancing academic literacy for minoritized students. Through multicultural education lenses, insight to the ideology behind social justice and equity to achieve successful inclusion is utilized to highlight predominant official discourses for inclusion of minoritized students in everyday practices of universities (Andrews, 2013: 34).

Sleeter (2004) highlights other conditions for the successful CDA as an academic literacy framework for minoritized students as follows:

- 1) Adequate and ongoing training for staff both EAL practitioners and discipline specialists
- 2) Saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization.
- 3) Treatment of students in a fair manner and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of EAL students.

Open University in the United Kingdom enhanced the academic literacy program through the use of an academic literacies model as argued for by Lea and Street (2006: 370). This model is concerned with meaning making, identity, power, and

authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context.

The conditions that made this academic literacies model to succeed are:

- 1) Alignment of student and tutor assumptions and understandings of assignment titles, tutor feedback on students' reading and writing, and the importance of students' own identity as writers
- 2) Clear guidelines from the institutional level regarding module, assessment, and university procedures on student writing (Lea & Street, 1998: 170).

In the USA, a Cultural Reproduction Framework was used as a necessary condition to address academic literacy challenges faced by ELLs and ESL students (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 92). Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was used as a guide to enquiry as Bourdieu argues that schools contribute to the reproduction of the existing hierarchy in society by creating conditions in the school system in which children of the dominant class are more likely to succeed. This is achieved through privileging knowledge, dispositions, and habits – cultural capital – that children of the dominant class bring to school and treating their cultural capital as if it were inherently more valuable than the cultural capital of the poor, working-class, and minority children (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 92).

In South Africa, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Durban Institute of Technology adopted an academic literacy as a social practice program to enhance academic literacy for first year university students and to create new spaces for integrating academic literacies (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Conditions that were necessary for the implementation of these academic literacies programmes are:

- 1) Institution wide project
- 2) Integration of language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum

- 3) Discipline-based collaborative partnerships between Academic Literacy Practitioners (ALPs) and Disciplinary Specialists (DSs)
- 4) Exploration of discursive practices of disciplines (ALPs & DSs partnerships)
- 5) Trans-disciplinary 'transaction space' Institutional project
- 6) Sense of belonging (Jacobs, 2005: 479-481).

On the other hand, the University of Pretoria adopted a subject/content-based approach to enhance academic literacy and to move away from the language skills program without relevancy to the discipline content of students (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 1). This academic literacy program was for engineering students and engineering-specific material was emphasized.

Contrary to the University of Pretoria, the University of Cape Town adopted a multimodal approach to enhance academic literacy for first year engineering students opening up new spaces of learning through symbolic objects (Archer, 2006: 191). The study demonstrated that students who have traditionally felt lacking in language, specifically English, are in fact carriers of key resources that can inform their reading and writing. This kind of pedagogy of diversity and unity is quite relevant in the current South African context with education policies that are committed to increased access, redress and equity in tertiary education (Archer, 2006: 204).

From the above discussions, it is clearly stated that different approaches to academic literacy were adopted at a number of many universities globally including South Africa. It is further shown that academic literacy approaches that are content/subject/discipline-based are mostly preferred by many universities globally and appear to be helpful in enhancing EALPs (Van Wyk, 2014: 213-14). These conditions experienced in these five countries demonstrate the commonalities and differences pertaining to the implementation of academic literacy programmes. The commonalities in all the five countries in this study are that they all implemented academic literacy collaborations at institutional, faculty and at disciplines level. They also implemented academic literacy programmes that are subject or discipline

oriented. The differences are mostly prevalent in Canada and the USA wherein the former implemented Plurilingualism and Critical Discourse Analysis as academic literacy approaches at universities while also providing ongoing training for educators of EAL students at universities and also making special efforts of treating EAL students in a far manner through celebrating diversity by adjusting pedagogical practices to suit their academic needs and lastly; saturating educators with similar educational background and experiences with EAL while the latter implemented a Cultural Reproduction Framework as an approach to academic literacy at universities, framing EAL students in positive terms and extending their stay at university by one year. The conditions derived from these diverse countries and universities with their similarities and differences help this study which seeks to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

The subsequent section focuses on the plausible threats that may hamper enhancement of EALPs and strategies to reverse them.

2.4.3.4 Plausible threats that may hamper EALPs enhancement for first year university students and strategies to circumvent them

This sub-section discusses plausible threats that many hamper EALPs enhancement for first year university students focusing on experiences from universities in Australia, Canada, UK, USA and South Africa. The criteria for the selection of these countries is on the basis of their commonalities as developed countries and the latter falling between developed and developing countries. As developed countries, they are likely to share some similarities regarding socio-economic and educational issues, experiences and challenges amongst others.

2.4.3.4.1 Plausible threats that may impede EALPs enhancement for first year university students

In Australia, a study conducted at Flinders University identified the plausible threats to successful enhancement of academic literacy (Huijser, Kimmins, & Galligan, 2008: A-23; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) as follows:

- 1) It is very difficult to facilitate a whole-of-university initiative

- 2) Lack of a common vision or collaborators not sharing the same vision of the initiative
- 3) Lack of team work where collaboration is conducted without a full appreciation of the relevant expertise provided by all parties involved in the collaboration
- 4) Lack of institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction
- 5) Marginalization of academic advisers. Positioning of learning advisers on the margins of universities is a main threat to embedding academic literacy skills.
- 6) Academic learning support centres undermined by academic staff
- 7) Using top-down approach to initiate whole-of-university academic literacy programmes

Contrary to the Flinders University experiences, at the University of Melbourne, the main threat to academic literacy enhancement was identified as

Students' lack of attendance of academic literacy classes

This happened to students who were enrolled in the European Architecture subject. Their failure to attend this discipline specific academic literacy course affected their performance in both European Architecture and other studies (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413). Similarly, Kennelly et al., (2010: 67) confirm that students who are identified as at risk and need academic literacy support, do not attend. A similar experience is shared by the University of Canberra, where reading and writing skills workshops were designed to run parallel to a core unit students were studying and the said students did not attend (Kennelly et al., 2010: 65). In a similar case, the University of Queensland offered pharmacy students extension courses in oral communications skills, and weaker students failed to attend (McKauge et al., 2009: 290-1).

In Canada, in contrast with the Australian universities' experiences of the plausible threats to EALPs enhancement, Jacquet (2008); Keat, Strickland and Marinak (2009); Smythe and Toohey (2009) and Andrews (2013: 35) in her review of works by critical theorists identified the following as plausible threats to academic literacy programmes enhancement:

- 1) Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students
- 2) Time constraints and the need for expertise, while managing demands for greater accountability
- 3) Colour blindness and denying differences

Moreover, contrary to both Australian and Canadian experiences of plausible threats to academic literacy enhancement, according to Lea and Street (1998: 163-4) in the United Kingdom, threats to enhancement of academic literacy programmes were as follows:

- 1) Different interpretations of writing between staff and students in academia
- 2) Conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion

In the USA, similar to some universities in Australia experienced the plausible threats to academic literacy programmes enhancement as follows according to Kanno and Varghese (2010); Harklau (2010) and Bunch and Endris, 2012):

- 1) EAL students working long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities
- 2) EAL students often have less than helpful guidance from the college. Institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students]
- 3) Lack of a common vision and buy in from all or some of the stakeholders
- 4) Lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change

According to Jacobs (2005: 476) South African universities, similar to Australian and USA universities, the plausible threats to EALPs enhancement were as follows:

- 1) Academic literacy courses that are separate; decontextualized, generic, and added on as extra subjects to an already over-burdened curriculum

2) Deficit models of approaching and teaching academic literacy at universities

2.4.3.4.2 Strategies for circumventing plausible threats to EALPs enhancement for first year university students

This sub-section discusses the strategies that could be employed in circumventing plausible threats to EALPs enhancement as discussed in sub-section 2.4.4.4.1 above.

To overcome and reverse the plausible threats to enhancing EALPs, Flinders University in Australia undertook the following measures according to Huijser, Kimmins, and Galligan (2008: A-23) and Pourshafie and Brady (2013: 166):

- 1) Whole-of-university initiatives were driven using bottom-up approach wherein faculties, departments and disciplines buy-in the ideas, own them and drive them from within, rather than receiving them from top university management and expected to just implement without questioning them.
- 2) A common vision or collaborators sharing the same vision of the initiative is critical to enhancing EALPs
- 3) Team work is necessary where collaboration is conducted with a full appreciation of the relevant expertise provided by all parties involved in the collaboration
- 4) Institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction is necessary
- 5) Academic advisers must not be marginalized and they must be part and parcel of the initiatives. They posit that positioning of learning advisers as experts in their own right at universities is the main advantage to embedding academic skills.
- 6) Academic learning support centres must be respected by academic staff
- 7) Using bottom-up approach to initiate whole-of-university academic literacy programmes

Contrary to the Flinders University experiences, at the University of Melbourne, the main strategy to reverse plausible threats to academic literacy enhancement was identified as

Encouragement of students to attend academic literacy classes and making attendance compulsory (Baik & Greig, 2009: 411; Read, 2008: 181).

Students who were enrolled in the European Architecture subject were encouraged to attend and make the academic literacy class compulsory. Their regular attendance of this discipline specific academic literacy course affected their performance in both European Architecture and other studies positively (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413). Similarly, Kennelly et al., (2010: 67) confirm that students who are identified as at risk and need academic literacy support, do succeed if they attend class. A similar experience is shared by the University of Canberra, where reading and writing skills workshops were designed to run parallel to a core unit students were studying (Kennelly et al., 2010: 65). In a similar case, the University of Queensland offered pharmacy students extension courses in oral communications skills, and weaker students who attended class regularly performed well in their studies (McKauge et al., 2009: 290-1).

In Canada, contrary to the Australian universities' experiences of the strategies for reversing plausible threats to EALPs enhancement, Jacquet (2008); Keat, Strickland and Marinak, 2009; Smythe and Toohey, 2009 and Andrews (2013: 35) in her review of works by critical theorists identified the following as strategies to circumvent plausible threats to academic literacy programmes enhancement:

- 1) Sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve minoritized students
- 2) Balancing time management and the need for expertise, while simultaneously managing demands for greater accountability
- 3) Seeing and treating ESL students as such and not equating them with mainstream students by not denying differences

In contrast to both Australian and Canadian experiences of strategies to curb plausible threats to academic literacy enhancement, Lea and Street (1998: 163-4) avow that in

the United Kingdom, strategies to circumvent plausible threats to enhancement of academic literacy programmes were as follows:

- 1) Same interpretations of writing between staff and students in academia
- 2) Consistent and common advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add to more understanding

In the USA, similar to some universities in Australia experienced the strategies for reversing plausible threats to academic literacy programmes enhancement (Harklau, 2010; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012) as follows:

- 1) Splitting EAL students' first year curriculum to run for two years to extend their engagement in collegiate activities
- 2) EAL students have sufficient helpful guidance and support from the college
- 3) Institutions deliberately and systematically avoid labelling EAL students in deficit terms, which leads to higher teacher expectations and academic acceptance [which leads to motivated EAL students]
- 4) Sharing a common vision and buy-in from all or some of the stakeholders
- 5) Institutional leadership which leads to institutional change over individual change

South African universities, similar to Australian and USA universities applied the following strategies to curb the plausible threats to EALPs enhancement (Jacobs, 2005: 476, Van Wyk, 2014: 212):

- 1) Academic literacy courses that are content/subject/faculty/discipline-based, are embedded as part of the curriculum and not added on as extra subjects to an already over-burdened curriculum
- 2) Academic literacies and academic literacy as social practice models were adopted as ways of approaching and teaching academic literacy at universities

Deducing from the above discussions, it is conspicuous that threats to EALPs enhancement are prevalent at universities internationally and strategies to circumvent

them. The experiences of these threats and strategies to curb them differ from country to country and university to university depending on the types of threats experienced. The similarities that seem to be prevalent in all the countries and the universities in this study are lack of a common vision amongst stakeholders or collaborators; lack of team work, lack of institutional leadership, top-down approaches, and deficit models of academic literacy programmes. The differences are notable in Australia which involve the marginalization of academic literacy advisors and practitioners and lack of attendance of academic literacy classes especially by weaker ESL students while in Canada the differences are lack of preparation to serve minoritized and ESL students, colour blindness and denying differences; and lastly, time constraints, the need for expertise while managing demands for greater accountability. The differences in the UK and the USA are different interpretations of writing between staff and students and conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses which add to the confusion for the former and the difference of the latter is that EAL students work long hours that limit their engagement in collegiate activities; and finally for South Africa, the implementation of separate, decontextualized, and generic academic literacy courses as extra add-ons on the already over-burdened curriculum cause more problems. The critical and important thing is that all the plausible threats have strategies to circumvent them as discussed above.

The section that follows discusses the monitoring strategies and indicators of enhancement of EALPs.

2.4.4.5 Monitoring strategies and indicators of successful EALPs enhancement for first year university students

In Australia, the performance of ESL students in the European Architecture subject and in their studies in the subsequent year were recorded and traced. Their results showed improvement in both the European Architecture and their studies. The findings support the conclusions from previous studies conducted in North America (Kasper, 1997; Song, 2006; Naves, 2009:23-24) that content-based ESL programs can provide long-term benefits that promote academic success.

Also, early identification and intervention for ESL students who have weak academic language skills, thus more likely to perform poorly in their studies are critical indicators of enhancing EALPs for first year university students (Baik & Greig, 2009: 414). In addition, comprehensive longitudinal studies of effectiveness and impact of discipline-based language programmes for ESL students are necessary monitoring strategies for enhancing EALPs as alluded to by Baik and Greig.

Bottom-up management approach of whole-of-university initiative served as an indicator of success in enhancing the implementation of EALPs. Burnett (2006) highlights the importance of a coordinated and well-developed plan of action when implementing whole-of-university initiatives that involve communication with all the staff involved. Scott (2003) further notes that collaborative cultures do not emerge spontaneously. They need to be coached and moulded.

Furthermore, a shared collaborative vision between the English Department and SLC academic staff members collaborating on developing teaching and learning resources, and teaching and assessment strategies served as indicators of the success of enhancing implementation of EALPs in Australia (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: A-169). Peacock (2008) emphasises that the strength of a collaborative process lies in the necessity of articulating a shared vision in order to establish a unified environment that fosters trust and communication, engenders joint ownership of the process and the content, and solves problems collegially.

Collaboration that takes into account the relevant expertise of all parties involved helps EALPs to flourish. For example, academic advisors as specialists in the teaching of academic language skills, can provide a distinctive insight into the relationships between learning, teaching and assessment, and in consultation with faculty-based staff, academic advisors are able to develop joint curricula to support student learning. Such collaborations can engender institutional changes where spaces are created not only to encourage collaboration, but also to provide adequate and timely support

(Pursor et al., 2008). According to Donham and Green (2004: 314), the attributes needed to develop a culture of collaboration include having mutual goals and mutual respect established on an 'equal footing by those parties engaged in the collaborative enterprise.'

Leadership is very key and crucial to university change management processes (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Cummings et al., 2005) and serves as both indicator of success in the implementation of enhancing EALPs and as a monitoring strategy. Senior administrators are crucial at both institutional and faculty level to exercise leadership to manage the collaborative process. Burnett and Lamar (2011: 25) posit that authentic support from a high level champion is required for successful collaborations

At the West Coast University in Canada, Plurilingualism as an academic literacy programme was implemented and monitored in the process of enhancing this EALP. Canagarajah (2011) argues that for students to successfully translanguage, educators need to develop dialogical pedagogy. He argues that such pedagogy should include peer and instructor feedback that allows students to question their choices, think critically about these choices and their assessment, and develop metacognitive awareness. Omoniyi (2011: 471) stresses the need to shift the focus away from actors to the spaces of action in order to 'appreciate the skills with which writers converge with or diverge from different varieties to invest their writing with particular effects.'

Ajodhia-Andrews (2013: 34) argues that a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an academic literacy approach and lens is a necessary monitoring strategy as it incorporates more critical analysis and pedagogical stances toward matters of diversity within classrooms, serving to destabilize oppressive and prejudicial social power structures entrenched within the mainstream courses at universities. In this case, CDA served as a monitoring strategy in the implementation of enhancing the EALP.

On the other hand, in the United Kingdom an academic literacies model of enhancing academic literacy for first year university students concerned meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context. Its processes involved complex, dynamic, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and social processes, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities. All these elements served as monitoring strategies for the implementation of enhancing the EALP (Lea & Street, 2006: 369).

At Open University collaborations amongst a team of tutors conducted sessions based on some of the theoretical principles developed from the academic literacies model and with recent work on multimodality and genre (Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006; Van Dijk, 1997). These sessions allowed students to interact with different categories of text defined as 'genres and modes' (Lea & Street, 2006: 371).

In the USA, monitoring strategies and indicators of enhanced EALPs implementation involved initiation of faculty committees collaborating with EAL practitioners and discipline specialists; involvement of all the stakeholders starting with students, departments, EAL practitioners, discipline specialists and top university management responsible for academic issues (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009:4-5). All these elements were achieved through the use of CHAT as a socio-critical academic literacies programme.

In addition, at Temple University a Cultural Reproduction was introduced as an academic literacy programme to enhance the academic success of EAL students. The following were implemented as indicators of successful enhancement of the EALP: it was made a norm that EAL students' stay at college was extended by one year. Support and monitoring of EAL students became a prerequisite. Clear and bold steps were taken and communicated lucidly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms rather than deficit terms (Kanno & Cromley, 2013: 89-92).

In South Africa, a number of universities came up with certain approaches and monitoring strategies for enhancing their respective EALPs. An academic literacy-as-social-practice approach was implemented through an institution-wide project focusing on integrating language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize the tertiary curriculum (Jacobs, 2005: 479). Monitoring strategies that made enhancement of EALPs workable were: collaborations between AL practitioners and disciplinary specialists that created discursive spaces, facilitation of AL teaching into disciplines of study (Jacobs, 2005: 479-480).

Similarly, academic literacy as a social practice approach was implemented as a way of enhancing the EALPs at the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) with success while collaborations between lecturers and a core of specialist academic development staff, supported by strong institutional structures enabled and helped in academic development and professionalism (Scott, 2001: 5; McKenna, 2013: 64).

On the other hand, at the University of Pretoria a subject/content-based academic literacy approach was implemented as part of enhancing the EALP and this was specifically for engineering students (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 5). Monitoring strategies were the use of engineering-specific material which was emphasised and it followed theoretical principles of Language for Academic Purposes (LAP). Both students and their lecturer evaluated the course as a monitoring strategy at the end of the year and they were satisfied that the EALP helped them a lot in their studies (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 7).

The University of Cape Town implemented a multimodal approach to academic literacy that created new spaces to improve academic literacy of ESL students (Archer, 2006: 191). The monitoring strategies applied in this study were: the creation of less regulated classroom environments which require open tasks with no generic guidelines specified, less emphasis on assessment, and more emphasis on creativity, and the use of students' own resources (Archer, 2006: 189).

Finally, Rhodes University followed a general model of academic literacy based on Gee's (1990) theory of primary and secondary Discourses in order to describe and explicate the acquisition process of academic literacies by two ESL students during their first academic year at university. The case study showed that ESL students' primary and secondary Discourses are an important monitoring strategy throughout their university academic studies and their overall university success or failure and the concomitant support they need from the institution thereof (Reynolds & De Klerk, 1998: 55-56).

The commonalities and differences on monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university in the five countries represented in this study as discussed above show that there are indeed strategies and indicators to help any institution to trace and monitor their academic literacy programmes from time to time. All the countries and universities share commonalities or similarities on the following strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students: they are all implementing content-based or discipline-based academic literacy programmes; bottom-up management approach of whole-of-university initiative, shared common vision, Collaborations that are institutional, faculty and discipline-based, involvement of an active institutional leadership, academic literacies model, academic literacy as a social practice model, and an Institution-wide initiative. The differences on monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students in the five countries represented in this study are as follows: in Australia there was early identification and intervention for ESL students with weak language skills, comprehensive longitudinal studies were conducted that traced the effectiveness and impact of discipline-based language programmes, a coordinated plan of action on whole-of-university initiative was provided, and collaborations that took into account all the relevant expertise of all parties involved in the institution were the differences emanating from the Australian universities pertaining to monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students while in Canada there was implementation of Plurilingualism and Dialogical Pedagogy as approaches to academic literacy that served as monitoring strategies as well as

indicators of successful enhancement of the English academic literacy courses offered.

The differences for the UK, USA and South Africa are as follows: In the UK team collaborations were on sessions based on multimodality and genre emanating from the academic literacies model; in the USA there was initiation of faculty committees that involved all stakeholders starting with students to management, the implementation of Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical (CHAT) as a socio-critical academic literacy program, usage of Cultural Reproduction approach, extension of EAL students' stay at college by one year, and taking clear and bold steps communicating to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, while in South Africa the differences were the implementation of a multimodal approach, creation of less regulated classroom environments that require open tasks with no generic guidelines, less emphasis on assessment, more emphasis on creativity, the use of students' own resources, and finally, the usage of Gee's general model of primary and secondary Discourses as monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. The next section summarizes and concludes this chapter on theoretical frameworks and literature pertaining to EALPs for first year university students.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter focus has been on academic literacy background, academic literacy models and approaches; and the literature related to the five objectives of this study. In the first section, literacy and academic as a dual concept are defined and examined from the earlier definitions to the recent and current perspectives and evolution of academic literacy especially within the context of universities. Academic literacy is explored from the narrow perspective of academic literacy as stand-alone study skills, language skills, reading skills, writing skills to more recent perspectives of academic literacy as a social practice, as disciplinary or subject discourses that are integrated and embedded within the subject or discipline within which students are enrolled in. Finally, a perspective is provided by the researcher in locating the view of academic literacy as a social practice and academic discourse embedded within the subject or

discipline students are enrolled in dealing with academic reading, writing, critical thinking, and language abilities through CBI relevant to the discipline and subject students are enrolled in.

In the subsequent section, academic literacy models and approaches are explored and the one adopted in this study is identified and expounded. The models by Baynham (1995: 15), Van Dyk and Weidemann (2004b: 16-17) and Jacobs (2007a) correctly capture the essence and the perspective of this study pertaining to academic literacy that this study advocates. These models of academic literacy adopted in this study are consistent with CER as they allow a platform to create discursive and third spaces for students to critique, deconstruct, reconstruct and construct academic literacy discourses in their own ways, thereby challenging the existing mainstream university discourses of academic literacy. Similar to CER, students participate in the reconstruction of academic literacy guided by their own experiences and in the process; they become their own liberators for equity and social justice in their education.

In the next section attention was given to challenges making it imperative to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Amongst the challenges that emerged, a lack of collaborative teams between AL practitioners and discipline or subject specialists, lack of a shared common vision, deficit models of academic literacy, lack of attendance of academic literacy classes by students, lack of institutional support to students, lack of support from top management responsible for academic programmes, top-down approaches to implementation of academic literacy programmes and the exclusion of practitioners and students in planning and decision making seemed to be common in all the five countries. This displays social injustices and disempowerment practitioners, students and other beneficiaries are exposed to, hence the relevancy of CER to address issues of emancipation, social justice, equity and empowerment through the participation of students as equal partners and co-researchers with the principal researcher.

In the section that follows discussions were advanced on the components and aspects necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students with the aim of making an effort to address challenges experienced in the previous section. Collaborative teams between AL practitioners and discipline specialists were created with a shared vision with mutual respect for each other as experts in their own fields. More universities adopted institution wide academic literacy programmes that were discipline based and focusing on relevant discourses within departments and faculties, rather than deficit models that saw students as inadequate for university studies. Students were encouraged to attend academic literacy classes and the said classes were made compulsory. Bottom-up approaches were used to initiate university wide programmes with top management support. Practitioners and students' voices were respected and sought during planning and decision making. It is common knowledge that centralized forms of leadership persist in most countries as practitioners and beneficiaries are expected to comply while being excluded in the design of the programmes. Since students are mostly excluded from the processes of designing academic literacy programmes, this study seeks to include them as participants towards generating views and ideas to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Their exclusion is against the objectives of CER, namely social justice, empowerment, emancipation and giving hope.

In the section that follows, the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs across all the five countries were good interrelations between AL practitioners and discipline specialists that created strong and sustainable bonding were by regular contacts between them. Team work, consultations and briefing sessions by AL practitioners and discipline specialists made it possible for both parties to have a common and shared vision. Compulsory attendance of students in academic literacy classes and more adoption of academic literacy models that encourage content based instruction and providing students with academic literacy discourses that are discipline embedded made enhancement of academic literacy possible. Support by a high level university leader responsible for academic programmes also served as a condition necessary for enhancing EALPs. However, AL practitioners remained in power most of the times when deciding what and how to present academic literacy to students and these are contrary to CER adopted in this study. On this basis, this study seeks to bring to the fore voices of the marginalized and the marginalized in this instance are students.

This section addresses the plausible threats to enhancing EALPs and strategies to circumvent them. Lack of team work between AL practitioners and discipline specialists was circumvented through good interrelations, briefing sessions, consultations and mutual respect between the team members as they respected each other's expertise and understanding that they all cared for the success of their students. From the literature, it is evident that from all the five countries, AL practitioners and discipline specialists within faculties offered solutions to their problems through collaborative and integrated programmes. In doing so, they put themselves in positions of being innovators themselves rather than recipients of innovation. Other threats to enhancing EALPs included the lack of attendance of academic literacy classes by students, adoption of deficit models of academic literacy, top-down approaches, lack of support by a high level university leader responsible for academic programmes, and the lack of a shared common vision.

In order to circumvent these threats, attendance of academic literacy classes was encouraged and made compulsory for all ESL students. Academic Literacy models embedded within the discipline or subject discourses students are enrolled in were adopted and implemented. Bottom-up approaches to enhancing academic literacy for first year university students were initiated through individual AL practitioners and discipline specialists and amongst colleagues within and across faculties. A shared common vision between AL practitioners, discipline specialists, faculties and a high level leader responsible for academic programmes made it possible to circumvent these threats. It is quite lucid that all these threats were overcome through the participation of all the relevant stakeholders to bring about fairness, equity, social justice and empowerment and all these are consistent with CER adopted in this study.

Lastly, the monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs were the allocation of academic advisors to monitor the academic progress of first year university students, making academic literacy classes compulsory to all ESL students in their first year of university studies, institutional support given to first year students and monitored throughout their university studies, tracing students' academic progress and making evaluations, academic performance of first year students improved and more collaborations between academic advisors, AL practitioners, librarians and

discipline specialists served as both the monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

The success of the monitoring process was enabled through frequent briefing sessions, consultations and collaborative team work between AL practitioners and discipline specialists within faculties as revealed by the literature from the five countries under investigation. Secondly, different structures in different countries were put in place to enable the monitoring process, amongst which were AL practitioners, academic advisors, discipline specialists, departmental level, faculty level, high level leader responsible for academic programmes, and at institutional level.

In the next chapter the focus is on the methodology and design employed to generate data necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

CHAPTER 3

DATA GENERATION FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. The study was conducted at the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus in South Africa. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, this chapter focuses on the research methodology and design relevant for this study. To fulfill the aim and objectives of this study; which is to enhance EALPs for first year university students through PAR as a research methodology and design, this chapter discusses PAR as a qualitative research methodology focusing on its historical origins, objectives, characteristics, its process, ontology, epistemology, data instrumentation and generation, narrative analysis, ethical considerations, profile of the research site, study leader's professional and educational background, participants, as well as the conclusion is drawn and the tone is set for the subsequent chapter on the analysis of data and discussion of findings.

In order to operationalize the aim and objectives of the study, the Free Attitude Interview question in two focus groups consisting of 12 participants per each group (ALC108 and ALN108 students and facilitators) was as follows starting with the main question and sub-questions to probe and generate data on how to enhance EALPs for first year university students:

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

Main question

How can we enhance the EALPs for first year university students?

Sub-questions

- How do we justify the need for the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students?
- Which aspects and components are necessary to enhance EALPs?
- Which conditions are necessary for us to enhance EALPs?
- How can we anticipate possible threats to enhancing EALPs and ways to reverse them?
- How can we show monitoring strategies and indicators of enhancement of EALPs?

The above question and sub-questions were operationalized through PAR as a methodology and design anchoring this study. PAR processes and data generation procedures are thoroughly elaborated and clarified in the subsequent sections.

3.3 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS AN APPROACH

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was followed to conduct this study. In PAR the focus is on the participation and involvement of all the role players in the particular research project. In the context of this study, the role players involved were myself as the Study Coordinator (the main researcher), ALC108 and ALN108 students, and ALC108 and ALN108 facilitators (co-researchers or participants). In PAR the truth (research) and solutions (action) to concrete problems occur simultaneously. Thus, action and research are compatible in PAR. Therefore, researchers and participants are equally involved in the process and take equal responsibility for the outcome of the research effort. On these bases, participation, research and action are of paramount significance in this PAR approach (Healy & Rahman in de Vos et al., 2011: 491).

However, there still exist uncertainty about the relationship between community development and PAR. Nevertheless, it can be stated that in PAR the community work process and the research process ultimately connect and the boundaries between them become vague. This happens immediately after the initial consultation and planning sessions wherein participants in the community take ownership of the research project and generate data that addresses the research aims and objectives while simultaneously addressing challenges and generating solutions to community

challenges. The term 'action research' emanating from PAR is used by Barker (2003: 5) and Maree (2007: 74) to link the data generation process with the development of a programme designed to alleviate the identified problem. Action research is seen as a form of participatory research in which action and research complement each other and where both researcher and participant are involved in decisions regarding the entire research process with the aim of emancipation for the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 63; Druckman, 2005: 314; Henning, 2005: 47; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 15; & Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005: 25, 205).

Some researchers argue that the term action research is the correct one to use and to add participatory is unnecessary seeing that action research is impossible without participation. According to these researchers, PAR and action research mean the same thing. However, PAR is the term used in this study (Barker, 2003: 5). PAR is broadly endorsed as consistent with the commitment of health professionals to social justice, it promises to connect local action to large-scale, progressive social change (Healy, 2001: 93). The researcher in PAR remains responsible for the research process, and the community worker should act on the recommendations of the researcher in order to improve the quality of life in the particular community. In this chapter, PAR historical origins; objectives, characteristics, PAR process, ontology, epistemology, data generation, data analysis, ethical considerations, research site profile, the researcher and participants are discussed and finally, a conclusion is drawn on how PAR unfolded in this study and the tone is set for the subsequent chapter.

3.3.1 PAR historical origins

PAR originated from countries that were colonized in the early 1960s, stirred by anti-colonial struggles (Jordan, 2003:187). Scholars began to focus on how to change and better people's lives of struggle and survival, from the margins of epistemology to the centre. PAR is therefore an approach from the social sciences which was developed as part of a paradigm shift away from traditional, positivist, science to work towards recognizing and addressing complex human and social issues (Eruera, 2010:1). PAR has the potential to address research and wider issues of social justice, inclusion and empowerment of the minority and often marginalized communities and in this study, the marginalized are ALC108 and ALN108 students. It links well with CER, which

advances the agenda for equity and advocates social justice, peace, freedom and hope (Mahlomaholo, 2009:226). The choice of PAR as a methodology and design guiding this study is justifiable in that the purpose of this study is to enhance EALPs for first year university students whose voices and participation will assist them in achieving social justice, freedom, hope and empowerment in having a say and taking responsibility towards their education as equal partners. Barker (2003: 5) and Maree (2007: 74) use the term *action research* to link the data-gathering process with the development of a programme designed to alleviate the identified problem. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 63), Druckman (2005: 314), Henning (2005: 47), Struwig and Stead (2001: 15) and Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 25, 205) see action research as a form of participatory research in which action and research complement each other and where both researcher and participant are involved in decisions regarding the entire research process with the aim of emancipation for the participants. Moreover, PAR promises to connect local action to large-scale, progressive social change (Healy 2001: 93). Hence, all these definitions of PAR fulfils the goal of this study, which is to bring both the researcher and the participant in a collaboration of equal relationship so that action is collectively taken to emancipate all the parties involved.

3.3.2 PAR objectives

PAR approach has three objectives (Jordan, 2003:188-189). First, it is against the systematic reproduction of unequal power relations between the researchers and the participants as it occurs when the conventional research methodologies, such as quantitative research, are used (Netshandama & Mahlomaholo, 2010:111). In this way it tends to align with a non-positivist approach to research. Hence ALC108 and ALN108 students participated in an equal and non-threatening environment with the researcher to fully be empowered and benefited from this process. For Dentith, Measor and O'Malley (2012) and Eruera (2010:1 of 9) it creates a discursive space for critically discussing matters without fear, giving power to all participants, including the marginalized and oppressed, to be listened to and express their opinions on issues that affect them on a daily basis and are about them. The participants in this study had an opportunity to share ideas and brainstorm ways to enhance EALPs for first year university students and took ownership of the research process and outcomes. The

researcher and students, through PAR, expressed their concerns without leaving their fate to authorities to speculate what the first year community, most importantly first year students, needed to enhance their experiences of EALPs as first year students.

Second, PAR is openly political (Eruera, 2010:2 of 9; Netshandama & Mahlomaholo, 2010:111; Sanginga, Kamugisha & Martin, 2010:696). The researcher works *with* as opposed to *on* participants, marginalized and oppressed groups and individuals. This originates from the notion that within societies, including education, there are unequal power relations; which then lead research to take a stance to look at social justice as an ethical issue which is committed to democratic engagement, transparency and openness. This objective seems to resonate with CER as a theoretical framework through which this study is anchored. This objective links with CER as it advances the agenda for equity in all its forms and advocates social justice, peace, freedom and hope (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 226). Working with participants enables people to conduct research themselves on the practices that affect their lives and in this research study, the researcher and first year students discussed and expressed their views on how to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Unlike conventional research methodologies, by which power is vested in the research-academic, in PAR it is vested in participants who are affected on a daily basis by the unsatisfactory situation that oppresses them (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:75; Netshandama & Mahlomaholo, 2010:110; Sanginga et al., 2010:696). In this study the first year students are marginalized as their views and concerns were never sought and considered in order to enhance EALPs for first year university students. The professional researchers occupy the same status as other participants except for setting their expertise alongside lay knowledge, skills and experiences of those people who constitute the object of their investigations (Eberson et al., 2007:126; Jordan, 2003:190; Sanginga et al., 2010:697).

The third objective that defines PAR is, according to Jordan (2003:190), its embrace of CER, which yields some of its key conceptual practices that either influenced or directly shaped the forms of social organization that PAR practitioners used to conduct research (Jordan, 2003:190). PAR's embrace of CER is critical and crucial for this study to have achieved its desired outcomes in a non-threatening environment of

freedom, empowerment, hope, equity and respect for each participant's contribution to enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

The three objectives show that PAR has been driven by a dynamic that has been centered on a democratic, critical, and emancipatory impulse that is quite distinct. The success of PAR relies on collective participation, indigenous knowledge, education and collective action. The researcher and the participants assume positions of being co-inquirers who are collectively engaged by and transforming the enquiry process (Dentith, Measor & O'Malley, 2012; Eruera, 2010:5 of 9; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:75; Sanginga et al., 2010:697). The usually unheard but important voices of the marginalized are an ingredient of the collective in PAR.

3.3.3 Characteristics of PAR

Characteristics of PAR are delineated by the following researchers (Babbie & Mouton in De vos et al., 2011: 496; Burkey, 1998: 53; Collins, 1997: 98; 1999: 19; Cousins & Earl, 1995: 148; 172-174; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 328; 2000: 376-377; 568; De Vos et al., 2011: 496; Green, 1998: 362; Healy, 2001: 98; Kondrat & Julia, 1997: 32; Morse, 1997: 286-305; Pottier, 1993: 1; Sarantakos, 2000: 8; Schurink, 1998: 413-417; Sewpaul & Rollins, 1999: 250):

3.3.3.1 PAR is committed to knowledge development

PAR is committed to knowledge development as any research initiative should be. It tries to understand the role of knowledge as an instrument of power and control. PAR seeks a more holistic understanding and better ways of achieving change, than is possible with traditional research. The acknowledgement that in the globalized world knowledge is power plays a role in PAR. Obtaining viewpoints of disadvantaged people themselves to create a more accurate, critical reflection of social reality, to realize human potential, and to mobilize human resources in order to solve problems is central and very important in PAR.

3.3.3.2 PAR is more applied research directed at practical problem solving

PAR is more of applied research directed at practical problem solving. Its process is based on the principle of self-development, in which people must organize themselves into action. It uses all conventional tools of social research. These tools acknowledge the value of opinions and thoughts of all people in the particular community, in this study referring to the first year students enrolled in the EALPs and participated in this research study together with the researcher. Both quantitative and qualitative paradigms may be used in PAR, depending on the goals of the research project. In this particular study no quantitative paradigm was used as the study was solely qualitative following the principles of CER and PAR. Hence, qualitative methods more fully reflect the voices and opinions of the community and gauge the impact and acceptability of programmes already implemented. Focus groups, in-depth interviewing and participant observation can be used as research procedures. For the purposes of this study, Free Attitude Interviews in two focus groups were used to generate data.

3.3.3.3 PAR operates on multidisciplinary and shared conceptual framework in which all stakeholders concerned are involved

PAR operates on a multidisciplinary and shared conceptual framework in which all disciplines concerned should be involved. This implies that all the stakeholders participating in the PAR research process have discussions and agree on how they should tackle their common challenges in the community. Support from government, the business sector and the community is important. Support may be in the form of finances, infrastructure or human resources. In a successful PAR approach, the community is enabled to be accountable for the progress made with the project and also for the management of its own resources. In the context of this research, only the researcher as an English Academic Literacy practitioner, facilitators and the students enrolled in ALC108 and ALN108 were involved as co-researchers and participants. The two groups of ALC108 and ALN108 students and facilitators had sessions and discussed the challenges they come across in the implementation of these courses and together they generated ideas on how best to address those challenges in order to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

3.3.3.4 PAR advocates equality between researchers and community members involved in the research process

The PAR approach is adamant about the fact that the researcher and community members should be equal partners in the research process and that the beneficiaries should participate in solutions to their own problems. Everybody involved in the research project should have shared ownership of the research enterprise, although the researcher will however, be seen as an outsider to a certain extent, despite attempts at partnership as it is in the human nature that researchers as outsiders to the communities they engage in research are treated with suspicion. Nevertheless, the researcher is required to take the lead in starting the project on a scientific note, to identify and involve all the stakeholders, to act as a resource person, and to see that relationships are of high quality. This does not imply that the researcher should be in control of all aspects of the project. PAR focuses on the involvement of its members, no project can be undertaken without the initiative of someone with time, skill and commitment, someone who is almost inevitably either a member of an educated group or the researcher him- or herself. Researchers do projects in the communities through consultation, evaluation, promotion of participant involvement, organizing of meetings and channelling of the action to be taken. Balance of power invested in the researcher should not be over- and under-involved and perhaps sharing without imposing, dialogue, equality and a certain level of intimacy. In this study, the participants were given powers to decide on dates and suitable times for sessions. As the researcher I avoided imposing decisions on the participants as I valued their opinions and inputs and I wanted them to feel free to air their views. Power relations were levelled between myself as the researcher and the participants as co-researchers throughout the research and data generation processes.

3.3.3.5 PAR promotes teamwork in the process of finding solutions to community problems

Team members are attracted to the process of PAR because they feel involved in the process and they have a desire to find useful solutions to the problem. Although community members may all have a common interest in the problem, it cannot be assumed that they have a homogeneous view of it or of the ways in which it should be addressed. As the project proceeds, community diversity emerges and individual

agendas become apparent. The challenge is to maintain a balance between the team agenda and the individual agendas. Power struggles may develop in three ways in the PAR approach: community researchers versus external researchers; community researchers versus the community at large; and community researchers using the PAR approach versus community researchers who have also entered the scene but are implementing traditional approaches. None of the three ways that power struggle develops in PAR occurred in this study. The researcher and the participants were fully involved in finding useful solutions to enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

3.3.3.6 Consistency is key in PAR when many people engage in research within a community

Consistency remains an issue in PAR when many people simultaneously approach a community to generate data. It is important for all members to convey the content of the project in a similar light, respecting each other's rights, and generating information in the agreed-upon manner. If many players are generating data, the dilemma is to reach some level of agreement on the emerging patterns and their meanings as to what actions are necessary. This process calls for negotiation and synergism, since new perspectives do not negate existing patterns, but rather stretch or augment them. Consistency was never an issue in this study for the researcher as the researcher approached the community individually without a team of researchers.

3.3.3.7 In PAR all parties are equally important and they have to feel that they are significant and have a contribution to make

All parties involved should continue to feel that they are making a contribution that is significant, both personally and to the group, while continuing to attend to their other individual commitments. Issues that may emerge include the unpredictability of the research course, timelines that are subject to continuous modification, and the availability of time for the work of the group. Tasks might be of varied nature, or some members might possess particular skills. Some might be initially very involved and enthusiastic, but might become discouraged by the time commitment. Everybody must be kept interested and functionally involved in the process in order to avoid loss of interest. Fortunately in this study, all the participants were committed and interested

in the study throughout the project because the researcher gave them the discretion to decide which dates and times were convenient for them to meet for sessions and focus group interviews.

3.3.3.8 PAR is emancipatory in nature

PAR is emancipatory and people are helped to recover and release themselves from the constraints of irrational, unproductive and unsatisfying social structures that limit their self-development and self-determination. In the atmosphere of shared control and support, stakeholders must be encouraged to participate actively in the total process. A systems resolution to the problem that emanates from the larger social structure is important in PAR. The tendency is to examine problems from intra- or interpersonal perspective.

3.3.3.9 Stamina and patience are key in PAR projects

Stamina and patience are required in PAR projects to deal with the competing demands for immediate action versus meaningful participation. Demands on personal time and energy may be unpredictable and may exceed those originally anticipated. Without flexibility, the promise of participation and empowerment disappears into a cloud of expediency. Available resources in the community, such as values, culture, knowledge and experience, must be recognized and used to their full potential. PAR conveys the idea that the original causes of people being disadvantaged lie in macro-social structures. Genuine change can thus only take place through the transformation of the existing social order. Participants were patient and enthusiastic throughout the project as they knew that our sessions and interviews would not go beyond an hour. Fortunately, all the sessions and interviews were between 40 and 50 minutes and for this reason, they trusted the researcher and they were very motivated and eager to participate every time we met for sessions and interviews.

3.3.3.10 PAR draws from conflict theory

PAR draws on conflict theory, which implies that all societies are characterized by two types of people: the haves and the have-nots. The dynamics of society are such that the ones that have want to maintain their position of privilege and power, and the ones that do not have want their power. PAR is intended to empower participants to take

control of the political and economic forces that shape their lives. This should involve well-recognized social action strategies, such as consciousness raising and collective action. A shift should take place from the dependency model to the empowerment model, with a participatory approach in which communities can do things for themselves in order to enhance community building and eventually improve their quality of life. In this study participants voiced their experiences and proposed solutions on how EALPs for first year university students can be enhanced and in the process, their participation empowered and emancipated them from the margins of their education and put them at the centre of their education as equal role players in shaping their educational experiences.

3.3.3.11 PAR involves the process of collective reflection and self-realization

PAR implies a process of collective reflection and self-realization in order to help the disadvantaged to regain their confidence in themselves. In this manner people are encouraged to share their experiences and to fight their way out of their problems. It implies that the existing problems of the community originated in the community and that the goal is political or social change. Members of the community should thus be capable of problem solving, information generating and resultant action.

3.3.3.12 PAR projects are implemented in a manner that makes the community to gain a feeling of ownership of the project

PAR projects are implemented in a manner that the community gains a feeling of ownership of a project so that its members can then shape the necessary services as required. People should be assisted in the development of their full potential. PAR approach constitutes a continuous process of interaction between research, action, interpretation, reflection and evaluation by the community members themselves. Action and change occur during the research process, not only as a final outcome. It focuses on capacity building that works towards competency, dignity and a desire for growth and participation. The processes of collaboration, mobilization, and empowerment; self-realization and community solidarity are important in the PAR approach.

3.3.3.13 PAR's ultimate goal is to improve self-esteem, self-reliance and self-determination of participants in the project

The ultimate goal of PAR is to improve self-esteem, self-reliance and self-determination. Members must also be encouraged to reflect critically on the findings and to make adjustments if necessary. Action can then be based upon the endorsed findings of the particular project. Ongoing surveillance, openness to dialogue and commitment to responsiveness to the competing demands for participation and action are essential to the participatory process. The realization of social justice through authentic involvement and pragmatic problem solving within the process is critical to the PAR approach.

In this section that dealt with the characteristics of PAR, the following aspects were highlighted and discussed as factors that characterize PAR: commitment to knowledge development; more of applied research directed at practical problem solving; multidisciplinary operation and shared conceptual framework that involve all stakeholders; advocates equality between researchers and community members involved; promotes team work in processes of finding solutions to community problems; consistency when many people engage in research with a community; all parties are equally important; they have to feel important and have a contribution to make; it is emancipatory in nature; stamina and patience are key; it draws from conflict theory; involves the process of collective reflection and self-realization; implemented in a manner that makes the community to gain a feeling of ownership; and its ultimate goal is to improve self-esteem, self-reliance and self-determination of participants.

This section of chapter 3 focused on the research design and data generation for enhancing EALPs for first year university students. It began with the introduction of the chapter and dealt with the aim, objectives, main research question, sub-questions, PAR as an approach, PAR origins, PAR research objectives, and finally, PAR characteristics. The next section focused on the PAR process, ontology, epistemology, data instrumentation and generation, data analysis, ethical considerations, research site profile, the participants, the research leader's professional background, ALC108 students, ALN108 facilitators, ALN108 students, ALN108 facilitators, and the chapter ends with a conclusion and sets the tone for the next chapter.

3.3.4 The PAR Process

Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 595) assert that the process of PAR may not be as neat and final as in some other procedures, as the stages will overlap and mutual plans may quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience. The PAR process is likely to be more fluid, open and responsive than other procedures. The subsequent delineation of PAR process is based on the viewpoints of Bless et al. (2006: 65-68), Collins (1999: 42-43; 108-117), Hakim (2000: 143), Kahn (1994: 2; 11-12; 95), Maree (2007: 127-131), Morris (2006: 246), Morse (1997: 285), McNicoll (1999: 57-58), Newman (2003: 119-129), Schurink (1998: 417) and Van Rooyen (1998: 82-84), Weyers (2001: 115-130), Yegidis and Weinbach (1996: 34):

3.3.4.1 Introduction to the community

A researcher may become aware of a particular problem in a community, or the community may approach the researcher for an opinion on the problem or to assist in identifying and formulating the problem. Ideally, the request for a PAR project should come from members of a community faced with a problem. Whatever the case may be, contact with the community should be made at the grass-roots level, and entry into the community must be negotiated. In the case of this study, I identified the problem regarding the contribution made by EALPs in helping students to perform well academically at the university. I then sold the problem to first year university students enrolled in EALPs and the facilitators to afford them the opportunity to conceptualize the problem from their own experiences and to solicit their buy-in. The first year university students enrolled in EALPs and their facilitators shared my perspective on the problem and agreed that collectively there had to be action and steps taken to address the problem of high failure rates through the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

The effect of the arrival of the researcher in the community can easily be underestimated. A researcher faces the time-consuming and uncertain task of gaining trust of the community and generating interest in the inquiry. All individuals in the community should have an equal opportunity to say what they think should be done about their situation, and what can be done to enable them to do it themselves. Some form of representation from within the community should already be gained at this

early stage of the project. All ethical aspects of the research should be closely monitored throughout the entire process. Aspects such as informed consent, deception, violation of privacy and debriefing of the community after the completion of the project can be regarded as essential concerns for the purposes of PAR. In this study, gaining the trust of the community and buy-in of the research problem were made easier because I am a practitioner of EALPs where this study is undertaken and familiar to the first year university students enrolled in these EALPs and their facilitators, though not facilitating classes for the groups of participants selected for this study. All the participants signed the consent forms during the first session. I did not deceive nor violate any of the participants' rights to confidentiality and they were debriefed at the end of the project to verify whether their voices and ideas were correctly captured.

3.3.4.2 Problem identification and statement

People, especially those who are marginalized and deprived, have their own agenda, which should be respected at all costs. In order to gain a clear vision of the problem, information should be generated about the problem situation and the context within which the problem occurs. A collective sense of clarity with regard to the exact nature of the problem should then be developed. All the role players should then set about delineating the scope of the proposed undertaking.

Researchers will have a timeframe of their own within which the project should be completed, but it is important to move at the pace of the community. A major distinction between traditional research and PAR is the continuity of the relationship. Traditional researchers leave the field after their research has been completed, but with the PAR approach, ongoing involvement exists. A mutually respectful relationship may fade over time, but it should not be broken altogether. With marginalized communities, relationships should be treated with special care. For this study, the threats of fading relationship between the community and myself as the researcher never arose because I am a practitioner and facilitator of EALPs and I interact with this community on daily basis.

3.3.4.3 Goals and objectives

Once a comfortable working relationship has been achieved it is time to consider the goals and objectives of all the groups that will be involved in the project, but also taking due cognizance of government policy. In most cases these goals will be different and the researcher has to plan carefully to accommodate everybody and all interests. A further crucial factor, at this stage, is that the researcher should determine and formulate from the various agendas what has to be evaluated, and how.

All groups must be prepared to work together to find a solution to the problem and to achieve all the various goals set out in the contract. It must be determined exactly what information is needed in order to find a solution and how the relevant data are to be generated. The whole team must work together in order to break the project down into manageable tasks and to allocate responsibility for each of these to the various participants. For this study, I worked collaboratively with the participants in determining suitable times for setting the agenda for the project, how long the focus group interviews would take to generate ideas to address the problem, processes of consultations during the project and at the end of the project. Each participant had a say in how the focus group interviews would unfold and what questions to prepare for during the sessions. Before the sessions, the participants were also at liberty to interact with their peers who were not part of the PAR project for their inputs and ideas on how to enhance EALPs for first year university students so that they could provide rich, diverse and valued solutions from the broader community and represent the views of the entire community.

3.3.4.4 Implementation of data generation procedures

During this phase the nature and context of a community's impediments must be determined by way of research. This phase means implementing the data generation procedures after the entire proposed research methodology to be followed in the inquiry has been carefully considered. Besides the known formal research procedures, issue raising, community self-survey procedures and participatory assessment procedures can be mentioned as being informal research procedures.

Resources and needs of the community are systematically assessed and the necessary information guiding appropriate action is generated. The pilot study is of major importance to clarify the goals of the study and the course of action to be followed. It is also important to guard against bias in data generation. It is therefore quite critical to be lucid from the outset of the study what the goals are, and to maintain a proper balance of research and action goals. Tension between research and action goals is present in most projects, and needs to be discussed and clarified repeatedly. In this study a pilot study was done and it assisted a lot in clarifying the conceptualization of the research question, research aim and objectives and finally, the time frames for the focus groups using Free Attitude Interviews. An audio recorder was used to capture data and transcribed later into themes that emerged.

3.3.4.5 Data analysis

From the implementation of data generation procedures, the data analysis of data generated is carefully done and data are categorized into certain themes so that they can be evaluated. Narrative Analysis was used as a data analysis method in order to understand the link and relationships between the final aims and objectives, and all the possible agendas, in order to accommodate them all.

3.3.4.6 Negotiation

The researcher should laboriously ensure that the representatives of the community are truly representative of all sectors and interest groups in the community, and that all facets of the problem are represented. The participants and the researcher together investigate all aspects of the problem, expand their understanding of the dimensions of the problem and develop relevant strategies for change.

Group process and group dynamics are important in PAR. To allow everybody to participate in an appropriate manner, not to let some dominate others, to give equal opportunities to everybody involved and not to leave the whole process to the researcher are all important aspects of this approach. Group dynamics determine to a large extent the failure or success of the project. The researcher should be prepared to learn from and with the people, and also have sensitivity, adaptability, patience, empathy and a flexible attitude. The capacity to reflect critically on the process from

time to time and to make appropriate adjustments is of paramount importance. The impetus should at all times come from the community and not from the researcher alone. The community should assume ownership of the total process. Three different sessions were organized for the participants and myself as the researcher to negotiate how the research would unfold in this study.

3.3.4.7 Planning

During this phase individual interpretations of the participants should be linked to and integrated into the broader context of the problem situation. The researcher should explore and affirm the inherent strengths, skills and weaknesses within the community. The research questions for the study should now undergo refinement, so that everybody involved in the study knows exactly what is expected of them and what they can contribute towards the agreed-upon strategies for data generation and analysis. To reach a point of mutual understanding might require long and patient discussion. The participants were thoroughly engaged in the planning phase of this study, hence three sessions that lasted between 35 and 45 minutes were utilized for this purpose so that every participant had a thorough understanding of the process, procedures and expectations.

3.3.4.8 Evaluation

Data evaluation is done in a manner that will assist the researcher in writing a research report of high quality that will also be of interest to potential readers. Evaluation should always be part of the process, meaning the extent to which goals have been achieved, the level of skills development and empowerment of the people, and the benefits to the community through participation.

3.3.4.9 Report writing

After evaluation of the data, the results and findings are written up in the research report. PAR research reports normally consist of the following headings:

Background information

Research questions and objectives

Literature review

Justification for choosing PAR

Research methods

Stakeholders

Processing and recording of data

Findings, conclusions and recommendations

3.3.4.10 The action plan

The development of the action plan follows on the recommendations of the research report. The research process informs some kind of action to be undertaken jointly by the PAR participants. If the power structure in the community cannot be changed by way of persuasion, power strategies or political action, the only solution to the problem remains self-help programmes for and by the community itself.

3.3.4.11 Evaluation of the action outcomes

After the action plan has been implemented, the results of the action are assessed and further period of research is initiated. Depending on these results, it may be necessary to redesign the original action undertaken. Thus action and research continue as alternate processes in the solution of the community's problems. The action part of the process keeps the research relevant, initiates further research and implements research findings, while the research part guides and evaluates the action.

This section on the PAR process highlighted and alluded to the following as key processes in the implementation of PAR in an attempt to enhance EALPs for first year university students: the necessary steps followed were introduction to the research community; problem identification and statement; goals and objectives setting; implementation of data generation procedures; data analysis; negotiation; planning; evaluation; report writing; the action plan; and evaluation of the action plan.

The next section elaborates on ontology, epistemology, data instrumentation and generation, data analysis, ethical considerations, research site profile, the participants, the study leader's professional background, ALC108 students, ALC108 facilitators, ALN108 students, ALN108 facilitators and finally, a conclusion of the chapter is drawn and the tone is set for chapter 4.

3.3.5 Ontology

According to Mason in de Vos et al., (2011: 309) ontology refers to the researcher's assumption of how reality should be viewed in order to answer the research question most truthfully. This therefore implies that the first question the researcher should ask when designing a qualitative study is: How should social reality be looked at? Following from this, two basic answers are that reality should be approached objectively as an external reality "out there" requiring the researcher to maintain a detached, aloof position when studying it; or the belief that there is no truth "out there" and that reality is subjective and can only be constructed through the empathetic understanding of the research participants' meaning of their world (de Vos et al., 2011: 309). Kvale in de Vos et al., (2011: 309) further explains the difference between these ontological viewpoints aptly by saying that the conception of knowledge as a 'mirror or reality' is replaced by the conception of the 'social construction of reality' where the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world.

Ontology in PAR reflects a version of the world and reality created by both researchers and participants guided by their own consciousness and lived experiences within their community, as opposed to positivist version of viewing reality as objective and external to human beings. Reality in PAR is co-constructed by researchers and participants collaboratively to address problems in the community. Therefore, the ontology in PAR is subjective and links with the CER as a theoretical framework that guides this study as they both seek to empower and emancipate both the researcher and participants from the margins of their own community involvement (Usher, 1996: 13; de Vos et al., 2011: 498).

This perspective is participative in nature and allows for multiple voices to be heard and respected. For the purpose of this study, a series of sessions and focus group interviews employing the Free Attitude Interview were conducted by myself as the researcher and the participants in order to generate ways and means to enhance EALPs for first year university students. Each participant's views were heard and respected.

3.3.6 Epistemology

According to de Vos et al., (2011: 309) epistemology refers to different theories of knowledge and perception behind ontological beliefs. This therefore leads to the question relevant for the research design: What are the principles and rules by which I believe reality should be known? Or differently stated: What research perspective should I use to design my research?

Epistemology in PAR reflects knowledge and how it is acquired. Knowledge in this instance is seen as a subjective experience of reality and not a hard and inflexible body as seen by positivists. This view of knowledge as a subjective experience of reality from PAR and CER perspectives inform how researchers and participants go about uncovering knowledge (Usher, 1996: 13, de Vos et al., 2011: 498).

To further elaborate on ontology and epistemology, the following research perspectives or major approaches, as depicted in Table 3.1, each with its own ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods of data generation and analysis, exist:

Table 3.1 Evolving research perspectives

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology	Methods of data collection and analysis	Report/writing style
Objectivism Positivism	The life world of subjects can be discovered in an objective manner	Interpretation arises from the observation of the researcher. With the right methods meaning can be discovered	For example classic ethnography and phenomenology	For example participant observation and interviewing	Description of day to day events experienced in the field, realist tales in an authorial, supreme

					voice to represent and interpret the other's story
Interpretivism Modernism Realism	The real world can be discovered by means of systematic, interactive methodological approach	Knowledge arise from the understanding of symbols and meaning (symbolic interactionism)	Grounded theory	Data are gathered through the means of participant observation, human documents and interviewing, and are analyzed systematically	The researcher provides insights into the behavior displayed and the meanings and interpretation that subjects give to their life worlds
Constructivism Postmodernism Impressionism	There is no real world or truth out there, only a narrative truth. Reality can thus only be known by those who experience it personally	Those who are personally experiencing it construct knowledge through a process of self-conscious action	Newer forms of ethnography: auto-ethnography, collaborative enquiry (PAR), appreciative inquiry, personal-reflexive ethnography	Interviewing, participant observation, human documents, personal narratives, lived experience, poetic representations and	The story must be life-like, evocative, believable and possible to enable readers to put themselves in the place of others and have empathy

			, narrative enquiry	fictional texts	
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Source: Adapted from Schurink (1998: 246-47)

Table 3.1 above demonstrates the different approaches and perspectives based on ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and report/writing style between objectivism in Positivism, realism in Interpretivism and impressionism in Constructivism. As discussed in chapter 2 on theoretical frameworks, ontology and epistemology in Positivism, Phenomenology and Critical Emancipatory Research are represented in Table 3.1 above under objectivism in Positivism, modernism and realism in Interpretivism and postmodernism and impressionism in Constructivism respectively. The latter, Constructivism correlates with CER and PAR as both the theoretical framework and research methodology and design anchoring this study.

From positivists' point of view, the relationship between subjects and objects is necessarily neutral and passive. As such, the relationship is one of exclusivity, subjects and objects existing quite separately and independently of one another. The world is filled with a finite quantity of objects, existing independently of knowers that subjects may experience, register and record according to the dictates of science (Scott & Usher, 1999: 25; de Vos et al., 2011: 311). In contrast, critical theorists within CER and PAR understand the relationship between subjects and object to be characterized by oppression, alienation, tension and 'class struggle' (Marx & Engels, 1987: 79; de Vos et al., 2011: 311). Broadly speaking, since subjects co-exist in a world of unbalanced and oppressive social relations, perpetuated and legitimated by powerful ideologies, they are perceived to be alienated from the underlying truth of their relationship to the world as subjects.

Truth can only be known or acquired through the raising of consciousness, since 'critical philosophy springs from . . . consciousness' (Lukács, 1983: 110–111; de Vos et al., 2011: 311), and 'the world becomes real only by force of comprehending the power of consciousness' (Marcuse, 1986: 94, de Vos et al., 2011: 496). An awareness of the unfair and oppressive state of social and economic relations, through the raising of consciousness, facilitates the transcendence of alienation and oppression, forming

the basis for collective agency and praxis (Poster, 1989: 61; de Vos et al., 2011: 496). Knowing who you are and what to do about it, consciousness is thus both a revolutionary and liberating force for critical theorists operating within PAR. Subjects, liberated from oppressive social relations, cease to be alienated from the world around them. Moreover, having developed an awareness of their location in the world, knowing subjects, agents of social change, are perceived having the potential to exist in a state of full consciousness with other subjects and objects and are able to determine their own social relations and existence.

For critical theorists, a potential future in which all members of society are fully conscious is the ultimate gauge against which every present must be judged. In sharp contrast to positivists, socio-economic, cultural, ideological and historical location and context are essential for critical theorists operating within PAR. In other words, the location of the subject, effects its relation to the object and vice versa. Moreover, the relationship between subject and object, far from being neutral or separated, is characterized by ongoing struggle and tension. Mystified by pervasive ideologies, the subject remains subjected and oppressed; alienated from the object and from itself. Only through the raising of consciousness is it possible for subjects to identify what is true in the world, complete consciousness for the expression of real freedom, empowerment, emancipation and social justice.

From the PAR and CER perspectives, the epistemology is that all human action is meaningful and must be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices (Usher, 1996: 18; de Vos et al., 2011: 498). These perspectives allow people to become aware of their cultural, social and historical conditioning and discover how to recreate their social and personal realities (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002: 33; de Vos et al., 2011: 498).

3.3.7 Data Instrumentation and generation

In order for data instrumentation and generation to be operationalized, the two categories of focus group interviews for both ALC108 students and facilitators and ALN108 students and facilitators were selected using both purposive and random sampling. Firstly, an advertisement for the research project involving students and

facilitators in the ALC and ALN courses throughout campus was done and posted at strategic places on campus specifying that only ten and two facilitators would be selected to participate in the research project for each group. Since many students and facilitators showed interest, as the researcher I had to apply the random sampling strategy by allocating numbers 1 to 20 for ALC students and 1 to 10 for ALC facilitators. I also allocated A to T for ALN students and A to J for ALN facilitators. Thereafter, I placed 10 numbers for male students and 10 numbers for female students in separate boxes. The same applied to the ALN group for students. For both ALC and ALN facilitators, I placed 5 numbers for male facilitators in one box and another 5 for female facilitators in another box. Thereafter, I randomly picked the numbers and each number represented a particular student or facilitator and those whose numbers or alphabets were picked constituted the two focus groups for ALC108 and ALN108.

Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) in Focus Groups were used by myself as the researcher to generate data in this study. As the researcher in this study, I possess the skills for conducting FAI interviews, hence it was easier to conduct the focus group interviews with the participants. In FAI, people talk as in a normal conversation where the researcher and participants have only one question to explore their own minds (Buskens, 2011: 1). The Free Attitude Interview developed its characteristic form during an industrial psychological research, the so-called Hawthorne Research in 1929 in the United States. The researchers discovered that when they gave the interviewees the freedom to speak, the information obtained became more relevant than when they would use a structured questionnaire (Buskens, 2011: 1).

The advantage of FAI is that people may say more than they would have said in responding to a closed questionnaire and the researcher can always probe to elicit more responses from the initial question or main question with sub-questions or follow-ups. This process helps the participants to feel free and comfortable to participate. The central research question had to do with how EALPs for first year university students could be enhanced. My simple role as a researcher was to observe and apply all the principles of an FAI. I respected the participants' opinions and showed interest on what they shared by creating a friendly and conducive environment for them to express their feelings. An FAI may be conducted between two people or as a group (Buskens, 2011: 2-3) hence in this study it was conducted in focus groups. Participants were free to

intervene and as the researcher I responded in a flexible manner. In this study, FAIs were conducted in two focus groups. I used them as person-to-person method of obtaining information from the participants. The flexibility, focus on respect and interest in listening to the participants made FAI to correlate with PAR and CER, the research methodology and theoretical framework respectively informing this study.

A tape recording system was used to record generated data. All sessions and focus groups interviews were tape recorded in the language participants were comfortable to use, which was English. For member checking, I took the verbatim transcriptions back to the participants for correct interpretation and verification. Verbatim transcriptions for the various contact sessions were made by the researcher, and in the next contact sessions, members checked if the words had been accurately transcribed and the message appropriately interpreted. According to Eruera (2010: 3 of 9) all partners must be involved in all steps of the research. Eruera posits that 'ideally the PAR group should be involved at all levels and stages of the research process.' According to Mahlomaholo and Netshandama (2010: 77); Netshandama and Mahlomaholo (2010: 113); and Sanginga et al. (2010: 696) the community should be seen as being able to interpret not solely from an advantaged viewpoint and perspective of the researcher, but also from the perspective of the participants.

3.3.8 Data analysis

Narrative analysis which is also referred to as discourse analysis by researchers such as Reissman (2008) was used to analyze data in this study. Narrative Analysis, like the name implies, centers around the study of stories or accounts – usually of individuals, but also of groups, societies, and cultures. Narrative analysis or narrative methods are a product of what was termed the “narrative turn” in social science research, which has been described and analyzed as a response to the lack of human stories in traditional social science in the 1960s. Early works delineating the historical foundations of narrative methods included works on life histories and oral narratives. The focus of these methods was life stories that described the personal experiences of poverty, inequality, sexism, and many other social and cultural experiences (Chase, 2005).

Narrative research has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). "Narrative" might be the term assigned to any text or discourse, or, it might be text used within the context of a mode of inquiry in qualitative research (Chase, 2005), with a specific focus on the stories told by individuals (Polkinghorne in Cresswell, 2006: 54). As Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) suggest, narrative can be both a method and the phenomenon of study. As a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals. Writers have provided ways for analyzing and understanding the stories lived and told. I will define it here as a specific type of qualitative design in which "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004: 17). The procedures for implementing this research consist of focusing on studying one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering (or using life course stages) the meaning of those experiences. Although narrative research originated from literature, history, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and education, different fields of study have adopted their own approaches (Chase, 2005). Therefore, narrative analysis is consistent with CER, the theoretical framework couching this study as it critically look at individuals and groups' lived experiences and empower the participants through giving them a platform to narrate and voice their own reality (Mertens, 2010: 30).

Interdisciplinary efforts at narrative research have also been encouraged by the Narrative Study of Lives annual series that began in 1993 and the journal Narrative Inquiry (Cresswell, 2006: 56). With many recent books on narrative research, it is indeed a "field in the making" (Chase, 2005: 651). In the discussion of narrative procedures, I relied on an accessible book written for social scientists called Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 48) that addresses "what narrative researchers do".

According to Clandinin and Connelly in Cresswell (2006: 55-56); Webster and Mertova (2007: 1-2); Kelly and Howie (2007: 139-141) the procedure for conducting a Narrative Analysis is as follows:

1. Determine if the research problem or question best fits narrative research. Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals.
2. Select one or more individuals who have stories or life experiences to tell, and spend considerable time with them gathering their stories through multiple types of information. Clandinin and Connelly in Cresswell (2006: 56) refer to the stories as “field texts.” Research participants may record their stories in a journal or diary, or the researcher might observe the individuals and record field-notes. Researchers may also collect letters sent by the individuals; stories about the individuals from family members; gather documents such as memos or official correspondence about the individual; or obtain photographs, memory boxes (collection of items that trigger memories), and other personal-family-social artefacts. After examining these sources, the researcher records the individuals’ life experiences. However, in this study data was generated through conversational sessions using Free Attitude Interviews where participants shared their own lived experiences of how they view themselves and EALPs for first year university students as students and facilitators.
3. Collect information about the context of these stories. Narrative researchers situate individual stories within participants’ personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place).
4. Analyze the participants’ stories, and then “restory” them into a framework that makes sense. Restorying is the process of reorganizing the stories into some general type of framework. This framework may consist of gathering stories, analysing them for key elements of the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewriting the stories to place them within a chronological sequence (Ollerenshaw & Creswell in Cresswell, 2006: 56). Often when individuals tell their stories, they do not present them in a chronological sequence. During the process of restorying, the researcher provides a causal link among ideas. This story line may include information about the setting or context of the participants’ experiences. Beyond the chronology, researchers might detail

themes that arise from the story to provide a more detailed discussion of the meaning of the story (Huber & Whelan in Creswell, 2006: 56). Thus, the qualitative data analysis may be a description of both the story and themes that emerge from it. A postmodern narrative writer, such as Czarniawska (2004), would add another element to the analysis: a deconstruction of the stories, an unmaking of them by such analytic strategies as exposing dichotomies, examining silences, and attending to disruptions and contractions.

5. Collaborate with participants by actively involving them in the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As researchers collect stories, they negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to the participants. In narrative research, a key theme has been the turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the participants in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). In this process, the parties negotiate the meaning of the stories, adding a validation check to the analysis (Creswell & Miller in Creswell, 2006: 57). Within the participant's story may also be an interwoven story of the researcher gaining insight into her or his own life. Also, within the story may be epiphanies or turning points in which the story line changes direction dramatically. In the end, the narrative study tells the story of individuals unfolding in a chronology of their experiences, set within their personal, social, and historical context, and including the important themes in those lived experiences. "Narrative inquiry is stories lived and told," said Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 20).

Given these procedures and the characteristics of narrative analysis, narrative research is a challenging approach to use. The researcher needs to generate extensive information about the participant, and needs to have a clear understanding of the context of the individual's life. It takes a keen eye to identify in the source material gathered the particular stories that capture the individual's experiences. As Edel in Creswell (2006: 57) comments, it is important to uncover the "figure under the carpet" that explains the multi-layered context of a life. Active collaboration with the participant is necessary, and researchers need to discuss the participant's stories as well as be reflective about their own personal and political background, which shapes

how they “restory” the account. Multiple issues arise in the generating, analyzing, and telling of individual stories. Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) raise these important questions: Who owns the story? Who can tell it? Who can change it? Whose version is convincing? What happens when narratives compete? As a community, what do stories do among us?

On the other hand, Riessman’s (2008) approaches to narrative analysis are four different analytic approaches: thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic/performance analysis, and visual analysis. Thematic analysis relies on categorizing accounts or aspects of accounts that are being told. Structural analysis looks in the ways in which the narratives are structured and what the language in the stories does on both the textual as well as the cultural level. Dialogic/performance analysis focuses on the difficulty in analyzing accounts that are co-constructed or performed. Lastly, visual analysis focuses on the analysis of all visual media including art, video, and digital media. However, in this study only three of Riessman’s four approaches to narrative analysis were used, namely: thematic analysis, structural analysis and dialogic/performance analysis.

Researchers can generate data for narrative analysis using any means that involves capturing an account. Common means are through video, interview, and participant observation though none of these means are mutually exclusive. There is however, a dispute amongst researchers who conduct narrative analysis about whether the product on narrative analysis should also be narrative. This relates to how stories are not merely told by the participants in research, but also by and of the researchers themselves. The degree and extent to which these stories are managed or excluded are discussed frequently as a matter of reaching the intended research audience (Clandinin & Connelly in Cresswell, 2006: 56; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007).

The dichotomies between narrative analysis and discourse analysis are blurred and subtle with the former’s focus on stories and the latter’s focus on discourse, which does not imply that specific stories or accounts are being shared. Reissman (2008) and other researchers often employ the term discourse to describe either what they are analyzing or what the accounts themselves appeal to. Therefore, the acceptability

and popularity of narrative versus discourse analysis also appears to vary across disciplinary and geographic lines. The thematic, structural, dialogic, and visual analysis embedded in narrative analysis make narrative analysis appropriate to PAR and CER as both research methodology and theoretical framework guiding this study as the focus is more on discovering knowledge in its social setting from the participants themselves as part of the community. Issues of peace, empowerment, emancipation, team spirit, transformation, equality, hope and social justice were therefore addressed and analyzed through the narrative analysis (Ledwith 2007: 591 & Mahlomaholo 2009: 226). Therefore, CER and the narrative analysis are consistent with each other and together they helped this study to achieve its aim and objectives.

As we traversed through the data generation processes and procedures, I was taken aback and astonished by the confidence, eloquence and articulation especially by student participants in both the two groups of ALC108 and ALN108. The students were free flowing and so fluent in expressing themselves during the sessions that I thought that maybe they volunteered on the basis that they are confident to express themselves in English. What surprised also was that though they were very fluent and articulate in English, they still insisted during data generation that their grammar or language usage was not good enough and they felt that their grammar needed to be upgraded in the EAL courses.

Moreover, contrary to the popular belief and narrative held by many colleagues on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS that first year students lack Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and that is why it is difficult to engage them in the mainstream courses that demand them to use Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as alluded to by Cummins (2008: 488), my experience with the participants in this study nullifies that narrative but proving that first year students do not lack BICS, but rather need support to build the CALP skills needed for their academic reading and writing.

One other interesting observation I made during the data generation processes is that though the participants always attended the sessions on time, in each and every session two or three participants requested to excuse themselves from finishing the sessions with the rest of us as they had other urgent matters to attend to.

Nevertheless, the situations were properly handled as they normally excused themselves when we were around five or ten minutes before wrapping up the sessions. For me this flexibility made the participants feel comfortable and trusted the research process itself, hence they never missed any session. Though it is upon the participants to ascertain whether they felt that the study empowered, emancipated and transformed their situations, as the researcher I consciously observed their participation and I could sense their joy and the sense of freedom that they could get the opportunity to be heard and their views considered on EALPs that affect them.

3.3.9 Ethical considerations

I wrote a proposal to two committees at the University of the Free State. After being granted permission by the Ethics Committee (*see Appendix A*) and Committee for Title Registration to pursue my PhD research, I then sought permission to involve students enrolled in EALPs (ALC108 and ALN108) and their facilitators from the manager of the Centre for Teaching and Learning on the QwaQwa Campus (*See appendix B & C*) of the university who gave me the go ahead. Thereafter, I wrote two advertisement letters and posted at strategic places designated for posting advertisements and information recruiting ALC108 and ALN108 students and facilitators respectively to volunteer participating in this study (*see Appendices D to E*). In the first sessions with ALC108 and ALN108 students and their facilitators in their separate groups, I indicated my field of research and showed them the permission letter to make them aware that the University of the Free State was aware of the research process and had given ethical clearance for the research to be undertaken. I emphasized that participants could withdraw at any stage of the research without being penalized or facing any nefarious consequences, hence affirming once more that their participation was voluntary and if they felt uncomfortable at any time during the research process, they were at liberty to withdraw their participation without any penalization.

In the next sessions with these two groups, the consent forms (*see Appendices F to G*) were read. Each of the participants from both groups had a copy at hand as the forms were read aloud by one participant who volunteered in each group. All members from both groups signed at these next sessions. As a result, all forms were signed and put together. According to van Niekerk (2009: 119) researchers have to ensure that

they receive consent forms before beginning the research process. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity of participants must be ensured by the researcher at all times (McMillan & Schumacher in De Vos et al., 2011: 366-367; Richie & Lewis, 2003: 67-68; Morris, 2006: 246). It is emphasized that researchers must ensure that the information captured is accurate and has no bias of their opinions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 140; de Vos et al., 2011: 123). Finally, the interviews transcripts from the ALC108 sessions and ALC108 sessions are also provided (*see Appendices H to I*).

3.3.10 Research site profile

QwaQwa Campus of the University of the Free State, formerly known as Uniqwa as an institution of higher education was established to serve the community of Eastern Free State, especially Qwaqwa, but as it developed, it turned out to serve all the South Africans from different walks of life, its catchment area being Northern KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State and Gauteng. Even though Uniqwa today is an integral part of the UFS, the trend of attracting students beyond the Eastern Free State and Northern KwaZulu-Natal must be continued to keep the campus vibrant and alive. Today more black students are going to historically white universities and many prefer universities of technology because they are more career-oriented. For the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS to survive, the schools in the catchment area of the Campus shall have to redouble their efforts to produce better matric results and increase the number of students with matric exemption! The establishment of Uniqwa, now the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS, has been a blessing to the people of this region and South Africa as a whole as it mostly accommodates students from mainly rural disadvantaged backgrounds (Moffett, 2007: 7). Approximately sixty percent of the student population on the Qwaqwa Campus is Zulu speaking and approximately forty percent is Sotho speaking. English Academic Literacy Programmes are offered to students who pass grade 12 with matric exemption or bachelor and have accumulated between 25 and 29 points instead of the 30 points or more needed to be admitted at the university. This group of students is expected to complete a three and four year degree in four and five years respectively as they are enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme.

3.3.11 The participants

The participants involved in the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students study were twenty students from the ALC108 and ALN108, four facilitators from the two EALPs for first year university students and myself as the researcher: 10 student participants enrolled in ALC108 and another 10 enrolled in ALN108. These participants were 10 males and 10 females and also 10 Zulu and 10 Sotho speaking. This means that for each of these two EALPs, there were five males and five females and five Zulu and five Sotho speaking participants. The two facilitators for ALC108 were all female and Sotho speaking while the ALN108 facilitators were all males, one Zulu speaking and the other Sotho speaking. The ALC108 and ALN108 students enrolled on the Qwaqwa campus of the UFS are predominantly Zulu and Sotho students, hence when the advertisement was posted at strategic place on campus for participants to volunteer, it was not a surprise that the volunteers were both Sotho and Zulu speaking who were enrolled in these EAL courses.

3.3.12 The study leader's professional background

I taught for two years as a part-time lecturer at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus from 2010 to 2011 and I have been a lecturer/researcher and Coordinator in the Unit for Academic Literacy at the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus since February 2012 to present. My interest in teaching English Academic Literacy began in 2009 when I was doing internship teaching at Riverside Language Programme for immigrants and refugees as part of my Master's Degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) in New York City, United States of America at Riverside Language Programme. Since I began working as an English Academic Literacy practitioner on the Qwaqwa Campus of the University of the Free State in 2012, I have observed and experienced how students struggle with academic reading and writing. I have heard and had conversations with colleagues who solely blame students for their lack of academic reading and writing skills. In all these blame games between and amongst academics and English academic literacy practitioners; none has ever involved the perspectives of the affected students and what they think about their own experiences of teaching, learning and assessment at the university.

As an English Academic Literacy practitioner who has perused a great deal on the works of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Gee's Discourse Analysis and Bourdieu's Cultural Reproduction amongst others, I felt that there is a dire need to engage students and hear their voices and perspectives. I felt that it would not help nor transform the plight of the students if something pragmatic and concrete is not done. Hence the birth of this PhD study focusing on tapping into the views, voices and experiences of first year university students enrolled in EALPs and their facilitators. Through the CER as a theoretical framework and PAR as a research methodology and design guiding this study, I thought that this will go a long way in enlightening both academics, English Academic Literacy practitioners and other interested stakeholders to know, understand, tap into and take action on the voices, views and experiences of first year university students enrolled in EALPs in a collaborative way to bring about the much needed transformation that will usher social justice, emancipation and empowerment to all the stakeholders involved. Furthermore, I sought to collaboratively with facilitators and students discover and shed some insight on how EALPs could be enhanced to help students improve their English academic literacy, particularly academic reading and writing. Ultimately, as an English academic literacy practitioner and researcher, I wanted to be part of the agents of change and transformation to create a conducive platform to empower both myself and participants to better understand and collectively contribute towards improving throughputs and pass rates through generating means and ways to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

3.3.12 ALC108 Students

These are 18 to 30 year old first year university students enrolled in Academic Literacy for Commerce, Education and Humanities (ALC108) faculties. Ten of them participated in this study. Five were Zulu and five were Sotho speaking. In terms of gender, five were males and five were females. These students come from rural areas of Kwazulu-Natal and Free State provinces. These students come from public schools in the rural areas that are mostly under-resourced with most under-qualified educators. Their families are working class families and most of them depend on old age pension to make ends meet at home and are mostly beneficiaries of the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

3.3.13 ALC108 Facilitators

These are English female educators who are in their late 40s with seven to eight years facilitating ALC108 course at the site where this study is undertaken. They both have more than ten years of teaching English in grade 12 in the local high schools around Qwaqwa. They are both Sotho speaking and residents of the Qwaqwa community. Qualification wise they both possess an Honours degree in Educational Leadership and Management and English Literature. The ten student participants and the two facilitators of ALC108 together with myself as the researcher had joint FAI focus group interviews as it was important for both groups of participants to share their views and generate solutions to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

3.3.14 ALN108 Students

These are 18 to 30 year old first year university students enrolled in Academic Literacy for Natural Science (ALN108) faculty. Ten of them participated in this study. Five were Zulu and five were Sotho speaking. In terms of gender, five were males and five were females.

3.3.15 ALN Facilitators

These are English male educators who are in their late 40s with seven to eight years of facilitating EALPs and three years of facilitating ALN108 as this course, unlike ALC108 was introduced in 2012. They both have more than ten years of teaching English, one teaching at a local high school and another teaching at a TVET college in Qwaqwa. One is Sotho speaking and another is Zulu speaking. Qualification wise they both have a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed) majoring in English. The ten student participants and the two facilitators of ALN108 including myself as the researcher had joint FAI focus group interviews as it was important for both groups of participants to share their views and generate solutions to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed PAR as a research methodology and design guiding this study as well as data generation procedures followed. A relationship between CER, the theoretical framework informing the study, and the PAR approach as well as Narrative Analysis as data analysis method has also been highlighted. Data instrumentation and generation sessions between the researcher and the participants were also elaborated on. The chapter closes by profiling the research site, the participants, as well as giving the research and study leader's professional background.

The next chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and discussion on how EALPs for first year university students can be enhanced.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION ON ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to enhance EALPs for first year university students at the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus. The preceding chapter presented and discussed the research methodology and design, PAR and data generation methods used in this study and locating them within the CER as the theoretical framework anchoring this study. In an attempt to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, this chapter focuses on the data presentation and analysis leading to the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

In order to systematise the presentation and analysis of data, narrative analysis is utilized as the data analysis method in this study. Subsequently, the five objectives informing this study, as discussed in the preceding chapters are used as organizing principles. Moreover, each of the constructs formulated for each objective are used to make sense of the theoretical framework guiding this study. Lastly, the literature reviewed in this study is utilized to frame data presentation and analysis through the narrative analysis.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS ALIGNED TO THE EMPIRICAL DATA JUXTAPOSED WITH THE LITERATURE

4.2.1 Challenges justifying the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

This section examines the challenges justifying the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.1.1 Module content is deemed irrelevant to students' background and life experiences

The two EALPs (ALC108 and ALN108) courses are seen as irrelevant by both facilitators and first year university students enrolled in these courses. Firstly, they argue that courses are American oriented and devoid of any of their African or South African experiences. They further raise concerns that the voices in the textbooks are American, not African and that is a serious challenge to them. The prescribed textbooks for ALC108 and ALN108 are English Encounters for both Human Sciences and the Natural World respectively. For the purpose of this study, participants from the ALC108 group are identified as Student 1 and Facilitator 1 and so forth while participants from the ALN108 group are identified as Student A and Facilitator A and so on. During the session on identifying challenges experienced by ALC108 and ALN108 students and facilitators, the following issues were raised by the participants:

Student 1 from the ALC108 had this to say:

"It says nothing about our country and there is no reason given to us why we have to be subjected to this academic torture."

Student C from the ALN108 group had this to say:

"There is a lot I do not know about Africa, let alone my country South Africa. It boggles my mind why should I make sense of this American textbook while it does not speak to my own worldview and cultural experiences."

Student G from the ALN108 group highlighted the following:

"I thought this ALN course will teach us about the science of English or scientific English, but to my surprise, it is more on reading and writing than teaching the scientific English."

Facilitator 2 from the ALC108 said the following:

"The Academic Encounters textbooks we use in the ALC and ALN classes are content and context based on American experiences. The African voices are not captured in the textbooks and this is problematic to us as facilitators."

Given the comments above, it is quite clear that the course content of ALC108 and ALN108 is a teaching and learning barrier to both facilitators and students' success in these courses as they are not fully engaged in classes due to their disapproval of these textbooks (English Encounters). Similarly, Australian, Canadian, USA and South African universities have had similar experiences. In Australia and Canada respectively, there has been lack of necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized ESL students in recent times (Baik & Greig, 2009: 401; Birell, 2006; Bretag, 2007; Department of Employment, Science & Training, 2002, 2007) that involved colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual English speaking students and ESL students (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Toohey, 2009). The experiences of students not motivated to learn due to their disapproval of the content that does not relate to their real life experiences is therefore not unique to this study as the literature suggest. For American students, the irrelevance of the module or course content led to ELL and ESL students being offered less than helpful guidance (Bunch & Endris, 2012) which led to lower teacher expectations, academic marginalization and demotivated ELL and ESL students (Harklau, 2006). In some South African universities, the irrelevance of module or course content to students' background and experiences led to high attrition and lack of success of ESL students at universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). It is quite common and part of the human nature that it becomes difficult to focus on something that one disapproves of or not interested in. On these bases, it is critical that facilitators and students' views should be solicited and considered in the process of selecting material for teaching and learning by those responsible as it affects their pedagogical experiences and success or lack of thereof. Indeed the saying that 'nothing about us without us' rings very true in this instance. This implies that students and facilitators' views should be taken into consideration during the processes of selecting materials for teaching and learning by those responsible. The next theme is EAL courses that focus on academic reading and writing than language usage or grammar

4.2.1.2 The English academic literacy courses focus on academic reading and writing than language usage or grammar

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants are of the view that these two EALPs for first year university students are focused more on reading and writing than on language usage. These participants argue that these courses are not doing justice to their academic needs as first year students and their main concern is that they need more help and support on the basics of grammar and language usage in as much as they need academic reading and writing skills together with critical thinking skills. These concerns are shared by both students and facilitators alike. To illustrate their frustrations on ALC108 and ALN108, the following participants had these to say during the session on identifying challenges they experienced with the ALC and ALN courses:

Student 4 from the ALC108 group:

“I do not know how to construct a logical simple English sentence as I was never taught how to write in my previous schools. I thought here at university I will be assisted in this ALC course only to find that I am expected to read and write reading reactions in the library without being taught the basics of how to structure an English sentence. My grammar is very horrible and I am afraid my confidence will not improve.”

On the other hand, **Student F** from the ALN108 alluded thus:

“As first year students enrolled in ALN108, we mostly come from rural schools wherein teachers taught us English in IsiZulu and SeSotho. To make matters worse, instead of being taught the basics of how to use the language English in ALN108, we are only expected to read and write more. This is stressing us because many of us are worried that our grammar is very bad. Can someone hear us and teach us the basics of English usage please?”

Facilitator A highlighted the following regarding the under-preparedness of students on language usage from high schools:

“Students come to the ALN or ALC classes under-prepared in terms of their grammar or language usage from high schools. This therefore requires us facilitators to dig deeper to help students with the language.”

Considering the above comments by the ALC108 and the ALN108 participants, it is quite lucid that these two courses are in contrast with facilitators and students’ expectations of these courses. These participants are of the opinion that an area of language usage is not emphasized in these courses while it is very fundamental and paramount for them to perform satisfactorily academically at university. This implies that the type of students enrolled in ALC108 and ALN108 need more language support than what the course/module guides suggest. Similar sentiments were shared by Australian ESL students who also expressed concerns about the level of their English language proficiency and linguistic demands of university education as most EALPs were focused on language skills like academic reading and writing than developing language usage or grammar skills (Birell, 2006a; Birell, 2006b; Birell, Hawthorne, & Richardson, 2006) while UK and Canadian ESL students experienced the emphasis of academic writing skills at the expense of language use or grammar at universities (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006; Van Dijk, 1997).

Furthermore, ELL and ESL students’ limited English proficiency in the USA has been singled out as the usual explanation for their low university participation and other academic underachievement issues (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009) while ESL students in South African universities experienced skills based EAL courses that focused more on academic reading and writing and ignored language use or grammar (Jacobs, 2005: 476). This challenge faced by ALC108 and ALN108 facilitators and students regarding students’ inadequate knowledge of basic grammatical rules need to be attended to and addressed in order to help students to successfully navigate through their first year university studies and beyond. The subsequent theme discusses the inappropriateness of time scheduled for EAL courses.

4.2.1.3 Classes for English academic literacy courses scheduled later in the evening

The participants, in particular students in both the ALC108 and ALN108 concurred that time is a big challenge for them while facilitators did not have a problem with the time scheduled for these classes. Firstly, the students' concern is that ALC108 and ALN108 classes are scheduled on the timetable from 15H00 to 17H00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, of which most of them are already tired by that time, some are even hungry, while others are unable to concentrate as they are thinking of going home as they stay off campus. Lastly, besides classes starting late at 15H00, it is de-motivating and a turnoff when facilitators and some students come 15 or 20 minutes late for class. These factors make students to have negative thoughts that maybe the course is not that important, hence it is not taken seriously by facilitators and students who come late. This in the end leads to majority of students no longer interested in attending ALC108 and ALN108 classes and their studies being adversely affected.

On the other hand, facilitators are of the view that the time scheduled for these classes is appropriate given the fact that facilitators are mostly teachers who work full time in schools and they knock off at around 14:45 hence they can only manage to attend ALC and ALN classes from 15:00. All these challenges are exacerbated by the fact that there is scarcity of highly qualified teachers with at least an honours degree in English and moreover, there is no Honours degree for English on the Qwaqwa campus. These two factors make it very problematic, hence the only available human resources the university draws from is matric or grade 12 local English educators in Qwaqwa who have a good track record in teaching English in grade 12. To further demonstrate how students and facilitators feel about time allocated to these courses, the participants uttered the following in the session to identify challenges they are experiencing in the ALC and ALN classes:

Student 1 and 8 respectively from the ALC108 group alluded to the following:

“We attend classes from 8H00 until 14H00 and by the time of ALC108 at 15H00, we are already exhausted and need nothing but rest.”

“It is true. By the time of ALC class at 15H00, most of us are already tired and hungry as we do not have money or bursaries to buy food and eat at the cafeteria.”

Student B and E from the ALN108 said the following:

“ALN108 classes start late in the evening from 15H00 to 17H00 and by that time, I am no longer in the mood of attending classes but thinking of going home to cook, eat and rest as I have been attending classes since 8H00 in the morning.”

“It is even worse that the facilitators and some students come late to the ALN classes by 15 to 20 minutes. It is discouraging and makes one to think of not attending the class completely as one cannot focus and pay attention while still being angry with some of the bad experiences in the previous classes.”

Facilitator 2 and B highlighted the following respectively:

“I am a full time Grade 12 English teacher in a High school here in Qwaqwa and I think the ALC and ALN classes are scheduled at the right time wherein we will be done with our school work and ready to assist these first year students.”

“Given the fact that the majority if not all the facilitators are professional teachers teaching English in the local High schools around Qwaqwa, I am of the view that 3pm is the most appropriate time for us to come to the university and assist these students with their language in the ALC and ALN classes”

Close analysis of the above comments by these ALC108 and ALN108 facilitators and students reveal that students are unable to cope with the academic load in their first year at university and it gets even worse when they have to attend classes until late at 15H00, while facilitators are happy and satisfied with the time scheduled for these classes. The situation students find themselves in is exacerbated by the fact that not all students can afford to buy meals in the cafeteria or have bursaries to book meals

at the student cafeteria. Another factor is that facilitators and some students come to ALC108 and ALN108 classes late by 15 to 20 minutes which is discouraging and demotivating to punctual students. Given the timetable schedules for ALC108 and ALN108 which are allocated every Tuesday and Thursday from 15H00 to 17H00, it becomes a huge challenge for students to attend and focus while they are tired, hungry, thinking of going home to cook as they mostly stay off campus and at worse, not paying attention and developing a negative attitude towards facilitators of ALC108 and ALN108 because of bad experiences they had with other lecturers in the preceding lectures. Inappropriateness of time scheduled for EAL course classes is an issue that is prevalent in Canada, USA and South Africa.

In Canada in particular, time constraints and the need for expertise to address language challenges of ESL students have been major concerns. As a result, EAL classes have been scheduled at odd times in the evening when students were already tired and lacked concentration in these classes (Jacquet, 2008) while in the USA, time constraints for ELL and ESL students forced them to work long hours which limited their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). In some South African universities, EAL courses were added on as extra subjects to an already overburdened curriculum which made it difficult for students to succeed at universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). Therefore, time allocated for EAL courses should be looked at and deliberated upon in order to positively address the plight of ESL students enrolled in EAL courses at universities. The following theme deals with the mismatch between American English content used in the textbooks and assessment done in British English.

4.2.1.4 The confusion brought by English academic literacy courses content which is in American English, but assessment is in British English

The participants seem to be very concerned and worried that the content and curriculum in ALC108 and ALN108 is American oriented and context-based, but the assessment is British oriented. This according to the ALC108 and ALN108 participants is frustrating and confusing as they do not know whether they should follow the American writing style or British style. The participants are of the view that this is a

factor that is crucial to their academic success and it needs to be clarified as early as possible and be included in the course guides as well. To give credence to this narrative, the following participants' views bear reference and these are the views the participants raised in the session to identify challenges experienced in the ALC and ALN courses:

Student 4 from the ALC108 group:

"We read text that is written in American English, but we are assessed in British English. This is confusing because our work is marked wrong spelling when we use American English. What is the use of us using American textbooks, but we are assessed through British English?"

Student C from the ALN108 group:

"My work is always marked wrong but I spell the words exactly the way they are written in the textbook. Actually, why are we not told which English is correct for us to use? Why American English is marked wrong in our work, but we use American textbooks to learn? This is frustrating!"

Facilitator 2 from the ALC108 group alluded to the following:

"The American English spelling is challenging and confusing to students. Our students just like us have been taught throughout their schooling years using British English and all of a sudden, they have to switch to American content now at the university. We are also confused as to whether we should mark the American spelling wrong or accept both American and British spelling on students' written work."

The comments of these participants speak to the core of ALC108 and ALN108 curricula. This is a challenge that is at the centre of student success or failure and needs urgent attention. This aspect needs to be captured in the course guides of ALC108 and ALN108 so that students are not confused. The facilitators are confused and their confusion is justified as they are working at a satellite campus where they do not have space to contribute to the courses they are teaching and they only receive

fully packaged material from the main campus. Those responsible for choosing material in the main campus are the ones who enjoy the privilege of deciding what must be included in the course material. It is more of a matter of whether both American and British standards of English spelling are both accepted or there must be consistency in terms of selecting material and textbooks for students. If the textbooks are American, the assessment has to be consistent with the textbooks and the same should apply when textbooks are British. The literature consulted and reviewed in this study has not touched on the issue of mismatch between the content of the textbooks written in American English juxtaposed with the assessment of the same course content in British English. Therefore, this theme is a unique contribution to knowledge generation. The succeeding theme focuses on lecturer or facilitator behaviour regarding competence, pastoral role and facilitator enthusiasm.

4.2.1.5 Lecturer behaviour

According to participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 focus groups, there are certain characteristics that seem to be detrimental to conducive teaching and learning in the classroom. Facilitator competence, pastoral role and enthusiasm are the three elements that the participants from both ALC108 and ALN108 emphasized as very important to students to successfully navigate throughout their first year university studies and beyond.

4.2.1.5.1 Facilitator competence

According to the participants, facilitators who come to class looking confused and stammering when talking to students in class exposes them as incompetent ALC108 and ALN108 facilitators. The participants feel that there must be something wrong with a facilitator who communicates with everyone outside the classroom without stammering and only stammers when in the classroom. They further asserted that it is a turn-off for a facilitator to consistently misspell words and especially commonly used words in English. This makes the facilitator to look bad and unprofessional. The participants are convinced that these elements that deal with the competency of the facilitator regarding teaching must be addressed urgently as they have the propensity to render the ALC108 and ALN108 classes fruitless and more like a circus. The current

arrangement makes it difficult for students to be convinced that facilitators are properly trained and competent given the fact that facilitators do not have a say in what constitutes the course material. This is problematic in the sense that it suggests that the institution employs people that it does not have confidence in their competency to design course material for the courses they teach. In a session that identified facilitator incompetence as a challenge in the ALC and ALN courses, participants alluded to the following:

Student 8: *“Some facilitators and lecturers look scared and afraid when they come to the class. They stammer and appear to be incompetent and not knowing their story. This is a turnoff to some of us first year students.”*

Student G: *“Some facilitators and lecturers consistently misspell simple common words in English and as first year students; we have to constantly correct their spelling when they write on the board. Sometimes we are even ashamed to correct them as it is embarrassing for us to correct our lecturers on simple spelling for common English words”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators some of us lack skills in using technological devices like PowerPoint presentations and this may put us in a negative light in the eyes of students as they are digital natives.”*

According to Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 62) policies in Education, one of the seven roles of an educator is Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist. The role is further elaborated as follows, starting with the former extracted from Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and the latter extracted from MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 58, 62):

The educator will be well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures relevant to the discipline, subject, learning area, phase of study, or professional or occupational practice. The educator will know about different approaches to teaching and learning (and, where appropriate, research and management), and how these may be used in ways which are appropriate to the learners and the context. The educator will have a well-developed understanding of the knowledge appropriate to the specialism.

Recently, MRTEQ Policy (2015: 62) as revised in 2014 allude to the following out of the ten competences envisaged from newly qualified educators with regard to being specialists in their own subjects, learning areas and fields:

- 1. Newly qualified teachers must have sound subject knowledge.*
- 2. Newly qualified teachers must know how to teach their subject(s) and how to select, determine the sequence and pace of content in accordance with both subject and learner needs.*
- 4. Newly qualified teachers must have highly developed literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) skills.*
- 6. Newly qualified teachers must be knowledgeable about the school curriculum and be able to unpack its specialised content, as well as being able to use available resources appropriately, so as to plan and design suitable learning programmes.*

Similarly, the need for expertise to help ESL students with EAL courses has been an issue of major concern to universities in Canada (Jacquet, 2008). The development of professional practices for educators in schools and at universities is a continuing process that lasts for the duration of the career of a committed teacher or lecturer. Continuous professional development is the process by which teachers reflect on their competences, keep them up to date and develop them further (Teacher Education, 2010: 3). Smith and Gillespie (2007: 216–218) state that professional development can be effective if it is designed to be of longer duration – longer-term professional development permits more time for teachers to learn about their own practice, especially if it includes follow-up training, focuses on subject-matter knowledge and includes a strong emphasis on analysis and reflection, rather than just demonstrating techniques. It should also include a variety of teaching activities and should encourage teachers from the same institution to participate together in teaching opportunities.

Furthermore, it should focus on quality and features of professional development, rather than on format or type of training. In the case of this study, eligibility for one to

qualify to facilitate these EAL courses is at a minimum, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with English major up to third year of study. This is also a major concern in as far as English teaching expertise is concerned especially at first year university level as the majority of the facilitators appointed possess the minimum qualification of a BA degree with English up to third year of study. The challenge to attract and appoint more EAL facilitators remains distant given the fact that currently the campus where this study is undertaken does not offer post graduate degrees in English.

To address this challenge, qualified teachers of English with three years and above teaching English in grade 12 with excellent results are preferred to overcome the major concern of English teaching expertise at university level. Ongoing training and support for EAL facilitators as per their needs is provided before and after class visits to enrich their expertise. All these efforts to empower facilitators are meant to also amongst others fulfil Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and recently MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 59, 62) policy imperatives for educators teaching in South Africa to be Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialists. The sub-theme that follows addresses the pastoral role of a facilitator or lecturer.

4.2.1.5.2 Pastoral role

The participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 groups are all in unison regarding the role of a facilitator in the classroom who is supposed to act in 'in loco parentis' or as a second parent or guardian. The participants are deeply concerned with facilitators who are not sensitive to student diversity and do not treat students equally. The participants are worried about facilitators who are impatient and therefore implicating that they do not care about first year students. In a session that identified lack of pastoral role on the part of facilitators as a challenge in the ALC and ALN courses, the participants alluded to the following:

Student 2: *"We need lecturers and facilitators who understand where we are coming from in terms of our educational background and therefore willing to*

take us by the hand and guide us. We need more lecturers who are patient with first year students and treating like their own children”

Student H: *“We really need facilitators and lecturers who are sensitive to student diversity and treat all their students equally with respect and dignity”*

Facilitator 1: *“As facilitators we need to show in action and deeds that we care about the well-being of our students and try our best in motivating them in each and every class that they can do it and in case they need any kind of help, we are more than willing to go the extra mile in helping them to succeed in their studies.”*

According to Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 62) policies in Education, one of the seven roles of an educator at any schooling level in South Africa is a community, citizenship and pastoral role. This role is further elaborated as follows with the former extracted from Norms and Standards (2000) and the latter extracted from MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 62):

The educator will practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator will uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education.

Recently, the MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 62) out of the ten competences an educator must possess allude to the following about the pastoral role of an educator in South African schools and universities:

3. Newly qualified teachers must know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly.

7. Newly qualified teachers must understand diversity in the South African context in order to teach in a manner that includes all learners. They must also be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these.

10. Newly qualified teachers must have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession.

It is therefore of paramount importance that EAL facilitators as educators of first year university students enrolled in EAL courses are aware of their pastoral role when dealing with students and also, by doing so they will be responding to Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 62) policy imperatives for educators in South Africa to play their community, citizenship and pastoral role. The succeeding sub-theme addresses the lack of facilitator enthusiasm in ALC and ALN classes.

4.1.2.5.3 Facilitator enthusiasm

The participants from both the ALC108 and ALN108 find it difficult to focus in the classroom wherein the facilitator is not hands on and at worst, inactive. Facilitators who are not interactive are a serious turn-off to first year students. Participants said that they do not prefer disengaged and inactive classrooms. They further elaborated that all these elements lead to a situation wherein students no longer attend such classes and even when they attend, they do not pay attention in class because the facilitator is not appealing to the students. ESL students lack requisite language skills leading them to struggle with mainstream courses. This frustrates academic teaching staff. Language and academic support for ESL students and its effectiveness are any in issue of major concern to many scholars. Colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual English speaking students and ESL students. Participants said

the following in the session to identify facilitators' lack of enthusiasm as a challenge in the ALC and ALN classes:

Student D: *“Some facilitators are passive and not interactive. The facilitator as the leader and manager of the class must be active, passionate and lead by example. If the facilitator looks bored and uninterested, students are likely to switch off and not benefit from the lecture”*

Student 6: *“Most of us begin to gradually bunk a class that is uninteresting, passive and boring. The facilitator must be energetic, enthusiastic and passionate about the lecture. He or she should inspire confidence in first year students to want to learn more in their course”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators we must at all times show enthusiasm and commitment to our work with passion. Students must never suspect that we are disinterested in what we teach or else they will begin to not take us and the course serious! We have to be energetic and exemplary in class for students to take us and the courses we teach serious.”*

According to the MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 58, 62) educator or lecturer enthusiasm is and must be displayed in the following manner:

10. Newly qualified teachers must have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession.

11. Newly qualified teachers must be able to reflect critically on their own practice, in theoretically informed ways and in conjunction with their professional community of colleagues in order to constantly improve and adapt to evolving circumstances.

Given the above views by both students and facilitators, it is therefore quite critical that facilitators must put aside any distractions when entering their classes and display that positive energy towards teaching in order to positively influence students to focus and take both the facilitator and the course serious for their own academic progress. The

subsequent theme deals with student behaviour as a challenge in the ALC and ALN classes.

4.2.1.6 Student behaviour

Participants raised the issue of students not being interested in learning or being at the university and students displaying negative attitudes towards the lecturers and the course as very fundamental and crucial to academic success or lack of in their first year and their entire undergraduate studies. The participants asserted that some of their classmates are not interested in studying or being at the university as some of them are forced by parents to study while they are not interested. These types of students are normally disruptive in class or completely do not participate in class discussions and all the activities that foster classroom student engagement. On the other hand, there are also some students who have negative attitudes towards lecturers and certain courses. This group of students may share the same attributes as those who are not interested in being at the university or studying, or they may be having their own personal and family challenges at home and as a result, they end up developing negative attitudes towards certain lecturers and courses as their experiences in those classes reminds them of their bad experiences at home and communities they come from.

There is underachievement of ELLs and ESL students at university due to their limited English proficiency. There is a low post-secondary education participation for ELLs and ESL students. These factors led to high attrition of ESL and ELLs students at universities in the USA. Lack of helpful guidance from the college towards ESL and ELLs was one of the contributing factors for students behaving in an unfriendly, unacceptable and negative way (Bunch & Endris, 2012). The need for ESL and ELLs to work for long hours also limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Labelling of students (ELLs and ESL) in deficit terms leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization, which leads to demotivated ELLs and ESL students (Harklau, 2010). In the session to identify student behaviour as a challenge in the ALC and ALN classes, the following views were shared by the participants:

Student 10: *“Some of our classmates are not interested in learning or being at the university. Some become disruptive in the class because of a number of reasons ranging from bad experiences from their homes and communities, being at the university just to make their parents happy and just having a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course”*

Student F: *“Some students like showing off in class and try to bully other students and the lecturer. Such students need serious and urgent psychological assistance from the powers that be at the university”*

Facilitator 2: *“As a facilitator, I see some students seem to be disengaged, too relaxed and not concentrating in class. Some are more obsessed with their cell phones and it becomes a distraction as they are focused on social networks than what is being done in class.”*

Given these views regarding student misbehaviour in the ALC and ALN classes, it is crucial that ground rules be established and culprits and perpetrators be brought to book and where possible, mechanisms be put in place to remedy such misbehaviours. This implies that both students and facilitators should respect the university space that they are given to fulfil their pedagogical obligations and as such, both should establish ground rules to address anomalies in the classrooms. Once ground rules are established, they have to be adhered to and those who do not adhere to the rules have to face the consequences as per the ground rules without favour. The next theme focuses on lack of institutional leadership and support as a challenge for the ALC and ALN courses.

4.2.1.7 Lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants argue that they are not given the necessary support, leadership and guidance by the university management ranging from campus management down to the classroom management. They cited lack of collaborative relationships between ALC/ALN108 and lecturers teaching mainstream courses, the challenges they faced with time-table clashes and the manner in which management

handled their problems as clear signs that they are not given the necessary support, guidance and leadership they need to successfully navigate through their first year university studies until graduation.

The participants strongly argue that lack of collaborative relationships between ALC/ALN108 facilitators and lecturers teaching mainstream courses are detrimental to their success. What appeared to be a tragedy to the participants is that even lecturers working in the same building did not know each other and that was the final blow that convinced the participants that they do not get the support and guidance they need in their first year at university. The issue that stressed the participants the most was time-table clashes between ALC/ALN108 and other mainstream courses. In this particular issue, the participants felt that they were totally abandoned and left to address the problem of timetable clashes on their own even though it was not caused by them. They are of the view that they were betrayed and hard done by the university management and all those responsible for the first year registration. The participants are of the opinion that they were tortured in their first year and frustrated instead of receiving proper support, guidance and leadership from the university management. Lastly, the participants are concerned about the manner in which their problems were attended to by university authorities.

The participants are concerned that management had a negative and bad attitude towards addressing their problems and that made them to feel unwelcomed and uncomfortable being at the university. They are of the view that they were treated as if the university is doing them a big favour for them to enrol at the university. Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students and lack of helpful guidance from the college towards ESL and ELLs showed lack of institutional leadership and support for these students in both Australian and USA universities respectively Bunch & Endris, 2012;) Labelling and framing ESL and ELLs students in deficit terms leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization, which lead to demotivated ELLs and ESL students in both South African and USA universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476; Harklau, 2010). All these demonstrate a sheer and clear lack of institutional leadership and support that should be given to these first year

English academic literacy students as they mostly lack academic success at universities and ultimately, their high failure rate leads to high attrition of these ESL and ELLs students. In the session to identify lack of institutional leadership and support as a challenge to ALC and ALN courses, the following views were expressed by the participants:

Student 5: *“As first year students we get frustrated with timetable clashes and to make matters worse, the university authorities are unable to provide us with the necessary leadership and support we need especially during registration”*

Student I: *“Some authorities refuse to help first years and as a result, first year students are taken from pillar to post on minor issues that could have been resolved by the said authorities in the first place. It appears that some university authorities have a negative attitude towards first year students and this does not help the dire situation first year students find themselves in”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators we get confused as well to realize that some lecturers in the mainstream courses decide to take our venues while the timetable is clear that the venue is supposed to be utilized at that time by the ALC or ALN class. Some even go to an extent of scheduled tests during our periods in order to frustrate students as to whether they must attend our classes or write that mainstream test.”*

On the basis of the above views by the ALC and ALN participants, it is quite lucid that something somewhere is not properly attended to by the powers that be at the university to address these challenges experienced by students and facilitators in the ALC and ALN courses. A solution has to be arrived at urgently to address the plight of facilitators and students in the ALC and ALN courses. Since proponents of CER advocate that research should be fundamentally critical about individuals and groups' lived experiences (Carr & Kemmis, 2005: 353; Mahomaholo & Natshandama, 2010: 40), the conversational style adopted in this study was that of mutual respect and recognition of equality (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 226) despite my status as a researcher, lecturer and coordinator of EALPs for first year university students in the campus

where this study was conducted. In order for the participants to arrive at the challenges discussed above, CER as a theoretical framework couching this study created a humane dialogue that was characterized by love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and above all, critical thinking on their lived experiences of challenges that justified the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students (Nouri, 2014: 79). Therefore, the humane dialogue that existed during data generation sessions was consistent with CER and the narrative analysis.

The need for the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students may be justified on the following grounds: module/course content deemed irrelevant to students' background and immediate life experiences; EAL course focus on academic reading and writing while neglecting language use or grammar, EAL classes scheduled later in the evening when many students are already tired and struggle to concentrate in class, confusion caused by disparities between EAL courses content and assessment wherein the former is done in American English and the latter is administered in British English, lecturer/facilitator behaviour which include facilitator's level of competence, how the facilitator plays his or her pastoral role in the class and the extent to which facilitators demonstrate enthusiasm and interest in their work, student behaviour that is antisocial, anti-learning and disruptive, and last but not least, perceived or real lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support for first year university students.

The next objective focuses on the components and aspects necessary to address challenges towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students as discussed in the preceding section.

4.2.2 The components and aspects necessary to address challenges towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students

4.2.2.1 Provision of background about the textbook before classes commence or provision of localized textbooks

Both ALC108 and ALN108 participants share similar views and sentiments regarding content they are taught in these two EALPs for first year university students. First and foremost, participants concur that localized textbooks are a necessity if not an imperative for them to engage meaningfully with the ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks. This according to both groups of participants is critical to their academic success at first year university level in particular. However, participants also concur that in cases where it is not easy to access localized textbooks for both ALC108 and ALN108, special attention and effort must be given to the provision of background knowledge about the said American or western textbooks to familiarize and conscientise first year students with the contents of these textbooks and to prepare them thoroughly before commencement of classes. This could be done in the first week of classes for convenience purposes.

In a nutshell, there is a consensus amongst ALC108 and ALN108 participants that though localized textbooks are preferred by first year university students, it is still vital that a brief background introduction to the said western or American textbooks should be provided to students prior commencement of classes to acquaint them with the contents of the textbooks as they are mostly unfamiliar to the students' lived experiences. Lecturers/facilitators' consciousness and understanding of embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions help in this process of providing the requisite background about the textbook (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007). This means that there must be clear and well planned saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization (Sleeter, 2004).

According Ambrose et al., (2010: 13-14) students' prior knowledge about the course can help or hinder learning in the following manner: firstly, students always bring along some knowledge gained in other courses or daily life to the classroom. This knowledge includes facts, concepts, models, perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes, some of

which is accurate, complete, and appropriate for the context, some inaccurate, insufficient for learning requirements of the course, or simply inappropriate for the context. As students bring this knowledge in our classrooms, it influences how they filter and interpret incoming information. Secondly, if they do not draw on relevant prior knowledge or that knowledge is inactive, it may not facilitate the integration of new knowledge they are supposed to learn. Moreover, if students' prior knowledge is insufficient for a task or learning situation, it may fail to support new knowledge, whereas if it is inappropriate for the context or inaccurate, it may actively distort or impede new learning. In the session to identify the aspects and components necessary to address the challenge of American textbooks, the participants shared the following views:

Student 4: *“The ALC108 textbook is American in content, language and context. These factors make it quite challenging for us first year students to acquaint and familiarize ourselves the American content, context and language found in the textbook. Provision of background information about these textbooks at the beginning of the semester or year is crucial.”*

Student 7: *“To worsen the situation first year students are confronted with regarding the American textbook, nobody including course guides compilers and facilitators thoroughly prepare and introduce the ALC108 textbooks to students before the commencement of classes. Localized textbooks must be preferred where possible”*

Student B: *“The ALN108 American textbook does not speak to our own African life experiences as first year students. The choice of a textbook that is African in content, language and context will make learning more authentic and relevant to our own lived experiences”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators we are also worried by the American textbooks that are devoid of our own African or South African contexts and voices! We find it quite disturbing that at this time and age even at this level (university) our own lived experiences are not valued. Students need affirmation of their own values, cultures, experiences and so forth and unfortunately, these American*

textbooks are not doing justice to all these important factors. We need an urgent solution to this crisis.”

The views expressed above demonstrate that both students and facilitators are of the view that this is not a train smash. This implies that there are tangible and practical solutions to overcoming this challenge of an American textbook that does not speak to the experiences of both facilitators and students. They are very clear that preparation before commencement of classes and where possible localized textbooks should be made available so as to empower students to fully benefit from these courses. The subsequent theme deals with creating harmony between teaching academic reading and writing and language usage or grammar.

4.2.2.2 Creating harmony between teaching academic reading and writing and language usage

ALC108 and ALN108 participants are concerned about the focus on reading and writing than language usage. They are of the view that their language usage is very low and their expectations are clearly not met when they arrive at university from high schools because ALC108 and ALN108 classes focus more on reading and writing than language usage. The participants suggest that language usage activities or exercises must be provided for first year students to improve their language usage abilities in addition to academic reading and writing. The ALC108 and ALN108 participants strongly argue that both the Basic Education (Grade R to Grade 12) and Higher Education (University) are doing a disservice to the students who are learning through English as a First Additional Language especially students from rural communities by ignoring language usage and focusing more on academic reading and writing.

Therefore, participants are convinced that a proper balance of teaching academic reading and writing coupled with language usage activities linked to academic reading and writing will help them a great deal in bolstering their confidence in using English and also help them to navigate successfully throughout their university studies. In the UK, universities shared a common understanding and assumptions of assignment titles between students and tutors; tutor feedback on students' feedback, and the importance of students' own identity as writers rather than acquisition of academic

writing skills in order to create harmony between reading, writing and language use (Lea & Street, 1998: 170; Bailey, 2007: 10-11; Snow, Uccelli, Olson & Torrance, 2009: 115-116). In the session to identify components and aspects necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, participants alluded to the following:

Student 2: *“As first year students at this university, we are very worried that both ALC108 and ALN108 are more focused and emphasize academic reading and writing skills, at the expense of treating language usage or grammar”*

Student 9: *“Some of us if not many first year students come from very poor rural schools with poor educational outcomes everywhere. We get frustrated when the university is not focusing on grammar aspects that we lack and instead focus on academic reading and writing”*

Student E: *“I do not have confidence to speak or write in English because I know my grammar is horrible. If the teaching of academic reading and writing skills can be taught parallel with language usage, it will help a lot in improving my academic literacy and my confidence to speak and write in English”*

Facilitator 1: *“As facilitators we have realized that our students come to class under-prepared in as far as language usage is concerned given the type of schools they attended. We need to find a way to dig deeper in our teaching to address students’ grammar challenges”*

Considering the above views by participants, it is crucial that facilitators must infuse grammar teaching alongside the teaching of academic reading and writing in order to assist students to cope well with their university studies. The next theme addresses the reduction of reading reactions from eight to five per semester with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback.

4.2.2.3 Reduction of reading reactions from eight to five with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback

It is the view of ALC108 and ALN108 participants that writing eight reading reactions and taking the best four reading reactions for formal assessment at the end of the semester is not helpful to their learning process. Participants suggest that four or five reading reactions are reasonable and necessary to be recorded as formal assessment. They think that more focused, lucid and detailed feedback on reading reactions and paragraph writing is necessary than writing many reading reactions that do not allow facilitators to provide clear and detailed feedback on both reading reactions and paragraphs. All in all, both participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 groups agree that instead of giving many reading reactions that half of them would not form part of the final continuous assessment, special attention and focus must be given to providing clear, detailed and quality feedback on reading reactions and paragraphs.

Facilitators on the other hand concur with the students in terms of reducing the number of reading reactions and focusing more on detailed feedback on paragraphs. In addition, they are of the view that there must be varied assessment strategies like the provision of opportunities for students to write testimonials, obituaries, letters, etc. The participants are convinced that the reduction of reading reactions to at least four or five per semester will assist in improving their English academic literacy prowess and their academic success as first year university students. In the session to identify components and aspects to enhance EALPs for first year university students, participants raised the following issues:

Student H: *“Writing eight reading reactions per semester while only the best four will be recorded seem to be unhelpful for us students. It would help a lot if the number of reading reactions is reduced from eight to four or five per semester which will all be recorded”*

Student 1: *“Reduction of eight reading reactions to four per semester may allow more focused and detailed feedback from the facilitator for students to work on and concretely improve their academic writing skills”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators we are of the view that instead of students writing reading reactions and paragraphs, they rather write varied assessment*

activities like testimonials, obituaries, letters, etc. as these genres are important for students to know how to write them”

The aforesaid issues are quite clear that the participants share the same views regarding the reduction of reading reactions written per semester, more detailed feedback on paragraph writing while facilitators in particular emphasized the need to have a variety of assessment like writing obituaries, testimonials, letters, etc. in addition to writing of reading reactions, paragraphs and essays throughout the year. The subsequent theme focuses on providing assurance and clarity to students at the beginning of the year that though an American textbook is utilized, assessment requires them to write in British English.

4.2.2.4 Providing assurance and clarity at the beginning of the year that both British and American English are acceptable or one is acceptable

Participants for ALC108 and ALN108 are concerned about the confusion between the British Standard English and American Standard English. Their main concern and worry is that American textbooks are used in both ALC108 and ALN108 while assessment is not clear whether these two courses are assessed using the American Standard English, British Standard English or both are acceptable. This is more confusing to students as they are used to and familiar with the British Standard English from their Basic Education experiences and when they arrive at university, they encounter a mix of British and American Standard English. This distinction of British and American Standard English varieties need to be clarified for students from the onset by the facilitators and lecturers. Participants are convinced that if this matter of the confusion between British and American Standard English varieties can be clarified earlier especially at the beginning of each semester, it would go a long way in assisting students to do well academically and improve their mastery of both

British and American English Standard varieties or the preferred one. Both ALC108 and ALN108 participants need assurance from the beginning that both British and American Standard English varieties are acceptable or one is acceptable so that they would not be unfairly penalized for using one variety over the other. There must be explicitness of modularity, assessment, and university procedures on student writing

at an institutional level as was the case in UK universities. This should be coupled with ongoing training of academic staff both discipline specialists and English academic literacy facilitators or practitioners as was done in the UK universities. Lecturers' consciousness and understanding of embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions assisted lecturers to provide assurance and clarity to students in the UK universities (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007). In the session to identify components and aspects for enhancing EALPs for first year university students, participants raised the following issues:

Student B: *"It is confusing and frustrating for us as first year students to use the American textbook for learning, but we are assessed through the British English"*

Student 6: *"We do not know which English Standard is academically acceptable in our writing or whether both the American and British Standard English are acceptable as it is not said nor stated anywhere in the course guides"*

Student G: *"Some form of communication both in the course guides and verbally at the beginning of the year providing clarity on which English Standard is acceptable for our academic written tasks will help us as first year students"*

Facilitator A: *"As facilitators, the American textbooks are a challenge to us as well especially with spelling as they differ with the British English textbooks we are familiar with. No wonder it is frustrating to students as we mark their work using the British English spelling, not American English as the course guides are silent on whether both British and American spelling are acceptable or one is acceptable. Clarity on which one is acceptable should be stated from the onset and be included in the course guides."*

Analysing the views raised above by ALC and ALN participants, it is quite obvious and lucid that the participants, both students and facilitators are concerned about how to address the issue of American English textbooks being used while assessment is done using British English spelling. Indeed this matter need to be cleared from the beginning

when classes commence and be clearly stated in the course guides to avoid confusion on the part of both facilitators and students. The succeeding theme addresses an inviting facilitator or lecturer behaviour as a way of enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.2.5 Inviting facilitator or lecturer behaviour

ALC108 and ALN108 participants prefer a facilitator or lecturer who is interactive and hands on. A passive lecturer or facilitator is a total turnoff for these groups of participants. These participants view a lecturer or facilitator as a leader and manager in the classroom who is supposed to be enthusiastic and energetic. If the facilitator is passive and seems uninterested, that will impact negatively on the students and their participation in the classroom. They also prefer a facilitator who collaborates with other lecturers from other faculties to improve academic reading and writing for first year university students. The participants in this study value these types of collaborations amongst lecturers with English academic literacy facilitators to have a shared and common understanding of how certain genres are written in different departments and faculties to avoid students' confusion.

According to these participants, an interactive facilitator who collaborates with other lecturers from other departments and faculties to improve students' academic reading and writing is a dynamic facilitator that they prefer and feel motivated to achieve more academically when they encounter such facilitators and lecturers in their different classes. The facilitator should possess enthusiasm, competence and pastoral responsibility in order to make students to have a sense of belonging and feel welcomed in class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81).

Cornelius-White, Cornelius-White, Motschnig-Pitrik and Figl (2013: 1) allude to the following points regarding what invitational education or Person-Centered Education (PCE) is about: Person-Centered Education (PCE) or invitational education is an approach to education, which hypothesizes that people learn and teach best when reciprocally facilitated with empathy, warmth, and genuineness. It grew from the

person-centered theory and research with counselling. Empathy refers to an experience of understanding by one person of the feelings, meanings, and goals of the experiences of another. Empathy is always uniquely experienced with each person. Understanding a specific person's learning style means accommodating to these individual and cultural differences. Warmth is an unconditional positive regard, respect for, or acceptance of another's experience. Genuineness refers to honesty within a person of that person's own experience. It is a congruence in which a person is not distorting or denying his or her own experiences and being "real" with others.

Together, the three attitudes form an interpersonal approach of establishing respectful, positive relationships between students and teachers (i.e. how to effectively care). Its goal is broad-actualization of individuals and their systems. Cognitive, behavioural, and affective outcomes are sought. In addition to the traditional affective and behavioural outcomes from the therapy research, the largest PCE researchers in the USA, Dave N. Aspy and Flora N. Roebuck, also conceptualized PCE to include facilitation of critical thinking behaviour (Cornelius-White, Cornelius-White & Motschnig-Pitrik, 2013: 1). According to Rogers in Cornelius-White, Cornelius-White, Motschnig-Pitrik and Figl (2013: 1), "Significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feelings, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning. When we learn in that way, we are whole".

Ongoing training of facilitators helps in further developing their class facilitation skills and creating a good rapport between the facilitator and students as indicated in the UK universities. All these will lead to facilitators treating students in fair manner and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs, as shown in UK universities (Sleeter, 2004). In the session that identified inviting lecturer or facilitator behaviour as a component and aspect necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following views were alluded to by the participants:

Student 5: *"An interactive and energetic facilitator makes me not to think about missing the class. A passive facilitator does not inspire us as first year students to attend such a class"*

Student D: *“A facilitator who collaborates and share their academic reading and writing expertise with lecturers in the mainstream are very helpful to us first year students”*

Student C: *“An interactive facilitator will know all the colleagues in the same floor or building as a starting point for more academic interactions to help first year students with their academic reading and writing”*

Facilitator 2: *“As facilitators we need to give students individual attention more especially those we see that they are lagging behind. In as far as reading and writing are concerned; we need to collaborate with lecturers in the mainstream to share expertise on academic reading and writing for the benefit of our students.”*

Given the views raised above by students and participants, it therefore behoves facilitators to go the extra mile in attending to students individually and also creating collaborative and academic relationships with lecturers in the mainstream to share expertise on academic reading and writing so that there is commonality between what facilitators teach and what mainstream lecturers expect from their students' written work. The following theme deals with acceptable student behaviour in class as a component and aspect necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.2.6 Acceptable student behaviour in class

Participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 are of the view that facilitators and lecturers are making a big mistake by referring to first year university learners as students. They are of the opinion that at first year university level they are still 'learners' and need a lot of support and scaffolding to adapt and adjust to the university's academic and social environment before they can reach the status of being 'students'. The participants in this study argue that this label of first year university entrants as 'students' instead of 'learners' makes it difficult for facilitators and lecturers to provide the necessary support and guidance to first year 'learners' as they treat them as

'students' who are at a level of being able to study on their own, instead of learners who need guidance and support as new entrants at university. Furthermore, students are diverse and bring with them diverse languages, cultures, age, experiences, language abilities, confidence, and attitudes towards university, lecturers, courses and so forth. As a result of these multitudes of factors, participants from both the ALC108 and ALN108 are of the view that lecturers and the university management can play a critical and a very important role in guiding, motivating and directing students to positively focus on their studies especially at first year university level.

The participants in this study are convinced that if lecturers and facilitators can start treating first year university students as learners and together with university management provide the necessary guidance, support and direction to first year university students, much can be achieved academically by first year university students. Facilitators also share the same sentiments as students that at first year level students should be treated as 'learners' and be given the necessary support and guidance they so desperately need before overloading them with the expectations we normally have for students. Student behaviour and campus experiences have an important bearing on college attainment (Alderman, 2006). This is one of the reasons why students want to feel a sense of belonging in class as was the case in some South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). All these require a skilled facilitator who is enthusiastic, competent and plays his or her pastoral role in class. Therefore, clear and bold steps must be taken and communicated lucidly to all campus stakeholders and in particular lecturers and facilitators framing EAL students in positive terms, as opposed to deficit terms as confirmed by USA universities. In the session that identified acceptable student behaviour in class as a component and aspect necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the participants highlighted the following:

Student 4: *"As first year students we are of the view that at this stage we are still learners and not yet students. So, we would prefer that facilitators and lecturers should not expect too much from us and rather give us more support and guidance"*

Student A: *“Most of us first year students come from very under resourced and bad schools wherein to some of us it is a miracle that we have been enrolled at this university. We never thought we would reach this far. We just need a little bit of patience in this first year so that we can adapt and adjust to university life and begin to be students in the second year”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators, given our experience of teaching these English academic literacy courses over the years, we have observed that we are expecting too much from these students instead of giving them more and build their foundation to cope well at the university. Indeed, we must begin to treat them as ‘learners’ rather than students in their first year and dig deeper to help them grasp the basics of language usage, reading and writing amongst other skills we teach them at first year.”*

According to the views expressed above by participants, it is quite clear that first year university students can be shocked and frustrated when they encounter academic demands at university. This therefore requires facilitators and all those lecturers teaching first year students to be patient and dig deeper in order to prepare students and build their academic foundation. It appears that this way will help in nurturing acceptable student behaviour in class as students will be academically oriented within their disciplines in their first years than it is currently done. Treating them as learners rather than students seems to be the way to go for these students to thrive academically especially in their first year. The succeeding theme focuses on improved institutional leadership and support as a component and aspect necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.2.7 Improved institutional leadership and support

ALC108 and ALN108 participants in this study assert that institutional leadership and support for first year university students is crucial to their academic success at university. Participants from both these groups argue that leadership and support from various levels at university especially on academic issues are very important. Starting with lecturers and facilitators providing leadership and support in their respective classes to departmental heads, faculty heads and institutional leadership regarding

academic matters. All these leadership levels are crucial to the success of first year university students. Participants appeal that there must be mechanisms and structures in place to provide leadership and support to first year university students at different levels of management in order to make the experiences of first year university students worthwhile and fulfilling. Bottom-up approach style of institutional management is necessary as indicated in Australian universities (Evans et al., 2009: 602).

Also, whole-of-university initiatives: which include coordinated and developed plan of action; processes for identifying and recognizing good practice; funding to develop initiatives at the local level; and authentic support from a high level champion are necessary for institutional leadership to be effective in providing support to students as confirmed in Canadian universities (Barnett & Larmer, 2011). EAL students' entrance university points are utilized effectively by university administrators and an extension of their stay at college by one year is suggested to be a norm if they are to succeed academically as is the case in USA universities. Universities in the USA created consultative forums are involving all stakeholders starting with students and ending with management responsible for academic matters. Finally, institutional management and leadership took clear and bold steps and communicated them lucidly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms. In the session that identified improved institutional leadership and support as a component and aspect necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, participants highlighted the following issues:

Student H: *"We are of the view that university management at various levels should work towards improving how they attend to issues that affect first year students"*

Student 9: *"In particular, university management should be able to act quickly especially on academic matters that affect first year students"*

Facilitator A: *"We normally feel bad and helpless as facilitators when students are confronted with an academic issue that is beyond us and nobody seems to be forthcoming from university authorities to address the issue. I suggest that we put mechanisms in place to address such pertinent issues so that students*

are not frustrated by being taken from pillar to post without any tangible solution being arrived at.”

The views expressed above by the ALC and ALN participants are testimony to the fact that leadership is critical to the academic success of first year university students. It is quite lucid that both facilitators and students share the same views regarding the institutional leadership and support they need, hence they are collaboratively trying to come up with an effective mechanism to expedite the process of addressing academic issues that confront first year students without them feeling frustrated and neglected by the powers that be at the university.

In the foregoing section (4.2.), components and aspects necessary to the enhancement of EALPs were explored and highlighted from the perspectives of the participants and juxtaposed with evidence from the literature extracted from the five countries represented in this study. Since proponents of CER advocate that research should be fundamentally critical about individuals and groups' lived experiences (Carr & Kemmis, 2005: 353; Mahomaholo & Natshandama, 2010: 40), the conversational style adopted in this study was that of mutual respect and recognition of equality (Mahomaholo, 2009: 226) despite my status as a researcher, lecturer and coordinator of EALPs for first year university students in the campus where this study was conducted. In order for the participants to arrive at the challenges discussed above, CER as a theoretical framework couching this study created a humane dialogue that was characterized by love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and above all, critical thinking on their lived experiences of challenges that justified the need to enhance EALPs for first year university students (Nouri, 2014: 79). Therefore, the humane dialogue that existed during data generation sessions was consistent with CER and the narrative analysis. In this section (4.3.2, the focus was on how the aforesaid challenges were attended to in a form of components and aspects necessary in an attempt to enhance EALPs for first year university students. The subsequent section (4.3.3) explored and addressed conditions favourable to the success of enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Components and aspects necessary to address the challenges raised in 4.2.1 above for enhancing EALPs for first year university students may be approached in the following manner: provision of background about the textbooks before classes commence or alternatively, local textbooks be utilized where possible. Secondly, creating harmony through the integration of academic reading, writing and language use in teaching EAL courses and reduction of eight reading reactions per semester to five with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback. Thirdly, assurance and clarity provided or made available to students at the beginning of the year affirming that both American and British English are acceptable for assessment purposes or one is acceptable and inviting lecturer or facilitator behaviour in the class. Fourthly, acceptable student behaviour in the class and lastly, improved institutional leadership, guidance and support.

The subsequent section (4.2.3) explored and addressed conditions favourable to the success of enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3 Conditions favourable to the success of enhancing EALPs for first year university students

The success of the components and aspects necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students as lucidly expounded in 4.3.2 is dependent on a number of factors which are conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students. The theme that follows is increased schema activation and building about the course content at the beginning of the year, course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture as a condition to successfully enhance EALPs for first year university students

4.2.3.1 Increased schema activation and building about the content of the course at the beginning of the year, course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture

ALC108 and ALC108 participants strongly argue that more schema building and activation about the content of these English academic literacy courses will help and prepare them a great deal to be able to anticipate all that they will be dealing with.

Since the ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks are American oriented, the participants are of the opinion that through preparation in a form of introducing the content of the textbooks will assist them to cope and adapt to the American content of the textbooks. The participants are convinced that if such an intervention cannot be implemented, first year students will struggle to cope with the content of ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks. The participants of both ALC108 and ALN108 propose that such intervention should be done in the first week of commencement of classes at the beginning of the year to allow first year students time and space to digest the content of ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks and further be done when introducing a course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture. These require adequate and ongoing training of EAL practitioners and discipline specialists and the saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students (Sleeter, 2004). In the session that identified increased schema activation and building about the content of the course at the beginning of the year, course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture, participants raised the following issues:

Student 8: *“Since the ALC108 course is American content and context based, increased schema activation, building and pre-reading and writing at the beginning of the year becomes very important for the success of first year students as everything about the textbook is foreign and not related to our experiences as South Africans or Africans”*

Student E: *“The ALN108 course is American and does not speak to us as South Africans. However, this requires a facilitator or lecturer to put extra effort in properly introducing the content and scenarios found in the textbook to prepare first year students before the actual classes begin”*

Facilitator 2: *“As facilitators we should do lot of re-reading and pre-writing activities to preview the content of the lectures we will be offering in class and also do a lot of schema activation and building using a variety of strategies to capture the students’ attention.”*

The above views by the participants point to the fact that participants are of the conviction that more previewing activities that include schema activation and building about the content being taught are necessary to their academic progress in these courses. This implies that facilitators should thoroughly prepare for lectures in order to deeply engage students in the ALC and ALN classes. Though facilitators emphasize that a lot of pre-reading and pre-writing activities must be done in class, this does not in any way suggest that facilitators are not doing pre-reading and pre-writing activities as these activities are embedded in courses themselves. The facilitators were just emphasizing that more pre-reading and pre-writing activities must be done by themselves and fellow facilitators who were not part of this study. The subsequent theme focuses on the provision of more language practice activities through classroom presentations and language exercises for vocabulary building as one of the necessary conditions to enhance EALPs for first year university students (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006: 197; Zwiers, 2013: 214-223).

4.2.3.2 Provision of more language practice activities through classroom presentations, language usage, and vocabulary building exercises

The participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 groups respectively prefer more language practice activities especially through classroom presentations to improve language usage and vocabulary building. The participants from these two English academic literacy courses seem to have a consensus that they need more language practice exercises in as much as they need more academic reading and writing exercises. They argue that they come from schools that did not properly teach them enough on language usage and as a result, they lack the confidence to speak or write in English because of the language usage gaps they possess. The participants further alluded to the fact that they expect both ALC108 and ALN108 courses to help them enhance their language usage or grammar in addition to academic reading and writing. They are of the opinion that if they can get more language usage exercises, it will also help them to improve their vocabulary, academic reading and writing in their first year at university and throughout their undergraduate studies. Adjustment of pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs and continuous training of EAL practitioners and discipline specialists are necessary for students' academic success. In the session that identified provision of more language practice activities through

class presentations and language usage exercises for vocabulary building as a component and aspect necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, participants alluded to the following issues:

Student A: *“As first year students, we know that we do not only need academic reading and writing for us to succeed at the university and improve our English vocabulary. We also need to be taught language usage or grammar equally so in order for us to cope with the academic demands at first year level”*

Student 2: *“Many of us come from schools where English was taught through Zulu and Sotho translation and we never got the opportunity to master the grammatical aspects of English. If language usage or grammar can be treated the same as academic reading and writing, many of us will do well academically and also improve our confidence in our ability to speak, read and write in English”*

Facilitator 1: *“We need to give students more language exercises for them to practice and also vocabulary building exercises through regular presentations in class to also boost their confidence in using English.”*

The aforesaid views as expressed by the ALC and ALN participants are focused on creating more language and vocabulary learning exercises that will be shared in class through presentations on regular basis that will also likely improve students' confidence in using English (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006: 197; Zwiers, 2013: 214-223). The next theme addresses the creation of an engaging and active classroom environment as a necessary condition to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.3 Creation of an engaging and active classroom environment

The participants hold strong views about the classroom environment that is ideal for effective teaching and learning to take place. They aspire and desire a lively, engaging and an active classroom that is led by a vivacious and zealous lecturer. They assert

that a passive lecturer who appears uninterested in their teaching is not preferable to them. The ALC108 and ALN108 groups of participants prefer an interactive lecturer who inspires confidence in their students and uses appropriate humour relevant to the content that is being taught. For these participants, a lecturer must lead the class by example through their interest, passion and enthusiasm for the course. Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice and adequate regular training of EAL practitioners and discipline specialists are crucial for students' academic success at university. Students need to be treated fairly and the celebration of diversity through adjustment of pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs.

Moreover, clear guidelines from the institutional level on module assessment, and university procedures on student writing should be readily available to all students. There must also be alignment of student and tutor assumptions and understandings of assignment titles, tutor feedback on students' reading and writing, and the importance of students' identity as writers (Ilea & Street, 1998: 170). Students want to feel a sense of belonging in class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). In addition, language and content need to be integrated in order to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum. Lastly, multimodal approach to teaching academic literacy which open up new spaces of learning through symbolic objects should be implemented (Archer, 2006: 191). In the session to identify conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were highlighted:

Student 10: *"A passionate and active lecturer with a bit of a sense of humour makes the class interesting and influences first year students to take such a class serious"*

Student C: *"A facilitator or lecturer must be in charge of their class and lead by example. Once the lecturer displays a positive spirit and energy for the class, he or she automatically passes such positive energy to his or her students"*

Facilitator B: *"As facilitators we need to display passion, dedication and commitment to our work and students. We need to go the extra mile in also*

using our own personal challenges we experienced when we were students at university so that students can understand that they as well can achieve success and complete their university studies.”

The above issues raised by the ALC and ALN participants speak to fact that productive and effective classrooms are those that provide an engaging and active classroom environment for teaching and learning to take place. The succeeding theme addresses lecturer or facilitator competence and interactivity with a positive attitude as a condition necessary towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.4 Competent and interactive lecturer with a positive attitude towards students and the course

These groups of ALC108 and ALN108 participants want to be taught by a lecturer or facilitator who is competent, sensitive and possesses a positive attitude towards the course and students. They prefer a lecturer who respects students' diverse backgrounds and cultures, language abilities and also, a lecturer who does not make fun of the weaknesses of students both as individuals and in their respective groups. The participants in this study want to be taught by a lecturer who addresses tensions with and amongst students in a matured way by talking to them in private through face to face personal engagement than rebuking them in public in the presence of other students in class.

The facilitator needs to make students to feel a sense of belonging in his or her class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) through the application of a multimodal approach to teaching academic literacy for first year university students (Archer, 2006: 191). These facilitators go the extra mile and make efforts to adjust pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs (Sleeter, 2004). While adequate and ongoing training is essential to enhance facilitators and lecturers' academic teaching skills (Andrews, 2013: 34), the saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students is crucial for their academic success (Sleeter, 2004). In the session to identify conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for

first year university students, the following issues were alluded to by the ALC and ALN participants:

Student 3: *“We first year students are encouraged and motivated by a lecturer who knows what they are doing and engages students”*

Student G: *“First year students get along very well with an impartial facilitator who does not discriminate students and acts as a caring and loving parental figure in the class”*

Facilitator A: *“We must be confident as facilitators to show students that we are competent to teach them these courses. We must also not take sides, but rather be impartial for all the students to feel at home and welcomed in our classes. As facilitators we must show that positive attitude and be exemplary to the students we teach.”*

The above views confirm that both students and their facilitators share the same views regarding the role facilitators should play in class. Amongst others facilitators are expected to be interactive and display a positive attitude towards the course and students. All these factors will affirm the facilitator as a competent professional who treats all his or her students with respect and dignity. The succeeding theme focuses on students preferring to be treated as learners in their first year at university than being treated as students as a condition towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.5 Facilitators treating first year university students as learners, not students

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants argue that first year students hold a view that lecturers and universities are demanding too much from them by expecting them to be students while they feel that at this stage they must be treated as learners and get the necessary guidance and support they need at this critical stage of their university studies. They also argue that the university is making a big mistake by expecting them in their first year to behave like students as at this stage, they are still learners who

need to be inducted, guided and nurtured to become students. The participants in this study are of the view that first year courses must focus more on building the foundation of making students transition from being learners to becoming students. They are furthermore afraid that if this factor is neglected, first year students at the university will continue to struggle and many will drop out of the system before completing their undergraduate degrees.

Facilitators share the same sentiments as students that at this level, they should be treated as learners and not students. Firstly, a concerted effort must be made by the university management to saturate their educational institution with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students who will find it much easier to understand the needs of these students (Andrews, 2013: 34) and simultaneously make students to have a sense of belonging (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) through treating students fairly and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs (Sleeter, 2004). In the session to identify conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the participants alluded to the following:

Student F: *"We first year students at university do not prefer being called students as we are still learners who need to experience university life before we can become students."*

Student 2: *"Lecturers should treat us as learners and start from the basics for us to benefit academically. If they make a mistake of treating us as students, many of us will be left behind academically."*

Facilitator 2: *"With the experience I have of teaching these first year students, I agree that maybe we should treat them as learners at this level especially that they mostly need us to dig deeper and start teaching them the basics as most of them do not have the proper foundation needed to begin studies at university."*

There is a consensus between students and facilitators that indeed the tendency of treating these first year university entrants as students may be too much for them given the kind of schools they mostly come from. Therefore, treating them as learners in their first year of their university studies, unlike as students will allow facilitators to prepare thoroughly and teach the basics and foundational concepts so that they can help students to start learning from where they are at the concrete level before moving to the abstract level. Students enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme do their 3 and 4 year degrees in 4 and 5 years respectively and it makes sense that they are of the view that facilitators and lecturers must treat them as learners as they do their first year in two years. This means that they need proper preparation to adapt and adjust to university academic life, unlike mainstream students. In their second year of the EDP that is when they can be treated as students and not as learners as they would have adapted and adjusted to the university's academic life. Schema building and activation will be crucial at this stage to accommodate and respond to the academic needs of these 'learners' as they prefer to be called. The subsequent theme explores the provision of engaged and improved institutional leadership, guidance and support as a condition necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.6 Availability and provision of engaged and improved institutional leadership, guidance and support

The participants in this study are of the view that as first year students at the university, they need sufficient support and guidance by the university. They hold a view that if they are not provided leadership and guidance at first year, their chances of progressing and advancing to the next level are very slim. The participants posit that first year students hold a view that a mentorship programme wherein senior students give them support and guidance is crucial and a necessity for them to successfully navigate throughout their university undergraduate studies. Participants assert that at the moment first year students are of the opinion that they do not get the necessary support and guidance they need from the university authorities.

Therefore, a shared institutional vision by academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries is needed. Processes for

identifying and recognizing good practice must also be created by university management while providing funding to develop initiatives at the local level (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). All stakeholders at the university need to have a sense of belonging and feel acknowledged and appreciated on their roles and contributions at the university (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). Also, the implementation of an institution wide project through bottom-up approach to leadership must be undertaken. Collaborators need to have an understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership. Finally, authentic support from a high level champion is an imperative for the success of an institution wide project (Pourshafie & Brady, 166-67). In the session to identify the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were highlighted:

Student 7: *“Given our experiences as first year students, the university management should take a stand and seriously attend to challenges faced by first year students, in particular academic issues”*

Student I: *“We suggest as first year students that maybe our university must have a mentorship programme just like in other universities to closely guide and support first year students through their first year of studying at the university”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators we have first-hand experience of the challenges first year students’ experience that need some kind of institutional guidance, leadership and support on regular basis. The role that we play as facilitators is not enough given the academic demands of university first year students have to grapple with. We are of the view that the introduction of a mentorship programme wherein senior students who perform well academically provide mentoring sessions and assist first year students with their academic work will address the frustrations faced by these students.”*

The participants in this study are of the same view that there must be a mechanism put in place to address the lack of clear institutional guidance, leadership and support for first year students. Both facilitators and students concur that the introduction of a mentoring programme wherein senior students who excel academically are selected

and trained by the university each to assist first year students and mentor them on their academic work throughout the year. The next theme focuses on the creation of a collaborative work between subject lecturers in the faculties and academic literacy facilitators as a necessary condition to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.7 Creation of collaborative work between subject lecturers in faculties and English academic literacy facilitators

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants want subject lecturers in the faculties and academic literacy facilitators to collaborate on topics of common interest to improve students' learning and achievement. The participants in this study argue that if there is closer collaboration between lecturers in faculties and academic literacy facilitators, first year students will benefit more as their academic reading and writing skills and genres they learn in the ALC108 and ALN108 courses will be reinforced in their mainstream courses. Integration of academic administration and support programmes into the mainstream curriculum (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226), adoption of discipline-based academic skills programmes (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403) and faculty-based academic literacy programmes (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) are all highlighted in the literature as the necessary factors conducive for enhancing EALPs.

Moreover, a shared institutional vision by academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166); processes for identifying and recognizing good practice; and academic advisors embraced and treated as experts with much to contribute are all important factors for the successful enhancement of EALPs. A shared thinking and understanding that collaborations require a change of thinking; common understanding that collaborations need to develop over time; and understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership. These collaborations require that all participants feel and have a sense of belonging (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) and the implementation of subject/content-based instruction (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 1). In the session to identify the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were alluded to:

Student 3: *“We can benefit a lot academically if English academic literacy facilitators collaborate and share their academic reading and writing skills with lecturers in the mainstream in order to align all these skills and embed them in the mainstream courses”*

Student D: *“English academic literacy facilitators and subject lecturers in the faculties should not just know each other as colleagues and what they teach. They should make efforts to collaborate and plan together to infuse academic reading and writing skills within the mainstream courses in the faculties”*

Facilitator 1: *“As English academic literacy facilitators we are the first to admit that there is a dire need to engage and have discussions with mainstream lecturers in order to address issues of common interest like the format of writing different genres in order to avoid mismatch between our expectations and those of mainstream lecturers. Such academic collaborations will help students to make the link between the academic reading and writing skills they learn in the ALC and ALN courses with their mainstream courses.”*

As the above views bear reference, there appears to be a consensus between facilitators and students who participated in this study that academic collaborations between facilitators and mainstream lecturers are a necessary condition to help students benefit more from the EALPs and their mainstream courses respectively. They all agree that these collaborations will help in alleviating a mismatch between what they learn in the English academic literacy courses and their mainstream courses as the reading and writing activities will be aligned and complementing each other. The subsequent theme discusses the integration of academic reading and writing skills within disciplines in faculties through collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching.

4.2.3.8 Integration of English academic literacy reading and writing skills within disciplines in faculties through collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching

The participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 in this study are of the view that academic literacy facilitators and discipline lecturers in faculties should integrate academic reading and writing skills within their disciplines in collaboration with academic literacy facilitators. The participants argue that this should be done through shared curriculum planning and teaching. The participants further argue that currently this type of integration is not taking place and as a result, first year students do not fully benefit academically in the manner that they should in a more meaningful way. Firstly, implementation of discipline-based academic literacy programmes (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403) and faculty-based academic literacy programmes have to be thoroughly planned and undertaken. Secondly, the integration of language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary education becomes a daily practice (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Lastly, the adoption of a collaborative interdisciplinary approach to teaching academic literacy is embraced by all the stakeholders involved (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). In the session to identify the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were evoked and discussed:

Student E: *“It would help us a lot if there is shared teaching wherein subject and content lecturers plan and teach the course together with the English academic literacy facilitators while infusing academic reading and writing skills”*

Student 10: *“Disciplines in the faculties should find ways to plan their curriculum in collaboration with English academic literacy facilitators in order to embed academic reading and writing skills across the curriculum within the disciplines”*

Facilitator 2: *“Shared teaching is an ideal and more effective way of teaching nowadays as it allows the facilitator and the content lecturer to plan together and share teaching as per their expertise. This means that as a facilitator I will deal with issues like summaries, writing paragraphs, essays, paraphrasing and so on while the subject lecturer focuses on the content.”*

The above issues raised by ALC and ALN participants affirm that they prefer shared curriculum planning and teaching wherein facilitators will handle aspects like how to organize ideas in a paragraph, paraphrasing, summarizing and writing essays while the subject lecturers will be focusing on teaching the content. The participants in this study are of the view that shared teaching will in fact strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. The succeeding theme deals with the alignment of academic reading and writing activities in English academic literacy courses, other mainstream subjects in the faculties and the write site as a condition necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.3.9 Alignment of academic reading and writing activities in English academic literacy courses, other subjects in the faculties and the Write Site

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants in this study are of the opinion that academic writing activities and genres in academic literacy, mainstream subjects and the write site should be aligned to avoid disparities and confusion for first year university students. The participants propose that academic literacy practitioners, disciplinary or subject specialists and write site consultants should collaborate and have a consensus and a common understanding on structuring academic writing in different genres. Collaborations between librarians, learning advisors and unit coordinators are a necessity (Ambery, Manners & Smith, 2005; Crosling & Wilson, 2005).

A coordinated and well developed plan of action embedded within the collaborative interdisciplinary approach, unity in diversity through mutual support and participation, and core acceptance of different perspectives are crucial (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166; Donnison et al., 2009) and integration of language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum must be implemented (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Furthermore, academic advisors must be embraced and treated as experts with much to contribute; there must be a shared thinking and understanding that collaborations require a change of thinking; common understanding that collaborations need to develop organically over time; and understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership

(Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). In the session to identify the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were raised:

Student J: *“Both the content subject lecturers, English academic literacy facilitators and write site consultants should communicate and strategically align academic reading and writing activities for the benefit of first year students”*

Student 1: *“If English academic literacy facilitators, discipline specialists and write site consultants consult each other and have common understanding of different academic writing genres and how they should be structured, first year students will benefit a lot”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators we buy the idea that there must be some form of alignment between the work we do as facilitators, subject lecturers in the faculties and write site consultants. There is no way we can effectively assist students with their academic reading and writing skills without aligning the work that we do as facilitators, subject lecturers and write site consultants! That consistency is needed in all of us for students to benefit more academically.”*

The above comments by participants in this study confirm that they are all in agreement that English academic literacy facilitators, subject lecturers in the faculties and write site consultants should share and have a common understanding of how different genres are written and which formats are acceptable academically. This is also emphasized by participants that it will help students in terms of consistency on what they learn in their English academic literacy courses, mainstream classes and at the write site when they visit for assignments consultations. This section has discussed and elaborated on the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students. CER aims for critical conscientization where according to Freire in Nouri (2014: 79-80) it means “to learn to persevere social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against oppressive elements of reality.

Since the participants succeeded in problem-posing in the previous section (4.2.1), in this section participants identified and conversed about components and aspects necessary to address the challenges identified in the previous section and by doing so, they were emancipating themselves, changing their lives through ensuring debates and dialogue between different participants in the research (Ledwith, 2007: 591; Mahlomaholo, 2009: 226). Since this study was conducted in a rural university campus where there are a lot of structural and educational disadvantages, and the voices of the participants are mostly marginalized (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005: 139), CER created that elusive space for critical engagements with the aim of freeing individuals and groups from repression of power and inequality (David & Keinzler, 1999: 272). Therefore, participants' actions and conversations correlated well with the aims and objectives of CER and the narrative analysis.

Components and aspects necessary for enhancing EALPs for first year university students as discussed above in 4.2.2 may be achieved under the following conditions: increased schema activation and building about the content of the course at the beginning of the year, course, unit, chapter, theme, lecture; provision of more language practice activities through class presentations, language usage and vocabulary building exercises, creation of an engaging and active classroom environment, competent and interactive lecturers/facilitators with a positive attitude towards students and the course, facilitators treating first year university students as learners, not students, availability and provision of an engaged and improved institutional leadership, guidance and support, creation of collaborative work between subject lecturers in the faculties and EAL facilitators, integration of EAL reading and writing skills within disciplines in faculties through collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching (subject lecturer and EAL facilitator), and alignment of academic reading and writing activities in EAL courses, other subjects in faculties and the Write Site.

The following section addresses plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students and strategies to circumvent such threats.

4.2.4 Plausible threats to the successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students and strategies to curb them

In section 4.2.3 above, a discussion on the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students was presented. In this section, the plausible threats that may hamper the successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are discussed together with the steps that must be taken to circumvent them.

4.2.4.1 Threats to enhancement of EALPs for first year university students

In section 4.2.3 above, a discussion on the conditions necessary to enhance EALPs for first year university students was presented. In this section, the plausible threats that may hamper the successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are discussed together with the steps that must be taken to circumvent them.

4.2.4.1.1 Lecturers/facilitators' negative attitude and low expectations from students

Participants are concerned that lecturers have a negative attitude towards first year students. ALC108 and ALN108 participants are worried that lecturers are impatient with first year students and expect them to perform badly in their academic work. Their major concern is that lecturers do not teach them concepts, but expect them to master those concepts. The participants in this study strongly argue that lecturers do not push them to their limits because they expect them to underperform. They are convinced that lecturers have abandoned their responsibility of meaningfully engaging first year students because they have low expectations of students' performance on the basis that they are enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme and doing English academic literacy courses.

The Lack of necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students by academics and institutions generally (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) leads to students' lack of attendance of academic literacy classes. Time constraints and the need for expertise; while managing demands for greater

accountability also add frustration and confusion to academics teaching EAL students (Jacquet, 2008). Colour blindness and denying differences leads to institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which further leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010). In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, the participants highlighted the following issues:

Student A: *“Lecturers seem to have a negative attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They do not expect us to perform well academically, hence they do not teach us concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies”*

Student 2: *“Our first year lecturers rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They seem to be impatient with us first years and expect less from us with regard to our academic performance”*

Facilitator A: *“To a particular extent I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year university students we seem to be mostly taking things at face value and not properly taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. In most cases we are guilty of not decoding the discipline with the expectation that students will just simply understand just like us without us teaching them the basic concepts.”*

The above comments point to the fact that both facilitators and students in this study concur that first year facilitators and lecturers do not do enough to orientate or decode the discipline they are teaching to the students. The participants are of the view that facilitators and lecturers of first years just brush over concepts without fully engaging students in a meaningful way while on the other doing so because they expect these to students to underperform as they are registered in the EDP and not mainstream. The subsequent theme focuses on students’ negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course.

4.2.4.1.2 Students' negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course

The participants in this study are worried about first year students who have a negative attitude towards a facilitator/lecturer and the course. Their concern is that first year students who are negative towards the lecturer and the course are a serious threat to their academic success. They argue that it would be highly impossible for students to focus and be interested to learn if they have a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course. The participants assert that there must be some ways of identifying such students earlier and mechanisms be put in place in order to remedy the situation to help those affected students to avoid risking failure or at worst, suspension and expulsion in their first year courses and beyond. Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors lead to students developing negative attitudes towards lecturers/facilitators and the course (Huijser, Kimmis, & Galligan, 2008: A-23).

Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009); colour blindness and denying differences between English monolingual speaking students and EAL students; and different interpretations of academic writing between staff and students in academia add fuel these negative attitudes. Also, conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion, more negative attitudes towards facilitators, and the course (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-64). In fact, EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Lastly, EAL students often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) while institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students] fuel and worsen students' negative attitudes towards facilitators/lecturers and the course (Harklau, 2010). In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, participants in this study alluded to the following:

Student H: *“Some of us first year students have a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. This bad behaviour is a learning barrier on its*

own and it affects both the student with a negative attitude and the rest of the class as the class is disrupted by such students with a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course”

Student 9: *“Those peer students of ours with a negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need serious and urgent attention before their situation gets out of control and end up leading to suspensions and at worse, expulsion from the institution. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible”*

Facilitator 1: *“As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are either uninterested in the course itself or just dislike the facilitator or lecturer. These types of students are few, but are capable of distracting teaching and learning in the class. Both the students and their facilitator/lecturer should develop classroom rules and comply with those rules in order to deal with such distractive tendencies in the class.”*

It appears that there is a consensus between facilitators and students that there are some students who are a distraction and obstacles to smooth functioning of the class because they might be disliking the course or the facilitator/lecturer. The above comments also attest that there is also a common agreement that such truant students who are disruptive in class should be dealt with accordingly as per the prescriptions of the class rules agreed upon and adhered to in each other by the facilitator/lecturer and students. The next theme addresses facilitators/lecturers and students who come late to class as threats to successful enhancement of EALPs and strategies to overcome such late coming to class tendencies.

4.2.4.1.3 Lecturer and students not attending regularly and coming late to class

Participants in this study have a serious problem with lecturers and students who come late to class especially after ten minutes or more after the class had already started. They are of the opinion that this makes other students to think that the course is useless as both the lecturer and some students do not take it serious, hence they go

to class late. Participants in this study are of the opinion that there must be mechanisms put in place to address this as late coming disturbs and disrupts the normal functioning of the class. Participants agree that both students and facilitators/lecturers should not be late to class by more than ten minutes. Lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to the situation where facilitators and students do not take classes serious and come late to class.

Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors (Huijser, Kimmis, & Galligan, 2008: A-23) make the situation even worse as both academic literacy facilitators and students are aware of the marginalization of their facilitators and the course they are enrolled in. EAL students also work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Moreover, EAL students often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) which leads to institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which further leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students] (Haklau, 2010). All of these occur in an institutional environment where there is lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change. In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, the participants alluded to the following:

Student 3: *“It is very frustrating and discouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be uninterested and demotivated to an extent of coming 15 or 20 minutes late to class consistently. It is even worse whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming late to class”*

Student B: *“The issue of coming late to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very demotivating to us students. From day one, the issue of late coming should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is ignored, effective teaching and learning is likely not to take place”*

Facilitator A: *“I can attest as a facilitator that late coming to class is demotivating and more depressing when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late, communication must be done prior to the commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing.”*

Given the above comments by ALC and ALN participants, it is quite lucid that the issue of late coming to class by both students and facilitators creates a negative environment for teaching and learning to take place. As such, there is a consensus between facilitators and students that if a facilitator realizes that he or she might be delayed to class, communication must be done with class representatives to alert them of such. Furthermore, the participants share the same views that if someone is late to class without prior notice, it should not be by more than ten minutes. The succeeding theme deals with traditional teaching that does not embed technology in the class as a plausible threat to successful enhancement of EALPs and strategies to overcome such a threat.

4.2.4.1.4 Traditional teaching that does not embed technology in the class

The participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 groups in this study call themselves “digital generation” or “digital natives” and as such, they find a classroom that does not embrace technology to be boring, uninteresting and irrelevant to their generation especially in this age of massive technological advancement and development. Participants are of the view that though lecturers may not have been traditionally trained to teach using technology, it will be more meaningful and easier to first year students if technology is embedded within teaching, learning and assessment in order to make the courses appealing to first year students and also with the ultimate aim of engaging them more meaningfully in a medium of technology that they are interested in and understand better. Recent research confirms the relationship between technology and interaction in the class (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland in Beldarrain, 2006: 140). Prensky (2001a: 1-3) published companion papers on a new generation of students: the ‘Digital Natives’.

The basic thrust of Prensky's argument was that this new group of students coming into universities was fundamentally different from any that educators had seen before. Digital Natives had "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age". Prensky maintained that the digital culture and environment in which the Natives had grown up had changed the way they think: "It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky, 2001a: 1). Furthermore, in what can only be regarded as a bold claim, Prensky suggested that "It is very likely that our students' brains have physically changed – and are different from ours – as a result of how they grew up."

Since Prensky (2001a, 2001b) coined the term, a considerable amount of discussion in education circles has centred on the Digital Natives (also referred to as the 'Net Generation', the 'Y Generation' and 'Millennials'). The argument has changed little from that originally posed by Prensky: the digital culture in which the Digital Natives have grown up has influenced their preferences and skills in a number of key areas related to education (Oblinger, 2003, 2006; Gros, 2003; Gibbons, 2007). Prensky's stance has also remained unaltered over this period; he states in a recent article "... our students are clamouring for these [new] technologies to be used as part of their education, in part because they are things that the students have already mastered and use in their daily lives, and in part because they realise just how useful they can be." (Prensky, 2007: 41). Digital Natives are said to prefer receiving information quickly; be adept at processing information rapidly; prefer multi-tasking and non-linear access to information; have a low tolerance for lectures; prefer active rather than passive learning, and rely heavily on communications technologies to access information and to carry out social and professional interactions (Prensky 2001a, 2001b; Oblinger, 2003; Gros, 2003).

Prensky (2001a: 2) not only pointed to the supposed natural technological affinity and literacy of the Digital Natives, he also expressed concern at an apparent lack of

technological literacy among educators. He labelled lecturers in higher education 'Digital Immigrants'; foreigners in the digital lands of the Net Generation, and regarded the disparity between the Natives and the Immigrants as the "the biggest single problem facing education today". The preferences and skills that characterise the Digital Natives were said to be incompatible with the current teaching practices of the Immigrants. Prensky and other commentators like Oblinger and Frand in Kennedy, Judd, Churchward and Gray (2008: 109) suggest that because of this disparity educators need to adjust their pedagogical models to suit the new kind of learner they are encountering in this generation of students. Not surprisingly, this argument has gained widespread attention in higher education circles (Doherty, 2005; Rodley, 2005).

However, the premises underpinning these arguments warrant closer examination before university educators set about overhauling established curricula and teaching and learning practices. These arguments are predicated on a general assumption that students coming into universities have had a comparatively universal and uniform digital upbringing. It is assumed that the technological experiences of students are more or less homogeneous and that most, if not all, incoming university students are Digital Natives. Not only is it assumed that these students will have had broadly universal experiences, but that they will also have a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Such generalisations risk overlooking a more complex mix of technology based skills, knowledge and preferences among the student population (Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray & Krause, 2008: 109).

An evidence-based understanding of students' technological experiences is vital in informing higher education policy and practice. A thorough understanding of students' technological experiences will have clear implications for areas such as student access, equity, and transition. Institutional decision making associated with the management and administration of information and communications technologies – technological infrastructure support, resource investment, student and staff support – would also benefit from evidence about students' existing experiences with technology. Finally, an investigation of students' current technological experiences will

have implications for ways in which technology could potentially be harnessed in pedagogically sound ways to improve teaching and learning (Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray & Krause, 2008: 109). In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, the following issues were raised by the participants:

Student 5: *“We are a digital generation and any class that does not include technology becomes boredom to us. We are not saying we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology”*

Student C: *“Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”*

Facilitator 2: *“As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves ‘digital natives’.”*

The students and facilitators in this study concur that classes are boring and not appealing to students if they are monotonous and taught in a traditional way without embedding technology in teaching, learning and assessment. Participants agree that since these students are ‘digital natives’, it is imperative that training should be provided to facilitators who are struggling to infuse technology in their teaching, learning and assessment. The following theme discusses the uncomfortable learning environment for students as a plausible threats towards successful enhancement of EALPs and the strategies to address such a threat.

4.2.4.1.5 Uncomfortable learning environment for students

ALC108 and ALN108 participants are more concerned about a classroom environment that is chaotic, unmanageable and the lecturer takes sides instead of mediating and uniting students in the class. The participants say that first year students need a classroom wherein they get a sense of belonging and they feel that they are physically and emotionally protected to air or voice their views and opinions on a variety of issues. Participants expect a lecturer who is impartial and respects all the students irrespective of their different levels of academic performance, looks, backgrounds and so forth. Participants are of the view that if first year students feel physically and emotionally vulnerable in the classroom, it will be difficult for them to focus and fully engage in the process of learning in the class while the classroom environment is threatening to them.

Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors occurs as a result of lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students; colour blindness and denying differences; coupled with conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4). Additionally, EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities, and they often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012). In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were alluded to by the participants:

Student F: *“As first year students we need a classroom that is not threatening wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”*

Student 1: *“Facilitators as leaders, administrators and managers of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act ‘in loco parentis’ or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will not happen.”*

The views expressed by the participants above regarding the uncomfortable learning environment for students in the class point to the fact that facilitators should not take sides nor be biased when they interact with students in their classes. Facilitators have to create a conducive and comfortable learning environment for students by treating students equally and being impartial in their classes. If facilitators can succeed in creating a positive environment for students to learn effectively and comfortably, this plausible threats would be circumvented. The following theme focuses on the uninterested and de-motivated students as a plausible threat to successful enhancement of EALPs and strategies to overcome this threat.

4.2.4.1.6 Uninterested and de-motivated students

Participants are worried that uninterested and de-motivated students are not just a threat and danger to themselves, but also to the lecturer and other students who are interested and motivated to learn. The participants in this study argue that these types of students have altercations with lecturers, their fellow students and are also disruptive in the classroom. They further say that such students behave aggressively and in an antisocial way because of a number of reasons. Participants suggest that such students need to be identified earlier and remedial actions be taken to help them not to disrupt their own learning and that of their peers. Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff; marginalization of academic advisors; and lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to students' lack of attendance of academic literacy classes as they become uninterested and demotivated.

Furthermore, Colour blindness; conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4); and lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to students' confusion and frustration. EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010) and they often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Lastly, institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010). The importance of motivation in the context of learning cannot be overemphasized (Ames in Ambrose et al., 2010: 69). Atkinson, Wigfield and Eccles in Ambrose et al., (2010: 69-70) argue that there are two concepts central to the understanding of motivation: (1) the subjective value of a goal and (2) the expectations, or expectations for successful attainment of that goal. According to Elliot and Fryer (2008) goals serve as the basic organizing feature of motivated behaviour.

Moreover, a number of goals are often in operation simultaneously. This is certainly true for college students who may, in any given moment, seek to acquire knowledge and skills, make new friends, demonstrate to others that they are intelligent, gain a sense of independence, and have fun (Ambrose et al, 2010: 71). However, since there are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, this study specifically focused on extrinsic motivation as a source of value, one that Eccles and Wigfield in Ambrose et al., (2010: 75) call instrumental value, represents the degree to which an activity or goal helps one accomplish other important goals, such as gaining what are traditionally referred to as extrinsic rewards. Praise, public recognition, money, material goods, an interesting career, a high status job, or a good salary are all longer - term goals that may provide instrumental value to shorter - term goals. For example, students who study business only because of the salary and prestige they expect a job in business will bring are motivated to study and attend their classes by the instrumental value the classes provide toward their desired salary and status. In this scenario, facilitators and lecturers are required to provide rewards or incentives to motivate students to perform well academically. In the session to identify plausible

threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, participants alluded to the following issues:

Student 8: *“There are some of our fellow students who are troublesome in the classroom. Such students disrupts their own learning and that of the other students”*

Student G: *“Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late”*

Facilitator 1: *“With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”*

The above comments by the participants of ALC and ALN point to the fact that both facilitators and students are equally concerned and worried by uninterested and de-motivated students who are disruptive and cause chaos in class. There is a consensus amongst the participants that such students' disruptiveness can be properly addressed through the formulation of class rules that must be enforced and consistently applied to anyone who does not comply or adhere to them. The succeeding theme focuses on clashes between EAL courses (ALC108 and ALN108) and mainstream courses as a plausible threat to successful enhancement of EALPs and strategies to curb this threat.

4.2.4.1.7 Clashes between English Academic Literacy courses and mainstream courses (Timetabling)

Participants in this study are disturbed by the fact that they are torn between a rock and a hard place with regard to timetable clashes between their ALC108 and ALN108 with mainstream courses. What surprises them the most is that English academic literacy courses are compulsory for all first year students enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme, but they still experience clashes with some of the mainstream courses. The participants are also of the opinion that English academic literacy courses are taken for granted by university authorities and as such, they do not get the logic why these courses are compulsory for first year students and yet, they are not taken serious as part of academic literacy development for first year university students enrolled in the EDP.

The participants propose that the timetable committee must be thoroughly engaged and clarified on this matter to arrive at an amicable solution for everyone. These clashes occur as a result of the undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff as well as the marginalization of academic advisors (Huijser et al., 2008: A-23). Moreover, lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) and lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change. In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, the following issues were raised by the participants:

Student 3: *“The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP is frustrating for us first year students. What makes it surprising and shocking is that the English academic literacy courses are compulsory for all first year students enrolled in the EDP, but we still experience clashes between some mainstream courses and the English academic literacy courses”*

Student J: *“It appears to us as first year students that English academic literacy courses are not taken serious by the university. It does not make any sense to us first years to be told that these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, yet they are clashing with mainstream courses on the timetable. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable”*

Facilitator A: *“With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. However, recently clashes are a norm and the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students.”*

The above views by the participants regarding timetable clashes between EAL courses and some of the mainstream courses are a disturbing and worrying factor according to the participants in this study. The participants are quite shocked that an English academic literacy course clashes with a mainstream course especially for a first year university student. The participants propose that the timetable committee must relook, review and identify the reasons behind these abnormal clashes. The next theme the negative attitude of management towards students and lack of guidance, support and leadership as a plausible threat to successful enhancement of EALPs and the strategies to alter such a threat.

4.2.4.1.8 Negative attitude of university management towards students and lack of proper guidance, support and leadership

The participants in this study are concerned that the university management at various levels has a negative attitude towards first year students. They hold a view that the university authorities lack proper guidance and leadership skills to deal with challenges faced by first year students. The participants argue that the university management ignores their challenges and thereby fail to resolve critical academic issues like timetable clashes. They are convinced that if management can develop and adopt a positive attitude towards first year students, it would help a great deal in providing proper guidance and leadership to first year students. It is always very difficult to facilitate a whole-of-university initiative especially when there is lack of a common vision or collaborators not sharing the same vision of the initiative. This is further made

worse and compounded by lack of team work where collaboration is conducted without full appreciation of relevant expertise by all parties involved in the collaboration.

Moreover, lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) and lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to the frustrations on the institutional management's attitude towards first year students. All these lead to EAL students having less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) as institutional management further develop negative attitudes towards these students. Finally, lack of a common vision and buy in from all the stakeholders; institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms (Harklau, 2010); and lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change exacerbate and add more negative attitudes of management towards EAL students. In the session to identify plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs, the following issues were highlighted by the participants in this study:

Student C: *“As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we are surprised by the manner in which our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities. We find ourselves experiencing timetable clashes and we are taken from pillar to post without getting concrete assistance on such serious and frustrating issues for first year students”*

Student 7: *“It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and put measures in place to address challenges first year students come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies”*

Facilitator 2: *“As a facilitator, I have observed many cases where students were frustrated because of timetable clashes and no one was available to amicably address the genuine challenges faced by students. The university*

management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students.”

The participants in this study agree and speak in one voice that the manner in which issues of first year students like the frustrations they encounter with timetable clashes without any solution forthcoming makes them to conclude that the university management has a negative attitude towards first year students and as such, the university management is failing to give them the necessary guidance, support and leadership they so desperately need in their first year at the university. Participants suggest that there must be a mechanism put in place that monitors and addresses academic issues confronting first year students like timetable clashes. If such a mechanism can be put in place, first year students will benefit a lot and realize that they get the necessary guidance, leadership and support from the university management.

4.2.4.2 Strategies to circumvent threats to enhancement of EALPs for first year university students

This sub-section focuses on the strategies for circumventing threats to enhancement of EALPs drawing from both the literature and empirical data.

4.2.4.2.1 Lecturers/facilitators' positive attitude and high expectations from students

Participants are of the conviction that institutional management must deliberately make clear effort to take action in framing EAL students in positive terms through bottom-up approach. Participants are of the view that the university management from different levels should initiate committees that meet quarterly at campus level and monthly at faculty level to provide leadership on matters affecting first year students. Drawing from the literature which also concurs with the participants' views, institutions must deliberately and systematically avoid labelling EAL students in deficit terms and frame them in positive terms, which will lead to higher teacher expectations and academic acceptance [which leads to motivated EAL students] (Kanno & Varghese, (2010); Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012). Furthermore, institutional management should seek buy-in of a common vision by all university stakeholders through faculties

and departments using bottom-up approaches to leadership so that there will be a shared ownership by all stakeholders involved in the whole-of-university and faculty initiatives (Alderman, 2006; Evans et al., 2009: 600; Donnison et al., 2009; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the following issues were highlighted by the participants:

Student H: *“Lecturers should have a positive attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They must expect us to perform well academically after teaching us basic concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies. They must avoid being abstract in their teaching and forget that as EDP students we need more support in our learning”*

Student 2: *“Our first year lecturers must not rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They must be patient with us first years and have high expectations from us with regard to our academic performance after teaching us”*

Facilitator B: *“I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year students be patient with students and teach them basic concepts properly and taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. Through positive attitude towards first year students, we can decode the discipline in a simplified manner with the expectation that students will understand as long as we are patient with their learning pace.”*

A positive attitude and high expectations by lecturers towards first year students seem to be the most important factors that the participants have a consensus that they have to be taken into cognisance in order to make the enhancement of EALPs a success. The next sub-section deals with students' positive attitude towards the facilitators and the course as a strategy to circumvent threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.2 Students' positive attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course

Participants are convinced that class rules must be discussed and agreed upon by both the facilitator and students guiding the behaviour of everyone in the classroom.

Participants further argue that facilitators should make students feel a sense of belonging, motivated and interested in the course and the facilitator (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). They are of the opinion that facilitators should come up with strategies of dealing with problematic students in the class without making the students to lose face in front of their peers and use referrals in case the students' situation is beyond the facilitator's jurisdiction. EAL students should be consistently encouraged to attend academic literacy classes and such classes must be made compulsory (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413; Kennelly et al., 2010: 67). In the session to identify strategies to circumvent threats to EALPs enhancement, participants alluded to the following:

Student 8: *"All of us as first year students should strive to develop a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. Good behaviour supports learning and affects both the student and the rest of the class in a positive way as the class is motivated and encouraged by such students with a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course"*

Student B: *"Our student peers need to develop a positive attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need in order to avoid suspensions and at worse expulsions by the university authorities. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible"*

Facilitator 2: *"As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are interested, motivated and have a positive attitude towards the course and myself as a lecturer."*

Both the ALC108 and ALN108 participants are of the view that students' positive attitudes towards the lecturer and the course is crucial to their academic success. This implies that students have to take full responsibility for their academic success and it cannot be the sole responsibility of lecturers/facilitators. The subsequent sub-section deliberates on lecturer and students' regular attendance of class and punctuality as strategies to circumvent threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.3 Lecturer/facilitator and students attending class regularly and being punctual

Respect for the course by both the facilitators and students through regular attendance of classes and being punctual. The participants were concerned and worried that both the facilitators and students have a tendency of coming late to class by more than ten minutes or at worse, they bunk classes. The participants are of the view that there must be a consensus agreed upon by the facilitator and students binding everyone not to be late by more than ten minutes for class and if one has to miss class, an apology has to be made or some communication has to be done especially if the student or facilitator is ill, attending to some university official business or a death case at home. According to the participants, all these would demonstrate that both facilitators have love, enthusiasm, respect and motivation for the course. The literature also affirm that facilitators and students should attend classes regularly and EAL classes should be made compulsory (Read, 2008: 181; Baik & Greig, 2009: 411-13; Kennelly, 2010: 67). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, participants raised the following issues:

Student E: *“It is very motivating and encouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be energetic, enthusiastic, interested and motivated to an extent of coming 5 or 10 minutes earlier to class consistently. It is even more interesting and encouraging whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming earlier to class”*

Student 10: *“The issue of coming early to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very motivating to us students. From day one, the issue of coming early to class should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is embraced and adhered to by everyone, effective teaching and learning is almost guaranteed to take place”*

Facilitator A: *“I can attest as a facilitator that coming early to class is motivating and more encouraging and exemplary when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late or miss the class, communication must be done prior to the*

commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing.”

Participants in this study seem to all subscribe to the idea that lecturers and students should respect their class by attending class regularly and being on time. This implies that participants value regular attendance and time. The following sub-section discusses innovative and up to date teaching that embeds technology in teaching and learning as a strategy to circumvent threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.4 Innovative and up to date teaching that embed technology in teaching and learning

The participants do sympathize with facilitators and lecturers who are not technologically savvy, but argue that such facilitators should upgrade their technological skills so that they can academically engage students using technology. They furthermore assert that ongoing training of facilitators especially on using technology in the class to engage students more will assist them a lot as students refer to themselves as ‘digital natives’. Recent research confirms the relationship between technology and interaction in the class (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland in Beldarrain, 2006: 140). Prensky (2001a: 1-3) published companion papers on a new generation of students: the ‘Digital Natives’. The basic thrust of Prensky’s argument was that this new group of students coming into universities was fundamentally different from any that educators had seen before. Digital Natives had “spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age” (Prensky, 2001a: 1). Prensky maintained that the digital culture and environment in which the Natives had grown up had changed the way they think: “It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors” (Prensky, 2001a: 1). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the subsequent issues were alluded to by the participants:

Student 3: *“We are a digital generation we expect university classes that include technology for us to be fully be engaged in learning. We are not saying*

we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology”

Student G: *“Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”*

Facilitator 1: *“As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves 'digital natives' in order to engage them fully in the academic discourses.”*

The participants are convinced that innovative teaching and learning methods that include technology in the classroom are ideal for students and that such innovative methods will increase student retention and engagement in the class. The participants are of the view that the current university classrooms call for students and lecturers who are technologically savvy to make the classes interesting and engaging. The following sub-section focuses on the creation of a comfortable learning environment as a strategy to circumvent threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.5 Comfortable learning environment for students

The participants say that first year students need a classroom wherein they get a sense of belonging and they feel that they are physically and emotionally protected to air or voice their views and opinions on a variety of issues. Participants expect a lecturer who is impartial and respects all the students irrespective of their different levels of academic performance, looks, backgrounds and so forth. Participants are of the view that if first year students feel physically and emotionally vulnerable in the classroom, it will be difficult for them to focus and fully engage in the process of learning in the class while the classroom environment is threatening to them. Sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve

minoritized students is very important to the academic success of these students (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413; Kennelly et al., 2010: 67). Time management and the need for expertise have to be balanced, while simultaneously managing demands for greater accountability. There must be a concerted effort to have same and common understanding and interpretation of writing between academic staff and students across faculties and disciplines (Jacquet, 2008; Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009; Andrews, 2013: 35). Additionally, consistent and common advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses will add more understanding (Lea & Street, 1998: 170; Lea & Street, 2006: 376). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the issues below were discussed.

Student F: *“As first year students we need a classroom that is welcoming and engaging wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”*

Student 9: *“Facilitators as leaders, managers and administrators of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act ‘in loco parentis’ or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will be compromised.”*

The creation of a comfortable learning environment for students in the class seems to be supported by the participants in this study as ideal to the academic success of students. This means that both the lecturer and the students should work together to make the learning environment friendly, conducive and comfortable for all students.

The sub-section that follows elaborates on interested and motivated students as a strategy for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.6 *Interested and motivated students*

Participants suggest that such students need to be identified earlier and remedial actions be taken to help them not to disrupt their own learning and that of their peers. Respect for academic learning support centres by academic staff; inclusion of academic advisors; and leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to students' regular attendance of academic literacy classes as they become interested and motivated. Furthermore, not being colour blind; clear and consistent advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add enthusiasm (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4); and the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to students' focus, engagement and motivation to learn. EAL students' long hours of work are reduced by extending their degrees by an extra year and this allows their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010) and they often have more than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Lastly, institutional labelling of EAL students in positive terms, which lead to higher teacher expectations and academic empowerment [which leads to motivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010).

The importance of motivation in the context of learning cannot be overemphasized (Ames in Ambrose et al., 2010: 69). Atkinson, Wigfield and Eccles in Ambrose et al., (2010: 69-70) argue that there are two concepts central to the understanding of motivation: (1) the subjective value of a goal and (2) the expectations, or expectations for successful attainment of that goal. According to Elliot and Fryer (2008) goals serve as the basic organizing feature of motivated behaviour. Therefore, EAL facilitators as experts in their own right and the academic learning support centres must be respected by academic staff for the success of students. Academic staff should do away with colour blindness and denying differences by beginning to see and treat ESL students as such and not equating them with mainstream students by denying differences. Collaborators must further share a common vision of the initiative they are involved in. Moreover, teamwork where collaboration is conducted with a full appreciation of the relevant expertise provided by all parties involved in the

collaboration is key and fundamental to the success of the collaboration initiatives. In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the issues below were deliberated on:

Student 4: *“Our fellow students who need to show interest and motivation to learn in the classroom. If all the students can be motivated and interested enough, disruptions and misconducts will not take place in the class our own learning would not be disturbed”*

Student D: *“Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late. Lecturers must play their pastoral role in treating students appropriately and devising classroom rules that bind everyone together with the students”*

Facilitator 2: *“With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”*

Interested and motivated students are seen by the participants in this study as those who have a better chance of performing well academically. Participants concur that interest and motivation play a critical and very important role in determining the academic progress of students. The sub-section below shed some light on clashes free timetable between EAL courses and mainstream courses as a strategy for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.7 Clashes free timetable between EAL courses and mainstream courses

Participants are of the view that institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction is highly needed especially on issues of clashes between EAL

courses and mainstream subjects while the timetable does not have clashes (Huijser, Kimmins & Galligan, A-23; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Facilitators are further convinced that academic advisors and EAL facilitators must be embraced as part of the collaborative initiatives within the university and steps must be taken to accommodate them rather than isolating them (Read, 2008: 181; Baik & Greig, 2009: 411). Splitting or spreading EAL students' first year curriculum to run for two years to extend their engagement in collegiate activities is also suggested as a good move towards empowering EAL students (Sleeter, 2004). This will imply that the normal 3 and 4 year degrees will automatically take 4 and 5 years respectively for these students to complete their undergraduate degrees if they are to finish in the stipulated time. Lastly, the college must make special efforts to give EAL students sufficient helpful guidance (Lea & Street, 2006: 370). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the issues below were highlighted:

Student J: *"The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP must be addressed urgently to avoid frustrating us first year students. The institutional management must engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their timetable planning for the year."*

Student 1: *"English academic literacy courses are very important for our academic success and they must be taken seriously by the university management and all the academic staff. Since these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, efforts must be taken to do away with timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable"*

Facilitator B: *"With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. Given this experience, the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students."*

Clashes free timetable between EAL courses and the mainstream courses seems to be an ideal and preferred scenario for the participants. This implies that participants are convinced that clash-less timetable between the mainstream and EAL courses will assist students to focus on their academic work without unnecessary distractions and frustrations. The subsequent sub-section addresses the positive attitude, proper guidance, support and leadership provided by the university management to students as strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement.

4.2.4.2.8 Positive attitude of the university management towards students and the provision of proper guidance, support and leadership

The participants are of the view that using bottom-up approaches to whole-of-university initiatives wherein faculties, departments and disciplines buy-in the ideas, own them and drive them from within, rather than receiving directives and instructions from top university management and expected to just implement without questioning them will help EALPs to succeed. Also, university stakeholders are required to share a common vision and a buy-in from all or some of the stakeholders (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226; Evans et al., 2009: 600). Furthermore, the implementation of academic literacy models and approaches that are content/subject/discipline-based should be embedded as part of the curriculum and not added on as extra subjects to an already overburdened curriculum if they are to bear the expected fruits of success (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). Lastly, provision of institutional leadership which leads to institutional change over individual change is highly needed to drive the initiatives (Burnett & Larmar, 2011; Cummins et al., 2005; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012). In the session to identify strategies for circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement, the subsequent issues were deliberated on:

Student 10: *“As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we will benefit a lot if our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities speedily. We will be very happy to see our timetable not clashing*

with the mainstream one as this will help us to focus on our academic work without distractions”

Student B: *“It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and provide leadership, guidance and support through putting measures in place to address challenges first year students may come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies and beyond the first year”*

Facilitator 2: *“As a facilitator, I am looking forward to a situation where students are no longer frustrated because of issues like timetable clashes and having people available to amicably address the genuine academic challenges students may be facing. The university management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students in order to provide leadership, guidance and support to these students.”*

Participants seem to be convinced that the display of positive attitude, proper guidance, support and leadership by the university management towards first year students are ideal for their academic success at the university. This in essence means that the university management has a responsibility to ensure that first year students are well taken care of through its demonstration of a positive attitude, proper guidance, support and leadership towards first year students.

This section dealt with the plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs and the strategies to circumvent them. CER in this study as a theoretical framework allowed for the inclusion of the marginalized and their participation in identifying threats to enhancement of EALPs and came up with strategies to circumvent such threats through debates and dialogue between different participants, which helped to emancipate and changed their lives (Ledwith, 2007: 591; Mahlomaholo, 2009: 226). Therefore, their conversational style of mutual respect and recognition of equality for all the participants (Mahlomaholo, 2009: 226) corroborated the stance of CER and the

narrative analysis. The succeeding section discusses the monitoring strategies and indicators that successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students happened.

The possible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students and strategies to circumvent them in 4.2.4 above may be as follows: lecturers/facilitators' negative attitude and low expectations from students which may be addressed through institutions deliberately and systematically avoiding labelling EAL students in deficit terms and frame them in positive terms. These will lead to higher teacher expectations and academic acceptance [which leads to motivated EAL students]. Further, students' negative attitude towards the facilitator and the course would be dealt with, which could be addressed by consistently encouraging EAL students to attend academic literacy classes and such classes being made compulsory. Moreover, late coming to class by both facilitators and students may be circumvented by respecting the course by both the facilitators and students through regular attendance of classes and being punctual. Additionally, traditional teaching that does not embed technology in the class can be reversed by the provision of ongoing training of facilitators especially on using technology in the class to engage students more as students refer to themselves as 'digital natives' and prefer learning and being engaged academically through technology. Finally, the uncomfortable learning environment for students require sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve minoritized students, which is very important to the academic success of these students.

Moreover, time management and the need for expertise have to be balanced, while simultaneously managing demands for greater accountability, there must be a concerted effort to have same and common understanding and interpretation of writing between academic staff and students across faculties and disciplines, consistent and common advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses will add more understanding; uninterested and demotivated students' situation can be addressed through respect given to facilitators by subject lecturers in faculties as experts in their own right, respect for academic learning support centres by academic staff is crucial to the success of students, their motivation and interest in

learning, academic staff doing away with colour blindness and denying differences by beginning to see and treat ESL students as such and not equating them with mainstream students by denying differences, collaborators sharing a common vision of the initiative they are involved in, creation of teamwork where collaboration is conducted with a full appreciation of the relevant expertise provided by all parties involved in the collaboration, which is key and fundamental to the success of the collaboration initiatives for the benefit of students.

In addition, clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses that could be avoided through availability of institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues (unofficial timetable clashes) and providing direction are highly needed especially on issues of clashes between EAL courses and mainstream subjects while the timetable does not have clashes. Academic advisors and EAL facilitators must be embraced as part of the collaborative initiatives within the university and steps be taken to accommodate them rather than isolating them. Also, splitting or spreading EAL students' first year curriculum to run for two years to extend their engagement in collegiate activities at university as part of the EDP implies that the normal 3 and 4 year degrees will automatically take 4 and 5 years respectively for these students to complete their undergraduate degrees if they are to finish in the stipulated time.

Lastly, the college or university must make special efforts to give EAL students sufficient helpful guidance especially on academic issues and negative attitude of the university management towards first year students and lack of proper guidance, support and leadership may be hampered by using bottom-up approaches to whole of university initiatives wherein faculties, departments and disciplines buy-in the ideas, own them and drive them from within, rather than receiving them from top university management and expected to just implement without questioning them. University stakeholders sharing a common vision and a buy in from all or some of the stakeholders is very critical for everyone to be responsible and accountable. Implementation of English academic literacy models and approaches that are content/subject/discipline-based have to be embedded as part of the curriculum and not added on as extra subjects to an already overburdened curriculum. Finally, provision of institutional leadership which leads to institutional change over individual change is highly needed. The succeeding section discusses the monitoring strategies

and indicators that successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students happened.

4.2.5 Monitoring strategies and indicators that successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students occurred

This section provides the monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students explored in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 as both components and aspects and conditions needed for successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students respectively. Firstly, monitoring strategies are presented and lastly, indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are highlighted.

4.2.5.1 Course evaluation by students and facilitators/lecturers

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants in this study hold a view that course evaluation by students at the end of the semester or year depending on whether it is a semester or year course is a good monitoring strategy and also an indicator of successful enhancement of a course. Participants specifically prefer that the course evaluation should be done in the middle of the semester or year and also at the end of the semester or year. This according to the participants will help a lot in the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Tracing and recording ESL students' results in both academic literacy courses and other mainstream courses throughout their undergraduate studies; early identification and intervention for ESL students with weak language skills; and comprehensive longitudinal studies of effectiveness and impact of the discipline-based language programs for ESL students are the best ways to evaluate the course as a monitoring strategy and an indicator of successful enhancement of the course.

Course evaluations per term, semester or end of year evaluations by both students and academic staff also help in monitoring and also as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. According to Edstrom (2008: 99) course evaluation is normally done for audit and development or for accountability and improvement.

Edstrom further argues that real and valuable course evaluation by both students and lecturers incorporate performance audit and development (Edstrom, 2008: 100). In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, participants alluded to the following issues:

Student E: *“I think that course evaluation by us first year students is very important as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of whether enhancement of the course has been successful”*

Student 10: *“If as first year students we are asked to evaluate the course half-way or at the end of the semester or year will be a good monitoring and an indicator of whether the enhancement strategies have been successful or not”*

Facilitator A: *“As facilitators we are convinced that course evaluation by students in the middle of the semester or year and at the end of a semester or year depending on whether the course is a semester or year course will help a lot in monitoring whether progress is being made regarding the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.”*

The above comments by the participants confirm that they share the same sentiments and views that course evaluation by students in the middle of the semester or year and at the end of a semester or year depending on whether the course is a semester or year course will help a great deal in assessing the progress students are making and what facilitators need to change or focus on to improve the delivery of the course. The subsequent theme sheds some light on monthly evaluation of students' performance by facilitators/lecturers in an endeavour to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.5.2 Monthly evaluation of students' performance by facilitators/lecturers

Participants in this study are of the opinion that monthly evaluation of students' performance and progress is critical as a monitoring strategy and also as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. Participants further feel that lecturers should

not wait for the end of the semester or year to realize that students have backlogs and are struggling with the course. They are convinced that interventions like monthly evaluation of students' performance and progress will help a great deal both as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. Support and monitoring of EAL students' academic progress have to be made compulsory if they are to succeed academically and bold and clear steps have to be taken as well and communicated lucidly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, rather than deficit terms. Edstrom (2008: 104) claims that evaluation, whether done by lecturers or students on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or at the end of the year, it must have a strong connection with development or improvement, not just for audit to check whether lecturers are doing their job. According to Biggs in Edstrom (2008: 105) evaluation must be part of Constructive alignment to bring about appropriate learning activities in the course. In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were highlighted by the participants:

Student 4: *"I am of the view that monthly evaluation of students' academic performance by the lecturers will assist as a monitoring strategy and as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course"*

Student H: *"I believe that lecturers should not wait for the end of the term, semester or year to be able to determine or realize that students are academically underperforming or performing. Monthly evaluation of students' academic performance in my opinion will help a lot as a monitoring tool as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course"*

Facilitator 2: *"As a facilitator I am obligated to reflect from time to time regarding teaching, learning and assessment in my classes. I am convinced that regular monthly evaluation of students' performance can help me a lot in knowing where my students need more support and which work they have mastered."*

Participants in this study concur that facilitators need to do monthly evaluation of students' performance in all their written tasks and activities with the ultimate goal of providing remedial action at an earlier stage whenever it is needed. They concur that such a monthly evaluation of students' work in their workbooks will serve as both a monitoring tool and an indicator of how successful the enhancement of the course has been. The succeeding theme focuses on facilitators selecting graded readers for

reading reactions writing in the library for students as one of the monitoring strategies as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.5.3 Selection of specific books (graded readers) to be read for reading reactions

ALC108 and ALN108 groups of participants in this study hold a strong view that the many graded readers they have to choose from in the library for reading reactions should be limited. Participants are of the view that a specific number and the list of graded readers to be read by first year students should be selected for students to read in order to avoid academic forgery, cheating and plagiarism. The participants are concerned that some students forge reading reactions and pretend to have read a book that they did not read and facilitators are unable to identify and expose this kind of academic cheating because of the fact that there are many graded readers to choose from in the library. According to Hinkel (2006: 121) there are always very important connections between L2 reading and vocabulary. Hu and Nation in Hinkel (2006: 122) indicate that an L2 reader needs to understand approximately 98% of the unique words in such texts as short novels or academic materials. In real terms, this represents about 5,000 word families (a family is a base word with its related words and their inflected forms, e.g., child, children, childhood. Coady and Huchin in Hinkel (2006: 122) further argue that irrespective of students' aspirations to enter universities, L2 learners need to acquire a substantial vocabulary to achieve competencies in practically all L2 skills, such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

A vocabulary of 2,000 words may serve as an essential base needed for daily interaction and speaking, whereas 5,000 base words are typically intended for a

general, non-specialist audience. Words need to be encountered 12-20 times to be learned in context. For learning to occur, activities with new words, such as reading or listening, should meet the following conditions: interest, repetition, deliberate attention, and generative use (the use of the word in a new context (Nation, 2005: 585). Extensive reading of graded readers by first year university students in the library emphasize on reading large amounts of material for enjoyment, hence they choose any graded reader of their choice and read one each week. According to Eskey (2005: 567) the relationship between reading and vocabulary is well documented and reciprocal and the more one reads, the larger his or her language base becomes. For less proficient learners, graded or simplified readers with controlled vocabulary loads may be the optimal choice. Therefore, without graded readers, reading for second language learners would be one continuous struggle against an overwhelming vocabulary level (Nation, 2005: 588). In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were raised:

Student C: *“As a first year student going to the library to pick any book of my interest from hundreds and hundreds of graded readers to read every week and thereafter write a reading reaction, I have observed that it is easier for many of my classmates to cheat and pretend that they have read a book in the library while it is not true”*

Student 6: *“I suggest that a specific number and names of graded readers in the library must be recommended for students to read than the current practice wherein they have to choose any book from hundreds and hundreds of books in the library. This way it will help the lecturer to trace whether the student has indeed read the book or it is just forgery and cheating”*

Facilitator B: *“As facilitators we have observed that the many graded readers that students are supposed to choose from in the library give them an opportunity to cheat and pretend to have read while they did not. A good example is when students write a reading reaction on Animal Farm or Romeo and Juliet while they know that they only read these books at school before coming to the university. In my view, as facilitators we must recommend a*

certain number of reading reactions that students should read to avoid academic cheating and plagiarism.”

Given the above views, the participants in this study agree in principle that since there are hundreds and hundreds of graded readers for students to pick one each week and read in order to write a reading reaction when they come to the class, it is imperative that such reading must be manageable. This means that facilitators should select a certain number of books and provide a list for students choose from when they visit the library to avoid cheating and plagiarism. A selected list of graded readers to be read by students in the library will help a lot in eliminating forgery and academic cheating of students who write reading reactions of books they read while at high school and pretending that they read them in the library. The theme that follows addresses the provision of continuous assessment with early and detailed feedback as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.5.4 Continuous assessment with early detailed feedback

Participants of ALC108 and ALN108 in this study prefer to get feedback which is detailed as early as possible from the facilitators and lecturers. They suggest that feedback on continuous assessment like academic writing of paragraphs, essays and reading reactions should be given weekly or fortnightly for students to work on the feedback that is detailed regarding mistakes and errors they may have committed in their respective written tasks and activities. The participants furthermore prefer that feedback on quarterly tests must be given after a fortnight or within three weeks from the day of writing the test especially given the number of students in a class which normally ranges from 20 to 35 students and also considering quality marking with detailed feedback. The participants are convinced that these suggestions if implemented, will help a lot as monitoring strategies and also as indicators of successful enhancement of the course. According to Hattie and Timperly (2007: 81) feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding and thus, feedback is a consequence of performance. When feedback

is combined with more of a correctional review, the feedback and instruction become intertwined until the process itself takes on the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness (Kuhavy in Hattie & Timperly, 2007: 82). In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, participants said the following:

Student 9: *“I think that detailed feedback in a continuous assessment course like the English academic literacy courses should be given as early as possible for students to be able to self-correct or peer-correct before moving to other aspects of their written tasks. For example, every week students have to write at least one reading reaction and it will be more effective if students get feedback weekly before they write another reading reaction”*

Student 1: *“Since our English academic literacy classes range from 20 to 35 students, I would suggest that at least for reading reactions and paragraphs, we must be given detailed feedback weekly or at worse fortnightly; for essays at least within two weeks or at worse three weeks and lastly, for tests within three weeks or at worst four weeks. In this manner, feedback will be more helpful and meaningful for us to improve our academic writing skills”*

Facilitator 1: *“Facilitators should always bear in mind that feedback on student writing is very crucial and important for student to improve their academic writing skills. As a facilitator I must take it upon myself to provide early and detailed written feedback to my students at least after a week for paragraphs and reading reactions; at least two weeks for essays and at least three weeks for feedback on tests. This way feedback will be more meaningful to students.”*

According to the comments made by the participants above, it is quite lucid that early and detailed written feedback is regarded as crucial and critical to the academic performance of first year students. It therefore suggests and behoves all facilitators to make sure that written tasks like reading reactions and paragraphs feedback is given within a week or at worse within two weeks while essays and tests can be given within

two weeks and at worse three to four weeks. The participants are convinced that if they can be given early and detailed feedback, it will help them a lot in improving their academic writing skills. The next theme expounds on the general reviews of assessment on student feedback by facilitators in addition to the detailed and early written feedback given to students as a monitoring and also as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.5.5 General reviews of assessment on student feedback

The participants in this study are of the view that lecturers and facilitators should give general reviews and feedback on assessment regarding each written academic task or activity in addition to the detailed feedback given to each student in their written academic tasks. Participants in this study suggest that lecturers and facilitators may come up with PowerPoint slides presentations, handouts or any form of presentation on how assessment was done and generally illuminating on the common mistakes and errors that were prevalent in such a written academic task. Participants further alluded that this idea will go a long way as both a monitoring strategy and an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. According to Charless (2006: 1) feedback is central to student learning. Ramsden and Hounsell in Charless (2008: 2-3) posit that comments on students' work represent one of the key characteristics of quality teaching and are decisive in learning and development beyond formal educational settings.

Moreover, assessment dialogues between tutors and students which seek to reduce the gap on perceptions on feedback are key (Charless, 2008: 3-4). Finally, Higgins in Charless (2008: 4) claims that many students are simply unable to understand feedback comments and interpret them correctly, hence the need for general reviews of assessment feedback in class through assessment dialogues between students and tutors. In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, participants alluded the following issues:

Student D: *“As first year students we need regular general reviews of our performance in class in addition to detailed feedback written on our assessment tasks and activities”*

Student 3: *“I think it is important for the lecturer to either through handouts or even a PowerPoint presentation, generally highlight some of the prevalent errors and mistakes we commit in our reading reactions, paragraphs and essays before we receive the detailed feedback. These general reviews will help us as first year students to focus on areas that we struggle with working individually and also cooperating with our peers in the class.”*

Facilitator A: *“We facilitators should always provide general reviews or feedback to all the students after marking a particular written task either a paragraph, reading reaction or essay and highlight the common mistakes or errors students commit in their academic writing in addition to the detailed feedback given in their workbooks. This will also assist in creating peer-teaching and peer-correction activities that will benefit everyone.”*

The participants in this study are of the view that in addition to early and detailed written feedback that facilitators should give students, facilitators should furthermore provide general reviews on how students performed in their written tasks before introducing the next lecture. Facilitators can use either handouts, PowerPoint presentation or write on the board in front of the class common errors that students committed in their written tasks just to make students aware of the areas they need to improve on before focusing on their individual early and detailed written feedback in their workbooks. The theme that follows focuses on facilitator monthly or quarterly individual or focus group interviews with students to check progress and students' experiences of the course.

4.2.5.6 Facilitator monthly or quarterly individual interviews with students to check progress and students' experiences of the course

Participants in this study are convinced that lecturers and facilitators should have monthly or quarterly focus group interviews or individual face to face interviews with a

selected number of students representing three categories of students' performance in class, that is students from the below average performers, average performers and above average performers to get their views and experiences of the course. The participants are of the opinion that these focus group and individual face to face interviews with the lecturer or facilitator will help both lecturers and first year students to reflect on their teaching and learning experiences as part of the monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of the course.

Participants are of the view that these interviews will create a platform for more meaningful engagement that allow students to reflect on their experiences of the course and be able to chart a way forward together with the lecturer or facilitator to subordinate teaching to learning and ultimately help to improve teaching and learning for first year students. According to Clark (2005: 297-98) lecturers need to engage in individual or focus group interviews with students monthly or quarterly to solicit the experiences of students in the course and what they see as motivating or demotivating factors in the course. Through individual or focus group interviews with students, lecturers are likely to discover or gain invaluable hints and tips on how students experience the course and what progress they are making in their academic work (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser & Hara, 2006: 247-48). In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, participants raised the following critical issues:

Student 8: *"As a first year student, I am of the conviction that lecturers are not doing enough in terms of understanding what we are going through as first year students. For instance, I am a shy student who rarely talks in class, but I would be more open if the lecturer can engage me one on one in trying to know my experiences of the course"*

Student E: *"I suggest that lecturers should arrange monthly or quarterly meetings with first year students ranging from below average performers, average performers and above average performers to get a feeling of our experiences of the course and our views"*

Facilitator 2: *“Facilitators should create other platforms to engage students and to understand what students are experiencing and going through in their courses especially as first year university students outside the threatening environment of the classroom. Individual or focus group interviews can help a lot composed of below average, average and above average student performance so that they can have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and ideas with the facilitator and their peers.”*

The participants in this study are convinced that monthly or quarterly interviews either with individual students or in focus groups will assist both the facilitator and students to reflect on the challenges they experience in the course and what works in order to improve teaching and learning. These types of interviews will accommodate below average student performers, average and above average performers so that they can share what works and what does not work for them in class. The next theme discusses the role of incentives or rewards as a form of providing extrinsic motivation to students and also to inculcate the culture of a healthy competition amongst students to perform better in their academic work as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

4.2.5.7 Encourage the spirit of a healthy academic competition in class through extrinsic motivation (rewards)

The ALC108 and ALN108 participants in this study believe that extrinsic motivation is critical especially to first year students at university. They assert that if lecturers or facilitators provide some form of extrinsic motivation to their students, it would help a lot in bringing the spirit of hard work and a healthy competition to do well academically amongst first year students. They are convinced that the introduction of incentives or rewards for good performance will raise the standards in the class not just for individual students, but also the overall performance of all students. The participants suggest that facilitators or lecturers should be creative and innovative in how they reward good performance of students in their courses. Walker, Green and Mansell (2006: 3) aver that identification with academics has been defined as the extent to which individuals base their self-esteem on academic outcomes, feel as though they belong in their

specific academic environment, and value academic achievement. Extrinsic motivation is motivation that is directed at attaining or avoiding something outside the self. The extrinsically motivated student will perform for the attainment of a desired grade or some other form of external reward (i.e., money or awards) (Walker, Green, & Mansell, 2006: 4). In the session to identify monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students, the following issues were alluded to by the participants:

Student G: “Some of us first year students lack confidence and motivation to work hard and do well academically. I feel that personally I need some kind of external motivation to work even harder”

Student 2: “I think lecturers should come up with ways to motivate us first year students to perform well academically. The spirit of competition amongst students should be encouraged through giving students some form of rewards or recognition for performing well academically”

Facilitator A: “As a facilitator I am of the view that good academic performance if rewarded lead to more good performance. The spirit of a healthy academic competition amongst first year students should be inculcated and nurtured in order to motivate students to work even harder academically.”

The participants in this study are of the view that facilitators can play an important role in providing extrinsic motivation to students in their classes. The participants propose that facilitators can be creative and innovative in using incentives or rewards for students to perform well academically. The participants further propose that facilitators can inculcate the culture of healthy competition amongst students to do well in their academic work.

In its establishment of problem-posing education, CER is an emancipatory system which attempts to regain humanity and respects students and lecturers' experiences and their culture through free and open dialogues between students and teachers wherein a pedagogy of questioning is adopted to constantly discover reality (Nouri, 2014: 79-81). CER provided that platform of critical engagement between different

participants (Carr & Kemmis, 2005: 350) in order to arrive at amicable solutions on monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. Therefore, the dialogues, conversations and discussions arrived at in all the sessions that took place in this study were consistent with CER and the narrative analysis, the theoretical framework and data analysis respectively underpinning this study.

In order to monitor and demonstrate that successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students take place, the following strategies and indicators may be employed: course evaluation by facilitators and students that could be done in the middle of the semester or year and also at the end of the semester or year; monthly evaluation of students' academic performance by facilitators; selection of specific books (graded readers) to be read by students in the library for reading reactions writing in the class; continuous assessment with early and detailed feedback; facilitator monthly or quarterly individual or focus group interviews with students to check progress and students' experiences of the course; facilitators encouraging the spirit of a healthy academic competition amongst students in class through extrinsic motivation (rewards, incentives) and doing it in a creative and interesting way.

The subsequent section provides the conclusion of this chapter (chapter 4) and set the tone for chapter 5.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In the first section of this chapter, challenges justifying the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students were highlighted. In response to the challenges, the second section discussed components and aspects needed and put in place to address the challenges. Conditions under which the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students worked according to the participants were presented.

Furthermore, plausible threats which could impede the successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students and strategies to thwart them were also highlighted and elaborated. The last section provided the monitoring strategies and indicators that the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students was successful as per the perspectives of the participants.

In the subsequent chapter, the focus will be on the discussion and summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, proposed strategies and implications for future research towards enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, ASPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ON ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students towards better academic performance of students at the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. This chapter reports on the findings, draws conclusions, makes recommendations and proposes strategies for the effective enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. This chapter further reports on the challenges that justify the formulation of effective strategies for enhancing EALPs. Limitations of the study are also highlighted.

This study has focused on strategies that effectively enhance EALPs. It aimed at proposing strategies to effectively enhance EALPs for first year university students at the aforesaid university campus. The study was driven by the following research question:

How can EALPs for first year university students be enhanced at the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS?

The key and critical argument I raised as the researcher has been the marginalisation of facilitators and students in the selection and formulation of EALPs for first year university students. However, this challenge is not unique to South Africa. The literature accessed from countries such as Australia, Canada, UK and USA also experience challenges with their EALPs for first year university students. The next section focuses on findings aligned to the five objectives driving this study.

5.2 FINDINGS ALIGNED TO THE STUDY OBJECTIVES

This section presents findings from both the literature review and empirical data from PAR.

5.2.1 The need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students can be justified in the following manner:

5.2.1.1 Module content does not speak to students' background and life experiences

The bone of contention is that students and facilitators are concerned and worried because of the confusion caused by the content which is American and irrelevant to their daily lived African experiences. They are of the view that the prescribed ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks are detached from their own individual and collective experiences as Africans and South Africans in particular. This frustrates both the students and facilitators. Similarly, Australian and Canadian universities have had similar experiences respectively where there has been lack of necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized ESL students in recent times (Baik & Greig, 2009: 401; Birell, 2006; Bretag, 2007; Department of Employment, Science & Training, 2002, 2007) that involved colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual English speaking students and ESL students (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Toohey, 2009).

For American students, the irrelevance of the module or course content led to ELL and ESL students being offered less than helpful guidance (Bunch & Endris, 2012) which led to lower teacher expectations, academic marginalization and demotivated ELL and ESL students (Harklau, 2006). In some South African universities, the irrelevance of module or course content to students' background and experiences led to high attrition and lack of success of ESL students at universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). It is quite common and part of the human nature that it becomes difficult to focus on something that one disapproves of or not interested in. Therefore, module content needs to speak

to students' backgrounds and experiences in order for them to take the module serious.

5.2.1.2 Academic reading and writing enjoy prominence over language usage or grammar

The course content for both ALC108 and ALN108 is emphasizes more focus on academic reading and writing at the expense of language usage or grammar. Both student and facilitator participants concur that this deliberate neglect of language usage is a serious drawback on the academic success of first year university students. This implies that the type of students enrolled in ALC108 and ALN108 need more language support than what the course/module guides suggest. Similar sentiments were shared by Australian ESL students who also expressed concerns about the level of their English language proficiency and linguistic demands of university education as most EALPs were focused on language skills like academic reading and writing than developing language usage or grammar skills (Birell, 2006a; Birell, 2006b; Birell, Hawthorne, & Richardson, 2006) while UK and Canadian ESL students experienced the emphasis of academic writing skills at the expense of language use or grammar at universities (Lea & Street, 2006: 368; Kress, 2003; Kress & Street, 2006; Van Dijk, 1997). Furthermore, ELL and ESL students' limited English proficiency in the USA has been singled out as the usual explanation for their low university participation and other academic underachievement issues (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009) while ESL students in South African universities experienced skills based EAL courses that focused more on academic reading and writing and ignored language use or grammar (Jacobs, 2005: 476).

5.2.1.3 Classes time for English academic literacy courses are not conducive for optimal student attendance

EAL courses normally take place in the evenings from 15H00 until 17H00 which becomes an inconvenience for many students who stay off campus. The issue of evening classes is also exacerbated by the fact that students are already tired from attending classes since 8am and their concentration level is negatively affected. Inappropriateness of time scheduled for EAL classes is an issue that is prevalent in

Canada, USA and South Africa. In Canada in particular, time constraints and the need for expertise to address language challenges of ESL students have been major concerns. As a result, EAL classes have been scheduled at odd times in the evening when students were already tired and lacked concentration in these classes (Jacquet, 2008) while in the USA, time constraints for ELL and ESL students forced them to work long hours which limited their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). In some South African universities, EAL courses were added on as extra subjects outside the main timetable to an already over-burdened curriculum which made it difficult for students to succeed at universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). This implies that time allocated for EAL courses needs to be addressed for conducive and optimal student attendance.

5.2.1.4 There are disparities between the language of instruction and the language of assessment

The bone of contention is that students and facilitators are concerned and worried because of the confusion caused by the disparities and inconsistencies of the module/course content and assessment. The prescribed textbooks for the ALC108 and ALN108 courses are written in American English while assessment is done in British English. This frustrates both the students and facilitators. They are of the view that the prescribed ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks are detached from their own individual and collective experiences as Africans and South Africans in particular. Similarly, Australian and Canadian universities have had similar experiences respectively where there has been lack of necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized ESL students in recent times (Baik & Greig, 2009: 401; Birell, 2006; Bretag, 2007; Department of Employment, Science & Training, 2002, 2007) that involved colour blindness and denial of differences between monolingual English speaking students and ESL students (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Toohey, 2009). For American students, the irrelevance of the module or course content led to ELL and ESL students being offered less than helpful guidance (Bunch & Endris, 2012) which led to lower teacher expectations, academic marginalization and demotivated ELL and ESL students (Harklau, 2006). In some South African universities, the irrelevance of module or course content to students' background and experiences led to high attrition and lack of success of ESL students at universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476). Language of

instruction and assessment disparities need to be aligned and harmonized to address students and facilitators' concerns and worries.

5.2.1.5 Some Lecturers' behaviour is unhelpful

There are three findings relevant to lecturer behaviour and supported by the policy documents and literature which are facilitator/educator competence, pastoral role, and enthusiasm. Both students and facilitators concur that facilitator competence, pastoral role and enthusiasm are central to the success of students and as a result, some facilitators do not demonstrate possession of these three findings and it is a cause for concern. Facilitators are expected to master and be experts in teaching EAL courses, be enthusiastic, show passion, love and commitment to the work they are doing while simultaneously caring, supporting and treating their students equally with respect and dignity and this is supported by Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and MRTEQ Policy Revised (2015: 58-62) documents.

5.2.1.6 Student behaviour lack commitment

The behaviour of students which does not conform to conventional classroom norms emerged as an area of concern that needed to be nipped in the bud and remediated before it gets out of hand. Lack of helpful guidance from the college towards ESL and ELLs was one of the contributing factors for students behaving in an unfriendly, unacceptable and negative way in the USA, Canada and Australia (Bunch & Endris, 2012). The need for ESL and ELLs to work for long hours also limited their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Labelling of students (ELLs and ESL) in deficit terms led to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization, which further led to demotivated ELLs and ESL students (Harklau, 2010).

5.2.1.7 There exists a lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support to the EALPs

Lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support was also a challenge that participants felt that it needed to be addressed in order to enhance EALPs for first year

university students. The participants concurred that they are mostly frustrated and they do not know who to turn to for assistance as it appears that no one seems to want to take responsibility in helping first year students with challenges they are experiencing. Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students and lack of helpful guidance from the college towards ESL and ELLs showed lack of institutional leadership and support for these students in both Australian and USA universities respectively (Bunch & Endris, 2012). Labelling and framing ESL and ELLs students in deficit terms leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization, which lead to demotivated ELLs and ESL students in both South African and USA universities (Jacobs, 2005: 476; Harklau, 2010). Therefore, institutional leadership, guidance and support is critically needed for the success of EALPs.

The discussion above indicated that the need for enhancing EALPs for first year university students can be justified on the following grounds: firstly, module content does not speak to students' background and lived experiences. Secondly, academic reading and writing enjoys prominence over language usage or grammar. Thirdly, classes' time for English academic literacy courses is not conducive for optimal student attendance. Fourthly, there are disparities between the language of instruction and the language of assessment. Fifthly, some lecturers' behaviour is unhelpful and moreover, student behaviour lack commitment. Finally, there exists a lack of institutional leadership, guidance and support for the EALPs.

5.2.2 There are some important components and aspects needed to enhance EALPs for first year university students

This section deals with the some suggested components and aspects as solutions to the challenges above towards enhancing EALPs drawing from both the literature and empirical data.

5.2.2.1 Provision of textbook background prior commencement of classes or availability of localized textbooks

Participants share a consensus that the American textbooks that are devoid of African experiences and therefore irrelevant to students' lived experiences need more thorough introduction, background, schema activation and building from the beginning of the year and throughout the course in order to prepare students to be fully engaged in the content and contexts that are devoid of their own lived experiences or alternatively, localized or African textbooks have to be prescribed for the benefit of students. Drawing from the literature, lecturers/facilitators' consciousness and understanding of embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions help in this process of providing the requisite background about the textbook (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007). This means that there must be clear and well planned saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization (Sleeter, 2004).

According to Ambrose et al., (2010: 13-14) students' prior knowledge about the course can help or hinder learning in the following manner: firstly, students always bring along some knowledge gained in other courses or daily life to the classroom. This knowledge includes facts, concepts, models, perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes, some of which is accurate, complete, and appropriate for the context, some inaccurate, insufficient for learning requirements of the course, or simply inappropriate for the context. As students bring this knowledge in our classrooms, it influences how they filter and interpret incoming information. Secondly, if they do not draw on relevant prior knowledge or that knowledge is inactive, it may not facilitate the integration of new knowledge they are supposed to learn. Moreover, if students' prior knowledge is insufficient for a task or learning situation, it may fail to support new knowledge, whereas if it is inappropriate for the context or inaccurate, it may actively distort or impede new learning.

5.2.2.2 Harmonizing and integrating the teaching of academic reading and writing with language usage or grammar

Participants share similar views and sentiments regarding the balance interplay of teaching both academic reading and writing alongside language usage or grammar as students are of the view that their grammar needs to be upgraded in their first year at university as schools did not thoroughly prepare them on this area of language. In the UK, universities shared a common understanding and assumptions of assignment titles between students and tutors; tutor feedback on students' feedback, and the importance of students' own identity as writers rather than acquisition of academic writing skills in order to create harmony between reading, writing and language use (Lea & Street, 1998: 170; Bailey, 2007: 10-11; Snow, Uccelli, Olson & Torrance, 2009: 115-116).

5.2.2.3 Limiting reading reactions from eight to five per semester with more focused paragraph writing and detailed feedback

Participants argue that writing eight reading reactions per semester does not benefit students in as far as their academic reading and writing skills are concerned. They suggest that five reading reactions per semester would be sufficient coupled with more focused paragraph writing with clear and detailed feedback. According to Spada and Russell (2006: 156) and Guenette (2007: 51) less writing activities for students with more focused and detailed feedback helps more in improving students' academic reading and writing skills than when they write more activities with less clear and focused feedback.

5.2.2.4 Clarifying disparities between the language of instruction and the language of assessment at the beginning of the year or clarifying which one is acceptable for assessment

The participants in this study are convinced that if the confusion about the textbooks that use American English while assessment is in British English is to be addressed, there are two alternatives involved. Firstly, they suggest that the textbook must just be consistent on the same English, be it American or British in both content and assessment. Secondly, the participants propose that assurance and clarity must be

provided at the beginning of the year on which English is acceptable in written activities and such must also be clearly stated in the course/module guides in addition to the clarity assurance given. There must be explicitness of modularity, assessment, and university procedures on student writing at an institutional level as was the case in UK universities (Lea & Street, 1998: 170). This should be coupled with ongoing training of academic staff both discipline specialists and English academic literacy facilitators or practitioners as was done in the Canadian universities (Sleeter, 2004). Lecturers' consciousness and understanding of embedded systemic prejudices, oppressive discourses, and injustices reproduced within educational institutions assisted lecturers to provide assurance and clarity to students in the Canadian universities (Nieto, 2002; Dei, 2007).

5.2.2.5 Friendly and acceptable facilitator or lecturer behaviour

The findings in this study supported by the literature affirm that inviting lecturer or facilitator behaviour is necessary of successful enhancement of EALPs. Facilitators are expected to be competent in their teaching of AL courses, demonstrate pastoral care to their students and be enthusiastic in their work. From the literature perspectives, the facilitator should possess enthusiasm, competence and pastoral responsibility in order to make students develop a sense of belonging and feel welcomed in class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). Cornelius-White, Motschnig-Pitrik and Figl (2013: 1) allude to the following points regarding what invitational education or Person-Centred Education (PCE) is about: Person-Centred Education (PCE) or invitational education is an approach to education, which hypothesizes that people learn and teach best when reciprocally facilitated with empathy, warmth, and genuineness. It grew from the person-centred theory and research with counselling.

Empathy refers to an experience of understanding by one person of the feelings, meanings, and goals of the experiences of another. Empathy is always uniquely experienced with each person. Understanding a specific person's learning style means accommodating to these individual and cultural differences. Warmth is an unconditional positive regard, respect for, or acceptance of another's experience. Genuineness refers to honesty within a person of that person's own experience. It is

a congruence in which a person is not distorting or denying his or her own experiences and being “real” with others. Together, the three attitudes form an interpersonal approach of establishing respectful, positive relationships between students and teachers (i.e. how to effectively care). Its goal is broad-actualization of individuals and their systems. Cognitive, behavioural, and affective outcomes are sought. All these will lead to facilitators treating students in a fair manner and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit EAL students’ academic needs, as shown in UK universities (Sleeter, 2004).

5.2.2.6 Appropriate and acceptable student behaviour in class

Participants in this study are in agreement that first year university enrolled in EALPs prefer to be called ‘learners’ and not students as they are afraid that the label ‘student’ instead of ‘learner’ will make lecturers and facilitators not to provide them with the necessary academic support they need to successfully navigate their way in their undergraduate studies. They furthermore attribute antisocial behaviour of some students in the classroom to this labeling of first years as students instead of learners. From the literature perspectives, student behaviour and campus experiences have an important bearing on college attainment (Alderman, 2006). This is one of the reasons why students want to feel a sense of belonging in class as was the case in some South African universities (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). All these require a skilled facilitator who is enthusiastic, competent and plays his or her pastoral role in class. Therefore, clear and bold steps must be taken and communicated lucidly to all campus stakeholders and in particular lecturers and facilitators framing EAL students in positive terms, as opposed to deficit terms as confirmed by USA universities (Alderman, 2006).

5.2.2.7 An improved institutional leadership, guidance and support for EALPs

Institutional leadership, guidance and support is crucial to the success of EAL first year university students. Facilitators are of the conviction that institutional leadership, guidance and support from various levels at the university is critical to the success of the EALPs. Participants appeal that there must be mechanisms and structures in place to provide leadership, guidance and support to first year university students at different

levels of management in order to make the experiences of first year university students worthwhile and fulfilling. Bottom-up approach style of institutional management is necessary as indicated in Australian universities (Evans et al., 2009: 602). Also, whole-of-university initiatives which include coordinated and developed plan of action; processes for identifying and recognizing good practice; funding to develop initiatives at the local level; and authentic support from a high level champion are necessary for institutional leadership to be effective in providing support to students as confirmed in Canadian universities (Barnett & Larmar, 2011).

EAL students' entrance university points are utilized effectively by university administrators and an extension of their stay at college by one year is suggested to be a norm if they are to succeed academically as is the case in USA universities. Universities in the USA created consultative forums are involving all stakeholders starting with students and ending with management responsible for academic matters. Finally, institutional management and leadership took clear and bold steps and communicated them lucidly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms (Alderman, 2006).

The discussion above highlighted the following as some of the possible components and aspects to address the challenges raised in 5.2.1: first, provision of textbook background prior commencement of classes or availability of localized textbooks. Second, harmonizing and integrating the teaching of academic reading and writing with language usage or grammar. Third, limiting reading reactions from eight to five per semester with more focused paragraph writing and detailed feedback. Fourth, clarifying disparities between the language of instruction and the language of assessment at the beginning of the year or clarifying which language is acceptable for assessment. Fifth, friendly and acceptable facilitator or lecturer behaviour. Moreover, appropriate and acceptable student behaviour in class. Lastly, an improved institutional leadership, guidance and support for EALPs.

5.2.3 Some conditions are necessary for successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students according to the findings in this study.

This section presents the empirical findings of this study juxtaposed with the literature to shed some light on some of the conditions sought to be conducive for successful enhancement of EALPs which are as follows:

5.2.3.1 More content schema activation and building at the beginning of a year, course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture

Participants strongly argue that more schema building and activation about the content of these English academic literacy courses will help and prepare them a great deal to be able to anticipate all that they will be dealing with. Since the ALC108 and ALN108 textbooks are American oriented, the participants are of the opinion that through preparation in a form of introducing the content of the textbooks will assist them to cope and adapt to the American content of the textbooks. From the literature, these require adequate and ongoing training of EAL practitioners and discipline specialists and the saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as was the case with Canadian universities (Sleeter, 2004).

5.2.3.2 Introduction of more language usage activities that include presentations and vocabulary building exercises

The participants from the ALC108 and ALN108 groups respectively prefer more language practice activities especially through classroom presentations to improve language usage and vocabulary building. The participants from these two English academic literacy courses seem to have a consensus that they need more language practice exercises in as much as they need more academic reading and writing exercises. They argue that they come from schools that did not properly teach them enough on language usage and as a result, they lack the confidence to speak or write in English because of the language usage gaps they possess. Drawing from the literature, the aforesaid views as expressed by the ALC108 and ALN108 participants are focused on creating more language and vocabulary learning exercises that will be shared in class through presentations on regular basis that will also likely improve

students' confidence in using English as alluded to by Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006: 197) and Zwiers (2013: 214-223).

5.2.3.3 Fostering and inculcating an engaging and active classroom culture

The participants hold strong views about the classroom environment that is ideal for effective teaching and learning to take place. They aspire and desire a lively, engaging and an active classroom that is led by a vivacious and zealous lecturer. They assert that a passive lecturer who appears uninterested in their teaching is not preferable to them. The ALC108 and ALN108 groups of participants prefer an interactive lecturer who inspires confidence in their students and uses appropriate humour relevant to the content that is being taught. For these participants, a lecturer must lead the class by example through their interest, passion and enthusiasm for the course. Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice and adequate regular training of EAL practitioners and discipline specialists were crucial for students' academic success in Australian university (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Students need to be treated fairly and the celebration of diversity through adjustment of pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs as was the case in Canadian universities (Sleeter, 2004).

Moreover, clear guidelines from the institutional level on module assessment, and university procedures on student writing should be readily available to all students. There must also be alignment of student and tutor assumptions and understandings of assignment titles, tutor feedback on students' reading and writing, and the importance of students' identity as writers (Lea & Street, 1998: 170). Students want to feel a sense of belonging in class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). In addition, language and content need to be integrated in order to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Lastly, multimodal approach to teaching academic literacy which open up new spaces of learning through symbolic objects should be implemented (Archer, 2006: 191).

5.2.3.4 Availability of competent and interactive facilitators and lecturers who value students and the course

The participants in this study want to be taught by a lecturer who addresses tensions with and amongst students in a matured way by talking to them in private through face to face personal engagement than rebuking them in public in the presence of other students in class. The facilitator needs to make students to feel a sense of belonging in his or her class (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) through the application of a multimodal approach to teaching academic literacy for first year university students (Archer, 2006: 191). These facilitators go the extra mile and make efforts to adjust pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs (Sleeter, 2004). While adequate and ongoing training is essential to enhance facilitators and lecturers' academic teaching skills (Andrews, 2013: 34), the saturation of educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students is crucial for their academic success (Sleeter, 2004).

5.2.3.5 Facilitators who are patient enough to treat first year students as learners, rather than treating them as students who know much

The participants in this study are of the view that first year courses must focus more on building the foundation of making students transition from being learners to becoming students. They are furthermore afraid that if this factor is neglected, first year students at the university will continue to struggle and many will drop out of the system before completing their undergraduate degrees. Facilitators share the same sentiments as students that at this level, they should be treated as learners and not students. Firstly, a concerted effort must be made by the university management to saturate their educational institution with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students who will find it much easier to understand the needs of these students (Andrews, 2013: 34) and simultaneously help students to experience a sense of belonging (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) through treating students fairly and celebrating diversity through adjusting pedagogical practices to suit EAL students' academic needs (Sleeter, 2004).

5.2.3.6 An engaged and improved institutional leadership, guidance and support that is forever present whenever needed

The participants posit that first year students hold a view that a mentorship programme wherein senior students give them support and guidance is crucial and a necessity for them to successfully navigate throughout their university undergraduate studies. Participants assert that at the moment first year students are of the opinion that they do not get the necessary support and guidance they need from the university authorities. Therefore, a shared institutional vision by academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) is needed. Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice must also be created by university management while providing funding to develop initiatives at the local level (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). All stakeholders at the university need to have a sense of belonging and feel acknowledged and appreciated on their roles and contributions at the university (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). Also, the implementation of an institution wide project through bottom-up approach to leadership must be undertaken (Evans et al., 2009: 600). Collaborators need to have an understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership. Finally, authentic support from a high level champion is an imperative for the success of an institution wide project (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166-67).

5.2.3.7 Collaborative work between subject lecturers and EAL facilitators particularly on reading and writing activities

The participants in this study argue that if there is closer collaboration between lecturers in faculties and academic literacy facilitators, first year students will benefit more as their academic reading and writing skills and genres they learn in the ALC108 and ALN108 courses will be reinforced in their mainstream courses. Integration of academic administration and support programmes into the mainstream curriculum (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226), adoption of discipline-based academic skills programmes (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403) and faculty-based academic literacy programmes (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) are highlighted as factors conducive for successful enhancement of EALPs from the literature perspectives.

Moreover, a shared institutional vision by academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries; (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) processes for identifying and recognizing good practice; and academic advisors embraced and treated as experts with much to contribute are all the necessary ingredients for successful enhancement of EALPs. A shared thinking and understanding that collaborations require a change of thinking; common understanding that collaborations need to develop over time; and understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). These collaborations require that all participants feel and have a sense of belonging (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81) and the implementation of subject/content-based instruction (Butler & Van Dyk, 2004: 1).

5.2.3.8 Collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching in the disciplines must be integrated with reading and writing skills from EAL

The participants in this study argue that this should be done through shared curriculum planning and teaching. The participants further argue that currently this type of integration is not taking place and as a result, first year students do not fully benefit academically in the manner that they should in a more meaningful way. Firstly, implementation of discipline-based academic literacy programmes (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403) and faculty-based academic literacy programmes (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) have to be thoroughly planned and undertaken. Secondly, the integration of language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary education becomes a daily practice (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Lastly, the adoption of a collaborative interdisciplinary approach to teaching academic literacy is embraced by all the stakeholders involved (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167).

5.2.3.9 Academic reading and writing activities must be aligned across subjects in faculties, EAL and the Write Site

The participants propose that academic literacy practitioners, disciplinary or subject specialists and write site consultants should collaborate and have a consensus and a common understanding on structuring academic writing in different genres. Collaborations between librarians, learning advisors and unit coordinators are a

necessity (Ambery, Manners & Smith, 2005; Crosling & Wilson, 2005). A coordinated and well developed plan of action embedded within the collaborative interdisciplinary approach, unity in diversity through mutual support and participation, and core acceptance of different perspectives are crucial (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166; Donnison et al., 2009) and integration of language and content to transgress narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize tertiary curriculum must be implemented (Jacobs, 2005: 475; McKenna, 2013: 64). Furthermore, academic advisors must be embraced and treated as experts with much to contribute; there must be a shared thinking and understanding that collaborations require a change of thinking; common understanding that collaborations need to develop organically over time; and understanding that collaborations require nurturing and leadership (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167).

Given the discussions above, some conditions that are necessary and conducive for enhancing EALPs can be as follows: more content schema activation and building at the beginning of a year, course, unit, chapter, theme or lecture are preferred by the participants in this study. They also agree with the introduction of more language usage activities that include presentations and vocabulary building exercises while fostering and inculcating an engaging and active classroom culture. Furthermore, availability of competent and interactive facilitators and lecturers who value students and the course, and facilitators who are patient enough to treat first year students as learners, rather than treating them as students who know much are preferred by the participants. They further prefer engaged and improved institutional leadership, guidance and support that is forever present whenever needed together with collaborative work between subject lecturers and EAL facilitators particularly on reading and writing activities. The participants are of the view that collaborative curriculum planning and shared teaching in the disciplines must be integrated with reading and writing skills from EAL, and that academic reading and writing activities must be aligned across subjects in faculties, EAL and the Write Site.

5.2.4 Some of the plausible threats and strategies to circumvent them in the effort to enhance EALPs for first year university students are highlighted and discussed below.

This section deals with some of the findings on threats to enhancement of EALPs and strategies to circumvent them from both the empirical data and the literature.

5.2.4.1 Some threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are explored below.

This sub-section focuses on some plausible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

5.2.4.1.1 Lecturers and facilitator who are negative towards and students and have low expectations from students

The participants in this study strongly argue that lecturers/facilitators do not push them to their limits because they expect them to underperform. They are convinced that lecturers have abandoned their responsibility of meaningfully engaging first year students because they have low expectations of students' performance on the basis that they are enrolled in the Extended Degree Programme and doing English academic literacy courses. The literature points to the lack of necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students by academics and institutions generally (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) which leads to students' lack of attendance of academic literacy classes. Additionally, time constraints and the need for expertise; while managing demands for greater accountability also add frustration and confusion to academics teaching EAL students (Jacquet, 2008). Furthermore, colour blindness and denying differences lead to institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which further leads to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to de-motivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010).

5.2.4.1.2 Students who have negative attitudes towards facilitators and lecturers and do not value the course

The participants assert that there must be some ways of identifying such students earlier and mechanisms be put in place in order to remedy the situation to help those affected students to avoid risking failure or at worst, suspension and expulsion in their first year courses and beyond. Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors lead to students developing negative attitudes towards lecturers/facilitators and the course (Huijser, Kimmis, & Galligan, 2008: A-23). Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009); colour blindness and denying differences between English monolingual speaking students and EAL students; and different interpretations of academic writing between staff and students in academia fuel these negative attitudes (Jacquet, 2008; Andrews, 2013: 35).

Moreover, conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion; more negative attitudes towards facilitators, and the course (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-64). In fact, EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Lastly, EAL students often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) while institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which lead to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to demotivated EAL students] fuel and worsen students' negative attitudes towards facilitators/lecturers and the course (Harklau, 2010).

5.2.4.1.3 Lack of regular class attendance and late coming to class by both facilitators/lecturers and students

Participants agree that both students and facilitators/lecturers should not be late to class by more than ten minutes. Since the classes are two hours per session, students agreed in principle that the most acceptable time to be late for class is ten minutes and later than that is not acceptable as it may distract the class. From the literature, lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to the situation where facilitators and students do not take classes serious and come late to class. Undermining of academic learning support

centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors (Huijser, Kimmis, & Galligan, 2008: A-23) make the situation even worse as both academic literacy facilitators and students are aware of the marginalization of their facilitators and the course they are enrolled in. EAL students also work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Moreover, EAL students often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) which leads to institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which further lead to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to de-motivated EAL students] (Haklau, 2010). All of these occur in an institutional environment where there is lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012).

5.2.4.1.4 Classes that are bereft of and do not infuse technology in teaching and learning

Participants are of the view that though lecturers may not have been traditionally trained to teach using technology, it will be more meaningful and easier to first year students if technology is embedded within teaching, learning and assessment in order to make the courses appealing to first year students and also with the ultimate aim of engaging them more meaningfully in a medium of technology that they are interested in and understand better. Recent research confirms the relationship between technology and interaction in the class (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland in Beldarrain, 2006: 140). Prensky (2001a: 1-3) published companion papers on a new generation of students: the 'Digital Natives'.

The basic thrust of Prensky's argument was that this new group of students coming into universities was fundamentally different from any that educators had seen before. Digital Natives had "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (Prensky, 2001a: 1). Prensky maintained that the digital culture and environment in which the 'Natives' had grown up had changed the way they think: "It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of

their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky, 2001a: 1). Furthermore, in what can only be regarded as a bold claim, Prensky suggested that "It is very likely that our students' brains have physically changed – and are different from ours – as a result of how they grew up."

5.2.4.1.5 Unfriendly, unwelcoming and uncomfortable learning environment for students

Participants are of the view that if first year students feel physically and emotionally vulnerable in the classroom, it will be difficult for them to focus and fully engage in the process of learning in the class while the classroom environment is threatening to them. Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff and marginalization of academic advisors occur as a result of lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students; colour blindness and denying differences; coupled with conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add confusion (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4; Jacquet, 2008; Keat, Streakland & Marinak, 2009; Toohey, 2009; Andrews, 2013: 35). Additionally, EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities, and they often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012).

5.2.4.1.6 Students who are negative, demotivated and uninterested in learning

Participants suggest that such students need to be identified earlier and remedial actions be taken to help them not to disrupt their own learning and that of their peers. Undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff; marginalization of academic advisors; and lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to students' lack of attendance of academic literacy classes as they become uninterested and demotivated (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413; Kennelly et al., 2010: 67). Furthermore, Colour blindness; conflicting advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching

staff in different courses add confusion (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4); and lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to students' confusion and frustration. EAL students work long hours and this limit their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010) and they often have less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012).

Lastly, institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms, which lead to lower teacher expectations and academic marginalization [which leads to de-motivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010). The importance of motivation in the context of learning cannot be overemphasized (Ames in Ambrose et al., 2010: 69). Atkinson, Wigfield and Eccles in Ambrose et al., (2010: 69-70) argue that there are two concepts central to the understanding of motivation: (1) the subjective value of a goal and (2) the expectations, or expectations for successful attainment of that goal. According to Elliot and Fryer (2008) goals serve as the basic organizing feature of motivated behaviour. Moreover, a number of goals are often in operation simultaneously. This is certainly true for college students who may, in any given moment, seek to acquire knowledge and skills, make new friends, demonstrate to others that they are intelligent, gain a sense of independence, and have fun (Ambrose et al, 2010: 71). However, since there are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, this study specifically focused on extrinsic motivation as a source of value, one that Eccles and Wigfield in Ambrose et al., (2010: 75) call instrumental value, represents the degree to which an activity or goal helps one accomplish other important goals, such as gaining what are traditionally referred to as extrinsic rewards.

5.2.4.1.7 Unofficial timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses

The participants are also of the opinion that English academic literacy courses are taken for granted by university authorities and as such, they do not get the logic why these courses are compulsory for first year students and yet, they are not taken serious as part of academic literacy development for first year university students enrolled in the EDP. The participants propose that the timetable committee must be thoroughly engaged and clarified on this matter to arrive at an amicable solution for everyone.

Drawing from the literature, these clashes occur as a result of the undermining of academic learning support centres by academic staff as well as the marginalization of academic advisors (Huijser et al., 2008: A-23). Moreover, lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) and lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change over institutional change are the main culprits for the perpetuation of this timetable clashes crisis (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012).

5.2.4.1.8 Lack of institutional guidance, support and leadership coupled with a negative attitude towards EALPs

The participants argue that the university management ignores their challenges and thereby fail to resolve critical academic issues like timetable clashes. They are convinced that if management can develop and adopt a positive attitude towards first year students, it would help a great deal in providing proper guidance and leadership to first year students. The literature attest to the fact that it is always very difficult to facilitate a whole-of-university initiative especially when there is lack of a common vision or collaborators not sharing the same vision of the initiative (Huijser, Kimmins & Galligan, 2008: A-23; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). This is further made worse and compounded by lack of team work where collaboration is conducted without full appreciation of the relevant expertise by all parties involved in the collaboration (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012).

Moreover, lack of leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) and lack of the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to the frustrations on the institutional management's attitude towards first year students. All these lead to EAL students having less than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012) as institutional management further develop negative attitudes towards these students. Finally, lack of a common vision and buy in from all the stakeholders; institutional labelling of EAL students in deficit terms (Harklau, 2010); and lack of institutional leadership which leads to individual change

over institutional change exacerbate and add more negative attitudes of management towards EAL students.

According to the discussions above, some possible threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students could be as follows: lecturers and facilitator who are negative towards and students and have low expectations from students; students who have negative attitudes towards facilitators and lecturers and do not value the course; lack of regular class attendance and late coming to class by both facilitators/lecturers and students; classes that are bereft of and do not infuse technology in teaching and learning; unfriendly, unwelcoming and uncomfortable learning environment for students; students who are negative, demotivated and uninterested in learning; unofficial timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses; and lack of institutional guidance, support and leadership coupled with a negative attitude towards EALPs.

5.2.4.2 Some of the strategies to circumvent threats to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are discussed below.

This sub-section reports on findings regarding some strategies for circumventing plausible threats to enhancement of EALPs from both the empirical data and the literature.

5.2.4.2.1 Facilitators and lecturers must demonstrate and display a positive attitude and have high expectations from students

Institutions must deliberately and systematically avoid labelling EAL students in deficit terms and frame them in positive terms, which will lead to higher teacher expectations and academic acceptance [which leads to motivated EAL students]. Drawing from the literature which also concurs with the participants' views, institutions must deliberately and systematically avoid labelling EAL students in deficit terms and frame them in positive terms, which will lead to higher teacher expectations and academic acceptance [which leads to motivated EAL students] (Kanno & Varghese; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012). Furthermore, institutional management should seek

buy-in of a common vision by all university stakeholders through faculties and departments using bottom-up approaches to leadership so that there will be a shared ownership by all stakeholders involved in the whole-of-university and faculty initiatives (Alderman, 2006; Evans et al., 2009: 600; Donnison et al., 2009; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167). The next sub-section focuses on students' positive attitude towards facilitators and the course as a strategy for circumventing threats to successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.2 Students must demonstrate and display a positive attitude towards facilitators, lecturers and the course

EAL students should be consistently encouraged to attend academic literacy classes and such classes must be made compulsory. Participants further argue that facilitators should make students feel a sense of belonging, motivated and interested in the course and the facilitator (Jacobs, 2005: 479-81). They are of the opinion that facilitators should come up with strategies of dealing with problematic students in the class without making the students to lose face in front of their peers and use referrals in case the students' situation is beyond the facilitator's jurisdiction. EAL students should be consistently encouraged to attend academic literacy classes and such classes must be made compulsory (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413; Kennelly et al., 2010: 67). The succeeding finding deals with regular class attendance by both facilitators and students as a strategy for circumventing threats as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.3 Lecturers, facilitators and students must attend classes regularly and be punctual

Respect for the course by both the facilitators and students through regular attendance of classes and being punctual. The participants are of the view that there must be a consensus agreed upon by the facilitator and students binding everyone not to be late by more than ten minutes for class and if one has to miss class, an apology has to be made or some communication has to be done especially if the student or facilitator is ill, attending to some university official business or a death case at home. According

to the participants, all these would demonstrate that both facilitators have love, enthusiasm, respect and motivation for the course. The literature also affirms that facilitators and students should attend classes regularly and EAL classes should be made compulsory (Read, 2008: 181; Baik & Greig, 2009: 411-13; Kennelly, 2010: 67). The finding that follows addresses facilitators who are innovative and up to date in teaching through embedding technology in their classes as a strategy for circumventing threats and as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.4 Teaching and learning must be conducted creatively and be integrated with technology

Ongoing training of facilitators especially on using technology in the class to engage students more as students refer to themselves as 'digital natives'. Recent research confirms the relationship between technology and interaction in the class (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland in Beldarrain, 2006: 140). Prensky (2001a: 1-3) published companion papers on a new generation of students: the 'Digital Natives'. The basic thrust of Prensky's argument was that this new group of students coming into universities was fundamentally different from any that educators had seen before. Digital Natives had "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (Prensky, 2001a: 1). Prensky maintained that the digital culture and environment in which the Natives had grown up had changed the way they think: "It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky, 2001a:1). The subsequent sub-section discusses the creation of a comfortable learning environment for students as a strategy for circumventing threats as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.5 A friendly and comfortable learning environment for students must be created

Sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve minoritized students is very important to the academic success of these students. Time management and the need for expertise have to be balanced, while simultaneously managing demands for greater accountability. There must be a concerted effort to

have same and common understanding and interpretation of writing between academic staff and students across faculties and disciplines. Additionally, consistent and common advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses will add more understanding. Participants are of the view that if first year students feel physically and emotionally vulnerable in the classroom, it will be difficult for them to focus and fully engage in the process of learning in the class while the classroom environment is threatening to them. Sufficient and necessary preparation on the part of academic staff to adequately serve minoritized students is very important to the academic success of these students (Baik & Greig, 2009: 413; Kennelly et al., 2010: 67).

Time management and the need for expertise have to be balanced, while simultaneously managing demands for greater accountability. There must be a concerted effort to have same and common understanding and interpretation of writing between academic staff and students across faculties and disciplines (Jacquet, 2008; Keat, Strickland & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009; Andrews, 2013: 35). Additionally, consistent and common advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses will add more understanding (Lea & Street, 1998: 170; Lea & Street, 2006: 376). The next finding focuses on interested and motivated students as indicators of circumventing threats to the successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.6 Students must be motivated and interested to learn

They must be respected as experts in their own right. Respect for academic learning support centres by academic staff is crucial to the success of students. Academic staff should do away with colour blindness and denying differences by beginning to see and treat ESL students as such and not equating them with mainstream students by denying differences. Collaborators must share a common vision of the initiative they are involved in. Teamwork where collaboration is conducted with a full appreciation of the relevant expertise provided by all parties involved in the collaboration is key and fundamental to the success of the collaboration initiatives. Respect for academic learning support centres by academic staff; inclusion of academic advisors; and

leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction (Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166) lead to students' regular attendance of academic literacy classes as they become interested and motivated.

Furthermore, not being colour blind; clear and consistent advice or feedback students receive from academic teaching staff in different courses add enthusiasm (Lea & Street, 1998: 163-4); and the necessary preparation to adequately serve minoritized students (Keat, Strickland, & Marinak, 2009; Smythe & Toohey, 2009) add to students' focus, engagement and motivation to learn. EAL students' long hours of work are reduced by extending their degrees by an extra year and this allows their engagement in collegiate activities (Kanno & Varghese, 2010) and they often have more than helpful guidance from the college (Bunch & Endris, 2012).

Lastly, institutional labelling of EAL students in positive terms, which lead to higher teacher expectations and academic empowerment [which leads to motivated EAL students] (Harklau, 2010). The importance of motivation in the context of learning cannot be overemphasized (Ames in Ambrose et al., 2010: 69). Atkinson, Wigfield and Eccles in Ambrose et al., (2010: 69-70) argue that there are two concepts central to the understanding of motivation: (1) the subjective value of a goal and (2) the expectations, or expectations for successful attainment of that goal. According to Elliot and Fryer (2008) goals serve as the basic organizing feature of motivated behaviour. The succeeding finding unpacks the clashes free timetable between EAL courses and mainstream courses as a strategy for circumventing threats as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.7 Unofficial timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses must be avoided

Institutional leadership in resolving contentious issues and providing direction is highly needed especially on issues of clashes between EAL courses and mainstream subjects while the timetable does not have clashes (Huijser, Kimmins & Galligan, A-23; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 166). Academic advisors and EAL facilitators must be embraced as part of the collaborative initiatives within the university and steps must

be taken to accommodate them rather than isolating them (Read, 2008: 181; Baik & Greig, 2009: 411). Splitting or spreading EAL students' first year curriculum to run for two years to extend their engagement in collegiate activities (Sleeter, 2004).

This will imply that the normal 3 and 4 year degrees will automatically take 4 and 5 years respectively for these students to complete their undergraduate degrees if they are to finish in the stipulated time. The college must make special efforts to give EAL students sufficient helpful guidance (Lea & Street, 2006: 370). The next finding discusses the positive attitude of the university management towards EALPS and students coupled with the provision of proper guidance, support and leadership as a strategy for circumventing threats as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.4.2.8 Availability of proper institutional guidance, support and leadership coupled with a positive attitude for EALPs

Using bottom-up approaches to whole of university initiatives wherein faculties, departments and disciplines buy-in the ideas, own them and drive them from within, rather than receiving from top university management and expected to just implement without questioning them. University stakeholders should share a common vision and a buy in from all or some of the stakeholders (Kift & Nelson, 2005: 226; Evans et al., 2009: 600). Implementation of academic literacy models and approaches that are content/subject/discipline-based should be embedded as part of the curriculum (Baik & Greig, 2009: 403; Pourshafie & Brady, 2013: 167) and not added on as extra subjects to an already overburdened curriculum. Lastly, the provision of institutional leadership which leads to institutional change over individual change helps in circumventing threats to EALPs enhancement (Burnett & Larmar, 2011; Cummins et al., 2005; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Harklau, 2010; Bunch & Endris, 2012).. The succeeding section deals with findings on monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

Given the discussions above, some strategies for circumventing plausible threats discussed in 5.2.4.1 may be as follows: facilitators and lecturers must demonstrate and display a positive attitude and have high expectations from students; students must demonstrate and display a positive attitude towards facilitators, lecturers and the course; lecturers, facilitators and students must attend classes regularly and be punctual; teaching and learning must be conducted creatively and be integrated with technology; a friendly and comfortable learning environment for students must be created; students must be motivated and interested to learn; unofficial timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses must be avoided; and availability of proper institutional guidance, support and leadership coupled with a positive attitude for EALPs.

5.2.5 Some monitoring strategies and indicators that there is successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students are discussed below as follows:

5.2.5.1 Both facilitators, lecturers and students do course evaluation at the end of the term, semester or year

Participants specifically prefer that the course evaluation should be done in the middle of the semester or year and also at the end of the semester or year. This according to the participants will help a lot in the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Tracing and recording ESL students' results in both academic literacy courses and other mainstream courses throughout their undergraduate studies; early identification and intervention for ESL students with weak language skills; and comprehensive longitudinal studies of effectiveness and impact of the discipline-based language programs for ESL students are the best ways to evaluate the course as a monitoring strategy and an indicator of successful enhancement of the course.

Course evaluations per term, semester or end of year evaluations by both students and academic staff also help in monitoring and also as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. According to Edstrom (2008: 99) course evaluation is normally done for audit and development or for accountability and improvement.

Edstrom further argues that real and valuable course evaluation by both students and lecturers incorporate performance audit and development (Edstrom, 2008: 100). As a result, course evaluation either in the middle or at the end of a term, semester or year remains critical as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.5.2 Lecturers and facilitators evaluate students' progress on monthly basis

Participants are of the view that lecturers should not wait for the end of the semester or year to realize that students have backlogs and are struggling with the course. They are convinced that interventions like monthly evaluation of students' performance and progress will help a great deal both as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. Support and monitoring of EAL students' academic progress have to be made compulsory if they are to succeed academically and bold and clear steps have to be taken as well and communicated lucidly to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, rather than deficit terms. Edstrom (2008: 104) claims that evaluation, whether done by lecturers or students on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or at the end of the year, it must have a strong connection with development or improvement, not just for audit to check whether lecturers are doing their job. According to Biggs in Edstrom (2008: 105) evaluation must be part of Constructive alignment to bring about appropriate learning activities in the course.

5.2.5.3 Facilitators must limit the type of books (graded readers) and number to be read by students in the library

The participants are concerned that some students forge reading reactions and pretend to have read a book that they did not read and facilitators are unable to identify and expose this kind of academic cheating because of the fact that there are many graded readers to choose from in the library. According to Hinkel (2006: 121) there are always very important connections between L2 reading and vocabulary. Hu and Nation in Hinkel (2006: 122) indicate that an L2 reader needs to understand approximately 98% of the unique words in such texts as short novels or academic materials. In real terms, this represents about 5,000 word families (a family is a base word with its related words and their inflected forms, e.g., child, children, childhood.

Coady and Huchin in Hinkel (2006: 122) further argue that irrespective of students' aspirations to enter universities, L2 learners need to acquire a substantial vocabulary to achieve competencies in practically all L2 skills, such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. A vocabulary of 2,000 words may serve as an essential base needed for daily interaction and speaking, whereas 5,000 base words are typically intended for a general, non-specialist audience. Words need to be encountered 12-20 times to be learned in context.

For learning to occur, activities with new words, such as reading or listening, should meet the following conditions: interest, repetition, deliberate attention, and generative use (the use of the word in a new context (Nation, 2005: 585). Extensive reading of graded readers by first year university students in the library emphasize on reading large amounts of material for enjoyment, hence they choose any graded reader of their choice and read one each week. According to Eskey (2005: 567) the relationship between reading and vocabulary is well documented and reciprocal and the more one reads, the larger his or her language base becomes. For less proficient learners, graded or simplified readers with controlled vocabulary loads may be the optimal choice. Therefore, without graded readers, reading for second language learners would be one continuous struggle against an overwhelming vocabulary level (Nation, 2005: 588). Therefore, selection of specific graded readers to be read by students in the library on weekly basis must be monitored for successful enhancement of EALPs.

5.2.5.4 Ongoing assessment with the provision of early detailed feedback

Participants suggest that feedback on continuous assessment like academic writing of paragraphs, essays and reading reactions should be given weekly or fortnightly for students to work on the feedback that is detailed regarding mistakes and errors they may have committed in their respective written tasks and activities. The participants furthermore prefer that feedback on quarterly tests must be given after a fortnight or within three weeks from the day of writing the test especially given the number of students in a class which normally ranges from 20 to 35 students and also considering quality marking with detailed feedback. The participants are convinced that these suggestions if implemented, will help a lot as monitoring strategies and also as

indicators of successful enhancement of the course. According to Hattie and Timperly (2007: 81) feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding and thus, feedback is a consequence of performance. When feedback is combined with more of a correctional review, the feedback and instruction become intertwined until the process itself takes on the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness (Kuhavy in Hattie & Timperly, 2007: 82). In a nutshell, both the findings and literature affirm that continuous assessment with early detailed feedback is crucial and central to the success of EALPs.

5.2.5.5 Facilitators give general reviews on student feedback in class

Participants in this study suggest that lecturers and facilitators may come up with PowerPoint slides presentations, handouts or any form of presentation on how assessment was done and generally illuminating on the common mistakes and errors that were prevalent in such a written academic task. Participants further alluded that this idea will go a long way as both a monitoring strategy and an indicator of successful enhancement of the course. According to Charless (2006: 1) feedback is central to student learning. Ramsden and Hounsell in Charless (2008: 2-3) posit that comments on students' work represent one of the key characteristics of quality teaching and are decisive in learning and development beyond formal educational settings. Moreover, assessment dialogues between tutors and students which seek to reduce the gap on perceptions on feedback are key (Charless, 2008: 3-4). Finally, Higgins in Charless (2008: 4) claims that many students are simply unable to understand feedback comments and interpret them correctly, hence the need for general reviews of assessment feedback in class through assessment dialogues between students and tutors.

5.2.5.6 Monthly or quarterly individual or group interviews with students to check their progress and experiences of the course

The participants are of the opinion that these focus group and individual face to face interviews with the lecturer or facilitator will help both lecturers and first year students

to reflect on their teaching and learning experiences as part of the monitoring strategies as well as indicators of successful enhancement of the course. They are of the view that these interviews will create a platform for more meaningful engagement that allows students to reflect on their experiences of the course and be able to chart a way forward together with the lecturer or facilitator to subordinate teaching to learning and ultimately help to improve teaching and learning for first year students. According to Clark (2005: 297-98) lecturers need to engage in individual or focus group interviews with students monthly or quarterly to solicit the experiences of students in the course and what they see as motivating or demotivating factors in the course. Through individual or focus group interviews with students, lecturers are likely to discover invaluable hints and tips on how students experience the course and what progress they are making in their academic work (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser & Hara, 2006: 247-48). In a nutshell, this implies that individual face to face interviews or focus group interviews with students on a monthly or quarterly basis are helpful and beneficial for both facilitators and students in terms of reflecting on classroom experiences and tracing students' academic progress.

5.2.5.7 Facilitators inculcate a culture of healthy academic competition in class through rewards and incentives

Participants are convinced that the introduction of incentives or rewards for good performance will raise the standards in the class not just for individual students, but also the overall performance of all students. They furthermore suggest that facilitators or lecturers should be creative and innovative in how they reward good performance of students in their courses. Drawing from the literature, Walker, Green and Mansell (2006: 3) aver that identification with academics has been defined as the extent to which individuals base their self-esteem on academic outcomes, feel as though they belong in their specific academic environment, and value academic achievement. Extrinsic motivation is motivation that is directed at attaining or avoiding something outside the self. The extrinsically motivated student will perform for the attainment of a desired grade or some other form of external reward (i.e., money or awards) (Walker, Green, & Mansell, 2006: 4). Therefore, both the findings and literature affirm the value of incentives or rewards in the class as monitoring strategies as well as indicators that enhancement of EALPs occurs.

As per the discussions above, some monitoring strategies and indicators for successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students may be as follows: both facilitators, lecturers and students do course evaluation at the end of the term, semester or year; lecturers and facilitators evaluate students' progress on monthly basis; facilitators must limit the type of books (graded readers) and number to be read by students in the library; ongoing assessment with the provision of early detailed feedback; facilitators give general reviews on student feedback in class; monthly or quarterly individual or group interviews with students to check their progress and experiences of the course; and facilitators inculcate a culture of healthy academic competition in class through rewards and incentives.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The literature revealed that the omission of facilitators and students in the selection and conceptualization of EALPs for first year university students was a drawback. Though this study acknowledges the great strides done by the Australian, Canadian, UK, USA, and South African universities in the processes of enhancing EALPs, much more could be attained through further consultation. The lack of consultation and training lead facilitators to teach and approach EALPs just for compliance, but not necessarily supporting them fully. As a consequence, this leads to facilitators separating themselves from what they need to do as per the dictates and stipulations in the MRTEQ Policy Revised and EALPs facilitators' guidelines. Moreover, facilitators separating themselves also result in the blame game where no one takes responsibility amongst all the stakeholders involved.

Therefore, on the basis of the glitches stated above as informed by literature reviewed and empirical data, this study proposes strategies by which facilitators would take full responsibility to engage in ongoing professional development and have more consultations with other colleagues, students and stakeholders concerned with the enhancement of EALPs.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of this study is that it was conducted using only two groups of facilitators and students from the EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. Though the study was never intended to generalise the results, I hope that where possible scholars, researchers and readers may find resemblances or even variances with their own EALPs contexts. The second limitation is that this study is qualitative in nature and therefore, I could only involve 24 participants made up of 20 students and 4 facilitators from the broader research population of EALPs. Although this study did touch on many aspects emanating from the literature and empirical data, its main focus was on the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

5.5 ASPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the aforementioned limitations, I recommend that further studies must be conducted on a larger scale combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Moreover, I also recommend longitudinal studies on EALPs for first year university students to shed some light in long term sustainable basis tracing the progress of students until they complete their undergraduate studies.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. Through the processes described above, the study succeeded in generating data for the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students guided by the literature and the empirical data.

In the main, the study revealed that having consultations and discussions amongst different stakeholders help in the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. A common vision, a coordinated plan of action with different institutional levels and bottom-up approaches proved to bring commonalities and created a bond amongst stakeholders.

The next chapter presents the proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

CHAPTER 6

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. Guided by the findings from both the literature and empirical data emanating from the previous chapters, strategies are proposed for enhancing EALPs for first year university students. The strategies proposed in this study may not be limited to EALPs alone. Those who are involved and affected by the teaching and academic progress of first year university students may also test and put into practice the strategies proposed in this study. The proposed strategies consist of four levels, namely: class level, discipline level, faculty level and institutional level. At all these levels, the strategies involve concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation extracted from Kolb and Kolb (2005: 198)'s experiential learning cycle.

6.2 PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING EALPs FOR FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The proposed strategies are presented below in a table and further discussed and elaborated upon in details.

Table 6.1 Strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Date	Resources Required	Performance Management
<i>1. Class level strategies</i>	Facilitators, students, student representatives	Daily	Teaching, learning and assessment resources	Less complaints and an improved

	and facilitators supervisor, evaluator and moderator		Supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the courses Evidence gathering	performance, addressing pertinent issues on time, and satisfaction of facilitators and students
2. <i>Discipline level strategies</i>	Facilitators, Student representatives, Facilitators supervisor, Discipline committee	Monthly	Coordinated plan of action, Disciplinary Committees and the participation of all stakeholders concerned	Regular disciplinary committee meetings with many if not all stakeholders attending
3. <i>Faculty level strategies</i>	Facilitators supervisor, student representatives, disciplines representatives, Faculty committees, institutional high level representative	Once in two months	Coordinated plan of action, Faculty committees, participation of all stakeholders and a high level university representative	Regular faculty committees meetings with many if not all stakeholders attending
4. <i>Institutional level strategies</i>	Facilitators supervisor, Students representative, Faculties representatives,	Quarterly	Coordinated plan of action, Faculty representatives, students representative	Regular institutional quarterly meetings with many if not all stakeholders

	high level institutional champion		and a high level institutional champion	being represented
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Table 6.1 above is elaborated and discussed below in details.

6.2.1 Class level

The findings from the literature and empirical data aligned to the five objectives of this study informed the following proposed strategies at classroom level informed by concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

The content of EAL courses must be disciplines and faculties based to help students to transfer skills they learn in the EALPs to their mainstream courses in their respective disciplines and faculties. The need for establishing classroom rules agreed upon by all students and the facilitator in the class is central to enhancing EALPs. Regular class attendance and punctuality by both students and facilitators must be adhered to and in cases of inconveniences; protocols have to be observed as outlined in the EAL courses guides. In order to comply with the MRTEQ Policy Revised regarding teacher competence and expectations, ongoing training and upgrading of skills for facilitators is encouraged. Giving students early and detailed feedback on their assessment coupled with whole class general reviews of common and prevalent errors or mistakes on assessment must be done. Facilitators must consciously create a comfortable classroom environment for students through their competence, treating students fairly and equally, being enthusiastic and playing their pastoral role. Facilitators must facilitate individual or focus group interviews with students in their classes on monthly or quarterly basis to solicit students' experiences of the course and how they think about their academic progress.

Facilitators must lead by example through developing a positive attitude towards students and the course that fosters mutual respect, trust and confidence between students and the facilitator. These should be done through facilitators celebrating diversity and adjusting pedagogical practices to suit the academic needs of EAL students. Facilitators must make it their daily habit to keep reminding students that they are capable of succeeding academically and avoid labeling them in deficit terms. Lastly, both facilitators and students must evaluate the course in the middle and at the end of the semester or year. These strategies emanating from the previous chapters are not exhaustive, but point to some of the strategies facilitators and students can employ in an effort to make the teaching and learning experiences worthwhile and beneficial to all with the ultimate aim of applying these strategies to enhance EALPs for first year university students.

6.2.2 Discipline level

From the discipline level, the strategies sourced from the literature and the empirical data in the previous chapters that this study proposes are discussed below.

Collaborations between ALPs and DSs are needed to enhance EALPs and the overall academic performance of students in their mainstream courses. EALPs must be linked and integrated within the content of a course or discipline. Disciplinary committees must be initiated to oversee the planning and meetings of the transdisciplinary collaborations. For these interdisciplinary collaborations to work, the following must happen:

Coordinated and well-developed plan of action;

Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;

Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;

and authentic support from a high level champion on academic issues at the university.

Upskilling of academic staff throughout the embedding process of interdisciplinary collaborations is a necessity. There must be both formal and informal opportunities to meet, share and learn from colleagues; and the spaces for detailed consultation on planning and reflecting on teaching within these collaborations. For these collaborations to work, the following must be agreed upon and adhered to:

EAL facilitators must be involved in these collaborations as they have much to contribute;

Collaborations require a change of thinking and attitudes;

Collaborations must be allowed to develop organically over time;

Collaborations require nurturing and leadership;

and ongoing training for EAL facilitators and discipline specialists.

Collaborations between EAL facilitators and discipline specialists require that they all share common assumptions and understanding of assignment titles between students and tutors, tutor feedback on students' feedback, and the importance of students' own identity as writers rather than the acquisition of academic skills. Disciplinary collaborations must furthermore adhere to the following:

Regular interactions between the collaborative partnerships;

Participation in the transdisciplinary project team;

All participants must feel and experience a sense of belonging;

Processes of transdisciplinary engagement must be discussed and agreed upon;

All the participants should use the opportunities to learn through the transdisciplinary engagements.

Lastly, discipline specialists and EAL facilitators should involve all stakeholders in these processes including students, departments, faculty and institutional management responsible for academic issues. The next sub-section discusses the strategies necessary to enhance EALPs at faculty level.

6.2.3 Faculty level

On faculty level, the following strategies are highlighted as extracted from the literature and empirical data and this study proposes them as suitable strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students.

Collaborations between the Unit for Academic Literacy, faculties, library and the Write Site are encouraged. There must be a creation of a culture of collaboration between faculty lecturers and EAL facilitators that entails values, purposes and past assumptions. Faculty committees must be initiated collaborating with EAL facilitators, discipline specialists, library, Write Site, and top university management responsible for academic issues. These faculty collaborations must adhere to the following:

- There must be regular interaction between the collaborative partnerships;

- Participation in the transdisciplinary project team;

- Every participant must feel and experience a sense of belonging;

- Processes of trans-faculty engagement must be discussed and agreed upon;

- All the participants should use the opportunities to learn through the trans-faculty engagements.

EAL content must be faculty based to help ease the collaborative processes. Curriculum initiatives at faculty level should include the following:

- A coordinated and well developed plan of action;

- Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;

- Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;

- and authentic support from a high level champion.

Elements for effective faculty collaborations are both formal and informal opportunities to meet, share and learn from colleagues, and the spaces for detailed consultation on

planning and reflecting on teaching. Faculty collaborations need the following in order to succeed:

- EAL facilitators must be involved as they have much to contribute;
- Collaboration requires a change of thinking and attitudes;
- Collaborations must be allowed to develop organically over time;
- Collaborations require nurturing and leadership.

The strategies highlighted at faculty level are not necessarily conclusive, but rather strategies that this study proposes for further implementation in an effort to enhance EALPs for first year university students drawing from the literature and the empirical data. The subsequent sub-section elaborates on the proposed strategies applicable at the institutional or university management level.

6.2.4 Institutional level

At the institutional level, special efforts must be undertaken to integrate academic administration and academic support programmes utilizing the bottom-up approaches to engagements. Through bottom-up approaches, the whole-of-university curriculum initiatives must include the following:

- Coordinated and well developed plan of action;
- Processes for identifying and recognizing good practice;
- Funding to develop initiatives at the local level;
- and authentic support from a high level champion responsible for academic issues.

The institution can make special efforts in saturating educational institutions with educators of similar educational experiences with EAL students as they are likely to be familiar with issues, perspectives, and discourses of minoritization. The institution must be explicit on modularity, assessment, and university procedures on student

writing. Moreover, institutional leadership must communicate clear and bold steps to all campus stakeholders framing EAL students in positive terms, as opposed to 'deficit' terms. University leadership must be represented in faculty committees to provide nurturing and leadership. University-wide initiatives and collaborations must adhere to the following:

Interaction between the collaborative partnerships;

Participation in the university-wide project;

A sense of belonging felt and experienced by all the participants;

Processes of university-wide project engagement must be discussed and agreed up by everyone;

Every participant must utilize the opportunities to learn from the university-wide project engagement.

University-wide projects and initiatives take time and therefore, the programmes must be given time to develop and ongoing resources must be provided. Above everything else, the university leadership or management through bottom-up approaches should lead a shared institutional vision by all academics and professional staff that form sustainable partnerships across institutional boundaries. As it has been indicated at the beginning of this section that deals with the proposed strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students from a class, discipline, faculty and institutional level using Kolb and Kolb (2005: 198)'s experiential learning cycle characterized by concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, some of the strategies repeat themselves at these various levels so as to maintain a shared vision, commonality and consistency between academic writing expectations in the EAL courses, disciplines, and faculties and meeting the institution's expectations.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to enhance EALPs for first year university students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS. Through the processes described above, the study succeeded in generating data for the enhancement of EALPs and proposing strategies for enhancing EALPs for first year university students guided by the literature and the empirical study.

The study revealed that having consultations and discussions amongst different stakeholders at different levels help in the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students. A common vision, a coordinated plan of action at different institutional levels and bottom-up approaches proved to bring commonalities and created a bond amongst stakeholders that proved crucial to successful enhancement of EALPs for first year university students.

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Appendix C

Centre for Teaching & Learning
University of the Free State Kestell Rd
Phuthaditjhaba
9866



2014-11-19

Dear Mr. Mathobela

To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

With reference to your request (17 September 2014) I hereby grant you Moodiela Victor Mathobela, Student Number 2013191727 permission to conduct a research study titled: *“Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for first year university students”*. I acknowledge that you have been granted Ethical Clearance (UFS-EDU-2014-042). In addition to the latter, I would like to emphasise that you adhere to the boundaries of the ethical agreement you signed for in your ethical clearance.

Should your research title and/or methodology change from the one described in your initial request, please render this permission retracted. I wish you well in your research and studies as a whole.

Kind Regards



Mr. VFS Mudavanhu Manager

Centre for Teaching & Learning UFS: Qwaqwa Campus

058 718 5393

Email: mudavanhuvfs@qwa.ufs.ac.za

University of the Free State, Qwa Qwa Campus, Kestell Road, Phuthaditjaba

T: +27(0)58 718 5000



Appendix B

Letter for Gatekeeper Permission to conduct the study

The Manager,
Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of the Free State
Qwaqwa Campus

17 September 2014

Dear Mr Mudavanhu,

My name is Moodiela Victor Mathobela. I am a PhD candidate in Higher Education Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State. I am doing research on **Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes (EALPs) for First Year University Students** at the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS.

My research involves 20 first year students between the age of 18 to 30 enrolled in EALPs: Academic Literacy for Commerce, Education and Humanities (ALC108) and Academic Literacy for Natural Science (ALN108) courses who will be asked to be part of the FAI focus groups which will have two sessions, one with 10 participants and the other with 10 participants for each of the two EALPs.

The reason I have chosen students on the Qwaqwa Campus of the UFS is because it has a significant number of underprepared students not performing well at the proficient level in the academic literacy domain of which is a prerequisite for success across different disciplines within higher education systems and leads to low throughputs as compared to the entire university campuses (UFS Integrated Report, 2012). This study has been triggered by my initial impression on how first year students perform at this campus across disciplines and faculties focusing on their academic reading and writing. Moreover, negative comments and complaints by academic staff from different disciplines about the poor academic reading and writing of their students added to my repertoire of motivations to conduct this study. Above all, as an academic literacy practitioner, I felt that there is a need for this kind of research in order to enhance academic literacy of our first years to lessen drop outs and improve throughputs.

The study aims to contribute to the possibility of enhanced EALPs that will in turn bear positive results in reducing drop outs and possibly improving throughputs across disciplines. I am inviting your students to participate in this research which aims to enhance EALPs for first year university students. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their participation at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identities will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Their individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Moodiela Victor Mathobela
Private Bag x13, Phuthaditjhaba, 9866
Mathobelamv@qwa.ufs.ac.za

058-718-5077/(0)72-4074-185

Supervisor: Dr. DJ Hlalele
Private Bag X13, Phuthaditjhaba, 9866,
HlaleleDJ@qwa.ufs.ac.za.

058 718 5003/(0)83 379 9328

Appendix C

Centre for Teaching & Learning
University of the Free State Kestell Rd
Phuthaditjhaba
9866



2014-11-19

Dear Mr. Mathobela

To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

With reference to your request (17 September 2014) I hereby grant you Moodiela Victor Mathobela, Student Number 2013191727 permission to conduct a research study titled: *“Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for first year university students”*. I acknowledge that you have been granted Ethical Clearance (UFS-EDU-2014-042). In addition to the latter, I would like to emphasise that you adhere to the boundaries of the ethical agreement you signed for in your ethical clearance.

Should your research title and/or methodology change from the one described in your initial request, please render this permission retracted. I wish you well in your research and studies as a whole.

Kind Regards

Mr. VFS Mudavanhu Manager

Centre for Teaching & Learning UFS: Qwaqwa Campus

058 718 5393

Email: mudavanhuvfs@qwa.ufs.ac.za

University of the Free State, Qwa Qwa Campus, Kestell Road, Phuthaditjaba

T: +27(0)58 718 5000



Appendix D

Researcher

Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela
1043 Administration Building
Private Bag x13
Phuthaditjhaba
9866

Contacts: 058 718 5077/072 4074 185

E-mail address: Mathobelamv@qwa.ufs.ac.za

Date: 19 November 2014

Study Leader

Dr. D.J. Hlalele
Education Building
Private Bag x13
Phuthaditjhaba
9866

Contacts: 058 718 5003

E-mail: hlaleledj@qwa.ufs.ac.za

Advertisement for the recruitment of student participants in a research project

Dear prospective research participants,

This advertisement is intended to invite first year university students enrolled in English academic literacy programmes (ALC108 and ALN108) for this academic year 2014 to participate voluntarily in a research project that will soon be undertaken.

The title of the research project is: ***Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for First Year University Students***

For one to be selected to participate in this research project, the following must be adhered to by the prospective participants:

- Must be enrolled in one of the ALC108 or ALN108 English academic literacy programmes
- Must sign a consent form provided by the researcher agreeing that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time they wish if they feel their rights as participants are being violated
- Must be willing to participate in three sessions with the researcher which involves the information session about the research project, the data generation session and lastly, the data analysis feedback session.

Your voluntary participation will be highly appreciated as your views and experiences will assist in enhancing these English academic literacy programmes.

Researcher signature

Moodiela Victor Mathobela

Date

Appendix E

Researcher

Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela

1043 Administration Building

Private Bag x13

Phuthaditjhaba

9866

Contacts: 058 718 5077/072 4074 185

E-mail address: Mathobelamv@qwa.ufs.ac.za

Date: 19 November 2014

Study Leader

Dr. D.J Hlalele

Education Building

Private Bag x13

Phuthaditjhaba

9866

Contacts: 058 718 5003

E-mail: hlaleledj@qwa.ufs.ac.za

Advertisement for the recruitment of facilitator participants in a research project

Dear prospective research participants,

This advertisement is intended to invite facilitators of first year university students enrolled in English academic literacy programmes (ALC108 and ALN108) for this academic year 2014 to participate voluntarily in a research project that will soon be undertaken.

The title of the research project is: ***Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for First Year University Students***

For one to be selected to participate in this research project, the following must be adhered to by the prospective participants:

- Must be facilitator in one of the ALC108 or ALN108 English academic literacy programmes
- Must sign a consent form provided by the researcher agreeing that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time they wish if they feel their rights as participants are being violated
- Must be willing to participate in three sessions with the researcher which involves the information session about the research project, the data generation session and lastly, the data analysis feedback session.

Your voluntary participation will be highly appreciated as your views and experiences will assist in enhancing these English academic literacy programmes.

Researcher signature

Moodiela Victor Mathobela

Date

Appendix F

Researcher

Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela
1043 Administration Building
Private Bag x13
Phuthaditjhaba
9866

Contacts: 058 718 5077/072 4074 185

E-mail address: Mathobelamv@gwa.ufs.ac.za

Study Leader

Dr. D.J Hlalele
Education Building
Private Bag x13
Phuthaditjhaba
9866

Contacts: 058 718 5003

E-mail: hlaleledj@gwa.ufs.ac.za

Date: 19 November 2014

Consent for ALC108 and ALN108 Students' participation in a research project

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by **Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela** from the University of the Free State. I understand that the research is designed to **generate information and make a contribution towards Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for First Year University Students** on campus. I will be one of approximately 20 students participating in this project.

1. My participation in this research is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any given time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on my campus will be told.
2. I understand that most participants will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the sessions, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the discussion.
3. Participation involves Free Attitude Interviews facilitated by the researcher in focus group sessions. The interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the discussion and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the University Ethics Review Committee for studies involving human subjects at the University of the Free State.
7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My signature

Date

My printed name

Signature of the Researcher

Researcher

Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela
 1043 Administration Building
 Private Bag x13
 Phuthaditjhaba
 9866

Contacts: 058 718 5077/072 4074 185

E-mail address: Mathobelamv@gwa.ufs.ac.za

Study Leader

Dr. D.J Hlalele
 Education Building
 Private Bag x13
 Phuthaditjhaba
 9866

Contacts: 058 718 5003

E-mail: hlaleledj@gwa.ufs.ac.za

Date: 19 November 2014

Consent for ALC108 and ALN108 Facilitators' participation in a research project

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by **Mr. Moodiela Victor Mathobela** from the University of the Free State. I understand that the research is designed to **generate information and make a contribution towards Enhancing English Academic Literacy Programmes for First Year University Students** on campus. I will be one of approximately 20 students participating in this project.

9. My participation in this research is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any given time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on my campus will be told.
10. I understand that most participants will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the sessions, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the discussion.
11. Participation involves Free Attitude Interviews facilitated by the researcher in focus group sessions. The interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the discussion and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
12. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
13. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
14. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the University Ethics Review Committee for studies involving human subjects at the University of the Free State.
15. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
16. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

 My signature

 Date

 My printed name

 Signature of the Researcher

Appendix H

Interview with ALC108 participants

Researcher: *Ok, according to your own experiences of ALC108 as a facilitator and as a student, how can you justify the need for enhancing this English academic literacy programme for first year university students?*

Student 1: *It says nothing about our country and there is no reason given to us why we have to be subjected to this academic torture.*

Student 3: *There is a lot I do not know about Africa, let alone my country South Africa. It boggles my mind why should I make sense of this American textbook while it does not speak to my own worldview and cultural experiences."*

Student 7: *I thought this ALN course will teach us about the science of English or scientific English, but to my surprise, it is more on reading and writing than teaching the scientific English."*

Facilitator 2: *The Academic Encounters textbooks we use in the ALC and ALN classes are content and context based on American experiences. The African voices are not captured in the textbooks and this is problematic to us as facilitators."*

Student 4: *I do not know how to construct a logical simple English sentence as I was never taught how to write in my previous schools. I thought here at university I will be assisted in this ALC course only to find that I am expected to read and write reading reactions in the library without being taught the basics of how to structure an English sentence. My grammar is very horrible and I am afraid my confidence will not improve.*

Student 6: *As first year students enrolled in ALC108, we mostly come from rural schools wherein teachers taught us English in IsiZulu and SeSotho. To make matters worse, instead of being taught the basics of how to use the language English in ALN108, we are only expected to read and write more. This is stressing us because many of us are worried that our grammar is very bad. Can someone hear us and teach us the basics of English usage please?*

Facilitator 1: *Students come to the ALN or ALC classes under-prepared in terms of their grammar or language usage from high schools. This therefore requires us facilitators to dig deeper to help students with the language.*

Researcher: *Anything else that you feel according to you as a facilitator or as a student justifies the need to enhance ALC108?*

Student 1: *We attend classes from 8H00 until 14H00 and by the time of ALC108 at 15H00, we are already exhausted and need nothing but rest."*

Student 8: *It is true. By the time of ALC class at 15H00, most of us are already tired and hungry as we do not have money or bursaries to buy food and eat at the cafeteria.*

Student 2: *ALN108 classes start late in the evening from 15H00 to 17H00 and by that time, I am no longer in the mood of attending classes but thinking of going home to cook, eat and rest as I have been attending classes since 8H00 in the morning.*

Student 5: *It is even worse that the facilitators and some students come late to the ALN classes by 15 to 20 minutes. It is discouraging and makes one to think of not attending the class completely as one cannot focus and pay attention while still being angry with some of the bad experiences in the previous classes.*

Facilitator 2: *I am a full time Grade 12 English teacher in a High school here in Qwaqwa and I think the ALC108 and ALN108 classes are scheduled at the right time wherein we will be done with our school work and ready to assist these first year students.*

Facilitator 1: *Given the fact that the majority if not all the facilitators are professional teachers teaching English in the local High schools around Qwaqwa, I am of the view that 3pm is the most appropriate time for us to come to the university and assist these students with their language in the ALC and ALN classes.*

Student 4: *We read text that is written in American English, but we are assessed in British English. This is confusing because our work is marked wrong spelling when we use American English. What is the use of us using American textbooks, but we are assessed through British English?*

Student 3: *My work is always marked wrong but I spell the words exactly the way they are written in the textbook. Actually, why are we not told which English is correct for us to use? Why American English is marked wrong in our work, but we use American textbooks to learn? This is frustrating!*

Facilitator 2: *The American English spelling is challenging and confusing to students. Our students just like us have been taught throughout their schooling years using British English and all of a sudden, they have to switch to American content now at the university. We are also confused as to whether we should mark the American spelling wrong or accept both American and British spelling on students' written work.*

Student 4: *Some facilitators and lecturers look scared and afraid when they come to the class. They stammer and appear to be incompetent and not knowing their story. This is a turnoff to some of us first year students.*

Student 6: *Some facilitators and lecturers consistently misspell simple common words in English and as first year students; we have to constantly correct their spelling when they write on the board. Sometimes we are even ashamed to correct them as it is embarrassing for us to correct our lecturers on simple spelling for common English words*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators some of us lack skills in using technological devices like PowerPoint presentations and this may put us in a negative light in the eyes of students as they are digital natives."*

Researcher: *Anything else that according to you justifies the need for enhancing ALC108 either in the classroom that involves teaching, learning and assessment?*

Student 9: *We need lecturers and facilitators who understand where we are coming from in terms of our educational background and therefore willing to take us by the hand and guide us. We need more lecturers who are patient with first year students and treating like their own children*

Student 2: *We really need facilitators and lecturers who are sensitive to student diversity and treat all their students equally with respect and dignity*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we need to show in action and deeds that we care about the well-being of our students and try our best in motivating them in each and every class that they can do it and in case they need any kind of help, we are more than willing to go the extra mile in helping them to succeed in their studies.*

Student 10: *Some facilitators are passive and not interactive. The facilitator as the leader and manager of the class must be active, passionate and lead by example. If the facilitator looks bored and uninterested, students are likely to switch off and not benefit from the lecture"*

Student 5: *Most of us begin to gradually bunk a class that is uninteresting, passive and boring. The facilitator must be energetic, enthusiastic and passionate about the lecture. He or she should inspire confidence in first year students to want to learn more in their course"*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators we must at all times show enthusiasm and commitment to our work with passion. Students must never suspect that we are disinterested in what we teach or else they will begin to not take us and the course serious! We have to be energetic and exemplary in class for students to take us and the courses we teach serious.*

Student 3: *Some of our classmates are not interested in learning or being at the university. Some become disruptive in the class because of a number of reasons ranging from bad experiences from their homes and communities, being at the university just to make their parents happy and just having a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course"*

Student 8: *Some students like showing off in class and try to bully other students and the lecturer. Such students need serious and urgent psychological assistance from the powers that be at the university"*

Facilitator 2: *As a facilitator, I see some students seem to be disengaged, too relaxed and not concentrating in class. Some are more obsessed with their cell phones and it becomes a distraction as they are focused on social networks than what is being done in class."*

Student 10: *As first year students we get frustrated with timetable clashes and to make matters worse, the university authorities are unable to provide us with the necessary leadership and support we need especially during registration"*

Student 1: *Some authorities refuse to help first years and as a result, first year students are taken from pillar to post on minor issues that could have been resolved by the said authorities in the first place. It appears that some university authorities have a negative attitude towards first year students and this does not help the dire situation first year students find themselves in"*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we get confused as well to realize that some lecturers in the mainstream courses decide to take our venues while the timetable is clear that the venue is supposed to be utilized at that time by the ALC or ALN class. Some even go to an extent of scheduled tests during our periods in order to frustrate students as to whether they must attend our classes or write that mainstream test."*

Researcher: *Ok ladies and gentlemen. In the absence of clarity seeking questions and additions on the justification for enhancing ALC108, then the next question is: which aspects and components do you think are necessary for enhancing ALC108 as a facilitator and as a student of this course?*

Student 9: *The ALC108 textbook is American in content, language and context. These factors make it quite challenging for us first year students to acquaint and familiarize ourselves the American content, context and language found in the textbook. Provision of background information about these textbooks at the beginning of the semester or year is crucial."*

Student 2: *To worsen the situation first year students are confronted with regarding the American textbook, nobody including course guides compilers and facilitators thoroughly prepare and introduce the ALC108 textbooks to students before the commencement of classes. Localized textbooks must be preferred where possible*

Student 5: *The ALN108 American textbook does not speak to our own African life experiences as first year students. The choice of a textbook that is African in content, language and context will make learning more authentic and relevant to our own lived experiences"*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we are also worried by the American textbooks that are devoid of our own African or South African contexts and voices! We find it quite disturbing that at this time and age even at this level (university) our own lived experiences are not valued. Students need affirmation of their own values, cultures, experiences and so forth and unfortunately, these American textbooks are not doing justice to all these important factors. We need an urgent solution to this crisis."*

Student 4: *As first year students at this university, we are very worried that both ALC108 and ALN108 are more focused and emphasize academic reading and writing skills, at the expense of treating language usage or grammar"*

Student 6: *Some of us if not many first year students come from very poor rural schools with poor educational outcomes everywhere. We get frustrated when the university is not focusing on grammar aspects that we lack and instead focus on academic reading and writing"*

Student 3: *I do not have confidence to speak or write in English because I know my grammar is horrible. If the teaching of academic reading and writing skills can be taught parallel with language usage, it will help a lot in improving my academic literacy and my confidence to speak and write in English"*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators we have realized that our students come to class under-prepared in as far as language usage is concerned given the type of schools they attended. We need to find a way to dig deeper in our teaching to address students' grammar challenges"*

Student 7: *Writing eight reading reactions per semester while only the best four will be recorded seem to be unhelpful for us students. It would help a lot if the number of reading reactions is reduced from eight to four or five per semester which will all be recorded"*

Student 4: Reduction of eight reading reactions to four per semester may allow more focused and detailed feedback from the facilitator for students to work on and concretely improve their academic writing skills”

Facilitator 1: As facilitators we are of the view that instead of students writing reading reactions and paragraphs, they rather write varied assessment activities like testimonials, obituaries, letters, etc. as these genres are important for students to know how to write them”

Researcher: Any other aspects and components that you are convinced that they are necessary for enhancing ALC108?

Student 10: It is confusing and frustrating for us as first year students to use the American textbook for learning, but we are assessed through the British English”

Student 8: We do not know which English Standard is academically acceptable in our writing or whether both the American and British Standard English are acceptable as it is not said nor stated anywhere in the course guides”

Student 2: Some form of communication both in the course guides and verbally at the beginning of the year providing clarity on which English Standard is acceptable for our academic written tasks will help us as first year students”

Facilitator 2: As facilitators, the American textbooks are a challenge to us as well especially with spelling as they differ with the British English textbooks we are familiar with. No wonder it is frustrating to students as we mark their work using the British English spelling, not American English as the course guides are silent on whether both British and American spelling are acceptable or one is acceptable. Clarity on which one is acceptable should be stated from the onset and be included in the course guides.”

Student 7: An interactive and energetic facilitator makes me not to think about missing the class. A passive facilitator does not inspire us as first year students to attend such a class”

Student 4: A facilitator who collaborates and share their academic reading and writing expertise with lecturers in the mainstream are very helpful to us first year students”

Student 9: An interactive facilitator will know all the colleagues in the same floor or building as a starting point for more academic interactions to help first year students with their academic reading and writing”

Facilitator 1: As facilitators we need to give students individual attention more especially those we see that they are lagging behind. In as far as reading and writing are concerned; we need to collaborate with lecturers in the mainstream to share expertise on academic reading and writing for the benefit of our students.”

Student 6: As first year students we are of the view that at this stage we are still learners and not yet students. So, we would prefer that facilitators and lecturers should not expect too much from us and rather give us more support and guidance”

Student 3: Most of us first year students come from very under resourced and bad schools wherein to some of us it is a miracle that we have been enrolled at this university. We never thought we would reach this far. We just need a little bit of patience in this first year so that we can adapt and adjust to university life and begin to be students in the second year”

Facilitator 2: As facilitators, given our experience of teaching these English academic literacy courses over the years, we have observed that we are expecting too much from these students instead of giving them more and build their foundation to cope well at the university. Indeed, we must begin to treat them as 'learners' rather than students in their first year and dig deeper to help them grasp the basics of language usage, reading and writing amongst other skills we teach them at first year.”

Researcher: Any other aspects components that you strongly think are necessary for enhancing ALC108?

Student 5: *We are of the view that university management at various levels should work towards improving how they attend to issues that affect first year students"*

Student 10: *In particular, university management should be able to act quickly especially on academic matters that affect first year students"*

Facilitator 1: *We normally feel bad and helpless as facilitators when students are confronted with an academic issue that is beyond us and nobody seems to be forthcoming from university authorities to address the issue. I suggest that we put mechanisms in place to address such pertinent issues so that students are not frustrated by being taken from pillar to post without any tangible solution being arrived at."*

Researcher: *Anything else... Ok, in case there are no more aspects and components you think are necessary to enhance ALC108 course, the next question is: which conditions do you think as a student and as a facilitator that they are necessary for enhancing ALC108?*

Student 9: *Since the ALC108 course is American content and context based, increased schema activation and building at the beginning of the year becomes very important for the success of first year students as everything about the textbook is foreign and not related to our experiences as South Africans or Africans"*

Student 4: *The ALC108 course is American and does not speak to us as South Africans. However, this requires a facilitator or lecturer to put extra effort in properly introducing the content and scenarios found in the textbook to prepare first year students before the actual classes begin"*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators we should do lot of re-reading and pre-writing activities to preview the content of the lectures we will be offering in class and also do a lot of schema activation and building using a variety of strategies to capture the students' attention."*

Student 10: *As first year students, we know that we do not only need academic reading and writing for us to succeed at the university and improve our English vocabulary. We also need to be taught language usage or grammar equally so in order for us to cope with the academic demands at first year level"*

Student 3: *Many of us come from schools where English was taught through Zulu and Sotho translation and we never got the opportunity to master the grammatical aspects of English. If language usage or grammar can be treated the same as academic reading and writing, many of us will do well academically and also improve our confidence in our ability to speak, read and write in English"*

Facilitator 2: *We need to give students more language exercises for them to practice and also vocabulary building exercises through regular presentations in class to also boost their confidence in using English."*

Student 2: *A passionate and active lecturer with a bit of a sense of humour makes the class interesting and influences first year students to take such a class serious"*

Student 8: *A facilitator or lecturer must be in charge of their class and lead by example. Once the lecturer displays a positive spirit and energy for the class, he or she automatically passes such positive energy to his or her students"*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators we need to display passion, dedication and commitment to our work and students. We need to go the extra mile in also using our own personal challenges we experienced when we were students at university so that students can understand that they as well can achieve success and complete their university studies."*

Student 7: *We first year students are encouraged and motivated by a lecturer who knows what they are doing and engages students"*

Student 3: *First year students get along very well with an impartial facilitator who does not discriminate students and acts as a caring and loving parental figure in the class"*

Facilitator 1: *We must be confident as facilitators to show students that we are competent to teach them these courses. We must also not take sides, but rather be impartial for all the students to feel at*

home and welcomed in our classes. As facilitators we must show that positive attitude and be exemplary to the students we teach.”

Student 1: *We first year students at university do not prefer being called students as we are still learners who need to experience university life before we can become students.”*

Student 6: *Lecturers should treat us as learners and start from the basics for us to benefit academically. If they make a mistake of treating us as students, many of us will be left behind academically.”*

Facilitator 2: *With the experience I have of teaching these first year students, I agree that maybe we should treat them as learners at this level especially that they mostly need us to dig deeper and start teaching them the basics as most of them do not have the proper foundation needed to begin studies at university.”*

Researcher: *Any other conditions you think are necessary for enhancing ALC108 course?*

Student 5: *Given our experiences as first year students, the university management should take a stand and seriously attend to challenges faced by first year students, in particular academic issues”*

Student 10: *We suggest as first year students that maybe our university must have a mentorship programme just like in other universities to closely guide and support first year students through their first year of studying at the university”*

Facilitator 1: *As facilitators we have first-hand experience of the challenges first year students’ experience that need some kind of institutional guidance, leadership and support on regular basis. The role that we play as facilitators is not enough given the academic demands of university first year students have to grapple with. We are of the view that the introduction of a mentorship programme wherein senior students who perform well academically provide mentoring sessions and assist first year students with their academic work will address the frustrations faced by these students.”*

Student 4: *We can benefit a lot academically if English academic literacy facilitators collaborate and share their academic reading and writing skills with lecturers in the mainstream in order to align all these skills and embed them in the mainstream courses”*

Student 9: *English academic literacy facilitators and subject lecturers in the faculties should not just know each other as colleagues and what they teach. They should make efforts to collaborate and plan together to infuse academic reading and writing skills within the mainstream courses in the faculties”*

Facilitator 2: *As English academic literacy facilitators we are the first to admit that there is a dire need to engage and have discussions with mainstream lecturers in order to address issues of common interest like the format of writing different genres in order to avoid mismatch between our expectations and those of mainstream lecturers. Such academic collaborations will help students to make the link between the academic reading and writing skills they learn in the ALC and ALN courses with their mainstream courses.”*

Student 8: *It would help us a lot if there is shared teaching wherein subject and content lecturers plan and teach the course together with the English academic literacy facilitators while infusing academic reading and writing skills”*

Student 2: *Disciplines in the faculties should find ways to plan their curriculum in collaboration with English academic literacy facilitators in order to embed academic reading and writing skills across the curriculum within the disciplines”*

Facilitator 1: *Shared teaching is an ideal and more effective way of teaching nowadays as it allows the facilitator and the content lecturer to plan together and share teaching as per their expertise. This means that as a facilitator I will deal with issues like summaries, writing paragraphs, essays, paraphrasing and so on while the subject lecturer focuses on the content.”*

Student 1: *Both the content subject lecturers, English academic literacy facilitators and write site consultants should communicate and strategically align academic reading and writing activities for the benefit of first year students”*

Student 6: *If English academic literacy facilitators, discipline specialists and write site consultants consult each other and have common understanding of different academic writing genres and how they should be structured, first year students will benefit a lot”*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we buy the idea that there must be some form of alignment between the work we do as facilitators, subject lecturers in the faculties and write site consultants. There is no way we can effectively assist students with their academic reading and writing skills without aligning the work that we do as facilitators, subject lecturers and write site consultants! That consistency is needed in all of us for students to benefit more academically."*

Researcher: *Ok, alright! It appears that the necessary conditions for enhancing ALC108 have been exhausted. The next question is: how can we anticipate possible threats to enhancing ALC108 and which strategies can we use to deal with such threats? Wait a minute... Eeh... Let us start first with the possible threats for enhancing ALC108. What are the possible threats for enhancing ALC108 course?*

Student 4: *Lecturers seem to have a negative attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They do not expect us to perform well academically, hence they do not teach us concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies"*

Student 8: *Our first year lecturers rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They seem to be impatient with us first years and expect less from us with regard to our academic performance"*

Facilitator 1: *To a particular extent I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year university students we seem to be mostly taking things at face value and not properly taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. In most cases we are guilty of not decoding the discipline with the expectation that students will just simply understand just like us without us teaching them the basic concepts."*

Student 10: *Some of us first year students have a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. This bad behaviour is a learning barrier on its own and it affects both the student with a negative attitude and the rest of the class as the class is disrupted by such students with a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course"*

Student 3: *Those peer students of ours with a negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need serious and urgent attention before their situation gets out of control and end up leading to suspensions and at worse, expulsion from the institution. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible"*

Facilitator 2: *As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are either uninterested in the course itself or just dislike the facilitator or lecturer. These types of students are few, but are capable of distracting teaching and learning in the class. Both the students and their facilitator/lecturer should develop classroom rules and comply with those rules in order to deal with such distractive tendencies in the class."*

Student 5: *It is very frustrating and discouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be uninterested and demotivated to an extent of coming 15 or 20 minutes late to class consistently. It is even worse whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming late to class"*

Student 9: *The issue of coming late to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very demotivating to us students. From day one, the issue of late coming should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is ignored, effective teaching and learning is likely not to take place*

Facilitator 1: *I can attest as a facilitator that late coming to class is demotivating and more depressing when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late, communication must be done prior to the commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing."*

Student 7: *We are a digital generation and any class that does not include technology becomes boredom to us. We are not saying we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology"*

Student 2: Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”

Facilitator 2: As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves ‘digital natives’.”

Researcher: Any more possible threats to enhancing ALC108 course?

Student 1: As first year students we need a classroom that is not threatening wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”

Student 6: Facilitators as leaders, administrators and managers of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”

Facilitator 1: As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act ‘in loco parentis’ or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will not happen.”

Student 5: There are some of our fellow students who are troublesome in the classroom. Such students disrupts their own learning and that of the other students”

Student 8: Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late”

Facilitator 2: With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”

Student 9: The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP is frustrating for us first year students. What makes it surprising and shocking is that the English academic literacy courses are compulsory for all first year students enrolled in the EDP, but we still experience clashes between some mainstream courses and the English academic literacy courses”

Student 4: It appears to us as first year students that English academic literacy courses are not taken serious by the university. It does not make any sense to us first years to be told that these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, yet they are clashing with mainstream courses on the timetable. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable”

Facilitator 2: With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. However, recently clashes are a norm and the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students.”

Researcher: Any other possible threats for enhancing ALC108?

Student 10: As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we are surprised by the manner in which our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities. We find ourselves experiencing timetable clashes and we are taken from pillar to post without getting concrete assistance on such serious and frustrating issues for first year students”

Student 1: It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and put measures in place to address challenges

first year students come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies”

Facilitator 1: *As a facilitator, I have observed many cases where students were frustrated because of timetable clashes and no one was available to amicably address the genuine challenges faced by students. The university management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students.”*

Researcher: *Now, let us now turn to strategies for dealing with the possible threats you just discussed now. Which strategies can we use to deal with the possible threats you have just highlighted?*

Student 2: *Lecturers should have a positive attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They must expect us to perform well academically after teaching us basic concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies. They must avoid being abstract in their teaching and forget that as EDP students we need more support in our learning”*

Student 8: *Our first year lecturers must not rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They must be patient with us first years and have high expectations from us with regard to our academic performance after teaching us”*

Facilitator 2: *I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year students be patient with students and teach them basic concepts properly and taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. Through positive attitude towards first year students, we can decode the discipline in a simplified manner with the expectation that students will understand as long as we are patient with their learning pace.”*

Student 10: *All of us as first year students should strive to develop a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. Good behaviour supports learning and affects both the student and the rest of the class in a positive way as the class is motivated and encouraged by such students with a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course”*

Student 3: *Our student peers need to develop a positive attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need in order to avoid suspensions and at worse expulsions by the university authorities. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible”*

Facilitator 1: *As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are interested, motivated and have a positive attitude towards the course and myself as a lecturer.*

Researcher: *What other strategies can we use to deal with threats for enhancing ALC108?*

Student 9: *It is very motivating and encouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be energetic, enthusiastic, interested and motivated to an extent of coming 5 or 10 minutes earlier to class consistently. It is even more interesting and encouraging whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming earlier to class”*

Student 4: *The issue of coming early to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very motivating to us students. From day one, the issue of coming early to class should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is embraced and adhered to by everyone, effective teaching and learning is almost guaranteed to take place”*

Facilitator 2: *I can attest as a facilitator that coming early to class is motivating and more encouraging and exemplary when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late or miss the class, communication must be done prior to the commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing.”*

Student 1: *We are a digital generation we expect university classes that include technology for us to be fully be engaged in learning. We are not saying we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology”*

Student 10: Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”

Facilitator 1: As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves ‘digital natives’ in order to engage them fully in the academic discourses.”

Student 7: As first year students we need a classroom that is welcoming and engaging wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”

Student 5: Facilitators as leaders, managers and administrators of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”

Facilitator 2: As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act ‘in loco parentis’ or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will be compromised.”

Student 6: Our fellow students who need to show interest and motivation to learn in the classroom. If all the students can be motivated and interested enough, disruptions and misconducts will not take place in the class our own learning would not be disturbed”

Student 4: Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late. Lecturers must play their pastoral role in treating students appropriately and devising classroom rules that bind everyone together with the students”

Facilitator 1: With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”

Researcher: Anything else that you think can be a strategy for dealing with threats for enhancing ALC108?

Student 3: The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP must be addressed urgently to avoid frustrating us first year students. The institutional management must engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their timetable planning for the year.

Student 8: English academic literacy courses are very important for our academic success and they must be taken seriously by the university management and all the academic staff. Since these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, efforts must be taken to do away with timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable”

Facilitator 2: With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. Given this experience, the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students.”

Student 5: As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we will benefit a lot if our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities speedily. We will be very happy to see our timetable not clashing with the mainstream one as this will help us to focus on our academic work without distractions”

Student 6: *It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and provide leadership, guidance and support through putting measures in place to address challenges first year students may come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies and beyond the first year"*

Facilitator 1: *As a facilitator, I am looking forward to a situation where students are no longer frustrated because of issues like timetable clashes and having people available to amicably address the genuine academic challenges students may be facing. The university management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students in order to provide leadership, guidance and support to these students."*

Researcher: *In the absence of any additions to the strategies for dealing with threats for enhancing ALC108, the next and last question is: how can we show monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of ALC108?*

Student 10: *I think that course evaluation by us first year students is very important as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of whether enhancement of the course has been successful"*

Student 4: *If as first year students we are asked to evaluate the course half-way or at the end of the semester or year will be a good monitoring and an indicator of whether the enhancement strategies have been successful or not"*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we are convinced that course evaluation by students in the middle of the semester or year and at the end of a semester or year depending on whether the course is a semester or year course will help a lot in monitoring whether progress is being made regarding the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students."*

Student 6: *I am of the view that monthly evaluation of students' academic performance by the lecturers will assist as a monitoring strategy and as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course"*

Student 9: *I believe that lecturers should not wait for the end of the term, semester or year to be able to determine or realize that students are academically underperforming or performing. Monthly evaluation of students' academic performance in my opinion will help a lot as a monitoring tool as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course*

Facilitator 1: *As a facilitator I am obligated to reflect from time to time regarding teaching, learning and assessment in my classes. I am convinced that regular monthly evaluation of students' performance can help me a lot in knowing where my students need more support and which work they have mastered."*

Student 3: *As a first year student going to the library to pick any book of my interest from hundreds and hundreds of graded readers to read every week and thereafter write a reading reaction, I have observed that it is easier for many of my classmates to cheat and pretend that they have read a book in the library while it is not true"*

Student 8: *I suggest that a specific number and names of graded readers in the library must be recommended for students to read than the current practice wherein they have to choose any book from hundreds and hundreds of books in the library. This way it will help the lecturer to trace whether the student has indeed read the book or it is just forgery and cheating"*

Facilitator 2: *As facilitators we have observed that the many graded readers that students are supposed to choose from in the library give them an opportunity to cheat and pretend to have read while they did not. A good example is when students write a reading reaction on *Animal Farm* or *Romeo and Juliet* while they know that they only read these books at school before coming to the university. In my view, as facilitators we must recommend a certain number of reading reactions that students should read to avoid academic cheating and plagiarism."*

Researcher: *Any other monitoring strategies for enhancing ALC108 and indicators that enhancement occurred?*

Student 2: *I think that detailed feedback in a continuous assessment course like the English academic literacy courses should be given as early as possible for students to be able to self-correct or peer-correct before moving to other aspects of their written tasks. For example, every week students have*

to write at least one reading reaction and it will be more effective if students get feedback weekly before they write another reading reaction”

Student 7: *Since our English academic literacy classes range from 20 to 35 students, I would suggest that at least for reading reactions and paragraphs, we must be given detailed feedback weekly or at worse fortnightly; for essays at least within two weeks or at worse three weeks and lastly, for tests within three weeks or at worst four weeks. In this manner, feedback will be more helpful and meaningful for us to improve our academic writing skills”*

Facilitator 1: *Facilitators should always bear in mind that feedback on student writing is very crucial and important for student to improve their academic writing skills. As a facilitator I must take it upon myself to provide early and detailed written feedback to my students at least after a week for paragraphs and reading reactions; at least two weeks for essays and at least three weeks for feedback on tests. This way feedback will be more meaningful to students.”*

Student 4: *As first year students we need regular general reviews of our performance in class in addition to detailed feedback written on our assessment tasks and activities”*

Student 6: *I think it is important for the lecturer to either through handouts or even a PowerPoint presentation, generally highlight some of the prevalent errors and mistakes we commit in our reading reactions, paragraphs and essays before we receive the detailed feedback. These general reviews will help us as first year students to focus on areas that we struggle with working individually and also cooperating with our peers in the class.”*

Facilitator 2: *We facilitators should always provide general reviews or feedback to all the students after marking a particular written task either a paragraph, reading reaction or essay and highlight the common mistakes or errors students commit in their academic writing in addition to the detailed feedback given in their workbooks. This will also assist in creating peer-teaching and peer-correction activities that will benefit everyone.”*

Researcher: *Any other monitoring strategies for enhancing ALC108 and some indicators that enhancement has taken place before we conclude the interview?*

Student 5: *As a first year student, I am of the conviction that lecturers are not doing enough in terms of understanding what we are going through as first year students. For instance, I am a shy student who rarely talks in class, but I would be more open if the lecturer can engage me one on one in trying to know my experiences of the course”*

Student 10: *I suggest that lecturers should arrange monthly or quarterly meetings with first year students ranging from below average performers, average performers and above average performers to get a feeling of our experiences of the course and our views”*

Facilitator 1: *Facilitators should create other platforms to engage students and to understand what students are experiencing and going through in their courses especially as first year university students outside the threatening environment of the classroom. Individual or focus group interviews can help a lot composed of below average, average and above average student performance so that they can have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and ideas with the facilitator and their peers.”*

Student 9: *Some of us first year students lack confidence and motivation to work hard and do well academically. I feel that personally I need some kind of external motivation to work even harder”*

Student 6: *I think lecturers should come up with ways to motivate us first year students to perform well academically. The spirit of competition amongst students should be encouraged through giving students some form of rewards or recognition for performing well academically”*

Facilitator 2: *As a facilitator I am of the view that good academic performance if rewarded lead to more good performance. The spirit of a healthy academic competition amongst first year students should be inculcated and nurtured in order to motivate students to work even harder academically.”*

Researcher: *In the absence of more ideas on monitoring strategies for enhancing ALC108 and indicators of successful enhancement, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for participating in this interview. It was in fact more of a discussion than an interview as we had to share our own experiences of the ALC108 course as facilitators and students. You will be informed in due*

course about the next session to do member checking to verify whether your views have been captured correctly in this interview. Thank you very much once again and this marks the end of the interview.

Appendix I

Interview with ALN108 participants

Researcher: *Ok, according to your own experiences of ALN108 as a facilitator and as a student, how can you justify the need for enhancing this English academic literacy programme for first year university students?*

Student A: *It says nothing about our country and there is no reason given to us why we have to be subjected to this academic torture.*

Student D: *There is a lot I do not know about Africa, let alone my country South Africa. It boggles my mind why should I make sense of this American textbook while it does not speak to my own worldview and cultural experiences."*

Student C: *I thought this ALN course will teach us about the science of English or scientific English, but to my surprise, it is more on reading and writing than teaching the scientific English."*

Facilitator A: *The Academic Encounters textbooks we use in the ALC and ALN classes are content and context based on American experiences. The African voices are not captured in the textbooks and this is problematic to us as facilitators."*

Student G: *I do not know how to construct a logical simple English sentence as I was never taught how to write in my previous schools. I thought here at university I will be assisted in this ALN course only to find that I am expected to read and write reading reactions in the library without being taught the basics of how to structure an English sentence. My grammar is very horrible and I am afraid my confidence will not improve.*

Student H: *As first year students enrolled in ALN108, we mostly come from rural schools wherein teachers taught us English in IsiZulu and SeSotho. To make matters worse, instead of being taught the basics of how to use the language English in ALN108, we are only expected to read and write more. This is stressing us because many of us are worried that our grammar is very bad. Can someone hear us and teach us the basics of English usage please?*

Facilitator A: *Students come to the ALN or ALC classes under-prepared in terms of their grammar or language usage from high schools. This therefore requires us facilitators to dig deeper to help students with the language.*

Researcher: *Anything else that you feel according to you as a facilitator or as a student justifies the need to enhance ALC108?*

Student J: *We attend classes from 8H00 until 14H00 and by the time of ALN108 at 15H00, we are already exhausted and need nothing but rest."*

Student D: *It is true. By the time of ALN class at 15H00, most of us are already tired and hungry as we do not have money or bursaries to buy food and eat at the cafeteria.*

Student H: *ALN108 classes start late in the evening from 15H00 to 17H00 and by that time, I am no longer in the mood of attending classes but thinking of going home to cook, eat and rest as I have been attending classes since 8H00 in the morning.*

Student I: *It is even worse that the facilitators and some students come late to the ALN classes by 15 to 20 minutes. It is discouraging and makes one to think of not attending the class completely as one cannot focus and pay attention while still being angry with some of the bad experiences in the previous classes.*

Facilitator A: *I am a full time Grade 12 English teacher in a High school here in Qwaqwa and I think the ALC108 and ALN108 classes are scheduled at the right time wherein we will be done with our school work and ready to assist these first year students.*

Facilitator B: *Given the fact that the majority if not all the facilitators are professional teachers teaching English in the local High schools around Qwaqwa, I am of the view that 3pm is the most appropriate time for us to come to the university and assist these students with their language in the ALC and ALN classes.*

Student H: *We read text that is written in American English, but we are assessed in British English. This is confusing because our work is marked wrong spelling when we use American English. What is the use of us using American textbooks, but we are assessed through British English?*

Student G: *My work is always marked wrong but I spell the words exactly the way they are written in the textbook. Actually, why are we not told which English is correct for us to use? Why American English is marked wrong in our work, but we use American textbooks to learn? This is frustrating!*

Facilitator A: *The American English spelling is challenging and confusing to students. Our students just like us have been taught throughout their schooling years using British English and all of a sudden, they have to switch to American content now at the university. We are also confused as to whether we should mark the American spelling wrong or accept both American and British spelling on students' written work.*

Student J: *Some facilitators and lecturers look scared and afraid when they come to the class. They stammer and appear to be incompetent and not knowing their story. This is a turnoff to some of us first year students.*

Student G: *Some facilitators and lecturers consistently misspell simple common words in English and as first year students; we have to constantly correct their spelling when they write on the board. Sometimes we are even ashamed to correct them as it is embarrassing for us to correct our lecturers on simple spelling for common English words*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators some of us lack skills in using technological devices like PowerPoint presentations and this may put us in a negative light in the eyes of students as they are digital natives."*

Researcher: *Anything else that according to you justifies the need for enhancing ALN108 either in the classroom that involves teaching, learning and assessment?*

Student C: *We need lecturers and facilitators who understand where we are coming from in terms of our educational background and therefore willing to take us by the hand and guide us. We need more lecturers who are patient with first year students and treating like their own children*

Student F: *We really need facilitators and lecturers who are sensitive to student diversity and treat all their students equally with respect and dignity*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we need to show in action and deeds that we care about the well-being of our students and try our best in motivating them in each and every class that they can do it and in case they need any kind of help, we are more than willing to go the extra mile in helping them to succeed in their studies.*

Student B: *Some facilitators are passive and not interactive. The facilitator as the leader and manager of the class must be active, passionate and lead by example. If the facilitator looks bored and uninterested, students are likely to switch off and not benefit from the lecture"*

Student E: *Most of us begin to gradually bunk a class that is uninteresting, passive and boring. The facilitator must be energetic, enthusiastic and passionate about the lecture. He or she should inspire confidence in first year students to want to learn more in their course"*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators we must at all times show enthusiasm and commitment to our work with passion. Students must never suspect that we are disinterested in what we teach or else they will begin to not take us and the course serious! We have to be energetic and exemplary in class for students to take us and the courses we teach serious.*

Student C: *Some of our classmates are not interested in learning or being at the university. Some become disruptive in the class because of a number of reasons ranging from bad experiences from their homes and communities, being at the university just to make their parents happy and just having a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course"*

Student H: *Some students like showing off in class and try to bully other students and the lecturer. Such students need serious and urgent psychological assistance from the powers that be at the university"*

Facilitator A: As a facilitator, I see some students seem to be disengaged, too relaxed and not concentrating in class. Some are more obsessed with their cell phones and it becomes a distraction as they are focused on social networks than what is being done in class."

Student J: As first year students we get frustrated with timetable clashes and to make matters worse, the university authorities are unable to provide us with the necessary leadership and support we need especially during registration"

Student A: Some authorities refuse to help first years and as a result, first year students are taken from pillar to post on minor issues that could have been resolved by the said authorities in the first place. It appears that some university authorities have a negative attitude towards first year students and this does not help the dire situation first year students find themselves in"

Facilitator B: As facilitators we get confused as well to realize that some lecturers in the mainstream courses decide to take our venues while the timetable is clear that the venue is supposed to be utilized at that time by the ALC or ALN class. Some even go to an extent of scheduled tests during our periods in order to frustrate students as to whether they must attend our classes or write that mainstream test."

Researcher: Ok ladies and gentlemen. In the absence of clarity seeking questions and additions on the justification for enhancing ALN108, then the next question is: which aspects and components do you think are necessary for enhancing ALN108 as a facilitator and as a student of this course?"

Student I: The ALC108 textbook is American in content, language and context. These factors make it quite challenging for us first year students to acquaint and familiarize ourselves the American content, context and language found in the textbook. Provision of background information about these textbooks at the beginning of the semester or year is crucial."

Student B: To worsen the situation first year students are confronted with regarding the American textbook, nobody including course guides compilers and facilitators thoroughly prepare and introduce the ALN108 textbooks to students before the commencement of classes. Localized textbooks must be preferred where possible

Student E: The ALN108 American textbook does not speak to our own African life experiences as first year students. The choice of a textbook that is African in content, language and context will make learning more authentic and relevant to our own lived experiences"

Facilitator A: As facilitators we are also worried by the American textbooks that are devoid of our own African or South African contexts and voices! We find it quite disturbing that at this time and age even at this level (university) our own lived experiences are not valued. Students need affirmation of their own values, cultures, experiences and so forth and unfortunately, these American textbooks are not doing justice to all these important factors. We need an urgent solution to this crisis."

Student H: As first year students at this university, we are very worried that both ALN108 and ALN108 are more focused and emphasize academic reading and writing skills, at the expense of treating language usage or grammar"

Student E: Some of us if not many first year students come from very poor rural schools with poor educational outcomes everywhere. We get frustrated when the university is not focusing on grammar aspects that we lack and instead focus on academic reading and writing"

Student I: I do not have confidence to speak or write in English because I know my grammar is horrible. If the teaching of academic reading and writing skills can be taught parallel with language usage, it will help a lot in improving my academic literacy and my confidence to speak and write in English"

Facilitator B: As facilitators we have realized that our students come to class under-prepared in as far as language usage is concerned given the type of schools they attended. We need to find a way to dig deeper in our teaching to address students' grammar challenges"

Student J: *Writing eight reading reactions per semester while only the best four will be recorded seem to be unhelpful for us students. It would help a lot if the number of reading reactions is reduced from eight to four or five per semester which will all be recorded"*

Student H: *Reduction of eight reading reactions to four per semester may allow more focused and detailed feedback from the facilitator for students to work on and concretely improve their academic writing skills"*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators we are of the view that instead of students writing reading reactions and paragraphs, they rather write varied assessment activities like testimonials, obituaries, letters, etc. as these genres are important for students to know how to write them"*

Researcher: *Any other aspects and components that you are convinced that they are necessary for enhancing ALN108?*

Student A: *It is confusing and frustrating for us as first year students to use the American textbook for learning, but we are assessed through the British English"*

Student B: *We do not know which English Standard is academically acceptable in our writing or whether both the American and British Standard English are acceptable as it is not said nor stated anywhere in the course guides"*

Student H: *Some form of communication both in the course guides and verbally at the beginning of the year providing clarity on which English Standard is acceptable for our academic written tasks will help us as first year students"*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators, the American textbooks are a challenge to us as well especially with spelling as they differ with the British English textbooks we are familiar with. No wonder it is frustrating to students as we mark their work using the British English spelling, not American English as the course guides are silent on whether both British and American spelling are acceptable or one is acceptable. Clarity on which one is acceptable should be stated from the onset and be included in the course guides."*

Student G: *An interactive and energetic facilitator makes me not to think about missing the class. A passive facilitator does not inspire us as first year students to attend such a class"*

Student C: *A facilitator who collaborates and share their academic reading and writing expertise with lecturers in the mainstream are very helpful to us first year students"*

Student F: *An interactive facilitator will know all the colleagues in the same floor or building as a starting point for more academic interactions to help first year students with their academic reading and writing"*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators we need to give students individual attention more especially those we see that they are lagging behind. In as far as reading and writing are concerned; we need to collaborate with lecturers in the mainstream to share expertise on academic reading and writing for the benefit of our students."*

Student B: *As first year students we are of the view that at this stage we are still learners and not yet students. So, we would prefer that facilitators and lecturers should not expect too much from us and rather give us more support and guidance"*

Student A: *Most of us first year students come from very under resourced and bad schools wherein to some of us it is a miracle that we have been enrolled at this university. We never thought we would reach this far. We just need a little bit of patience in this first year so that we can adapt and adjust to university life and begin to be students in the second year"*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators, given our experience of teaching these English academic literacy courses over the years, we have observed that we are expecting too much from these students instead of giving them more and build their foundation to cope well at the university. Indeed, we must begin to treat them*

as 'learners' rather than students in their first year and dig deeper to help them grasp the basics of language usage, reading and writing amongst other skills we teach them at first year."

Researcher: Any other aspects components that you strongly think are necessary for enhancing ALN108?

Student J: We are of the view that university management at various levels should work towards improving how they attend to issues that affect first year students"

Student E: In particular, university management should be able to act quickly especially on academic matters that affect first year students"

Facilitator B: We normally feel bad and helpless as facilitators when students are confronted with an academic issue that is beyond us and nobody seems to be forthcoming from university authorities to address the issue. I suggest that we put mechanisms in place to address such pertinent issues so that students are not frustrated by being taken from pillar to post without any tangible solution being arrived at."

Researcher: Anything else... Ok, in case there are no more aspects and components you think are necessary to enhance ALN108 course, the next question is: which conditions do you think as a student and as a facilitator that they are necessary for enhancing ALN108?

Student C: Since the ALC108 course is American content and context based, increased schema activation and building at the beginning of the year becomes very important for the success of first year students as everything about the textbook is foreign and not related to our experiences as South Africans or Africans"

Student G: The ALN108 course is American and does not speak to us as South Africans. However, this requires a facilitator or lecturer to put extra effort in properly introducing the content and scenarios found in the textbook to prepare first year students before the actual classes begin"

Facilitator A: As facilitators we should do lot of re-reading and pre-writing activities to preview the content of the lectures we will be offering in class and also do a lot of schema activation and building using a variety of strategies to capture the students' attention."

Student C: As first year students, we know that we do not only need academic reading and writing for us to succeed at the university and improve our English vocabulary. We also need to be taught language usage or grammar equally so in order for us to cope with the academic demands at first year level"

Student B: Many of us come from schools where English was taught through Zulu and Sotho translation and we never got the opportunity to master the grammatical aspects of English. If language usage or grammar can be treated the same as academic reading and writing, many of us will do well academically and also improve our confidence in our ability to speak, read and write in English"

Facilitator B: We need to give students more language exercises for them to practice and also vocabulary building exercises through regular presentations in class to also boost their confidence in using English."

Student J: A passionate and active lecturer with a bit of a sense of humour makes the class interesting and influences first year students to take such a class serious"

Student D: A facilitator or lecturer must be in charge of their class and lead by example. Once the lecturer displays a positive spirit and energy for the class, he or she automatically passes such positive energy to his or her students"

Facilitator A: As facilitators we need to display passion, dedication and commitment to our work and students. We need to go the extra mile in also using our own personal challenges we experienced when we were students at university so that students can understand that they as well can achieve success and complete their university studies."

Student A: We first year students are encouraged and motivated by a lecturer who knows what they are doing and engages students"

Student I: *First year students get along very well with an impartial facilitator who does not discriminate students and acts as a caring and loving parental figure in the class"*

Facilitator B: *We must be confident as facilitators to show students that we are competent to teach them these courses. We must also not take sides, but rather be impartial for all the students to feel at home and welcomed in our classes. As facilitators we must show that positive attitude and be exemplary to the students we teach."*

Student J: *We first year students at university do not prefer being called students as we are still learners who need to experience university life before we can become students."*

Student C: *Lecturers should treat us as learners and start from the basics for us to benefit academically. If they make a mistake of treating us as students, many of us will be left behind academically."*

Facilitator A: *With the experience I have of teaching these first year students, I agree that maybe we should treat them as learners at this level especially that they mostly need us to dig deeper and start teaching them the basics as most of them do not have the proper foundation needed to begin studies at university."*

Researcher: *Any other conditions you think are necessary for enhancing ALN108 course?*

Student G: *Given our experiences as first year students, the university management should take a stand and seriously attend to challenges faced by first year students, in particular academic issues"*

Student D: *We suggest as first year students that maybe our university must have a mentorship programme just like in other universities to closely guide and support first year students through their first year of studying at the university"*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators we have first-hand experience of the challenges first year students' experience that need some kind of institutional guidance, leadership and support on regular basis. The role that we play as facilitators is not enough given the academic demands of university first year students have to grapple with. We are of the view that the introduction of a mentorship programme wherein senior students who perform well academically provide mentoring sessions and assist first year students with their academic work will address the frustrations faced by these students."*

Student H: *We can benefit a lot academically if English academic literacy facilitators collaborate and share their academic reading and writing skills with lecturers in the mainstream in order to align all these skills and embed them in the mainstream courses"*

Student E: *English academic literacy facilitators and subject lecturers in the faculties should not just know each other as colleagues and what they teach. They should make efforts to collaborate and plan together to infuse academic reading and writing skills within the mainstream courses in the faculties"*

Facilitator A: *As English academic literacy facilitators we are the first to admit that there is a dire need to engage and have discussions with mainstream lecturers in order to address issues of common interest like the format of writing different genres in order to avoid mismatch between our expectations and those of mainstream lecturers. Such academic collaborations will help students to make the link between the academic reading and writing skills they learn in the ALC and ALN courses with their mainstream courses."*

Student D: *It would help us a lot if there is shared teaching wherein subject and content lecturers plan and teach the course together with the English academic literacy facilitators while infusing academic reading and writing skills"*

Student F: *Disciplines in the faculties should find ways to plan their curriculum in collaboration with English academic literacy facilitators in order to embed academic reading and writing skills across the curriculum within the disciplines"*

Facilitator B: *Shared teaching is an ideal and more effective way of teaching nowadays as it allows the facilitator and the content lecturer to plan together and share teaching as per their expertise. This means that as a facilitator I will deal with issues like summaries, writing paragraphs, essays, paraphrasing and so on while the subject lecturer focuses on the content."*

Student I: *Both the content subject lecturers, English academic literacy facilitators and write site consultants should communicate and strategically align academic reading and writing activities for the benefit of first year students"*

Student A: *If English academic literacy facilitators, discipline specialists and write site consultants consult each other and have common understanding of different academic writing genres and how they should be structured, first year students will benefit a lot"*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we buy the idea that there must be some form of alignment between the work we do as facilitators, subject lecturers in the faculties and write site consultants. There is no way we can effectively assist students with their academic reading and writing skills without aligning the work that we do as facilitators, subject lecturers and write site consultants! That consistency is needed in all of us for students to benefit more academically."*

Researcher: *Ok, alright! It appears that the necessary conditions for enhancing ALN108 have been exhausted. The next question is: how can we anticipate possible threats to enhancing ALC108 and which strategies can we use to deal with such threats? Wait a minute... Let us start first with the possible threats for enhancing ALN108. What are the possible threats for enhancing ALN108 course?"*

Student G: *Lecturers seem to have a negative attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They do not expect us to perform well academically, hence they do not teach us concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies"*

Student D: *Our first year lecturers rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They seem to be impatient with us first years and expect less from us with regard to our academic performance"*

Facilitator B: *To a particular extent I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year university students we seem to be mostly taking things at face value and not properly taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. In most cases we are guilty of not decoding the discipline with the expectation that students will just simply understand just like us without us teaching them the basic concepts."*

Student B: *Some of us first year students have a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. This bad behaviour is a learning barrier on its own and it affects both the student with a negative attitude and the rest of the class as the class is disrupted by such students with a negative attitude towards the lecturer and the course"*

Student A: *Those peer students of ours with a negative attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need serious and urgent attention before their situation gets out of control and end up leading to suspensions and at worse, expulsion from the institution. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible"*

Facilitator A: *As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are either uninterested in the course itself or just dislike the facilitator or lecturer. These types of students are few, but are capable of distracting teaching and learning in the class. Both the students and their facilitator/lecturer should develop classroom rules and comply with those rules in order to deal with such distractive tendencies in the class."*

Student F: *It is very frustrating and discouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be uninterested and demotivated to an extent of coming 15 or 20 minutes late to class consistently. It is even worse whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming late to class"*

Student E: *The issue of coming late to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very demotivating to us students. From day one, the issue of late coming should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is ignored, effective teaching and learning is likely not to take place"*

Facilitator B: *I can attest as a facilitator that late coming to class is demotivating and more depressing when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late,*

communication must be done prior to the commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing.”

Student C: *We are a digital generation and any class that does not include technology becomes boredom to us. We are not saying we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology”*

Student F: *Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves 'digital natives'.”*

Researcher: *Any more possible threats to enhancing ALN108 course?*

Student B: *As first year students we need a classroom that is not threatening wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”*

Student G: *Facilitators as leaders, administrators and managers of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”*

Facilitator B: *As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act 'in loco parentis' or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will not happen.”*

Student H: *There are some of our fellow students who are troublesome in the classroom. Such students disrupts their own learning and that of the other students”*

Student E: *Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late”*

Facilitator A: *With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”*

Student J: *The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP is frustrating for us first year students. What makes it surprising and shocking is that the English academic literacy courses are compulsory for all first year students enrolled in the EDP, but we still experience clashes between some mainstream courses and the English academic literacy courses”*

Student C: *It appears to us as first year students that English academic literacy courses are not taken serious by the university. It does not make any sense to us first years to be told that these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, yet they are clashing with mainstream courses on the timetable. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable”*

Facilitator B: *With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. However, recently clashes are a norm and the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students.”*

Researcher: *Any other possible threats for enhancing ALN108?*

Student I: As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we are surprised by the manner in which our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities. We find ourselves experiencing timetable clashes and we are taken from pillar to post without getting concrete assistance on such serious and frustrating issues for first year students”

Student A: It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and put measures in place to address challenges first year students come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies”

Facilitator A: As a facilitator, I have observed many cases where students were frustrated because of timetable clashes and no one was available to amicably address the genuine challenges faced by students. The university management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students.”

Researcher: Now, let us now turn to strategies for dealing with the possible threats you just discussed now. Which strategies can we use to deal with the possible threats you have just highlighted?

Student H: Lecturers should have a positive attitude towards us first year students especially those of us enrolled in the EDP. They must expect us to perform well academically after teaching us basic concepts and the vocabulary we need to master in our studies. They must avoid being abstract in their teaching and forget that as EDP students we need more support in our learning”

Student B: Our first year lecturers must not rush to finish the syllabus without fully engaging us on the content of the course. They must be patient with us first years and have high expectations from us with regard to our academic performance after teaching us”

Facilitator B: I agree that as facilitators and lecturers of first year students be patient with students and teach them basic concepts properly and taking students by their hands and walk with them in order to guide them academically. Through positive attitude towards first year students, we can decode the discipline in a simplified manner with the expectation that students will understand as long as we are patient with their learning pace.”

Student E: All of us as first year students should strive to develop a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course itself. Good behaviour supports learning and affects both the student and the rest of the class in a positive way as the class is motivated and encouraged by such students with a positive attitude towards the lecturer and the course”

Student G: Our student peers need to develop a positive attitude towards the facilitator/lecturer and the course need in order to avoid suspensions and at worse expulsions by the university authorities. The university should put some mechanisms in place to deal with such tendencies as early as possible”

Facilitator A: As a facilitator, I have observed quite a number of first year students throughout my seven or so years of experience teaching these students wherein they are interested, motivated and have a positive attitude towards the course and myself as a lecturer.

Researcher: What other strategies can we use to deal with threats for enhancing ALN108?

Student F: It is very motivating and encouraging to attend a class as a first year university student wherein the facilitator/lecturer seems to be energetic, enthusiastic, interested and motivated to an extent of coming 5 or 10 minutes earlier to class consistently. It is even more interesting and encouraging whereby quite a significant number of classmates have joined the lecturer in coming earlier to class”

Student D: The issue of coming early to class especially by the facilitator/lecturer is very motivating to us students. From day one, the issue of coming early to class should be agreed upon and the agreement adhered to by both the lecturer and the students. If this issue is embraced and adhered to by everyone, effective teaching and learning is almost guaranteed to take place”

Facilitator B: I can attest as a facilitator that coming early to class is motivating and more encouraging and exemplary when it is the facilitator/lecturer who does it as we are supposed to be exemplary and lead by example. If due to certain unforeseen circumstances the facilitator/lecturer realizes that he or she might be late or miss the class, communication must be done prior to the commencement of the class with the class representatives so that it does not become a bad thing.”

Student J: *We are a digital generation we expect university classes that include technology for us to be fully be engaged in learning. We are not saying we must be academically engaged through technology in each and every class we attend. We are actually saying there must be a variety of resources used and technology is one of those resources to meaningfully engage us through technology”*

Student B: *Lecturers must strive to move out of their comfort zones and try to include technology in the teaching, learning and assessment processes in order to make classes more interesting and appealing to us digital natives”*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we are the first to admit that some of us are not comfortable with technology and we would appreciate it a lot if we can be trained on how to use technology in a variety of ways when we teach these students who call themselves 'digital natives' in order to engage them fully in the academic discourses.”*

Student C: *As first year students we need a classroom that is welcoming and engaging wherein the lecturer treats all students equally with respect and dignity without bias or discrimination”*

Student G: *Facilitators as leaders, managers and administrators of their classrooms should ensure at all times that the classroom environment is conducive and friendly for all students for effective teaching and learning to take place”*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators, we need to be careful and very observant of how we treat our students. We must never be biased or favour certain students at the expense of others. We must at all times act 'in loco parentis' or on behalf of parents. It is our responsibility to make sure that students feel comfortable, at home and welcomed in our classes or else, effective teaching and learning will be compromised.”*

Student H: *Our fellow students who need to show interest and motivation to learn in the classroom. If all the students can be motivated and interested enough, disruptions and misconducts will not take place in the class our own learning would not be disturbed”*

Student E: *Though troublesome students might be experiencing a lot of challenges as first year students, there must be some mechanisms and remedial actions taken by the lecturer to address such antisocial and disruptive conduct of our fellow students before it is too late. Lecturers must play their pastoral role in treating students appropriately and devising classroom rules that bind everyone together with the students”*

Facilitator B: *With my experience as a facilitator, I think the best solution to deal with disruptive, uninterested and de-motivated students is through class rules that are established by the facilitator and students at the beginning of the year. Such class rules must be enforced so that every member of the class abide by them to the latter and those who do not comply, there must be remedial steps taken so that they are assisted to behave appropriately.”*

Researcher: *Anything else that you think can be a strategy for dealing with threats for enhancing ALC108?*

Student F: *The issue of the timetable for first year students enrolled in the EDP must be addressed urgently to avoid frustrating us first year students. The institutional management must engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their timetable planning for the year.*

Student C: *English academic literacy courses are very important for our academic success and they must be taken seriously by the university management and all the academic staff. Since these English academic literacy courses are compulsory, efforts must be taken to do away with timetable clashes between EAL courses and mainstream courses. The university should thoroughly engage the timetable committee to consider EDP students in their planning of the timetable”*

Facilitator A: *With my experience and knowledge of the timetable over the years, there is no way students who are enrolled in the EDP can encounter clashes between an English academic literacy course and a mainstream course. The timetable for EDP students is structured in such a way that they cannot experience clashes especially as first year students. Given this experience, the timetable committee on behalf of the university management must urgently address these abnormal clashes that frustrate first year students.”*

Student H: *As first year students enrolled in the EDP, we will benefit a lot if our academic challenges are attended to and addressed by the university authorities speedily. We will be very happy to see our timetable not clashing with the mainstream one as this will help us to focus on our academic work without distractions"*

Student E: *It will help us first year students a lot if the university management at various levels can develop a positive attitude towards first year students and provide leadership, guidance and support through putting measures in place to address challenges first year students may come across especially during their first three months or first quarter of their academic studies and beyond the first year"*

Facilitator B: *As a facilitator, I am looking forward to a situation where students are no longer frustrated because of issues like timetable clashes and having people available to amicably address the genuine academic challenges students may be facing. The university management through the timetable committee must come up with a mechanism that can quickly assist first year students in order to provide leadership, guidance and support to these students."*

Researcher: *In the absence of any additions to the strategies for dealing with threats for enhancing ALC108, the next and last question is: how can we show monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of ALN108?*

Student A: *I think that course evaluation by us first year students is very important as a monitoring strategy as well as an indicator of whether enhancement of the course has been successful"*

Student I: *If as first year students we are asked to evaluate the course half-way or at the end of the semester or year will be a good monitoring and an indicator of whether the enhancement strategies have been successful or not"*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we are convinced that course evaluation by students in the middle of the semester or year and at the end of a semester or year depending on whether the course is a semester or year course will help a lot in monitoring whether progress is being made regarding the enhancement of EALPs for first year university students."*

Student D: *I am of the view that monthly evaluation of students' academic performance by the lecturers will assist as a monitoring strategy and as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course"*

Student F: *I believe that lecturers should not wait for the end of the term, semester or year to be able to determine or realize that students are academically underperforming or performing. Monthly evaluation of students' academic performance in my opinion will help a lot as a monitoring tool as well as an indicator of successful enhancement of the course"*

Facilitator B: *As a facilitator I am obligated to reflect from time to time regarding teaching, learning and assessment in my classes. I am convinced that regular monthly evaluation of students' performance can help me a lot in knowing where my students need more support and which work they have mastered."*

Student E: *As a first year student going to the library to pick any book of my interest from hundreds and hundreds of graded readers to read every week and thereafter write a reading reaction, I have observed that it is easier for many of my classmates to cheat and pretend that they have read a book in the library while it is not true"*

Student H: *I suggest that a specific number and names of graded readers in the library must be recommended for students to read than the current practice wherein they have to choose any book from hundreds and hundreds of books in the library. This way it will help the lecturer to trace whether the student has indeed read the book or it is just forgery and cheating"*

Facilitator A: *As facilitators we have observed that the many graded readers that students are supposed to choose from in the library give them an opportunity to cheat and pretend to have read while they did not. A good example is when students write a reading reaction on *Animal Farm* or *Romeo and Juliet* while they know that they only read these books at school before coming to the university. In my view, as facilitators we must recommend a certain number of reading reactions that students should read to avoid academic cheating and plagiarism."*

Researcher: *Any other monitoring strategies for enhancing ALN108 and indicators that enhancement occurred?*

Student C: *I think that detailed feedback in a continuous assessment course like the English academic literacy courses should be given as early as possible for students to be able to self-correct or peer-correct before moving to other aspects of their written tasks. For example, every week students have to write at least one reading reaction and it will be more effective if students get feedback weekly before they write another reading reaction”*

Student A: *Since our English academic literacy classes range from 20 to 35 students, I would suggest that at least for reading reactions and paragraphs, we must be given detailed feedback weekly or at worse fortnightly; for essays at least within two weeks or at worse three weeks and lastly, for tests within three weeks or at worst four weeks. In this manner, feedback will be more helpful and meaningful for us to improve our academic writing skills”*

Facilitator B: *Facilitators should always bear in mind that feedback on student writing is very crucial and important for student to improve their academic writing skills. As a facilitator I must take it upon myself to provide early and detailed written feedback to my students at least after a week for paragraphs and reading reactions; at least two weeks for essays and at least three weeks for feedback on tests. This way feedback will be more meaningful to students.”*

Student G: *As first year students we need regular general reviews of our performance in class in addition to detailed feedback written on our assessment tasks and activities”*

Student D: *I think it is important for the lecturer to either through handouts or even a PowerPoint presentation, generally highlight some of the prevalent errors and mistakes we commit in our reading reactions, paragraphs and essays before we receive the detailed feedback. These general reviews will help us as first year students to focus on areas that we struggle with working individually and also cooperating with our peers in the class.”*

Facilitator A: *We facilitators should always provide general reviews or feedback to all the students after marking a particular written task either a paragraph, reading reaction or essay and highlight the common mistakes or errors students commit in their academic writing in addition to the detailed feedback given in their workbooks. This will also assist in creating peer-teaching and peer-correction activities that will benefit everyone.”*

Researcher: *Any other monitoring strategies for enhancing ALN108 and some indicators that enhancement has taken place before we conclude the interview?*

Student F: *As a first year student, I am of the conviction that lecturers are not doing enough in terms of understanding what we are going through as first year students. For instance, I am a shy student who rarely talks in class, but I would be more open if the lecturer can engage me one on one in trying to know my experiences of the course”*

Student C: *I suggest that lecturers should arrange monthly or quarterly meetings with first year students ranging from below average performers, average performers and above average performers to get a feeling of our experiences of the course and our views”*

Facilitator B: *Facilitators should create other platforms to engage students and to understand what students are experiencing and going through in their courses especially as first year university students outside the threatening environment of the classroom. Individual or focus group interviews can help a lot composed of below average, average and above average student performance so that they can have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and ideas with the facilitator and their peers.”*

Student A: *Some of us first year students lack confidence and motivation to work hard and do well academically. I feel that personally I need some kind of external motivation to work even harder”*

Student E: *I think lecturers should come up with ways to motivate us first year students to perform well academically. The spirit of competition amongst students should be encouraged through giving students some form of rewards or recognition for performing well academically”*

Facilitator A: *As a facilitator I am of the view that good academic performance if rewarded lead to more good performance. The spirit of a healthy academic competition amongst first year students should be inculcated and nurtured in order to motivate students to work even harder academically.”*

Researcher: *Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for participating in this interview. It was actually more of a discussion than an interview as we had to share our own experiences of the ALN108 course as facilitators and students. You will be informed in due course about the next session to do member checking to verify whether your views have been captured correctly in this interview. Thank you very much once again and this marks the end of the interview.*

