

**TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO GRADE 4
LEARNERS THROUGH PLAY: A SEASONED TEACHER'S SELF-STUDY**

BY

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DECLARATION-
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
PLAGIARISM

I, EMMACULATE NOMPUMELELO NOKUKHANYA NGCONGO, declare that

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STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This statement is submitted with my approval.



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DR LUNGILE, REJOICE MASINGA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
AIDS	Acquired Immune Virus
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
DEAR	Drop All and Read
DRF	David Ratray Foundation
ETA	English Through Activity
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FAL	First Additional Language
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PSRIP	Primary School Reading Improvement Programme
SACE	South African Council for Educators
WRAD	World Read Aloud Day

ABSTRACT

My self-study research focused on teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play. This study aimed to improve my teaching practice by exploring new and innovative strategies for effective teaching and learning of English FAL. I undertook this study because I was concerned about my learners' under-performance in English FAL and my unintentional role in continuing this pattern. Adopting a Sociocultural theoretical perspective helped me understand that learning a language is embedded in social and cultural experiences. Thus, it was essential to pay attention to what learners experienced in their social and cultural interactions (prior knowledge level). The first question that guided my research was: *What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?* This question helped me reflect on my educational journey and engagement with language learning, starting with my family, community, primary and high school, and early school teaching experiences. I identified five significant learnings from my lived experiences that influenced my teaching of language: (a) Learning through playing traditional games, (b) Learning through storytelling, (c) Learning through rhymes and games, (d) Learning through role-playing and (e) Learning through interaction with others. My second research question was: *How can I better facilitate the teaching of English First Additional Language through play?* In responding to this question, I worked with my Grade 4 class as research participants on various activities I designed for this study. Working with the learners in different activities and my reflective journal helped me understand how learners recognised the teaching and learning of English FAL. In this self-study, I also worked with my two critical friends who are also studying Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies. I generated data using six research methods, namely: collage, artefact retrieval, drawing, audio recording, reflective journal writing and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and lesson plans. In engaging with this self-study, I considered five learnings concerning learning and teaching of English FAL: Curiosity and interest to learn stimulated through play, Physical engagement through play encourages class participation, Social interaction through play is an advantage to learning, Play promotes and develops creativity in learners and Play as a teaching technique to improve learner performance. In addition, I learned that learning a language is not an individual activity but a social experience that should be connected to learners' daily experiences.

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CHAPTER ONE

DISCOVERING MY SELF-STUDY JOURNEY

1.1 Introduction

I am a classroom-based educator who has been teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners for more than twenty years. The First Additional Language refers to a language which is not a mother tongue but which is used for certain communicative functions in a society, that is, medium of learning and teaching in education (CAPS, 2011), while Home language is the language first acquired by children through immersion at home. According to the curriculum in South Africa learners receive education in their mother tongue in the early grades (Foundation Phase) (Grades 1-3) and then switch to English First Additional Language in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-7) as a medium of learning and teaching (LoLT). During my years of teaching, I observed that learners struggled and were hesitant to participate in English as a language of learning and teaching in Grade 4 because they were using their home language as LoLT in the Foundation Phase. They had not developed the ability to understand and speak the English language needed in Grade 4. Therefore, it was frustrating to observe that many learners regarded English as challenging because of the transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4, resulting in poor performance.

Therefore, as a teacher, my aim with this study, was to explore new and innovative strategies to teach English FAL effectively to Grade 4 learners through play and, at the same time, improve and develop my teaching practice. I aimed to enhance and develop English FAL teaching and learning to Grade 4 learners through play.

1.2 Focus, purpose and rationale of the study

Radhamoney (2010) concurs that the ability to communicate in English proficiently by second-language English learners is a cause of concern, especially in mainstream schools. Therefore, the focus of this study was to improve my practice as a Grade 4 teacher by finding new and innovative strategies for teaching English First Additional Language (FAL) through play as an

attempt to improve learners' English speaking skills. I aimed to help Grade 4 learners develop language skills such as listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presentation, and language and conventions. I conducted this self-study because I was concerned about my learners' performance which could have been caused by inadequate understanding of English. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction, learners learn using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase and switch to English as LoLT in the Intermediate Phase (grade 4-6) (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

However, based on what I observed over the years as a Grade 4 teacher, the transmission of learners from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is a challenge to both teachers and learners (Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Yohannes, 2006). Pretorius (2014) also declares that the challenge that might hinder learners' smooth transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 could be that learners learn to read in the Foundation Phase, whereas in Grade 4 and upwards, they are reading to learn. Therefore, the ability to speak English impacts all areas of their learning, not only in listening and speaking, reading and writing, but also in Mathematics and Science, where understanding concepts is crucial.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, teachers must revise work done from the previous grades (DBE, 2011). Hence, I observed that grade 4 learners struggle because they have limited background knowledge of the English language from the Foundation Phase (Anyiendah, 2017). Therefore, learners are reluctant to participate in English, leading teachers to code-switch when teaching English FAL to assist learners with understanding. Researchers such as Jones, Greenberg and Crowley (2015), whose research focuses on teaching and learning through play, concur that children are more successful when communicating their ideas to each other during play. Similarly, other studies by Golinkolff and Hirsch-Pasek (2016) advised that children's potential needs to be supported to enable them to be happy and healthy thinkers, caring and social children who will become collaborative, creative, competent and responsible citizens of the future. Golinkolff & Hirsch-Pasek (2016) understand that when children play together, they build skills in communication and collaboration and that playful experiences can give children skills they need to go beyond the facts. Consequently, I embarked on this self-study to explore practical approaches to teaching

English FAL through play to improve my teaching and the development of English language proficiency in my learners.

I anticipated that embarking on this self-study would be significant to myself and other colleagues because we shared information in subject meetings and hoped that it would assist us as teachers to be more effective in teaching English FAL and thereby improve learners' performance.

1.3 Background information

As mentioned, I am an Intermediate Phase teacher teaching English FAL in a primary school in a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. I was born and raised in this province where most people speak isi-Zulu. Therefore, my mother tongue is isi-Zulu. The Zulu nation is well known as people who love singing and dancing as part of their language. Zulu folklore is transmitted through storytelling, poems and proverbs which explain our history and to teach moral lessons. Nevertheless, learners who attend my school speak IsiZulu as their Home Language. Pretorius (2014) asserts that schools, where children are taught in an African language from grade R-3 find it difficult in grade 4 because English FAL is introduced as the LoLT. Learners in my school come from underprivileged backgrounds where their parents experienced social issues like poverty and unemployment. Most learners live with their grandparents who do not have an academic background, thus making it difficult for them to support and assist learners with homework or motivate them to read at home. Therefore, this affects teaching and learning because they do not get help at home or in the community. Because Collier (2007) argued that homework is one of the main factors impacting learners' achievement, we as teachers ensure that we motivate learners to read, do homework and work independently.

I have been teaching grade 4 for the past 20 years and regard myself a seasoned teacher, which has allowed me to see the subject, English FAL, undergoing numerous pedagogical changes in South Africa. The Annual National Assessment (ANA) which are standardised national assessment for languages and mathematics in the senior phase (grades 7 - 9) and intermediate phase (Grades 4 – 6), and in literacy and numeracy for the foundation phase (grades 1 – 3), (DBE, 2011); posed a problem because they were conducted in English FAL in 2011. DBE

(2011) showed that grade 4 learners had difficulty reading with understanding during the ANA. Also, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) conducted in 2016 revealed that 80% of South African Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning (Howie, Scherman and Venter, 2019). These findings indicated that grade 4 learners experienced problems with basic interpersonal communication skills, which called for us teachers to develop intervention strategies to help learners improve their English FAL performance.

The challenge of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in South Africa could be caused by the complexity of the Multilingualism in South Africa. Because, although the constitution provides for the rights to use the language of one's choice in educational institutions and declared them as official at national level (Afrikaans, English, Isi-Zulu, Isi-Ndebele, Isi Xhosa, siSwati, se-Sotho, se-Pedi, se-Tswana, Tshi-Venda and xi-Tsonga) but this is reasonable not practicable. And also when looking back at historical massacre in 1976 where all black schools were forced to use Afrikaans and English as a language of instruction. This implies the challenges faced by native and non-native speakers in the use of English as a medium of instruction. Therefore, as a Grade 4 teacher and a seasoned teacher I had to recognise these challenges and attempt to overcome them by doing self-study to improve my teaching of EFAL.

The learning and teaching English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4 has led the Department of Basic Education to implement various intervention strategies to raise and improve English FAL learning in South African Schools. In 2014, the Department of Education published the manual for Teaching English Across the Curriculum (EAC), (DBE, 2014) to assist learners who face barriers to learning when learners learn content subjects through a language medium that is not their own. The manual emphasises that every teacher is a language teacher (DBE, 2014). In my view, this could increase learners' performance, although the challenge is that teachers were not well-trained to use the manual effectively.

Currently, there are other campaigns that the Department of Education has rolled out to strengthen English FAL teaching and learning in schools which include: Primary School Reading Improvement Plan (PSRIP) which aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning in public schools, Read to Lead Campaign which was launched to encourage a national focus on improving the reading abilities of South African children; Drop All and Read (DEAR)

which was a strategy that involves learners to stop what they are doing and read for 10 minutes, with the hope of building their literacy skills ; World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) to strengthen communities through the power of stories, and National Spelling Bee Competition to promote literacy amongst others (Motshekga, 2015). Again in March 2017, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) launched an in-service training programme for early childhood teachers entitled "Powerful Learning Around You"(P.L.A.Y.), (DBE, 2017) to help professionals strengthen their knowledge and skills to implement play-based learning.

However, as a seasoned teacher who has been in the teaching profession for some time and has seen many initiatives and campaigns introduced, I noticed that they are not producing the outcomes they intended so far. Nevertheless, this might be because I have been in the field for a long time and have developed my ways and habits of teaching as Gillet, Vallerand, Amoura, & Baldes (2010) assert that teachers create their teaching styles as a reflection of their actions set in their classrooms. Therefore, embarking on this self-study as a seasoned teacher, I felt I could profoundly contribute to improving English FAL by questioning my old teaching habits. In this way, I could help support my learners to improve their proficiency in the English language.

1.4 Research questions

According to Vannassche and Kelchtermans (2015), self-study includes research questions that guide the research and the researcher's thinking, beliefs, perspectives and outcomes. Therefore, my self-study was guided by two research questions as follows:

Question 1

What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?

The purpose of asking this question was to understand better how I learned English First Additional Language. In response to this question, I recalled my past English language learning experiences in my family, community, primary and secondary school. As reflected in Chapter Three, I used a collage and artefacts to prompt memories to assist me in constructing my personal history narrative. From my journey, I learned that drawing from my memories helped

me remember experiences that I had forgotten (Mitchell, 2011). It helped me look back and reflect on memories that could have influenced my current practice (Brodgen 2008). I used a reflective journal to reflect on my personal feelings and perspectives about my lived experiences that could have been significant to my development as an English FAL teacher (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009). I also used an audio recorder to record discussions with my critical friends and supervisors to help me further address this research question.

Question 2

How can I better facilitate the teaching of English First Additional Language through play?

In asking this question, I aimed to clearly express how I explored new and innovative methods for effective teaching and learning of English First Additional Language through play. To respond to this research question, as outlined in Chapter Four of this thesis, I planned, enacted and reflected on my lessons using the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) as my guiding document. I audio-recorded my lessons with my learners. This assisted me in writing and reflecting on my teaching in my reflective journal. I used role-play, games, collage and drawing as teaching methods to enhance my teaching and learning.

1.5 Key concepts and theoretical perspectives

In this study, I adopted a sociocultural perspective as the lens through which I understood the key concepts that guided this study. According to Vygotsky (1997), sociocultural perspectives indicate how social interactions and culturally organised activities influence children's development. For this to happen, I realised that English FAL teaching and learning must be connected to social interactions and be relevant to learners' daily experiences. The main aim was to help the learners to participate in learning and to express themselves in English without being shy and struggling. This perspective helped me understand that teaching and learning are more effective if the socialising approach is adopted and where the setting is relevant to learners' daily lives (Bates, 2019; Leonard, 2002; Nagel, 2012). Hence play as a social activity is part of their daily activity.

Henceforth, using sociocultural perspectives, I planned my lessons effectively as I explored new and innovative ways of teaching FAL through play. To do this, I used games because they are associated with learners' daily life experiences. McMurtry (2015) pointed out that the sociocultural perspective on learning occurs when people interact. McMurtry (2015) also affirms that social interaction assists teachers in adjusting and restructuring their understanding of the context in which they function.

The following Social Interaction Models influenced the planning of my lessons:

- (a) Jurisprudential inquiry
- (b) Group work
- (c) Social inquiry
- (d) Role-playing

(Bandura, 1969)

The first model, the "Jurisprudential inquiry", emphasises the role of social interaction in English language teaching. This teaching model helps learners acquire the means of expressing themselves (Bandura 1969). During my lessons, I had to ensure that learners played an active role in their learning as they learned from each other to make discoveries (Easton, 2008). For example, to introduce my lesson to reading and viewing, I had to ask them questions about the picture I showed to them to help them express themselves in English (see Chapter Four). This will help learners shape their memories and thinking (Vygotsky, 1978).

The second model, the "Group work model", emphasises the importance of cooperative learning. It stresses that learning means working with people, making mistakes and learning from mistakes (Bandura 1969). For example, when I was consolidating the topic on reading and viewing, learners wrote sentences in groups to learn to understand new words instead of completing worksheets. They checked the words' meaning and the words' spelling in the dictionary in groups and wrote short sentences thereafter (see Chapter Four). This suggests that learning a language is not an individual activity but a social experience (Gerhard & Mayer-Smith, 2008).

The third model is "Social inquiry," highlighting exploration and reflection on different social issues. For example, I used collage making to encourage listening and speaking, which helped learners talk about the different jobs people do (see Chapter Four). Pretorius states that "not only do learners need to develop adequate oral communication skills in English, they also need to develop the more book-oriented academic literacy skills in the LoLT to cope with the increasing literacy challenges of the Intermediate Phase" (Pretorius 2014, p. 54).

The fourth model, "Role-playing", deals with social support that helps learners interact in typical social situations. According to this principle, learners take turns practising what to do in certain situations such as conversations, games or asking for help. For example, when I taught reading and viewing, learners had to role-play a story. I combined listening, speaking, reading, and viewing into one activity (see Chapter Four).

Concept A: Role of play in teaching and learning

In this study, I used play activities to enhance English FAL learning as Vygotsky (1978) asserted that play integrates children's experiences, knowledge and representations to help them create meaning and sense to understand the world. He believed play promotes children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Vygotsky 1978). Vygotsky (1978) also declares that play is the primary source of development in children and found that a child finds meaning in things as having meaning in play. Hence, play was the core factor in this study as I considered new and innovative ways to teach English FAL more effectively.

Moyles (1994) asserts that play offers the best learning experience and must remain a priority in education. He further explains that play allows children to express themselves and learn how to work with other peers (Moyles 1994). In engaging with this study, some learnings emerged that informed the development of new and innovative strategies to teach English FAL. These learnings are visible in the lesson plans highlighted in Chapter four, where I work with grade 4 learners to explore innovative strategies for teaching English FAL through play. Sevy-Baloon (2017) found that learners show more interest, increased motivation and learn language more quickly when play is incorporated into the lesson. As a teacher, I found it essential to improve

my learners' learning and practice to respond to my teaching requirements. Therefore, I incorporated games in my lesson planning to improve learners' English FAL learning.

Concept B: Second language teaching and learning

Language can be a barrier to effective learning if learners cannot understand a lesson (Cummins 2000). In South Africa, children start using their first additional language, English, as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), in grade 4. This means that they must reach a high level of competence in English by the end of grade 3 (DBE, 2011). Van der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2012) explained the second language as any language learned after the first language, which is the home language, is a language to which learners have limited exposure. Consequently, lack of exposure to the LoLT worsens the language barriers, so learners continue to struggle until they reach higher learning (Cummins 2000). According to the CAPS document (DBE, 2011), teaching, learning, and assessment occur through a language which, in the case of most African learners in South Africa, is not their mother tongue. Therefore, this disadvantages learners and leads to linguistic difficulties, contributing to a breakdown in learning (Cummins 2000). Hence, this self-study has helped me understand this concept and find various strategies to teach English First Additional Language more effectively (see Chapter Four).

From my experience, acquiring a mother tongue does not involve much labour because learners learn this language from birth and speak it at home, but learning a second language gives learners a demanding and challenging task because learners need to learn to read, communicate, write and understand it within a short period of time. Another challenge is that English is mainly practised at school since most learners' backgrounds do not expose them to English outside of school. Therefore, I learned that I need to expose them to activities that allow them to interact and share their ideas in the classroom. Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) assert that learning a language is not an individual activity but a social experience. So, playing and working in groups provide learners with a social experience during English language learning in the classroom.

1.6 Methodological approach

The methodology I used in this study was self-study. Austin and Senese (2004) maintained that self-study allows us as teachers to find our voices, improve our practice and improve our potential. The methodological approach selected in this study was self-study to reflect on my personal experiences to enhance my practice. This section is elaborated on in Chapter Two. Samaras and Freese (2006) assert that self-study in the educational context allows the researcher to scrutinise their teaching challenges and find resolutions to them.

Furthermore, in this study, I focused on what LaBoskey (2007) identified as self-study features: self-initiated and focused; improvement aimed; interactive and collaborative; includes multiple, mainly qualitative methods; and casts validity as a process based on trustworthiness and used it to give my study more credibility. Therefore, since this study aimed to explore new and innovative strategies to facilitate English First Additional Language better, I anticipated that if I could improve my practice, this would positively impact my learners' performance. Thus, I scrutinised what worked and what did not work in my teaching practice and came up with various teaching methods to facilitate English FAL in a better way.

Another crucial aspect of self-study is critical friends' role through their contribution to the study process. Samaras and Roberts (2011) assert that self-study allows teachers to work with critical friends in a supportive way to improve practice by making it explicit through collaborative inquiry. Consequently, self-study allows you to openly ask your critical friends questions about your research. This means that you choose your research questions about something that captures your interest and needs your attention in your classroom, and you enact research inside your classroom while receiving support from your critical friends. Therefore, I found self-study motivating by allowing me to engage with critical friends about my study.

1.7 Conclusion and overview of the dissertation

In this chapter, Chapter One, I discussed my study's focus, background and rationale. I focused on why I engaged in this study. I explained the importance of instilling play into my teaching strategies to teach English FAL. I also considered the Department of Basic Education's intervention strategies to improve learner performance. I then clarified the two research

questions that guided my study and how I responded to them. I finally discussed the methodological approach I selected, which is self-study, and gave reasons why it was suitable for this study.

In Chapter Two, I outlined the research methodology used in this research study, which is self-study. I introduced the research participants. I described the research settings giving the background status of the community in which my school is situated. I introduced my critical friends while highlighting the value their inputs made to my research study. I further elaborated on the data sources I used to generate my data: collage making, artefact retrieval, drawing, audio recording, reflective journal writing, games, role-playing, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and lesson planning. Furthermore, I discussed how I established my study's trustworthiness and adherence to ethical considerations. Finally, I commented on the challenges I encountered during the study and how I overcame them.

In Chapter Three, I responded to my first research question, *"What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?"* I discussed my learnings from my lived experiences and how they influenced my teaching of English First Additional Language to my Grade 4 learners through play. I narrated my lived experiences by creating a collage as a tool for recalling my personal history. I presented my collage to my critical friends and supervisor for alternative support. I also included artefacts to make my memories more visible.

In Chapter Four, I responded to my second research question, *"How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching and learning through play?"* I discussed the planning and preparation of my lessons. I demonstrated how I collected data from the lessons while working with my grade 4 class.

In Chapter Five, the concluding chapter, I reflected on my learnings in this self-study journey, namely the methodological, conceptual, and theoretical learnings. These learnings were: curiosity and interest to learn stimulated through play, physical engagement through play encourages class participation, social interaction through play is an advantage to learning, play

promotes and develops creativity in learners and play as a teaching technique to improve learner performance. I concluded this chapter by disclosing the learnings gained from this self-study research using a collage and how it contributed to and assisted me in my future teaching of English First Additional Language.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLORING MY SELF-STUDY JOURNEY

2.1 Introduction

My study focused on teaching English First Additional Language in Grade 4 through play, and I aimed to enhance my teaching practice to improve learners' English FAL proficiency. In the previous chapter, Chapter One, I explained the study's focus and purpose. I then outlined the rationale for my research and described how I thought my learners would benefit from the study. After that, I briefly explained the methodological approach and theoretical perspective I selected. I further outlined critical concepts in English FAL learning and teaching. Finally, I discussed the research questions that guided my study.

In this chapter, I give a comprehensive guide on my self-study research process. I begin by discussing the research methodology that I employed for my study. I explain the research setting for my research and my research participants. I further explain how I generated data using different research practices. I describe how I made meaning for my study and followed ethical considerations to establish trustworthiness. I then elaborate on the challenges that affected my research study and how I overcame them.

2.2 Research methodology

The study employed a self-study research methodology as I intended to explore and improve my English First Additional Language teaching and learning in Grade 4 through play. According to Smith (2016), self-study is about teachers taking control of their own professional practice by researching it with the intention of developing and improving both oneself and practice and aiming to create new research based knowledge. This implies that as a teacher I am responsible and must take responsibility for investigating, describing and articulating the relationship between teaching and learner's development, understanding and learning. Focusing on self-study is also understanding my own practice which means that I critically examine my own personal values (Kunneman, 2005), work towards better understanding

(Keltchermans, 2005) and positive changes in identity and practice (Grant & Butler, 2018) and have a moral purpose (Fullan, 2001).

Keltchermans and Hamilton (2004) point out that one of the purposes of self-study is that, self-study can help teachers to look beyond technical and mechanical reductionism which is from the perspective of “knowing how” to the perspective of “knowing why” and becoming someone-who-for students. This means that as teachers we live up to the society’s demands for quality education and be more than professional and educational experts (Day, 2000). And this also means the importance of involving moral obligation, moral of one’s knowledge that includes personal attributes such as honesty, integrity and credibility in our teaching.

Koster and van den Berg, (2014) emphasises that by engaging in self-study, teachers can be aware of who they are and find their core values which can be a good way to create meaningful processes to become more aware of who you are as a teacher and also develop your identity. Austin and Senese (2004) also asserted that once teachers frame their research as a self-study, they enter the field of research with a different approach, a personal approach because they enter the field with themselves and about themselves which required them to put themselves, their assumptions, their beliefs and their ideology of teaching under scrutiny. Because how one teaches is a product of who one is and what one considers to be one’s own belief and truths related to teaching.

Therefore, I found self-study suitable because I wanted to study my professional practice to improve my English FAL teaching in Grade 4 as I understand that the purpose of my teaching is to make learners understand better. So, I aimed to respond to my learners' challenges in mastering English as a first additional language. Self-study helped me respond to my second research question: *How can I better facilitate the teaching and learning of English First Additional Language through play?* Through this question, I explored new and innovative strategies to make my teaching more effective and improve myself. I understood that self-study aimed to create changes and improvements and bring new knowledge and developments to teachers. As LaBoskey (2004, p. 840) asserted, self-study is about "self-improvement". Therefore, this study allowed me to enhance my practice and contribute to my personal and

professional development. It also encouraged me to improve my practice by improving my teaching.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) declared the purpose of self-study as understanding one's teaching practice that benefits the self and others in the teaching profession. Similarly, Pinnegar (1998) also maintained that self-study is a methodology for studying professional practice settings to improve teaching and maximise learners' benefits. Valli and Buese (2007) found that teachers motivated to enact changes believe in self-study. Thus, through self-study, I was able to enact, reflect and take action in my practice and contribute the most to the educational system, my school and my colleagues. So, self-study encouraged me to be an agent in my learning and reform initiatives while collaborating with my professional colleagues to improve my daily and long-term work with my learners (Samaras & Freese 2009).

Following Russell (1998, p. 6), I wanted to learn from my experiences as I understood that "self-study is about learning from experiences embedded within teachers creating new experiences for themselves and those they teach." Through personal history as a self-study method, I looked at my personal history in responding to my first research question: *What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?* I reflected on my lived experiences from this question to use it for future learning. This helped me understand the accountability I have towards my learners. According to the South African Council for Educators (SACE), Act 31 of 2000, teachers have a commitment and obligation to do all within their power to exercise their professional duties. Thus self-study offered me a new way to think about my professional accountability, as emphasised by McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p. 11), who stated, "How can I hold myself accountable to myself" which Vannasche and Kelchtermans (2015) call "a necessary turn to self." Using a self-study methodology to improve my practice demonstrated my accountability to my learners as I sought to improve their performance in English FAL.

In addition, the self-study methodology uses art-based research practices. Samaras (2011) maintained that using these practices in self-study allows the researcher to analyse and create meaning. Weber (2014) also asserts that these research practices expand our knowledge base

by including neglected and important ways to construct meaning. Therefore, I applied arts-based research practices such as artefact retrieval, drawing, collage making and reflective journal writing in my study to assist me in making visible and reflecting on my past experiences. Using these practices allowed me to understand my English FAL learning in my personal history. Furthermore, I also used arts-based practices such as drawing and collage-making to teach and improve my learners' listening and speaking skills.

2.3 Research setting

Since this is a self-study, I looked at my practice of teaching English First Additional Language in Grade 4 through play. I conducted this study in my classroom with my Grade 4 learners at my school in uMzinyathi District, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. My school is situated in a rural area where they still practice crop and stock farming. Occasionally, learners have to stay home to look after cattle and goats, leading to absenteeism and late coming. The school enrolment is 263 learners (123 males and 140 females), from grade R to 7 (6-15 years of age) with a principal, one head of department and 7 Post Level 1 educators, an administration clerk, two cooks, a cleaner and a security officer. The teacher-learner ratio is 1: 40. It is a mainstream, no-fee paying government school that depends on the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NSF), which means learners do not pay school fees and receive stationery from the school. The school is part of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which means learners receive lunch from the school. Approximately all learners receive the Child Support Grant as a source of income. The medium of instruction is IsiZulu, the home language of most learners and teachers. The teachers and learners are all black South Africans.

The school has limited teaching resources but owns a mobile library donated by the David Rattray Foundation (DRF) for teachers and learners to access reading material. The school's infrastructure is inadequate, with no administration buildings and playgrounds for learners to conduct sports activities. Both teachers and learners use pit latrine toilets. The community's socioeconomic status is low, as most people are unemployed and depend on social grants for a living. The David Rattray Foundation assists the community with food parcels, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4 Research participants

I was the main participant and the researcher in this study, researching my current teaching practice to improve my English FAL teaching through play. Samaras (2011) explained that teacher-researchers become the main participants in their self-study research. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) also highlight that the researcher is one of the voices in the conversation in self-study. Hence, through play, I explored my English FAL teaching in grade 4. Samaras & Freese (2009) argue that self-study is not done in isolation. Therefore, I worked with my 39 grade 4 learners comprising 15 boys and 24 girls aged between 9 and 11 years old. They were all black learners who spoke isiZulu and were not exposed to any resources to support their English language learning. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to divide my classroom into two sections to have enough space and allow social distancing. So I had two groups of learners occupying the same classroom, but one group only was exposed to my new teaching strategies while the other was not. Since my research study took place during the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, this affected my teaching because learners were not attending school regularly as the Department of Basic Education stipulated that grades will attend on different days, which affected their learning.

2.5 Critical friends

For this study, I worked with my critical friends, as Samaras (2011) suggested. Critical friends are a learning community with trusted colleagues who constructively ask questions to clarify the research and offer different viewpoints. My critical friends helped me gain a "new perspective in understanding and reframing" my ideas about my research (Samaras 2011, p. 281). They brought new perspectives, beliefs, thoughts and experiences, which helped me rearrange my ideas to improve my research. We had regular meetings using WhatsApp and Zoom, where we collectively supported each other through conversations and constructive feedback on our work. We presented our work and critiqued each other's work. For example, when I presented my lessons, one of my critical friends asked me, *"Don't you think the content was too much for an hour?"* Due to her comment, I divided my lesson into two parts as I realised the work was too much for my learners. Again my critical friend asked, *"Don't you think you spent much time playing games instead of teaching?"* His question helped me develop an innovative strategy for managing time throughout my lesson.

My critical friends were the other three colleagues also studying for a Master's Degree in Education at the same university I am registered. One is a female with five years of teaching experience and two males, one with 12 years of teaching experience and the other with one year of teaching experience. Working with my critical friends and supervisor, I learned to interact with other practitioners to promote learning, critique and take others' suggestions into account to improve my research.

2.6 Data Generation

Samaras (2011) offered that self-study is "useful to examine who you are as a teacher, your identity, the motivations behind your teacher goals and support you have experienced in reaching those goals" (p. 95). Thus, in this study, I attempted to bring to light and explore the role of play in teaching English FAL in Grade 4. In composing my study, I followed a growing body of work on self-study that used art-based methods such as collage making, artefact retrieval, drawing, reflective journal writing, an audio recording of lessons and discussions, role-playing and games. These research practices helped me provide evidence of my teaching and learning. It also helped me represent, construct and deconstruct my thinking about teaching English FAL through play (Weber & Mitchell, 2004). It allowed me to generate data to answer the research questions: *What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play? How can I better facilitate the teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?* I used the data sources as follows:

Collage

I used a collage to answer my first research question as a prompt to recall my personal history and my learnings (see figure 3.1 in Chapter Three). I also used it as a teaching strategy to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. I asked learners to make and present their collages to the class (see figures 4.7. and 4. 8. in Chapter Four).

Artefact retrieval

I employed artefact retrieval to bring the past to the present by recalling my memories of learning English First Additional Language at home, at school, and community (see Chapter 3).

Drawing

Drawing helped me analyse my learner's learning (see figure 4.18 in Chapter Four). I also used it as a learning and teaching strategy to develop listening and speaking skills. I asked learners to listen and draw what they listened to (see figure 4.12 in Chapter Four).

Audio recording

Audio recording helped me obtain and listen to conversations and discussions with my critical friends and supervisors during our online cohort sessions via Zoom, the online meeting platform. It also helped me listen to conversations with my learners during teaching and learning.

Reflective journal writing

I kept a journal to reflect on my past, critical friends' and supervisor's suggestions and inputs. I also used it to reflect on my lessons and instruction during teaching and learning.

Table 2.1 below illustrates what data sources I used to respond to each research question

Table 2.1: Data generation table

Research question	Data Generation Activities	Data Sources
What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language	<p>*I made a collage to narrate my personal history of my English First Additional Language learning through play.</p> <p>*I collected objects that prompted memories of my personal experiences in learning English First Additional Language through play.</p>	<p>1. Collage.</p> <p>2. Artefacts.</p> <p>3. Audio-recording.</p> <p>4. Reflective journal writing.</p>
How can I better facilitate the teaching of English First Additional Language through play	<p>*Learners were asked to make a collage describing jobs and present them to the class.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to compose and perform their songs to the class.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to listen to the story and draw what they were listening to.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to read and role-play a story.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to play games.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to write class activities.</p> <p>*Learners were asked to reflect on their lesson and teaching.</p>	<p>1. Learner's Collages.</p> <p>2. Audio-recording of songs and presentations.</p> <p>3. Learner's drawings.</p> <p>4. Roleplaying and audio-recording.</p> <p>5. Reflective journal writing, Games.</p> <p>6. Learner's classwork activities.</p> <p>7. Reflective journal writing, Lesson Plans, and CAPS documents.</p>

(Table format by: Samaras, 2011)

2.7 Data representation

Artefact retrieval

According to Allender and Manke (2004), artefacts are objects that can offer "tangible evidence of the realities of teaching and learning" (p. 20). They assert that "artefacts come from our past, and we can find them in file drawers and dusty boxes" (p. 21). Similarly, Mitchell (2011) explained that artefacts could carry personal memories and evoke personal narratives when examined, to answer specific questions about the significance to the owner. Brodgen (2008) declared that artefacts are tangible objects that can help one recall and understand past events, bring the past to the surface, appreciate our history, and change the present and future. Therefore, I chose essential artefacts and used them to help recall my personal experiences of learning English FAL through play (see Chapter Three). I collected those that could help me remember unique experiences and evoke new meaning of my past life experiences to develop me professionally. I used a wall frame, an envelope, a coat, a *Umlabalaba /Umrabaraba* game board (an umlabalaba is a traditional game played in pairs) and a textbook as artefacts to find meaning in my experiences and to explore how they influenced my life and teaching (see Chapter Three).

I used artefacts to reflect on my past primary school and Sunday school experiences. Remembering my primary school and Sunday school experiences, I tried to find meaning in my experiences regarding how they influenced my life and teaching. There were unforgettable memories of how I learned English FAL at school and in the community (Sunday school). The memories aroused happy feelings and reminded me of the happy moments at primary school and Sunday school. These artefacts also made me acknowledge the importance of learning through play. Therefore, using artefact retrieval as a data generation practice contributed significantly to my personal history narrative and enlightened my current teaching practice.

Reflective Journal writing

Studies have confirmed that using a reflective journal effectively captures, reports on, reflects and evaluates data (Brookfield, 1995; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996). For this study, I kept a journal to record and engage with my learning, teaching, and research experiences during my study. According to Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 123), journal writing is "a tool that offers a place for writers to expose and reflect on their personal

feelings and perspectives." I documented and reflected upon my experiences, thoughts and views of my life and classroom activities that emerged from teaching and learning. Masinga (2012) highlighted that keeping a reflective journal as a methodological tool helps provide moments of reflection and interpretation of all aspects of the experiences gained. I used reflective journal writing to reflect on my teaching, understand my journey, and make inductive reasoning.

Taggart and Wilson (2005) assert that since self-study aims to learn from experience, keeping a journal helped make each session more educative. Similarly, Varathaiah (2010) highlights the importance of journal writing to record and reflect on our experiences during the research process; and that learning comes from reflecting on the adventure rather than the experience itself. Therefore, journal writing enabled me to reflect on my teaching process and developed me personally and professionally. I learned that I should write a journal entry during the breaks because it was better to write about the experience when it was still fresh in my mind. I consider my journal as a rich resource for my study because I return to it whenever I need to reflect. Figure 2.1 below is a screenshot of one of my journal entries.

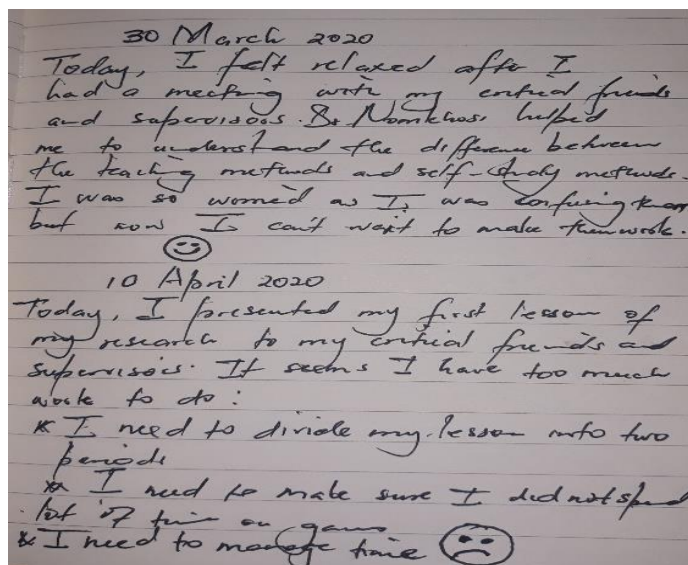


Figure 2. 1 A screenshot of my journal entry

Collage making

Collage is an artistic practice that involves cutting and pasting disparate images from magazines, books and newspapers and arranging them in such a way to create a new holistic

image (Pithouse, Mitchell & Weber, 2009). Pinnegar and Hamiton (2009) assert that collage offers a worthy research method that can support a teacher's self-study in considering the possibility of capturing their understanding. Collage also provides an opportunity to produce an "internalised portrait" of the world based on an experience (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999, p. 4). For Davis and Butler-Kisber (2009), collage is vital to enhance analysis and representation in pursuing educational research. It makes the complexity, clarity, depth and coherence of ideas and understanding visible. Therefore, I constructed a collage (see figure 3.1 in Chapter Three) to account for my learning of English First Additional Language through play at home, school, and community. I saw a collage as a way to cultivate my personal and professional voice.

I also used a collage to teach my learners (see figure 4.5 in Chapter 4) listening and speaking skills. The collage assisted them in interacting with each other and helping each other, and they could also present their collages to the class (see figure 4.5.2 in Chapter 4). Using a collage helped them become more than I expected, as they could express themselves freely in English. As Butler-Kisber (2008) maintained, collage offers "a way of expressing the said and unsaid, and allows for multiple avenues of interpretation and greater accessibility" (p. 268). Therefore, a collage helped me recognise innovative methods to improve listening and speaking.

Drawing

According to Ganim (1999), art can allow us to experience feelings and thoughts that may have been repressed or forgotten. Likewise, McNiff (1992) asserts that artistic images can expand communication and offer insight outside the scope of the reasoning mind. Similarly, van Manen (1984) sees drawing as the intellectual value of artistic forms of inquiry. Therefore, I used drawing during teaching and learners' learning of English FAL through play to understand how it could improve their communication skills.

Learners' drawings

Literat (2013) asserts that drawing has a playful nature and a lack of dependence on linguistic proficiency. Therefore, it is suitable for working with children and youth across various backgrounds and cultural contexts. As part of my research, I gave learners an activity to listen to the story and draw what they were listening to. Then, they had to retell the story to the class using their drawings. I found that making drawings exposed their cognitive processes,

particularly creativity and the emergence of ideas (Garner, 2008). My learners could use drawing to retell the story in chronological order. This exposed them to new ways of thinking because drawing led them to manipulate and develop thoughts. Drawing opened up clear avenues for verbal and visual communication. It helped them communicate freely and talk about their drawing. I learnt that drawing was essential in developing their listening and speaking skills. Hence the focus of the research was to improve their English FAL. Figure 2.2 below is an example of learner's drawings

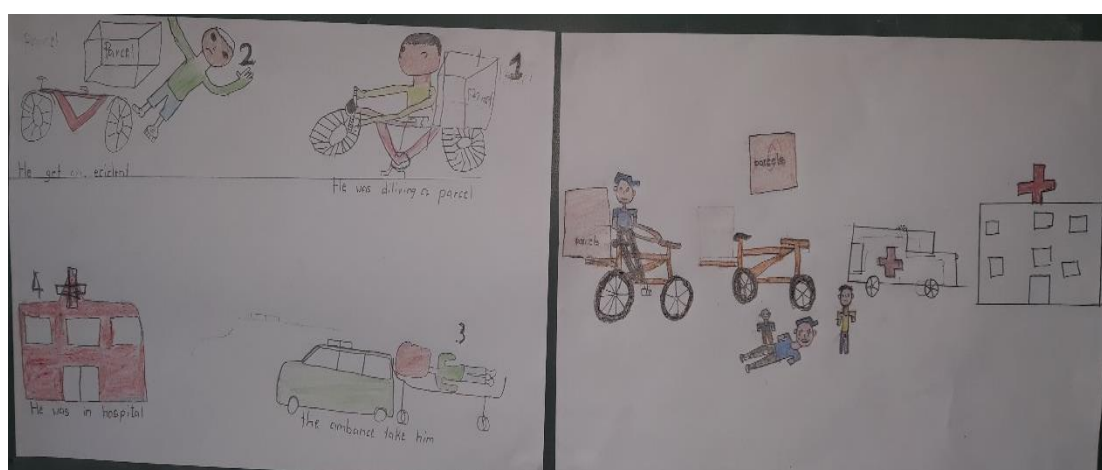


Figure 2. 2. Example of learners' drawings

Audio recording

According to Masinga (2012), the audio recording of sessions and reflective journal writings are tools for memory work. I used this research method to collect data from my teaching and learning and during cohort meetings with my supervisors. The aim was to listen and become fully engaged in what had happened during the discussions. Masinga (2012) highlights the significance of audio recording in that it helped her listen to what was said during her meeting with self-study research participants. Therefore, audio recordings helped me listen carefully to my discussions with my supervisor and critical friends, teaching and learning sessions, and learner presentations for the purpose of my self-study research. It also helped me recognise the weaknesses and mistakes during my lesson presentations. For instance, I always point at the same learners during my teaching and learning, but listening to my audio recording helped me give all learners a chance to speak. Masinga (2012) postulates that recording the sessions

becomes the 'third ear,' which is accurate because it helps me to reason inductively so I can analyse the participant's inputs and make meaning.

Roleplaying

Role-playing offers several advantages for both teachers and learners as a teaching strategy. According to Joyce and Weil (2000), roleplaying is a strategy that fits within the family of models. This strategy emphasises the social nature of learning and sees cooperative behaviour as socially and intellectually stimulating. For this research study, I used role-playing to raise the learners' interests in the topic as children love to play (see figure 4.16.2 in Chapter Four). I used the role-playing method to teach my learners reading and viewing, where I asked them to role-play a story they read. I found that learners were very excited and came up with suggestions on how to act out an account from the story, proving that role-play raised learners' interest and increased their confidence.

Research has shown that "integrating experiential learning activities in the classroom increases interest in the subject matter and understanding of the subject content" (Poorman 2002, p. 32). It increases involvement on the part of the learners in a role-playing lesson as learners are not passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge; instead, they take an active role. Poorman (2002, p. 32) observes that "true learning cannot occur when learners are passive observers of the teaching process." I also used role-playing as a basis for listening and speaking exercises to develop conversational skills. Role-playing strengthens learners' creativity by generating their dialogue skills and making learning fun and interesting.

From my experiences, language learning requires substantial oral practice and the active participation of the learners. The challenge I observed was that speaking English as an additional language needed more time to practice in the classroom as most learners did not use English outside the school environment or at home. I indicated in Chapter Four that learners enjoyed what they were doing, but they failed to complete their tasks and had to finish the following day because of time constraints. Nevertheless, I found it enjoyable and worthy to use arts-based methods to help learners practice speaking English in the classroom, although it consumed most of my time.

Games

Kosnik (1995) asserted that games are not activities aimed at breaking the ice between students or killing time but an excellent way to teach content and enhance learners' critical thinking abilities. Games promote learning in a non-threatening manner and encourage active, learner-centred learning as learners interact freely to solve problems collectively. Games also provide an open-ended opportunity for learners to clarify their ideas and ask questions. Byrne (1995) also defines games as a form of play governed by rules that should be followed, but the most crucial benefit for the learners is to have fun. Games are not just a diversion or a break from routine activities but also a way of getting learners to use the game's language. Similarly, Hadfield (1998) defined games as an activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun, and the main focus is to help learners learn and have fun. I used games during teaching and learning (see Chapter Four), and I found that learners were excited and enjoyed the games; it helped them be on time for class, and it also helped develop their self-confidence.

Lightbrown and Spada (1999) stress that teachers can influence learners by creating a supportive environment where learners are stimulated and engaged in activities. They anticipate that learners have a better chance of learning vocabulary during games (see figure 4.12 in Chapter Four). Therefore, to enhance learners' learning, I gave them a chance to play different games to increase their participation. I used various games to stimulate and encourage them to learn and thereby improve their understanding. With the enjoyment of games for teaching and learning, learning occurs smoothly, and outcomes are achieved (Moon 2000).

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Documents and Lesson Planning

The Department of Basic Education has a prescribed curriculum policy for all schools in South Africa, namely the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). It is a comprehensive policy developed for each subject from grades R-12. CAPS stipulates that children from grade 4 onwards be taught in their first additional language, English. This requires that grade 4 learners acquire the necessary English language competence to learn their subjects through the medium of English. In this study, I used the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements to plan my teaching and learning activities for my learners. Since grade 4 articulates from the foundation phase (grade R-3), where the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) is isiZulu, I had to keep that in mind when designing activities for my learners.

2.8 Making meaning (data analysis and interpretation)

To make meaning from my study, I moved from a general to a specific point of view of my teaching of English FAL through play in grade 4. I collected data using collage and lesson plans I created to make vivid my learning experiences as obtained from my actual teaching and learning. According to Frith and Gleeson (2004), you can identify themes and patterns within the data, inductively or deductively. Therefore, I engaged inductively with the generated data to find meaning and patterns in response to my research questions: *What can I learn from my personal history in teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play? and how can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching and learning through play?* (Niewenhuis, 2010). Thomas (2006) defines the inductive approach as a systematic procedure for analysing qualitative data in which the analysis is to be guided by specific evaluation objectives. He also describes inductive analysis as an approach that uses detailed raw data readings to form patterns, themes, and concepts.

Samaras and Roberts (2011) state that the characteristic of self-study is that it should be interactive even when conducted by an individual researcher. They also noted that working collaboratively with critical friends can help researchers understand the phenomenon under study and allow growth and learning. Therefore, I worked with my "critical friends" (Samaras & Roberts, 2011, p. 43) to obtain an alternative perspective. Working with my critical friends positively impacted my understanding of learners' English FAL learning through play. Interacting and collaborating with my critical friends and Grade 4 learners helped me interrogate new perspectives on teaching English FAL through play. This assisted in the interpretation and analysis of data. Samaras and Roberts (2011) explain that self-study is personal and interpersonal, with learning, thinking and knowledge arising through collaboration and feedback from others. This influenced me in facilitating English FAL more effectively. Through feedback from my learners (participants) and working collaboratively on generating data, I gained new insight and perspective in analysing and interpreting data.

In chapter three, I responded to my first research question: *What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English FAL through play?* I created a collage to reflect on my journey. From my experiences, I extracted five learnings that I believe were useful to my teaching practice in Grade 4: learning through playing traditional games, learning through

storytelling, learning through rhymes and songs, learning through role-playing and learning through interaction with others. Again, in responding to my second research question in chapter 4: *How can I better facilitate English FAL teaching and learning through play?* I also used a collage to analyse and make meaning of the data collected. These learnings were:

- (a) Curiosity and interest in learning is stimulated through play
- (b) Physical engagement through play encourages class participation
- (c) Social interaction through play is an advantage to learning
- (d) Play promotes and develops creativity in learners
- (e) Play as a teaching technique improves learner performance

I also used ethically responsible photographs of learners at play as evidence of data collected, and through analysing them, I understand how learners in Grade 4 learn English FAL through play.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

In research with children as participants, one should carefully consider particular ethical issues. Graham, Powel and Taylor (2015) suggested the researcher should, in research studies involving children, be mindful of ensuring that the children are to be respected, their human rights not violated and that the research should benefit them. As a result, it was vital for me to get ethical clearance from the university and consent from parents or guardians for learners to be involved in my research study and for me to use the learners' classwork activities as data.

I explained to my learners how we would work together to approach learning through play. I gave them the consent letters that requested their permission to participate. We read the letters together for them to understand and say whether they wished to be part of my study or not. Before commencing my first lesson, I reminded them that I was not forcing them to participate in my research. Instead, they must participate voluntarily, and if they feel that they want to withdraw from the study, they could do so, and I would not penalise them for that and would not use their class activities as part of my research (see appendix page).

Parry and Mauthner (2004) indicated that learners should have the right to participate and decline to participate in the study without any threat. Before I started research lessons with my

learners, I wrote letters to the parents to request the learners' participation. I explained to them that the learner's participation would be voluntary and that I would guarantee their confidentiality by not revealing learners' real names but pseudonyms. I explained that their involvement in the study was for academic purposes and no financial benefit. I clarified that the surveys' objectives would help the learners benefit from my experience and be able to understand English First Additional Language better because of improvements in my teaching and their learning. I then asked the parents if they were willing to sign the consent letters, and the parents agreed unanimously. I also asked my principal's permission and explained that I needed to reflect on my own learning experiences and professional development. My principal permitted me to conduct my research with grade 4 learners.

2.10 Trustworthiness

According to Munby (1995), validity refers to how a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific topic that the research is attempting to measure. Samaras (2011) declared that using different data sources validates or strengthens a self-study's trustworthiness. Feldman (2003) also concurs that "to achieve validity, we must provide clear, detailed descriptions of how we collect data" (p. 27). Therefore, in my study, I took the suggestions of Feldman (2003) and Samaras (2011) to establish validity and trustworthiness for my study by giving extensive, detailed evidence of how I generated data using research practices such as artefact retrieval, collage making, drawing, audio recording, and reflective journal writing. These research practices helped me recall my personal history (see Chapter Three) and as a method for teaching (see Chapter Four).

Furthermore, Feldman (2003) advised that a clear presentation of evidence can help convince the readers of the study's validity. Therefore, I showed all my work to my learners to reveal my teaching evidence (see Chapter Four). The use of multiple methods helped me improve my study's validity. Feldman (2003) also maintained that "self-study [should] results in a change in the researcher's way of being a teacher" (p. 28). Hence, evidence of how I changed to be a more productive teacher of English First Additional Language is visible. I showed what I learned from my learners' drawings (see figure 4.18 in Chapter Four). Using multiple data generation methods enhanced the study's validity.

Samaras (2011) highlights the importance of working with critical friends to get different responses and perspectives in your research process. Through self-study, I would support others in learning about self-study and understanding why self-study is a learning journey. Kosnik (2001); Loughran (2004a); Loughran and Northfield (1996); Schuck (2002) also stated that for self-study to maintain credibility, validity (Feldman, (2003), and trustworthiness, the involvement of and with others is imperative. Therefore, my critical friends supported and helped me navigate my teaching. They reminded me that self-study research aims to provoke, challenge and illuminate rather than confirm and settle (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Therefore, I dug deep and got different perspectives and alternatives to my teaching practice with the help of my critical friends.

2.11 Research challenges

Educational research is a process of seeking answers to questions that are important to teaching and learning (Loughran, 2006; Hostetler, (2010). However, because I was working with children, it was a challenge because if I did not seek permission from their parents for them to participate in my research study because I understood that parents could have had concerns about signing the consent forms for their learners for my study, it would have posed a considerable challenge. Therefore, I asked the principal to communicate with the parents about my research. I explained my research study to them, and they were all willing to consent for the learners to participate.

There are some limitations that I experienced during my study. One of them was contact time. Learners did not complete all their activities on time (see Lesson One in Chapter Four) but finished the next day. Therefore, I needed to use a staggered approach to introduce learners to a new language and to use that new language with confidence. I found that this consumed most of the time for explaining and making learners understand. That is why I found games and competition helped motivate learners to work faster.

Another limitation was finding relevant tools for teaching and learning, such as magazines. It was not easy to access various magazines with pertinent information. I asked the learners to bring some to school, but that was not forthcoming. I asked my colleagues for assistance, and they came to my aid (see picture 4.1 in Chapter Four), and my lessons were successful.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected learners significantly because they were expected to attend school rotationally. Most of them lived with their grandparents, who could not assist them with homework as more work had to be done at home. This situation negatively impacted learners' learning because they had to adjust to working independently. Thus, this study contributed significantly to learners' learning as they had fun while learning English FAL through play.

2.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give an account of the methodological process of the study. I identified and explained why I chose the self-study methodology. I applied my methodological approach in line with the study's focus and purpose. I described the research settings where I was conducting my research and the people who were my research participants (Grade 4 learners and my critical friends). I focused on data generation and representation and the research practices to generate data. I described the process of making meaning for my study. I highlighted the study's ethical issues and trustworthiness, which made this study successful. I also discussed the challenges I encountered and how I overcame them.

In carrying out this self-study research, I understood that teachers' work has unique complexities, dilemmas, and choices (Greene, 1978; Pinar, 1980) and that one should understand impacts children's lives. Conducting self-study research helped me learn that every person's life is a journey. This life journey enabled me to understand myself better and use that self-knowledge to help others. I undertook self-study to understand myself better and be a better teacher for my learners. Therefore, I believe that self-study research helped me teach English First Additional Language better and helped me support other teachers, making our schools better by contributing to the effective implementation of the curriculum.

In the next chapter, I expound on how I address my first research question, "*What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?*"

CHAPTER THREE

UNEARTH MY PLAYFUL EXPERIENCES TO IMPROVE MY TEACHING PRACTICE

3.1 Introduction

My self-study research focused on English First Additional Language teaching and learning through play. My research aimed to study my past and current practice to facilitate English FAL better and improve my learner's First Additional Language proficiency. In the previous chapter, Chapter Two, I elaborated on my self-study research process. I identified and explained the methodology I chose for my study. I then described the research practices I used to generate data for my study. I further explained how I addressed trustworthiness, ethical issues, and challenges that affected my study.

In this chapter, Chapter Three, I responded to my first research question: "*What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?*" In responding to my first research question, I looked for a tool that could assist me in recalling my personal history about how my family, community and school contributed to my learning and development. Therefore, I chose a collage as a tool that would help me to recall my personal history, generate data to answer my first research question and provide evidence of my past English FAL learning.

3.2 My journey begins

I created a collage that represented different aspects of my life through images, pictures and cuttings from magazines and other media and print materials (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). The main objective of this collage was to tell my story about who I am and how I came to be the person I am today (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). The collage assisted me in recalling my personal history and generating data to answer my first research question: *What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?* After creating the collage, I presented it in a cohort session with two supervisors and two critical friends in an online meeting via zoom. They gave me other alternatives and support, such as that the first collage I created had big pictures that took a lot of space and the *Umlabalaba* game board had no tokens (cows). So, they advised me to find middle-sized pictures and add tokens to the

Umlabalaba game board to make my collage look more lively. Therefore, I created a second collage that looked better than the first one. Figure 3.1 is the collage I presented in a cohort, showing playful memories of my family life through to high school.

Figure 3. 1. The collage presented at the cohort showed playful memories of my family through to high school

3.3 Playful memories in my family

family of 18 people, and we lived in a Church Mission house with seven rooms (five bedrooms, a sitting room and a kitchen) and a two-roomed outside building for the boys. I lived with my mother's mother (grandmother) and her two sisters (my aunts) and their children (my cousins). In my immediate family, we were five (three girls and two boys). I am the fourth born. My big aunt had five children, two boys and three girls. My other aunt had three children, two boys and a girl. Therefore, having all these kids at home ensured that I always had someone to play with. Figure 3.2. below is a photograph of the family I grew up with.



Figure 3.2 A photograph of the family I grew up with

My father was a Minister in the Presbyterian church and did not earn much. My mother was a teacher in a nearby primary school, so she was the one who supported the family. She was the pillar of our family and a source of our inspiration. She ensured that we all had school uniforms, stationery and books before buying Christmas clothes. However, as children, we always felt that she was unfair because we wanted her to buy us Christmas clothes before school uniforms. She would remind us that school comes first. My mother had an old wardrobe where she kept old books and encouraged us to read them. She always said, "read a book; it would make you drowsy." Therefore, reading before we went to sleep became our norm, which I believe was when my love for reading first developed. Figure 3.3 below is a picture of a coat as an artefact representing my mother



Figure 3.3 A picture of a coat as an artefact representing my mother

As I mentioned, we were a big family with thirteen children of almost the same age. As children, we were allowed to play indoors as our parents believed that our brothers, sisters, and cousins would help us with homework, and after that, we could play together. As a result, we shared clothes, did household chores and homework together and then played together. Before we began our homework, my elder brother, sisters and cousins were responsible for washing the dishes after eating. After doing so, they helped us with our homework and then we would have time to play games. We played many exciting games such as *Umlabalaba*, Bingo, blindfolding, and food pockets. These games brought us together as a family because sometimes we used to play with our parents, which was a wonderful experience we had as children. For example, we used to play the *Umlabalaba* game as a family, and when we played, there would be a lot of noise as our big brother and my father would cheat us. Sometimes we cried and did not want to continue playing, so we played in teams to help each other win the game.

My brother had created an *Umlabalaba* game board, out of a cardboard box and cut it into a square to play this game. He drew lines with a marker to use every time we played the game. Two players play this game. Each player starts with 12 tokens called "cows," which should not be the same. We usually use red and white maize seeds or bottle caps as tokens. Each player would place one cow on a circle. The aim was to create three rows vertically, diagonally, or horizontally. You could put cows anyhow, and when three-in-a-row had been achieved, the player removed one of the opponent's cows. You only allowed to shoot one of the opponent's cows. Once you shot a cow, you could not use it again. Each player placed 12 cows on the board, and cows moved from one junction to another and repeatedly moved back and forth to the same two crossings. *Umlabalaba* was my favourite game, and it helped me with Mathematics at school because it challenges memory and increases critical thinking ability. Figure 3.4 shows children playing on a homemade *Umlabalaba* game board that taught us critical thinking.

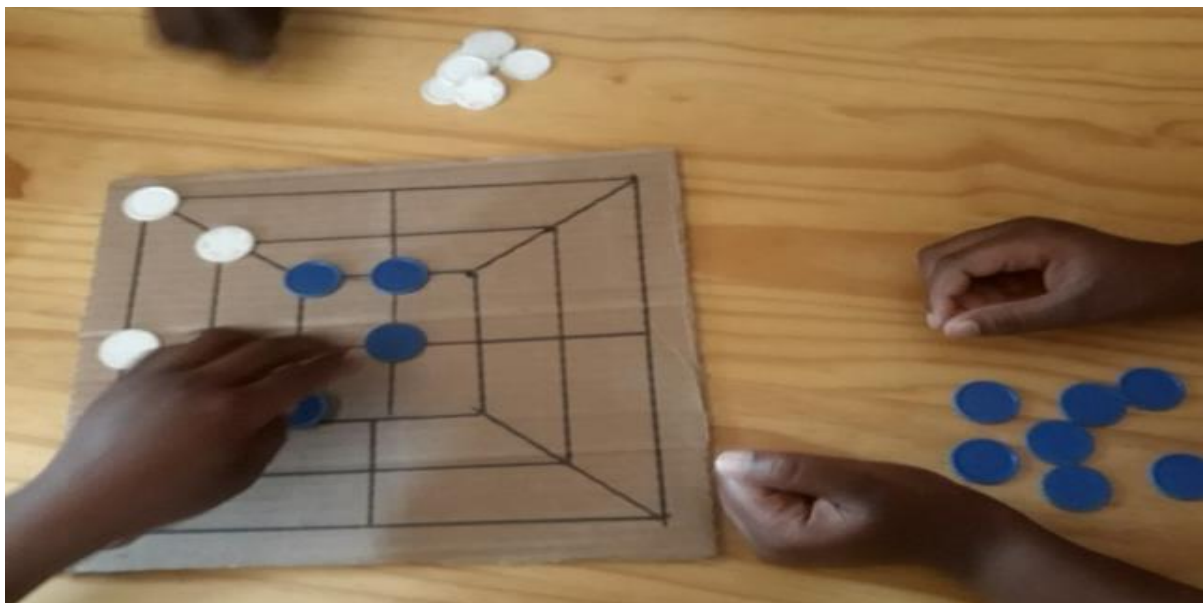


Figure 3.4 Photograph of children playing an *Umlabalaba* game that taught us critical thinking

We also played a game called colour and shape Bingo. My mother taught us this exciting game, but before we played it, one would cut a cardboard box into a rectangular card and draw 6 or 8 squares on each card for the pictures—there would be a space on top for the name of the game (Bingo). We would draw circles, triangles, ovals, squares, diamonds and rectangles on a

rectangular card and use crayons to colour the shapes. We would work together to cut many little squares, draw circles, ovals, diamonds, triangles, and squares, colour them with different colours, and put them in a plastic bag. Interestingly, this game taught us to draw shapes, name them and recognise the different colours because each one would have an opportunity to draw, name and colour the shape. You needed to be six or eight players to play this game. One person would be a caller and hold a bag with small little squares with colours and shapes. The caller would not look into the bag but pull out any square and call out the name and colour of the shape. If a player had that coloured shape, they would take that square, place it on their card, and cover it with a stone or bottle cap. If a player did not have that coloured shape, they did anything. The game continued until a player who covered all coloured shapes on the card shouted "BINGO", and the game stopped. The winner would call out the coloured shapes, and the caller checked whether the player had all coloured shapes and that player was the winner. Figure 3.5 below is a memory picture of a Bingo game that taught us to draw and name shapes and colours.

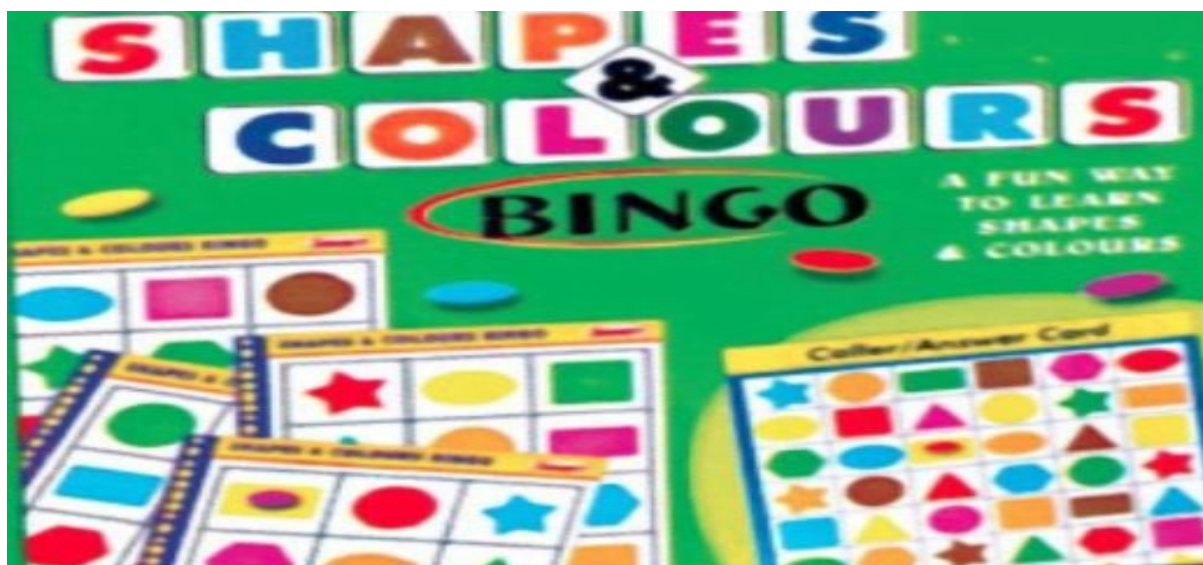


Figure 3. 5 A memory picture of a Bingo game that taught us to draw; name the shapes and colours

At home, I also liked to play the blindfolding games, and this was my favourite game because it involved listening, which most of my siblings were not fond of because they had to listen

carefully to the directions to move from point A to point B. We would create a space free of harmful objects because one had to be blindfolded and others directed them. I enjoyed listening to the directions, and I believe playing these games like blindfolding helped me a lot with my listening skill as listening is the first skill to be acquired when learning a language. When I reflected on my early years of schooling, I realised now why teachers liked to send me to other teachers because I listened carefully and got done whatever they had wanted.

I would not forget my other favourite game, the food packet game, where we used empty food packets such as sugar, flour and powdered milk packets, to find words we knew on the packets and circle them. We played this game after my mother had done the grocery shopping, unpacked the food items and disposed off the empty packets. With this game, we learned to identify and spell words correctly. My elder sister would check the number of words we identified and determine the winner who identified the most words. Reflecting on this game helped me immensely because I enjoyed writing words; therefore, I performed well on spelling tests. When we played these games, we would not want to be disturbed, and sometimes we would even forget the time for our evening prayer. Before we prayed, my father would ask us to sing a prayer song and choose one of us to read a bible verse. We enjoyed singing songs and feeling comfortable but felt nervous and uncomfortable when reading the bible. I now realise that this helped us read fluently at school because as we read, my father would make us repeat words until we read them correctly and recalling those days made me laugh at myself.

After our evening prayer, we would go to my grandmother's bedroom, sit next to her on her grass mat, and beg her to tell us stories (*izinganekwane*) (*izinganekwane* are stories originating in popular culture and passed on by word of mouth). My grandmother was an excellent storyteller. She would change her voice to mimic the different characters. If the story were about animals, she would change her voice and make a sound like that animal. I recall one of her favourite stories about the tiger and the man. In this story, a tiger caught in a trap begs a man to help him. The man helped release the tiger, but as soon as the tiger was free, he wanted to eat the man. The man asked the tiger to ask the other animals if that was fair. I loved this part of the story when my grandmother changed to different animal voices when asking questions because it made the story exciting and fun. She changed her voice, encouraging us to listen to the story,

and we wanted her to tell us more. We would listen to her quietly and constantly ask her what happened after that, and she would tell us the story until it ended. At the end of the story, she would ask us questions about the story. We would argue about the story, whether it was fair or unfair, and I believe that is when I learned much about storytelling. Figure 3.6 below is a picture of a grass mat as an artefact representing my grandmother, who used to tell us *izinganekwane* (tales).

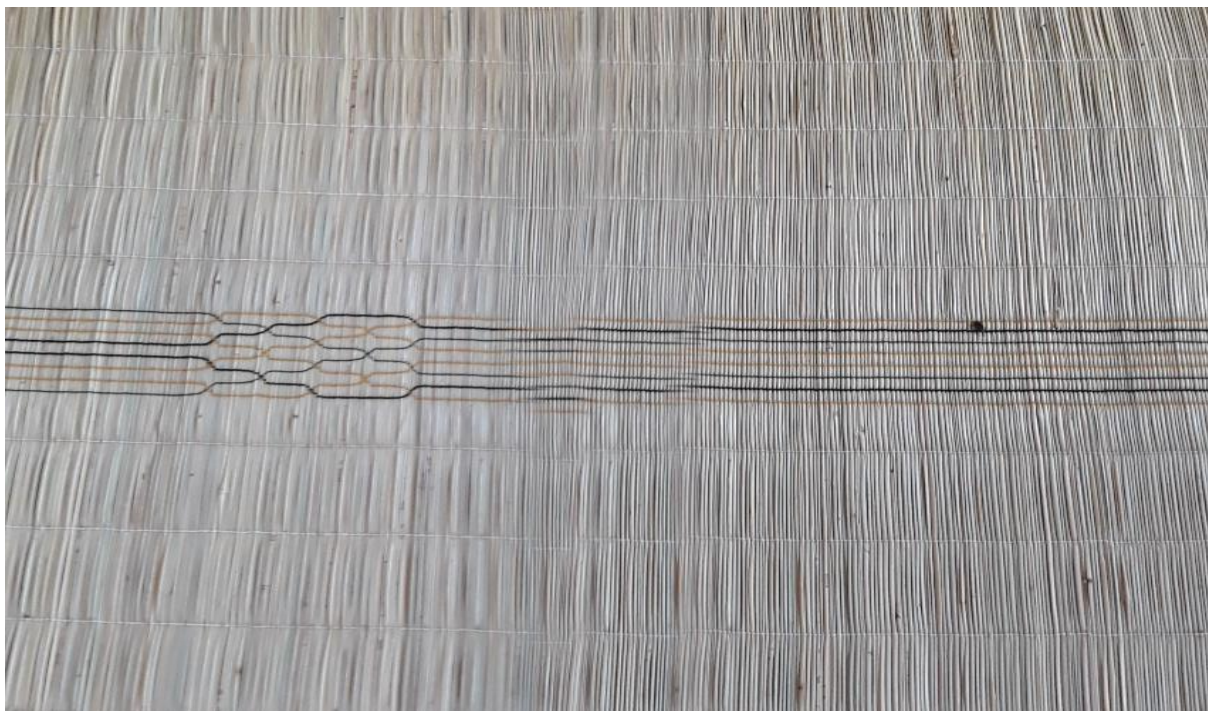


Figure 3. 6 A picture of a grass mat as an artefact representing my grandmother, who used to tell us *izinganekwane* (tales)

3.4 Playful memories in my community

In our community, we regard every adult to be our parent. When you meet an adult on the road, they would not be shy to ask you about what you did at school, what rhymes you learned and ask you to say those rhymes. You would do that without complaining because it was our culture to listen to an adult. Children from our neighbourhood were like our brothers and sisters. We used to go together to fetch water from the nearby borehole. We would have time to interact and play games such as umagenda and hopscotch. This was exciting because my parents did not allow us to play outdoor games. Therefore, fetching water allowed us to play and communicate

with our neighbours. We also used to go together to church on Sunday. Our community had a church that was like our first school. We had Sunday School programmes for the children starting at 08h00 before the church service at 10h00. Most of the children in the community attended Sunday school. Figure 3.7 below is a memory drawing of our church which we regarded as our first school



Figure 3.7 A memory drawing of our church which we regarded as our first school

On Sunday, we used to wake up early and prepare ourselves. We would collect other children in our neighbourhood and go to the church together. On the way, we would make noise by singing songs and reminding ourselves what we learned at church the previous Sunday. It was fun and exciting. I recall that on Christmas Day, our Sunday school teacher used to organise a concert to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It was a concert that most members of the community participated in. We would rehearse songs and role-play stories. We enjoyed rehearsing our storylines, but I enjoyed it the most because I was the lead singer. We wore costumes and props for the concert and performed different Christmas carols. The community members would come out to see us performing. It was fun, and we learned to interact with other children and to role-play, which I believe helped us learn language skills such as listening and speaking.

Also, during Sunday school, we learned to create wall frames. Our teacher taught us to make wall frames from a cardboard box to memorise a bible verse. We would cut a cardboard box, make a square shape, and use a coloured pen or markers to write a verse. We created two small holes in the middle to insert a string. We used to memorise the verse at home, and then, on Sunday, we used to wear the wall frame on our necks and recite the verse without looking at the frame. After that, we used to hang the frames inside the church on a wall. It was fun and exciting, and we were unaware our teacher was developing our memorisation skills. Figure 3.8 is an example of the wall frames with the bible verse we made that helped us with memorisation skills.

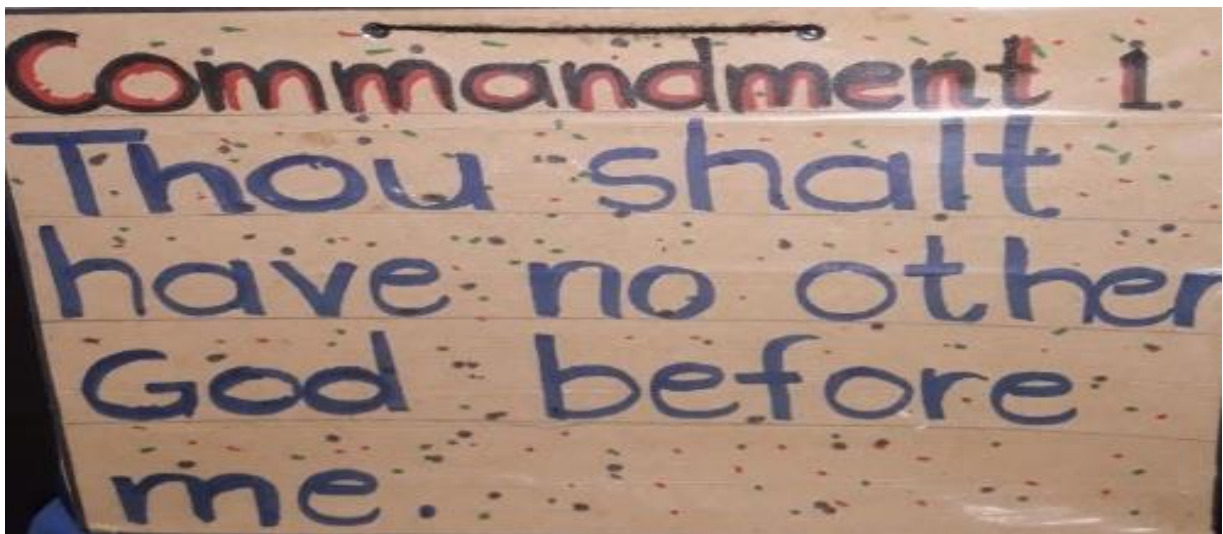


Figure 3. 8. An example of a wall frame that helped us with memorisation skills

3.5 My primary school playful memories

I began school in a neighbouring primary school with my siblings and cousins. I shared the same class with two of my cousins, but we did not share the same teacher because our class had three sections. On our way to school, we would share stories and laugh about many things, such as imitating our teachers on what they said if learners had not done their homework or came late to school. On our way back home, we would talk about the games we would play at home, which helped us plan and prepare before we reached home.

I remember my school days; there were no pre-schools like nowadays. We came to school without any experience of even holding a pencil correctly. I recalled a day when my sub-standard

A (Grade one) teacher held my hand to show me how to move a pencil when writing. I cried because I failed to write the vowel "a". I struggled with writing. Our teacher would take us outside to write vowels on the sand, which helped us practice writing. In the end, I became excited because I mastered writing the letter "a," It was fun, and I enjoyed writing because the teacher made learning to write letters easy, which is why I used to write on the walls at home. My father used to scold me for doing that. Figure 3.9 shows a child practising writing vowels in the sand.



Figure 3. 9. A picture of a child practising writing vowels on the ground

In sub-standard B (Grade two), I recall the books we used in the classroom. Benny and Betty (reader book) had bright colours and bold font; English Through Activity (ETA) had language skills and grammar. They were my favourite books. We would read them aloud in the classroom and at home. We even knew what was on different pages and read without looking at the words, which was fun. At that time, I didn't understand that we read a story without looking at the words, but now I understand that we were good at memorising. Now I understand that we did not have a variety of books; therefore, we used the same book to make it easy to recall words in the story. Figure 3.10, below is a picture as an artefact of our favourite books we read at school.

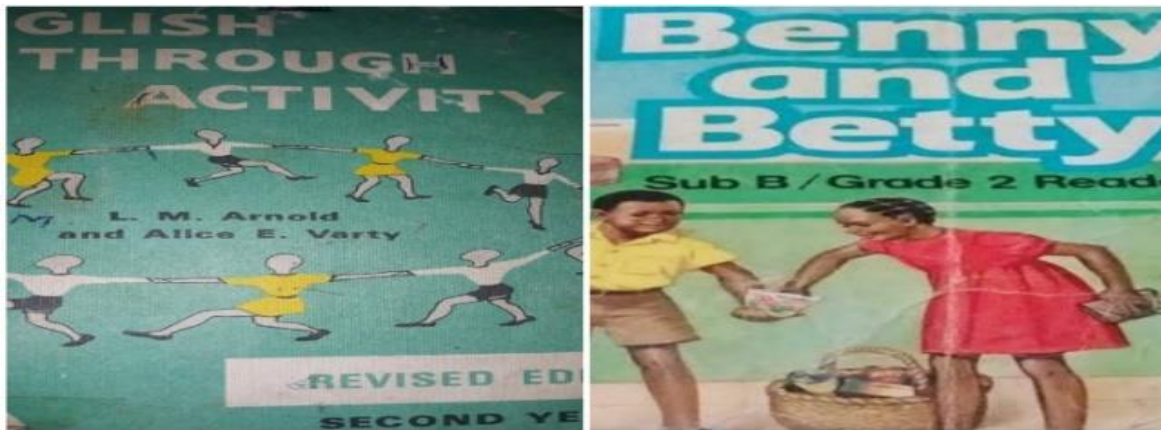


Figure 3. 10 A picture as an artefact of our favourite books we read at school.

Our standard one (Grade 3) teacher would teach us a song before teaching us a new topic. We were very excited, and when we sang, we used our hands and bodies to show our understanding and performed the song. Our teacher would also perform the song with us, which increased our motivation to learn. We would keep singing until the teacher became satisfied that we knew the rhyme or song very well. This made us happy and improved our listening and speaking skills as we enjoyed learning because we found learning fun and interesting. One of the songs I remember was “Here we go round the mulberry bush as indicated below

Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush

Here we go round the mulberry bush
 The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush
 Here we go round the mulberry bush
 So early in the morning

This is the way we wash our clothes
 Wash our clothes, wash our clothes
 This is the way we wash our clothes
 So early Monday morning

This is the way we iron our clothes
 Iron our clothes, iron our clothes
 This is the way we iron our clothes

So early Tuesday morning

This is the way we sweep the floor

Sweep the floor, sweep the floor

This is the way we sweep the floor

So early Wednesday morning

This is the way we bake our bread

Bake our bread, bake our bread

This is the way we bake our bread

So early Thursday morning

(Halliwell-Phillips, 1849)

When I was in standard two (Grade 4), my teacher told us that we should pretend to have a telephone conversation using tin cans. She told us to work in pairs and bring tins and strings to make our telephones. By that time, telephones were uncommon, so we were happy to learn how to use telephones. She brought her telephone made of tins to school and demonstrated how to make our telephones. It was fun, so we were happy, made our telephones, and conversed in pairs. I enjoyed learning English on that day without realising that the teacher was improving my listening and speaking skills. I remember that I even tried this at home with my siblings and cousins. Figure 3.11 is a picture of an example of a telephone made from tin cans that the teacher demonstrated to us.



Figure 3. 11 An example of a telephone made from tin cans that the teacher demonstrated to us

In standard five (Grade 7), our teacher, Mr S, taught us how to recall months of the year with 30 and 31 days. He taught us a song that we enjoyed in such a way that whenever he came to class, we would be happy and sing that song, and with that song, we learned the skill to memorise months with 30 and 31 days. The song goes like this:

30 days of September, April, June, and November
All the rest have 31 days except February,
Which has 28 days

Reflecting on my primary school years, I understand that we performed well because we enjoyed learning. After all, teachers made learning fun and interesting.

We used to play many creative games during the breaks, such as Umagenda (a game played in pairs by digging a hole in the ground and put stones so that the one who throw and capture more stones win) and hopscotch (a game played by tossing a small object into numbered pattern and then jump through the spaces to retrieve the object) but skipping rope was the most exciting game. We would make a skipping rope by tying our uniform belts together. Skipping rope was a traditional game that we played in teams. In a team, two players hold the rope at each side by its ends and twirl it in a circular motion, and other players take turns jumping over the rope while chanting a rhyme. You had to avoid being hit by the rope turners who would try

to hit you with the rope, and then you were out of the game—the player who jumped around twenty or more times without being hit scored a point. Teams changed once all players had taken turns to jump. Playing these games was fun, but I believe they helped us with Mathematical skills because we had to count the number of times we jumped. Figure 3. 12 is a memory drawing of children skipping the rope.

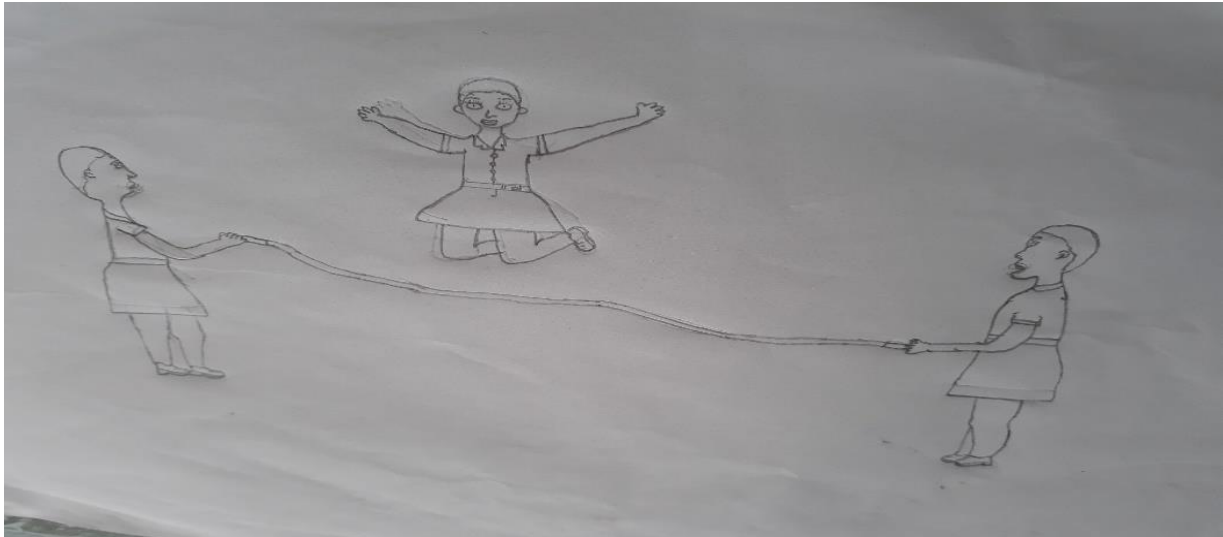


Figure 3.12 A memory drawing of children skipping the rope

3.6 My high school memories

I completed my standard six to ten (Grade 8 to 12) in a high school near my primary school. I was excited to be in high school. However, I noted that teaching and learning were not the same. We learned through singing songs and role-playing in primary school, while the high school was different. We had to do things on our own. My standard six and seven English FAL teacher was unfriendly. When she was teaching, she would not allow us to ask her questions for clarification. She would tell us that we asked questions because we were not listening. I remember she gave us a story to read, analyse and present one day without explaining how to do it. We didn't do it because we did not know where to start. She became upset and reported us to the principal. The principal did not even ask why we didn't do the homework; he just punished us. After that incident, we took the initiative and formed study groups to help each other. That grouping was exciting and fun as we learned from each other.

Despite the challenges I had when I was in standards six and seven, we had an excellent English teacher in standard eight (Grade 10). I read many books, and I vividly recall books such as Don Quixote (de Cervantes, 1615), Cry the Beloved Country (Paton, 1951), The adventures of Tom Sawyer, (Twain, 1876), Kungavuka Abanguni, (Kubheka, 1973) and many more also are imprinted in my memory. The teacher shared the names of exciting books he read with us during his free time and encouraged us to read an exciting story at home and share it in the class the following day. He did this every day. As learners, we enjoyed sharing stories with the class and became motivated to read. He also gave certificates to the learner who read more books each month, which motivated us so much that I believe my love for reading improved tenfold. Figure 3.13 is an example of a collection of books as an artefact that inspired me to read.



Figure 3. 13 An example of a collection of books as an artefact that inspired me to read.

Reading books influenced me to write letters which were the common ways we communicated with each other as we had limited means of communication. We usually wrote letters or cards to propose friendship, which was fun because we learned to select sweet words to compliment our friends. Boys used that opportunity to write letters to girls requesting dates. They used to write humorous words that made us laugh, and we had to reply to the letter; otherwise, they constantly reminded us about the reply until we replied to the letters. It was exciting; besides, it developed our writing skills because we had to plan what to say before writing. I remember that there were times when schools would visit each other to play sports. We used that opportunity to make friends and write letters to each other. It was an exciting and fun way of

learning to communicate. Figure 3.14 is a memory drawing of an envelope that reminded me of writing letters.

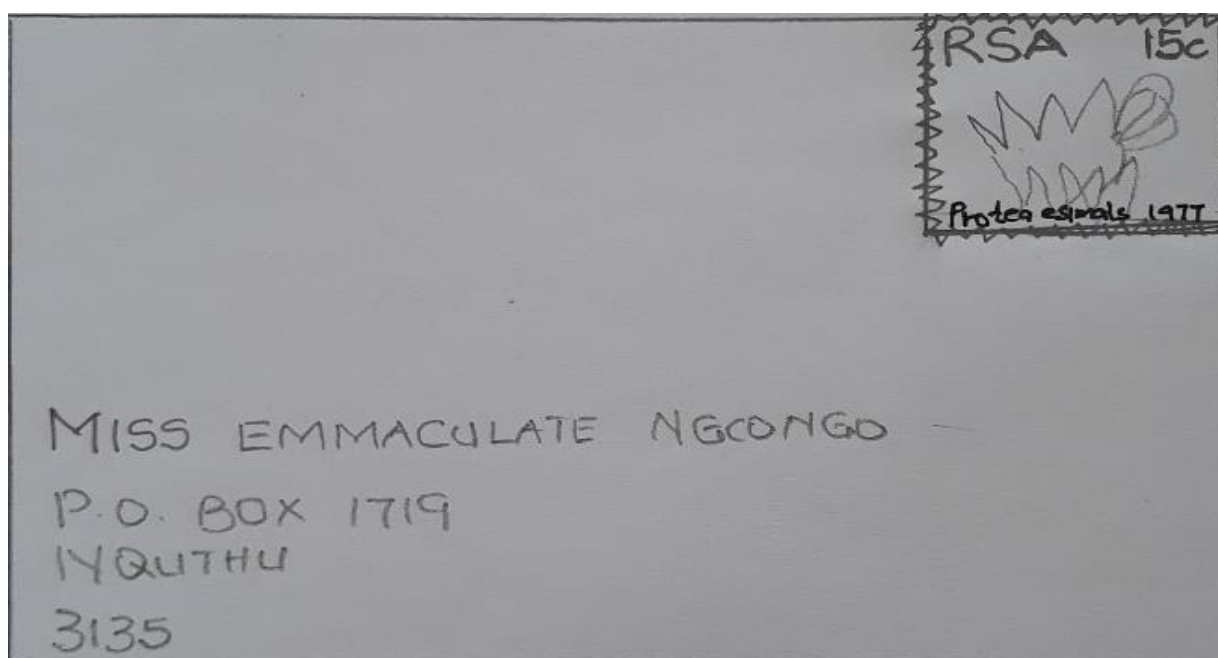


Figure 3.14 A memory drawing of an envelope that reminded me of writing letters

3.7 My tertiary education

I trained as a teacher in one of the teacher education colleges in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. I spent three years at the college; those were the best years of my life because that is where I experienced being a teacher. I remember that we were taught both theory and practice. Our lecturers taught us many things, from how you present yourself in front of the learners (dress code), managing and organising your classroom (classroom management), and teaching your learners. The emphasis was not on improving the learner's learning but on teaching the learners. Our lecturers did not emphasise the uniqueness of the learners in the classroom; we learned this during our teaching practice. The teaching method emphasised the traditional lecture method where teachers deliver knowledge and learners remain passive recipients of the information. This is how we were taught to teach, which impacts on the way we teach the learners. However, it was a wonderful experience because we had to practice this in groups with other student teachers before they took us to the real world of practising teaching at a school. Being at the college shaped my future, so I knew that I could face any challenges related

to teaching and learning. When I finished my training in 1995, I knew that I was ready to teach. Figure 3.15 is a photograph of the first primary school I taught at as a teacher



Figure 3. 15 A photograph of the first primary school I taught at as a teacher
(Image downloaded from: Demidoff / Dreamstime.com)

After finishing my training as a teacher in a college of education, I started teaching in one of the Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The school was in a rural area and had approximately 1000 learners. It was a big school with more than 25 teachers. Most of them were unqualified with only a Standard 10 (Grade 12) education, while other teachers were under-qualified, holding a Primary Teacher's Certificate. Each classroom was divided into two or three sections. I arrived at this school in March of that year, and they had already started teaching. The principal told me to teach standard two (Grade 4). There were two sections in Standard two, but they were still overcrowded, meaning there would be 3 Standard two classes (Standard 2A, B, and C). The curriculum was such that all learners had to do all the subjects, which meant I was supposed to teach all Standard two subjects to all the learners. As I mentioned, there were two sections, which meant that two teachers were teaching Standard two classes. Therefore, they had to give me a portion of their learners each. One of the teachers told me that they gave me learners that were not doing well in class. It was hard. I did not know where to start as a first-year teacher. I needed someone to support me. The other teachers ignored me because they felt I should know more than they did because I came from the college.

The school was under-resourced, but I knew that I had to improvise. I brought empty food packets, scissors and old magazines to the school and asked my learners to bring some as well. I knew I had to teach effectively, but my challenge was that most children lived with their grandparents, who could not assist them with homework and motivate them to read. Therefore, as a teacher, I had to look for ways to improve my teaching to benefit my learners. The following year, the education authorities proposed that we offer specialised subjects. The principal asked me to take English First Additional Language in all three classes, and that is where my concern about my teaching started. Reflecting on how we were taught to teach made me feel worried, which I believe is why I wanted to improve my practice.

3.8 My learnings from my personal history.

Looking at my personal history and engagement with playful language experiences helped me discover that I learned lessons from every experience. I learned that my experiences in my journey influenced how I taught my learners. In sharing my personal history experiences, I aimed to understand what I learned from my experiences that could improve my practice. To achieve this, I created a collage and used it to reflect on my memories. Figure 3.16 below is a collage representing my learnings from my personal history.



Figure 3. 16 A collage representing my learnings from my personal history

After completing my collage, I presented it to my cohort of two supervisors and two critical friends, as I had shared my learnings from my personal history with them. My learnings were: (1) Learning through playing traditional games, (2) Learning through storytelling, (3) Learning through rhymes and songs, (4) Learning through role-playing, and (5) Learning through interaction with others.

3.8.1 Learning through playing traditional games

Through my personal history, I learned that the traditional games we played at home, in the community, and at school were essential to developing my language skills. We played games for fun and enjoyment, such as the Umlabalaba game, which required interaction, sound decision-making, concentration, strategies and tactics. As Dehkordi (2017) asserted, traditional games have always been important in human and social life. Also, Parrondo, Borrell and Miralles (2021) and Perrotte et al. (2020) concur that traditional games can be used as a lesson to train children's ability to act. It promotes creativity and working independently because we use knowledge from the games to learn language skills in the classroom. This is supported by Agyar (2016), who stated that games improve children's language development and communication skills.

Constantinescu (2012) claims that games play an essential role in the language learning classroom even though most teachers are unaware of it as a learning strategy. For Constantinescu (2012), games improve learners' understanding of written and spoken English. Similarly, Boyle (2011) also posits that games play a vital role in building learners' confidence as they help them engage themselves, remember, solve problems, and improve their attention span and other skills. Figure 3.16.1 is an extract from my main collage showing a child playing a game using building blocks to promote creativity and working independently



Figure 3.16.1 An extract from my main collage (3.16) representing a child playing a game using building blocks to promote creativity and working independently

When reflecting on my childhood playful memories, I see how games played an essential role in my language development because I created most of my learnings from games. Cross (2000) discovered that as children focus on an activity, they acquire language skills and improve their English First Additional Language without being aware of it. Allowing children to play games motivates, challenges and encourages them to interact, participate and communicate in English successfully (Cross 2000). Therefore, when looking at my past playful experiences, I realised that it was necessary to incorporate language games in my teaching and learning of English FAL. De Vries (2006) maintained that while playing games, children learn a wide range of social skills such as sharing, understanding other perspectives and taking turns.

3.8.2 Learning through storytelling

Looking back at my past experiences, I learned that listening and using imagination are essential language skills developers through storytelling. Growing up, we listened to my grandmother's stories (*izinganekwane*) at night. It was fun and enjoyable for us without knowing that we were learning language skills. Nevertheless, I now understand that this developed and improved our language skills. My grandmother used to change her voice to adapt to the different characters, which made us imagine and create pictures of different

characters in our minds. It taught me the importance of listening and imagination to ‘see’ the story and aroused my interest in listening to stories. I learned from her stories that I could incorporate storytelling in my classroom to help learners improve their listening and speaking skills. Atta-Alla (2012) and Nguyen et al. (2014) insist storytelling enhances the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Figure 3.16.2 is an extract from my main collage showing a child focusing on listening to a story.



Figure 3.16.2 An extract from my main collage (3.16) representing a child focusing on listening to a story.

Chang (2004) and Lucarevshi (2016) concur that storytelling improves learners' vocabulary and sentence structure. Isbell et al. (2004) also consider storytelling a more personal experience as the listener frequently has more excellent eye contact with the narrator of the story than a story read from a book. We learned to focus, concentrate, socialise and communicate during storytelling which helped us improve our listening and speaking skills. Although my grandmother told stories in Nguni, I learned that I could use the same strategy in planning my English lessons to help improve my learners' listening and speaking skills. Therefore, I learned that storytelling has a unique way of developing and improving listening and speaking skills.

Engaging in this self-study helped me understand the influence I could have on my learners' learning. Therefore, by recalling my personal history of storytelling, I understand that this

could significantly impact on how I assist learners in experiencing learning in class by learning while having fun.

3.8.3 Learning through rhymes and songs

I recalled my personal history experiences and realised that rhymes and songs inspired my English language experience. Singing songs at home, church and school played an essential role in my language development. When we sang songs, we were excited, and after that, we would not forget them, which made me understand that rhymes and songs could help teach and learn vocabulary and pronunciation better. As Purcell (1992) contends, the benefits of rhymes and songs in the classroom could contribute to enhanced listening skills, speaking skills, vocabulary, sentence structures and sentence patterns. Therefore, recalling my personal history memories of learning English FAL made me realise that I can integrate rhymes and songs in my lessons and engage my learners to compose songs in groups to make their lesson exciting and fun.

Cameron (2001) also endorsed that rhymes and songs could be helpful in language learning and teaching. For instance, we used to sing for enjoyment and fun; however, rhymes and songs were a natural way to learn a language. As a result, I learned that language learning could be developed and improved through rhyming and singing songs because children love to imitate. To acquire new vocabulary and correct pronunciation, learners need to rhyme and sing songs. Recalling my personal history taught me that rhymes and songs are a natural way of learning a second language. Therefore, this taught me to plan lessons that reflected my learnings to make my learners excited and enjoy the lesson as children learn quickly through play and having fun. Figure 3.16.3 is an extract from my main collage (3.16) showing a picture representing rhymes and songs.



Figure 3.16.3 A picture representing rhymes and songs

3.8.4 Learning through role-playing

Through my personal history experiences, I learned that role-playing is essential in children's language development as it develops their communication and social skills. While growing up, our Sunday school teacher used to encourage us to wear costumes and role-play a story about the birth of Jesus Christ for our Christmas Day concert in the church. I realised that this encouraged us to communicate and interact with each other. When we did that, we used to be excited without realising that we were learning the skill of speaking. According to Baraldi (2009), role-play helps learners develop their social, linguistic, speaking and listening competence in the classroom. Similarly, Bertrand and Stice (2002) asserted that role-play allows learners to present their understanding of the story. Although we role-played in our mother tongue, I believe this strategy could work in my English FAL teaching and learning classroom.

Hence, in preparing my lessons, I used a role-playing strategy when designing my lessons as I learned that my learners needed exposure to various activities that could challenge their thinking and promote decision-making. Figure 3.15.4 is an extract from my main collage (3.16.) showing a picture of a learner wearing a costume and role-playing a scene.



Figure 3. 16. 4 A picture representing a learner wearing a costume and role-playing a scene

3.8.5 Learning through interaction with others.

Looking back at my engagement with my large family, siblings, and cousins at home helped me realise the importance of interaction in mastering language skills. I realised that being around lots of people encouraged more conversations which improved communication skills. According to Brown (1980), interaction is the basis of second language learning because children enhance their communicative abilities and socially construct their identities through collaboration and negotiation. In my view, one of the reasons we lack the skills to implement English First Additional Language speaking effectively is because of how we were taught the English Language at school. The teaching strategy relied on rote learning, where we had to rhyme and sing songs without understanding the real meaning of what we were saying. Therefore, we lacked a depth-understanding of English skills. Figure 3.16.5 is a picture showing children interacting with each other.



Figure 3.16.5 Picture representing children interacting with each other

When I was in primary school, teachers never advised us to sit in groups and interact with each other. Chanting and rhymes were important. I realised that they promote learning by memorising rather than thinking and reasoning. As children, we were supposed to keep what was instilled by teachers in our minds and not what we thought. This experience taught me that it is essential to help learners understand by using various teaching and learning strategies. Lantolf and Thorne (2007) mentioned that language learning occurs through participation in family life, peer group interaction, schools and the workplace.

Vygotsky (cited in Lightbrown & Spada, 1999) indicate that language is developed through interaction with others. Therefore, reflecting on my memories of interaction, I learned that interaction played an essential role in my learning. Because of those experiences, I introduced my learners to group work activities encouraging interaction, where they could communicate with others freely.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I responded to my first research question: "*What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play*"? I used a collage and artefacts to respond to this question to discuss and reflect on my learning. I recalled and narrated my past experiences of teaching and learning English FAL at home, in the community and in school. These experiences assisted me in learning that I can draw from my personal history to develop my teaching and learning strategies to understand how I might improve English FAL teaching and learning. I also used a collage to discuss five learnings that have influenced and assisted me in recalling activities that could help me teach English FAL better.

In the next chapter, I respond to my second research question: *How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language through play?* To achieve this, I comprehensively describe my data analysis from the lesson I administered. I explain how I used my journal and discuss my critical friends' role during this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTIVATING PLAYFUL EXPERIENCES TO UNEARTH INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

My self-study focused on Teaching English First Additional Language in Grade 4 through play. The study aimed at improving my practice as a Grade 4 teacher facilitating English First Additional Language. In chapter 3, I addressed my first research question, "*What can I learn from my personal history about Teaching English FAL in Grade 4 through play?*" I reflected on my personal experiences concerning learning and teaching English FAL. I showed how my past experiences in the family, school and community played a significant role in my personal and professional development.

In this chapter, Chapter Four, I narrate how I cultivated playful learning experiences with my Grade four learners. I showed how I engaged them in answering my second research question, "*How can I better facilitate English FAL teaching through play?*" I present photographs of learners working in the classroom and describe what I learned from interactions with my learners. I used an audio recorder to record all my teaching sessions, and then I used a reflective journal to reflect on my teaching.

4.2 Planning and Preparation Process

In this chapter, I respond to my second research question: "*How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching through play?*" I had to think of the strategies or activities to teach the familiar content differently, using play as a teaching approach, without diverting from the prescribed Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). I intended to create a learning environment that would make learning enjoyable. I wanted to do this because I learned from my personal history that children learn better through playing games, storytelling, rhymes and songs, role-playing and interaction with others (see Figure 3. 16 in Chapter Three). I planned and prepared six lessons, two on listening and speaking, two on reading and viewing and one on writing, presenting, language structures and conventions, following the English First Additional Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Statements (CAPS), Intermediate Phase, Grade 4-6. The CAPS document stipulates that the Intermediate Phase learners need to cover and achieve four skills within two-week cycles each term. The CAPS document allocates skills to be acquired as follows: listening and speaking (2 hours), reading and viewing (4 hours), language structures and conventions (2 hours), and writing and presenting (2 hours). I worked within these allocated timeframes from the policy document. I used one hour per day for two weeks equalling ten hours. However, I only elaborated on four lessons in this study. Table 4.1 below outlines the English First Additional

Language Grade four content and teaching plan for Term 4 as extracted from the CAPS policy document (DOE, 2011). document (DOE, 2011).

TERM 4				
SKILLS	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
WEEK 1-2	<p>Participates in conversation on a familiar topic Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks relevant questions and responds to questions Maintains the conversation Respects others' ideas <p>Plays a more complex language game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows instructions correctly Uses a range of vocabulary Takes turns, giving others a chance to speak 	<p>Reads a story Choose from contemporary realistic fiction/traditional stories/personal accounts/adventure/funny/fantasy/real life stories Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading: predicts from the title and pictures Uses reading strategies, e.g. predicting what will happen next Answers and begins to ask more complex questions, e.g. Why? How do you think? Retells story in sequence using connecting words Guesses and explains reasons for actions in the story Explains the cause and the effect in the story. Gives a personal response to the text <p>[READING COMPREHENSION]</p>	<p>Writes a friendly letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a correct format Selects appropriate content for the topic Uses topic and supporting sentences to develop coherent paragraphs Links paragraphs using connecting words and phrases Uses a variety of vocabulary Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation and spaces between paragraphs Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words Uses the writing process Brainstorms ideas using mind maps Produces first draft Revises Proofreads Writes final draft Presents neat, legible final draft with correct spacing between paragraphs <p>[WRITING: FRIENDLY LETTER]</p>	<p>Spelling Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words Words starting with a k sound and followed by a, u or o: use a c to spell the word, e.g. can, cot, cut</p> <p>Working with words and sentences Begins to understand there is no article with uncountable nouns (e.g. I like fish.) Builds on use of subject verb concord, e.g. There is one book/There are two books ... Uses 'will' to indicate something that will happen, e.g. There will be a storm today Builds on use of prepositions that show position (on, under, above) Uses questions marks Uses exclamation marks</p> <p>Vocabulary in context Words taken from shared or individually read texts Homonyms (words that are pronounced or spelled alike but have different unrelated meanings, e.g. flour/flower)</p> <p>[LS&C ACTIVITIES]</p>
	<p>Practices Listening and Speaking (Choose one for daily practice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs a simple rhyme, poem or song Plays a simple language game Gives and follows simple instructions /directions Tells own news Retells a story heard or read 	<p>Reflects on texts read during independent/pair reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares books/texts read <p>[READING FOR ENJOYMENT]</p>	<p>Records words and their meanings in a personal dictionary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses drawings or sentences using the words or explanations to show the meaning, etc. <p>[PERSONAL DICTIONARY]</p>	

Table 4. 1. The content and teaching plan for English FAL. Intermediate Phase

TERM 4				
SKILLS	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
WEEK 3-4	<p>Listens to interviews/talk show Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recalls main ideas • Asks relevant questions • Responds appropriately • Gives opinions 	<p>Reads information text with visuals, e.g. charts/tables/ mind-maps/ maps/ pictures</p> <p>Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading: predicts from the title and pictures • Uses a range of reading strategies, e.g. predicting, using phonic and contextual clues, scanning for specific information • Answers and begins to ask more complex questions, e.g. Why? How do you think? • Interprets and discusses visuals <p>[READING COMPREHENSION]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUMMARISES the text with support, e.g. fills in missing words in a written summary <p>[SUMMARY]</p>	<p>Draws, labels and/or completes a visual text, e.g. chart/tables/ mind-maps/ maps/pictures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures the information correctly • Shows the links between different parts of the visual correctly • Writes sentences describing the chart • Uses appropriate vocabulary • Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words <p>[WRITING: VISUAL TEXT]</p>	<p>Spelling Spells familiar words correctly, using a personal dictionary</p> <p>Working with words and sentences Uses connecting words to show addition (and) and sequence (then, before) Develops understanding and use of connecting words showing addition, sequence and contrast. Begins to use connecting words to show cause-and-effect (so that) Revises use of personal pronouns e.g. I, you, he, she, it, they; me, you, him, her, it, us, them</p> <p>Vocabulary in context Words taken from shared or individually read texts Joining prefixes or suffixes to a base word</p> <p>[LS&C ACTIVITIES]</p>
	<p>Practices Listening and Speaking (Choose one for daily practice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a simple rhyme, poem or song • Plays a simple language game • Gives and follows simple instructions/directions • Tells own news • Retells a story heard or read 	<p>Reflects on texts read during independent/pair reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retells story or main ideas in 3 to 5 sentences • Expresses emotional response to texts read. <p>[READING FOR ENJOYMENT]</p>	<p>Records words and their meanings in a personal dictionary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses drawings or sentences using the words or explanations to show the meaning, etc. <p>[PERSONAL DICTIONARY]</p>	

Term 4				
	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
WEEK 5-6	<p>Listens to a story with dialogue Choose from Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicts what will happen next • Discusses plot, setting and characters • Discusses events in the story • Gives a personal response to the story • Retells story in the right sequence using connecting words <p>[PRESENTS DIALOGUE DONE DURING WRITING]</p> <p>Practices Listening and Speaking (Choose one for daily practice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a simple rhyme, poem or song • Plays a simple language game • Gives and follows simple instructions/directions • Tells own news • Retells a story heard or read 	<p>Reads a story with dialogue Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading: predicts from the title and pictures • Uses reading strategies, e.g. predicting, using contextual clues • Discusses plot, setting and characters • Discusses events in the story • Gives a personal response to the Story <p>[READING COMPREHENSION]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes story with help • Identifies which parts of the story is the dialogue • Role plays the story or a part of the Story <p>[SUMMARY] Reads a diary or diary entries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading: predicts from title and pictures • Uses reading strategies, e.g. prediction, looks at pictures carefully, uses contextual clues • Identifies and discusses the person writing the diary • Expresses feelings stimulated by the text <p>[READING COMPREHENSION]</p>	<p>Write a dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects content appropriate • Uses the frame • Uses direct speech for dialogue • Extends sentences by adding adjectives and adverbs • Uses extended vocabulary including pronouns and connecting words and phrases • Uses appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation • Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words <p>[WRITING: DIALOGUE]</p>	<p>Spelling and punctuation Uses the dictionary to check spelling and meanings of words</p> <p>Punctuates correctly: comma, colon, semi colon, inverted commas, question mark, exclamation mark, full stop</p> <p>Working with words and sentences Begins to use connecting words to show choice (e.g., either...or...).</p> <p>Begins to recognize and use reported speech.</p> <p>Develops use of direct speech.</p> <p>Uses quotation marks for direct speech</p> <p>Uses commas for separating nouns in a list</p> <p>Uses apostrophes for showing possession</p> <p>Vocabulary in context Words taken from shared or individually read texts</p>
		<p>Reflects on texts read during independent/pair reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to own life <p>[READING FOR ENJOYMENT]</p>	<p>Records words and their meanings in a personal dictionary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses drawings or sentences using the words or explanations to show the meaning, etc. <p>[PERSONAL DICTIONARY]</p>	

Term 4				
	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
WEEK 7-8	<p>Participates in conversation on a familiar topic Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks relevant questions and responds to questions • Maintains the conversation • Expresses opinions • Respects others' ideas <p>Practices Listening and Speaking (Choose one for daily practice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a simple rhyme, poem or song • Plays a simple language game • Gives and follows simple instructions/directions • Tells own news • Retells a story heard or read 	<p>Reads information text Text from the textbook or Teacher's Resource File (TRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading: predicts from the title and pictures • Uses a range of reading strategies, e.g. predicting, using phonic and contextual clues, scanning for specific information • Answers and begins to ask more complex questions, e.g. Why? How do you think? • Interprets and discusses visuals <p>[READING COMPREHENSION]</p> <p>Summarizes the text with support, e.g. fills in missing words in a written summary [SUMMARY]</p>	<p>Writes a paragraph using a frame</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 sentences • 30-40 words • Uses appropriate content • Uses a variety of vocabulary including pronouns and connecting words and phrases. • Uses appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation • Uses the dictionary to check spellings and meanings of words 	<p>Spelling Spells familiar words correctly, using a personal dictionary Uses knowledge of alphabetical order and first letters of a word to find words in a dictionary</p> <p>Working with words and sentences Begins to recognize and use reported speech. Uses adverbs of place (here, there) Uses adverbs of manner (e.g. quickly, slowly) Builds on understanding and use of present progressive</p> <p>Vocabulary in context Words taken from shared or individually read texts Compound words, e.g. playground Joining prefixes or suffixes to a base word</p>
			<p>Records words and their meanings in a personal dictionary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses drawings or sentences using the words or explanations to show the meaning, etc. <p>[PERSONAL DICTIONARY]</p>	

**Extracted from Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements English First Addition
Language Intermediate Phase Grades 4-6 (DBE, 2011)**

After planning and preparing my lessons, I presented them to my critical friends and supervisors for alternative perspectives and support. They gave me constructive feedback on

planning and preparing learner activities to benefit my learners and make my lessons exciting and enjoyable. Firstly, during my presentation, one of my critical friends asked me, *"Don't you think the content was too much for an hour?"* She noted that my first lesson had too much content, which I had not noticed. My supervisor also commented, *"You should ensure that play is visible in your lessons"*. Therefore, I realised that working with critical friends improved my study as they kept asking questions that pushed me to think and make reasonable changes. As LaBoskey (2004) insists, critical friends, challenge our assumptions and biases while helping us reframe our experiences and triangulate study outcomes.

After my presentation, I went back to my lesson plan and changed the sections of my lesson plans that my critical friends commented on. For example, I divided my first lesson into two hours and made games visible in my lesson plan, which helped improve my lessons. My critical friends also reminded me of aspects that would be crucial during my lesson presentation, such as taking photographs as evidence of my lessons but not showing the learners' faces. I also ensured that I did not use learners' names in my lessons. Working with my critical friends taught me that I needed people to support me throughout my journey. Samaras (2011) notes that working with critical friends yielded alternative perspectives. Thus, working with my critical friends assisted me in acquiring varying viewpoints during the planning and preparation of my lessons.

I also worked with my colleagues and school learners to gather the teaching and learning resources I needed for my lesson planning and preparation. I requested them to help me collect newspapers and magazines as these were not readily accessible. They supported me, and I got enough resources to carry out my planned lessons.

4.3 Action Plan

Before commencing my first lesson, I introduced my research study to the learners. I had explained this to them when I asked for their permission to participate in my research study (see Chapter Two). I reminded learners that their participation in the study was voluntary, and if they felt they wanted to withdraw, they could do so without penalty. I also assured them that

if they withdrew from my study, I would not use their classwork as part of my research. I told them this to relax them and proceeded with the planning and preparing of my lessons as outlined in the next section.

4.4 LESSON PRESENTATIONS

4.4.1 Lesson 1

Listening and Speaking

Listening and speaking was my first lesson, and the topic was "Community Helpers." I began the lesson by informing my learners that we would do things differently to improve their English First Additional Language learning. I explained that we would be playing different games such as "Simon says" and others to make learning exciting and enjoyable. But once I explained that, my learners looked puzzled, and I asked them why they were puzzled. One of my learners, who is always ready to speak, said, "*Miss, we will play games with you?*" She laughed and clapped her hands, showing her disbelief, and others joined her. I quickly understood why they were puzzled. It was for the first time that we would be playing games when learning. We usually got to the content and started learning. However, it was essential to explain to them how we would change the strategy from what we were used to to make learning fun and enjoyable and improve their English FAL learning.

After I explained that, I noticed excitement on their faces, and I observed that their eyes were on the small table I had placed in front of the class with the tools and materials we were going to use in our lesson, so they were curious about them. I heard them talking to each other, saying, "*maybe we are going to watch videos,*" pointing at the laptop. Others said, "*We are going to cut pictures,*" pointing at the scissors, magazines and newspapers, while others said, "*We are going to play games,*" pointing at the game boards. The excitement that my learners showed proved to me that I had already achieved the objective of the lesson, which was to make the lesson enjoyable for them while learning English FAL. I understood their curiosity because they always only see their textbooks and exercise books when learning. For the first time, they saw these resources, so they wanted to start the lesson immediately to see what I had planned for them. Therefore, I explained how they would use magazines and newspapers to make collages, use the laptop to listen to a story and the group that finished the task would be allowed

to play games in the play area. After this explanation, they looked excited and were eager to start the lesson, which taught me that, while resources aroused learners' interests, displaying them created much more of a stir amongst learners. Figure 4.1 shows the tables on which the resources and games were displayed.

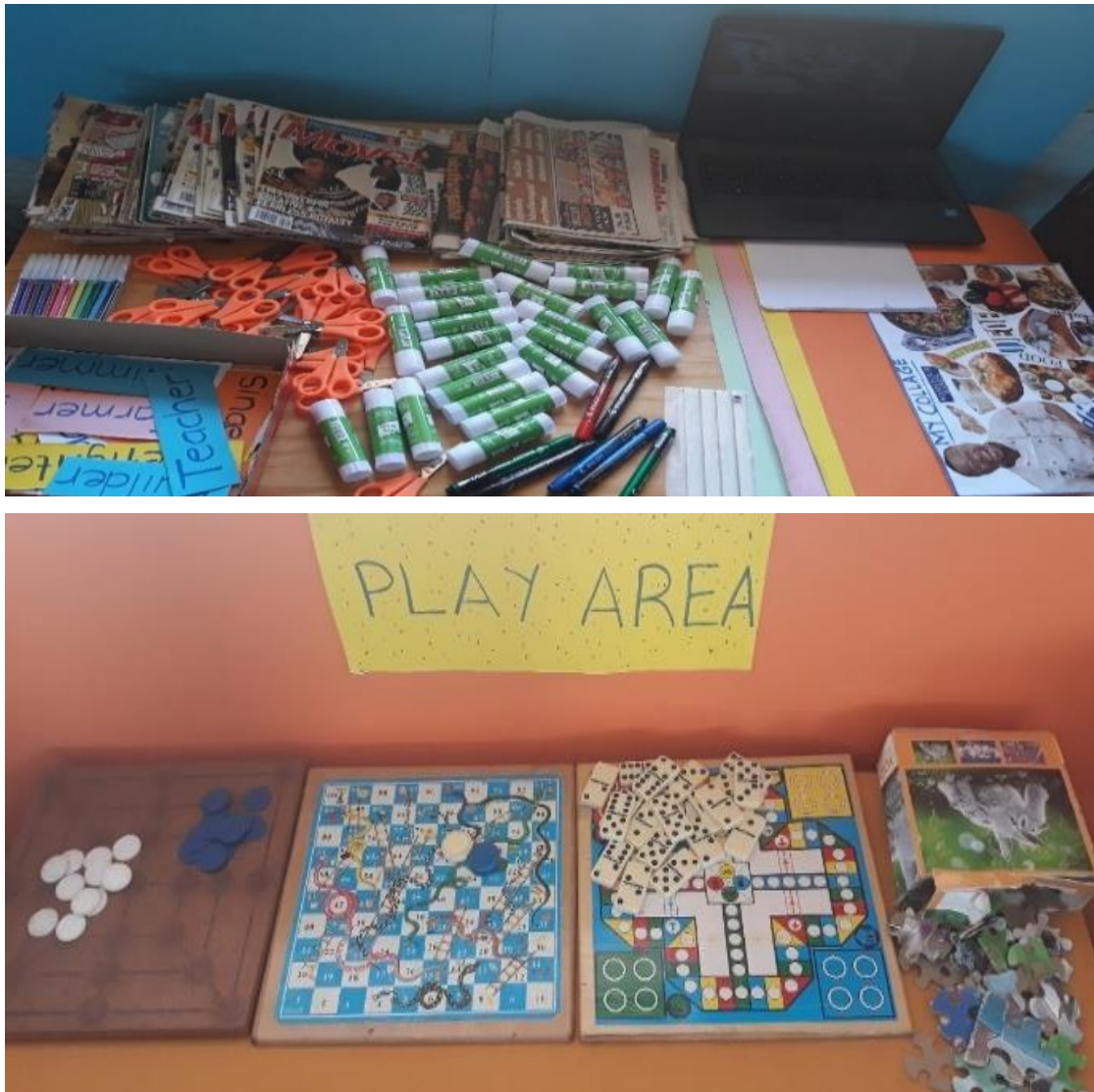


Figure 4.1 Tables with resources and games displayed

I introduced the lesson by informing learners that they would play a game called "Simon says." I chose this game because I wanted my learners to listen and perform actions to show that they understood what they were supposed to do, which would improve their listening skills, which was the lesson's objective. I explained and demonstrated to them how the game was played. I informed them that they must touch certain areas of their bodies, such as their knees, head and

shoulders, when instructed to do so. I explained that they should only do this when I say, "Simon says." However, if I do not mention the words "Simon says," they should not do anything. If they make a mistake by carrying out the instruction and I did not say "Simon says", then they will be disqualified from the game and have to sit down. I explained that it was our responsibility together to spot those who did not follow the instructions, which would help them take responsibility for their learning. However, I stated that I would also be working with them.

After demonstrating and explaining, I asked the learners to stand and start the game. At first, when I said, "Simon says touch your knees," the learners looked hesitant about what to do. I asked myself why because I thought they knew their body parts, but I quickly realised that I assumed they knew their body parts, which taught me a valuable lesson that I should not assume but find out before starting a lesson. Therefore, I began teaching them body parts and continued with our game. I noticed a little bit of chaos as others did not want to admit whenever they did not follow the instructions, but as the game continued, they all understood that they should sit down if they made a mistake. As we continued playing the game, I observed that they became more relaxed and excited, telling each other, *"You did not follow the instruction, or you did not touch the correct part of the body, so sit down."* We all enjoyed this game.

Finally, I understood that it was essential to get them to remember the parts of the body that I taught them in the previous grades before adding the new knowledge. At the end of the game, I noticed that knowing their body parts helped them play the game without hesitation and improved their self-confidence. Figure 4.2 is a photograph of the learners playing the game, "Simon says."



Figure 4. 2. A photograph of the learners playing the game, "Simon says."

Next, I explained to the learners that they would watch a video and imitate what they saw. The intention in watching this video was to improve their listening and speaking skills, which they had already started with when they played the game, "Simon says". In this video, puppets sing and demonstrate the types of jobs people do. I wanted the learners to sing and demonstrate along with them. They would do this to draw attention to the different jobs people do. They sang and imitated different types of jobs along with the video. Learners were already excited about the game they had played previously, so watching the video increased their enthusiasm and enjoyment. Figure 4.3 is a photograph of learners watching the video and imitating the actions in the video.



Figure 4.3 is a photograph of learners watching the video and imitating the actions in the video.

For this game, my purpose was to establish the knowledge that the learners had about different jobs and to be able to speak about different jobs in the following activities. After the video activity, I showed learners a box with flashcards containing different jobs' names. I told them to come to the front, take one flashcard with a job name, look at it, and not show it to other learners. After looking at the flashcard, they were to imitate that job, and the rest of the class would have to guess what job it was. I informed the learners that they would respond by raising their hands to answer what was demonstrated. For example, two learners came to the front of the class, the first one held two hands together and pointed two fingers up like a gun, and the other showed mixing the cement and the sand using a spade and paving using a plastering trowel. The other learners in the class could identify what types of jobs these were. They became excited and raised their hands to say what type of job it was. I noticed that even shy learners participated, felt included and found their strengths, which made me realise that games reinforced learning because they are learner-centred. Figure 4.4 shows photographs of learners demonstrating the different types of jobs.



Figure 4. 4 Photographs of learning demonstrating the different types of jobs

After demonstrating the different jobs to the class, they needed to speak about them; hence, their lesson focused on listening and speaking. To do this, I divided them into five groups and explained that they must work in groups and create a collage. When grouping them, I ensured that I followed Covid-19 regulations of social distancing. Firstly, I showed them my collage and explained that to make their collages, they should get pictures of the materials that are related to the different jobs and paste them on the chart paper provided. Then they should present their completed collage to the class and explain how those materials were essential for the different jobs that they had demonstrated. I mentioned that I would work with them to get magazines and newspapers as that would help them when they made their collages. For example, my collage was about being a chef, so I mentioned that chefs have a way of dressing (dress code); they did not dress anyhow, which makes it easy to identify them, and I showed them a picture of a chef. I also showed them pictures of chefs using different serving dishes and spoons to suit different purposes. Chefs also mix different ingredients to make delicious meals. I showed them different meals prepared by chefs. Next, I told them they had to choose their jobs in groups and let the rest of the class know what job they had chosen to prevent groups from choosing and preparing for the same job. After that, they began constructing their collages. I explained to them that they would present their collages to the class, and during their presentation, they could use isiZulu words if they did not know the name of an item in English. I allowed them to code-switch because English is their additional language. Figure 4.5 is the collage that I showed to the class.



Figure 4. 5. The collage that I showed to the learners.

After explaining and showing them my collage, I gave them time to discuss it in groups. I showed them a small table with magazines and newspapers. I informed them each group would send one representative to the table to look for magazines and newspapers with relevant pictures. I had explained to them before so that all of them would not go to the table simultaneously and cause chaos. I then gave each group a pair of scissors, a chart, a koki-pen and glue.

After giving them all the materials, they got excited, quickly chose their group representatives, and began working. While they were working, I moved around to each group to observe that they were all participating and to ensure they were working. I observed that before learners cut the pictures out, they first discussed whether it was the correct picture for the job, and this taught me that they were able to make decisions as groups. Figure 4.6 shows photographs of learners looking through magazines and newspapers for their pictures.



Figure 4. 6 Photographs of learners looking through the magazines and newspapers for their pictures.

I told the learners that after presenting their collages, they would have to compose songs based on the type of job they chose, and they were to write their own lyrics for their songs. I did this so that they would be able to listen and speak to each other, and I informed them beforehand so that they would be able to prepare themselves to compose their songs. It was exciting to see all learners participating and discussing in line with the CAPS document that all children should be able to speak in English (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Therefore, this meant that the outcome of the lesson was achieved.

The lesson was planned for two days with one hour a day, but because of time constraints, we had to stop and complete the lesson the following day. The next day, the learners were excited. They asked me if we could start the day with the English FAL of the subject on their timetable, namely Mathematics. I explained that we could not disturb the school's timetable as it could cause the disorder. They understood, but their attitude demonstrated that they were looking forward to their projects. I was surprised by their behaviour since it was the first time they had made such a request, and this made me realise that learning and teaching English FAL through play could be the most effective strategy when teaching grade 4. English is the first lesson after the break, and most learners were already seated when the bell rang. They were ready to finish their collages and compose their song. Group A finished first and went to the play area to play games, and this helped other groups work fast because they also wanted to have time to play games in the play area. Only one group went to the play area because of time; however, it

motivated other groups to try and finish quickly. There were four groups; Group A chose a builder as a job, Group B a doctor, Group C a teacher and Group D chose a hairdresser. After all, groups had finished creating their collages; they displayed them on the classroom wall. Figure 4.7 shows the learners' collages.



Figure 4. 7 Learners' collages

When all groups completed their collages, I asked them to present their collages to the class. The aim was to hear them speaking about their collages in English and other learners listening. For example, the Group One presenter went to the front of the class, greeted the class, and told them he represented group one, but all the group members were there to assist him during his presentation. Their job was a builder. He told the class that a builder is a person who starts something new by putting different parts together. He pointed at their collage showing builders' different houses, such as blocks of flats and double-storey houses. He also pointed at the building materials needed to build houses, such as wheelbarrows, cement, blocks, corrugated iron, crushed stones, pipes, doors, windows and tiles. He told the class that builders build houses from scratch and are essential because people cannot live without houses. After his

presentation, other learners commented that the presenters should not talk about which job was more valuable than the other because this was not part of the activity. Learners became noisy after that because they discussed this point in the class, but I told them we would talk about that the next time. Then they quietened down, and we continued. Seeing all learners willing to present for their groups was inspiring and unbelievable because I usually had to push them to participate. I noticed that all groups could talk about their collages, and group members were ready to assist the presenters. It was an incredible moment for all of us, which made me realise that play is a valuable strategy for teaching and learning English FAL. Figure 4. 8 are photographs showing learners presenting their collages.



Figure 4. 8. Photographs showing learners presenting their collages.

At the end of all presentations, I asked them what they had learned from making collages, other groups' collages, and the lesson itself. I asked these questions to encourage them to speak because this lesson focused on listening and speaking. One learner, Thobile (pseudonym), said, *"all the collages looked beautiful and clear enough that I could identify the materials and what each collage was about."* Another learner, Sipho (pseudonym), said, *"I am happy about how we made our collages and how easy it helped us talk about them"*. He also said, *"I wished I had my collage to show it to my parents at home"*. The third learner, Lerato (pseudonym), also said, *"I enjoyed this lesson because our group made a beautiful collage, and we worked together and helped each other; we were all participating"*. The learners' comments made me realise that using play helped me achieve the outcome of the lesson, which was listening and speaking.

To conclude the lesson, I gave the groups time to prepare for their songs, although I was nervous because I doubted they could do it. I doubted it because I did not do it with them before. Surprisingly, when they were preparing their songs, I noticed that they put together all the information they used when creating their collages into the lyrics. The group that chose builders as a job created a drum out of the cans to imitate the sounds made by builders when building houses. After the groups' preparations, I asked the groups to sing and perform their songs. During the performance, I was surprised by a boy in class who used to be shy but was leading a song in his group. I remember the song created by the builders' group. I discovered that play is a fun activity that helps learners engage in learning without being pushed by the teacher. Learners owned the class, were active, and participated fully in their activities. This made me understand the importance of incorporating play activities in my lesson planning to make learning fun and help learners engage in their learning to improve my teaching and learning.

This song was composed by Group A about builders.

We are builders; we build houses

We are builders; we build houses

We build, we build, we build double stories

We build, we build, we build blocks of flats

We build, we build, we build townhouses

We build, we build, we build RDPs

When we build, we use blocks and cement

When we build, we use sand and stone

When we build, we use tiles and plunks

When we build, we use nails and hammers

We build, we build, we build beautiful schools

We build, we build, we build beautiful clinics

We build; we build, we build houses

We build; we build, we build houses.

(Song composed by Group A)

I recorded all their songs using a mobile phone so that they could listen to their performances repeatedly. Figure 4.9 shows photographs of learners singing and performing their composed songs.



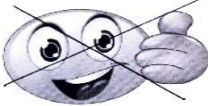
Figure 4.9 Photographs of learners singing and performing their composed songs


Because this was my self-study with which I aimed to improve my practice, it was essential to ask the learners to reflect on the lesson, their games and my teaching. Therefore, I gave them reflection sheets with emojis and crossed the best option that reflected how they felt. I told them not to write their names on their reflection sheets and do it privately without showing it to other learners. I did this so they could respond to the questions truthfully without fear of other learners seeing what they wrote. Figure 4.10 is an example of one of the learner's completed reflection sheets.

Learner Reflection


Choose and make a cross on the best symbol about what you felt after the lesson.

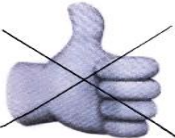
❖ How did you feel about today's lesson?



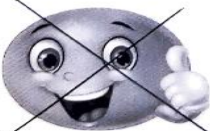


❖ How did you feel about my teaching?





❖ How did you feel about the games we played?






Figure 4.10 An example of one of the learner's reflections sheets

4.4.1.1 Reflective Journal Writing

For this study, I used a reflective journal to reflect on my teaching and my learners' learning, and I learned that reflection allowed me to think about my lesson and look at what I could do better next time. For example, incorporating games into my English FAL class helped enhance the lesson as learners were excited and motivated to learn. Making collages to emphasise and consolidate the lesson improved my learners' listening and speaking skills. Also, using audio-recording helped me to think about my lessons. For instance, when I listened to my audio-recording, I thought about what one of my learners meant when she said, *"You would play games with us"*, and this made me realise that it is not only content that matters in the classroom but how the content is delivered and received by learners is also essential. Therefore, in the future, I plan to consider all these issues when I plan for my lessons, not just concentrating on the content but on making the lesson enjoyable to enhance learning and teaching.

4.4.1.2 Challenges

In my planning and presentation process, I indicated that time allocation in English First Additional Language was one hour per day in the Intermediate phase. I believe English FAL in grade 4 should have one hour and a half to give them enough time to practice speaking English as an Additional Language. Moreover, in Grade 4, children are coming from the Foundation phase, where they were learning to read, but in the Intermediate phase, they are reading to learn other content subjects. And this becomes a challenge to teachers and learners as most learners do not use English outside of school. I found the time challenging in our lesson because learners needed more time to complete their work. Baron and Celaya (2010) found that increasing time in second language teaching and learning could enhance children's language skills. Ojima et al. (2011) also concur that long hours of exposure to English FAL can improve proficiency scores.

4.4.2 Lesson Two

Listening and speaking

The second lesson related to my research was a continuation of the previous lesson (listening and speaking). I started my lesson by asking my learners if they remembered the game they played in their previous lesson, "Simon says." I asked them to raise their hands and remind the class about the rules of the game. They raised their hands very quickly. I pointed at Sanna (pseudonym), and she responded: *"When you said Simon says, touch any part of your body, we follow the instruction; but when you said touch any part of your body without the word Simon, we do not follow the instruction. If we follow, we are out of the game and have to sit down"*. Afterwards, the learners clapped their hands to acknowledge and agree with what Sanna said. They were excited, and I also allowed other learners to discuss what they could remember. They discussed the rules of the games and the parts of their bodies and said that it was the class's responsibility to spot those who did not follow the rules. I found that learners could recall all the game rules, which taught me that when children are having fun during learning, it helps them retain the information better because it was enjoyable and memorable.

Therefore, I informed the learners that they would play the game with the same rules as 'Simon says', which asked them to touch their bodies but this time, it asked them to follow the instructions, not touch the parts of their bodies. For example, I asked them to perform simple instructions like standing on their right foot, turning around, closing their left eye and so forth. I demonstrated this with them to make sure that they followed. I told them that one who would remain standing would be called a King or a Queen of the day. I did this because I knew that children loved to be recognised; therefore, they would pay attention. After I told them that, they all stood up before I told them to stand up. I noticed that all learners were excited and ready to become Kings and Queens of the day. Therefore, I started the game immediately so as not to let them get bored. I observed that the learners enjoyed the game because it took us some minutes to have a King or Queen of the day as all learners were listening carefully and did not want to be out of the game, which proved to me that games could improve learners' listening skills.

After that, I told them that I would play their songs as I had recorded them in the previous lesson. Then, I informed them that the rest of the class would sing and perform songs together, irrespective of which group had composed a song. I did this so that all the learners would learn about the jobs they wrote about in their songs. Then, I asked them to stand up and perform different songs. It was exciting observing learners trying to learn the words of each song from other groups. I observed that they learn different songs very fast, which made me realise that learners could build their engagement in learning through fun. Figure 4.11 is a photograph of the learners singing and performing the different songs.



Figure 4.11 A photograph of the learners singing and performing the different songs

The following activity aimed to improve learners' listening and speaking skills. This activity aimed to listen to the story and use drawings to tell the story. I informed the learners that they would listen to a story played on a compact disc (CD) using a laptop. Then they would draw what they would listen to and present their drawings to tell the story to the class. After their presentations, I would ask them questions. I further explained that they should not worry about how good their drawings were because the drawing aimed to tell the story.

After explaining to them, most of them were very excited. However, I noticed that some learners felt relaxed after telling them that drawing does not need to be perfect, while others said they could not. After explaining to them, they asked for drawing papers, which taught me that they were ready for their activity. Although I was a little bit nervous because it was for the first time, they would listen to a CD. I thought it would raise their interest and increase their concentration because I usually read a story to them and asked them to respond to the questions by raising their hands or writing on their worksheets.

Quickly, I gave each learner the materials they would use to draw, such as A4 paper, pencil, rubber, crayon and a ruler. After giving them the material, I told them I would play the story three times. For the first time, I would pause the CD and ask them questions based on the story to check their understanding, and on the second, they could start their drawings, and on the third, they could make corrections to their drawings. I played the CD, a story about a man riding a bicycle and delivering a parcel, and on his way, he had an accident with a taxi, broke his arm, and the ambulance took him to the hospital. During the drawing activity, I moved around, checking for those who may have needed assistance. I observed that most of the learners completed their drawings very speedily, and I was impressed by their drawings because they showed that they achieved the outcome of the lesson. After completing their drawings, I gave them pre-stick to paste them on the board. They all pasted their drawings on the board. Figure 4.12. are examples of the learners' drawing.

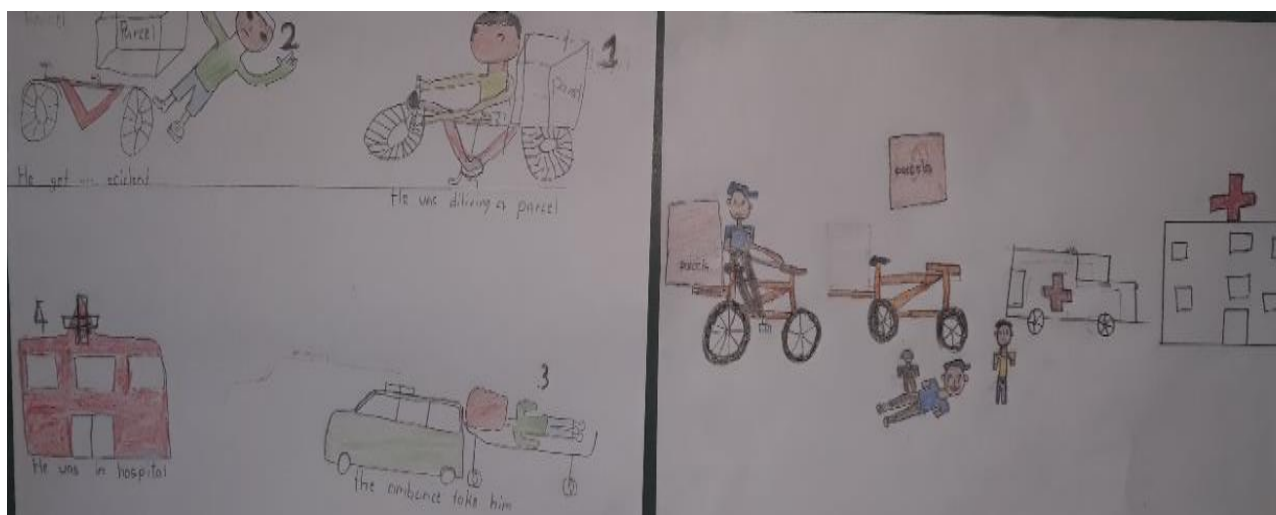


Figure 4. 12. Example of learners' drawings

I noticed that all learners were eager to tell the story using their drawings. I aimed to observe that drawing could help them tell the story and follow the story in a correct sequence. We were all excited by the drawings, so I asked learners to present them by telling the story using their drawings. The first presenter was Palesa (pseudonym). She went to the front of the class, greeted the learners, and presented her drawing. She pointed at her drawing telling others what the story was about. I noticed that she could tell the whole story using her drawing during her presentation. After her presentation, all learners applauded her. I gave other learners a chance to tell the story using their drawings. Finally, I noticed they could tell the whole story sequentially using their drawings, proving that drawing enhanced their listening and speaking skills.

After their presentations, I asked them why they were not shy to talk about their drawings. One of the learners said, "*I find it easy to tell a story using a drawing; drawing helped me speak*", and this was an exciting moment for all of us as everyone was happy. I remembered that McNiff (1992) asserted that artistic images could expand communication and offer insight outside the scope of the reasoning mind. Therefore, this was convincing that drawings improved learners listening and speaking skills.

I planned the lesson for an hour, but we did not complete it and completed it the following day because of time. On the following day, I showed the learners a chart with questions. I asked

them to read those questions. As they read the questions, I noticed they wished they could answer them. I told them that they would write the answers in their worksheets. I gave them worksheets with questions to answer. After giving them the questions to answer, I observed that they took a few minutes to finish their activity. We marked the work together and made corrections. I noticed that nearly all the learners got their answers correct. It made me realise that drawing helped the learners understand the story better. It played an essential role in remembering and recalling. I put colour stickers on the worksheets of those who did very well and were very excited. Figure 4.13 are examples of learners' worksheets.

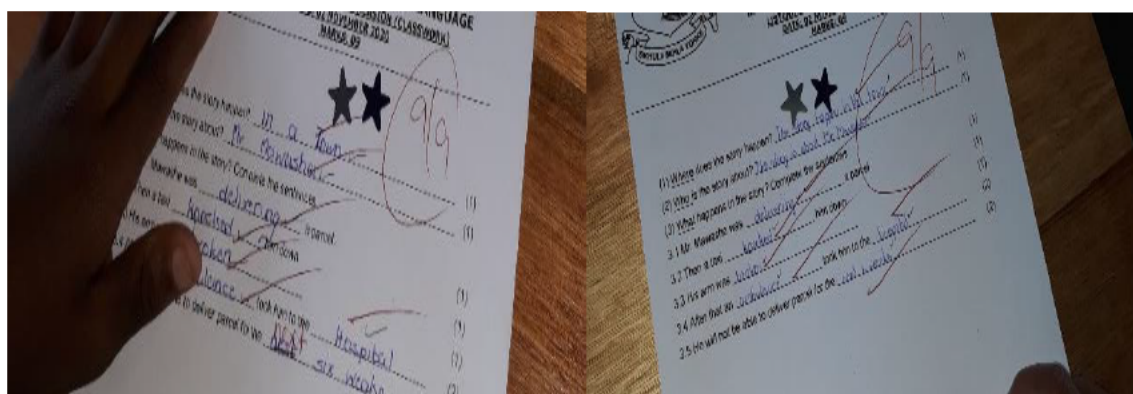


Figure 4.13 Example of learners' worksheets.

4.4.2.1 Reflective Journal Writing

Reflecting on my journal, I found that drawing helped learners speak, as all learners were motivated to tell the story using their drawings which helped me recognise that drawing could significantly improve learners listening and communication skills. As a teacher, I realised that data sources such as drawing could improve English FAL.

4.4.3 Lesson Three

Reading and Viewing

The third lesson for my research study was on Reading and Viewing. It was a continuation of listening and speaking. In the previous lesson, I indicated that according to CAPS, listening and speaking should be developed before reading and writing so that learners can read and

write. Therefore, there was a need to improve listening and speaking skills to build a strong foundation for reading and viewing. Thus, the outcome of this lesson was to improve learners' reading and viewing.

I introduced the lesson by explaining and demonstrating that they would play the "I spy" game. I found this game appropriate because it is a turn-taking game that could help develop their social skills, and it could help develop their vocabulary and understanding of language. I explained that they would use only objects found in the classroom. In this game, one learner says, "I spy with my little eye something begins with a letter....." (the learner would mention only the first letter of the object and allow other learners to look around in the classroom to find an object that starts with that letter; they would then raise their hands and guess what the object that started with that letter was). If the learner who had asked for the letter finds that they are taking too long to come up with the correct answer, that learner will give them the following letter of the word for a clue until they get the correct word. The learner who got the correct answer would take a turn in saying "I spy with my little eye something begins with a letter....." I also explained that they would respond by raising their hands. Learners showed that they understood the game because they got excited and asked me to start after explaining how they would play it. Then, I started the game, and one learner, Sipho (pseudonym), answered and took a turn. I noticed after that, they all participated and owned the game. I also recognised improvements in listening and speaking as they could listen to and allow each other a chance to speak.

Next, to extend the previous activity, I had prepared worksheets with a picture story and this activity aimed to improve learners' reading and viewing. Therefore, I gave learners worksheets and asked them to look at the pictures, and I then asked them questions.

Teacher: How many people are in the story?

Thobile: There are two people

Teacher: Good. Where are they? And how do you know?

Buhle: They are at the tuckshop. I could see shelves with tins of fish and baked beans etc.

Teacher: Excellent, Boy, Yes, they are at the tuckshop, and how do you know that? Who do you think they are?

Zanele: I think It's a Police officer and a person who sells at the tuckshop. The Police officer is wearing a police uniform, and the other person is selling at the tuckshop. I think he is the owner of the shop.

Teacher: Perfect, Zanele, Who could tell us why they are at the shop?

Sam: I think the police officer came to ask the shop owner if he has a license to sell goods.

Teacher: Terrific Sam, yes, it could be one of the questions a police officer could ask. What do others think?

Learners gave me many related answers according to what they thought.

I further asked them to read a story silently and highlight the words they did not know the meaning of. Then, I gave each of them a highlighter and showed them how to use it as they were using a highlighter for the first time. They were very excited, and I understood that using highlighters excited them. Then they read a story silently and highlighted new words. I moved around while they read silently, checked their progress, and took pictures. Figure 4.14 shows photographs of learners highlighting new words.

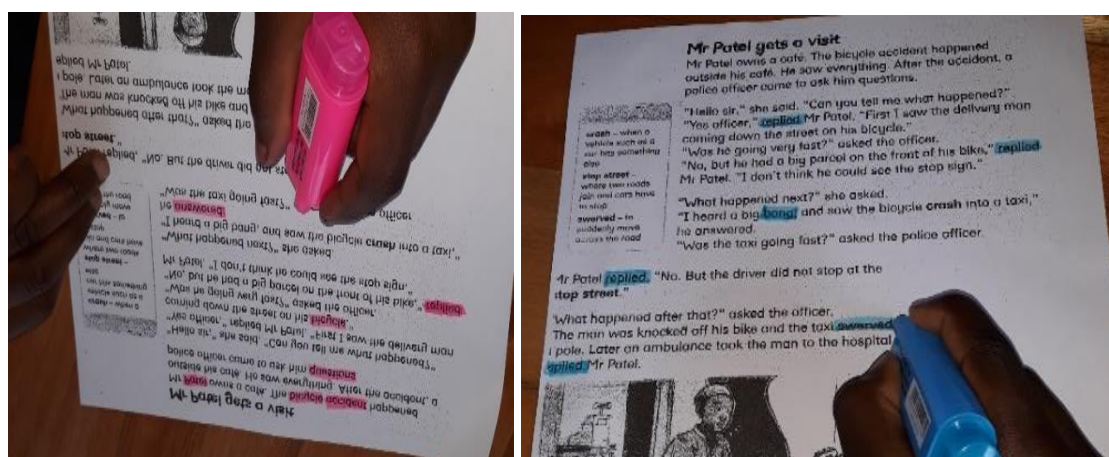


Figure 4.14 Photographs of learners highlighting new words.

After they were done highlighting, I asked the learners to call out the highlighted words and write them on the board. I noticed that sometimes they struggled to pronounce some words, which gave me a chance to correct them and read words together with them. When I was done

writing words on the board. I asked all learners to read them. Then, I told them to work in groups to find the meaning of the words in the dictionaries, write the definition in the chart, cut it out and paste it next to the word on the board. I did this so that they would know the meaning of the words. I understood that they would be able to use dictionaries as we previously had a lesson on arranging words in alphabetical order, of which we used dictionaries. I also informed them that this was a group competition; therefore, the group to finish first would have time to play games in the play area. I then divided the learners into five groups and gave each group four dictionaries, koki pens and different coloured charts. I ensured that charts were not of the same colour to identify the group that quickly got more definitions than others. I also told them that getting more words would win the competition. I did this so that they could work fast.

The learners got excited and started their activity quickly. I moved around, checking if groups needed assistance and were following COVID-19 regulations of social distancing. I found it fun, and all groups worked well because all learners participated and ensured they finished first. I noticed that other groups had divided themselves; some were looking for meanings while others were writing, which taught me that they could make their own decisions because they wanted to finish first. They were all busy, which surprised me as I always urged them to participate in their work. I was impressed to see learners engaging in their activities, proving that games improve learning. I also learned that competition motivated them to work with speed.

I informed the groups that they had to get the meaning of the words first, write it on the chart, cut it out and paste it next to the word on the board. They did this until they got all the meanings of the words. I found out that this game increased their motivation as they were all motivated to get more words first, and it taught them to take responsibility for their learning. Because it was a competition, all groups were working against time. Figure 4.15 shows photographs of learners looking for the meaning of words in the dictionary and writing the meaning on the chart.

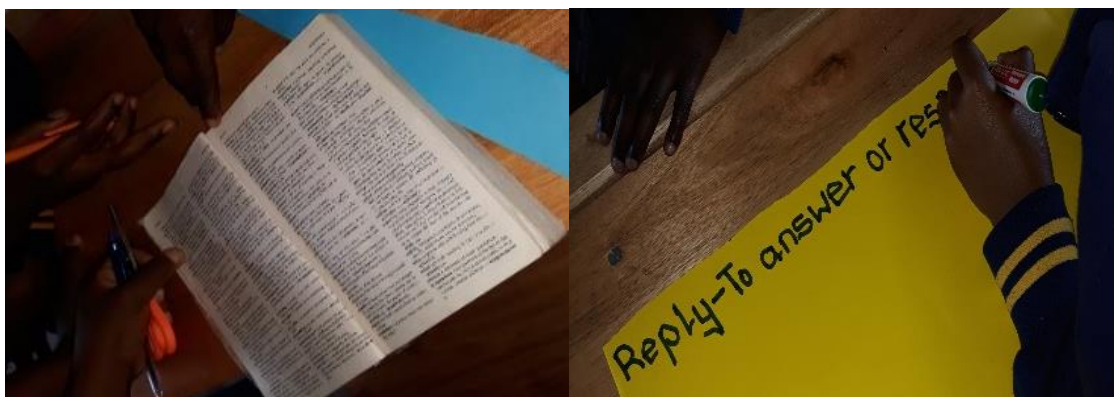


Figure 4.15 Photographs of learners looking for the meaning of words in the dictionary and writing the meaning on the chart

I then asked them to read words from the board, took the charts with the meaning of words, and put them on the table. I called out a word from the board and asked them to look for the correct meaning, show it to the rest of the class to decide whether it was the correct word, read it and paste it on the board. I also erased the words from the board and left the definitions. Then, I asked them to read the meaning of the words. I wrote words on the small charts and asked them to come and match words with their meaning. They had to show the word to the class, read it and paste it next to the correct meaning. I did this activity to help the learners learn the meaning of the words, which made this activity more enjoyable. Everyone wanted to come and try. I learned that using games to practice new words enhances learners' understanding and memorisation. In the end, I asked the learners to write words and their meanings in their exercise books. Figure 4.16 is a photograph of learners playing the vocabulary game.



Figure 4.16 Photographs of learners playing the vocabulary game

Because of time, we did not finish our lesson but had to finish it the following day. The next day, I asked the learners to work in the same groups. We revised what we did previously. I pasted words on the board and asked them to go to the board and match words with their meaning. I informed the learners that they would choose five words on the board in groups, write short sentences on the chart, and present it to the class. I did this activity to help learners show their understanding of the words. Therefore, I gave them charts, koki-pens and A4 papers to use before writing on their charts. I moved around the class to see that all learners were participating. I found out that all learners were working and contributing to their groups. I noticed that learners were not afraid to talk to me freely as they were always shy previously. I observed that playing games allowed learners to speak freely during teaching and learning. It was exciting to see learners contributing to their own learning and showing that they enjoyed their learning, and this proved to me that games provided an active and supportive environment in the classroom. Figure 4.17 is an example of learner's sentences

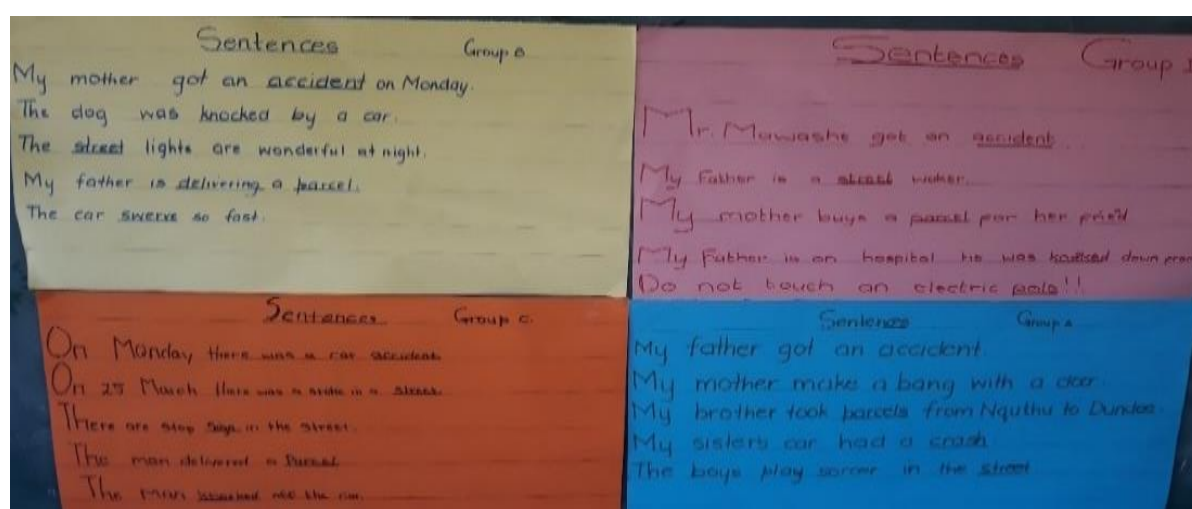


Figure 4. 17. Example of learner's sentences.

4.4.3.1 Reflective Journal Writing

In this lesson, I realised that learners understood and used vocabulary better through fun games which are essential in reading. Furthermore, as a teacher, I realised that games allow learners to examine the words, enhancing their motivation to learn.

4.4.4 Lesson 4

Reading and Viewing

The fourth lesson of my research study continued from lesson three, Reading and Viewing—and aimed to improve learners' reading and viewing skills. Based on learners' previous lesson experiences, I think they can listen, speak, read, and view what we are continuing. I introduced the lesson by informing the learners that they would play a board race game. The goal of a board game is to have two teams racing to the board and write answers, and the group to finish first scores a point. I chose this game to boost learners' language skills so it would be relevant for reading and viewing. I explained and demonstrated how they would play this game. I told them we would use the words we used in the previous lesson. Therefore, I displayed words on the board and encouraged learners to read them, and after that, I erased them from the board. To play this game, I split learners into two teams. There were twenty learners in my class, so each team had ten. I showed them a chart with ten jumbled or scrambled words to be unscrambled by them. Then, I pasted it on the board and gave each team a koki- pen to write with it. Each team had ten members, and they had to make two lines. One member would go to the board, unscramble one word, and give a koki-pen to the next member until they all had a chance to write.

I planned to do this game activity with the learners to instil vocabulary. The rule was that they could help one another by telling their members what to write, and I told them that because this was a competition, and the team to get all words correct would get a packet of sweets. I also told them that as a class, we would check which group got all the words correct at the end of the activity to get a packet of sweets. Before I finished talking, the learners were already in lines, ready to start the activity. After that, I gave them a few minutes to complete the activity. All learners were very excited and eager to participate. I noticed that other learners did not even think about what they would write but needed to participate. I observed that others went to the board and asked others what to write, which showed me that they were all willing to participate.

Finally, the groups completed their activity. We marked words together and made corrections. Then, we identified the team that had the correct words. I realised that motivating learners by

playing games before starting a lesson was essential because games encouraged active classroom interaction and learner participation. Figure 4.18 is a photograph of learner's board race game.

Team A			Team B		
acciten	=	accit accident ✓	acciten	=	accident ✓
kcnko	=	knock ✓	kcnko	=	knck knock ✓
gnab	=	bang ✓	gnab	=	bang ✓
rshca	=	Crash ✓	rshca	=	cash X
ewrsve	=	Swerve ✓	ewrsve	=	Swr Swerve ✓
opel	=	Pole ✓	opel	=	pole ✓
rpyle	=	At Reply ✓	rpyle	=	+ reply ✓
plcare	=	Est parcel ✓	plcare	=	pest parcel ✓
gins	=	Sign ✓	gins	=	sin sign ✓
steret	=	Stret Street ✓	steret	=	street ✓

Figure 4. 18 Photograph of learners' Board Race Game

After the game activity, I reminded the learners that they would have a show and tell session for the next activity. I asked them to bring items to school. I was surprised by what they brought to school; I did not expect them to get different objects. They were very excited, and I asked them if some did not get objects from home, and I gave them items I brought from home so that everyone would have an object to show. It was a fantastic moment. They were to go to the front of the class, show the item, and all other learners raised their hands, guessed the item, and then indicated which type of job the item belonged to. The learners took turns showing their items until they finished their game. Figure 4. 19 is a photograph of learners during the "show and tell."



Figure 4.19 Photographs of learners during the “show and tell”

After that, I gave learners the picture story they used in the previous lesson, which was on reading and viewing. Then, I asked the rest of the class to read a story together. The story was a conversation between a police officer and a shop owner. The bicycle accident happened outside the shop owners' shop, and he saw everything that happened. The police officer came to ask him questions (take a statement) about what happened. The shop owner told the police officer that the cyclist did not stop at the stop sign, and the taxi driver did not stop at the stop street. Therefore, the cyclist was knocked off his bicycle, and the taxi swerved and smashed into a pole. The ambulance took them to the hospital. I moved around while learners were reading to help those who needed support. I also asked oral questions during reading to help them understand the story. The following is a list of questions I asked the learners.

Table 4.2 List of questions for learners to answer

Questions asked
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you think police help the community?• How do you believe spaza/tuck shops help the community?• Who are the people who work in the hospital? And how do they help the community?• Who are the people who help in the ambulance? And how do they help the community?• After the accident, the car was damaged and needed someone to fix it. Who do we call people who repair cars?• How do they help the community?• When you grew up, how would you like to help the community?

The learners responded to the questions by raising their hands. It was interesting because the questions were open-ended and allowed them to respond. I realised that they enjoyed talking and had a lot to say. This taught me that it would be essential for me to support them by having more class dialogues and discussions.

Next, I told the learners that they would role-play a story in groups. And after that, they would summarise a story they read and role-played in groups and present it to the class. We discussed the roles played by different characters. I did this so that they would understand how to allocate different characters and discuss what each character would say. I divided the learners into groups and gave them time to discuss and rehearse their roles. I moved around the class to support the groups with some challenges. I found that all learners were excited and actively engaged in their activities. They were busy interacting with each other about their roles. Although groups had finished the rehearsals, because of time, they did not complete the role-play activity and had to complete it the next day. The next day, I gave them time to act out their stories. I was impressed by how they conducted their stories. It was fun, and we all enjoyed the role-play activity. I learned that learners become active participants if we allow them to do things independently. One group even asked if they could add the story's ending during their role-play, which taught me that they were actively involved in their learning. Figure 4.20 is a photograph of learners role-playing the story.



Figure 4. 20. Photograph of learners role-playing the story.

After that, I informed the learners they would write a summary of the story; therefore, I gave them scribble papers for the first draft, charts, and koki-pens to write their summaries and

present them to the class. Once I gave them all the materials, they began the task. I observed that it took them a few minutes to summarise the story. Then, I asked them to present their summaries. Their presentations showed that they understood the story much better, which revealed that learners achieved the outcome of the lesson. Figure 4.21 is an example of learners' summaries.

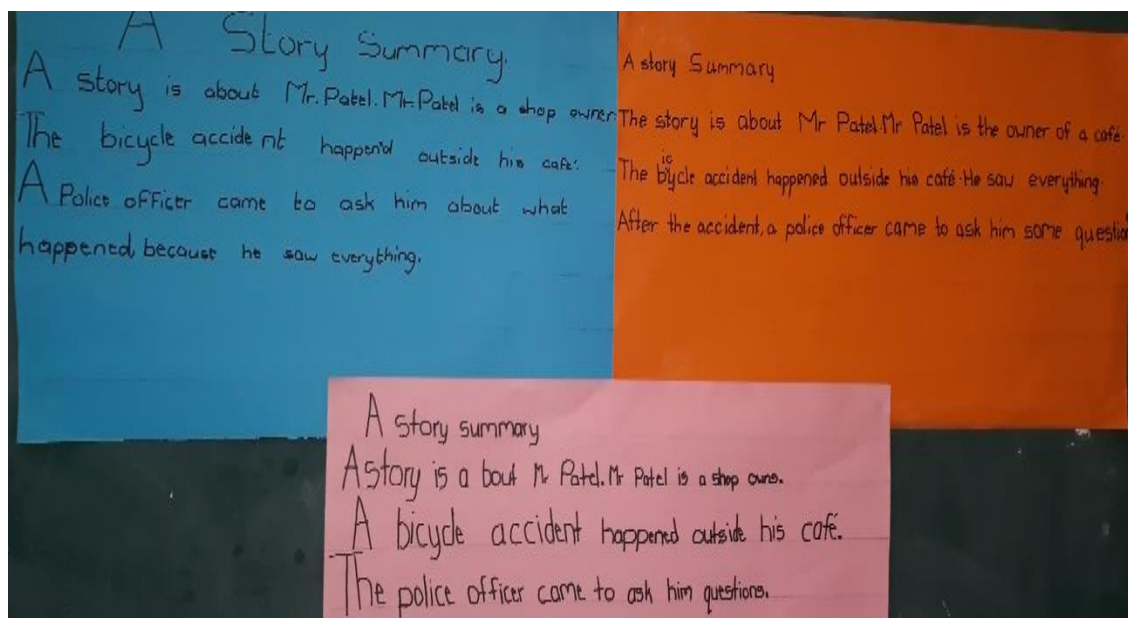
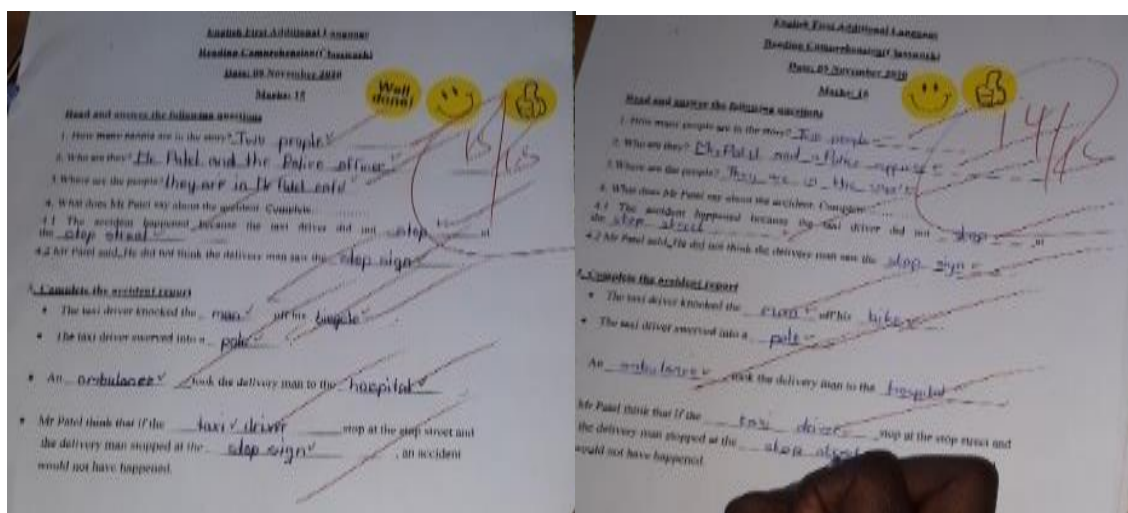


Figure 4. 21. Example of learners' summaries

In conclusion, I gave learners worksheets with questions and asked them to read them out aloud. Then, I asked them to write down the answers. I noticed that they completed the activity in record time, which taught me that they understood the story well. We marked the activity together and made corrections. Most of the learners got the answers correct. They were very excited, and I put “well-done” stickers on their work to encourage them. I realised that role-play allowed learners to reflect on a story and develop their knowledge to better understand it before writing a summary and comprehension. Figure 4.22 is an example of learners' classwork activity.



4.4.4.1 Reflective Journal Writing

I found out that role-play arouses interest in the learners. They were very excited, which reinforces what was said by a researcher that "integrating experiential learning in the classroom increases learners' interest in the subject matter and understanding of the subject content" (Poorman 2002, p. 32). I realised that through play, their involvement increased. After role-playing, I asked them to write a story summary and comprehension activity. They could write a summary and answer questions correctly, proving that role-play allowed them to reflect on a story; it improved their understanding. I also found out that when they were role-playing, they gained confidence, and their communication improved. They also learned to listen to each other. Therefore, I believe that play activities improved their reading and viewing.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I responded to my second research question, *How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching through play?* I described how I involved Grade four learners in my study to learn from them. I conducted four lessons and used various activities, which helped me explore how to teach English FAL better. For instance, my first two lessons enhanced learners' listening and speaking. Learners' drawings, cutting and pasting pictures to make a collage helped me understand how I could increase learners' interest and participation to improve their communication skills. Another two lessons aimed at improving learners

reading and viewing. Vocabulary games, writing short sentences in groups, role-playing, and summary writing helped me recognise how I could develop their brains, stimulate their curiosity and imaginations, and increase their ability to focus and concentrate on reading and reviewing.

I learned that children learn best when they play games from these lessons and class activities. They engage themselves, which allows them to learn language from their peers and develop language skills. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of language suggests that children acquire knowledge to engage in social experiences. Therefore, I learned to give learners appropriate help to carry out their tasks themselves because they learn to express themselves more naturally, quickly, and spontaneously through play, allowing them to construct knowledge themselves. They also acquire knowledge to be creative while developing their imagination; for example, when learners were role-playing, they used their imagination of what they think happened. I believe this does help them improve their language skills and builds their self-confidence.

I learned that learning through play is continual. It brings home, school, and community together because when learners play at home, they have fun and build communication and collaboration skills that prepare them for their demands. This helped me understand my shortcomings as a teacher to seek new ways to improve my teaching practice. I showed how my teaching and learning extended by responding to my second research question through interaction with them. My teaching reveals the vital contribution of my learners as they participated in my research. I anticipate that this developed me professionally and personally as I aim to facilitate English FAL better.

Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek (2016) stated that playful experiences could give children the skills they will need in the future. My study helped me understand that learning through play could be an enjoyable experience; however, it plays an essential part in laying a foundation for learning. Therefore, I learned that I could lay a solid foundation to support higher learning to build on it through the play because I became aware that they understand better.

In the next chapter, I build on the insights I gained from conducting lessons with my learners to develop my research study idea.

CHAPTER FIVE

HARVESTING AND RETROSPECTING ON MY SELF-STUDY RESEARCH JOURNEY

5.1 Introduction

This self-study focused on my professional development as a grade 4 teacher, teaching English First Additional Language through play. I aimed to explore new and innovative strategies for effectively teaching and learning English FAL. In the previous chapter, Chapter Four, I responded to my second research question: *“How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching through play?”* In responding to this question, I worked with my Grade 4 learners to explore various teaching strategies to stimulate their interest in learning English FAL better. I narrated how I cultivated playful experiences with my learners and presented photographs to show learners working in the classroom.

In this concluding chapter, Chapter Five, I reflect on what I learned from my self-study research. I reviewed my research by briefly explaining what I covered in the previous chapters. Then I presented a collage that I created to share the personal and professional learnings I discovered through my research. I further reflected on the methodological and theoretical learning I adopted in English FAL. Lastly, I identified contributions and the further advancement of this study.

5.2 Review of dissertation

Chapter One

In Chapter One, I gave an account of this study by discussing the focus and purpose of teaching English First Additional Language in Grade 4 through play. I identified two fundamental concepts and the sociocultural theoretical perspectives that grounded this study. I then indicated the methodological approach I selected. I further provided my study’s background information and rationale and briefly explained my two research questions.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, I offered a comprehensive guide of my self-study research process. I identified and discussed my methodological approach, self-study. I further explained the research setting, research participants and critical friends. I described how I generated data using research practices. I narrated how I made meaning for my study, followed ethical considerations and established trustworthiness. Lastly, I considered research challenges that affected my study and how I overcame them.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, I responded to my first research question: “*What can I learn from my personal history about teaching and learning English First Additional Language through play?*” I used a collage to narrate my lived experiences of my engagement with the English language in my family, community, primary and high school. I elaborated on how these memories influenced me to be the kind of teacher I am today. Lastly, I created a collage to elaborate on the lessons learned through my lived experiences. These learnings helped me understand the role I played in learners' lives.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, I addressed my second research question: “*How can I better facilitate teaching English First Additional Language through play?*” I discussed how I engaged my Grade 4 learners in answering this question. I revealed how I planned, prepared, taught and reflected on my teaching. I presented illustrations of my learners' work and reflections.

Chapter Five

This chapter responds to my second research review of chapter four. In this chapter, I reflect on my research journey by reviewing each chapter. I give details on what I discovered as new and innovative strategies for teaching English FAL in Grade 4. I use a collage to reveal and analyse what I learned after interacting with my learners in the classroom. These learnings arise from what I observed and discovered in Chapter four.

5.3 Reflecting on the study

5.3.1 Using a collage to analyse my learning experiences from the study

To consolidate my learnings from my self-study journey, I needed a tool to help me analyse my life experiences and data representation. I created a collage representing my learnings from my teaching of English FAL. I aimed to generate ideas to assist me in consolidating my learning in response to my second research question: *How can I better facilitate English First Additional Language teaching through play?* I chose to use a collage as Van Shalkwyk (2010) states, that it is a poster where the participant uses photographs, images and prints that includes text from the magazines and any other printed materials that say something about them. A collage helped me reflect on what I discovered from teaching English FAL.

5. 4 My Learnings

My learnings from my research study are: (a) curiosity and interest to learn stimulated through play, (b) physical engagement through play encourages class participation, (c) social interaction through play is an advantage to learning, (d) play promotes and develops creativity in learners (e) play as a teaching technique to improve learner performance. Figure 5.1 below is my collage representing my learnings and reflections on my research journey.



Figure 5.1. My collage representing my learnings and reflections on my research journey.

5.4.1 Learning 1: Curiosity and interest in learning stimulated through play



Figure 5. 2. Picture representing children designing images from palm leaves with their teacher.

The picture above (Figure 5. 2.) shows children excitedly designing their images using palm leaves. I learned that for learners to participate and enjoy what they are doing, they need something that would ignite their curiosity and interest. As stated in chapter 4, I noticed the excitement on learners' faces and observed their eyes on the small table I had placed in front of the class with items they would use for their lesson. They were curious and wanted to know what they were. Their reaction showed that children learn better when they are interested. I find that it is essential to be aware of what attracts them so that they would learn better. They do not need someone to encourage them to participate as they always do, but curiosity and interest create an exciting environment for them to know better. My learners' reactions reminded me of my personal history (see Chapter Three), where we used to be curious when playing *Umlabalaba* with my siblings at home and listening to folklores narrated by my grandmother using our native language. We would be curious about what our grandmother would tell us that day and listened with interest when she spoke. And also, in my primary school, teachers made us rhyme and sing songs, making us interested in learning. When I applied this understanding, it gave my learners confidence to participate. They engaged with

the lessons with much interest and enthusiasm. Thus, I concluded that arousing curiosity in learners increased participation, encouraging learners to express themselves in English. Initially, learners felt shy about participating and expressing themselves in English, but curiosity helped them to become more relaxed and motivated to participate and communicate in English. This reduced shyness and fear of expressing themselves in English. Hence, I concluded that learning through play heightens interest and curiosity that acts as a springboard for learners to become more active in the classroom.

5.4.2 Learning 2: Physical engagement through play encourages class participation



Figure 5. 3 Picture representing children playing games

Figure 5. 3. shows learners creating an enjoyable environment by exploring their bodies. Learners played different games that used their physical engagement, they are wearing different baraclavas in order to use their hands, legs, eyes and ears, to amplify their participation. In chapter 4, I used different physical games such as ‘Simon says’ where the learners used their

bodies, game on touching their parts of the body, demonstrating the types of jobs, cutting newspapers, and pasting them on the charts using their hands and fingers. I find that using their bodies helped them be fully engaged and participate in the lesson which enabled me to decipher that learners respond better when physically engaging in the task. I realised that physical engagement helped them participate, become more comfortable, and be ready to perform different tasks, thus understanding the content better. I also learned that physical engagement through play encourages class participation, draws their attention and creates interest in learning (see Chapter Four).

Through this study, I learned that as a teacher, I need to also engage myself in physically demonstrating to help them understand better. Physical engagement assisted me because learners became hands-on and worked in groups. Therefore, teaching English First Additional Language became productive and exciting by using physical engagement.

5.4.3 Learning 3: Social interaction through play is an advantage to learning



Figure 5. 4. A picture representing learners interacting with each other

Figure 5. 4. shows learners interacting with each other. This picture's main aim is that learners share thoughts through play. They are talking to each other. My theory of sociocultural perspective taught me that language is not an individual activity but a social experience. Therefore, I planned most of my lessons using groups because I understood that it is a platform where they would share their thoughts and develop their understanding, which helped them to gain much confidence. For example, in chapter 4, I grouped learners and asked them to create collages, compose songs, look for the meaning of words in the dictionaries, write sentences on charts and play a board race game. In all these activities, I noticed that even the learners who used to be shy participated fully in their groups which enabled them to overcome their shyness and exchange ideas with others, making learning enjoyable. The kind of response from my learners taught me that social interaction plays a vital role in learning. Lightbrown and Spada (1999) acknowledge that when second language learners interact, it promotes their language development.

5.4.4 Learning 4: Play promotes creativity in learners



Figure 5. 5. A picture represents a child at play building a tower

Figure 5. 5. extracted from the main collage (Figure 5.1) shows a child at play building a tower. I chose this image because it represents the feeling of having a moment of realisation about how learners are creative during learning. I observed my learners when they were creating and performing their songs. Learners put together all the information they used when creating their collages into the lyrics. Group A, who chose a builder as a job, even created a drum out of cans to imitate the sound made by the builders when building houses (see Chapter 4). This taught me that learning through play brings out creativity in learners as they think beyond instructions. It empowered them with creative thinking skills because they learn better and faster when they discuss in their groups. Therefore, engaging my learners in play activities helped them gain new knowledge and skills and improve their language learning. And also, when I asked them to role-play a story in chapter four, one group asked me if they could add their ending for the story, which taught me that learners are very creative if they are given a chance to demonstrate their creativity. I learned to be flexible and adapt to my learners' abilities.

5.4.5 Learning 5: Play as a teaching technique to improve learner performance

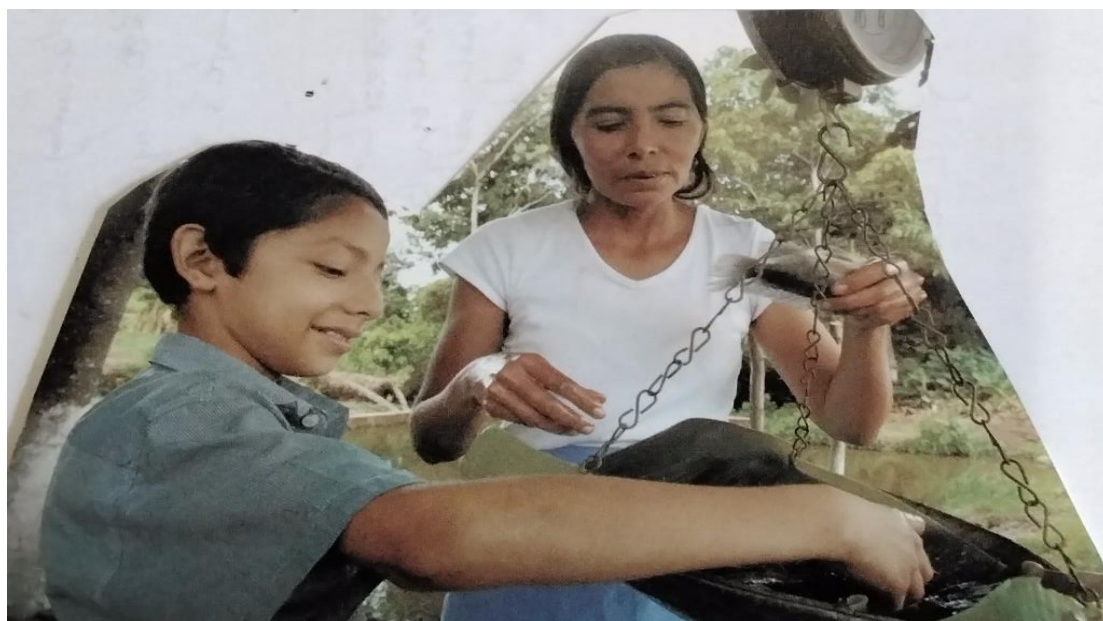


Figure 5. 6. A picture representing a teacher using play as a teaching technique

The picture of a teacher (Figure 5.6) shows a learner how to build a rotary engine. I discovered that a teaching technique the teacher uses is vitally crucial as it should make learners interested

in the subject matter and create an eagerness to learn. Therefore, I find that play is a teaching technique to help attract learners' attention in the classroom. For example, in lesson one, chapter four, I mentioned that learners asked if they would play games with me, which showed that learners become interested if their teacher is engaged in their learning. It stimulated their minds to learn. During play, I did not force or encourage my learners to participate as I usually do; instead, they were all willing to participate, proving that play is a teaching technique which encourages learners to learn. Self-study as my research methodology helped me understand my learners better and develop myself and my practice, which helped improve learners' performance.

5.5 Personal-Professional Learning

I mentioned in the previous chapters that although I was a seasoned teacher, I was worried about my Grade 4 learner's poor performance in English FAL, which forced me to re-evaluate myself and my teaching strategies to improve my learner's performance. Therefore, this study allowed me to implement, analyse and reflect on my practice and look at myself critically concerning teaching English First Additional Language. And also, as I indicated in the previous chapters of this study, I aimed to explore how I could improve my learners' performance by using play to facilitate English First Additional Language better.

Previously, I followed the policy documents as they are such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) etc. without trying to fit myself into my context and learners. Therefore, conducting this study helped me look at myself and identify and evaluate my role as a teacher within the current prescribed curriculum (CAPS). The study helped me improve how I teach my learners while also compelling me to research new strategies to enhance and facilitate learning English FAL more effectively. I learned new and innovative strategies instead of relying on the textbook. I learned about play as a teaching technique.

Embarking in this self-study helped me to make several discoveries about teaching English First Additional Language in Grade 4 through play. According to Parker and Thomsen (2019), there is a dearth of evidence and practical guidance on how learning through play can be

employed effectively in the formal school context and the condition that support success. Also, Howard (2010), Jay and Knaus (2018) asserted that studies on learning through play in schools for children beyond age 5 are limited because play is presented as “an activity for enjoyment or recreation rather than a serious purpose” (Oxford Press, 2020). Therefore, my engagement with this study helped me to find out the necessity on having more self-studies conducted on teaching and learning through play in the formal school context especially in Grade 4 in order to face the challenge on English FAL teaching and learning. However, there are more recent research related studies to English FAL in Grade 4 that have conducted, for example: A study by Fesi and Moodly (2018) that focus on challenges and approaches in language transitioning in a South African context.

Consequently, this study compelled me to research and identify more activities to integrate into English FAL lesson planning to improve learner performance. In my involvement with the learners, I noticed the change in their attitude towards English FAL. I observed that they initially struggled and became shy to participate in English and that many regarded English as challenging because of the transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4. Therefore, this study has dramatically impacted my role as a teacher because I discovered my learners, myself and the teaching and learning of English FAL. Also, adopting a sociocultural perspective on teaching and learning helped me understand that learning is culturally and socially constructed. Paying attention to learners' social and cultural backgrounds to draw on what they already know was essential.

5.6 Methodological learning

In this study, I chose the self-study methodology to enhance my English FAL teaching and learning because it would allow me to learn from my practice and become better at what I do (Crowe and Dinkelman, 2010). By employing self-study, I anticipated improving my teaching practice for personal and professional development. Samaras and Freese (2006) note that self-study creates a fertile ground for evaluating and developing one's insight about learning with efficient and personal information. Self-study helped me see myself differently because I learned to record my lessons and listen to them later. Listening to myself teaching opened my eyes and ears to all the gaps and weaknesses in my teaching. With self-study, I became more

self-reflective as I kept a reflective journal in which I regularly recorded my reflections on my teaching and conversations with my critical friends. Thus, the self-study methodology offered exciting opportunities for continual reflection on the role I needed to play and the impact I should make on teaching English FAL. Therefore, engaging in this self-study research certainly improved my practice as an English FAL teacher. This research study helped to become aware of the impact I have on my learners with my teaching.

Through self-study, I discovered that I could look back at my personal history and reflect on my teaching practice (LaBoskey 2004). This helped me understand that the way I was taught had a significant impact on how I teach. Although we were not using English as our mother tongue at home, I find that it helped us learn language skills because it is a language. Lastly, understanding this methodology allowed me to be more innovative and analytical and transcend what the prescribed textbook offers.

5.7 Conceptual and theoretical learning

In this study, I identified and discussed two main concepts that I explored: (a) Role of play in teaching and learning and (b) Second language teaching and learning. I also discussed how the sociocultural perspectives helped me understand these concepts in a way that contributed meaningfully to the study's outcome. Arce (2000) asserts that language is a social concept that develops through social interactions. Moreover, Bates (2019), Leonard (2002), and Nagel (2012) consider that learning a language happens due to social interactions and takes place within a specific environment. Therefore, I employed a sociocultural theoretical perspective that supported my explored key concepts. I chose a sociocultural theoretical perspective to frame this study because it became a platform to understand play and language better. Through this lens, I had to acknowledge that language is a social experience in the cultural environment. Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) maintained that a sociocultural perspective is grounded in the belief that learning a language is not an individual activity but a social experience. Therefore, I learned that play gives children the opportunity to learn a language from their peers and practice what they have learned in different scenarios.

I learned that engagement with my learners made it possible to understand that play offers the best learning experience. My learners learned to express themselves, learn to work with others and gain self-confidence. I also learned that learning a second language is crucial as learners need to be exposed to it through social interaction. Thus, I found that using games aroused their interest as they love to play. Using these key concepts and sociocultural perspectives helped me be more realistic as I raised learners' interest through interaction. This helped me to teach language skills more effectively. For instance, I found my learners interested in collage making and drawing and enhancing their listening and speaking skills. I let them make their collages in groups and present them to the class. Because of their interest, they talked about their collages without being pushed by the teacher.

Exploring the key concepts and theoretical perspectives helped me understand and appreciate learners' different cultural backgrounds and support them. From this perspective, I learned that learners learn differently depending on their social environment. They participate in various activities and internalise the effects of working together. They acquire new strategies and knowledge of the world and culture.

5.8 My contribution to the practice of teaching and learning

This self-study entrenches the belief that our teaching practice is a priority as teachers. This results in effective teaching. Thus, effective teaching is never easy. It is a process that requires teachers to understand that their learners' learning is their responsibility. As a seasoned teacher, I should always seek to improve and assess my teaching to continue impacting the learners' learning. Therefore, this study helped me understand that learners can improve their performance in English only if there are innovative strategies to support them in learning effectively. I believe this research study contributed to my personal and professional development as I developed new innovative ways of teaching English FAL, and my learners understood English FAL better.

Hence moving forward, I will continue to incorporate activities that involve playing in all my lessons, such as games, singing songs, and cutting and pasting (collages), because I realised that learners are always interested in learning stimulated through play. Play ensures that

learners take responsibility for their learning and be able to explore new knowledge for themselves. Engaging in this self-study research also allowed me to re-evaluate my lesson planning. I learned to keep my learners in mind whenever I planned a lesson. Being a seasoned teacher does not mean an end to possibilities to improve. Correspondingly, Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) (2017) and Ernst and Reynolds (2021) suggest that as technology advances and workplaces evolve government and education system should realise that a more realistic view of education is required to equip children to thrive and reach their full potential. I shared my thoughts and learnings with my colleagues at my school during our English committee meetings. I introduced to them the lesson plan I used during my research study. Everyone was interested. We all decided to use the same lesson plan to help our learners improve their English language (refer to Appendix C p. 136).

5.10 Conclusion

Chapter Five's purpose was to provide an overall review of what I discovered through this self-study research. I presented the overall thesis by explaining what I covered in each chapter. I reminded the reader about my personal and professional motivation that prompted me to engage in this study, and I used a collage to reflect on my learnings. I reflected on how this study influenced me as a researcher. I further reflected on my chosen methodology and the new insight I gained from this self-study. I also reflected on the key concepts I explored and the central theoretical perspective I selected in understanding the key concepts. I discussed what self-study has contributed to my understanding of the topic and its contribution to education. I also revealed what I planned to do in the future due to this study.

Golinkloff and Hirsch-Pasek (2016) stated that playful experiences could give children the skills they will need in the future. This study helped me understand that learning through play could be an enjoyable experience. However, it plays an essential part in laying a foundation for learning. Therefore, I learned that I could lay a strong foundation that could support higher learning to build on it through play. Lastly, this journey taught me that language is not an individual activity, but a social experience and learning through play is a learning advantage. Therefore, it would be essential to promote social interaction to encourage effective teaching and learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX: A ETHICAL CLEARANCE



07 October 2020

Miss Emmaculate Nompumelelo Nokukhanya Ngcongco (208529445)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Miss Ngcongco,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001965/2020

Project title: Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play: A seasoned teacher's self study

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 20 September 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 07 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Urmilla Bob
(University Dean of Research)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8360 / 4557 / 3387
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



UMZINYATHI DISTRICT

NQUTHU CIRCUIT

MKHONJANE WARD

PROVINCE OF KWA-ZULU NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMKHWINGO WEMFUNDU

MASOTSHENI PRIMARY SCHOOL

P.O. Box 1719

NQUTHU

3135

Enquiries: Mrs. Manyathi E.S.

--- Contact No: 072 210 0304

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MASOTSHENI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Sir / Madam

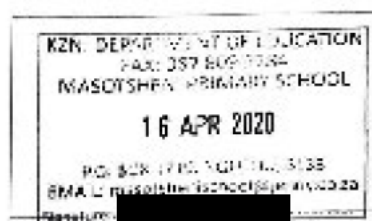
This letter serves to confirm that Emmaculate Nompumelelo Nokukhanya Ngcongo has been granted permission to conduct research entitled Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play at Masotsheni Primary School. The conditions of approval are as follows:

1. The research will make all the arrangements concerning the research.
 2. The research must ensure that teachers and learning programmes will not be disturbed.
 3. Learners, Teachers and the Schools are not identifiable in any form from the result of the research.
 4. A copy of this letter is submitted to your Departmental Head (immediate supervisor).
 5. Principal, Teachers and Learners are not obliged to partake or assist you in your investigation.
- However, written consent will be obtained from both the parents and learner.

I do not doubt that her findings and recommendations will benefit our learners and improve results in English First Additional Language (EFAL).

Yours faithfully

E.S Manyathi (Principal)



APPENDIX: C LESSON PLANS

Lesson plan One

Subject: English FAL		Grade: 4	Date: Duration: 1 hour
Content: Listening and Speaking Theme: Community Helpers			
Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (including content/process/product)	Materials and Resources
Part 1: Minds On	<p>[The teacher will play a video clip for 2 minutes about types of jobs people do]</p> <p>[The teacher will ask the learners to imitate people who do different types of jobs]</p> <p>[The teacher will write different types of jobs people do on the chalkboard as learners imitate]</p>	<p>Learners will watch a video clip and imitate what they are watching.</p> <p>Learners will play a game of imitation. One learner will perform the job while others try to guess the type of job.</p> <p>Learners will draw the images of two jobs they like on their workbooks and write a sentence to say what they are and why they like them.</p>	<p>laptop, chalkboard, newspapers, magazines, charts, scissors, glue, markers, cellphone</p>

Part 2: Action	<p>[The teacher will ask the learners to make a collage of different types of jobs people do. The teacher will demonstrate how to make a collage]</p>	<p>Learners will cut pictures from magazines and newspapers and paste them on the chart to make a collage. They will also cut out words to help explain their pictures.</p> <p>Learners will present their collages to the class.</p>	
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Questions to Ask	Learning Activities (content/process/product)	Materials and Resources
Part 3: Consolidate & Debrief	<p>[The teacher will ask the learners to compose a song about different jobs people do together. The teacher will record songs,</p>	<p>Learners and the teacher will compose and perform a song about types of jobs.</p>
Assessment activities (diagnostic/<u>formative</u>/summative) Oral		
How will the next lesson build on this one? The next lesson will be a continuation of the first lesson. Learners will use the knowledge and skills gained from the first lesson.		
Self-Reflection		
What went well?	What didn't go so well?	What do I need to change?

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Lesson plan Two

Subject: English FAL		Grade: 4	Date: Duration: 1 hour
Content: Listening and Speaking Lesson Theme: Community Helpers			
Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (including content/process/product)	Materials and Resources
	[The teacher will ask the learners to sing and perform a song they composed on their previous lesson]	Learners will sing and perform songs they composed in the previous lesson and listen to their recorded songs.	CD, CD player, A4 papers, exercise books

Part 2: Action	<p>[The teacher will tell the learners that she will play a CD to tell a story to them. Therefore they have to listen because she will ask questions to check whether they were listening]</p> <p>[The teacher will play a CD, stop at some stage to explain new vocabulary words and ask the learners to share thoughts about the story]</p> <p>[The teacher will repeat playing CD 3-4 times to make sure all the learners understand the story]</p> <p>[The teacher will ask the learners to role-play a story in groups to show their understanding]</p>	<p>Learners will listen to the story and draw what they are listening.</p> <p>Learners will listen to a story again and identify words that were new to them. They will read words from the small charts, try to make meaning of them, and write them in their notebook dictionaries.</p>	
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	Questions to Ask	Learning Activities (content/process/product)	Materials
Part 3: Debrief	<p>[The teacher will ask the learners to work in groups and retell the story using guided questions, and they will also, write listening comprehension]</p> <p>[The teacher will go through the answers with the learners and allow them to correct their work]</p>	<p>Learners will read the questions on the charts. They will retell a story using guided questions.</p> <p>Learners, together with the teacher, will mark and correct their work.</p>	
Assessment activities (diagnostic/<u>formative</u>/summative) Oral and written comprehension			
How will the next lesson build on this one? The next lesson will be on reading and viewing; learners will use the knowledge and skills gained from listening and speaking.			

Self Reflection		
What went well?	What didn't go so well?	What do I need to change?

Lesson Plan Three

Subject: English FAL		Grade: 4	Date: Duration: 1 hour
Content: Reading and Viewing Lesson Theme: Community Helpers			
Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (including content/process/product)	Materials and Resources
Part 1: Minds On	<p>The teacher will ask the learners to sing and perform a song they composed in the previous lessons]</p> <p>[The teacher will give learners worksheets with picture story and ask them to look at the pictures in the story]</p> <p>[The teacher will write questions on the board and ask the learners questions.]</p>	<p>The learners will sing and perform a song they composed in the previous lessons</p> <p>The learners will look at the pictures, read questions on the chart and try to answer them</p>	worksheets with picture story, exercise books, notebooks dictionaries

<p>Part 2: Action</p>	<p>[The teacher will ask the learners to skim a story to get the idea of what the story is about]</p> <p>[She will then ask the learners to underline any words they might think are essential to tell them what the story is about and circle any words they do not know the meaning of]</p> <p>[The teacher will ask the learners to make a list of new vocabulary words and write them on the board]</p> <p>[The teacher will ask the learners to try to figure out the meaning of words]</p>	<p>Learners will read a story, underline important words and circle the words they do not know the meaning of.</p> <p>Learners will call words to the teacher. The teacher will write them on the board and make a list of new vocabulary words.</p> <p>Learners will play a word game. They will use words on the board. One learner will write the meaning of the word and read it aloud. Other learners will look at the board and guess the correct word. The one who got the correct word will take a turn.</p>	
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Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (content/process/product)	Materials
Part 3: Consolidate , Debrief	[The teacher will help the learners.	Learners will write sentences using new words. They will present their sentences to the class.	
Assessment activities (diagnostic/<u>formative</u>/summative) Vocabulary words Reading aloud			
How will the next lesson build on this one? The next lesson will continue reading and viewing, and learners will use the knowledge and skills gained from the previous lesson.			
Self Reflection			
What went well?		What didn't go so well?	What do I need to change?

Lesson Plan Four

Subject: English FAL		Grade: 4	Date: Duration: 1 hour
Content: Reading and Viewing Lesson Theme: Community Helpers			
Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (including content/process/product)	Materials and Resources
Part 1: Minds On	[The teacher will ask the learners to ask the parents to prepare and give them the objects they will use for the tell and show activity (The teacher will also bring objects to school to assist the learners in having a variety of objects.	Learners will play show and tell activity. Each learner will bring an object that shows different jobs to school. One learner will show an object to the class, and others will guess and tell what job the object belongs to.	real objects

Part 2: Action	<p>[The teacher will tell the learners to use a picture story to read a story aloud.</p> <p>[The teacher will read a story while learners follow their books and ask them to read aloud.</p> <p>[The teacher will help learners who struggle</p> <p>[The teacher will ask the learners to try to make a summary of a story</p>	<p>Learners will follow on their books silently while the teacher is reading, and they will also read a story together as a class.</p> <p>Learners will read a story aloud.</p> <p>Learners will write a story summary and present it to the class.</p>	<p>books with picture story, scribbling papers</p>
Questions to Ask		Learning Activities (content/process/product)	Materials
Part 3: Consolidate, Debrief	<p>[The teacher will tell the learners that they will role-play a story.</p> <p>[The teacher will prepare a class for roleplaying. They will allocate the characters and discuss what they will say.]</p>	<p>Learners will act out a story. They will work together with the teacher.</p>	
Assessment activities (diagnostic/<u>formative</u>/summative) Story summary			

Roleplaying		
How will the next lesson build on this one? The next lesson will be on language structures and conventions. Learners will use knowledge and skills gained from reading and viewing.		
Self Reflection		
What went well?	What didn't go so well?	What do I need to change?

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

Box 1719

Nquthu

3135

Dear Parent / Guardian

My name is Emmaculate Nompumelelo Nokukhanya Ngcongo. I am currently studying for a Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, South Africa. I am researching Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play. The research objectives of my study are as follows:

- To learn from my personal history about English First Additional Language teaching and learning.
- To improve English First Additional Language teaching and learning through play in Grade 4.

To generate data for my research study, I request you to use your child's classwork or activities. I will use Grade 4 learners because the research requires me to explore strategies that I could use to improve English First Additional Language in Grade 4. I request you permit me to work with your child and use their class activities. I will use the following data collection methods to invite learners to contribute to the study: Drawing, Collage, Audio recording, games, roleplaying, photo takings and written class activities.

Please note that:

- Learners' participation is voluntary; they have a right to participate or not participate in the study, and no one will penalize them in any way. I expect all the learners to participate in-class activities as I will be teaching using the official intended curriculum but will not use the classwork of those who do not consent.
- I will guarantee learners' confidentiality by not revealing their real names.
- I will use learners' activities for data generation only, not marks to pass.
- The learner's involvement will be purely for academic purposes only, as there is no financial benefit.
- Data collected will be securely stored safely and disposed of after five years.
- I will discuss the research findings with the learners.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

E.N.N.Ngcongco

My contact details are as follows:

Email: emmangcongco18@gmail.com

Cell phone: 072 408 8890

My supervisor is Dr Lungile Masinga. She is a Lecturer in the School of Education, College of Humanities, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. My supervisor's contact details are:

Email: masingal@ukzn.ac.za

Cell phone: 078 747 2590

You may also contact the Research Office at:

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics

Govan Mbeki Centre

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 031 260 4557

APPENDIX E: DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I -----(full names of parent/guardian)
confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project.
I consent to my child participating in the research project entitled: Teaching English First
Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play.

I understand the study's purpose and procedures, and I declare that my child participation is
entirely voluntary. She/he has a right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I also understand that the researcher will protect the identity of my child. She will not reveal
their name in the study.

I give a permit to the researcher to use my learner's activities as I understand that it is for
research purposes only, not for marks to pass

I understand that if I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I may
contact the researcher at 072 408 8890.

I now provide consent to:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| • Use my child's drawings | YES / NO |
| • Collage | YES / NO |
| • Audio recordings | YES / NO |
| • Written class activities | YES /NO |

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

INCWADI YOKUCELA IMVUME UKUBA UMNTWANA WAKHO ABE
YINGXENYE YOCWANINGO

Box 1719

Nquthu

3135

Mzali/Mbhekeleli womntwana

Igama lami ngingu Emmaculate Nompumelelo Nokukhanya Ngcongo. Ngingumfundi waseNyuvesithi yakwaZulu-Natali kwinkundla yase Edgewood e South Africa. Ngenza iMasters yezemfundo. Ngenza ucwaningo maqondana nokufundisa Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza usebenzisa ukudlala.

Injongo yocwaningo yile:

- Ukufunda ngomlandowami ngisakhula, ngibheka indlela esafunda ngayo Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza.
- Ukuthuthukisa indlela engifundisa ngayo abantwana Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza kwibanga lesine.

Ukuqoqa ulwazi engiludingayo ukwenza ucwaningo, bengicela ukusebenzisana nomntwana wakho we banga lesine ngoba ucwaningo lwami luqondene nokubheka izindlela ezingathuthukisa ukufunda nokufundisa Isingisi Ulimi Lwesibili Lokwengeza kwi banga lesine. Bengicela ukuba ungivumele ngisebenze nomntwana wakho nemisebenzi yakhe. Ngizosebenzisa lamathuluzi: Ukudweba, ikholaji, ukubaqopha, ukuthatha izithombe, imidlalo, nokubamba iqhaza.

Nakhu okubalulekile okumele ukwazi:

- Kuyilungelo lakho ukuba umntwana wakho ahlanganyele noma angahlanganyeli kulolucwaningo.
- Nginyaqinisekisa ukuthi amagama abafundi azogcinwa eyimfihlo kulolucwaningo.
- Ulwazi oluqoqiwe luyogcinwa iminyaka emihlanu endaweni ephephile, bese luyashabalaliswa.

- Ukusebenzisana ukuqoqa ulwazi kulolucwaningo angeke kukwakhele inzuzo, lumayelana nokuthuthukisa ulwazi
- Umsebenzi womntwana uyosetshenziselwa ukuqoqa ulwazi ayi amamaki okuphasa.
- Imiphumela yocwaningo iyoxoxwa nabafundi.

Ngiyabonga

Ozithobayo

E.N.N.Ngcongco

Ngiyatholakala:

kwi Emeyili ethi-emmangcongco18@gmail.com

Umakhal'ekhukhwini: 072 408 8890.

Umphathi wami u Dkt Lungile Masinga otholakala esikhungweni semfundo ephakeme yakwaZulu-Natali, enkundleni yase Edgewood.

i-Emeyili yakhe ithi: masingal@ukzn.ac.za.

Umakhal'ekhukhwini: 078 747 2590

Ungathinta nehofisi lwezocwaningo:

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics

Govan Mbeki Centre

Emeyili: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 031 260 4557

AMAZWI AFUNGELWE

Mina -----(amagama aphelele omzali noma umbheki womntwana). ngiyavuma futhi ngiyaqonda konke okushicilelwe kulomqulu kanye nezinhlelo zocwaningo, ngiyanikezela ukuba umntwana wami azibandakanye kulolucwaningo olusihloko salo esithi: Ukufundisa Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza usebenzisa ukudlala.

Nginyaqonda ukuthi ngivumelekile ukuhoxisa umntwana wami kulolucwaningo nomanini uma ngifisa.

Nginyaqonda ukuthi umcwaningi uyovikela umntwana wami ngokuthi angasebenzisi igama lakhe langempela.

Nginyaqonda ukuthi uma nginemibuzo noma ngezikhhalazo ngalolucwaningo ngingathinta umcwaningi kulenombolo: 072 408 8890.

Ngiyavuma

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| • Ukusetshenziswa kwemidwebo | YEBO / CHA |
| • Ikholaji | YEBO / CHA |
| • Ukuqoshwa | YEBO / CHA |
| • Imisebenzi yakhe ayibhalile | YEBO / CHA |

Ukusayina komzali/ umbheki womntwana

Usuku

APPENDIX F: LEARNER CONSENT LETTER

Hello, Grade 4; I am doing a Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am researching Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play. I like to request you to be part of my research. I invite you to participate because you study English First Additional Language in Grade 4. Therefore, I wish to use your class activities for my research study.

I want you to know this:

- Your participation is voluntary if you do not participate; no one will penalize you in any way, and you have a right to withdraw anytime without negative consequences.
- I will guarantee your confidentiality by not revealing your real names in my study.
- ☐ I will use your activities to generate data only, not for marks to pass.
- Data collected will be securely stored safely and disposed of after five years.
- I will discuss research findings with you.

In my study, you will learn to make a collage for types of jobs people do. You will cut and paste pictures from magazines and newspapers and present them to the class.

We will read a story together, and I will ask you to role-play a tale, read and make drawings of what happened in the development, and play language games with me. I will record all my teaching lessons with you and also take pictures.

Are you happy or unhappy to be part of my study?

YES / NO

Incwadi yomfundi yokucela imvume

Sanibonani Grade 4, Ngenza izifundo ze Masters kweze mfundo kwi Nyunivesithi yakwa Zulu-Natali. Ngenza izifundo zocwaningo maqondana nokufundisa Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza ngisebenzisa ukudlala. Ngithanda ukunicela ukuthi nibe ingxenye yocwaningo lwami. Nginimema ngoba nenza izifundo ze-Isingisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza kwibanga lesine. Ngakho-ke ngifisa ukusebenzisa imisebenzi yenu kucwaningo lwami.

Ngifisa futhi nazi lokhu:

- Ukuba yingxenye yocwaningo kungokuzithandela akekho okufanele akuphoqelegele uma ungathandi futhi kuyilungelo lakho ukuphuma nanoma nini akuyikuba nambandela.
- Ngiyoqiniseka ukuthi amagama enu ngiyowagcina eyimfihlo.
- Imisebenzi yenu ngiyoyisebenzisela ucwaningo kuphela ayi amamaki okuphasa.
- Ulwazi oluqoqiwe luyogcinwa endaweni ephephile iminyaka emihlanu bese luyashabalaliswa.
- Ngiyoyixoxa nani imiphumela yocwaningo.

Kwisifundo sami niyofunda ukwenza ikholaji yemisebenzi eyehlukene abantu abayenzayo. Niyosika ninamathisele izithombe enizithathe kwezakamuva (magazines) namaphephandaba (newspapers) bese nethulela ikilasi.

Siyofunda indaba ndawonye besenidlala ukubamba iqhaza (role-play) kwindaba esiyifundile, niyokwenza imidwebo ukuzikhumbuza okwenzeke endabeni bese sidlala imidlalo yolimi. Ngiyoziqopha zonke izifundo esizobe sizenza ndawonye ngithathe nezithombe.

Niyajabula noma anijabuli?

YEBO / CHA

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO CRITICAL FRIEND

Box 1719

Nquthu

3135

Dear Critical Friend

REQUEST FOR CONSENT IN GENERATING AND UTILIZING DATA FOR MY STUDY

Title of study: Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play. A seasoned teacher's self-study

The focus of this study is to explore how I, as an English First Additional Language teacher, could improve Grade 4 English First Additional Language teaching and learning through play.

I am a student at the University of Natal (UKZN), and this research form part of my Master in Education (MED) study. My supervisor is Dr Lungile Masinga, a Lecturer at the school of education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You can contact her at: 078 747 2590 or E-mail: masingal@ukzn.ac.za.

Since this is a self-study, I require critical friends who could offer constructive advice and fresh viewpoints in generating data to improve my teaching and learning through play. Therefore, I request you to be part of my study through your critical discussion inputs and constructive advice. We will have meetings which will take place twice a month at the university. During the lockdown period, we will use Zoom for our cohort session. We will use reflective journal notes and record our

conversations. I wish to request you to use those reflective journal writing and recorded conversations to generate data for my study. I will only use this data if I receive written consent from you. If I accept your approval, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. My notes on your inputs to the discussion will be securely stored safely and disposed of after if no longer required for research purposes.

I will not use any information that identifies you or your school in my presentation. Your participation in this study is voluntary; you have a right to withdraw anytime without negative consequences. There are no direct benefits to participants, and if you have any further questions or queries relating to the rights of research participants, you may contact my supervisor or the Research Office at:

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Office

Govan Mbeki Centre

Tel: 031-260 4557

E-mail: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you

Yours faithful

Ms E.N.N Ngcongco (072 4088 890 / E-mail: emmangcongco18@gmail.com)

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I _____ hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study entitled: Teaching English First Additional Language to Grade 4 learners through play. A seasoned teacher's self-study. I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time; there will be no adverse consequences.

I also understand that if I have any further questions or concerns, I may contact the researcher at 072 408 8890.

I consent to the following data collection activities (please circle):

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective journal writing | YES / NO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio recording | YES / NO |
| Discussions / Zoom discussions /Conversations | YES/ NO |

Signature of Critical Friend

Date

APPENDIX: H TURN-IT-IN REPORT

Final Masters Thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

4%	%	4%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	"International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020 Publication	<1%
2	Khulekani Luthuli, Nontuthuko Phewa, Kathleen Pilhouse-Morgan. "Their Drawings Were Eloquent": Learning about Drawing as an Arts-Based Self-Study Method for Researching with Children", Studying Teacher Education, 2019 Publication	<1%
3	"Memory Mosaics: Researching Teacher Professional Learning Through Artful Memory-work", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2019 Publication	<1%
4	Hanoi University Publication	<1%
5	"International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices",	<1%