The Effectiveness of a Literature-Driven English Programme in Improving the English Language Skills of Secondary One Students in Singapore

Mary Delfin Pereira
University of Notre Dame Australia

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The Effectiveness of a Literature-Driven English Programme in Improving the English Language Skills of Secondary One Students in Singapore

Mary Delfin Pereira

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education

2006

School of Education
University of Notre Dame Australia
ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to discover whether an integrated Literature and English curriculum would be effective in enhancing the English language skills of students in schools. The curriculum initiative project was conducted as multiple site case studies in four secondary schools in Singapore over a span of five to six weeks during 2004. These schools included a girls’ only school, a boys’ only school and two co-educational schools. These schools were also of different types: independent, government-aided and government schools. The sample within and across the schools provided: different levels of performance in a graded situation; multiple teachers and classes; and control and experimental conditions for the curriculum implementation. Thus, the curriculum was tested in naturalistic conditions with all the variables of an operational education setting.

The experimental curriculum was a Literature-Driven English Curriculum which was adapted to suit the local circumstances of each school. Though the curriculum utilised a literature text as a tool to teach language skills, it did not require a specific text. Therefore, the lesson duration and textual material were adapted according to the requirements of each school. The multiple site case studies were selected to test if the Literature-Driven English Programme could be an effective means of equipping diverse students with relevant skills to write a piece of narrative and to comprehend a given text. The teaching methods included explicit and implicit modes of teaching.

In the analysis of the findings, it was found that the Literature-Driven English Programme was effective in improving the narrative writing and reading comprehension skills of students across a wide range of variables. It is anticipated that these findings would inform a wider use of a Literature-Driven English Curriculum.
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Declaration of Authorship

This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institution.

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Mary Self
12/10/06
Candidate’s Name
Date
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I thank those mentioned above and other friends and acquaintances for making this research journey smooth and enriching.
Glossary
This section consists of a glossary of terms that may be unfamiliar to those who are not versed in the lingua franca of the educational system in Singapore.

MoE – Ministry of Education, Singapore. All schools, including private schools, are regulated by the MoE. Private schools have the most autonomy. In recent years, the MoE has given some public schools autonomy in the running of the schools with the degree of autonomy dependent on whether the school is independent or autonomous. All major changes, however, have to be approved by the MoE.

Primary Schooling – Years 1 to 6 (seven to twelve years of age)
PSLE – Primary School Leaving Examinations
Secondary Schooling – Years 1 to 4/5 (thirteen to sixteen/seventeen years of age)
Streams: Special – English and Mother Tongue Language (MTL) studied as 1st Languages; 4 years of secondary education
Express – English studied as 1st Language, MTL as 2nd Language; 4 years of secondary education
Normal (Academic) – English studied as 1st Language, MTL as 2nd Language; 5 years of secondary education
GCE `O’ Level Examinations: Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Examination at Ordinary Level; students take these examinations at the end of secondary education.

Independent Schools – have the least funding from the government. Students in these schools pay higher fees and other sources of funds include sponsorship from the alumni and rental of school facilities.
Government-aided Schools – mostly Christian schools, with a few Buddhist schools.
Government Schools – completely funded by the government.
Autonomous Schools – can be government-aided or government schools; these schools were allowed to become autonomous because of their students’ good academic track record. Though they are funded by the government, they are allowed some autonomy in the running of their schools.
Special Assistance Plan Schools – students learn English and Mandarin as 1st Languages.

Degree of autonomy granted by the MoE in the running of the schools is as follows:

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(Government/ Government-aided)

Literature text – novel, play, or compilation of short stories or poems.
Literature – literary analysis of the literature text.
English Language text – used in many schools to teach Comprehension, Composition and Grammar, though some schools, such as the independent schools, develop their own teacher-generated materials to teach English Language.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A Literature-Driven English Curriculum

Their hearts and minds they lay bare
With honeyed clauses and bitter phrases,
Knotting, stirring, freeing that within
With sentences simple, compound and complex.
Come, I say,
See the words dance, and hear the whispers
Of souls that break free
Through language that touches you and me.

Imagine, if you will, an integrated English Language and Literature class.
It is a class where the written word takes a life of its own through the
literature text. The literature text becomes a model of communication in
action and through it students are shown the power to connect with
themselves and others.

The Research on the Literature-Driven English Programme

A curriculum initiative project on the effectiveness of teaching an integrated
English and Literature curriculum was undertaken in multiple sites, namely
four schools in Singapore. In the four schools students were taught to
communicate verbally and in written form through using the literature text as a
tool. The literature texts were prescribed by the schools. These texts were
fictional pieces: a compilation of related short stories, an adapted
Shakespearean play, and single short stories. Through these literature texts,
language skills were taught, and it was decided to name this form of
integrated English and Literature teaching a Literature-Driven English
Curriculum. Since the literature text was used as a tool to facilitate the
teaching of English Language skills, the term “Literature-Driven English Curriculum” was deemed appropriate.

With regard to the research, the term Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) rather than Literature-Driven English Curriculum (LDEC) was adopted because the LDEC consists of a broader curriculum than the one that was eventually implemented in the schools for the research. The broader LDEC would include the explicit teaching of vocabulary and oral communication skills and more time would be devoted to literary analysis. All these components may also be assessed. However, in the case of the current research, due to the fact that the schools could only offer five to six weeks during which the LDEP could be implemented, fewer components were taught and assessed. Due to the short time frame, the focus was on the teaching of narrative writing skills and the analysis of selected literary topics. Improvements in narrative writing and reading comprehension skills were evaluated through uniform pre-tests and post-tests and improvements in literary analytical skills through feedback from teachers and students.

In the context of this research, the teaching of narrative writing skills was selected as the curriculum was to be implemented in Secondary One classes. In most secondary schools, narrative writing skills are taught to Secondary One students. As such, the grammatical and technical features of narratives found in the literature text were highlighted. The students were then guided to create their own narratives. In that sense the LDEP was goal-oriented. A specific skill, namely narrative writing skill, that the students were expected to attain at the end of the LDEP was first identified. Then, the literature texts of the different schools were utilised to teach this skill.

Other skills were also identified. These skills included reading comprehension, oral communication and literary analytical skills though the latter two skills were not assessed through the use of test instruments due to time constraints and lack of human and other resources. While learning the skills, students were encouraged to express themselves in a variety of ways. Students presented their works in the form of role-play and artwork as well as
orally and through short and extended written pieces. Different means were also used to teach the skills. There was explicit teaching of concepts through lectures with the aid of PowerPoint presentations and through live demonstrations of concepts by students. The teachers also acted as facilitators, guiding the students during activities which enabled learning to take place through the application of the concepts being taught. In the current research, the specific aim was to investigate whether an integrated English and Literature Programme, through the explicit teaching and application of various skills, would aid students to become better readers and writers.

In order to evaluate whether the students had attained the abovementioned skills, the reading and writing skills of the students were assessed prior to and after the implementation of the LDEP. The objective was to determine if there were any improvements in these areas after the implementation. Thus, this curriculum initiative project involved a curriculum development project that sought to combine two correlated subject-areas, namely English and Literature, into one holistic subject in a manner that would lead to increased learning of the common skills of the subjects.

**Structure of the Literature-Driven English Programme**

This section explains the structure of the LDEP. During the LDEP the literature texts selected by the schools were used as tools to teach some of the components of the English Language, namely, Composition, Comprehension and Grammar. The students were taught how to analyse the literature text as well (Figure 1.1). The teaching methods included teaching through implicit and explicit forms of instruction. The implicit teaching included the use of contextual cues and a process-oriented approach (Figure 1.1). At the completion of the LDEP, it was hoped that there would be improvements in written expression, reading comprehension and literary analysis (Figure 1.1). Differences in written expression and reading comprehension skills were assessed through test instruments while improvements in literary analysis skills were evaluated through soliciting feedback from teachers and students.
Background and Context

In introducing an integrated English and Literature curriculum into a multi-lingual society like Singapore, it is important to consider the needs of the students in Singapore. The proposed LDEP must have the potential to improve the English language skills of the students in Singapore and address a real need to improve the existing standard of the language skills of these students.

In Singapore, there are four official languages and a wide variety of other minority languages. The four main languages are English (also known as the language of administration), Malay (the national language), Mandarin and Tamil, an Indian language. English is also taught as a first language in schools. Therefore, all students who pass the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) would have basic reading and writing skills in English when they commence secondary education. However, the degree of fluency varies depending on the language spoken at home. For instance, in 2000, the
percentages of children aged five to fourteen years of age who spoke English most frequently at home were: 35.6% of the Chinese majority; 9.4% of the Malays; and 43.6% of the Indians (Census of Population Office 2000).

Partly due to the fact that English is taught as a first language from kindergarten onward, literacy in English (English only or multi-language) increased from 63% in 1990 to 71% in 2000 among the general population (Census of Population Office 2000). However, the government began to fear that with the increasing importance placed on the learning of the English language in schools, Singaporeans would lose their Asian culture and become too westernised. Thus, most students were required to learn English and one of the other three main languages as a second language to preserve the Asian beliefs and traditions of the population (Ang & Stratton 1995; Foley 1998). Gradually, the term ‘Second Language’ was changed to ‘Mother Tongue Language’. Those who were deemed capable of taking two languages, English and the Mother Tongue Language, as first languages were allowed to take ‘Higher Mother Tongue Language’ (Ministry of Education Singapore 2003a). In January 2004, the Ministry of Education brought about changes to the Mother Tongue Languages because there was a growing concern that some students, coming from English-speaking homes, were disadvantaged by their inability to cope with the Mother Tongue Languages (Channel News Asia 2004; Tee 2004). Conversely, some English Language teachers felt that the standard of the English Language was adversely affected by the stress placed on Mother Tongue Languages (Davie 2003). Many students in Singapore have experienced difficulty coping with the educational requirement that they achieve a pass in at least two languages.

To arrest a perceived drop in the standard of the English Language (Davie 2003) and to cater to a wide spectrum of students, with varying fluency in English, there is a need to discover more effective modes of teaching English. A possible effective mode of teaching English may be through integrating English and Literature. In most secondary schools in Singapore, English and Literature are taught as separate subjects, and often by different teachers. Under English, Comprehension, Composition, Vocabulary, Grammar and Oral
Communication are taught as separate components, each divorced from the other. In addition, Literature is taught for the first time in Secondary One (or Grade 7), but few schools have an integrated English and Literature programme. To aid the current research project, between October 2003 and January 2004 a preliminary survey was mailed to all the 165 secondary schools in Singapore. In the preliminary survey five out of twenty-one schools that responded reported having an integrated English and Literature programme. Of the five schools, the number of Literature and English components that were combined ranged from 4 to 28 components. Of the 21 schools, 5 schools had a combination of 6 components, with 9 schools having a combination greater than 8 components (please refer to Appendix 1b for analysis of data collected from the initial survey).

Many of the schools that responded to the survey supported an integrated English and Literature programme. In the preliminary survey 18 of the 21 schools reported that Literature and English should be integrated. According to the responses of some schools there was a natural link between Literature and English. They also thought that Literature could prove a useful tool in the teaching of English language skills. Other schools were of the opinion that a greater appreciation of the Literature text as well as language could be gained from combining the two (c.f. Appendix 1c). The three schools which were against integration cited mainly administrative and technical reasons although in the opinion of an all-boys' school, boys experience difficulty in learning Literature. Another school thought that students would fail to gain a deeper appreciation for the literature text under such an integrated English and Literature curriculum (c.f. Appendix 1c).

The responses with regard to an integrated English and Literature programme in the preliminary survey indicate that most of the teachers endorse such an integrated programme. Therefore, it was felt that research into the LDEP might be a viable option since there might be schools in Singapore willing to support the research if they were approached.
The Development of English Language Programmes in the United States and Australia

When considering the conceptual framework of the LDEP, some of the changes that had occurred in the United States and in Australia with regard to the English curriculum were taken into account.

In the United States, from 1894 onwards, literature assumed a central position in secondary English education (English Journal Forum 1994). Yagelski (1994) feels that the focus should be shifted to the study of language, and literature should become a component of it since there is a widespread trend to view reading and writing as separate. The separate reading and writing tasks lack purpose and are of little significance. In addition, Vavra (2003) mentions that generally students possess an inadequate knowledge of grammatical rules.

In some states in Australia, recent times have seen a shift from a literary tradition to a focus on literacy in the teaching of English Language. In New South Wales in 1988, the NSW Year 11 and 12 English Curriculum was changed to include the 2 Unit Contemporary course which focused less on literature and more on language skills acquisition (Parker, Meyenn & MacFadden 1991). According to teachers interviewed by Parker et al., this was more in tune with the English 7 – 10 syllabus in NSW. In Queensland, in 1986 there was movement urging the government to reform the curriculum so that teachers can return to teaching the basics especially grammar and spelling (Doig, Wyatt-Smith, Cumming & Ryan 1998). Progressive reformation in Queensland included the release in 2000 of the pilot literacy-based Senior English Syllabus which focused on multi-literacies while largely neglecting the study of literature (Green 2002). According to Green (2002) teachers in general were not enthusiastic about the syllabus.

However, it is contended here that Literature and Language are interconnected and so too are the different components taught under English linked to one another (Yagelski 1994). In particular, it could be argued that
there is a strong link between reading and writing. In a study done on the teaching of nine first grade teachers, it was found that more effective learning took place when the link was made between what was read and the writing assignment (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampton 1998). What may be true of first grade students could well be true for older students as well. Indeed, in comprehending a passage, one could argue that one needs to have knowledge of vocabulary and grammar as well as a contextual understanding. Similarly, in composing a written piece, one needs to be aware of the context in which one is writing. One would also require a wide range of vocabulary and be able to write grammatically correct sentences so as to be understood by the readers. Thus, Literature could be the vehicle through which vocabulary is expanded and there is a better understanding of the use of language in context. Apart from these advantages, the integration of Literature and Language could well lend itself to the teaching of critical and creative thinking skills. After all, the Literature text itself is a creative piece and studying it involves analysis (Gold 1988).

Conceptual Framework of the Literature-Driven English Programme

One of the approaches to teaching English is through Whole Language. In the United States in the ‘1960s and 1970s… a paradigm shift… [led to language teaching veering] away from formalism toward student- and child-centered education’ (Tchudi 2003, p.741). The paradigm shift gave rise to Whole Language. The Whole Language approach encourages students to internalise language conventions ‘not by study of forms, but through engagement with a wide range of ‘real world’ or purposeful discourse’ (Tchudi 2003, p.741). The Literature-based English Curriculum, a variant of Whole Language, also advocates the contextual learning of language conventions through the process of engagement with the Literature text (Feeley, Strickland & Wepner 1992; Sorenson & Lehman 1995). In conceptualising the LDEP, the main principles of Whole Language or the Literature-based English Curriculum were first examined. The advantages of the Whole Language were incorporated into the LDEP. However, modifications were made in
areas where the Whole Language was deemed inadequate in transferring practical and theoretical knowledge of essential language skills.

The similarities and differences between the LDEP and Whole Language approach (Shafer 2001) are shown in Table 1.1. (The differences are highlighted through the use a shaded background across the relevant points.) The main similarities between the LDEP and Whole Language can be found in the use of whole texts rather than extracts to teach concepts or skills contextually (Table 1.1). On the other hand, an essential difference is that in the Whole Language or Literature-based English Curriculum, literature occupies a central position whereas in the LDEP literature becomes a part of language study.

Table 1.1: Contrasting Whole Language Curriculum with the LDEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Literature-Driven</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down-up (Student Autonomy)</td>
<td>Down-up and top-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Wholes (not “bits”)</td>
<td>Learning in Wholes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful (Problem-solving)</td>
<td>Purposeful (Critical/Creative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes are Projects</td>
<td>Outcomes are Projects/Varied Group and Individual Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Learning</td>
<td>Process Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate text and real world Issues</td>
<td>Evaluate issues: text/social (current &amp; historical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-directed (implicit)</td>
<td>Directed (explicit) and Non-directed (implicit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature (minority)</td>
<td>Literature (merit/themes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 displays the number of other differences between the Whole Language approach and the LDEP. In Whole Language, the emphasis is on problem-solving but in the LDEP, the objective is to help the students to become critical and creative learners (Table 1.1). As such the activities involved not just discussions of issues suggested in the literature text but rather, the students were expected to create different forms of output as well. The outputs included the end project of creating individual narratives as well as other forms of individual and group work comprising short written pieces,
art work and oral presentations. On the other hand, in Whole Language projects are the main output (Table 1.1). Additionally, apart from analysing the text for current issues, in the LDEP historical issues are also evaluated for it is believed that the past has a lot to offer in terms of lessons to be learnt. Thus, the literature text is not to be chosen based on just minority issues. Instead, the literature text is to be assessed on its own merits. The literature text has to be one that is a model of effective communicative language and one that includes complex issues that would give rise to critical discussions.

Another important difference between a Whole Language approach or a Literature-based English Curriculum and the LDEP lies in the teaching methods employed during the course of teaching language skills. As Table 1.1 illustrates, in the Whole Language approach the teacher is the facilitator (down-up) but in the LDEP the teacher is both a facilitator (down-up) and instructor (top-down). In other words, in the LDEP there is explicit teaching (directed) as well as implicit instruction (non-directed). In a Literature-based English Curriculum or Whole Language, it is believed that students will progressively attain language and literacy skills through interaction with a literature text. There is no explicit teaching of skills; rather, there is a reliance on the process or implicit form of instruction (Feeley, Strickland & Wepner 1992; Giddings 1992; Sorenson & Lehman 1995; Tchudi 2003). In the LDEP, interaction with the literature text is also important, but so is the explicit teaching of skills. Thus, while there are similarities between the LDEP and Whole Language or Literature-based English Curriculum, there are also significant differences.

In relation to Singapore, the LDEP offers a different perspective to the learning of the English language. At present in Singapore, in most English classes, students are taught language skills through the use of extracts or at times through exercises that employ a single sentence or a string of sentences. In the LDEP, however, emphasis is placed on interactive and contextual learning with the aid of the literature text. During the research the students were guided to explore the ways in which clauses, phrases and different sentence structures were used in a given literature text to convey
ideas, feelings and thoughts so as to discover if the students would be able to translate what they were learning into their own writing. Another purpose of the research was to discover if the reading comprehension and literary analytical skills of the students would be enhanced as well.

**Scope of the Research**

To study the effectiveness of the LDEP, the programme was implemented in seventeen classes in four diverse schools in Singapore. These four schools were chosen as multiple site case studies so that the research outcomes from these schools could be studied within the context of each individual school as well as in relation to one another. Additionally, each of these schools offered actual pre-existing classes and the English and Literature teachers who normally taught these classes volunteered to teach under the programme. The LDEP was also implemented as part of the normal operation in each of the four schools without any disruption to the normal working conditions or character of the participating schools and classes. Thus, there was scope to study how well the curriculum worked irrespective of the existence of the many differing variables inherent within and among the different schools and without manipulating actual pre-existing conditions.

In summary, the effectiveness of the LDEP in advancing narrative writing, reading comprehension and literary analytical skills within the contexts of four diverse schools with many variables was investigated during the research. The aim was to determine whether there was transference of knowledge through the explicit and implicit teaching within the short span of time during which the LDEP was implemented without any manipulation of the variables.

**Research Questions: Major and Sub-Questions**

The research questions, contextualised within the Singapore education system and early secondary education, consist of an overarching major research question and a number of sub-questions.

The major research question is:
Does an Integrated English Language and Literature Curriculum enhance the English Language skills of the students?

The above research question articulated into the following sub-questions which guided the development of the research methods.

1. Are the students able to write more effective narratives if they use a given literature text as a model of a good narrative?
2. Do students become more effective writers if they are taught contextually rather than in “bits and pieces”?
3. Are students able to produce a more grammatically accurate piece of writing if they are taught in context through a Literature text?
4. Are students able to comprehend better if they are taught comprehension skills in context through a Literature text?
5. Are students better able to critically analyse a Literature text if, in addition to content, they analyse the language of the text as well?

Limitations of the Research

There were a number of limitations to conducting a curriculum initiative project on the LDEP in multiple sites. There were many variables and in the event that there were no similar measurable outcomes, there was the risk of arriving at inconclusive results. Additionally, the decision by the researcher to surrender to the teachers the curriculum she designed and take on the role of an observer may have had an adverse effect on the successful implementation of the programme. The researcher, after an initial briefing, intervened only when the teachers sought her assistance or asked for clarifications about some of the lesson plans. Not recommending a standard literature text to be used by all the schools but adapting the LDEP to the different texts prescribed by the schools may be regarded as another limitation in terms of comparison of outcomes. Moreover, the short span of time that the schools could allow for the research to be conducted in their schools may have been insufficient to assess the effectiveness of the LDEP.
Strengths in the Limitations

However, in the case of the current research on the LDEP, the limitations may be viewed positively. The research on the LDEP was not positivist or empiricist in its approach. The intent of the research was to study the effectiveness of a specific curriculum in a naturalistic environment. Since the aim was to discover if the LDEP was robust enough to be effective in various non-manipulated situations, the limitations proved useful to the study.

Exercising controls over pre-existing variables or testing a curriculum in selected environments creates an artificially stimulated situation that may not produce any practical benefits. Even if the LDEP succeeds in enhancing language skills, there is no guarantee that it will succeed in real-life where there will be no controls imposed. Thus, testing the curriculum in diverse environments with the usual circumstances left intact facilitated a more pragmatic investigation of the effectiveness of the LDEP as a language programme (Pereira & Vallance 2005). In the event of inconclusive findings, it may be concluded that a standardised LDEP would be ineffective in improving the language skills in diverse settings. Similarly, the differences in implementation in the different schools and the use of different texts added to the variability, thus increasing the heterogeneity of the situations in which the LDEP was tested. The heterogeneity, in turn, strengthened the practical utility of the research on the LDEP.

Moreover, the short span during which the LDEP was implemented in each experimental class is comparable to the length of time devoted to a unit of teaching in Secondary One. Additionally, the short span was sufficient to assess the short-term effects of the teaching of particular skills and concepts since assessment of learning was restricted to topics covered during the research. Furthermore, long-term retention of learning was outside the scope of the research.
Ethical Considerations

As the research involved children as participants, it was important to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner. Care was taken to ensure that the time of the schools and students was not wasted by reviewing relevant literature and through having the LDEP appraised by practitioners and academics. Schools were also briefed on the programme and they volunteered to participate only after they had examined the entire programme. Schools, teachers and the students were assured of confidentiality when findings are reported and published. Additionally, the ethical implications of the test instruments and interview and survey protocols as well as the manner in which the findings were analysed were considered so as to minimise discomfort and inconvenience to the participants. Detailed examination of the ethical considerations is found in Chapter 3, pp.86–94.

Salient Features of the Research

In this section, the salient features of the research are examined. It is also important to establish how the researcher fits within the context of all the pertinent features of the research. There are two reasons for doing this. One reason is to ensure there is transparency by revealing that the researcher is aware of her strengths and weaknesses. Another reason is to articulate the measures that were taken so as to limit the effects of the weaknesses. Figure 1.2 displays the pertinent features of the research and the correlation between the researcher and the research context.

Figure 1.2: Salient Features of the Research
Each component of Figure 1.2 will be separately explained below.

**Singaporean Context**

In Singapore, English is taught as a first Language from kindergarten onward and students sit for a national exam, the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), at the end of the primary education. Primary schooling commences at age seven years and the PSLE is normally attempted at the end of six years of schooling at age twelve years. Those who pass and enter secondary schools are placed in the Special/Express, Normal (Academic) or Normal (Technical) Streams (for detailed descriptions of these terms, please refer to the glossary on p.x). There is also diversity of culture, religion and Mother Tongue Languages in Singapore. The researcher conducted the research among the Special/Express and Normal (Academic) stream students, thereby including students of varying abilities. These students also included those who were high achievers and fluent in the English language and those who were weak in the English language.

**Ministry Of Education**

The Singapore Ministry of Education (MoE) generally sets the rules and regulations for the schools, and the curriculum requirements for government and government-aided schools. The MoE also serves as gatekeeper for any research done in schools. Permission from the MoE was obtained to conduct the research in Singapore schools (c.f. Appendix 10a).

**Schools**

The stakeholders in the research included the participating schools. In 2003, when preliminary surveys were mailed to secondary schools, there were 165 secondary schools in Singapore. These schools were made up of different types of schools, namely independent schools, government schools and government-aided schools. Some government and government-aided schools were permitted to become autonomous because of their good academic achievements. The degree of autonomy accorded to schools in
their operation depends on the type of the schools. Independent schools have the greatest autonomy in relation to financial and operational independence. Autonomous schools are financially dependent on the State but they are given some degree of autonomy over the running of their schools. Non-autonomous government and government-aided schools have the least autonomy.

The four participating schools included an all-girls’, an all-boys’ and two co-educational schools. These schools were independent, government-aided and government schools. One of the government schools was also an autonomous school. Since the number of schools participating in the research was small, different types of schools consisting of diverse student populations were included so that a wider representation of the student population in Singapore could be made. The intention was to see if there would be a general appreciable improvement in performance in the post-test when compared to the pre-test in students belonging to different types of schools and who were of different gender and of various abilities.

Within three of the participating schools a group of classes was taught under the proposed LDEP while another group of classes was retained as a control group so that a comparison could be made between the two groups. For details on the design and data collection, please refer to Chapter 3, pp.69–74.

**Teachers**

The other stakeholders in the research were the English and Literature teachers in the participating schools who collaborated in the current curriculum initiative project by teaching the experimental curriculum. Inclusion of these teachers with differing teaching styles also added to the heterogeneity of the variables.

**Students**

In the current research, the students were the participants who may be assumed to have basic literacy skills since they had passed the PSLE or its
equivalent. However, these students had varying language abilities since there were also students who came from non-English speaking backgrounds. The students were Secondary One students (thirteen year-olds) and came from the Special/Express and Normal (Academic) Streams.

**Literature Texts**

Three of the schools were contacted between the end of December 2003 and January 2004. The fourth school contacted the researcher in February 2004 to indicate its interest in participating in the research. Since there was no intention to dictate to schools or teachers the literature texts they should employ for the research, the texts presented by the schools were utilised for the programme. The designed curriculum for the LDEP was based on the texts that the schools had planned to use during the duration of the research. Though the texts differed, the skills taught and the mode of imparting these skills remained the same for all schools. The curriculum was easily adaptable to whatever texts were prescribed; it was not necessary to use a standardised literature text in all the schools.

**The Researcher**

The researcher was educated in a government-aided all-girls’ school and taught in an independent all-boys’ school, and so, had limited knowledge of how English was taught in government schools (c.f. p.x). Neither did she have an awareness of the language abilities of the students in government schools. In addition, the researcher has had little exposure as a student or teacher in a co-educational environment. The researcher also has a personal preference for Literature. These biases and lack of knowledge were considered and compensated through literature review when designing the LDEP so that the needs of all students, male or female, weak or strong, could be addressed.
Conclusion

The current research was a curriculum initiative project with the aim to discover the effectiveness of a Literature-Driven English Programme in guiding students toward attaining improved reading comprehension and writing skills as well as enhanced analytical skills in a literary study. The research was conducted as a multiple site case study so that a wider student population in Singapore could be included. In addition, no attempt was made to control any of the mediating variables since the intent was to discover whether this curriculum would be successful in a naturalistic environment.

In the next chapter, literature that discusses factors influencing language acquisition is explored. These factors are considered to discover the impact they would have in the design of a curriculum. Then the pertinent characteristics of the LDEP are reviewed. In Chapter 3, the methodology employed during the research is outlined. Chapters 4 and 5 cover the findings and discussion of the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Chapter 6 integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings so as to evaluate the LDEP. Finally, the concluding Chapter 7 revisits the research questions to answer these questions in the light of the research findings.

Into schools four I ventured
With questions at hand to answer.
In seeking new ways of knowing,
    New ways of doing,
    A new curriculum I designed.

Of a mixed lot the schools were
And varied too the texts used
But meddle with what is I did not
For the curriculum I tested
In conditions, natural and true.

These schools I located in Singapore;
And if you find the system a tad too confusing
Please do take a moment or two
Browsing through the glossary.

Mary Delfin Pereira, EdD Thesis
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

From the middle of 1999 onwards, policy-makers and the media in Singapore began to discuss the issue of the standard of English in Singapore. There were suggestions to improve the standard by placing a greater emphasis on the teaching of grammar (Kramer-Dahl 2003; Nirmala 1999). The English Language syllabus was revised and English Language teachers were required to attend a 60-hour course to familiarise themselves with the new syllabus (Nirmala 1999). When the researcher attended the course in 2001, teachers with a degree in English were permitted to attend a shorter 24-hour course while others, including those with a degree in Literature, had to fulfil the 60-hour requirement. Though the aim of the new syllabus was to equip ‘students with a conscious understanding of how patterns of language are used systematically and variably in different contexts’, it wound up ‘teaching prescriptive grammar’ (Kramer-Dahl 2004, p.80).

Kramer-Dahl considers the media allusions to declining standards ‘manufactured’ (2003, p.80) and questions the assumptions underlying the concept of standards. Indeed, the publicity has led to the rich Colloquial Singapore English (CSE), Singlish, being demeaned in the media and by policy-makers (Kramer-Dahl 2003). The negative publicity appeared to have even influenced a young student to question the validity of communicating in CSE in the classroom. In 2002, the researcher divided her Secondary One class into groups and asked them to translate a scene from a Shakespearean play into CSE and act out the scene. One of the students promptly stood up and questioned, “But, ma’am, we are supposed to learn proper English.” In reply, the class was told that it would aid in the literary understanding of the play and that since they had already shown their capability in being able to translate Shakespearean English into Modern Standard English in an earlier activity, their knowledge of Standard English was in no danger of being
contaminated. In addition to being entertaining, the translation and the subsequent role-playing had the effect of making Shakespeare relevant and accessible to a group of Singapore students far removed from the cultural, social and historical realities of Shakespearean England.

While CSE has its uses and there may not be a crisis in the declining standards, the importance of teaching a Standardised English Language cannot be trivialised. According to Pakir (1991) highly-educated users of English in Singapore are able to easily navigate between Standard Singapore English (SSE) and CSE depending on the social occasion. They also occupy the upper stratum of the Singapore society. In Singapore, the ability to code-switch between SSE and CSE or even between English and other languages is socially and economically empowering (Foley 1998). CSE is learnt from the environment but SSE should be learnt in schools to enable all students to capitalise on the economic and social advantage that SSE affords.

As a former teacher interested in discovering new ways and means of improving the knowledge of SSE in students, the researcher decided to design and implement a new curriculum. This project is the formal evaluation of the effectiveness of this curriculum in improving the English Language skills of the students. This new curriculum was implemented in four secondary schools through the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) in 2004. In three of the schools the LDEP was tested against the pre-existing curricula in those schools through the use of control groups to discover if it would be more effective in enhancing writing and reading comprehension skills of Secondary One students. In the fourth school, there was no control group since the school requested that all the Secondary One Express and Normal (Academic) students be taught under the experimental LDEP. Chapter 3 offers a detailed description of the methods and samples of participants of this research project. Before the LDEP was designed, works by other educators and researchers in the field were examined. In researching a curriculum initiative project that includes the design of a programme, it is important to study available literature on the factors that would have an impact on the initiative.
The outline of this literature review is shown in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1 demonstrates that, firstly literature on how language develops and is acquired was explored. The implications of language development on the design of a language curriculum were also studied. Then, literature pertaining to the different components to be included in the LDEP was explored before creating the outline of the LDEP. Comparison was also made to some aspects of the Dialogic Approach (Bakhtin 1981) so as to gain a better insight into the rationale for implementing the LDEP. Next, the use of Literature as a tool in the LDEP was examined before considering Literature as an aid in achieving each of the separate objectives of the programme, namely the teaching of: writing; reading comprehension; oral communication; and grammar. Finally, literature on the teaching methods that were employed in order to realise the objectives as well as learner preferences was reviewed. Background knowledge of these factors is essential as they might play an influential role in the success or failure of the programme.

Figure 2.1: Outline of the Literature Review
Before exploring the curriculum itself, the theories of language acquisition and
development were examined. It is important to ascertain if any theory would
enhance the understanding of the learning of a language, and especially the
way secondary school-aged children learn language.

After reviewing the literature pertaining to the different theories on the
development and acquisition of language, an adapted version of modern
socio-cognitive theory of language acquisition (Atkinson 2002) was accepted
as the most helpful in guiding the designing of the LDEP. Socio-cognitive
theory contains elements of an early hypothesis of the environment
influencing language acquisition (Bloomfield 1933) and a later premise that
language is inborn (Chomsky 1965). Before exploring socio-cognitive theory,
it might be pertinent to examine the theories formulated by Bloomfield and
Chomsky as these theories may be viewed as part of the evolutionary process
of the linguistic study that led to the socio-cognitive theory.

Bloomfield (1933) tells us that we are stimulated by our environment to learn
language. In other words, a child makes sense of language and imitates it
through interaction with other humans ‘by connecting the learned situation of
its fuse (the stimulus) with its form (the response)’ (Wanner & Gleitman 1983,
p.4). Without an environment to teach and sustain the language acquisition of
the child, the child may have difficulty acquiring language capabilities. On the
other hand, the creation of a conducive environment for learning in an
educational setting would lead to the acquisition of language. From this
theory, it may be surmised that any person, whether child or adult, when
situated in an appropriate learning environment would be able to acquire a
language, for language acquisition is solely dependent on external social
forces.

However, adults converse with other adults and with children in different
ways. When adults converse with children adults simplify what they say or
repeat phrases and words and in addition, these ‘utterances… are not
perfectly grammatical’ (Dale 1976, p.63). Therefore, it would be difficult for children to make sense of the rules inherent in the language and subsequently, go on to replicate them in their own spoken language. Given the limitations of the behaviourist viewpoint in explaining language development, linguists began to look for other explanations. In 1965, Chomsky popularised the notion that language learning is aided by the innate capabilities in all human babies to process and make sense of the sounds that humans vocalise into words. Chomsky and others like Lenneberg (1967) believe that all humans share this natural common capacity which allows a child, who is not taught explicitly, to gain ‘a complex internal rule system’ (Slobin 1974, p.56).

There is biological evidence to support the theory of an innate ability in humans to acquire language (McNeill 1970). It was found that, among the primates, humans have a shorter gestation period which means that human babies emerge into the world completely reliant upon their caregivers, who are usually their mothers. This helplessness gave rise to an evolutionary need in babies to articulate their wants and needs just to ensure their survival (McNeill 1970) which, it is argued, leads to the development of a unique biological means of acquiring language. An example of this unique biological means can be found in the larynx which in humans evolved to be situated lower than in the other primates, thus increasing the variety of sounds that humans can vocalise (Holden 2004).

The hypothesis that humans have a natural capacity to acquire language is supported by the fact that, in a short span of time, young children are able to acquire a complex language. The theory of operant reinforcement (Skinner 1957), whereby the child is reinforced to repeat a certain word when by chance the child is rewarded on vocalising that word, cannot explain how a child is able to learn a wide array of words and word combinations (Wilkinson 1975). Halliday, has written of ‘filters [that help] learners decide what is and what is not on their agenda, identifying what aspects of ongoing behaviour may be appropriately tackled for learning’ (1993, p.105). In other words, cognitive processes determine the form and mode of learning a language.
Indeed, some psycholinguists have supported the link Chomsky draws between language acquisition and an innate capability in humans based on the intricate correspondence between the cognitive processing that occurs during language acquisition and the practical nature of that acquisition (Bever & Montalbetti 2002).

In 1967, Lenneberg went a step further and expounded the theory that after puberty, children reach a critical stage, after which they will not have the capacity to acquire fluency in a language even if instructed or exposed to the language (Lenneberg 1967). The case of Genie who was found and rescued at age thirteen in 1970 appears to support the critical stage theory. When rescued Genie could not speak a word since she was kept in a locked room, deprived of any human interaction (Curtiss 1977). During the seven years that she was reintroduced into society, the progress of her language acquisition followed that of a normal child, though at a slower rate (Villiers & Villiers 1979). However, according to Curtiss, Fromkin, Rigler, Rigler, and Krashen (1975) Genie continued to have problems with articulation and in attaining greater syntactical competence. Since, according to Clahsen and Muysken (1989) and Dopke (1998), the degree of language competency is to be measured by the number of dependent clauses used as well as by the ‘Chomskyan definition of linguistic competence as essentially syntactical competence’ (Bongartz & Schneider 2003, p.28), it may be suggested that Genie had difficulty attaining fluency in the language. Though Genie progressed in acquiring language, her inability to attain fluency appears to confirm the critical stage theory that fluency in a language cannot be achieved if the language is learnt after puberty.

Advancing a theory pertaining to normal language development based on an atypical instance of the outcome of language deprivation on one child is, however, problematic. Not only is the sample size too small to make a generalisation, but the case of Genie is an extreme case. Genie was kept isolated in a room with little human interaction for thirteen years and there is a possibility that this might have caused severe emotional and mental damage so that her capacity to learn was impaired (Curtiss 1989). It was also found
that the left and right hemispheres of her brain worked in reverse of the norm; the left side of her brain processed spatial information rather than language and the right side dealt with language (Stromswold 2000). In addition, during the seven years of study, Genie received no formal instruction (Villiers & Villiers 1979) and that leads to the question of whether the lack of instruction had an impact on the learning of more complex forms such as syntax.

In another study of a group of Korean and Chinese native speakers, aged three to thirty-nine, it was found that in learning English after puberty the students experienced greater difficulty in acquiring syntax (Johnson & Newport 1989). This study, however, relates to second language learners with no exposure to the language before they started learning it formally at a later age. Indeed, most researchers subscribing to the critical stage theory have explored the neurological processing during language acquisition in participants with language impairments or brain damage and second language learners (Stromswold 2000). In the case of Singapore, students are taught English from kindergarten onwards (Census of Population Office 2000). Therefore, though the research participants were in Secondary One during which most of the students turned thirteen years of age, these students were exposed to the English Language from a young age. Learning language skills during the LDEP for these students was thus related to enhancement of the skills rather than the learning of a new language.

While biological theorists of language acquisition (Chomsky 1965; Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch 2002; Holden 2004; Stromswold 2000) may find credence in their theory by pointing out that very young children acquire language at an amazing speed, children also do not come into the world equipped with ready-made adult-like grammatical rules. Infants can make sense of some of the words used in their surroundings and can answer aptly even before they can articulate any words (Villiers & Villiers 1979). They progress to apply ‘grammatical principles… [and] operate on these basic and universal principles even when composing short, idiosyncratic, childish utterances’ (Slobin 1974, p.48). On the other hand, children are unable to comprehend passive sentences or differentiate between syllables until much later (Villiers
& Villiers 1979). It has also been found that unstressed parts of speech are absent from the speeches of children (Brown & Fraser 1964). It appears that children are attuned to the sounds found in their environment and they seem to take cues from it to articulate their own developing versions of the language. Certainly, children may have some innate ability to comprehend language but there has to be some ‘social input… to support [their] language development at every turn’ (Atkinson 2002, p.528). Nurture appears to have an impact on the learning of a language. If that is the case, then formal instruction in the form of a new curriculum, such as the LDEP, could aid in enhancing language learning.

The socio-cognitive theory that Atkinson (2002) propounds was inspired by the socio-cognitive approach originated by Temmerman (2000). According to the socio-cognitive theory, there is an internal biological wiring in humans that needs to be stimulated by the environment. Since language is the means through which social interaction and accomplishment occur (Atkinson 2002), it is logical to consider language acquisition from a social perspective. ‘Language never occurs apart from a rich set of situational/sociocultural/historical/existential correlates, and to separate it out artificially is to denature it’ (Atkinson 2002, p.527). Separate language from its social context, which makes it meaningful, and the result is ineffective or incomplete learning.

Even from a very young age, in the early language acquisition stage, parents and siblings interact closely with the child and ‘language acquisition… takes place in the context of a rich interaction’ (Villiers & Villiers 1979, p.98). The case of Genie demonstrates the importance of the need for social support in the acquisition of language. During the thirteen years Genie was deprived of cues from the environment she had no knowledge of language though biologically she had the apparatus to produce speech. Indeed, the environment appears to stimulate infants to acquire language. Locke (1993) found infants to be drawn to recurring interactive actions. Atkinson (2002) also points out that according to a discovery made by Barrett (1995) there is a tendency for infants to connect specific vocabulary with what exists or has occurred in their physical surrounding. A social context is needed to make
language meaningful to the one acquiring it (Vygotsky 1978; Wertch 1991) and this is especially true of the acquisition of higher order language skills (Atkinson 2002; Villiers & Villiers 1979). What is true for infants may well be true for older children as well since even in the study of adult learners, it was found that social and cultural contexts play a key role in enhancing the learning of a language (Alfred 2003; Caffarella & Merriam 2000).

Firth and Wagner (1997) argue that any theory that focuses on only the natural intellect of an individual without also taking into account the social effects on the learning of language makes that theory lopsided. Infants learn from their caregivers and when they reach school-going age, the teaching role is taken over by teachers and peers in a school setting.

In research conducted by Bardovi-Harlig (2000) it was found that formal instruction along with social interaction in a school setting have an impact on the learning of a language. The social interaction can be between a competent user of the language and a beginner, whether it is between a student and a teacher or a second language learner and a native speaker. When comparing uninstructed and instructed learners, it was found that ‘all the tutored learners in the European study entered the morphological stage of development, whereas only some of the untutored learners did’ (Bardovi-Harlig 2000, p.404). Moreover, differences in the rate and degree of acquisition of the language among the learners, whether tutored or untutored, indicate that there are multiple factors involved in the successful acquisition of the language. Apart from the variability in the mode of instruction, the following factors also played an important role in the progress of the learners: motivation to learn and the frequency of interaction with competent speakers (Bardovi-Harlig 2000).

Through intermingling with parents and other adults and through interacting in classrooms and playgrounds with teachers, peers and other humans, children are learning how to communicate in their everyday interaction. Language acquisition goes on through life and, much, including syntax, can be learnt through social interaction. Indeed, it seems the critical stage when learning of
a language is thought to be difficult relates to the articulation of words rather than to grammar or vocabulary (Villiers & Villiers 1979). Instruction and immersion into the company of competent speakers seem to aid all language learners to achieve competence in the acquisition of higher-order language skills.

If direct instruction and interaction are needed for students to achieve language competence, then an English curriculum that includes explicit teaching of skills and the application of these skills through interaction may enable students to better internalise the learning. It is the contention of this research that the proposed Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) would be effective in this respect. The LDEP encouraged the use of explicit and implicit teaching of writing and reading comprehension skills and grammar through active interactions and through the contextual discussions on the literature text. Thus, the purpose of this thesis was to discover the answer to the main research question, namely, would an integrated English language and literature curriculum enhance the English Language skills of the students?

The Structure of the Literature-Driven English Programme

In this and subsequent sections, the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) is discussed from two perspectives, namely the LDEP as a concept and the LDEP as the implemented programme. The LDEP as a concept is treated in the present tense whereas the LDEP as the implemented programme is discussed in the past tense.

The LDEP involves using a literature text as a tool to teach skills and concepts. Additionally, the LDEP includes linking the analysis of a literature text with the teaching of skills and concepts. For the research, a literature text was utilised to instruct the students on narrative writing techniques and selected grammar concepts that aided in the teaching of these techniques. In the LDEP, a literature text thus becomes the model through which the effective use of language, writing techniques and the elements of specific writing genres are highlighted to the students. Through highlighting instances
of effective narrative writing skills, students may emulate the author of the literature text when they produce their narratives. Moreover, through the analysis of the text and teaching of specific writing techniques, the students may also display improvement in reading comprehension. In teaching these skills and techniques, explicit and implicit forms of instruction are employed.

**Figure 2.2: Brief Outline of the LDEP and the Assessed Outcomes**

![Diagram of LDEP and Assessed Outcomes]

With regard to the research, the literature texts were selected by the schools and selected grammar concepts and narrative writing techniques were taught using these literature texts. As Figure 2.2 illustrates, the literature texts were utilised to explicitly and implicitly instruct the Secondary One students of different abilities, from the four secondary schools, on pre-selected topics and techniques. The anticipated outcomes at the end of the programme were improved narrative writing and reading comprehension skills which were assessed through test instruments with the aid of standardised rubrics and answers. The Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) English grades of the students were used as indicators of their abilities and there were students with Grade A* (the highest grade) to the lowest Grade C. These particular outcomes were chosen because students in most secondary schools in Singapore are taught writing and reading comprehension skills. These skills would ultimately be tested four or five years later in the Cambridge General Certificate of Examination at Ordinary Level (G.C.E ‘O’ Level). Some time is also devoted to oral communication skills since the English examination in the G.C.E ‘O’ Level includes an oral component. A more detailed discussion of the methods and instruments employed for the research and the types and sources of data collected is included in Chapter 3.
The goal of the LDEP was to enhance narrative writing, reading comprehension and oral communication skills. Grammar was also taught as it was felt that knowledge of grammatical rules would aid in the improvement of writing and reading comprehension skills. In Secondary One, students are usually taught narrative writing skills. As such, improving narrative writing skills was one of the targeted outcomes of the programme. Literature is also taught for the first time in Secondary One. Therefore, basic appreciation of literary analysis was also introduced, in addition to selecting topics for analysis that would enhance narrative writing and reading comprehension skills. Narrative writing and reading comprehension skills of the Secondary One students in the experimental group which underwent the programme and the control group which followed the usual English and Literature curricula of their respective schools were assessed through test instruments. However, due to the short span of the research, the oral communication skill of the students was not assessed while their literary analytical skill was evaluated through the feedback received from teachers and students.

What is relevant for Singapore could be relevant for other countries. There are many countries like Singapore with populations of diverse linguistic backgrounds attempting to learn the English Language. Thus, Singapore presents a fertile testing ground for the LDEP in terms of the impact of language ability on the success or failure of the programme. The educational system in Singapore includes students from different linguistic backgrounds. Though the ethnic diversity of Singapore is categorised into three main ethnic groups and “Others”, the diversity within each ethnic group, particularly among the Chinese and the Indians, is wide. The Chinese form 76.8%, the Malays 13.9%, the Indians 7.9% and Others, comprising the remaining ethnic groups, 1.4% of the total population (Census of Population Office 2000). However, this classification into four main categories masks ‘the highly complex and heterogeneous linguistic heterogeneity within each ethnic group’ (Kramer-Dahl 2003, p.162). Among this diverse population, some students come from an English-speaking background and their English language ability is more advanced than those who come from homes where the main language spoken is a language other than English (c.f. pp.4–5). Additionally,
the school system of Singapore includes new migrants from countries such as China, where exposure to the English language is minimal for many of these immigrants. The impact of the LDEP on students of different abilities could have implications for the teaching of English language skills to students who include those who are fluent or weak in the English Language.

Before going into the different elements of the LDEP, it might be pertinent to consider the work on *Dialogic Imagination* by Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1981). There are some parallels between the philosophy of literacy formation espoused by Bakhtin and the LDEP. ‘Bakhtin presents grammar and language as a lesson in the *construction* of language [italicised by Godley] and meaning rather than avoidance of error by asking his students to apply the grammatical concepts they are learning through literature to their own writing’ (Godley 2004, p.55). Godley (2004) states that in the domain of English language teaching, many have called for the implementation of the approach formulated by Bakhtin to the teaching of grammar in English language classrooms. Green (2002) has also suggested that such language instruction be attempted in Australia.

One of the aims of the research on the LDEP was to discover if a dialogic mode of teaching grammar would be successful in improving the language skills of students. In the programme, grammar was taught in context through the literature text. Additionally, during the LDEP, the literature text was used as a model to demonstrate how words, grammar, narrative writing techniques influence meaning and stimulate responses in the reader. The students, through understanding the meaning-making conventions in a narrative, were then asked to create narratives by utilising what they had learnt.

In designing the LDEP, a number of factors are considered. The first factor is the use of literature as a tool to teach writing and reading comprehension skills as well as grammatical concepts. The second factor relates to using the contextual cues found in the literature text to make the learning more relevant and authentic. The third factor pertains to the methods used to teach the skills and concepts; these methods include explicit and implicit forms of instruction. The explicit teaching ensures that the students are presented with
the necessary information from which they could draw when applying the skills and concepts learnt. The implicit teaching method may stimulate intrinsic interest in the learner to achieve. The intrinsic interest could be aroused by not only making the learning relevant to the learner but also by ensuring that the learning is an active one (Daiker, Kerek & Morenberg 1990; Patterson 1977; Shafer 2001). By being an active learner, the student might better internalise the learning which could leave a lasting impression on the learner. As such, the students are expected to actively participate in the lessons through the inclusion of activities that require them to apply the skills and concepts learnt. The fourth factor includes learner preferences, with particular reference to gender preferences. Diverse kinds of activities are included to cater to the diverse needs of students with different learner preferences. The fifth factor considers the value of social interaction by including group work.

**Literature as a Tool for Cognitive and Language Development**

In the Singapore *Straits Times*, Davie (2003) reported that with the decline in the standard of English there was also a drop in the number of students sitting for the literature paper for the G.C.E ‘O’ Level. Within eight years, the percentage of students sitting for the paper fell from fifty to a mere twenty-five and in 2001, only four percent of the students took the literature paper for the G.C.E at Normal Level (Davie 2003). In the same report, many teachers commented that ‘English literature students had a sound command of the language and expressed themselves well’ (Davie 2003). It would be simplistic to say that the drop in the number of students taking Literature can be attributed to the decline in the standard of English. There are other variables (such as different modes of teaching the language) to consider but one may well ask why Literature students are perceived to display a better command of the language (Davie 2003). Is there a link between the interest in reading and literary analysis displayed by the Literature students and better command of the language? It is probable that the text may demonstrate to students the practical manner in which effective communicative devices could be employed; the text thus becomes a model which the students could emulate.
Indeed, if there is a link between learning Literature and improved English Language skills, the LDEP might be one strategic approach to arrest the perceived decline in the standard of English in Singapore (c.f. p.19).

The LDEP incorporates some aspects of the dialogic approach of Bakhtin, a Russian researcher, in teaching language skills (c.f. p.31). According to Godley, in the research conducted by Bakhtin the ‘curricular materials came from Russian Literature rather than grammar or language textbooks’ (Godley 2004, p.55). Bakhtin (1986) discovered that the language skills of his students improved when Russian literature texts were utilised to teach Russian grammar. What may work for the teaching of Russian Language through the use of Russian literature texts could well work in the teaching of the English Language using English literature texts. In the LDEP, the curricular materials also came from the literature texts selected by the schools. The students were taught language skills and grammatical concepts solely through the use of literature texts.

In utilising the literature text as a tool to teach language skills it is important to consider the inherent merits of the text in imparting the skills. The text has to be a good model of language usage and the genre being taught. Additionally, the text should be appropriate for the age of the students and be of interest to these students (Raphael, Florio-Ruane & George 2004). In the current research the schools selected the literature texts and due to time constraints there was no discussion between the researcher and the schools on what type of books to select for the programme. Therefore, when the research findings are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, references are made to the possible limitations of the texts selected.

Though not assessed during the research due to limitations of time offered by the schools, another potential advantage of the LDEP is that it could allow for multi-dimensional learning to occur. The LDEP, through involving students in the analysis of the literature text, may inspire creativity through lateral thinking whereby a person looks at problem as a conflict, and searches for several alternative solutions. Even the least likely alternative is carefully considered.
for there may lie the best solution to the problem (De Bono 1995). Literary analysis involves the study of conflicts to arrive at an understanding of several possible alternative interpretations. The activities during the LDEP involved exploring the themes, conflicts and character traits, among others, in the literature text. Students were encouraged to explore the issues and arrive at conclusions and judgements as a class, in smaller groups and individually.

Through the analysis of the literature text, students may be guided to return to what Samples refers to as the ‘metaphoric mind’ (1976, p.19) after centuries of its subjugation by our infatuation with the rational mind. According to Samples, the brain houses two different functions, the left side of the brain accommodating ‘the organizing, logical, “conforming” qualities… [while] the right… is the residence of the metaphorical mind’ (1976, pp.18-19). Aside from being in touch with the senses, the metaphorical mind is the inventive side of the brain that confronts existing knowledge so that new knowledge can be created. Additionally, the metaphorical mind does not see parts in isolation, but rather searches for their connection with the greater whole (Samples 1976). Likewise, during the LDEP, the students not only dealt with what they found in the literature text, but they used the knowledge they had gained from the text to create their own narrative pieces.

An additional benefit could be that stereotypes which arise in young minds may be reduced in secondary school when they start to learn Literature. According to Gardner, there is a need to ‘revise the misconceptions and stereotypes that reliably arise all around the world in the first half decade of life’ (Gardner 1993, p.111). Through a literature text, the secondary school students could be taught to experiment with different perceptions, come up with various ideas and at the same time, tackle their own biases.

When students confront their prejudices, their own characters might mature as well. According to Walsh (1966), the development of cognition that does not take into account morality is inadequate. A lack of a sense of morality leads to an impoverished mind that leaves the emotional side underdeveloped. A holistic view of education is needed and the ‘American or
Pragmatic view of life and education’ does not meet the demands of society for though it ‘has greatly enlivened the method of education, making it active and exciting, [it] has in turn vulgarized the notion of character’ (Walsh 1966, p.189). Literature texts, which study the human condition, may trigger debates that could set students thinking about various societal issues, and how the actions of an individual could affect the lives of others.

The fictional works may also stimulate the students to think about their obligations and responsibilities as citizens of their country and the world. Walsh commented that

> literature embodies in itself and provokes in us a free and open consciousness. It is the full, articulate intelligence, the impassioned mind, neither driven by the force of unenlightened emotion, nor dry and abstract and subject to the tyranny of syllogism (1966, p.213).

Indeed, if such learning takes place, then society and individuals will benefit from the fact that students are able to interact with others in a more responsible and sensitive manner. It must be noted that the multi-dimensional learning objective is outside the purview of the research objectives. However, reference is made here to multi-dimensional learning because there is a likelihood of such learning taking place through the use of the literature text to teach analytical and language skills during the LDEP.

It is contended that the teaching of English and Literature as two separate components could be regarded as an artificial distinction. A synthesis between English and Literature may result in a natural reunion that could produce a vital balance between the rational and metaphoric functions of the brain. Thus, the integration of English and Literature may lead to a holistic intellectual development in students that would enable the students to understand themselves, the world and their relationships with the world. Additionally, Literature may also aid in improving the language skills of students. In summary, this research is conducted in the context of the teaching of English and Literature in the Singapore school system to discover if the integrated teaching of English and Literature would enable students to develop their cognitive and language faculties.
Literature and Reading Comprehension, Writing and Oral Communication

In the LDEP the literature text is utilised to teach reading comprehension and writing skills. There are also opportunities for students to develop their oral communication skills during group and individual presentations.

Through analysis of the literature text, it is hoped that the students would develop their reading comprehension skills. By examining the language and content in the literature text, the students may arrive at a greater insight into the text than if they were to only study the content of the text. During the LDEP, the students are guided in ‘understanding authorship, [thereby]… sort[ing] out what reading is all about through writing’ (De Ford 1981, p.657). Langer and Flihan (2000) argue for enhancing language development through the learning of Literature and classroom interactions. Langer goes so far as to state that literature classes may lead the students into constructing ‘more individually rich, but never singular interpretations’ (1999, p.10).

In the very act of textual interpretation there are occasions for critical thinking or ‘reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do’ (Ennis 1987, p.10). For instance, when one reads a literature text, one is struck by multiple conflicts that might elicit varying responses from different readers. Thus, a class discussion could lead to ‘the formation of responses [in individual students] and the selection among possible responses’ (Solso 1991, p.440). During the LDEP, the literature text is used to stimulate the creation of meaning through communal inquiry (Lipman 1991) when the students participate in small group and class discussions. Indeed, through communal inquiry, students may be guided to better comprehend a piece of writing, thereby becoming good readers who can understand and interpret a text well.

The LDEP provides students with opportunities to interact with the literature text in meaningful ways and to discover different ways of looking at a problem. These opportunities may provoke new ideas so that the cognitive activities
that take place when one is reading would lead to the mind engaging in pleasurable resourceful endeavours (Gold 1988). A possible outcome of these endeavours could be better reading comprehension skills resulting from interacting with literature texts that are relevant to the age and stimulating (Raphael et al 2004).

Effective users of language skills are those who can competently read as well as effectively communicate their ideas or perceptions in written form to others. The LDEP facilitates the use of the literature text as a tool to teach students writing techniques. Some researchers argue that there is a strong correlation between reading and writing. In studies carried out on the reading and writing habits of students, the findings point to a strong correlation between reading and writing (De Ford 1981; Wittrock 1983) and it has been found that one who reads well also writes well (Chall & Jacobs 1983; Stotsky 1983).

One of the reasons good readers may also be good writers could be due to the readers implicitly learning writing techniques from the author of the text while reading. It is argued that there is an interconnectedness as well as interaction between reading and writing. Often, reading and writing, which are so inter-linked that they are really ‘one kind of literate skill…, [are taught] as if they are exclusively individual cognitive skills’ (Yagelski 1994, p.31). The LDEP aims to correct the artificial split between reading and writing and merge these two inter-related disciplines. During the LDEP the students are guided through their own writing process as they read the literature text. The students are directed to read from the perspective of an author as recommended by Langer and Flihan (2000) and Smith (1983) so as to analyse the thinking and writing processes of the author who is trying to express an idea or narrative. The students then become apprentices to the writer of the literature text who is after all a skilful practitioner of the language.

In teaching students how to write effectively, reading published works or the works of other students could greatly aid the students to internalise the mechanics of the language better. Knoeller has published poems for over two decades and through practice he has discovered that as a writer he finds
inspiration in reading. It is a practice that he calls ‘reading as a writer’ (Knoeller 2003, p.42). From the experience of Knoeller as a poet, it becomes apparent that works by other writers have aided in his development as a writer. Just as a professional writer draws on the expertise of other expert writers, so too can young learners learn from the techniques employed by authors of literature texts. Teachers can facilitate the conversion of students into apprentices to the authors of the literature texts.

Apprenticeship is an old concept, one that has been in use since ancient times in many cultures. Apprenticeship offers the learner the opportunity to learn through observation from an expert in the field of study. Thus, ‘imaginative writing, such as poetry and fiction, can serve an important role in helping students understand literary forms and styles’ (Marcus 1977, p.373). Through understanding different forms, the students could then attempt to imitate the various forms, before discovering their individual styles to create their own compositions. This form of apprenticeship learning during the LDEP also includes explicit instruction on techniques that cannot be observed or are trade secrets (Gardner 1993). Since it is neither commonplace nor practical for most schools to employ an author to teach writing, the literature text could take on the role of the expert and the explicit instruction could be provided by a teacher who is schooled in the genres and techniques of writing.

Oral expression is as important as written language for, as social beings, humans spend much time interacting and communicating orally. Oral competency is, therefore, an essential life-skill. As Fox (1998) argues, one who routinely applies oral language may be able to respond rationally rather than resort to a sentimental reaction.

One way in which oral expression could be stimulated is through the reading of a literature text. Literature of different genres exposes the students to a world of novel ideas revealed in a language and manner that are effective forms of communication. The literature might then influence ‘the child’s own internal thought and oral communication’ (Fox 1998, p.146). Walsh concurs by stating that these lasting works of Literature are a legacy left behind by the
'most gifted minds [which]… offer us standards by which we may judge the incompleteness and the poverty of our own knowledge… [and] the means to emulate them' (1966, p.133). These standards afford students the opportunity to add to or refine their store of ideas before expressing themselves through oral communication. Though oral expression was not evaluated during the programme due to lack of human resource and time constraints, during the LDEP students were required to present their work orally as well as in written form.

Literature was utilised in the LDEP to enhance writing, oral communication and reading comprehension skills. The Literature text as a model of effective communication of ideas became a tool to enhance comprehension skills and teach students to express themselves in written and oral forms.

**Literature and Grammar**

The teaching of grammar has, in recent years, fallen into disfavour, especially in the United States (Mulroy 2004; Vavra 2003). Mulroy (2004) rather humorously writes of the consequences of the war waged against the teaching of grammar by the American National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). In his opinion the campaign by NCTE against the teaching of grammar has led to what he refers to as a ‘higher illiteracy’ (Mulroy 2004, p.54). According to him, ‘[h]ere then is a second element in higher illiteracy. Its victims are not only ignorant of how to analyse complex meanings; they are ignorant of their ignorance’ (Mulroy 2004, p.54). He goes on to write about the inadequate reading comprehension skills of his university students due to their lack of knowledge of the grammatical structures.

Researchers have argued against the traditional mode of teaching prescriptive grammar, writing that it simply does not have any value in advancing the language skills of the students (Bailey 1997; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer 1965; Cox 1995; Hartwell 1985; Hillocks & Smith 1991; Shuster 1999). However, the question may not lie in whether grammar should be taught at all but in how it should be taught. While there is much literature
on what might not work in the teaching of grammar, little attention has been
given to the issue of what form of instruction might work (Kolln 1991; Weaver
1996). In attempting to determine the form of instruction the teaching of
grammar should assume, it might be relevant to explore the discovery made
by Harris (1962). When just one component of the language, grammar, was
examined, Harris (1962) found that studying grammatical conventions
contextually was more useful than studying formal grammar.

Bakhtin (1986) approached grammar instruction by accepting that 'language
is not artificially separated from its communicative purposes, as it is in many
grammar textbooks, but is instead presented as inherently dialogic' (Godley
2004, p.55). The LDEP utilises the same approach in that the students study
the grammatical conventions used in the text and engage communally in their
growing understanding of these conventions and through the creation of their
own compositions. The LDEP, through equipping students with knowledge of
language conventions, aims to enhance the language skills of the students.
According to the Qualification and Curriculum Authority in London students by
comprehending 'how language use and choice contribute to meaning and
effect… [might become] more responsive and critical as listeners and readers'
(Qualification and Curriculum Authority 1998, p.21).

When Smoot conducted an experiment in his grammar class to test the
effectiveness of teaching a grammatical concept and its application through a
history text, he found that they were becoming 'more discerning writers and
critics' (2001, p.41). His students realised that studying the phraseology of
the argument aided in the understanding of the argument itself. There
appears to be complementary results from learning grammar contextually; a
practical skill is learnt and the content of the piece of writing is also better
understood. During the LDEP, however, the students learn more than
grammar in line with the recommendations of some researchers which are
incorporated into the LDEP. The LDEP is designed to make the learning
goal-oriented (Barton 1998; Hagemann & Wininger 1999) with a connection
being made between grammar and Literature (Marshall 2001) and linking the
learnt grammar concepts to the actual writing process (Keen 1997; Richmond 1990).

Through the LDEP, students are taught pre-selected grammatical concepts which are necessary to attain a particular outcome which in the case of the research was narrative writing skills. It is hoped that this goal-oriented contextual form of teaching grammar with an emphasis on its practical use would lead to the enhancement of language skills in the students.

**Teaching Methods**

Two modes of teaching, namely explicit and implicit forms of instruction, are employed in the LDEP to achieve the learning outcomes of enhancing language skills in reading comprehension and writing. The explicit mode is first used to impart pre-existing knowledge, or content, so that students could develop their language skills from an existing base or foundation. When students apply the knowledge gained through the explicit teaching, they may also learn implicitly through contextual and process-oriented approaches.

**Implicit Instruction through Contextual and Process-oriented Approaches**

Harp proposes that ‘language is learned through use in meaningful contexts, not through talking about it or analysing it’ (1991, p.4). If the different components of the language were examined, one could see that language is not made up of unrelated parts of speech or unconnected sentences. Language consists of parts that could be constructed in meaningful ways if they are linked or brought together into a holistic unit; the parts make up the whole, and they make little sense without the whole. The literature text is the whole, and when studying it, students are actually ‘examining the language of a work more closely and in greater depth’ (Knoeller 2003, p.44).

According to the cognitive psychologist Tulving (1972), context plays an important role in the teaching of vocabulary since semantic memory only remembers meanings of words in terms of referents and not single episodes.
Tulving (1972) argues that when one hears a word, semantic memory does not hone in on a specific period of time when the word was used, but rather offers a general idea of it which is derived from several occasions when the word was used.

The study of semantic memory by Tulving (1972) demonstrates that the mind does not work on isolated pieces of information, but rather, like the metaphoric mind, searches the landscape of the mind for whole pieces of information and connections. However, as Solso states ‘if information is not used or rehearsed, with time forgetting may occur’ (1991, p.196). Students need to apply the concepts learnt so as to internalise these concepts, thereby ensuring that these concepts are not soon forgotten.

Application appears to be important. Students do not learn if they are turned into passive learners; they cannot be converted into mere receptacles into which knowledge can be poured (Daiker, Kerek & Morenberg 1990; Killgallon 1987; Shafer 2001). Students learn best or naturally if they are involved in their own learning (Shafer 2001). Killgallon (1987) and Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg (1990) have recommended that students should be allowed to test different modes of sentence constructions through hands-on activities. Only through the process of actually applying what they had learnt will the students be better able to understand the concepts learnt.

The LDEP includes activities in which the students participate so that the concepts that they are taught could be reinforced. For example, in the research, the students learnt about characters and how they influenced a narrative. A follow-up lesson required them to change the character traits of the characters in the narrative so that they could discover for themselves the effect that the change would have on the events and resolution of the narrative. The students also applied the concepts and techniques taught by creating new stories with the altered characters.

The implicit form of instruction is a fundamental aspect of the Literature-based English Curriculum. According to some researchers, a literature-based
curriculum aids in improving language skills because it is process-oriented and makes use of actual literature texts (Feeley, Strickland & Wepner 1992; Giddings 1992; Sorenson & Lehman 1995). The LDEP also incorporates this aspect of the process-oriented approach and the use of literature text into its lessons. The belief that through the application of taught concepts and skills the students would better internalise the lessons forms part of the premise on which the LDEP is based. However, the LDEP differs from the Literature-based approach in that the LDEP works on the premise that students need explicit instruction to gradually expand on their knowledge.

In supporting the implicit mode of instruction, Shafer goes so far as to state:

written language does not require explicit teaching [and this perception] is further supported by the ethnographic research of Denny Taylor in her three year study of six families. At the time of the study, each of the families Taylor observed had children who were at various stages in literacy development. Some were not yet literate in the academic sense, while the others were adults and literate professionals. For each Taylor found the acquisition and development of language to be a rather organic outgrowth of daily life (2000, p.32)

It is likely that the participants in the study conducted by Taylor came from a cultural and economic background that placed much value on the acquisition of literacy in Standard English. From a very young age, they would have received the appropriate home and environmental support to aid them in their acquisition of the language. With this support these students were probably able to make the appropriate links between the implicit teaching and the sound knowledge of the basic principles of Standard English they already possessed to advance in their acquisition of Standard English. Many students in the United States and Singapore, on the other hand, are not viewed as competent users of Standard English (Davie 2003; Frater 2004; Mulroy 2004; Vavra 2003). They may not have the necessary learning environment outside of school to acquire a strong foundation in Standard English to aid in the acquisition of Standard English through implicit teaching. For these students, an implicit mode of instruction might not be sufficient.
**Explicit Instruction through Literature Texts**

It is the contention of some writers that the process approach is insufficient in equipping students with the necessary language skills (Mulroy 2004; Vavra 2003). In fact, these authors believe the process approach of teaching has led to a decline in the standard of the English Language. According to Vavra (2003), the decline in the standard of English Language in the United States is evidenced by a decline in test scores in the last forty years, and the decline could be due to the focus on the teaching of English through a process-oriented approach. The process approach to learning does not take into account the fact that ‘process and content, thinking and knowledge, must be brought into a worthwhile balance’ (Fox 1998, p.135). In Singapore, there have been similar experiences. In a report in the *Straits Times* of Singapore, the English language educators who were interviewed felt that the standard of English had declined (Davie 2003). They attributed the decline to the fact that ‘in the 1980s and 1990s… [students were] taught through activities such as discussions, language games and role play’ (Davie 2003). The similar experiences of educators in the United States and Singapore suggest that learning implicitly through process alone may not be enough. In order for students to acquire a sound foundation so as to produce quality written and oral work, Fox (1998) states that content is needed before the process can guide or lead students to new discoveries.

In searching for content to teach the English Language, age-appropriate literature texts, namely the plays, novels, short stories and poems could be utilised. Literature texts could act as models, the tool through which the mechanics of the language and different writing styles could be taught. Indeed, ‘imaginative writing, such as poetry and fiction… [could be used to enable students to] understand literary forms and styles’ (Marcus 1977, p.373). Students could try out the different styles found in the literature texts, using them as models, before producing their own creative works.

Apart from the explicit teaching of the form, there should also be a focus on the language of the text. As Hagemann states, ‘[w]riters who are better able
to address the needs and expectations of their readers, in part by drawing on formal or grammatical conventions become more successful communicators’ (2003, p.76). Hagemann recommends that while activities can be contextual in nature, time should also be spent to explain grammatical rules and the mechanics of language so that students are able to understand how these help in expanding their understanding of the written language. The recommendation by Hagemann appears to support the advice advanced by Braddock (1969) that students be instructed in the art of composing instead of merely being given writing exercises in the hope that they would learn from them. Besides, even in allowing students to become more reflective, they need to be given ‘substantive information and sound logic’ in which to develop their viewpoints (Ivie 2001, p.18).

The LDEP is designed on the premise that features of good writing, including the mechanics as well as the writing techniques of a particular genre, need to be highlighted to the students so as to enhance the learning of writing skills. This premise is in line with the recommendations offered by Meyer, Wardrop, Stahl and Linn (1994), Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas and Daley (1998) and other researchers (Derewianka 1990; Hasan 1989; Martin 1989; Rutherford & Sharwood-Smith 1985). However, the explicit teaching of the mechanics and techniques is to be conducted for no more than twenty minutes. Some researchers indicate that only a very small percentage of students would be able to listen to and absorb much from long lectures on new and difficult concepts (DePaula 2002; Honigsfeld 2000). In the LDEP, there is an expectation that the teachers would interact with the students during the lecture-style instruction so that students could be active participants. The lecture-style teaching of skills is also complemented with other modes of explicit teaching. During the research, for example, student volunteers were asked to demonstrate the different sentence types. Students with different clauses on strips of vanguard sheets (large-sized thick sheets of paper) took centre-stage while other students shifted these students around to create different types of sentences.
The LDEP works on the premise that there are merits in the arguments advanced by those who believe in the contextual process-oriented approach and those who value teaching concepts and techniques explicitly. Explicit instruction is included to present students with the necessary knowledge base. The students then apply the concepts learnt through a process approach. In conclusion, a combination of the two teaching modes is employed in the LDEP to capitalise on the advantages of both approaches so as to enhance the language skills of the students.

Another aspect of the research on the LDEP included examining learner preferences, especially different gender preferences. After examining how students may prefer to learn, a variety of activities is included in the LDEP to accommodate these different preferences. It is hoped that the different activities would stimulate a greater interest in the students to learn the language skills.

Learner Preferences, with Particular Reference to Gender Preferences to Learning

In secondary schools in Singapore class sizes are large, ranging from thirty-five to forty students in each class. Since it was not possible to measure the learning preferences of the students involved in the research it was presumed that in each of the classes with close to forty students, different kinds of learning preferences would exist. There would be some students who would prefer to work in groups while others would rather work individually. There would be those who would like to take centre-stage and present in front of the class, and yet others who would rather be left alone to sit and learn at their desks. These variations in learner preferences have to be considered to ensure that the LDEP would interest and motivate many of the students in the diverse classrooms to learn under the programme.

Researchers reveal that children in general approach learning in varied ways and gendered differences in these approaches are more noticeable than other group differences (Head 1999; Honigsfeld & Dunn 2003; Jorge 1990; Marcus
boys tend to be more kinaesthetically-oriented but are not as self-motivated as girls. Some girls are also more diligent and are open to seeking help from peers as well as teachers (Clark & Trafford 1996; Cole 1997). The Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission (1996) claims that boys need to be involved in the process of learning and see the practical benefits before they apply themselves in any lesson. Most girls, on the other hand, are more conforming and persistent. In addition, some researchers have noted that generally boys have poor auditory skills while girls are better at listening (Head 1999; Honigsfeld & Dunn 2003). Willingham, Cole, Lewis and Leung (1997) discovered that in the performance of different tasks, boys are better at multiple-choice questions whereas girls are better at written responses.

It must be noted that the purpose of this project does not include investigating the validity of different learning preference claims. Rather, the different learning preference claims advanced by various researchers were considered with the intent to accommodate the range of learning preferences identified in these prior research undertakings. To cater to various learner preferences, the LDEP includes a variety of activities, different modes of teaching explicitly and diverse kinds of output that students are expected to produce. Students are expected to produce short written pieces in addition to extended compositions. Oral presentations, role-playing and alternative modes of expressions such as illustrations are also included in the LDEP. The LDEP includes opportunities for students to participate in group work as well as work individually. Moreover, no more than twenty minutes are to be spent on the explicit teaching of the concepts. The short duration of the explicit teaching might aid students with less well practised listening skills. These students might learn better during group work when together with their peers they apply the concepts taught explicitly. Students are also expected to produce different forms of work. For example, during the research in addition to the final narrative piece, they were given short response assignments as well as exercises that included symbolic representations instead of written work.
It is important to vary the exercises and activities because there is research to reveal that boys do not perform as well as girls in English. Since the LDEP is an English Language programme, it is essential to include different activities and exercises so as to accommodate the various learning preferences of the boys and girls. The absence of differentiated teaching to cater to the differing interests and modes of learning might account for the boys lagging behind the girls in literacy or English (Hawkes 2001; Head 1999; Noble, Brown & Murphy 2001; Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996). The lower achievement of boys in English may be one of the reasons why 'secondary age boys tend to have more negative attitudes towards reading and writing than girls’ (Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996, p.16).

In England, Australia and Hong Kong, the test scores of boys lag far behind girls in English. According to an English report published by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 1996, 'girls out-perform boys at ages 7, 11, and 14 in the National Curriculum assessments in England’ (Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996, p.6). In Australia, 'twice as many boys as girls were represented in the lowest ability groups in literacy across all socio-economic groups’ (Hawkes 2001, p.105). In the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, completed by students at the end of secondary school, girls outperformed boys in English as well as other subjects except Mathematics (Wong, Lam & Ho 2002).

One of the reasons cited by Head (1999) for the general lack of achievement in English displayed by the boys is the change in the cultural and educational climate. Feminism created a vacuum for the boys when women became the focus of study. Additionally, since boys experience ‘difficulty with the affective aspects of English’ (Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996, p.16) when these affective aspects become topics of discussion during English lessons these lessons became difficult for the boys (Head 1999).
There is also research to implicate factors other than gender differences for differing learning styles of students. Researchers have claimed that changing social climate could account for a change in preferences as well. According to Honigsfeld and Dunn (2003), boys today are less compliant to authority figure and prefer working in groups. However, about twenty years ago, in the United States male students were more teacher-motivated and would rather work individually than in groups (Marcus 1979), indicating that there is a likelihood that ‘learning-style preferences change over time’ (Dunn & Griggs 1995, p.197).

Cultural differences may also play a role in the learning preferences of boys and girls. ‘Discrepancies between (a) overall and country-specific findings and (b) results of previous and current research may suggest that cultural differences affected the learning-style preferences of the two genders or that individual differences within each group weighted the results’ (Honigsfeld & Dunn 2003, p.204).

There are contradictions between the findings of some researchers. These contradictions may arise from differences in context, ability and approach of the researchers and their samples. According to Yong and McIntyre (1992), males were found to be more attracted to learning approaches that encouraged movement and active learning than females. Honigsfeld and Dunn (2003) go so far as to claim that girls prefer working alone whereas boys like interacting and learning from their peers. However, Holden (2002) discovered that active learning was enjoyed by both boys and girls.

According to some researchers where there are variations in learning preferences, differences in achievement may have an impact. Among high-achievers, both boys and girls enjoy reading and writing. Low-achieving boys and girls do not view reading and writing as pleasurable activities. However, boys display a less positive attitude towards reading because unlike underachieving girls, underachieving boys are less ‘compliant and do not concentrate if the subject does not engage their interest’ (Holden 2002, p.107). It is probable that more boys than girls are represented among the
low achievers (Hawkes 2001) because low achieving girls are more compliant and attentive than boys even when the subject is not interesting. Another research that mentions similarities between the reading preferences of boys and girls claims that there is a convergence of reading preferences with many boys and girls preferring to read horror and fantasy stories. While more boys than girls like reading non-fiction, too few of the boys enjoy non-fiction to suggest ‘a strong fact-fiction divide on gender grounds’ (Holden 2002, p.105). Indeed, in the area of English learning, Myhill (1999) found more similarities than differences between the genders.

There may be divergent views and findings about learning preferences and gender, but evidence reveals that there are various ways in which different students are stimulated and motivated to learn. There could even be more than one way in which a particular child learns. In research conducted on older students in a community college in the United States, it was discovered that students adapted their learning styles to the subject being taught (Jones, Reichard & Mokhtari 2003). It has been claimed that students employ different learning modes according to the demands of a particular subject or task (Cornett 1983; Entwistle 1981; Kolb 1984; Sims & Sims 1995). Students are ‘most likely to prefer learning through active experimentation when learning science… [and] concrete experience mode’ when learning English and Social Studies’ (Jones, Reichard & Mokhtari 2003, p.369).

There are different learning preferences and whether these preferences are based on gender or not, a teaching approach that offers a combination of methods is needed to cater to a diverse student population. By adapting the teaching approach to suit the learning preferences of different students, most children, boys and girls, may be motivated to learn in an English Language classroom. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), successful teachers are those who make use of a wide repertoire of teaching strategies. When designing the LDEP, the need for active participation and a variety of activities and assignments was recognised. The assignments include tasks requiring short responses as well as extended written pieces from the students. For the final assignment, an extended piece of writing, the students are also given the
option to make use of computer technology to aid students who may prefer typing on a computer rather than writing a lengthy composition. In addition, activities included in the lessons for discussion give students the option to express themselves from a personal or broad perspective. Though it was felt that the literature text should be appealing to the children as well as ‘thought-provoking and age-appropriate’ (Raphael, Florio-Ruane & George 2004, p.199), due to time constraints, the researcher could not discuss the choice of books with the schools. As such, the researcher designed the curriculum based on the texts that the schools had already chosen for the 2004 academic year.

To meet its desired outcomes, the design of any curriculum must accommodate anticipated differences in the learning preferences of the students. Therefore, a curriculum that is broad enough to give students options when completing assignments or include various teaching methods may reach a wider student population. By catering to the different learning preferences of a diverse student population, it is hoped that the students would be encouraged and motivated to learn.

**Conclusion**

Children acquire language in many ways. The intent of the research on the LDEP was to discover if the LDEP would prove to be an effective mode through which the writing and reading comprehension skills of early adolescents are enhanced. In designing the curriculum for the LDEP various factors were considered. These factors included the manner in which the learning of language is transmitted, environmental influences, and the active and practical use of communicative language with the literature text as a model of that communicative language. Additionally, the use of explicit forms of instruction and the process of applying the concepts taught explicitly in purposeful endeavours were also considered. Research into different learner preferences, with particular reference to variations due to gender, was also examined.
In considering the various theories on language acquisition, socio-cognitive theory proposed by Atkinson (2002) was adopted in preference to the theories advanced by Bloomfield (1933) and Chomsky (1965). In designing the LDEP it was accepted that the innate capacity of the students to learn language has to be supported in a number of ways. There has to be classroom interaction with the teacher and other students and students should have the opportunity to participate orally, in written form and through reading in the communicative process of acquiring and utilising language.

Another factor considered was the utility of the literature text in transmitting language skills. The benefit of having the literature text studied as a model of communicative language in advancing writing, reading comprehension and oral communication skills and in teaching grammar was studied. In reviewing the structure that the LDEP should adopt, the research that Bakhtin (1986) conducted on a curriculum he implemented through which he taught students Russian language skills through the use of Russian Literature texts was reviewed. According to Green (2002) ‘for Bakhtin, the novel (or “novelness”, as he put it) represented a particularly rich “language laboratory”’. Green continues by advocating the use of the idea of a language laboratory in English Language classrooms. In the English-speaking world, ‘despite the fact that the field has seen many calls for grammar instruction that is dialogic in nature, such instruction has not yet been studied systematically in classroom contexts’ (Godley 2004, p.56). The research on the LDEP included such a study on the use of the literature text as a “language laboratory”.

During the LDEP, the literature text became the specimen that was dissected and examined by the teacher and students in each of the experimental classes so as to enhance the learning of selected English Language skills. The close study was performed not so as to deconstruct the text, rather, the features of the text were studied in parts and then, as part of a holistic narrative unit.

There are researchers advocating the advantages in teaching explicitly (Daiker et al 1990; Killgallon 1987; Shafer 2001) and through a process-oriented approach during which students learn through application of skills.
(Fox 1998; Ivie 2001; Marcus 1977). Since there are benefits in instructing students explicitly and implicitly, these two approaches to teaching were adopted for the LDEP. During the review of the research on the learning preferences of the students it became apparent that there are individual and gender differences (Head 1999; Hawkes 2001; Holden 2003; Honigsfeld & Dunn 2003; Jorge 1990; Marcus 1979; Yong & McIntyre 1992). To accommodate the differences in learning preferences, different kinds of activities and explicit teaching approaches were included in the LDEP.

The possible benefits of integrating two subjects, English and Literature, which are taught separately in most schools in Singapore, were also explored. Walsh states that ‘intelligence… is intimate with feeling, feeling with sensibility, and sensibility with language’ (1966, p.49). There is a direct link between our cognitive faculty and our senses, and both merge and find an outlet in language. However, the current mode of teaching English and Literature as separate, non-integrated units in most schools in Singapore does not allow for a holistic expression that combines the metaphoric and rational parts of the mind. Through bridging the artificial divide that currently exists between English and Literature the LDEP may lead to a natural merging of the two inter-connected disciplines.

By testing the LDEP in classrooms in Singapore this research hopes to discover the effectiveness of the LDEP in improving writing and reading comprehension skills through utilising literature texts as tools. The LDEP also employs explicit and implicit modes of instruction and incorporates different kinds of activities and instructional methods to cater to the differing learning preferences of students of varying abilities.

In the next chapter, the methodology and methods employed during the research are explained. The different kinds and sources of data and the triangulation of methods and measures used during the research are also stated. Additionally, the ethical considerations that were utilised during the course of the research are described in detail.
CHAPTER 3
Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the rationale for conducting a curriculum initiative project in multiple sites which were studied as cases in the current research is explained. Since the research included the design of the curriculum by the researcher, the expertise of the researcher in the area is also examined. In addition, the curriculum design, participants, and the stages in the gathering of the data are described. Sources and kinds of data and the data that were used to answer each of the research questions are also provided. Finally, before recounting the ethical considerations that were considered for this research, details pertaining to the mode in which the data were analysed and the usefulness of this research are offered.

Research on the LDEP – A Curriculum Initiative Project

The current research on the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) involved a curriculum project initiative that was designed to improve on existing practices in the teaching of English and Literature. The aim was to conduct an active inquiry into the effects of an integrated Literature and English Language programme on the learning of language skills through implementing an experimental curriculum.

Characteristics of the Curriculum Initiative Project on the LDEP

The research on the LDEP included some of the characteristics of, as well as departures from, the classical form of action research. There was the desire to improve on existing educational practices (Archer, Holly & Kasten 2001; Kemmis 1988; Thomas 2005) and it was appreciated that the inquiries into the complex situations found in the different schools may not yield unqualified resolutions (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire 2003). While action research in education normally concerns teachers conducting research to inform their classroom practice (Mills 2003; Murray & Lawrence 2000; Rosiek
In action research, the aim is to work towards amelioration in the 'rationality...[pertaining to] the situations in which the practices are carried out' (Kemmis 1988, p.42). The intent of the current research was to seek an improved understanding of how students learn and gain language skills through comparing the LDEP with existing English and Literature curricular practices within the context of Singapore. Additionally, the aim of the current research, as in any action research, was not to provide all the answers (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire 2003). The research was viewed as an initial investigation that would hopefully result in further developments of the LDEP. If the findings from the research lead to a better understanding of the effects of an integrated English and Literature programme, the LDEP could be further improved so as to produce beneficial curricular changes in the area of English Language and Literature teaching. Moreover, the presence of many variables was accepted as a necessary component to study the effectiveness of the LDEP and thus, the variables were left intact. Heterogeneity and complexity added to the practical validity of the study since they represented the real-life situations in schools. Thus, knowledge gained from the study is accepted as part of an on-going process of 'drawing theories out of practice, so that theory becomes embodied practice and embodied practice has the potential to emerge again as new theory' (McNiff & Whitehead 2002, p.103).

Often action research in education is conducted by teachers to enhance the practices carried out within their own classrooms (Mills 2003; Murray & Lawrence 2000; Rosiek & Atkinson 2005); however, in the current research a broader view was employed. Though the researcher was neither employed by the schools participating in the research nor directly involved in the teaching of the lessons, she nonetheless played a participatory role. The LDEP, which the researcher designed, was the product of the experiences gained by the researcher as a classroom English and Literature teacher. These classroom experiences like any other classroom experiences of action researchers initiated the research. Brydon-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire
believe that ‘action researchers… came to theory largely as a way of justifying what they knew was correct to begin with, to legitimize a politically informed and effective form of knowledge through experience’ (2003, p.15). Likewise, the chosen research topic was the product of the on-going self-reflection on teaching methods employed by the researcher in the teaching of English and Literature during the course of her five year teaching experience in Singapore. The topic was also inspired by her experiences as a Language Arts teacher in urban and suburban schools in the United States. Like any other action researcher the experiences and experimentation conducted within classes of the researcher allowed her to discover the benefits of an integrated English and Literature programme. She, thus, decided to develop and implement a refined integrated programme so as to discover its impact on a larger scale involving other schools and teachers. The professional opinion of the teachers was also actively sought during interviews and informal meetings. Consequently, the current research was conducted as ‘an enquiry by the self into the self, undertaken in company with others acting as research participants and critical learning partners’ (McNiff & Whitehead 2002, p.15).

**Strengths of the Research on the LDEP**

In studying the effects of the LDEP in a social setting with many influences, the position taken was that ‘events, particularly social events, may not be orderly or pre-determined. Causation is always likely to be multi-dimensional’ (Murray & Lawrence 2000, p.30). Thus, the goal was not to seek “tidy” resolutions.

In the current research there were many variables with no controls imposed on existing practices in the four participating schools. Messes, a word employed by Ackoff (1999), were anticipated. Messes refer to ‘complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved’ (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire 2003). The researcher expected challenges, both practical and theoretical and the existence of these challenges was important. One of the aims of the research was to discover if the curriculum would be robust enough to be
effective in spite of the challenges presented by the different situations with differing variables. It was felt that a curriculum proven to be effective in heterogeneous situations would be of greater utility than a curriculum found to be effective in a controlled environment with very few variables. Additionally, since the working premise was that there were no absolute answers and the study was viewed as part of an on-going cyclic process of gaining better understanding of the LDEP, limitations and challenges were anticipated and indeed, even welcomed.

In the current research the researcher took on the dual roles of participant and observer. She offered assistance when such assistance was requested by the teachers. She also acted as a participant researcher in that she worked closely with the teachers during the implementation of the LDEP and at the request of the teachers, even modelled the teaching of a lesson in two of the four schools. However, since it was decided from the outset there should be no interference by the researcher once the curriculum was surrendered to the schools, she took on the role of an observer during the implementation of the programme. She did not interfere with the teaching of the lessons, offer unsolicited suggestions or highlight incorrect implementation procedures. There were two reasons for assuming the role of an observer. Firstly, the intent was to observe how the LDEP would fare in naturalistic conditions with few researcher manipulations over its execution and to ascertain the reasons for the success or failure of the LDEP in such circumstances (Keen & Packwood 1995). Secondly, through asking the teachers to actively reflect on the effect of the LDEP and by not taking away ownership of the classes they teach, the research might be of greater interest to the teachers and their schools. In having ‘action research conducted in one’s own [italicised by Mills] classroom/school [it] is more likely to be persuasive and relevant and the findings expressed in ways that are meaningful for teachers themselves’ (Mills 2003, p.7).

In the next section the reasons for, and the advantages of, conducting research in multiple sites which were studied as cases are discussed.
Multiple Site Case Studies of the Effectiveness of the LDEP

It was felt that a curriculum initiative project could be better evaluated if it was implemented in multiple sites or schools. Each school was studied as a case with sub-groups in order to gain a greater understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum in naturalistic environments with many variables.

Characteristics of Case Studies of the LDEP

‘Case studies are appropriate then to study complex social situations or interventions, where multiple variables exist’ (Walshe, Caress, Chew-Graham & Todd 2004, p.678). No case study is identical to another. As such, a constant, in this instance the LDEP, could be tested in different sites consisting of multiple case studies with differing variables. In addition, ‘case studies will often be the preferred method of research because they may be epistemologically in harmony with the reader’s experience and thus to that person a natural basis for generalization’ (Stake 2000, p.19). Since schools are the intended audience, a project undertaken in individual schools would enable the administration and teachers in other schools to make comparisons and determine if the outcomes are relevant to them.

In selecting the schools as case studies, convenience sampling was employed since the research was dependent on the availability and willingness of the schools to participate (Gillham 2000; Wallen & Fraenkel 2001). Convenience sampling can be disadvantageous as the ‘samples cannot be considered representative of a population’ (Wallen & Fraenkel 2001, p.139). However, it was decided at the beginning that diverse types of schools would make up the samples. If similar types of schools had volunteered, the researcher would have approached other schools that indicated an interest in the research or in an integrated English and Literature programme. Fortunately, the four schools that agreed to participate were different types of schools with diverse student and teacher populations and there was no need to approach other schools.
**Implications of an Embedded Case Study in Multiple Sites**

It was believed that multiple site case studies best serve the research objective of assessing the effectiveness of the LDEP since the intent was to test the impact of the LDEP in naturalistic settings with few controls imposed.

A prime reason for conducting the research in multiple sites lay in the nature of the topic of the research. A research that involves a curriculum initiative is complex in many respects. There are many variables that could influence the outcome and as such, it would be very difficult to reach any conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum. Accordingly, the research was designed to include at least four schools with very different characteristics and with varying student bodies and cultures to test the experimental curriculum (Figure 3.1). It was felt that ‘a finding emerging from the study of several very heterogeneous sites would be more robust’ (Shofield 2000, p.80). As such, conclusions reached from the findings derived from the four schools could be more persuasive than if the experimental curriculum was tested on the students of one school.

**Figure 3.1: Overview of the Research on the LDEP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Schools:</th>
<th>Mediating Variables</th>
<th>Individual and Group Differences:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-ed., Single-sex; Independent, Government-aided, Government; Schools of different ranks</td>
<td>Differing Abilities: Normal (Academic) and Express Streams; PSLE English Grades A*, A, B and C</td>
<td>Teaching Styles; Gender; Class Cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conducting the research in multiple sites also allows for multiple analyses. ‘The same case study may involve *more than one unit of analysis* [italicised by Yin]. This occurs when, within a single case, attention also is given to a subunit or subunits’ (Yin 1994, p.41). For instance, in the current research each school became a case study with each class becoming a sub-unit within each school. The conclusions drawn from the findings of each school were
studied in relation to the school as well as in comparison to other schools. Thus, what Yin (1994) considers as a possible problem in embedded case study design was avoided. As he expresses it, a major problem with ‘an embedded design… occurs when the case study focuses only on the subunit level and fails to return to the larger unit of analysis’ (Yin 1994, p.44). While the effectiveness of the LDEP was analysed in relation to each mediating variable, in the end, the researcher returned to the main research question of whether the LDEP was effective in imparting language skills in spite of the mediating variables.

In addition, mixed methods were used which led to a richer analysis. A case study is ‘a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context’ (Gillham 2000, p.1). In order to have a full contextual understanding of the findings from the four sites or schools quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The research design employed: 1) an experimental group on which the experimental curriculum was tested, and 2) a control group which followed the usual school curriculum. The quantitative data included pre-test and post-test scores of the writing and reading comprehension skills assessments that the experimental and control groups completed. The purpose in making a comparison between the two groups was to test the effectiveness of the experimental curriculum (Neuman 2003). Qualitative data derived from interviews, field notes and observations and the quantitative data from surveys were used to further enhance the analysis on the effectiveness of the experimental LDEP. Indeed, ‘the embedded case design allows for both qualitative and quantitative data and strategies of synthesis or knowledge integration’ (Scholz & Tietje 2002, p.14).

**Theoretical and Practical Benefits of Multiple Site Case Studies**

In order to include as many mediating variables as possible (Figure 3.1, p.59), researching in multiple sites was chosen as the best option for discovering the effectiveness of the LDEP in facilitating the imparting of language skills. The theoretical and practical benefits of multiple site case studies (Pereira & Vallance 2006) are offered below.
Theoretical Benefits

There are at least six theoretical benefits of multiple case study research. The theoretical benefits include the literal replication of outcomes or theoretical replication in case of discrepancies in outcomes as well as the opportunity these sites present in testing the hypotheses in naturalistic conditions. In addition, there are more variables which allow the researcher to argue for a greater validity in the findings than if the LDEP was tested in a smaller sample of variables. Similar outcomes could also lead to the possibility of generalisations being made to other schools with similar contexts, thereby leading to a possible wider interest in the findings. These benefits are explored in greater detail below.

1. Leading to Literal or Theoretical Replication

By studying the multiple sites as individual case studies as well as a larger single case study, sub-unit analysis as well as cross-comparisons could be made. According to Yin, ‘each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) produces contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)’ (1994, p.46, italicised by Yin). The diverse cases were included in the study so that if similar measured outcomes were achieved then these outcomes may be considered to be indicative of the effectiveness of the LDEP in enhancing language skills in spite of the many variables. Thus, if there is a literal replication in that the curriculum is found to be effective across the various sub-units, a ‘theoretical framework… [which] later becomes the vehicle for generalizing to new cases’ (Yin 1994, p.46) could be developed. This theoretical framework would include the curriculum as well as its characteristics (c.f. pp.28–30) which could form the basis for designing the LDEP in other sites or schools.

However, if there are conflicting measurable outcomes, the different variables in the diverse schools may be used to deduce the reasons for these conflicting outcomes. It may be surmised that the curriculum may be effective in some schools or classes but not in others due to some pertinent
mediating variables exerting an influence over the outcomes. The assumptions could then generate further research hypotheses and designs to evaluate the theories that arise out of the theoretical replication. Including more sites with varying characteristics in the current research, should there be no literal replication, offers a greater possibility of producing a theoretical replication.

2. **Testing the curriculum in a naturalistic environment**

Schools vary, students differ and so do classes. It would be difficult to reach any conclusion about a curriculum that is tested on a single school. The school culture or organisational structure may have an influence on whether the curriculum succeeds or not. The school may have high-achievers and the motivated students could be a reason why the curriculum succeeds. There could be many plausible reasons for a curriculum succeeding in one school and just as many possible reasons for failing in another. Therefore, depending on a single site or school would make the findings applicable only to that school and perhaps to schools with very similar characteristics. However, by conducting the research in multiple sites with very different characteristics the LDEP was tested in situations that included more variables, thereby emulating a wider naturalistic educational setting.

3. **Leading to greater coverage or sample of potential variables**

In the case of the research on the LDEP, there were many variables with regard to ability, gender, school and class cultures, and teaching styles. These variables existed within as well as across the schools studied. None of the variables were experimentally controlled and so the variability was similar to that normally encountered in the schools. Moreover, some of the variables such as the different teachers and the various protocols practised in the diverse schools appeared only during the implementation. Since the type of research was naturalistic, these variables were necessary components of the research and the many variables led to a larger sample of variables being included in the research. Additionally, in line with the nature of the current curriculum initiative project in retaining the naturalistic environments of the
schools, no attempt was made to apply a measure or metric of differences in
class or school culture, and teaching style. The same two measures, the
Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) overall and English subject
grades, which the schools use to sort student ability levels before the students
enter Secondary One, were used as indicators of general and English
Language abilities in the same way that the schools make use of these data.

4. **Possibility of more robust findings in heterogeneous multiple cases**

The LDEP that was tested among the Secondary One students in the four
diverse schools was the only constant amidst many variables. If it succeeded,
it would be easier to draw the conclusion that the inherent merits in the LDEP
were the most likely reasons for the improvement observed in the
performances of these students from the same age group.

5. **Naturalistic Generalisation**

A conclusion formed from an analysis of similar findings collected from the
multiple site case studies consisting of the four schools may lead to a
‘naturalistic generalization’ [italicised by Stake], derived by recognizing the
similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the
natural covariations of happenings. To generalize this way is to be both
intuitive and empirical’ (Stake 2000, p.22). There would be a greater
possibility of arriving at a naturalistic generalisation if the LDEP is found to be
effective in different kinds of schools consisting of a diverse student
population and teachers with varying teaching styles. The conclusions about
the LDEP drawn from the outcomes may be applied to more schools with
similar variables and contexts. The research may present a strong case to
other schools with similar circumstances as any of these four schools to
attempt the LDEP.

Generalisation of findings collected from samples of diverse population in
multiple case studies pertains to contextual generalisability and not empirical
or positivist generalisability. It is up to the reader to judge if the findings of the
research can be generalised to his or her school in the event that the contexts
of any of the participating schools are found to be similar to his or her school (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Indeed, ‘accepting generalizations (to whatever extent they may be possible) as indeterminate, relative and time- and context-bound, while not a wholly satisfying solution, is at least a feasible one’ (Lincoln & Guba 2000, p.32). The conclusions derived from such analyses in the current research could be extrapolated to other schools with similar contexts, thereby benefiting a wider school population.

6. Possible wider potential interest

The naturalistic generalization could result in a wider potential interest and audience. Other schools in Singapore, and perhaps in other countries, have a wider choice from the four very different multiple case studies included in the research with which to compare their schools. The range of characteristics in the sample schools can allow other schools to locate themselves with reference to these schools.

Therefore, a curriculum initiative project that is studied in multiple sites provides a number of advantages which may substantiate the validity of the research findings and conclusions drawn from them.

**Practical Benefits**

Apart from the theoretical benefits, multiple site case studies offer practical benefits as well. There are three main practical benefits arising from multiple site case studies. These practical benefits are elaborated below.

1. **Diversity of variables and methods of analysis leading to a greater understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum**

A curriculum that is effective in more schools involving a range of classes would have more practical benefits than one that is found to be effective in only one school or a few classes. In the current research, apart from the four diverse schools, there were seventeen experimental classes and eight control classes. Mixed methods were also utilised to analyse the data since the use of ‘both qualitative and quantitative methodological tools’ would allow for ‘both
the subjective and objective points of view’ to be included (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, p.26). The combined use of quantitative and qualitative data led to ‘the multiple sources of evidence [which] essentially provided multiple measures of the same phenomenon’ (Yin 1994, p.92). The diversity of variables from which data were collected and the use of mixed methods to analyse the data would also aid in authenticating the conclusions drawn from them (Guba 1981). Additionally, the research may generate a literal replication if similar conclusions are drawn across the units and sub-units of analysis. There may be theoretical replication if outcomes are different but these outcomes can be explained when comparisons are made between and across the units and sub-units of analysis. The diversity in variables and methods would therefore lead to a greater understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum.

2. Presence of multiple conditions reflecting the naturalistic situation in the educational arena

In multiple site case studies, there are also varying conditions which reflect the diverse naturalistic settings in the educational arena. In the research on the LDEP, the schools, the thirteen teachers and the students in the seventeen experimental classes reflect a diversity of abilities, skills, teaching or learning preferences, motivation levels as well as school and class cultures. By testing the curriculum in these different situations, without manipulating or controlling any of the variables, any finding in relation to the effectiveness of the curriculum would be more dependable. In the research on the LDEP, it was a “take us as you find us” situation among the teachers and students in the schools. The researcher did not attempt to impose any conditions but adapted and adjusted according to the needs and requirements of the schools. For example, in one school the periods were one hour long whereas in the other schools they were either thirty or thirty-five minutes long. The lesson outline and lesson plans provided to each school were adjusted to reflect these differences in timetabling. By ensuring that the multiple conditions in the schools remained intact, the LDEP could be tested in a naturalistic educational environment.
3. A large amount of data

Multiple site case studies also present the researcher with a large amount of data. There are two advantages to having a large amount of data. The first advantage is that should there be a problem with a particular type of data, there are other sources on which the researcher can rely. The second benefit is that the rich sources of data permit the creation of a theoretical framework if there is literal replication. However, if there are divergent outcomes there is an increased possibility of explaining the differences in the outcomes.

These practical advantages make the argument for reliable findings more plausible.

Implications of Conducting Research on the LDEP in Multiple Sites

Figure 3.2 presents an overview of the curriculum initiative project that was conducted in multiple sites. The main characteristics of the research and the implications of conducting the research as case studies in multiple sites are displayed in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Overview of the Research on the LDEP Conducted in Multiple Sites
Implementing a curriculum initiative programme is complex in many respects. Whether it succeeds or fails may be attributable to a number of factors. In order to test the inherent merits of the curriculum, as Figure 3.2 demonstrates, the curriculum initiative project on the LDEP was conducted in multiple sites. Since the intent was to improve on existing English and Literature curricular practices, the complex school environments in the sites were left intact with no controls imposed on the schools (Figure 3.2). There was no interference with the instructional methods of the teachers or the implementation procedures of the schools. The teachers had full ownership of their classes (Figure 3.2) and assistance was only offered when requested. Teachers were regarded as fellow practitioners whose professional perceptions of the LDEP articulated during interaction and dialogue proved useful to the researcher during her reflection of the outcome of the research (Bryk, Lee & Holland 1993; McNiff & Whitehead 2002). Additionally, by including the perceptions of the teachers as data the research may prove relevant to them (Mills 2003) and their schools.

It was accepted that there would be challenges and that these were part of the naturalistic environments in which the effectiveness of the LDEP was being investigated. The investigation was also anticipated to be part of an ongoing reflective process (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire 2003; Schoen & Schoen 2003) that may lead to further development of the LDEP (Figure 3.2). Consequently, though the intent of the current research was to discover whether the LDEP would be effective in enhancing language skills, it was also accepted that the findings may yield propositions for future improvements to the LDEP.

In investigating the effectiveness of the curriculum in naturalistic environments multiple sites of four schools with many variables were studied as cases (Figure 3.2). Case studies, and embedded case studies (Yin 1994), of heterogeneous sites could lead to more robust findings (Shofield 2000). The comprehensive exploration of the intact multi-faceted influences acting within and across the multiple site case studies on the curriculum (Stake 2000; Yin 2003) through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.
(Scholz & Tietje 2002) may also lead to a greater appreciation of the utility of the curriculum.

**The Literature-Driven English Curriculum**

In a curriculum initiative project in which the researcher designed the curriculum, the experience gained by the researcher working in schools in Singapore as well as in the United States proved useful in a number of areas. The ways in which this experience had been useful in developing and assessing this curriculum are offered below:

1. **Drawing on past teaching experience and the literature review**

In the designing of the curriculum, the researcher could draw on her experiences teaching an integrated English and Literature programme in Singapore and also as a Language Arts teacher in the United States. During these teaching experiences, the researcher was not only exposed to but taught the Literature-based English Curriculum, thereby enabling her to evaluate its advantages and disadvantages. The teaching experience also helped her in building a rapport with the teachers and students with whom she came into contact during the course of the research.

The knowledge gained during her Master of Education course in the United States also aided in the curriculum design. The modules on educational and adolescent psychology, reading and the teaching of Secondary English were particularly helpful. These modules enhanced the understanding of the researcher regarding learner needs and preferences, thereby aiding in the design and presentation of the components to be included in the curriculum to make learning interesting and accessible to the learners. Ideas for the design of the curriculum also came from a workbook the researcher wrote and published (Pereira 2003). In the workbook extracts from well-known poems, novels, short stories and essays were used to teach selected grammar concepts and writing techniques. In addition, the literature review completed for this research aided in expanding on the prior knowledge of learner
preferences and needs as well as the salient features of learning the English Language.

The teaching experience and knowledge of teaching pedagogy gained from the Master of Education course and literature review aided in the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected.

2. Knowledge of Generic Practices

Knowledge of generic practices common across Singapore schools proved useful for the researcher when the curriculum was designed. For instance, she knew that in Singapore narrative writing skills are commonly taught in lower secondary classes. Accordingly, it was decided that the curriculum would focus on the teaching of narrative writing skills.

Design of the Curriculum

The designed curriculum was adapted according to the needs of individual schools as the different literature texts which the students in the selected schools used in Term 3, 2004 were utilised. (Please refer to Appendices 2a and 2b for the sample outline and lesson plans.) The teaching methods and learning approaches used in the classes were however the same. The explicit instruction materials employed at the beginning of the lessons were also the same. The differences were found in the examples used in the class assignments and in the homework since these examples came from the text that the students were using.

Once the curriculum was designed, the Head of the School of Teaching and a Senior Lecturer in Secondary English at the University of Notre Dame Australia examined the curriculum. Their feedback guided the development of the curriculum. In addition, the curriculum was also sent to the four participating schools so that feedback from practitioners could also be obtained. By soliciting feedback from the schools, the curriculum design was evaluated by the participant schools as well. The experience and expertise of the teachers in the participating schools not only ensured that there was a
greater likelihood that the curriculum would have merit but also that it would be acceptable to the schools implementing the programme.

Participants

The participating students were Secondary One students. Most of these students had completed their PSLE in 2003 and entered secondary education in January 2004. The students were from the Express and Normal (Academic) streams. These participants possessed varying language abilities though all were assumed to have basic reading and writing skills since they had passed the PSLE. Participating in the research were four schools: an all-boys', an all-girls' and two co-educational schools, thereby making the sample indicative of the general school population in Singapore with regard to school type, gender and abilities.

In these schools, the sample of students included those from:
- single-sex and co-educational schools,
- independent, government-aided and government schools (including an autonomous school),
- Express and Normal streams, and
- mixed-ability classes.

Additionally, three of the schools had separate English and Literature curricula whereas one of the schools had an integrated Literature-based English curriculum with a greater focus on Literature than the teaching of language skills.

The unit of analysis in the current research was the class. Data was also analysed based on the following: experimental and control groups; the individual schools; gender; ability based on the PSLE English grades; streams; the experimental classes in the four schools; and finally the classes of teachers who taught both experimental and control classes.
Gathering Data
There were a number of steps that were taken during the course of gathering the data. Toward the end of 2003 surveys were mailed to the 165 secondary schools in Singapore to inform schools of the research, to get their feedback on an integrated English and Literature programme and to discover if any of these schools would be interested in participating in the research. Data were collected in stages from schools that agreed to participate in the research. These stages will be described in the following section.

Preliminary Step of Locating Participants

Before the research was undertaken, permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to conduct a preliminary survey (c.f. Appendix 10a) during the period of October 2003 to January 2004. Six schools which expressed initial interest in the preliminary survey were contacted after the MoE gave a verbal go-ahead through the telephone in January 2004 to approach schools to ascertain if they would be interested in taking part in the research. Four schools agreed to permit their Secondary One students to participate in the research. One of the schools, School 1, required that all its Secondary One Express and Normal (Academic) classes participate in the research. Express students and Normal (Academic) students take four and five years respectively to complete their secondary education. The three other schools were willing to have some classes participate as control classes and others as experimental classes (Table 3.1). Table 3.1 displays the four schools and information about participant classes and teachers in the schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Co-educational;</td>
<td>Express; Normal (Academic)</td>
<td>7; 1*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government, Autonomous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boys'; Independent</td>
<td>Express</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Girls'; Government-aided</td>
<td>Express</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Co-educational; Government</td>
<td>Express</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Originally there were 2 Normal (Academic) classes, but one had to be excluded from analysis due to discrepancies in some of the data collected from the class.
Phases of Gathering Data

The data collection occurred over five main stages. In the preliminary stage, surveys were mailed out from Australia to schools in Singapore (c.f. p.71). During the early part of the first stage, the researcher was in Singapore and was able to approach the schools that indicated an interest in participating in the research. Work on designing the curriculum was started in Australia during the remaining part of the second stage and contact with schools was maintained through email. During the third to fifth stages, the researcher was in Singapore, visiting schools and collecting data.

1st Stage: During the first stage, six schools were approached and four schools indicated an interest to participate. A fifth school expressed its interest through email. Outlines of the curriculum were created and sent to the schools in April (please refer to Appendix 2a for the sample outline). Five schools agreed to participate in the research. One school withdrew from the project in July, leaving four schools which eventually participated in the research. Approvals to conduct the field research in Singapore were also obtained from the Ministry of Education in Singapore and the Ethics Committee of The University of Notre Dame (c.f. Appendices 10b and 10c).

2nd Stage: In the second stage, during the school holidays, between the end of May and June 2004, the researcher visited the four schools to give the teachers an overview of the research and to brief the teachers on the curriculum. In one of the schools, the researcher was able to meet with only the Literature teachers. In this one school, another meeting was held in July, when school reopened, so that both the English and Literature teachers could be briefed about the programme. Lesson plans were also distributed to all the teachers in the schools before the programme was implemented in the schools (please refer to Appendix 2b for the sample lesson plans). Initially, it was planned that a workshop on the LDEP would be held for the teachers who would be teaching under the programme. Due to time constraints a workshop could not be held; however, teachers were encouraged to contact the researcher should they need assistance with the teaching of the
programme. The teachers were provided with the email address of the researcher and the coordinators were also given the mobile phone number of the researcher.

3rd Stage: In the third stage, immediately before the implementation of the programme, the students in the experimental and control classes completed the pre-tests (c.f. Appendices 3a and 3b) to assess their writing and reading comprehension skills. The test scores were used for the quantitative analysis of the writing and reading comprehension skills of the students at the beginning of the programme. At this time, the teachers who had agreed to teach the proposed curriculum were also interviewed about the existing English and Literature programmes in their schools (please refer to the semi-structured interview schedule in Appendix 6a). Data from the interviews formed part of the qualitative data.

4th Stage: During the fourth stage, the teachers of the experimental classes taught the proposed curriculum during Term 3, 2004. Since the Head of the English Department of School 1 requested that all the Secondary One students in the Express and Normal (Academic) streams in the school be taught the proposed curriculum so as to 'level the playing field', groups of classes of students in School 1 were taught under the experimental LDEP in phases. Table 3.2 demonstrates how the students in School 1 were taught in phases. In the first phase, 5 classes (Group 1) were taught the experimental curriculum while the remaining four classes (Group 2) were taught the usual curriculum. During the second phase Group 1 was taught the usual curriculum and Group 2 was taught the experimental curriculum (Table 3.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2: Implementation of LDEP in School 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Term 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 1 – 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 5 – 9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The programme ran for five to six weeks in each of the experimental classes in which it was implemented. There were two reasons for the variation in the number of weeks. There were differences in the number of hours that each school devoted to the teaching of English and Literature in a week. In some schools, lessons were disrupted by internal school or academic events.

During the implementation of the curriculum in the seventeen experimental classes, each of the classes was observed by the researcher twice over a period of five to six weeks (please refer to Appendix 9 for the semi-structured observation schedule). In addition, the teachers were also asked to keep log book entries regarding any noteworthy observable changes in motivation or skill level of the students.

5th Stage: At the conclusion of the programme, the students in the experimental and control classes were assessed on their writing and reading comprehension skills through post-tests (c.f. Appendices 4a and 4b). The teachers of the experimental classes were again interviewed for their feedback on the programme (please refer to the semi-structured interview schedule in Appendix 6b).

A small group of about seven students from each of the seventeen classes were also interviewed so as to give students the opportunity to provide feedback about the programme (please refer to Appendix 7 for the semi-structured small group interview schedule). It is important to allow students who would be most affected by a curriculum initiative the opportunity to voice their opinions because ‘listening to children provides clues as to what they as consumers value and are willing to engage with’ (Holden 2002). All the students in the seventeen experimental classes were also given survey questionnaires to complete (c.f. Appendix 8).

A request was also made to the schools to have access to the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) English grades of the students. All the schools obliged and provided the researcher with the required information.
Sources and Kinds of Collected Data

The collected data were quantitative and qualitative in nature. Table 3.3 displays the sources and types of the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Table 3.3: Sources and Kinds of Collected Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From teachers</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Total No. of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Log Books</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward end of Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From students</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Total No. of classes</th>
<th>Total No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical data</td>
<td></td>
<td>PSLE English Grades</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Writing (Story starters); Reading Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Writing*: Pre – 950 Reading*: Pre – 951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>Writing (Story starters); Reading Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Writing: Post – 944 Reading: Post – 955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Survey</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From classes</td>
<td>Semi-structured Observations (twice)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 X 2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only paired pre-test and post-test results were analysed. Results of students who sat for only one of the tests, either the pre-test or post-test, were excluded from the quantitative analysis.

The field notes of the researcher were also used to inform the analysis of the qualitative data. In addition, some of the responses from 21 schools that responded to a preliminary survey (c.f. Appendix 1a) were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data.

The qualitative data from the teachers consisted of the interviews conducted before the implementation and at the conclusion of the LDEP. Log book...
entries of any observable learning experiences that they had noted in their students were also examined. The qualitative data from the students included the small group interviews. About seven students from each class formed the small group. Composition of the small group was left to the teachers. Most of the teachers selected the students based on academic performance to ensure that each group was made up of students of various abilities. The qualitative data also included field notes and semi-structured observations of the 17 classes (c.f. Appendix 9) which were designed to gather contextual rather than explanatory data. The analysis of the qualitative data was used to enhance the findings and conclusions derived from the quantitative data.

The quantitative data consisted of the results of the writing skills and reading comprehension pre-test and post-test, exit survey findings and PSLE English grades. The writing and reading comprehension skills tests were uniform pre-tests and post-tests that students in the experimental and control groups completed before the implementation of the programme and at the end of the programme. The writing skills tests (c.f. Appendices 3b and 4b) comprised story starters from which the students were expected to create their own narratives. The reading comprehension tests consisted of passages which were extracts taken from the same book of fiction. At the end of each passage, the students were to complete a cloze passage to display their comprehension of the passages (c.f. Appendices 3a and 4a). In addition, requests were made to the schools to have access to the PSLE English grades of the students and the schools obliged. The exit surveys (c.f. Appendix 8) that the students from the seventeen experimental classes completed at the conclusion of the programme made up the final part of the quantitative data. The quantitative data were analysed to determine if the students displayed any improvement in writing and reading comprehension skills.

Answering the Research Questions with the Collected Data
The data collected were used to answer the major research question as well as the sub-questions. Table 3.4 links the data with the research questions that were answered through the analysis of the data.
Table 3.4: Research Questions and the Data used to answer those Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major: Does an integrated English Language and Literature curriculum enhance the</td>
<td>Conclusions drawn from sub-questions 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language skills of the students?</td>
<td>to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub 1: Are the students able to write more effective narratives if they use a given</td>
<td>Pre-test and Post-test Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literature text as a model of a good narrative?</td>
<td>Interviews (Teachers and Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub 2: Do students become more effective writers if they are taught contextually</td>
<td>Interviews (Teachers and Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rather than in “bits and pieces”?</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub 3: Are students able to produce a more grammatically accurate piece of writing</td>
<td>Pre-test and Post-test Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if they are taught in context through a Literature text?</td>
<td>Interviews (Teachers and Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub 4: Are students able to comprehend better if they are taught comprehension</td>
<td>Pre-test and Post-test Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills in context through a Literature text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub 5: Are students better able to critically analyse a Literature text if, in</td>
<td>Interviews (Teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addition to content, they analyse the language of the text as well?</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pre-test and post-test scores and the exit surveys from the students were used to answer the sub-questions 1 and 3 pertaining to whether the students wrote more effective and grammatically accurate narratives when the literature text was employed as a tool (Table 3.4). The qualitative data from the interviews with the teachers and students were also used to answer these sub-questions, 1 and 3. Sub-question 2 regarding the correlation between contextual teaching and improvement in writing was answered through the use of the qualitative data derived from interviews with teachers and students. Sub-question 4 dealt with whether the students comprehended better through utilising the literature text as a tool and this question was answered through the pre-test and post-test scores. The data from the interviews with teachers and the surveys were used to discover the answer to sub-question 5, namely whether the students improved in the literary analysis of the text (Table 3.4). The conclusions drawn from sub-questions were used to inform the analysis of the overarching major research question of whether an integrated Literature and English Programme was effective in improving language skills (Table
The manner in which these questions were answered by the different kinds of data is found in the concluding chapter, Chapter 7.

Data Analysis

In this section, the manner in which the data from the research was analysed so as to ensure the reliability and validity of the conclusions drawn from them is examined.

In the current research, data triangulation and methodological triangulation were utilized (Denzin 1978). The different types of data from various sources were analysed through quantitative and qualitative approaches to answer the research questions. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and data to examine the major and subsidiary research questions would allow for the cross-checking of the data (Guba 1981). The findings and conclusions drawn from these findings would be more reliable as they can cross-checked for consistency (Burnaford 2001; Wallen & Fraenkel 2001).

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data included the analysis of pre-test and post-test scores and the surveys. The surveys comprised the preliminary survey that was sent to 165 secondary schools in Singapore and the exit survey that the students in the experimental group completed at the end of the implementation of the LDEP.

Pre-test and Post-test Scores

The test scores were used for the quantitative analysis of the writing and reading comprehension skills of the students at the conclusion of the programme. During the quantitative data analysis, the PSLE English grades of the students aided in ascertaining the skill levels of the participants. Once the levels of language competency of the students were ascertained, it became possible to make cross-comparisons of the pre-test and post-test results of the students within each school, between schools and between
students in the experimental and control groups. In marking the tests and computing the scores from the pre-test and post-test, standard marking procedures were followed. There was a marking scheme for the writing skills tests (c.f. Appendix 5a) and lists of acceptable and unacceptable answers were created for the pre-test and post-test reading comprehension (c.f. Appendix 5b). When analysing the results of each of the writing and reading comprehension tests, the pre-test and post-test scores of each student were paired. Since the improvement scores of the individual students were the focus of the analysis, the likelihood of variations between and among students affecting the findings was greatly diminished. In addition, the scores that the researcher awarded were cross-checked with the marks that the teachers from the schools awarded for the random sets of papers they assessed. These steps were taken to ensure that a valid comparison could be made as to whether there was an appreciable increase in the level of competency displayed by the students in different groups at the conclusion of the implementation of the LDEP.

Surveys

With regard to the preliminary and exit surveys, content analyses of the responses reduced the themes derived from the responses to categories. In the preliminary survey, the schools commented on whether they had an integrated English and Literature Programme and the degree of integration of the existing English and Literature Programmes of the schools and the components taught within the English Language. These components included Comprehension, Composition, Vocabulary, Grammar and Oral Communication. The survey was also used to ascertain how the English Departments in the schools viewed an integrated English and Literature Programme. In the exit surveys the students in the experimental group were asked to comment on their usual curriculum and the LDEP. They were also asked if they had grasped any of the six grammatical concepts taught during the programme and if in their opinion they had improved in their writing and analytical skills. The data from the surveys were used in the quantitative analysis of the perceptions of the students about the LDEP and its usefulness.
The responses from the preliminary and exit surveys were coded through the use of manifest content analysis through which surface meanings were sought (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003). For questions which required short ‘yes’, ‘no’ or straight-forward answers such as the type of books the students preferred reading, ‘simple frequency counts of identified words or terms’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003, p.69) were performed. Similarly, in relation to the responses to open-ended questions such as why they did or did not like the LDEP, frequencies of identified terms were computed. Microsoft Excel XP™ and SPSS™ version 12 were used to analyse the quantitative data.

**Reliability of Quantitative Data Analysis**

To ensure the reliability of the data analysis, the tests were also assessed by one person, the researcher, and scores were recorded only after all the papers were assessed. An additional precaution taken to ensure reliability was to have some of the papers, selected at random, assessed by the teachers participating in the research. The scores awarded by the teachers and the researcher for the same papers were cross-checked to see if they were the same. In the survey results, where students gave ambiguous responses, these were excluded. At the same time, survey results of one class were excluded when they were deemed unreliable because of discrepancies between the PSLE scores that some of the students reported and information provided by the school. Additionally, the test scores of this class were excluded from analysis. In order not to jeopardise the reliability of the other findings the ambiguous data and data from the one class were excluded. Whenever there was a discrepancy that would affect the reliability of the data to be analysed, the data were excluded.

The steps taken to ensure the reliability of the data, it was felt, would help to make the conclusions drawn from the quantitative findings more defensible.

**Validity of Quantitative Data Analysis**

Uniform writing and reading comprehension pre-tests and post-tests were completed by students in the experimental and control groups in all the four
schools. Additionally, paired pre-test and post-test results were analysed so that the improvement scores of individual students could be computed. The use of uniform tests and the analysis of paired test scores enhanced the validity of the test instruments and analysis. There is a greater likelihood of these test instruments and mode of analysis generating a more accurate measure of the improvement or lack of improvement achieved by individual students in the narrative writing and reading comprehension skills. There is also a greater chance that the comparisons made within and between sub-groups, comprising of experimental and control groups, school, gender, ability and stream would be more valid since the comparisons would be based on the same instrumentation.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

In relation to qualitative data analysis, to ensure the reliability and validity of the analysis, the mode of analysis adopted included a triangulation of measures. The audio recordings of interviews with teachers and small groups of students were transcribed and examined through the aid of QSR Nud*ist version 6 (N6) (Richards 2002). Additionally through conceptual analysis, themes or issues were identified from the data in the observation of classes, field notes and the log book entries of the teachers (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003). These analyses were used to gain insight into the perceptions of the teachers and students about the LDEP and whether they felt that learning was taking place under the programme. At the same time, the qualitative data were also examined to discover if the students found the lessons conducted during the programme enjoyable. The qualitative data aided in enhancing the quantitative findings.

**Interviews**

The preliminary and concluding interviews conducted with the teachers were transcribed verbatim. In the preliminary interviews (c.f. Appendix 6a) the participating teachers were asked to comment on: the existing programmes of their schools; the language abilities and reading preferences of their students; an integrated English and Literature programme; their fears or hopes in
relation to the LDEP. In the concluding interviews conducted with the teachers (c.f. Appendix 6b), they were asked to comment on whether: they had noticed any learning taking place in the classes during the programme; they had observed any difficulties that the students encountered when learning under the new programme; they would like to continue teaching under the programme; and whether they would recommend the programme to other English and Literature teachers.

During the small group interviews, the students were asked if they noticed any differences between the English and Literature programmes that they had before the implementation of the programme and the LDEP. They were then asked to elaborate on any lessons during the LDEP that they did not enjoy and any lessons that they enjoyed. Their perception of whether they felt any learning had taken place was also solicited before they were asked to conclude with whether they would recommend the programme or not. The interviews were summarised and informative sections selectively transcribed to fairly report the sense of the student perceptions. The data from the interviews were used for the qualitative analysis of the feedback gained from the teachers and students on the effectiveness and weaknesses of the LDEP.

Observation and Field Notes

The data from the observation and log book entries were used for the qualitative analysis of the progress of the curriculum in the individual classes. During the participant observation, the main objective was to ‘document the behaviours and interaction patterns as they occur[red] in the “natural settings”’ (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, p.106) so as to evaluate the progress of the LDEP in the classes. The log book entries from the teachers allowed the researcher to obtain feedback from the observations of the teachers of their classes as they taught the lessons under the LDEP. Field notes further enhanced the qualitative analysis in the current research.

In the qualitative analysis, coding through the use of themes was developed by the researcher to accommodate the requirements of the study on the
effectiveness of the LDEP (Brown, Cozby, Kee & Worden 1999). Relational analysis of the qualitative data was performed ‘by identifying themes or issues to explore’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003, p.77). These themes were coded according to the pertinent research question. Themes were collected in groups that might lead to a greater understanding of the utility of the LDEP. These codes concentrated on extracting the nuances found in the text, whether in what was said during the interviews or in what was observed (Berelson 1971).

Reliability of Qualitative Data Analysis

To ensure the reliability of the qualitative data a number of steps were adopted. Semi-structured interview schedules were used in the interviews to permit ‘sufficient flexibility to allow the interviewee an opportunity to shape the flow of the information’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003, p.45). Teachers and students were able to include matters or topics that the researcher had not considered but which were relevant to the study. During the interviews, teachers and students were also encouraged to elaborate on adverse comments made about the LDEP so that a multi-dimensional picture of the research could be gained. Additionally, when feedback received from teachers was ambiguous, the researcher went back to the teachers to obtain clarification. The interviews were also transcribed carefully by cross-checking the typed transcripts with the audio recordings of the interviews to ensure that the actual intended meanings of the interviewees were conveyed.

There is a greater likelihood that the steps taken to ensure the reliability of the qualitative data would generate more credible qualitative findings.

Validity of Qualitative Data Analysis

To ensure validity of the qualitative data analysis literal data from interviews are included to substantiate the qualitative findings. Pertinent information from the observation and field notes was shared with the teachers during informal meetings and during interviews so as to gain the perspective of the
teachers as well. The cross-checking of information with the teachers may increase the validity of the data gained from the observation and field notes.

**Usefulness of the Research**

The context of the research is Singapore where the field research on the effectiveness of the LDEP was conducted. The sampling consisted of diverse schools and classes and this diverse sampling may lead to a greater degree of applicability to the general student population in Singapore. The 165 secondary schools in Singapore comprise co-educational schools as well as twelve boys’ schools and fifteen girls’ schools (Ministry of Education Singapore 2003a). The inclusion of a boys’ and a girls’ schools along with two co-educational schools in the sample suggests that the findings may be applicable to a wide range of schools. The selected students were also Secondary One students of varying language abilities, and two of the classes were Normal (Academic) classes. Again, this would make the findings applicable to a wider school population as most Singaporean students are either in the Special/Express or Normal (Academic) streams (Ministry of Education Singapore 2003a).

Teachers from the selected schools were asked to teach the experimental curriculum while the researcher observed the classes. Only on a couple of occasions, at the request of the teachers, in two schools did the researcher model how the lessons might be taught. By requesting that the teachers teach their usual classes important mediating variables, the different personalities and modes of teaching of the teachers, could be included when the effectiveness of the LDEP was analysed. In the same way, the use of different literary texts and the differing abilities of the students were also viewed as important mediating variables. However, the curriculum was consistent with regard to the skills taught and mode of instruction, thereby, making it, the curriculum, the independent variable.

By not imposing controls on the mediating variables, the effectiveness of the LDEP in diverse naturalistic environments could be assessed. Indeed, if any
of the variables had been controlled, and even if the curriculum succeeded in certain quarters, it would not be assured of success in other schools where variables would not be controlled. Given the large number of variables that exist within a school and between schools, the best chance of seeing if any curriculum would succeed was to test it in environments that are left as naturalistic as possible.

In assessing the LDEP measures were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the quantitative and qualitative findings. The use of uniform tests and through assessing the difference in performance of individual students at the conclusion of the implementation of the LDEP through paired test analysis increased the validity of the quantitative research findings. The inclusion of interview data, quoted verbatim, enhanced the validity of the qualitative findings. Steps taken to ensure reliability included having teachers mark randomly selected test papers so as to cross-check the scores awarded by the teachers and the researcher. Unreliable data were excluded and semi-structured interview schedules were utilised so that there was flexibility for the teachers to articulate their opinions and perceptions about the LDEP as fully as possible. Additionally, transcriptions of the interviews were cross-checked for accuracy. Triangulation of methods and measures also increased the likelihood that the findings were reliable. By taking measures to ensure the reliability and validity of the quantitative and qualitative findings there is a greater possibility that the research would prove useful to schools since the findings would be defensible.

Here it must also be acknowledged that the researcher was aware of the limitations of multiple site case studies. There were theoretical as well as practical limitations. Among the theoretical challenges, there was the problem of reconciling the differences and conflicts in the pertinent variables. Deciding on the meaningfulness of the variables was another limitation. Moreover, there was also the difficulty of explaining the discrepancies in the outcomes. The practical challenges included coping with the limited human and other resources and time at the disposal of the researcher and analysing a large
amount of quantitative and qualitative data. The theoretical and practical limitations are covered in greater detail in Chapter 7, pp.260–265.

**Ethical Issues and Modes of Addressing Them**

Before, during and after the conduct of the research, ethical issues surrounding the implementation of a curriculum initiative project in schools were carefully considered. The researcher was aware of differences between the Australian and Singaporean practices of ethics in school research and it was decided that the local customs and requirements would be followed. These arrangements were acceptable to the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) Ethics Committee.

Ethics approval and permission to conduct research in Singapore were sought from the Ethics Committee of the UNDA and the MoE in Singapore. Both the ethics approval and permission to conduct research in Singapore were granted by the Ethics Committee of UNDA and the MoE toward the end of March 2004 (c.f. Appendices 10c and 10b).

In conducting the research, the laws and guidelines to which the MoE required adherence were followed (NHMRC n.d., § 1.21). In addition, a number of principles that are detailed below were considered to ensure that the research was carried out in an ethical manner. These principles are based on the holistic ethics model advocated by Vallance (2005).

**Respect for Persons, Justice and Beneficence**

In the course of the conduct of the research, the researcher was aware of her responsibility to the stakeholders and participants of the research, namely the schools, teachers and students. Thus, steps were taken to minimise any adverse effects or inconvenience and to ensure that proper and adequate information was given to all the stakeholders. The steps taken to ensure that the research was conducted in a responsible manner are offered below.
1.  Responsibility to the Participants and their Parents

The interests of the participants took precedence over all other interests (NHMRC n.d., § 1.4). In order to ensure that the interests of the participants were safe-guarded and any ill-effects minimised (NHMRC n.d., § 4.3), the LDEP was carefully designed, evaluated by independent assessors and also given to participating schools beforehand to get their feedback. In addition, to minimise any inconvenience or detrimental effects that might occur due to the experimentation (Dockrell 1990) the research was conducted for a short period of between five and six weeks.

In adhering to Singapore customs and MoE ethical requirements, which were met, the option of informing the parents of the student participants were left to the school principals. Accordingly, in most cases the teachers gave the students a brief overview of the research. In one school, at the request of the school, letters outlining the purpose and nature of the research were sent to the parents of the students in the experimental classes. Moreover, if the participants were aware that they were part of a research study, being young they might react differently. There was ‘no moral obligation to give subjects more information than they need to act in their long-run best interests’ (Rivlin & Timpane 1975, p.107). Therefore, student participants were only given an exit survey to complete and the small group interviews of students were held at the conclusion of the LDEP. Before commencing the small group interviews, students were also assured that their names would not appear in any published reports or forum. Likewise, the students were not required to include their names in the surveys they completed. In the findings, as recommended by Leedy and Ormrod (2001), the researcher used code numbers and letters of the alphabet in place of the names of the participants and schools that took part in the research. Hence, the schools, teachers and students were not identified.

Since the researcher was given access to the PSLE English grades of the participants as well as other information pertaining to academic performance,
all information so obtained and the findings were kept anonymous so as to safeguard the interests and privacy of the participants (NHMRC n.d., § 1.19).

2. Responsibility to the Schools

To ensure that the schools’ time was not wasted or that the students suffered no adverse effects from an ill-designed curriculum, the researcher reviewed literature on the topic. She also sought feedback from practitioners so as to guarantee that the curriculum was of a high quality.

The curriculum was also sent to the schools beforehand. The intent was to seek and gain the approval and permission of the principals and the teachers of the schools which had agreed to participate in the research (Gay & Airasian 2003). Only when the schools were satisfied with the outlines and lesson plans was the curriculum implemented in the four schools. In fact, in a fifth school the teacher felt that the LDEP would be unsuitable for her students after lesson plans were given and a few lessons were conducted. The school had the prerogative to withdraw from the research; the school withdrew and data collected from that school were excluded.

The researcher also gave the school administration and its teachers an overview of the research project. The researcher outlined the objectives, purpose, procedures, and expectations. The researcher, in addition, assured the teachers of her full cooperation to minimize inconvenience. Thus, the teachers in the schools were encouraged to voice their expectations and anxieties. They were also informed that they could contact the researcher at any point for assistance should they need it. To this end, full contact details of the researcher, both in Australia and in Singapore, and those of the research supervisor were communicated to all participants. These contact details included postal addresses, email, telephone and fax particulars. Additionally, to minimise any unequal balance of power between researcher and the practitioner, the researcher maintained a low profile throughout the implementation of the LDEP.
Furthermore, the researcher conducted the research for a short period of about five to six weeks so that the schools or students were not unnecessarily inconvenienced by the research. This relatively short period of time drastically constrained the scope of the trial curriculum, and this constraint was accepted in order to minimise possible loss of teaching time. The research was also done in phases so that no great burden was placed on the schools or participants. The preliminary survey of 165 schools was completed at least five months before the initial research, and the in-class research was conducted immediately after the June holidays in Term 3 and it ended in Term 3, well ahead of the final exams at the end of Term 4. In completing the research in phases, it was hoped that the schools and students would not find the research a burden and an impediment to their learning objectives. Additionally, the participants targeted for this research were Secondary One students who were not sitting for any major exams that year.

The researcher assured the schools that the names of the schools or the teachers would not be revealed in any published reports or forums. The researcher also notified the schools that the findings might be published in academic journals. Additionally, the schools were informed that at the conclusion of the research, the researcher would share the research findings with the schools so that the research would be of benefit to the schools as well. The research findings were included in a preliminary report and sent to the individual schools along with the data and outcomes of the research on the respective schools.

**Research Merit and Precautions**

To ensure the research has merit, the researcher will share the findings with the MoE since the researcher has an obligation to the larger student population as well. The findings will also be published in academic journals so as to benefit a larger community. In this way, the research will be beneficial to more school systems and schools.
In order to maintain the integrity of the research, the researcher will maintain ownership over the collected data and analysis of the data.

**Ethical Review and Conduct of Research**

During the course of the research, steps were also taken to ensure that the literature was reviewed ethically. In addition, the research topic and questions as well as the methods employed during the course of the research were examined to ensure that they were ethically sound.

1. **The Responsible Review of Literature**

Literature was reviewed with the intent to find out more about the research area of focus so as to gain a greater understanding of the problems associated with it. Thus, the literature review was carried out responsibly such that no particular view was sought in preference to another. The intention was to access available relevant knowledge that could aid in the discovery of a solution to the research problem rather than to buttress any preconceived notions held by the researcher.

2. **The Responsible Conduct of the Research**

First, the research topic was seriously considered and opinions of others sought to ensure that the research questions generated were ‘important to the… wellbeing of children’ (NHMRC n.d., § 4.1a). The findings from the preliminary survey (c.f. Appendix 1c) revealed that many teachers had considered the topic and were interested in research on it. In addition, the questions were carefully designed so as to ensure that they were not frivolous but rather, focused on existing problems that needed to be addressed. The predominating intention was to seek real solutions to genuine problems.

Thus, literature was reviewed to assess the needs of the student population with regard to the teaching of English and to ensure that the research was ‘justifiable in terms of its potential contribution to knowledge’ (NHMRC n.d., § 1.13).
Since this is a curriculum initiative project with possible repercussions on the learning of the participants, great care was taken when employing the methods. The researcher made sure that the study done and the method chosen were appropriate for the age group (NHMRC n.d., § 4.1c). Thus, the methods employed in the research were carefully considered and implemented in such a way that neither the participating schools nor the students experienced any inconvenience or harm. Adjustments were made to accommodate the needs and requirements of the schools during the implementation of the programme.

Any ‘extraneous variables that operate[d] during the study’ were carefully considered and measures taken so as to make sure that, as far as possible, they did not ‘affect the internal validity’ (Borg 1981, p.178) of the research. For example, in Term 3 there were public holidays and school functions which affected the programme. Thus, instead of shortening the programme to adhere to the planned schedule, the programme was extended so that all the lessons could be executed.

The diverse participants were included with the intention of maximising the generalizability of the data to be gathered so that the sample population would be representative of the general student population of that age group. Therefore, no one group of students, whether based on gender, race or language ability, was targeted in preference to any other or excluded (NHMRC n.d., § 1.5).

In gathering data, care was again taken to ensure that appropriate types of data were targeted and that the origin of the sources would serve the research purpose. The data sought were linked to the research questions so that these questions were answered.

**The Ethical Development and Use of Instruments**

Care was also taken to ensure that due ethical consideration was given during the conception, development and use of the research instruments. In
deciding on the types of research instruments and in developing them, their usefulness in meeting the objectives of the research was first established. The impact that the instruments would have on the participants of the research was also considered. Finally, steps were taken to ensure that the instruments were employed in an ethical manner.

The Responsible Development and Use of Research Instruments

The ethical considerations that went into the development and utilisation of research instruments such as letters of introduction, letters to parents, lesson plans, the literature resources used and the particulars regarding the programme are covered in pp.87–91.

Due consideration was given to the survey and interview questions to ensure that they minimised ‘anxiety or discomfort’ and the researcher also accepted that she had to be ‘responsible for protecting the confidentiality of data’ collected (Neuman 2003, p. 302). Uniform pre-tests and post-tests were used in the four schools so as to increase the validity of the conclusions reached from the cross-comparisons within and between schools. In the final analysis of the test scores, only group computations were analysed and reported.

Interviews were audio-recorded with the written consent of the participants. The field notes and audio-recordings of interviews will be safe-guarded by the researcher and they will not be shown to the schools or individual students. As mentioned, individual names related to the data will not be published in any form (c.f. p.89).

The Ethical Collection of Data

Steps were also taken to ensure that the data were collected in a responsible manner.

The Responsible Collection of Data

With regard to the field data, in-depth notes were made during the observations, trips made to the schools and informal conversations held with
the teachers so that the data collected would be worthy of analysis (Neuman 2003).

Although the uniform pre-test and post-test included writing prompts which are considered more subjective than short-response tests (Borg 1981), steps were taken to standardise the marking criteria by relying on rubrics that have already been used in standardised writing assessments. The rubrics for the writing test were adapted from the ISAT Writing Sample Book of the Illinois State Board of Education (Illinois State Board of Education 2002). With regard to the reading comprehension tests, sets of acceptable and non-acceptable answers were created. Preliminary sets of answers were first compiled. Then, a small sub-sample of scripts from different schools was marked. Adjustments were made to the sets of acceptable and non-acceptable answers after the marking. Finally, these scripts and the other scripts were re-marked in line with the revised sets of acceptable and non-acceptable answers. Teachers who taught the experimental group of classes also had access to the marking schemes and could provide feedback. There was a brief discussion on the sets of answers with teachers from one school to ensure teacher validation of the marking schemes.

The tests were marked strictly according to the rubrics for the writing assessment (c.f. Appendix 5a) and the list of acceptable and non-acceptable answers for the reading comprehension tests (c.f. Appendix 5b). In addition, there were independent markers to ensure stability of marking schemes and to guard against the use of shoddy tests, which would produce no reliable or valid answers (Walker & Burnhill 1988). These measures were taken to ensure that the tests and marking were as reliable as possible.

**The Ethical Analysis of Data**

The analysis of the data was also ethically carried out so that the conclusions derived from the analysis would be valid.
The Responsible Analysis of Data

The quantitative data were analysed using computer software SPSS™ and Microsoft Excel™. Although this may, to a certain extent, reduce human error since the machine performed the computations, there may yet be possibilities of human errors occurring due to the incorrect input of data entries or due to technical faults. To safeguard against such human errors taking place, ‘hand analysis of a small sub-sample’ was carried out to verify the computerised analysis (Isaac & Michael 1990, p.40). The data were also meticulously studied repeatedly to ensure that full justice was done to the analysis of the data. The researcher also took appropriate measures so as to not be ‘misled by statistics’ by disregarding or concealing them (Neuman 2003, p.361).

Likewise, qualitative data from interviews with the teachers, which were coded with the help of N6, were validated through the use of ‘member validation’ (Neuman 2003, p.389). In informal meetings with teachers, further comments and clarifications were solicited.

Triangulation of methods and measures were used as well to verify the data collected and to ensure that the data were, as far as was possible, reliable. In addition, when analysing the data, steps were taken so that no attempt was made ‘to fabricate data in order to substantiate a personal belief or value’ (Mills 2003, p.93). These steps included the accurate transcribing of interview and field notes as well as triangulation of methods and measures and the use of independent markers, so that any discrepancy in data would be immediately evident. The data were analysed with the greatest accuracy and precision and the outcomes of the analyses have been faithfully reported.

The Ethical Reporting and Use of Results

In the dissemination of the research findings, every attempt will be made to act in a responsible manner so that the findings will be beneficial to the participating schools, the Singapore school system in general and others who may be interested in the research.
The Ethical Dissemination of Data

The data will be made public by the researcher. The researcher will disseminate the findings by publishing them in academic journals and at the end of 2005 the Ministry of Education, Singapore and the participating schools were presented with copies of a preliminary report of the findings. Thus, the findings will be open to ‘scrutiny and contribute to public knowledge’ (NHMRC n.d., § 1.18).

Conclusion

In the current research that involved a curriculum initiative project, multiple site case studies were considered the best option to discover the effectiveness of the curriculum. The great number of variables within and across schools presented the researcher with the opportunity to test the curriculum in naturalistic conditions. The greater the number of variables, the more opportunities there are in bringing about either a literal or theoretical replication (Yin 1994) as well as wider applicability. As such, the research was conducted in four diverse schools with varied student bodies.

In the design of the research on the LDEP, the teaching and educational experiences of the researcher as well as the literature review proved useful. They aided in the design of the curriculum and during the field work in the schools. Independent evaluators examined the curriculum before it was implemented in schools.

Different kinds of quantitative and qualitative data were collected so that through a triangulation of measures, the findings would be more reliable, thereby increasing the probability of arriving at valid conclusions. Such data came from pre-test and post-test scores, surveys, interviews, field notes, log book entries and observations. These data were linked to the research questions because the data were used to answer the major research question and sub-questions.
The data were analysed with safeguards in place to ensure that the analysis was reliable. The uniform tests were marked using pre-determined rubrics and answer schemes. Some of the papers were marked by teachers from the four schools and the marks were cross-checked against those awarded by the researcher for the same papers. The interviews were transcribed to get at the meaning of the comments made by interviewees.

A research project that is well-designed and ethically conducted and analysed is one that could be beneficial to all the parties concerned, namely the researcher, the participants, the stakeholders and the community at large. It would lead to a ‘win-win relationship’ (Sieber 1992, pp.3-4) with the research benefiting all the parties involved in the research. Therefore, by carefully considering methodological implications pertaining to the design, conduct and ethical issues, and by taking steps to address any problems, the researcher intended to act in a socially responsible manner that would lead to the addition to pre-existing knowledge as well as possibly inspire a utilitarian change. Thus, through the careful design of the research, methodical collection of data, systemised analysis of the data, and generally ethical conduct of the research, it is hoped that the research will be of value to the participating schools and students and also to the larger community.

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, the quantitative findings are presented and discussed. The data used in the analysis came from the pre-test and post-test results of the writing and reading comprehension assessments. Additionally, findings from the surveys that the students in the experimental group completed at the conclusion of the LDEP are also presented and discussed.
CHAPTER 4
The Quantitative Findings and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the quantitative data are presented. These findings are derived from the pre-test and post-test scores of the writing and reading comprehension skills assessments. The findings from the exit survey that the students in the experimental group completed at the conclusion of the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) are also presented. These findings are discussed in this chapter because of the nature of the analysis during which mixed methods were employed. Chapter 6 integrates the findings and discussions from the quantitative data in this chapter and the qualitative data in Chapter 5.

Two forms of pre-tests and post-tests were given to students in the experimental and control groups. Each group was given a set of reading comprehension and writing skills tests before the experimental group was taught the experimental curriculum. At the end of the teaching sequence of the LDEP, the control and experimental groups were given additional sets of reading comprehension and writing skills tests to complete. The results of the tests from the two groups were analysed and compared to discover if there was a difference in the improvement, if any, in the reading comprehension and writing skills of the control and experimental groups, as well as within sub-groups. The students in the experimental group were also given exit survey questionnaires to complete. It was hoped that the questionnaires would lead to a better understanding of the reading preferences of the students as well as give them an avenue to offer their feedback and opinions about the experimental curriculum.

In this chapter, the findings of the pre-test and post-test results of the writing and reading comprehension tests are presented and discussed to ascertain if
there was any measurable improvement in the performance of the students in the experimental group after being taught under the LDEP. Additionally, comparisons were made between the experimental group and control group as well as between the sub-groups. These sub-groups were created to study the impact of mediating variables such as gender, different levels of fluency in the English language, and varying school and class cultures.

The pre-test and post-test results of the writing skills and reading comprehension tests of the students in both the experimental and control groups were analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. The intent of the analysis was to discover:

- If there was an improvement in the performance of the students in the experimental group after the LDEP,
- If there was an improvement in the performance of the control group of students who did not go through the LDEP,
- If there was an improvement, was there a difference between the improvement shown by the experimental group and the control groups?
- Lastly, if there was an improvement, did all the sub-groups, based on the mediating variables, display the same degree of improvement?

Findings of the survey that the students answered and returned at the conclusion of the LDEP were also used to ascertain if the students themselves thought that they had improved in writing and in the comprehension of the stories that they had read during the period. The questionnaire contained multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions. These multiple-choice and open-ended survey questions were analysed through manifest content analysis during which ‘the data… [were] coded or grouped into categories’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003, p.69) which were then subjected to frequency counts.

A schematic outline of the content and sequence of this chapter is provided in Figure 4.1.
Did learning take place during the LDEP?

Formal Testing
- Pre-test
- Post-test

Survey Findings
(Student Perceptions)
- Did the students grasp the six grammar concepts taught?
- Was the LDEP enjoyable?

Outcomes

Did the students grasp the six grammar concepts taught?

Writing Skills
- Comparison between Control & Experimental Groups
  - Comparison between sub-groups categorised by
    - PSLE English Grades,
    - Gender,
    - School,
    - Class,
    - Normal (Academic) class, and
    - Experimental and control classes taught by the same teachers

Reading Comprehension
- Comparison between Control & Experimental Groups
  - Comparison between sub-groups categorised by
    - PSLE English Grades,
    - Gender,
    - School,
    - Class, and
    - Normal (Academic) class

Student Perceptions regarding improvement in
- writing,
- sentence construction,
- use of descriptive details,
- accurate tense usage,
- understanding of the elements of a narrative, and
- analysis of the stories

Comparison between Control & Experimental Groups

Comparison between sub-groups categorised by
- PSLE English Grades,
- Gender,
- School,
- Class, and
- Normal (Academic) class

Comparison between sub-groups categorised by
- PSLE English Grades,
- Gender,
- School,
- Class, and
- Normal (Academic) class
Pre-Test and Post-Test Findings

Pre-test and post-test scores from 16 experimental classes and 8 control classes involving Secondary One students from 4 schools were analysed. Schools 1 and 4 were co-educational schools while School 2 was an all-boys’ school and School 3 was an all-girls’ school. A comparison of the English language ability of the students across the four schools was made on the basis of the English grades that the students received in the 2003 Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), for which most of the Secondary One students had to sit before gaining admission into secondary schools. The percentages of students, in the experimental and control groups, with the different PSLE English grades in the four schools are given in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: PSLE English Grades of Students by School and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Missing* (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1#</td>
<td>Express</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normal (Academic)</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>26.06</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>21.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#: A small number of students did not sit for the PSLE.
###: In School 1, there were no control groups. PSLE grades of the one Normal (Academic) class included in the analysis and those of the seven Express classes are given. In Schools 2, 3 and 4 only the Express classes participated in the research.

In Schools 1 and 2, 94.9% and 99% of their Express students achieved Grades A* and A in the 2003 PSLE respectively (Table 4.1). In Schools 3 and 4, 69.8% and 59.5% of their Secondary One Express cohorts achieved Grades A* and A respectively (Table 4.1). In 2003 about 44% of the 49,867 students who completed the PSLE in Singapore achieved Grades A* and A (Bukit Timah Primary School n.d.) and out of 49,867 students, 62.2% entered the Special and Express Streams while 34.9% entered the Normal
(Academic) and Normal (Technical) streams (Ministry of Education Singapore 2003b). On comparing the PSLE English grades of the students in the four schools, it may be safe to assume that Schools 3 and 4 may be more representative of the general school population whereas Schools 1 and 2 may be more representative of the top secondary schools. Therefore, in analysing the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores among the students of the four schools, a distinction was also made on the basis of the schools, gender and the PSLE grades of the students so that possible implications of the findings to other similar schools in Singapore may be detected.

The scores of the experimental Class 9, a Normal (Academic) class, were excluded from all analyses for a number of reasons. When the exit survey questionnaires that the students completed were examined, inconsistencies between the self-reported information and the information provided by the school were discovered. Due to the inconsistencies, it was felt that the reporting could not be accurately relied upon. In addition, during class observations and through conversations with the English teacher, in general the class was observed to be unmotivated and disruptive. Moreover, no feedback from the Literature teacher of this class was received since she declined to meet or be interviewed by the researcher. For these reasons, Class 9 was dropped from all quantitative analysis as it was felt that an accurate analysis of the class performance and an assessment of the class could not be made due to the unreliable or inadequate data collected.

Before presenting the analysis of the writing skills and reading comprehension test results, it is noted that the writing skills test formed the major component of the test analysis with the reading comprehension assuming a minor role. Unequal importance was accorded to the different tests because in the experimental curriculum more time was spent on teaching narrative writing skills. Even the literary analysis was linked to the acquisition of writing skills. In trying to balance the limited time schools were able to offer for this research and the need to gain as much understanding as possible, it was decided that the focus would be more on the writing component than reading comprehension. It was hoped that during the process of reading the literature
text, analysing it and discussing the language in relation to writing skills, the students would begin to acquire better reading comprehension skills as well. Thus more attention was paid to the writing test results than the reading comprehension results since there was more concentration on the acquisition of writing skills than reading comprehension skills.

Both the written and reading comprehension test results were analysed using SPSS™ version 12 and Microsoft Excel™ 2003. The improvement scores of the students in the experimental and control groups were analysed through the calculation of Frequencies, Percentiles, Mean Differences, Effect Size, Confidence Intervals and statistical significance of the difference between the post-tests and pre-tests. The Frequencies, Percentiles, Confidence Intervals and statistical significance figures were computed through SPSS™ whereas the Effect Size was computed using Microsoft Excel™. SPSS™ does not offer Cohen’s d calculation of Effect Size within the paired t-test routine and so Excel™ was used to calculate Cohen’s d based on the SPSS™ output.

It must also be noted that, in the analysis, the pre-test and post-test results of individual students were taken as co-related variables. As such, the analysis was done on the basis of a correlated design, which is not only ‘inherently balanced’ but may also ‘reduce error variance and increase statistical power’ (Kline 2004, p.20).

Additionally, a series of univariate analyses was performed on the outcomes of the different sub-groups. In the analysis, the dependent variable was the mean difference score between the post-test and pre-test. There were two different dependant variables, writing skill improvement and reading comprehension skill improvement. The independent variables were the control and experimental groups; students with PSLE English grades A*, A, B and C; gender; school; class; Normal (Academic) class. In relation to the writing skills assessment, an additional independent variable included the experimental and control classes taught by the same teachers.
Since ‘univariate analysis describe the units of analysis’ and ‘bivariate and multivariate analyse are aimed primarily at explanation’ (Rubin & Babbie 1997, p.473, italicised by Rubin & Babbie), univariate analysis was selected. The aim of the research was to describe the effect of the curriculum or the size of the dependent variables with respect to each of the independent variables and the sub-groups within each independent variable. The purpose was not to concentrate on the variables or explain ‘the relationships between the variables themselves’ (Rubin & Babbie 1997, p.475).

Moreover, since the study was based on a naturalistic design, the group sizes were unpredictable. The number of students between groups (and within sub-groups) varied substantially. Take for instance the two independent variables: gender and PSLE English grades. As a top boys’ school was included, there were 96 boys with PSLE grade A* as opposed to 27 girls with grade A*. There were 88 boys with grade A and 166 girls with grade A, 31 boys with grade B and 53 girls with grade B, and 6 boys with Grade C to 4 girls with Grade C. Multi-way analysis of multivariate interaction effects may be more meaningful if the study is ‘a completely independent groups design with different subjects in each group and the number of subjects in each group... [is] equal’ (Brown, K. W. et al. 1999, p.347). In this study independent groups of equal sample sizes could not be achieved and that fact reinforced the choice of univariate analyses.

To examine the effect of the curriculum on each independent variable t-tests were utilised. The use of inferential statistics such as t-tests would ‘provide information regarding the magnitude of the effect, or the relationship’ (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, p.116). Thus, the t-test was deemed appropriate to study the extent of the effect that the curriculum would have on the different groups. However ‘t tests thrive more when sample sizes are not very different for any given total N’ (Rosenthal & Rosnow 1991, pp.304-305, italicised by Rosenthal & Rosnow), and uneven sample sizes in the different groups could make any interaction study between variables unreliable. The individual t-tests with the degrees of freedom (df) and standard deviation reported would make it possible for the reader to decide for himself or herself how much
importance he or she would like to place on any comparison between the test results of the different independent variables or sub-groups within these independent variables.

In the writing assessment, comparisons were made between the performances of students from experimental and control groups, and within the experimental group, between the performances of sub-groups of students: from the various schools; of different gender; and with differing PSLE English grades. The intent was to compare the performances among the sub-groups within each of the independent variables. Where these comparisons were made of the outcomes of the dependent variable among the sub-groups within an independent variable, the One-Way Anova was mainly utilized. It was necessary to compare the pre-test results of the sub-groups within the independent variable so that a more meaningful comparison may be made of the final outcomes of the sub-groups in the post-test. In this instance, the varying sample sizes between groups is of less importance since two One-Way Anova tests were carried out on the same sub-groups with the same sample sizes.

Moreover, univariate analyses would serve the purpose just as well as a multivariate analysis since ‘multivariate analysis often wind up as a series of univariate analyses conducted with individual outcomes’ (Kline 2004, p.22). Thus, t-tests and One-Way Anovas were preferred to Two-Way Anovas.

**Computing the Effect Sizes**

In order to find out the magnitude of the difference between the post-test and pre-test scores, which may indicate improvement, the Effect Size of this difference or improvement was computed. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate of Effect Size ($ES$) was calculated with the aid of Microsoft Excel using the formula (Burns 2000, p.203):

$$\text{Cohen's } d = \frac{t}{\sqrt{N}}$$

It was decided that computing the ES from the t value would be appropriate since the t value includes in its computation the ‘observed average difference
score and its standard error’ (Kline 2004, p.45). In an experimental research of this sort, in which the aim is to find differences between two tests, it is logical to base the computation of the ES of the performance of the experimental and control groups on the mean difference scores between the post-tests and the pre-tests and standard error of these mean difference scores.

Traditionally, an ES of 0.2 is considered to be small, 0.5 is medium, and an ES of 0.8 is a large effect size (Burns 2000; Kline 2004; Smithson 2000). With respect to education, the Joint Dissemination Review Panel of the National Institute of Education in the United States requires an ES of 0.33, though it will accept an ES of 0.25 as an indicator of educational significance (Wolf 1986). Thus, there are no clear guidelines that can be applied ‘across all behavioural research areas. This is because what may be considered a large effect in one area may be modest in another’ (Kline 2004, p. 133). In the case of this research, it was decided to base the evaluation of the ES on the requirement of the National Institute of Education of an ES of 0.33 though an ES of 0.25 may be sufficient to indicate effectiveness since the experimental curriculum ran for only five to six weeks in each school, a short period in terms of language instruction. It is reasonable to argue that ‘longer, more intense intervention may potentially have a larger effect than a shorter, less intense intervention’ (Kline 2004, p.42). Therefore, an ES of 0.5 and above is taken to indicate that the curriculum was highly effective in imparting the writing and reading comprehension skills.

**Analysis of the Writing Test Scores of the Pre-test and Post-test**

All classes in the study, whether in the control or experimental groups, were assessed using a writing skills test. As part of the writing skills test, the students were instructed to write narratives for the pre-test and post-test, based on different story-starters. The pre-test was administered before the curriculum was introduced, no more than one week prior to the commencement of the curriculum. The post-test was administered within a week of the conclusion of the curriculum instruction. Copies of the pre and post writing skills tests are included in Appendix 3b.
The pre-test and post-test writing skills instruments were marked using a predetermined marking scheme (please refer to Appendix 5a). The researcher marked the tests after all the classes in the four schools had completed the post-tests.

The marking was conducted in a manner that would minimise expectancy effects. The pre-test scripts were all marked before the post-test scripts were marked. In total, there were close to a thousand pre-test scripts and a thousand post-test scripts, so it would have been difficult to track the marks any particular group or student had scored in the pre-test when the post-test scripts were being marked. In addition, marks were only recorded on Excel™ spreadsheets after the pre-test and post-test scripts were all marked.

Another step was taken to ensure that the marking was reliable. A request was made that each of the teachers in the participating schools mark the pre-test and post-test scripts of five students. The score differences between the post-test and the pre-test were then compared to the score differences awarded by the researcher for the same scripts. A paired t-test comparison of the post-pre scores awarded by the teachers and the researcher yielded a negligible mean difference score of -0.125 with a low statistical significance of 0.719 (2-tailed). The regression model on the same scores resulted in a regression beta of 0.199, and R² was only 1.7%. There appears to be negligible disparity in the post-pre scores awarded by the teachers and the researcher for the same scripts. Thus, it may be safe to assume that the marking of the researcher was reliable.

One discrepancy needs to be recorded. When the pre-test scripts of the school with the largest number of classes (nine) were marked, initially it was decided not to award half marks. However, since the maximum mark awarded for each category was only five, later it was decided that in order to have more levels of differentiation, it would be necessary to include half marks. However, the school had requested to view the scripts before the scripts could be re-marked or even before the marks could be recorded (since the post-test scripts were not yet marked). When the scripts were returned,
only scripts from six classes remained intact. Scripts from two classes, Classes 3 and 8, were missing, and a small number of scripts from another class was also missing. Therefore, it was decided to exclude the two classes and results of the students in the third class with missing scripts from the analysis for the following reasons:

- It was felt that a fair analysis cannot be made without marking the scripts again to take into account the inclusion of half marks in the assessment.
- Even though the teachers provided the pre-test marks, the comparison of results between the pre-test and post-test would be distorted since the post-test scripts were marked to reflect the inclusion of half marks in the assessment of the writing under the different categories.
- There could be decreased reliability of a comparison between the outcomes of these classes and those of the other classes in the same school and other schools since the marking of the scripts of the other classes would have included more levels of differentiation in the marking.

It must be noted at this point that the returned scripts were in their original condition; there were no alterations made to the scripts by the students or teachers before they were returned.

In analysing the data, not only was the difference in outcomes between the control and experimental groups assessed but the outcomes of sub-groups within the experimental group were analysed as well in order to ascertain whether mediating variables had an effect on the outcomes. These sub-groups were categorised based on: the PSLE grades of the students, gender, school, class, and Normal (Academic) stream. In addition, the results of a sub-group of experimental and control classes taught by the same teachers were also analysed.
Comparison of Improvement Scores in Writing between the Experimental and Control Groups

The control group of students in the three schools were taught narrative writing skills through the regular curriculum. The regular, that is control, curriculum also included the teaching of text-based grammar. Extracts were used to teach grammar explicitly and the grammar concepts taught were linked to writing tasks. In two of the schools the teaching of these narrative writing techniques and grammar concepts was not linked to the literature text. In the third school, writing tasks that were linked to the literature text were more in the nature of literary analysis. Narrative elements and narrative writing techniques were often taught separately without an explicit link being made to the literature text. Grammar was seldom explicitly taught. Similar narrative writing techniques and narrative elements were also taught during the LDEP. However, the teaching of these narrative writing skills and the explicit teaching of grammar were linked to the literature text. The grammar concepts taught were also pre-selected to aid in the writing of narratives. Therefore, while the control group was taught similar grammar concepts, the experimental, that is the LDEP, group learnt how the use of these concepts could have an impact on the narrative.

In the initial analysis a comparison was made between the experimental and control groups based on the difference between the post-test and the pre-test results in the writing assessment of the individual students. The valid scores of 482 students from the experimental group and 290 students from the control group were analysed. The invalid scores comprised of scores from students who had only sat for one of the tests, either the pre-test or the post-test, and those students who had returned scripts that were less than half a page long or who had very similar scripts. The former meant that no valid comparison could be made since comparison was made between the post-test and the pre-test of individual students. Likewise, similar or incomplete scripts that were very brief were deemed inadequate for an accurate assessment to be made of the narrative writing abilities of the students.
Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of students in the experimental and control groups with the different improvement scores. The improvement scores are the differences between the post-test scores and the pre-test scores.

**Figure 4.2: Improvement Scores for Writing Skills Assessment for Experimental and Control Groups**

![Image of bar charts showing improvement scores for experimental and control groups.](image)

Figure 4.2 above suggests that more students in the experimental group than in the control group improved. More students in the experimental group attained positive improvement scores. From a total of 482 students in the experimental group, approximately 64% received positive improvement marks. In contrast, about 37% of the 290 students in the control group achieved positive improvement marks. The frequency charts suggest that most of the students in the control group did not improve while the opposite is true of the experimental group as the majority of them had improved.

The mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the students in the experimental and control groups were examined since more students in the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement in the post-test than the students in the control group. The mean scores and the 95% confidence limits for the results of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental and control groups are displayed in Figure 4.3.
Figure 4.3 suggests that the pre-test scores of the control and experimental groups are comparable as the mean scores of the two groups are similar. However, the post-test scores present a very different story. The mean of the post-test scores of the control group is actually lower than the mean of the pre-test scores, though the difference is slight (Figure 4.3).

On the other hand, the mean of the post-test results of the experimental group is much higher than the mean of the pre-test scores or the mean of the post-test scores of the control group. Moreover, the 95% Confidence Intervals of the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group overlap (Figure 4.3). However, the experimental group has distinctly different pre-test and post-test scores such that their 95% Confidence Intervals do not overlap, indicating that in 95% of the cases, the mean would be much higher (Figure 4.3). It appears that many of the students in the experimental group had improved.

The One-Way Anova test results of the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups revealed no significant difference between the results of the two groups. Next the post-test results of the experimental and control
groups were examined to discover whether the post-test results of these groups were significantly different from each other. Table 4.2 presents the outcome of the One-Way Anova test of the post-test results of the experimental and control groups.

**Table 4.2: The One-Way Anova test results of the Post-test Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Writing Scores</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>214.665</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>214.665</td>
<td>46.055</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3588.999</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>4.661</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3803.664</td>
<td>771</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The post-test results of the One-Way Anova reveal that there is a highly significant difference between the two groups. There is a probability of less than 0.001% that the difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups had occurred by chance alone (Table 4.2).

On the other hand, there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test results of the experimental and control groups. Therefore, it can be assumed that the students in the experimental and control groups performed similarly in the pre-test. In other words, the students appeared to be of similar abilities. However, in the post-test, there seems to be a significant difference (Table 4.2). If the students were of similar abilities, why was there a significant difference in the post-test results of the two groups? The variables, including chance, which may explain the difference in the post-test, were also present when the students completed the pre-test. The low probability in the post-test, in contrast to the higher probability in the pre-test, which can be attributed to chance alone, may indicate an appreciable improvement in the performance of the experimental group due to the independent variable, the LDEP.

In order to get a clearer picture of the improvement, or lack of, achieved by either group, a paired t-test of the differences between the test scores within each group was conducted to discover the degree of the significance of these differences.
In short,
- Was there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results within the control and experimental groups, and
- Was there an improvement in the post-test results of either, or both, groups?

The paired t-test is the appropriate test because for each student in the experimental and control groups, there is a single pre-test score and a single post-test score.

From the paired t-tests on the pre-test and post-test writing results of the control and the experimental groups, the following results were obtained (Table 4.3). The ES was also computed from the t value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0.93154</td>
<td>2.13901</td>
<td>0.09743</td>
<td>0.74010</td>
<td>1.12297</td>
<td>9.561</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-0.18448</td>
<td>2.03973</td>
<td>0.11978</td>
<td>-0.42023</td>
<td>0.05126</td>
<td>-1.540</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.3 indicates that the mean difference score between the post-test and pre-test scores of the experimental group is positive, showing that on the average, the experimental group had improved. The mean improvement score is significantly different from zero at p<0.001. However, the mean difference score of the control group is negative, though at -0.18 it is very slight (Table 4.3). The mean difference score of the control group is also not significantly different from zero, thereby indicating that the scores of the post-test and pre-test were similar. Thus, on the average, the students in the experimental group improved by 0.93 marks (computed to two decimal places) whereas the students in the control group may be considered to have scored similarly on both the pre-test and the post-test (Table 4.3).
**Overall Effect Size of the Mean Improvement Score of the Experimental Group**

The next step taken was to calculate the Effect Size (ES) of the mean difference between the post-test and pre-test results, or mean improvement score, of the experimental group only. As there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test which the students in the control group completed and there is, in fact, a low negative “t” value, it can be said that there was no change in performance, or “effect”. Thus, the ES for the control group was not calculated.

From Table 4.3, it can be seen that the overall ES of the mean difference score between the post-test and the pre-test of the experimental group was calculated to be 0.44 (to 2 decimal places). This is above the 0.33 standard set by the American Joint Dissemination Review Panel of the National Institute of Education (Wolf 1986). Generally, the curriculum appears to have been effective in improving the writing skills of many of the students in the experimental group.

There were five sub-categories on which the students were assessed in the writing tests. The five categories were *Focus, Elaboration, Organisation, Convention* and *Integration*. In each sub-category, the maximum marks allotted were five marks. The improvement scores of the students in the experimental and control groups in the different categories were then analysed.

Figure 4.4 displays the improvement scores as well as the 95% Confidence Intervals in each of the five categories for the experimental and control groups.
The graph in Figure 4.4 indicates that the experimental group had improved in all the categories, attaining positive mean improvement scores in the five categories. On the other hand, the students in the control group achieved positive improvement score in only one category, namely “elaboration”. In the other categories, the mean improvement scores were either negative or zero (Figure 4.4.). Since the lower bounds of the Confidence Intervals of the improvement scores for the experimental group are all above zero, there is a 95% chance that the mean improvement score would not be zero, but be positive. Moreover, in each of the sub-categories none of the Confidence Intervals of the experimental group overlaps with the corresponding Confidence Intervals of the control group. In fact, the lower bounds of the Confidence Intervals of the mean improvement scores of the experimental group are higher than the upper bounds of the Confidence Intervals of the mean improvement scores of the control group (Figure 4.4).

Most of the students in the experimental group appeared to have improved more than the students in the control group in all the five measured areas.
To confirm that indeed the experimental group had improved more than the control group in the five measures areas, independent sample t-tests on the improvement scores of the experimental and control groups in each of the five sub-categories were performed. Table 4.4 on p.117 includes the independent t-test results from the SPSS™ output with the addition of the ES.

The independent samples test results in the adapted Table 4.4 indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the improvement scores of the experimental group and the control group. The positive t values in all the five sub-categories indicate a positive difference between the improvement scores of the experimental group and the control group, thereby signifying that there was a greater improvement in the students from the experimental group than the control group in all the five sub-categories (c.f. Table 4.4, p.117).

The Levene’s test for equality of variances indicates whether the experimental and control groups have approximately equal variances on each of the dependent variables given in the first column in Table 4.4 (c.f. p.117). The Levene’s test indicates that the variances are not considered to be equal in four out the five categories, namely “focus”, “elaboration”, “convention” and “integration”. In one of the categories, “organisation”, since p>0.05, it indicates that the variances are approximately equal. As such, under “organisation” the t-value where the variance is assumed to be equal is taken for the computation of the ES of the difference in improvement score between the experimental and control groups whereas in the other four categories, the t-values where the variances are not assumed to be equal are taken for the computation of the Effect Sizes of the difference in improvement scores. The appropriate t value is printed in bold in Table 4.4 (c.f. p.117).

The positive Effect Sizes indicate there is a degree of difference in the improvement scores of the experimental and control groups with the experimental group performing better than the control group. The greatest degree of difference can be found under the categories “convention” and “integration” (c.f. Table 4.4, p.117). The students in the experimental group,
who were explicitly taught selected grammatical concepts pertaining to narrative writing through the literature text, appeared to have improved most (ES = 0.27) in that area, which was assessed under the category “convention”. The control group was taught grammar concepts explicitly as well but these were not linked to the literature text. In addition, in the category “integration”, which assesses the narratives of the students as a whole, the degree of improvement registered by the experimental group over the control group was also greater than the improvement demonstrated in the three other categories of “focus”, “organisation” and “elaboration” (c.f. Table 4.4, p.117).

Not only were there positive degrees of difference in the improvement scores of the experimental and control groups in all the five sub-categories but the experimental group had also achieved positive mean improvement scores in all the categories. On the other hand, the control group achieved close to zero or very slight positive mean improvement scores in two sub-categories (“focus” and “elaboration”) and negative mean improvement scores in three other sub-categories (c.f. Figure 4.4, p.114). The experimental curriculum had included the explicit teaching of narrative writing skills and grammar with the aid of the literature text. Therefore, the explicit teaching of the relevant skills using a literature text as a tool appears to have been effective in improving the skills of the students in the experimental group in all the five measured areas.

The ES of each of these five measured categories is relatively modest, ranging from 0.16 to 0.27. The maximum score awarded for each of these categories was five points and the variance in each category is comparatively small. Hence the mean differences are restricted by the small range of the marking scale. The intent of the research was to investigate the effect of the LDEP and the writing test amply achieves that aim. Later research may readily address components or categories of the writing skills to develop a finer grained assessment of the improvement that the LDEP offers writing skills in English.
Table 4.4: Independent samples t-test results of the Mean Improvement Scores in the 5 Sub-Categories in the Writing Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus: Improvement Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>15.455</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>4.003</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration: Improvement Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>17.093</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>4.149</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation: Improvement Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>5.139</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention: Improvement Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>6.009</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>6.664</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration: Improvement Scores</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>4.909</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>6.252</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table of SPSS™ independent t-test results output adapted to include the ES.*
The findings indicate that the experimental group had improved more than the control group in the writing assessment; however, that information alone is insufficient. It is more important to discover the extent to which they had improved and whether that improvement had occurred irrespective of the mediating variables. If there is an appreciable improvement among the students of different abilities in the experimental group across the four schools, then the findings would have practical significance.

The students in the experimental group were sub-divided based on mediating variables. The mediating variables considered in the analysis included:

- PSLE English grades used to ascertain the prior English Language ability of the students,
- gender,
- schools,
- classes,
- Normal (Academic) and Express classes, and
- experimental and control classes that were taught by the same teachers.

The sub-groups were analysed so as to discover if there were differences among the groups with respect to the improvement shown in the post-test writing assessment.

**PSLE English Grades and the Improvement Scores of the Students**

The PSLE is a state-wide examination conducted for four subjects, namely English, Mother Tongue Language, Mathematics and English. The examination is externally set and marked. The research design included the collection of the previous PSLE performance results of the students. These English PSLE grades are recorded from A* to C with C being the lowest. These grades are accepted as indicators of ability levels at the commencement of Secondary One and the Singapore system uses PSLE grades in order to determine the academic
streams of students in Secondary One. It is reasonable to investigate whether the curriculum was equally successful for students with different levels of ability as indicated by the PSLE English grades of the students. In addition, if the students had improved, it would be pertinent to discover the extent of this improvement.

In analysing the writing results of the students, the results of students who had no PSLE English grades, because they did not sit for the PSLE, were not analysed. Since the intent was to discover the effect that the different PSLE grades might have on the writing test scores of the students, the inclusion of students with missing grades would serve no purpose.

Before analysing the improvement scores of the students with different PSLE English grades, a One-Way Anova test of the pre-test results was performed to discover if there were any statistically significant differences between the four groups (A*, A, B and C). The results are displayed in Table 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>514.069</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>171.356</td>
<td>50.048</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1598.928</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>3.424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2112.998</td>
<td>470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 indicates that statistically there is a significant difference between the groups (p<0.001). The different groups had performed differently in the pre-test. Therefore, a One-Way Anova was performed on the improvement scores to discover if this difference was maintained in the post-test. The test results are displayed in Table 4.6:
Table 4.6: One-Way Anova test results of the Writing Assessment Improvement Scores of the Students with Different PSLE English Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.395</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.798</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>.479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2143.755</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>4.590</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2155.151</td>
<td>470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 demonstrates that there are no statistically significant differences between the groups with the different PSLE English grades since p>0.05. In other words, the groups appeared to have improved at the same rate. This result is taken to indicate that the programme overcame some of the differences in achievement since the students with different PSLE English grades improved similarly.

In the next stage, the 95% Confidence Intervals of the means of the difference scores between the post-test and the pre-test writing assessment of students with the different PSLE English grades were computed.

Figure 4.5: 95% Confidence Intervals of the Means of the Improvement Scores by PSLE English Grades
Figure 4.5 illustrates that the means of the improvement scores of students with Grades A*, A, and B are quite similar. In addition, the 95% Confidence Intervals are also very similar. In the case of these three groups, there is a 95% likelihood that the means in repeated tests would be above 0.5. In the case of students with Grade C, the mean of the improvement score is higher than those with Grades A*, A, and B (Figure 4.5). However, the Confidence Interval of the mean of the improvement score of the students with Grade C indicates a wide variation in the marks as the standard error of the mean is rather large. Within the 95% Confidence Interval, there is also the possibility of the mean improvement score dropping to below zero (Figure 4.5). In part, the large standard error of the mean may be due to the relatively low number of students with a PSLE English grade of C (Table 4.7). A more detailed analysis by gender later in this chapter will also shed some light on the large difference between the performances of the students with Grade C and those with the other grades.

Table 4.7: Mean Improvement Scores (Post-test – Pre-test) in the Writing Assessment by PSLE English Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE English Grades</th>
<th>Mean Improvement Scores</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A*</td>
<td>1.1220</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2.00649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.8445</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>2.18747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.9762</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2.10121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.6500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.89684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.9575</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>2.14136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows the mean improvement scores of the students with the different PSLE English grades. The greatest mean improvement score of 1.65 was achieved by students with Grade C. The students with Grades A*, A and B attained similar mean improvement scores of 1.12, 0.84 and 0.98 (Table 4.7). Students with Grades A*, A, and B appear to have improved at a similar rate whereas the mean improvement of the students with Grade C is higher though with a wider variation in the individual marks.
The ES of the improvement gained by each group of students with different PSLE English grades was next calculated in order to ascertain the extent of the improvement that the curriculum effected for all students, regardless of the PSLE English grade. Paired t-tests of the mean difference scores between the post-test and pre-test for each group of students, with respect to their PSLE English grades, were performed. The results and the ES, calculated from the t value, are displayed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Paired t-test Results and the ES of the Mean Difference Scores between the Post-test and Pre-test Writing Assessment by PSLE English Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE Grade</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A* (n=123)</td>
<td>1.12195</td>
<td>2.06649</td>
<td>0.19092</td>
<td>-0.76380 to 2.48010</td>
<td>6.201</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (n=254)</td>
<td>0.84449</td>
<td>2.18747</td>
<td>0.13725</td>
<td>-0.37418 to 1.06307</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (n=84)</td>
<td>0.97619</td>
<td>2.10121</td>
<td>0.22926</td>
<td>-0.24020 to 2.19353</td>
<td>4.258</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (n=10)</td>
<td>1.65000</td>
<td>2.89684</td>
<td>0.91606</td>
<td>-0.42227 to 3.72227</td>
<td>1.801</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.8 suggests that there is a statistically highly significant difference between the post-test and the pre-test results of students with Grades A*, A and B, since p<0.001. Though the results of the students with Grade C are not as significant, since probability is greater than 0.05, the ES of the improvement achieved by these students is the largest (Table 4.8). However, a cautionary note should be included here. The different sample sizes could influence the significance level and the ES. The small sample size of students with Grade C could account for the low statistical significance and the large ES. Power is usually lower in small sample sizes (Kline 2004) unless the variance changes and the small sample size can also lead to low significance level (Muijs 2004). There were double the number of students who had Grade A than Grade A*, and three times as many students who had Grade A than Grade B. On the other hand, there were only ten students with Grade C who participated in the research, about 25 times fewer than the students with Grade A (Table 4.8).
Nevertheless, the results of all the students across the grade levels show a moderate or greater than moderate ES, thereby indicating that the curriculum was effective for many of the students, regardless of their PSLE English grades.

The next mediating variable that was taken into account was gender. Did the boys and girls register similar improvements in the post-test? If they had, to what extent did they improve? Additionally, was the degree of improvement the same for students of either gender, regardless of their PSLE English grades?

**Mean Scores and the Effect Sizes of Improvements in Relation to Gender and PSLE English Grades**

The mean scores and the 95% Confidence Intervals of the pre-test and post-test writing assessment by gender is displayed in Figure 4.6.

**Figure 4.6: Mean Scores of the Pre-test and Post-test Writing Assessment and 95% Confidence Intervals by Gender**

![Figure 4.6](image.png)

Figure 4.6 reveals that both boys and girls improved on their mean scores in the post-test from the pre-test. However, though boys did not perform as well as the
girls in the post-test, the boys appear to have improved slightly more than the girls. A comparison of the 95% Confidence Intervals between the pre-test and post-test results of the boys and girls indicate that the disparity between the performance of the girls and the boys may have been reduced in the post-test. In the post-test, there is a narrowing of the gap between the lower bound of the Confidence Interval of the results of the girls and the upper bound of the results of the boys. The gap in the pre-test appears to be larger (Figure 4.6).

Table 4.9 below displays the mean differences between the post-test and pre-test results of the writing assessment for boys and girls.

Table 4.9: Mean Scores of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores in the Writing Assessment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys/Girls</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Writing Scores</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>13.8333</td>
<td>2.09591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>14.2996</td>
<td>2.33681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Writing Scores</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>12.8444</td>
<td>2.08583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>13.4183</td>
<td>2.11974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean difference score between the post-test and the pre-test in the writing assessment is about one mark for the boys and 0.9 for the girls (Table 4.9). In real terms, the boys improved more than the girls by a margin of about 0.1 of a mark. To discover the significance of this margin of difference, the Effect Sizes of the improvement gained by the boys and girls were computed. The results of the paired t-test between the post-test scores and the pre-test scores for the boys and girls as well as the ES computed from the t value are displayed in the adapted Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: Paired t-test results of the Post-test and Pre-test Scores in the Writing Assessment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys/Girls</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Writing Scores</td>
<td>Boys (n=225)</td>
<td>0.98889</td>
<td>1.99298</td>
<td>0.13287</td>
<td>0.72706 to 1.25071</td>
<td>7.443</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls (n=257)</td>
<td>0.88132</td>
<td>2.26180</td>
<td>0.14109</td>
<td>0.60348 to 1.15916</td>
<td>6.247</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.
From the paired t-test results in Table 4.10, it can be ascertained that the statistical difference between the post-test and pre-test results is highly significant (p<0.001) for the boys as well as the girls. From the computation of the improvement score ES, it can be ascertained that the ES for the boys is larger at 0.5 whereas for the girls, the ES stands at 0.39 (Table 4.10). However, both these Effect Sizes are above the ES of 0.33 set by the American Dissemination Review Panel of the National Institute of Education as the standard of educational significance (Wolf 1986). The curriculum appears to have been effective in improving the narrative writing skill of the boys and girls. The curriculum also appears to have benefited the boys more with the curriculum being highly effective in improving their writing skills (c.f. p.105 for the discussion on the ES and the benchmarks for indicating the effectiveness of the curriculum).

The next question asked was whether the degree of improvement was the same for students of either gender, regardless of their PSLE grades. To discover the answer to that question, the Effect Sizes of the various groups, based on gender and PSLE English grade, were calculated. However, before computing the effect sizes, the paired t-test results of the post-test and pre-test writing scores based on gender and PSLE English grades were examined. Table 4.11 shows the results of the paired t-tests and the ES for the different groups.

Table 4.11: Boys’ Paired t-test results of the Post-test and Pre-test Scores in the Writing Assessment by PSLE English Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE Grade</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A* (n=96)</td>
<td>1.07292</td>
<td>1.98412</td>
<td>0.20250</td>
<td>0.67090</td>
<td>1.47494</td>
<td>5.298</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (n=88)</td>
<td>0.85227</td>
<td>2.00310</td>
<td>0.21353</td>
<td>0.42786</td>
<td>1.27669</td>
<td>3.991</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (n=31)</td>
<td>0.82258</td>
<td>1.80069</td>
<td>0.32341</td>
<td>0.16208</td>
<td>1.48308</td>
<td>2.543</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (n=6)</td>
<td>3.08333</td>
<td>2.20038</td>
<td>0.89630</td>
<td>0.77418</td>
<td>5.39249</td>
<td>3.432</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.11 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test and pre-test results that the boys of all grade levels had taken, with the boys getting a mean improvement score ranging from 0.82 (to 2 decimal
places) to 3.08 (to 2 decimal places) (Table 4.11). The improvement score Effect Sizes range from 0.43 for boys with Grade A to a large 1.40 for boys with Grade C, though it must be noted that the analysis included only six boys with Grade C (Table 4.11). From the ES, it can be ascertained that there is significant evidence to show that the curriculum was highly effective in imparting writing skills to most of the boys, regardless of their PSLE grades. The writing test scores of the girls were then scrutinised.

Table 4.12: Girls’ Paired t-test results of the Post-test and Pre-test Scores in the Writing Assessment by PSLE English Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE Grade</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A* (n=27)</td>
<td>1.29630</td>
<td>0.40673</td>
<td>2.11342</td>
<td>0.46026</td>
<td>2.13234 - 3.187</td>
<td>2.13234</td>
<td>3.187</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (n=166)</td>
<td>0.84036</td>
<td>0.17735</td>
<td>2.28502</td>
<td>0.49019</td>
<td>1.19053 - 4.738</td>
<td>1.19053</td>
<td>4.738</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (n=53)</td>
<td>1.06604</td>
<td>0.31185</td>
<td>2.27029</td>
<td>0.44027</td>
<td>1.69181 - 3.418</td>
<td>1.69181</td>
<td>3.418</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (n=4)</td>
<td>-0.50000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.61406</td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.65956 - 3.65956</td>
<td>-4.65956</td>
<td>3.65956</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.12 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test and pre-test results in the writing assessment that the girls with grades A* to B had taken, with the mean improvement score ranging from 0.84 (to 2 decimal places) to 1.30 (to 2 decimal places). The ES of between 0.37 and 0.61 of the improvement scores of these girls (Table 4.12) are educationally significant (c.f. p.105), thereby indicating that the curriculum was highly effective in improving the writing skills of the girls with Grades A* to B. However, there is no significant difference with regard to the performance of the girls with grade C, and the mean difference between the post-test and the pre-test is -0.50. The effective difference is slight, with the ES showing a negative 0.19 value (Table 4.12), thus demonstrating that the girls had performed similarly in the pre-test and post-test. The curriculum may not have delivered measurable benefits to the girls with Grade C. The findings with regard to the girls with Grade C and their apparent lack of improvement in writing will be further discussed in the next section when comparison is made to the performance of the boys in the writing test.
The graph below better illustrates the differences, if any, between the genders in relation to improvement achieved in the post-test. The Effect Sizes of the improvement demonstrated by the boys, girls and for all the students with regard to PSLE English grades are graphically represented in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Effect Sizes of the Improvement in the Writing Skills Assessment by Gender and PSLE English Grades

Figure 4.7 indicates that the overall improvement score ES and the improvement score Effect Sizes of boys and girls are similar. The overall ES is 0.44 (c.f. p.112) and the ES for the boys and girls are 0.5 and 0.39 respectively (c.f. p.124). Thus, overall, the curriculum appears to have been effective for all students though the boys appear to have benefited more than the girls. The Effect Size of the improvement displayed by the boys with Grade A is slightly larger than that of the girls with the same grade, and the girls with Grade A* attained a slightly larger ES than the boys with the same grade (Figure 4.7). The Effect Sizes of the improvements attained by the boys and girls with Grade B are almost alike. Generally, the curriculum appears to have benefited both boys and girls with Grades A*, A, and B.

The negative mean difference score between the post-test and the pre-test for the girls and the large positive mean difference for the boys in the writing
assessment would have skewed the Confidence Interval of the improvement scores of the students with Grade C (c.f. Figure 4.5 on p.120). Figure 4.7 indicates that the improvement score ES for the boys is large whereas the ES for the girls is a negative value. Why the curriculum appears to have been effective for the boys with Grade C but not for girls with the same grade is unclear. Further research needs to be conducted to discover the reasons for it. However, it must also be noted that the sample sizes for students with Grade C were very small. Writing results of only six boys and four girls with Grade C were analysed. In addition, the standard error of the means are also large; for the boys, it is 0.89830 (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125) and for the girls, it is 1.30703 (c.f. Table 4.12, p.126). This would indicate that there are wide variations in the mean difference scores between the post-test and the pre-test results. As such, the findings would not be as dependable as the findings of the students with Grades A*, A, and B.

From the analysis of the data, it may be implied that the experimental curriculum seemed to have had a positive effect on most students, regardless of gender or level of fluency in the language (as can be ascertained from the different PSLE English grades). The boys experienced moderate to large ES improvements in their writing skill scores and only one sub-group of girls with a lower PSLE grade did not display any improvement in their writing skills scores.

**Comparison of the Improvements in the Writing Assessment Gained by the Students in the Four Schools**

A One-Way Anova was performed on the pre-test and improvement scores of the schools to discover if there were differences in the scores among the four participating schools. The intent was to discover if the students from each school improved at the same rate or if there were differences in the improvements achieved by the students of different schools. The One-Way Anova test results are displayed in Table 4.13.
Table 4.13: The One-Way Anova of the Pre-Test and Improvement Scores in the Writing Assessment in the 4 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Writing Scores</td>
<td>23.815</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.938</td>
<td>1.773</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2140.530</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>4.478</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2164.345</td>
<td>481</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement Scores (Post-test - Pre-test)</td>
<td>34.848</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.616</td>
<td>2.564</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2165.892</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>4.531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2200.741</td>
<td>481</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 demonstrates that there are no statistically significant differences among the pre-test scores of the four schools ($F \approx 1.8$, $p=0.151$). In other words, the students in the four schools appear to have performed similarly in the writing assessment pre-test. However, in the improvement scores, there appears to be a difference in the mean improvement scores of the students from the four schools (Table 4.13), since $p=0.054$, thus indicating that there might be greater improvement in the performances of the students in some schools than in others. The means of the improvement scores and the Confidence Intervals of those means were then computed. The findings are displayed in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Means and Confidence Intervals of the Improvement Scores in the Writing Assessment in the 4 Schools
Figure 4.8 suggests that the mean improvement scores of three of the schools, 1, 2 and 4 are very similar. In addition, the Confidence Intervals of these schools indicate that, in repeated experiments, there is a 95% probability that the mean improvement score would be positive since the lower bounds are above zero. On the other hand, the mean improvement score of School 3 is not only much lower, the lower bound of the confidence interval is just below zero (Figure 4.8). There is a probability that the students might get a negative improvement mark in repeated tests. Thus, it appears that after the experimental curriculum, the other three schools had improved much more than School 3. In order to substantiate if this is true, paired t-tests of the post-test and pre-test writing scores were performed. The Effect Sizes, derived from the t values, were also computed. The results are displayed in the adapted Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: Paired t-test of the Mean Difference Scores (Post-test – Pre-test) in the Writing Assessment attained by the 4 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (n=210)</td>
<td>1.083333</td>
<td>2.27404</td>
<td>0.15692</td>
<td>0.77398</td>
<td>1.39269</td>
<td>6.904</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (n=102)</td>
<td>1.04902</td>
<td>1.88993</td>
<td>0.18713</td>
<td>0.67780</td>
<td>1.42024</td>
<td>5.606</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (n=97)</td>
<td>0.39691</td>
<td>2.19960</td>
<td>0.22334</td>
<td>-0.04641</td>
<td>0.84022</td>
<td>1.777</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (n=73)</td>
<td>1.04110</td>
<td>1.89984</td>
<td>0.22236</td>
<td>0.59783</td>
<td>1.48436</td>
<td>4.682</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.14 indicates that in all the schools, the students achieved positive mean improvement scores though the mean improvement score of School 3 is much lower than the three other schools. The mean improvement scores of Schools 1, 2 and 4, range from around 1.04 to 1.08 (Table 4.14). In School 3, an all-girls’ school, the mean improvement score is comparatively much less, with the students achieving a mean improvement score of only 0.40 (to 2 decimal places). There is also no statistically significant difference between the post-test and the pre-test results of the students from School 3. The mean improvement scores of the students from the other three schools are however statistically significant (Table 4.14). The students from Schools 1, 2 and 4 appear to have improved significantly more than the students from School 3 who may not have improved.
The Effect Sizes of the improvement achieved by the students in the four schools are shown in the last column in Table 4.14. The mean improvement scores of students in School 2, an all-boys’ school, and Schools 1 and 4, which are co-educational schools, achieved similar Effect Sizes of 0.56, 0.48 and 0.55 respectively. In contrast, the ES of the improvement attained by students of School 3, an all-girls’ school, was a small effect of 0.18 (Table 4.14). The curriculum appears to have been highly effective in Schools 1, 2 and 4, but less effective in School 3. A possible explanation for these differences may rest with gender differences and with PSLE English grades seeming to play a role in the outcome. It was presented earlier in this chapter that the Effect Sizes of the improvement scores for boys and girls with Grades A*, A, and B were similar, though the boys appear to have benefited slightly more (c.f. Table 4.10, p.124). Moreover, boys with Grade C attained a very large ES whereas girls with Grade C achieved a negative ES. Table 4.15 below displays the percentages of the number of students with the different PSLE English grades in the four schools.

Table 4.15:  Percentage of Students with the Different PSLE English Grades in the 4 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE English Grades</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A*</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.9²</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.1²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² rounding error

Three of the four girls with Grade C came from School 3 while the 2.6% of students with Grade C in School 1 (Table 4.15) included six boys and a girl. The boys with Grade C achieved a high ES (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125) while the girls with the same grade achieved a negative ES (c.f. Table 4.12, p.126). Since almost all the girls with Grade C came from School 3 the poor performance of the girls with Grade C would have affected the overall ES of the performance of the school. In addition, most of the students in School 3 attained PSLE English Grade A (Table 4.15). Girls with Grade A attained a lower improvement ES of 0.37 in
comparison to the improvement ES of 0.43 of their male counterparts (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125 and Table 4.12, p.126). However, it could also be possible that the girls in School 3 may not have performed as well as the other girls in the co-educational schools 1 and 4. If girls with Grade A from the all girls’ school did not perform well, their performance could affect the overall ES of the performance of all the girls with Grade A. Therefore, the improvement score ES of the girls in the two co-educational schools as well as the ES for School 3 were calculated. Only the improvements of students with Grades A*, A, and B were calculated; the ES of students with Grade C was not computed because only one of girls came from another school, School 1. The Effect Sizes of the improvements achieved by the respective groups of students are displayed in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: Effect Sizes of the Improvement in the Writing Skills Assessment attained by Girls in the Coeducational Schools and Girls’ School

The five girls with Grade A* in School 3 attained a mean improvement score of zero while the 21 girls in School 1 achieved an improvement score ES of 0.67 (Figure 4.9). In School 4, there were no girls with Grade A*. Similarly, the performances of the 108 girls with Grade A in the co-educational schools, Schools 1 and 4, achieved a larger ES of 0.42 compared to their 58 counterparts in School 3 who attained an ES of 0.27. Figure 4.9 also reveals that there is a greater disparity between the improvements achieved by students with Grade B.
There were 27 girls in the co-educational schools with Grade B and a similar number of girls (27) in School 3, an all girls’ school. The improvement score ES that the girls from the co-educational schools achieved was 0.81 compared to the small ES of 0.20 achieved by the girls in School 3. Though there are differences in the number of students with the different grades in the respective schools, the evidence points to the likelihood that the curriculum was not as effective in School 3 as it was among the girls in the co-educational schools, Schools 1 and 4. The reason for the lower ES attained by the girls in School 3 may lie in factors other than gender, including the manner in which the programme was implemented in School 3. An attempt is made in the next chapter on Qualitative Findings to discover the possible reason for the disparity (c.f. pp.195-197).

In summary, it appears that the curriculum was highly effective in the all-boys’ school, School 2 and in the co-educational schools, Schools 1 and 4. While the curriculum seems to be not as effective in the all-girls’ school, School 3, the girls nevertheless showed some sign of improvement in the writing skills post-test even if that improvement was not statistically significant.

At this stage, it must be noted that School 2 had an integrated English and Literature Programme whereas the other three schools did not. However, there were important differences between the LDEP and Literature-based English Programme in School 2 since there was a greater concentration on the teaching of language skills during the LDEP. Therefore, the curriculum in School 2 curriculum was accepted as different from the LDEP just like the curricula used in the other schools. Though the control group in School 2, unlike the other control group of students in Schools 3 and 4, improved in the writing skills assessment, the improvement was not as large as the improvement registered by the experimental group of students in School 2. The mean improvement score ES of the experimental group of students in School 2 was 0.56 (t = 5.606, df = 101) whereas the control group in the same school achieved an ES of 0.23 (t = 2.365, df = 103).
In the following section, the improvement attained by the students in the various classes in the experimental group and in experimental and control classes taught by the same teachers were analysed to discover if:

- Class culture would have an influence on the outcomes,
- Normal(Academic) class performance matched that of the Express classes, and
- Teacher differences would affect the outcome.

**Analysis of the Improvement Achieved by the Different Classes in the Experimental Groups**

In Table 4.16, the paired t-test results of the differences between the post-test and the pre-tests as well as the Effect Sizes of these differences attained by the individual classes are presented. Class 5N(A) was the Normal (Academic) class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85526</td>
<td>2.19307</td>
<td>0.35576</td>
<td>0.13442</td>
<td>1.57611</td>
<td>2.404</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.47143</td>
<td>2.31346</td>
<td>0.39105</td>
<td>0.67673</td>
<td>2.26613</td>
<td>3.763</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.17308</td>
<td>2.15380</td>
<td>0.42239</td>
<td>-0.69686</td>
<td>1.04301</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5N(A)</td>
<td>1.81429</td>
<td>2.07253</td>
<td>0.35032</td>
<td>1.10235</td>
<td>2.52622</td>
<td>5.179</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.12821</td>
<td>2.27896</td>
<td>0.36493</td>
<td>0.38945</td>
<td>1.86696</td>
<td>3.092</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.85135</td>
<td>2.42632</td>
<td>0.39888</td>
<td>0.04238</td>
<td>1.66033</td>
<td>2.134</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.56250</td>
<td>1.93753</td>
<td>0.34251</td>
<td>-0.13605</td>
<td>1.26105</td>
<td>1.642</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.18571</td>
<td>1.67194</td>
<td>0.28261</td>
<td>0.61138</td>
<td>1.76005</td>
<td>4.196</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.35714</td>
<td>2.01309</td>
<td>0.34027</td>
<td>0.66562</td>
<td>2.04866</td>
<td>3.988</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.38889</td>
<td>2.23642</td>
<td>0.37274</td>
<td>-0.36781</td>
<td>1.14559</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.08621</td>
<td>2.08767</td>
<td>0.38767</td>
<td>-0.70790</td>
<td>0.88031</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.68750</td>
<td>2.28512</td>
<td>0.40396</td>
<td>-0.13637</td>
<td>1.51137</td>
<td>1.702</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.25641</td>
<td>1.85980</td>
<td>0.29781</td>
<td>0.65353</td>
<td>1.85929</td>
<td>4.219</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.79412</td>
<td>1.94281</td>
<td>0.33319</td>
<td>0.11624</td>
<td>1.47200</td>
<td>2.383</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

An examination of the Effect Sizes of the performances of the students in the different classes in Schools 1, 2 and 4 reveals that of the 11 experimental classes, only one class, Class 4, attained a slight ES (Table 4.16). The Effect
Sizes with regard to the other classes were moderate to large. The Normal (Academic) Class recorded a large ES of 0.88. Generally, the curriculum appears to have been effective in most of the classes, irrespective of the different teaching styles, class or school cultures, or whether the class was Express or Normal (Academic). With regard to School 3, Class 20 achieved a moderate ES improvement score of 0.30 (Table 4.16). The ES of improvement score attained by Class 16 was 0.17 but if the scores of the three girls with Grade C were excluded, the ES goes up to 0.24. In the light of the fact that the two control classes in School 3 attained negative improvement score Effect Sizes (-0.16 and -0.20 respectively), the curriculum appears to have helped the girls in two of the experimental classes to improve. (For one control class, t = -0.944, df = 36; for the other control class, t = -1.250, df = 39). Students in Class 18 appear not to have improved much. The very slight improvement score ES of 0.04 that students from Class 18 achieved would affect the ES of School 3 (Table 4.16). Possible reasons as to why Class 4 in School 1 and Class 18 in School 3 achieved slight Effect Sizes will be explored in the next chapter on Qualitative Findings (c.f. pp.217-220).

**Analysis of the Difference Scores of the Experimental and Control Classes Taught by the Same Teachers**

In School 4, the experimental and control classes were taught by the same teachers. The following Table 4.17 compares the performances of these classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23(E*)</td>
<td>1.25641</td>
<td>1.85980</td>
<td>0.29781</td>
<td>0.65353-1.85929</td>
<td>4.219</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21(C*)</td>
<td>-0.05556</td>
<td>1.91527</td>
<td>0.31921</td>
<td>-0.70359-0.59248</td>
<td>-0.174</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24(E)</td>
<td>0.79412</td>
<td>1.94281</td>
<td>0.33319</td>
<td>0.11624-1.47200</td>
<td>2.383</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25(C)</td>
<td>-0.42424</td>
<td>1.81194</td>
<td>0.31542</td>
<td>-1.06673-0.21825</td>
<td>-1.345</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(E) stands for Experimental class and (C) stands for Control class

**Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.**
Classes 23 and 21 were taught by the same teacher. Class 23 was the experimental class and Class 21 was the control class. The experimental class achieved a large ES of 0.68 whereas the control class displayed no improvement since the very slight ES is negative (Table 4.17). Experimental Class 24 and Control Class 25 were taught by the same two teachers, one of whom taught English and the other taught Literature. The ES attained by Class 24 indicates that the experimental curriculum was effective in improving the writing skills of the students but the negative ES achieved by Class 25 (Table 4.17) illustrates that the students did not improve. Since the teacher effect remained the same for the experimental and control classes taught by the same teachers, the contrast between the Effect Sizes achieved by the experimental and control classes demonstrates that the experimental curriculum may have been effective. In the writing assessment, most of the students in the experimental group improved whereas most of the students in the control group maintained their pre-test scores. In addition, there appears to be general improvement in the performance of the students in the experimental group even across the following mediating variables: differing language abilities, gender, school, Normal (Academic) or Express stream, class or varying teaching styles. In conclusion, it may be presumed that the experimental curriculum was effective in improving the writing skills of many of the students.

Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

In these multiple site case studies, there were seventeen experimental classes which were taught the experimental curriculum and eight control classes which were taught under the usual curriculum in four separate schools. However, for reasons already stated at the beginning of this chapter (c.f. p.101), one of the experimental classes, a Normal (Academic) class, had to be excluded from the analysis. Thus, in the final analysis, only the results from sixteen experimental and eight control classes were included. It is once more noted that the reading comprehension skills was a minor component of the LDEP since a greater
emphasis was given to the writing skills. Due to the short duration of the programme more time was spent on the explicit and implicit teaching of writing skills. However, through the literary analysis of the text and the teaching of writing skills it was hoped that the comprehension skills of the students would improve as well. Therefore, the evidence offered in this section of any improvement in the reading comprehension skills of the students in the experimental group is in support of evidence presented of the improvement in the writing skills displayed by the students in the experimental group to indicate that the LDEP was effective in improving the language skills of the students.

In the experimental curriculum, reading comprehension skills were taught differently from the control classes. In the control classes in all the schools, the students had the usual lessons on comprehension skills that included completing comprehension exercises with extracts as passages. These lessons would normally involve the students completing the comprehension exercises and the teachers going over the answers. In some schools, the students were also taught techniques on how to answer comprehension questions. The experimental group, on the other hand, was not given comprehension exercises unrelated to the literature text; rather, they were guided through the analysis of the content and language of the literature text. Therefore, in analysing the outcomes of the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test, the intention was to discover if the experimental programme would lead to an improvement in reading comprehension skills through the analysis of the literature text. In addition, it was hoped that a comparison with the control group would yield answers to whether the teaching of reading comprehension skills through linking literary analysis with writing would aid just as well in the improvement of these skills as the usual custom of teaching comprehension skills through the use of distinct comprehension exercises.

In one school (School 1), since the school wanted all the Secondary One Express and Normal (Academic) classes to participate, for practical reasons the classes were taught under the experimental curriculum in two phases. In the first
phase, five classes, including a Normal (Academic) class, were taught the experimental curriculum while the other four classes in the level followed the usual curriculum. These four classes then took part in the second phase during which the first group of five classes returned to their usual curriculum. One of the four classes in Phase 2 was the Normal (Academic) class that was excluded from the final analysis (c.f. p.101). Since the post-test that the students in Phase 1 completed coincided with the pre-test that the students in Phase 2 completed, the post-test of the Phase 1 classes became the pre-test of the Phase 2 classes. Subsequently, the pre-test reading comprehension assessment of the classes in Phase 1 became the post-test of the classes taking part in Phase 2. Please refer to Table 3.2, p.73 for a tabular representation of the implementation in phases. Two sets of different comprehension passages, Passage A and Passage B, extracted from the same story, were used for the pre-test and post-test (c.f. Appendices 3a and 4a). In Schools 1 (Phase 1), 2, 3 and 4 Passage A was the pre-test and Passage B was the post-test and in School 1 (Phase 2) Passage B was the pre-test and Passage A was the post-test. Lists of acceptable and unacceptable answers were created (c.f. Appendix 5b). These lists were open to scrutiny, and teachers who taught the experimental and control classes had access to them. As with the writing skills assessment, all the pre-test and all the post-test scripts were marked before the scores were recorded. This was to ensure that the pre-test and post-test marks of any particular individual or group would be difficult to track, thereby acting as a safeguard against unreliable or inconsistent marking by the researcher.

An additional safeguard was taken to ensure that the marking was reliable. Teachers from each of the participating schools marked the pre-test and post-test scripts of five students. In Schools 2, 3 and 4, Passage A was the pre-test and Passage B was the post-test. In School 1, since the scripts of students in Phase 2 were given to the teachers to be marked, Passage B was the pre-test and Passage A, the post-test. The difference scores between the post-test and the pre-test awarded by the teachers were recorded, and then compared to the
difference scores awarded by the researcher for the same scripts. The difference scores were used because in the analysis of the test scores of the students, the focus was on the difference scores between the post-test and pre-test as these indicate improvement or lack of improvement in the performance of the students.

The paired t-test between difference scores awarded by the teachers and the researcher yielded a mean of zero with a two-tailed significance of 1. The computation of the regression between the scores resulted in a constant of -0.005 and beta = 0.817. The disparity between the difference scores that the teachers and the researcher awarded for the same scripts appears to be negligible.

On completing the marking of the reading skills test papers, it was found that on the average, students received fewer marks in the test with Passage B than in the test with Passage A. It is important that the tests with Passages A and B are similar in terms of level of difficulty for two reasons. While the test with Passage A was the pre-test and the test with Passage B was the post-test for many of the students, the reverse was true for other students. The students in School 1 (Phase 2) completed the test with Passage B as the pre-test and the test with Passage A as the post-test. There can be no comparability between the two groups if the tests are of different difficulty levels. It is also important to ensure that the tests are similar so that assessment of any improvement in the reading comprehension skill of the students would be reliable.

In order to ascertain if there is a difference in the level of difficulty between Passage A and Passage B, a third group of 179 Secondary One students from two schools were given the tests to complete. This group was outside the sample of the four schools. These students came from four Express classes and one Normal (Academic) class and they completed the reading comprehension tests on the same day. The reading comprehension test with Passage A is
termed as Test A and the test with Passage B is termed as Test B. After marking the test papers of these students, the scores of each student were kept as paired scores. On comparing these paired scores, it was found that they scored on average, about 1.79 marks less in Test B than in Test A (Table 4.18). The paired t-test results in Table 4.18 indicate that there is a significant difference between Test B and Test A (t = -6.7, p < 0.05). In other words, since the tests were completed on the same day, it would be safe to assume that Test B was more difficult than Test A.

Table 4.18: Paired t-test of Test B and Test A in the Reading Comprehension Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test B Scores – Test A Scores</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test B Scores – Test A Scores</td>
<td>-1.78771</td>
<td>3.55213</td>
<td>0.26550</td>
<td>-2.31164 to -1.26378</td>
<td>-6.733</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was then decided to adjust the Test B scores using a regression model so that Test A would be equivalent to Test B. The results are displayed in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Results derived from the Regression Model

Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.672a</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>3.36773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Test B

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1652.421</td>
<td>145.695</td>
<td>.000a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>11.342</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>3659.888</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Test B
b. Dependent Variable: Test A
Using the information from Table 4.20, Test B results were adjusted using the formula:

\[
\text{Test B adjusted} = \text{Constant} + (\text{coefficient} \times \text{Test B original}) \\
= 5.517 + (0.725 \times \text{Test B original})
\]

The adjusted Test B results and the Test A scores were then paired in a paired t-test to determine if the regression approach would work in levelling the difference between the pre-test and the post-test. The following results were obtained:

### Table 4.21: Paired t-test of the Difference in the Reading Comprehension Scores attained in Adjusted Test B and Test A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Test B Scores – Test A Scores</td>
<td>0.00373</td>
<td>3.35826</td>
<td>0.25101</td>
<td>-0.49160 - 0.49907</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With Test B scores adjusted, there is no statistically significant difference between the Test A and Adjusted Test B scores since p is greater than 0.05 and the mean difference is a negligible 0.004 (to 3 decimal places). Through the adjustment made by following the regression model, the t-test shows that the mean score marks that the students achieved from Test A and the Adjusted Test B are very similar. Consequently, all Test B scores of the participating students in Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 were adjusted using the formula:

\[
\text{Test B adjusted} = 5.517 + (0.725 \times \text{Test B Original})
\]
It is once again noted that Test B was the post-test for the students in Schools 1 (Phase 1), 2, 3 and 4 and the pre-test for the students in Phase 2, School 1.

**Comparison of the Reading Comprehension Results of the Experimental Classes and the Control Classes in Schools 3 and 4**

On analysing the results it was found that the top students in the experimental and control groups displayed little improvement in the post-test. Figure 4.10 below displays the mean improvement scores of all the students in the experimental and control groups with the different PSLE English grades.

![Figure 4.10: Mean Improvement Scores and their Confidence Intervals in the Reading Comprehension Assessment by PSLE English Grades](image)

Figure 4.10 demonstrates that students with A* showed no improvement. The mean improvement score is less than zero and the upper and lower bounds of the Confidence Interval are at and below zero (Figure 4.10). In addition, the following Table 4.22 shows that more than 65% of the students with Grade A* had scored 68% or more in the pre-test. In the post-test, about 54% of the same group of students scored 68% or more.
Table 4.22: Percentage of Students with Grade A* scoring 68% or more in the Pre-test and Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Marks (% of Test Score)</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 23 (80% – 92%)</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – &lt;20 (68% – &lt;80%)</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22 reveals that more than three-fifths of the students with Grade A* were already achieving high scores in the pre-test, thereby indicating that these students were already performing at a high level on this type of test. In contrast, 30.6% of the students with Grade A, 1.8% of students with Grade B and none of the students with Grade C scored within the range of 17 to 23 marks in the pre-test. Thus, the post-test may not have been challenging for most of the students with Grade A*, and that may be the reason why the percentage of students scoring the same range of marks dropped to just over half of them (Table 4.22).

Regression towards the mean suggests that a group of students scoring highly in the first test might have lower mean scores in the second test (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister 1990). This phenomenon might explain why as a group the students with Grade A* did not do as well in the post-test. Since the mean improvement score for the students from the control and experimental groups with Grade A* was below zero, it might be assumed that for these groups of students there was no change in performance in the second test. Moreover, as over half of the students with Grade A* still managed to score 68% and more in the second reading comprehension test, it is probable that these students needed a more challenging test than the uniform one that was given to all students. It must be noted, however, that with regard to the lowest-scoring students, there were only three students with PSLE Grade C in the experimental group (c.f. Table 4.26, p.148). Since no comparison could be made with the control group, the performance of this group is not included in the discussion of the findings.
As students with PSLE English Grade A* in both the control and experimental groups displayed either no or little improvement, it was decided that these students would be excluded from the analysis. Thus, the students with A* from Schools 3 and 4 and all the Express students from Schools 1 and 2 were excluded from the analysis. All the students from the Express stream from Schools 1 and 2 were excluded because most of the Express students in Schools 1 and 2 who attained PSLE Grade A would have scores that were close to that needed to achieve Grade A*. This conclusion was reached based on the PSLE English grades of the students and the aggregate PSLE scores of the students in these two schools when compared with the grades and scores of the students in Schools 3 and 4. More than 90% of the students in the Special/Express classes in Schools 1 and 2 had obtained Grades A* and A (c.f. Table 4.1, p.100) in the PSLE. Additionally, in 2004, the PSLE aggregate scores of the Express students who entered Secondary One in Schools 1 and 2 were much higher than the aggregate scores of the students who entered Schools 3 and 4. The aggregate scores are given in Table 4.23.

### Table 4.23: Mean of the Aggregate PSLE Scores* of Express Students who entered Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Non-Affiliation Mean</th>
<th>Affiliation# Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Under ‘Affiliation’, the aggregate score of students who entered the secondary school from an affiliated primary school is given. Only one school, School 3, has an affiliated primary school.

In the PSLE, students are tested on English Language (100 marks), Mother Tongue (100 marks), Mathematics (50 marks) and Science (50 marks). For each student, the Ministry of Education reports the grades of the individual subjects and an aggregate score. The maximum aggregate score for the four subjects is 300. Thus, from the mean aggregate scores in Table 4.23, it may be deduced
that, on the average, in the respective schools, each Express student would obtain the following marks in English:

Table 4.24: Calculation of the Mean PSLE English Scores from the aggregate scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Mean PSLE English Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(250/300) x 100</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(267/300) x 100</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(230/300) x 100, (210/300) x 100**</td>
<td>77%#, 70%##</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(220/300) x 100</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*# Of students from non-affiliated primary schools
**# Of students from affiliated primary schools

In order to get a grade of A*, the students would have to obtain a score of 90% or more. The range of scores for Grade A is wide, going from a minimum of 75% to 89%. Since the average PSLE English scores of students in Schools 1 and 2, being just 7% and 1% less than the 90% (Table 4.24), were close to scores needed for Grade A*, it was decided that these schools would be excluded from the analysis. Students from Schools 3 and 4 had mean English scores that were much lower than the score needed for Grade A* (Table 4.24). Most of the students from these schools with Grade A would have attained scores well below that needed for an A*. Thus, the scores of the students with PSLE Grade A, as well as those with Grade B, from these schools were analysed.

The means and the Confidence Intervals of the means of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental and control groups in Schools 3 and 4 were computed, and these are displayed in Figure 4.11.
Figure 4.11: Means and the Confidence Intervals of the Post-test and Pre-test Scores in the Reading Comprehension Assessment by Treatment Groups

Though the mean of the post-test of the experimental group in the assessment of the reading comprehension is lower than the post-test mean of the control group, the mean of pre-test scores of the experimental group is much lower (Figure 4.11). The experimental group appears to have narrowed the gap and caught up with the control group, thereby indicating that the experimental group had improved more than the control group. Paired t-tests of the reading comprehension post-test and pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups were next analysed. The results and the Effect Sizes are presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Paired t-tests of the Improvement Scores in the Reading Comprehension Assessment by Treatment Groups in Schools 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2.12226</td>
<td>3.33722</td>
<td>0.25155</td>
<td>1.62579 2.61872</td>
<td>8.437</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.49425</td>
<td>3.46401</td>
<td>0.25197</td>
<td>0.99720 1.99130</td>
<td>5.930</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.*
There is a statistically highly significant difference between the post-test and the pre-test for both the experimental and control groups, since \( p < 0.001 \) (Table 4.25). However, the mean difference score of the experimental group is greater than the mean difference score of the control group. Moreover, the ES of the mean improvement score of the experimental group at 0.64 is greater than the ES of the mean improvement score of the control group which was 0.43. The experimental group in Schools 3 and 4 appears to have performed better than the control group in the same schools even though the experimental group did not work on distinct reading comprehension exercises on which the control group worked. The students in the experimental group may have improved through the process of doing literary analysis and through exploring the use of language in the literature text. It may also be pertinent to note that, in all the schools, the control classes would have continued with same form of instruction in comprehension skills that they had in the first half of the school year. Though the experimental classes had the benefit of the same form of instruction during the first two terms in the year, in Term 3, the control classes continued to have the same form of instruction while the experimental classes did not. The control classes would have had the benefit of having the comprehension skills reinforced whereas the experimental classes did not have these skills reinforced during the duration of the programme.

In the next section, the improvement that the students achieved in the post-test in the reading comprehension assessment was scrutinised to ascertain if differing language fluency, as determined through the PSLE English grades of the students, may have had an influence on the outcomes.

**PSLE Grades and Improvement Scores in the Reading Comprehension Assessment by Treatment Groups in Schools 3 and 4**

In Table 4.26, the results of the paired t-tests of the mean difference scores between the post-test and pre-test and the Effect Sizes of the improvements achieved by the Experimental and Control Groups are displayed.
Table 4.26: Paired t-tests of Improvement Scores by PSLE English Grades and Treatment Groups in Schools 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE Grade</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>1.26490</td>
<td>3.08659</td>
<td>0.29839</td>
<td>0.67331 - 1.85649</td>
<td>4.239</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.71938</td>
<td>3.35994</td>
<td>0.29933</td>
<td>0.12698 - 1.31179</td>
<td>2.403</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>3.21743</td>
<td>3.29826</td>
<td>0.43308</td>
<td>2.35020 - 4.08466</td>
<td>7.429</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.06372</td>
<td>3.19770</td>
<td>0.40942</td>
<td>2.24475 - 3.88269</td>
<td>7.483</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>4.89200</td>
<td>2.97027</td>
<td>1.71489</td>
<td>-2.48656 - 12.27056</td>
<td>2.853</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

With respect to students with Grade A, the mean improvement score and the ES of the experimental group are greater than those of the control group. The ES of the mean improvement score is 0.41 for the experimental group and 0.21 for the control group (Table 4.26). In the case of the students with Grade B, statistically there is a highly significant difference between the mean improvement scores of both the experimental and control groups since p<0.001. The mean difference score and the ES of this group of students in the experimental group are greater than those of their counterparts in the control group. The margin is however slight with the improvement score ES of the experimental group being 0.98 and the ES of the control group being 0.96 (Table 4.26). Figure 4.12 shows a comparison of the Effect Sizes between the experimental and control groups as a whole and on the basis of the PSLE English grades of the students.

Figure 4.12: Effect Sizes of the Improvement Scores by Treatment Groups and PSLE English Grades
Students with Grade A from the experimental group achieved a larger ES than the students in the control group (Figure 4.12). However, with regard to the students with Grade B, the gap is marginal (Figure 4.12) with both the experimental and control groups having similarly large Effect Sizes. Both groups improved greatly in the post-test over the pre-test though the experimental group improved slightly more than the control group (Figure 4.12). Overall Effect Sizes of the experimental and control groups show that generally the experimental group, irrespective of PSLE English Grades, had registered greater improvements in the reading comprehension assessment than the control group.

Gender and PSLE English Grades and Improvement Scores in the Reading Comprehension Assessment by Treatment Groups

The improvement scores of the students in the experimental as well as control groups in Schools 3 and 4 were analysed with respect to gender as well as the PSLE English Grades of the boys and girls. All the boys came from School 4, a co-educational school, since School 3 was an all-girls’ school.

The paired t-test results of the post-test and pre-test of the reading comprehension assessment that the boys and girls completed and the ES of the improvements gained are displayed in Table 4.27.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td>2.09771</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>2.27599</td>
<td>0.38471</td>
<td>1.68589</td>
<td>3.41302</td>
<td>0.50878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>1.31589</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>2.87954</td>
<td>2.71127</td>
<td>0.66050</td>
<td>2.00915</td>
<td>7.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</td>
<td>5.453</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>3.314</td>
<td>4.933</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Upper</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

The paired t-test results in Table 4.27 indicate a statistically high significance between the post-test and pre-test in the reading comprehension assessment though the significance is slightly lower for the control group of boys. The mean
improvement scores are greater for both the boys and girls in the experimental group than in the control group. The Effect Sizes attained by both boys and girls in the experimental group are larger than those achieved by the control group of boys and girls. In the experimental group, the boys attained a large improvement ES of 0.92 as opposed to the much lower ES of 0.49 of the control group of boys (Table 4.27). With regard to the girls, the experimental group achieved an improvement ES of 0.6 in contrast to the lower ES of 0.41 attained by the control group (Table 4.27). In both cases, the boys and girls in the experimental group improved more than those in the control groups.

The next step taken was to compare the performances of the boys with PSLE English Grades A and B in the experimental and control groups. There was only one boy in the control group with a Grade C and so no comparison could be made.

The results of the paired t-tests of the post-test and the pre-test as well as the ES of the improvement achieved by the male students in School 4 are presented below in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28: Paired t-tests of Improvement Scores of Boys in the Reading Comprehension Test by PSLE English Grades and Treatment Groups in School 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSLE Grade</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.55152</td>
<td>2.28175</td>
<td>0.49792</td>
<td>0.51288 to 2.59017</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0.98218</td>
<td>3.49241</td>
<td>0.66000</td>
<td>-0.37204 to 2.33640</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.91700</td>
<td>2.08167</td>
<td>0.55635</td>
<td>1.71508 to 4.11892</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.78731</td>
<td>3.11576</td>
<td>0.77894</td>
<td>1.12704 to 4.44758</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Table 4.28 indicates that in all cases, except for the control group of students with Grade A, there are statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test since \( p < 0.05 \). The experimental group of students with Grades A and B and the control group of students with Grade B appear to have improved significantly more than the control group of students with Grade A. The mean
improvement scores of the experimental group of students with Grades A and B are greater than the mean improvement scores of the control group of students with the corresponding grades (Table 4.28). The experimental group of students appears to have improved more than their counterparts in the control group.

Table 4.28 reveals that the boys with Grades A and B in the experimental group attained much larger improvement score Effect Sizes of 0.68 and 1.4 than their counterparts in the control group with improvement Effect Sizes of 0.28 and 0.66 respectively. This indicates that there is a greater likelihood that the improvement of the boys in the experimental group would be more educationally significant than the improvement displayed by the control group of boys.

In Table 4.29, the ES of the mean improvement scores and the results of the paired t-tests of the reading comprehension post-test and pre-test scores of the girls in Schools 3 and 4 are presented. Since there were students with Grade C in only the experimental group, their scores were excluded from the analysis as no comparison could be made with the control group.

The results of the paired t-tests, as displayed in Table 4.29, reveal some resemblance to the results attained by the boys in School 4. There is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores for students in the control group with Grade B and for students in the experimental group with Grades A and B since p < 0.05 (Table 4.29). The mean improvement scores registered by the girls in the experimental group are greater...
than those of the control group though the difference between the girls with Grade B is negligible. The Effect Sizes indicate that the girls with Grade A in the experimental group achieved a moderate improvement score ES whereas their counterparts in the control group attained a small ES of 0.19 (Table 4.29). The Effect Sizes of the improvement scores of the girls with Grade B in the experimental and control groups are similarly large. The improvements achieved by the girls in the control and experimental groups appear to be of similarly important increments.

A more detailed study of the Effect Sizes of the improvements achieved by the boys and girls in the experimental and control groups is undertaken in the next section so as to discover the relationship between gender and the LDEP and the usual mode of teaching reading comprehension skills adopted in the schools. Figure 4.13 displays the Effect Sizes of the improvements achieved by the boys and girls as a whole and by PSLE English grades.

Figure 4.13: Effect Sizes of the Improvement by Gender, PSLE English Grades and Treatment Groups

![Effect Sizes Graph]

B(A) stands for Boys with Grade A; B(B) – Boys with Grade B; G(A) – Girls with Grade A; G(B) – Girls with Grade B; B(O) – Boys’ Overall ES; G(O) – Girls’ Overall ES
The Effect Sizes of the various groups of boys and girls with different PSLE English grades in Figure 4.13 reveal that in general the boys and girls from the experimental group appear to have improved more than the boys and girls from the control group. As illustrated by Figure 4.13, only one group of girls with Grade B in the control group has a slightly larger ES (0.95) than the girls with the same grade in the experimental group (0.92). However, the difference is slight and both groups of girls appear to have benefited, whether they had learnt reading comprehension skills through the LDEP or through the usual curricula of the schools. However, in the case of the boys, there is a large difference between the experimental group and control group. The experimental curriculum appears to have been highly effective for boys with Grades A and B in the experimental group with the boys registering much larger Effect Sizes than their counterparts in the control group (Figure 4.13).

There are similarities in the results of the boys and girls when a comparison is made between the experimental and control groups. There are also marked differences in the Effect Sizes of the improvement scores achieved by the boys and girls. Tables 4.27 to 4.29 and Figure 4.13 (c.f. pp.149-151 and 152) reveal that the boys in the experimental group displayed greater improvement than the experimental and control groups of girls, irrespective of PSLE English grades. These boys displayed greater improvement than the boys in the control group as well. The results may imply that with boys reading comprehension skills may be enhanced through the contextual and literary analysis of the literature text. The gap between the Effect Sizes attained by the boys in the experimental and control groups (Figure 4.13) is also wide. It may imply that the LDEP is better than the traditional mode of teaching comprehension skills in improving the reading comprehension skills of the boys.

In the final section, the findings from the results of the individual schools, School 3 and School 4, are presented. Overall, the experimental group appears to have done better than the control group (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). However, would this
mean that in the individual schools the experimental group performed better than the control group as well? The outcomes of the different groups in Schools 3 and 4 were studied to ascertain if in each of these schools, the experimental group of students also registered greater improvement than the control group of students.

**Reading Comprehension Assessment of the Experimental and Control Groups in School 3**

The paired t-test results of the reading comprehension post-test and the pre-test and the ES of the improvement achieved by the students in the experimental and control groups in School 3, an all-girls’ school, are displayed in Table 4.30.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2.27926</td>
<td>3.61386</td>
<td>0.35437</td>
<td>1.57645</td>
<td>2.98207</td>
<td>6.432</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.39567</td>
<td>3.56791</td>
<td>0.41199</td>
<td>0.57476</td>
<td>2.21657</td>
<td>3.388</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

Both the experimental and control groups in School 3 improved (Table 4.30). However, the experimental group achieved a larger mean improvement score ES of 0.63 compared to the improvement score ES of 0.39 of the control group (Table 4.30). In spite of having a focused instruction on comprehension skills, the control group of classes displayed less improvement than the experimental group. The LDEP appears to have been highly effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of the students in the experimental group.

**Reading Comprehension Assessment of the Experimental and Control Groups in School 4**

School 4 is a co-educational school and the results of School 4 mirrors that of School 3 in that the experimental group displayed greater improvement in the post-test than the control group. The results of the paired t-tests of the reading
comprehension post-test and the pre-test and the improvement score ES are presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.31: Paired t-tests of the Improvement Scores (Post-test – Pre-test) in the Reading Comprehension Assessment in School 4 by Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>1.89547</td>
<td>2.90103</td>
<td>0.34189</td>
<td>1.12137</td>
<td>2.57718</td>
<td>5.544</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.55911</td>
<td>3.40828</td>
<td>0.31922</td>
<td>0.92686</td>
<td>2.19153</td>
<td>4.884</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.

The experimental group attained a larger improvement ES of 0.65 compared to the improvement ES of 0.46 achieved by the control group (Table 4.31), indicating that the experimental group of students had improved more than the control group of students. The Effect Sizes of the improvement registered by the students in the experimental groups in Schools 3 and 4 are similar since they are around 0.60 (Tables 4.30 & 4.31). In summary, it may be stated that the experimental curriculum was highly effective in enhancing the comprehension skills of the students.

Since the experimental group showed greater improvement, the outcomes of the individual classes in the experimental group in the two schools were examined in order to see if differences between classes had an impact on the outcomes. The paired t-test results of the reading comprehension post-test and pre-test and the Effect Sizes of the improvements shown by the students in the individual classes are displayed in Table 4.32 below.

Table 4.32: Paired t-tests of the Improvement Scores of the Experimental Classes in the Reading Comprehension Assessment in Schools 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.29762</td>
<td>3.76972</td>
<td>0.59604</td>
<td>3.09201 to 5.50324</td>
<td>7.210</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.69986</td>
<td>3.00581</td>
<td>0.50908</td>
<td>-0.33268 to 1.73239</td>
<td>1.377</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.40148</td>
<td>2.74622</td>
<td>0.50996</td>
<td>0.35688 to 2.44609</td>
<td>2.748</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.85416</td>
<td>2.89399</td>
<td>0.47577</td>
<td>0.88926 to 2.81907</td>
<td>3.897</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.93914</td>
<td>2.95006</td>
<td>0.49865</td>
<td>0.92576 to 2.95252</td>
<td>3.889</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.
A comparison of the Effect Sizes of the improvement registered by the individual experimental classes in Schools 3 and 4 in Table 4.32 reveals that the LDEP was highly effective in improving reading comprehension skills in all the classes except Class 18 in School 3. Though the mean improvement score ES achieved by Class 18 is smaller by comparison, the ES of 0.23 still shows that the curriculum had some positive effect. Therefore, the experimental curriculum was effective irrespective of class differences.

With the removal of one Normal (Academic) class from analysis, only the performance of one Normal (Academic) class, Class 5, remained to be analysed. Even though the number of students, at forty, is small, and there were no control Normal (Academic) class, it was felt that analysis of the performance of the students in Class 5 would help in ascertaining if the experimental curriculum could be as successful with Normal (Academic) students as with the Express students. In the following section, the outcomes of the Normal (Academic) class and the sub-groups within that class are presented. The paired t-test results between the reading comprehension post-test and the pre-test and the Effect Sizes of the improvement achieved by the students in the Normal (Academic) Class 5 are displayed in Table 4.33.

### Table 4.33: Paired t-tests of the Improvement Scores (Post-test – Pre-test) in the Reading Comprehension Assessment of Class 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improvement Scores</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.52387</td>
<td>3.21716</td>
<td>0.50868</td>
<td>2.49498</td>
<td>4.55277</td>
<td>6.928</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>3.83724</td>
<td>3.32322</td>
<td>0.72519</td>
<td>2.32453</td>
<td>5.34995</td>
<td>5.291</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>3.17753</td>
<td>3.148530</td>
<td>0.72232</td>
<td>1.65999</td>
<td>4.69507</td>
<td>4.399</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>3.27325</td>
<td>2.87851</td>
<td>1.01771</td>
<td>2.86675</td>
<td>7.67975</td>
<td>5.181</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade A</td>
<td>1.12950</td>
<td>3.72999</td>
<td>2.63750</td>
<td>-32.38311</td>
<td>34.64211</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade B</td>
<td>3.21355</td>
<td>3.23462</td>
<td>0.60065</td>
<td>1.96317</td>
<td>4.44393</td>
<td>5.350</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade C</td>
<td>5.27325</td>
<td>2.87851</td>
<td>1.01771</td>
<td>2.86675</td>
<td>7.67975</td>
<td>5.181</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOYS</td>
<td>3.45986</td>
<td>3.53701</td>
<td>0.94531</td>
<td>1.41765</td>
<td>5.50206</td>
<td>3.660</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade A</td>
<td>1.12950</td>
<td>3.72999</td>
<td>2.63750</td>
<td>-32.38311</td>
<td>34.64211</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade B</td>
<td>2.98367</td>
<td>3.03173</td>
<td>0.78279</td>
<td>1.30475</td>
<td>4.66258</td>
<td>3.812</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade C</td>
<td>6.67950</td>
<td>1.53796</td>
<td>1.08750</td>
<td>-7.13850</td>
<td>20.49750</td>
<td>6.142</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table adapted to include paired t-test results from the SPSS™ output and the ES.*
Table 4.33 demonstrates that the Normal (Academic) students in Class 5 had improved substantially by a relatively large mean improvement ES of 1.10. In addition, the boys and girls appeared to have improved to a similar extent with the improvement ES for boys being slightly higher at 1.15 and the girls attaining an ES of 1.01 (Table 4.33). Boys and girls with Grades B improved greatly, attaining the same improvement ES of 0.98 (Table 4.33). With regard to the girls with Grades A and C, and boys with Grade C, since the sample sizes are small, little importance can be placed on the results of the students with these grades.

In conclusion, the curriculum appears to have benefited the students with Grades A and B in the Express and Normal (Academic) classes in Schools 3, 4 and 1. Imparting comprehension skills contextually and through literary analysis during the LDEP seems to have been highly effective in most cases.

Though the teaching of writing skills and reading comprehension formed the major and minor components of the LDEP respectively, the students in the experimental group appear to have improved in both the writing as well as the reading comprehension skills assessments. These students in general displayed greater improvement than the control group of students. In the writing skills assessment, the students in the experimental group improved irrespective of differences in PSLE English Grades, schools, classes and gender. In the reading comprehension skills assessment, only the results of the students with Grades A and B in Schools 3 and 4 were analysed since it was felt that the test instruments were unchallenging for the students with Grade A*. There were too few students with Grade C. Students with Grades A and B in the experimental group improved more than the students with similar grades in the control group. These students generally improved more than the control group of students in the different sub-groups of analysis based on gender, PSLE English Grades and school.
Having analysed the performances of the students in the pre-test and post-test, it would now be useful to study the perceptions of the students regarding the experimental programme through the survey they were asked to complete at the end of the programme.

SURVEY FINDINGS

All seventeen experimental classes completed a survey (c.f. Appendix 8). However, only the responses of sixteen classes \((n = 604)\) were analysed since it was decided to exclude one of the classes, Normal (Academic) Class 9, from all analysis of the data collected for reasons stated at the beginning of this chapter on p.101.

In the survey that the students were requested to complete, they responded to:

- The number of grammar concepts they had grasped during the LDEP (Literature-Driven English Programme), and
- Whether they felt they had acquired specific writing skills or had improved in their writing in general.

Figure 4.14 shows the percentages of students who reported grasping none, or one or more of the grammar concepts taught.
Figure 4.14, reveals that of a total of 599 students who responded to the question of how many of the grammar concepts they had managed to grasp, about 7.2% of them reported that they had grasped none. 17.5% of the students understood one to two of the concepts taught while the majority, about 75.3% managed to grasp three or more of the grammar concepts. Of the 75.3%, about 26.4% had comprehended all six concepts taught. The LDEP appears to have succeeded in transmitting the learning of some of the concepts to many of the students. Table 4.34 explores to what extent the students had consciously tried to transfer the concepts they had learnt into their own pieces of writing.
Table 4.34: Students’ Self-Report on the Outcomes of the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you try to create appropriate sentence types to suit the content of your writing after the Programme?</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the Programme, where appropriate, do you include more adjectives, adverbs or other descriptive words when you write?</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you more aware of the appropriate tenses to use in your writing after the Programme?</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you find that you are writing better now than you were at the end of Term 2?</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the literature text help you to understand the elements of a story better?</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were the lessons useful in helping you to analyse the stories?</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around 64% of the students made an effort to vary their sentence structures to suit the writing. Over 75% of the students reported that they were adding more elaborative details and were more careful with their tenses after the LDEP (Table 4.34). With regard to literary analysis, about 70% of the students felt the lessons helped them in the analysis and 66% of them comprehended the elements of a story better through the use of the literature text. Though only 55.2% perceived that they had become better writers, the higher percentages in previous responses, showing that students were conscious of some of the conventions of writing and were making an effort to apply them, suggest that more may have improved in their writing potential than they themselves think.

The explicit teaching of grammar concepts appears to have resulted in learning taking place. Not only did their writing skills improve as evidenced by their mean improved scores in the post writing test (c.f. p.110), but most of the students also perceived that they had grasped at least one of the concepts. In addition, many of them also viewed themselves as improving in one or more areas in their writing.

In the survey, the students were also asked about their reading preferences, and their liking for the English and Literature lessons before the Programme and for the Programme itself.
Table 4.35: Percentages of the Approval Responses of the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you enjoy reading?</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you enjoy reading Literature Text A?</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you enjoy reading Literature Text B?</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>382*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the start of the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP), did</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you enjoy the English lessons?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the start of the LDEP, did you enjoy the Literature lessons?</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>509#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you enjoy the LDEP?</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In Schools 1 and 4, the students were required to read two short stories, Text A and Text B.
#The students in School 4 were taught Literature for the first time in Term 3 when the LDEP was started.

With reference to Table 4.35, it may be established that a high percentage of students (around 81%) enjoyed reading, though the question was broad enough for the students to include different types of reading materials, including non-fiction and self-help books. Before the LDEP, 62% of the students enjoyed the Literature lessons, and a similar percentage of students enjoyed reading at least one of the literature texts that was used during the Programme. A similar percentage of students (about 63%) also enjoyed the English lessons before the LDEP. About 54% of the students reported enjoying the LDEP.

The students were also asked open-ended questions about what kinds of books they preferred reading and their reactions to the LDEP. From these responses, categories were created. Through their responses, it was hoped that a better understanding of their reading preferences as well as their reactions to the programme may be gained than from a general “yes” or “no” response to questions found in Table 4.35. The categories and the percentages of male and female responses to each category are presented in Table 4.36. For example, in School 1, 69% of the males and 62% of the females surveyed reported that they preferred reading mystery, adventure or fantasy books (Table 4.36). The percentages of the responses from either the males or females total more than 100% because some students provided multiple responses to the question requesting them to state their reading preferences. The overall number of responses provided by males and females are also offered in Table 4.36 and
from these responses it may be seen that the responses are more than the number of respondents. For example, in School 1, the 86 males offered 109 responses while the 128 females offered 181 responses.

According to Table 4.36, the majority of the students, irrespective of gender, reported enjoying books on mysteries, adventures and fantasy. There were marked differences in three categories of reading preferences. Over a fourth of the girls in the two co-educational and in the girls’ schools enjoyed reading books on Teenage Fiction and Romance (Table 4.36). While below 10% of boys in the co-educational schools mentioned liking these kinds of books, none in the boys’ school reported liking reading Teenage Fiction or Romance (Table 4.36). On the other hand, close to a fourth of the boys in the boys’ school enjoyed reading science fiction and none of the girls in either the girls’ school or co-educational
School 4 mentioned preferring science fiction. In another co-educational school, School 1, more girls than boys mentioned liking science fiction (Table 4.36).

Since a literature book was used to teach language skills, it is important to evaluate whether the choice of literature text had an impact on the learning of the students and their enjoyment of the programme. Table 4.37 displays the number of students who reported liking the story or stories they had to read under literature. These literature texts were prescribed by the schools.

Table 4.37: Positive Reaction to Text studied under Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>Description of Text</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text A – Story of a man romancing and fooling a much older woman</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text B – Story of a young woman who married a much older man for money</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>Description of Text</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text A – Story of a young boy befriending an underprivileged boy and later suspecting him of cheating</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text B – Story of a young boy being visited by his dying grandmother</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>Description of Text</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text – Science Fiction: Collection of short stories about man’s relationship with the robots that he had created</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>Description of Text</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text – Adapted Shakespearean play about love, racism and friendship</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the co-educational schools, there were mixed receptions to the chosen short stories. In School 1, the percentages of the boys and girls who liked the stories were little different (Table 4.37) even though only 3% of the boys reported liking romance stories (c.f. Table 4.36, p.162). After the LDEP, the boys managed to achieve an improvement score ES of 0.4 ($t = 3.709$, $df = 85$) in the writing assessment and the male Normal (Academic) students in School 1 improved by an ES of 1.15 in the reading comprehension assessment (c.f. p.156). (The results of the students in the Express stream were not analysed, c.f. pp.142-145.)
In School 4, however, the first story chosen appealed to more girls than boys and the second story, in general, was not well-liked by either the girls or boys (Table 4.37). In spite of the fact that in School 4 few boys liked the stories, in the writing test they improved with an ES of 0.59 (t = 3.574, df = 36). In the reading comprehension, the ES of the improvement score was 0.92 (c.f. p.149). In the single-sex schools, about three-fourths of the students liked the assigned texts (Table 4.37). The results of the reading comprehension assessment of the students from School 2 were not analysed (c.f. pp.142-145) but their writing had improved, with this experimental group of students achieving an improvement score ES of 0.56 (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130). The ES of the improvement score in writing achieved by the girls in School 3 was marginally lower at 0.18 (Table 4.14, p.130) but the improvement score ES attained in the reading comprehension was a moderately large 0.63 (c.f. Table 4.30, p.154).

In Table 4.38, the reactions of the students to the LDEP are displayed. The categories found in Table 4.38 were created from the responses that the students gave to open-ended questions about what they did or did not like about the LDEP. There were students who provided multiple responses to each question, giving more than one positive or negative reaction. For each reaction, sub-groups of male and female responses in each school were created. Within each male or female sub-group, each reaction was calculated as a percentage of the total male or total female respondents from that school. For example, in School 1 (Table 4.38) only 0.8% of boys liked the novelty of the LDEP whereas 1.2% of the girls in School1 liked the novel aspects of the program. The aim was to discover the percentage of males and females reporting each positive or negative reaction. The percentages of positive reactions in each school for each sub-group total more than 100% because of the multiple responses provided by some of the students, as indicated by the overall positive responses of the males and females. For example, in School 1, the 126 males offered 169 positive responses. The percentages of negative reactions in three schools for each sub-group total less than 100% because some students did not report any negative
reactions to the programme, as indicated by the overall negative responses of the males and females. For example, in School 1, 88 negative responses were received from the 126 males and 142 negative responses from the 169 female respondents.

Table 4.38: Student Response to Reactions to the LDEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 1 (Respondents: 169 females; 126 males)</th>
<th>School 2 (Respondents: 106 males)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Reactions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Positive Reactions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked the novelty</td>
<td>Liked the novelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Interesting or fun activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting or fun activities</td>
<td>Useful or informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Liked Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Improved literary analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved literary analysis</td>
<td>Liked integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Reactions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative Reactions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>Boring or uninteresting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>Boring at times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>Difficult or confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Disliked the integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>Disliked Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Concepts taught too basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sch 4 (Respondents: 36 females; 35 males)     |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|                                  |
| **Positive Reactions**                        | **Positive Reactions**            |
| Liked the novelty                             | Liked the novelty                 |
| Male                                          | Male                             |
| 0%                                            | 6.9%                             |
| Female                                        | Interesting or fun activities    |
| 0%                                            | 37.9%                            |
| Interesting or fun activities                 | Useful or informative            |
| 31.4%                                         | 57.5%                            |
| Male                                          | Liked Group work                 |
| 20.0%                                         | 4.6%                             |
| Female                                        | Improved literary analysis       |
| 36.1%                                         | 6.9%                             |
| Improved literary analysis                    | Liked integration                |
| 5.7%                                          | 25.3%                            |
| Male                                          | No. of responses                 |
| 37                                            | 121                              |
| Female                                        |                                  |
| 5.7%                                          |                                  |
| Liked integration                             |                                  |
| 5.6%                                          |                                  |
| **Negative Reactions**                        | **Negative Reactions**           |
| Male                                          | Male                             |
| 57.1%                                         | Boring or uninteresting          |
| Female                                        | 46.0%                            |
| 8.6%                                          | Boring at times                  |
| 30.6%                                         | 8.0%                             |
| Male                                          | Difficult or confusing           |
| 14.3%                                         | 4.6%                             |
| Female                                        | Disliked the integration          |
| 25.0%                                         | 24.1%                            |
| 11.4%                                         | Disliked Group work              |
| 2.8%                                          | 0%                               |
| Male                                          | Concepts taught too basic         |
| 2.9%                                          | 1.1%                             |
| Female                                        | No. of responses                 |
| 8.3%                                          | 73                               |

| School 3 (Respondents: 87 females)           |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|                                  |
| **Positive Reactions**                        | **Positive Reactions**            |
| Liked the novelty                             | Liked the novelty                 |
| Male                                          | Male                             |
| 6.9%                                          | 6.9%                             |
| Female                                        | Interesting or fun activities    |
| 37.9%                                         | 37.9%                            |
| Liked Group work                              | Useful or informative            |
| 57.5%                                         | 57.5%                            |
| Male                                          | Improved literary analysis       |
| 6.3%                                          | 6.9%                             |
| Female                                        | Liked integration                |
| 25.3%                                         | 25.3%                            |
| **Negative Reactions**                        | **Negative Reactions**           |
| Male                                          | Male                             |
| 46.0%                                         | Boring or uninteresting          |
| Female                                        | 46.0%                            |
| 46.0%                                         | Boring at times                  |
| 8.0%                                          | 8.0%                             |
| Male                                          | Difficult or confusing           |
| 4.6%                                          | 4.6%                             |
| Female                                        | Disliked the integration          |
| 24.1%                                         | 24.1%                            |
| 24.1%                                         | Disliked Group work              |
| 0%                                            | 0%                               |
| Male                                          | Concepts taught too basic         |
| 1.1%                                          | 1.1%                             |
| Female                                        | No. of responses                 |
| 73                                            | 73                               |
An examination of Table 4.38 reveals that in all schools the positive responses outnumber the negative responses. In all schools, except for the boys in School 4, more than half the students found the programme useful or informative (Table 4.38). Between 30% and 40% of the respondents in each school mentioned the programme being interesting or enjoying the activities in the programme. Though only about 30% of the respondents in School 1 and 2 found the programme boring or uninteresting, about 51% and 46% of the respondents in Schools 4 and 3 respectively reported finding the programme boring (Table 4.38). The reasons for this will be further explored in the next chapter on Qualitative Findings (pp.195-197 & pp.215-216).

In the next section, the overall student response from the four schools to the LDEP is presented. The averages of the percentages of each positive and negative reaction of the male and female students (c.f. Table 4.38, p.165) from these schools as a whole were calculated. The findings are reported in Table 4.39.

Table 4.39: Overall Student Response to Reactions to the LDEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents (292 females; 267 males)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked the novelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting or fun activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful or informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved literary analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Reactions</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boring or uninteresting</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring at times</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult or confusing</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disliked the integration</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disliked Group work</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts taught too basic</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of responses</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.39 reveals that close to 35% of the students reported finding the programme interesting and about 55% stated that the programme was
informative. Though 15.3% of the students mentioned liking the group work, only a small 2% reported disliking the group work (Table 4.39). While about 14% of the students reported liking the integrated English and Literature programme, about 11% mentioned disliking the integration. Around 40% of the students referred to the programme as boring and 10% of them reported that the lessons were difficult (Table 4.39). The number of positive responses (740) was higher than the number of respondents (559), thus indicating that on the average there were approximately 1.3 positive responses from each respondent (Table 4.39). The number of responses from the females was higher than the responses from the males but this could be due to there being more females who completed the surveys. When the percentages of the responses in relation to the male and female populations were calculated, it was found that positive responses for the males and females were similar with 131% positive male responses in comparison to 133% positive female responses. Negative responses, on the other hand, were fewer than the number of respondents (Table 4.39) with there being an average of about 0.82 negative responses from the respondents. Negative responses were calculated at about 75% for the males and 88% for the females. In all there were about 150 and 130 more positive than negative responses from the males and females respectively (Table 4.39). Overall 62% of the responses were positive while 38% were negative responses. Many of the students surveyed perceived the LDEP as either being beneficial or enjoyable in some ways.

The fewer negative responses from the males than the females might indicate that more boys were receptive to the LDEP, hence leading to general improvements in the writing skills and reading comprehension skills of the boys irrespective of the PSLE English grades (c.f. pp.125-126 & 150).

In summary, the LDEP appeared to have helped many of the students to improve in their writing (c.f. p.112) and to be conscious that they were learning skills that they would find useful in improving their writing.
Conclusion

In the three schools where there were experimental and control groups, while the experimental group was taught under the LDEP, the control group was taught the usual curricula of the respective schools. The usual curricula included the teaching of similar topics such as narrative elements and narrative techniques. In two of the schools, text-based grammar that made use of extracts to teach grammar concepts was taught. In the third school, which had a literature-based English curriculum, grammar concepts were taught as and when written assignments revealed a need for the reinforcement of certain concepts.

The findings indicate that the LDEP had a bearing on the improvement of student writing skills, irrespective of the variables. The 482 students in the experimental group achieved positive mean improvement scores in writing skills, irrespective of gender, language fluency, class or school cultures and teachers. On the other hand, the 290 students in the control group did not attain a positive mean improvement score in the writing skills assessment. In the writing skills assessment, the experimental group improved over the control group in the following areas:

1. When individual scores of the students were assessed, more than 60% of the students in the experimental group posted positive improvement scores. However, only about a third of the students in the control group achieved positive improvement scores (c.f. p.109).

2. The mean improvement score of the students in the experimental group was positive with an ES of 0.44. On the other hand, the control group achieved a mean improvement score that was slightly below zero, thereby indicating that there was no change in the performance of the group in the post-test of the writing skills assessment (c.f. p.112).
3. In all the five measured areas of outcome by which the writing skills of the students were assessed, the experimental group displayed greater improvement than the control group (c.f. pp.114-116).

Among the sub-groups within the experimental group, generally there was improvement in the performance of the students.

1. Students with different PSLE English grades achieved positive mean improvement scores, attaining improvement Effect Sizes of between 0.39 and 0.57 (c.f. Table 4.8, p.122).

2. Generally, boys and girls improved with their mean improvement scores attaining Effect Sizes of 0.50 and 0.39 respectively (c.f. Table 4.10, p.124).

3. Boys with different PSLE English grades improved with Effect Sizes of the improvement scores ranging from 0.43 to 1.40. Except for one sub-group of girls with PSLE English grade C, the girls with PSLE English grades A* to B achieved Effect Sizes of the mean improvement scores of between 0.37 and 0.61 (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125 & Table 4.12, pp.126).

4. All the schools attained positive improvement score Effect Sizes although School 3 achieved the lowest ES of 0.18. The other three schools attained comparable Effects Sizes of between 0.48 and 0.56 (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130).

5. Nine of the 14 experimental classes achieved improvement score ES of above 0.33. Of the remaining five classes, two of them achieved Effect Sizes of 0.29 and 0.30, which are close to the ES of 0.33 taken as an adequate measure of effectiveness in this research. Only three classes achieved lower, though positive, Effect Sizes (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134).
6. In School 4, where the teachers taught both experimental and control classes, the control classes achieved negative mean difference scores between the post-test and the pre-test in the writing skills assessment. The experimental classes, on the other hand, achieved moderate to large Effect Sizes of 0.41 and 0.68 (c.f. Table 4.17, p.135).

In the writing skills assessment, in almost all the sub-groups and as part of a larger group of experimental classes, the students from the experimental classes improved whereas the control group did not improve.

The reading comprehension formed a minor component of the LDEP while the major component comprised of the writing skills. Due to a lack of time, a greater emphasis was placed on writing skills and these skills were explicitly taught. On the other hand, reading comprehension skills were not explicitly taught, rather it was expected that students would improve in these skills from the literary analysis of the literature text and the teaching of the writing skills.

The LDEP appears to have also enhanced the reading comprehension skills of 40 Normal (Academic) students in School 1 and the 176 students with Grades A, B and C in Schools 3 and 4. In comparison to the control group of 189 students in Schools 3 and 4:

1. Overall, the experimental group of students achieved a larger ES than the control group of students (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). Among students with different PSLE English grades, the experimental group also improved more than the control group (c.f. Table 4.26, p.148).

2. When making comparisons by gender, boys in the experimental group achieved a larger ES than the boys in the control group. Similarly, the girls in the experimental group also attained a larger ES than the control group of girls (c.f. Table 4.27, p.149).
3. Boys with Grades A and B in the experimental group achieved much larger Effect Sizes of improvement scores than the boys in the control group (c.f. Table 4.28, p.150). Among the girls, the girls with Grade A in the experimental group achieved a larger ES than the girls with Grade A in the control group. The Effect Sizes of the improvement scores of the girls in the control and experimental groups with Grade B were similar (c.f. Table 4.29, p.151).

4. The experimental group of students in Schools 3 and 4 attained similar Effect Sizes of improvement scores of 0.63 and 0.65 respectively. The Effect Sizes of the control group of students in Schools 3 and 4 were much lower at 0.39 and 0.46 respectively (c.f. Table 4.30, p.154 & Table 4.31, p.155).

5. Among the experimental classes, all except one class achieved moderate to large Effect Sizes of between 0.51 and 1.14. One class, Class 18 in School 3 achieved a much lower ES of 0.23 (c.f. Table 4.32, p.155). However, the ES was still statistically significant at the 5% level.

6. In the Normal (Academic) class, the students achieved a large overall ES of 1.10 and moderate to large Effect Sizes in the sub-groups based on gender and PSLE English grades (c.f. Table 4.33, p.156).

Generally, the experimental group of students achieved a larger improvement score ES than the control group of students in the reading comprehension assessment. The LDEP appears to have been more effective in enhancing comprehension skills through linking literary analysis with the teaching of writing than the conventional mode of completing distinct comprehension exercises.

The results of the survey of the students of the experimental classes support the findings of the pre-tests and post-tests that the LDEP had an impact on the
students. From the survey findings attained from the responses of the 604 students, many of the students perceived that learning had taken place during the programme. Over three-fourths of the students reported that they grasped three or more grammar concepts taught and many of the students also attempted one or more of the writing techniques taught (c.f. pp.159-160). There were also more positive than negative responses to the LDEP from the students surveyed (c.f. p.167).

The quantitative evidence to support the positive effects of the LDEP is clear. The LDEP had led to substantial improvement scores in the writing skills of the students. The LDEP had also led to substantial improvement in the reading comprehension skills assessed even within the limited time frame of the curriculum intervention. Furthermore, the majority of student comments from the exit survey were positive. The quantitative evidence has been argued in terms of both statistical significance and effect size. Both these measures justify the claim that the LDEP led to measurable, substantial increases in skills despite a variety of uncontrolled variables of initial performance (PSLE English grades), gender, school or class and academic grouping.

In the next chapter, the feedback from teachers and students about the LDEP expressed through interviews and log book entries are presented and discussed in detail. In addition, the observation and field notes are also used to inform the interview findings found in the next chapter. It is also hoped that through the voices of the people most closely connected to the programme, namely the students and the teachers, it would be possible to list the advantages and disadvantages of the programme. Finally, suggestions on how the LDEP could be further improved are also offered.
CHAPTER 5
The Qualitative Findings and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter the qualitative findings are reported and discussed. The quantitative data of the mixed methodology were presented and discussed in Chapter 4. The next Chapter 6 integrates the findings and discussions from Chapters 4 and 5 so as to develop in a substantial manner the outcome of the LDEP as a whole.

The qualitative data presented in this chapter consist of feedback from:

- Interviews with teachers who taught under the Literature Driven English Programme (LDEP) before the implementation of the LDEP and at the conclusion of the programme,
- Small group interviews with students from the experimental classes,
- Log book entries completed by teachers who taught under the LDEP, and
- Field and observational notes of the researcher.

During the course of the field research, teachers who taught under the experimental programme were interviewed in order to obtain their professional responses to the experimental programme. These professional responses included the perceptions of the teachers about the programme based on: their pedagogical knowledge; observations of their classes; evaluation of the performances in writing, reading and literary analysis of their students through class work and assessments, and through their interactions with their students. Teachers, in each of the four schools, were interviewed as a small group before the implementation of the LDEP. At the end of the LDEP, most of the teachers were interviewed individually. In two schools, due to time constraints, four teachers were interviewed in pairs at the conclusion of the programme.
Teachers were also supplied with log books. The teachers were encouraged to enter in these log books their reflections on the lessons and the reactions of the students to these lessons during the programme. At the end of the programme, six teachers returned these log books to the researcher. The students were also interviewed at the conclusion of the programme. On average, seven students from each of the seventeen experimental classes were interviewed as a small group. Each of the seventeen experimental classes was also observed twice over the course of the field research. In addition, field notes were taken during the course of, and after, the programme during informal sessions with the teachers. Table 5.1 displays the qualitative data collected for analysis.

Table 5.1: Qualitative Data Collected from the Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Data</th>
<th>No. of Teachers/Students</th>
<th>No. of Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers – Pre-LDEP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers – Post-LDEP</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students – Small Groups</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Books</td>
<td>Teachers – Pre-LDEP</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Books</td>
<td>Teachers – Post-LDEP</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>17x2*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Each class was observed twice.

The qualitative data were collected from the students from the experimental classes and teachers who taught under the LDEP. Qualitative data were not collected from the control group of classes or teachers since the intent in collecting the qualitative data was to gain an enhanced understanding of the LDEP from the teachers and students who had undergone the programme.

Although thirteen teachers taught the experimental curriculum, twelve and eleven teachers were interviewed before and after the programme respectively (Table 5.1). In School 1, the Literature teacher who taught during the second phase of the implementation declined to be interviewed, provide any feedback or have her classes observed during her teaching. The classes were, however, observed during the English lessons. In addition, due to time constraints, another teacher in School 1 could not be interviewed after the programme ended. She, however, was interviewed before the implementation of the programme. She also gave feedback on the LDEP during informal meetings. In addition, though few log
books were returned (Table 5.1), during informal sessions feedback about the programme was solicited and received from most of the teachers. The feedback was included in the field notes which informed the findings presented in this chapter.

The transcriptions of the interviews were coded with the aid of QSR Nud*ist™ Version 6 (N6) (Richards 2002). The data from the log book entries and field notes were coded through conceptual analysis. The codes were derived by establishing categories from the feedback given by the teachers on the LDEP (c.f. pp.82-83). These categories were established so as to answer the research questions pertaining to the effectiveness of an integrated English and Literature programme in enhancing the language skills of the students. The transcripts of the interviews were transferred into N6 and relevant selections coded (Richards 2002) according to the established categories. From the codes, data were retrieved for the presentation and discussion of the findings in this chapter.

In this chapter, the findings and discussion of these findings from the interviews with teachers and their log book entries are presented so as to gain insights into the LDEP. First, their opinions regarding the teaching of the LDEP are valuable in discovering the benefits and difficulties of teaching under the programme. It is also important to assess the value of the programme by asking the teachers whether they felt learning had taken place. Finally, they were asked to offer recommendations on how the LDEP could be enhanced.

Seventeen experimental classes experienced the LDEP. However, three classes from School 1 were excluded from the quantitative analysis for a number of reasons. The pre-test and post-test scores of writing and reading comprehension assessments of two of the classes, Classes 3 and 8, and all quantitative data from Class 9 were excluded from the analysis. With regard to the writing assessment there was a discrepancy between the scores of the students from Classes 3 and 8 and other students whose scripts were marked
again (c.f. p.106-107). The writing skills pre-test and post-test scripts of Classes 3 and 8 were not returned to the researcher for the scripts to be marked again. The reading comprehension pre-test and post-test scores of all Express students from School 1, including those of Classes 3 and 8 were excluded (c.f. pp.143-145). These data were excluded because there may be possible inconsistencies in the marking and defect in the test instrumentation and not due to a lack of reliability of feedback supplied by the students. Thus, the survey responses and the qualitative data of Classes 3 and 8 were included in the analysis as there were no valid reasons to exclude the data. The feedback from the students, English teachers and the data from the observation of their classes offered a greater diversity to the insights gained about the programme, thereby enhancing the findings from the other classes.

With regard to Class 9 all quantitative data, including data from the surveys, were excluded due to the data being deemed unreliable because of discrepancies in the information provided by the school and by the students in the survey (c.f. p.101). However, the qualitative data were examined because qualitative data presents a number of advantages not found in quantitative data. The personal interaction of the researcher with the participants and stakeholders during the collection of the qualitative data affords the researcher with the opportunity to ascertain the value of the data. On the other hand, even a slight suspicion of the quantitative data being unreliable would be adequate reason to exclude them since there are no other avenues of checking the veracity of the data. Through obtaining data from the interview with the teacher and the observations of the class it would be possible to obtain valuable information about the students in the class. In a face-to-face small group interview the students might contribute frank and honest feedback. While the opposite could also be true in that the students may not be forthcoming with their feedback in front of their peers, the possibility of obtaining accurate information that might be helpful in understanding the class was a strong consideration that led to the inclusion of the interview data from the small group.
Moreover, qualitative data can be studied closely to discover the reasons for the quantitative data from Class 9 being unreliable. The feedback from the teacher, some of the students from Class 9 and the observation could reveal some factors that had a negative influence on the research on the curriculum initiative. Knowledge of these factors may aid future researches into a curriculum initiative as steps may be taken to reduce the adverse effects of these factors.

Findings from the interviews with the students and discussion of these findings are detailed in this chapter so as to enunciate the reactions of the students to the programme. The perceptions of the students in relation to whether their language skills were enhanced during the LDEP are also included. The data from the interviews of the students were coded with the aid of N6 (c.f. pp.82-83). The transcripts from the interviews were transferred into N6 and codes created (Richards 2002) through establishing categories to discover the extent of the appreciation of the students for the content and utility of the LDEP. From these codes, the reactions of the students to the LDEP and their perceptions of the utility of the programme were retrieved and included in the presentation and discussion of the findings offered in this chapter.

Finally, the observations of the classes, aided through the use of a semi-structured observation schedule (c.f. Appendix 9), were utilised to evaluate the teaching and learning under the LDEP. The manner in which the experimental curriculum was taught and the difficulties the teachers encountered in teaching the curriculum were observed. The reactions of the students during the lessons were also observed. The semi-structured observation schedule was based on ‘categories of behaviour… [and] activities’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003, p.129) which were related to the research objective of discovering the effectiveness of the LDEP in enhancing language skills.

Figure 5.1 presents an outline and sequence of the topics included in this chapter.
As Figure 5.1 indicates, feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme was solicited from the teachers. In relation to the strengths, the teachers were asked to comment on the benefits of integrating Literature and English as well on the constructive outcomes of the LDEP. They were also asked about the drawbacks of the LDEP and the difficulties they encountered during the implementation of the programme (c.f. Appendix 6). Figure 5.1 demonstrates the type of feedback obtained from the students which focused on their positive and negative reactions to the LDEP (c.f. Appendix 7). Through the aid of the observation and field notes it was possible to understand the difficulties encountered during the LDEP (Figure 5.1). These notes were used to arrive at possible explanations as to why the findings from Classes 4 and 18 did not match those of the other experimental classes. Data from the observation and field notes relating to Class 9 were also examined in an attempt to further explain why the quantitative data might have been unreliable and to obtain feedback.
about the programme from at least some of the students in the class (Figure 5.1). Data from the interviews with the teachers and students were also used to enhance the data from the observation and field notes. Their comments were used to verify the findings from the observation and field notes.

**FEEDBACK FROM THE TEACHERS**

Thirteen teachers taught the experimental classes. Table 5.2 presents the classes and the teachers who taught these classes in the four schools. To ensure confidentiality the teachers and classes are identified through the use of alphabet letters and numbers respectively. Feminine pronouns are also employed when references are made to the teachers to further ensure confidentiality.

Table 5.2: Teachers and the Classes they taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Subject/s Taught</th>
<th>Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>English &amp; Literature (Literature Only)</td>
<td>1, 5, (2, 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D*</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>6, 7, 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E**</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>7, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Integrated Literature-based English Programme</td>
<td>11, 13, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>18, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>16, 18, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>English &amp; Literature</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Declined to provide feedback, be interviewed, or have her classes observed.
** Was unavailable for second interview at the conclusion of the LDEP.

While all the three other schools had separate English and Literature programmes, School 2 had an integrated Literature-based English Programme with a greater focus on the teaching of Literature than on English Language skills. Since the LDEP is different from a Literature-based English Curriculum (c.f. pp.8-10) the English programme in School 2 was accepted as another type of curriculum like the non-integrated curricula of Schools 1, 3 and 4. Moreover,
the use of a control group in School 2 allowed for a comparison to be made between the performances of the experimental and control groups in the school in the writing skills assessment. The ES of the mean improvement score of the experimental group was more than twice that of the control group of students with the experimental group achieving an improvement ES of 0.56 as opposed to the improvement ES of 0.23 of the control group (c.f. p.133).

As Table 5.2 illustrates, in School 4, one class was taught English and Literature by the same teacher (K) whereas the other class (24) was taught the subjects by different teachers, L and M (Table 5.2). In School 1, two of the nine classes (1, 5) were taught English and Literature by the same teacher (A). The remaining classes were taught English and Literature by different teachers (Table 5.2). One teacher (G) taught the three classes in School 2 (Table 5.2). Since the LDEP was an integrated programme, having different teachers teach the two subjects, English and Literature, was not an ideal situation. However, in Singapore the current reality in most schools is that teachers teaching other subjects, such as the Humanities or Mathematics, also teach English. This reality was taken into account when the outlines and lesson plans were designed. In the three schools without an integrated English and Literature programme, the outlines and accompanying lesson plans differentiated the English lessons from the Literature lessons. However, it must be noted that in each school the teachers were encouraged to look through the outline and all lesson plans so as to obtain a complete picture of the LDEP. They were also informed that as an integrated programme, concepts taught in English classes would have to be completed before proceeding on to the Literature lessons, or vice versa. In short, coordination between the English and Literature teachers would be helpful in overcoming the disadvantage of having different instructors to teach English and Literature.

The semi-structured interview schedules that were used before the implementation of the LDEP and at the end of the LDEP are reproduced in
Appendices 6a and 6b. During the semi-structured interview before the implementation of the LDEP (Appendix 6a) the teachers were asked to comment on:

- the curriculum normally adopted by their schools, and
- their opinions with regard to having an integrated programme.

At the conclusion of the LDEP, during the semi-structured interview (Appendix 6b), the teachers offered feedback on:

- problems they faced during the implementation of the LDEP,
- benefits of the experimental curriculum,
- drawbacks of the experimental curriculum, and
- possible recommendations on how it could be modified to be of greater benefit to their students.

The feedback of the teachers regarding the programme and their students was also solicited through the logbook entries and during informal meetings.

The intent of the interviews was to gain an insight into the views of the teachers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the LDEP. In addition, it was hoped that the teachers would also recommend modifications that they might find useful in teaching language skills to their students.

All interviews took place in the respective schools in the afternoons after lessons had ended. They were conducted by the researcher and audio-recorded with the explicit consent of the participants. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim and then reviewed for accuracy before being transferred as electronic files into N6 by the researcher (c.f. p.81 & p.83).

**Feedback of the Teachers on the Strengths of the LDEP**

In the interviews, the teachers were asked to comment on the positive aspects of an integrated programme, in general, and on the LDEP in particular. To highlight the quotations from the teachers, these quotations appear as indented texts in a different font with ellipsis to indicate omission and elaboration or explanations.
Within brackets. Additionally, feminine pronouns are used for all the interviewees so as to preserve the confidentiality of the interviewees since all except one of the teachers in this sample were females.

**A. Benefits of Integrating English and Literature**

During the interview before the implementation of the programme, many of the teachers were of the opinion that combining English and Literature was a logical step since the two subjects were inter-related. There were practical advantages to be gained from the integration. Some teachers mentioned that it would be beneficial to nurture an interest in Literature since it would enhance the learning of language skills.

1. **The Inter-relatedness of Literature and English Language**

Many of the teachers in the four schools were of the opinion that Literature and English were inter-related with many similarities. They mentioned that similar skills are taught during the teaching of the two subjects. In the three schools that do not have an integrated English and Literature programme, the teachers spoke of consciously and unconsciously integrating the two subjects.

> It is very easy to appreciate that the two are very complementary indeed. Lots of writing tasks for English can easily spin out of Lit. It’s just simple playing around with the characters. Even though Lit is mainly narrative in structure, English can easily come in to complement it.

*(Teacher M, School 4)*

At times the integration of the two subjects may lead to duplication of skills taught in schools where Literature and English are taught as separate subjects. Two of the twelve teachers in the three schools that do not have an integrated Literature and English programme taught English and Literature to some classes. One of the teachers mentioned that because there were duplications when she taught both subjects, the two subjects should perhaps be integrated.
For Literature teaching I find myself reinforcing certain skills that I teach in English Language, so maybe, Literature should be integrated with Language teaching.

(Teacher A, School 1)

2. Practical Advantages in Integrating Literature and English Language

Many of the teachers in the four schools were of the opinion that there were practical benefits in combining the two subjects. In utilising Literature as a tool to teach language skills, students would be better able to comprehend and apply the concepts taught. One of the teachers elaborated that comprehension was advanced when the Literature text translates abstract concepts into more concrete terms.

Last term, I was teaching English, and I was not teaching that class Literature but when I was talking about something and I felt that it, they would understand better if I use the example in Literature. I just drew the character and I explained to them… they seemed to understand it very well.

(Teacher L, School 4)

Some teachers expressed the opinion that students might be able to better understand the concepts as well as apply the skills learnt because these skills are being taught in context. They viewed the Literature text as a model from which the students can appreciate the use of language and learn from it.

There is so much application in terms of modelling, in terms of using content because they are both skills-based subject. If they have a similar platform to base their skills on, it would make the learning more complete for students.

(Teacher M, School 4)

A few teachers mentioned that the literature text can expose the students to many diverse ideas and aid in the growth of the students as writers. A better appreciation for language may result in greater creativity in writing.
Maybe a greater interest in literature... awareness in the students to see the language in play, and maybe in the texts that are chosen, to see how good writing, and to recognise it, and perhaps to actually try to emulate, or try to create, or try to at least follow those writings and maybe, come up with their own creative pieces... to sort of put into writing their views of life or their emotions, and through that a greater awareness of how language is a conveyor of the thoughts.

(Teacher G, School 2)

LDEP as an Integrated Programme

The LDEP was an integrated Literature and English programme. Many of the practical benefits that the teachers mentioned with regard to an integrated English and Literature programme were reported as advantages of the LDEP. These advantages are described in the next section.

B. Constructive Outcomes of the LDEP

Every one of the eleven teachers interviewed at the end of the programme said that the students gained in some way or another. Some mentioned improvements they saw in the language skills of the students. Some of the Literature teachers saw amelioration in the way students analysed the literature text. Yet others thought that the thinning of the distinction between English and Literature was a desirable outcome.

1. Improvement in Language Skills

In terms of language ability, all the teachers reported that learning had taken place in varying degrees in the students. For instance, Class 16, termed as very weak by its English teacher displayed some form of learning taking place during the LDEP.

Firstly, my students are a weaker lot. They are actually quite weak... they could tell me that this is, ah there you are [shows the pieces of work completed by the
students] that they have simple, that they have compound. When they can recognise the sentences, that is good, right? ... It’s coming along. Yeah, I think they have learnt something.

(Teacher H, School 3)

Teacher G was of the opinion that the programme was structured in such a way that it proved very helpful in imparting writing skills. She went on to elaborate that its usefulness lay in the fact that it managed to convey to the students how the changes in the structures will change the focus or emphasis of the narrative writing, so they were aware of it.

(Teacher G, School 2)

The main aim of the LDEP was to impart knowledge of grammatical rules and writing techniques so that the students would have the necessary skills to write better narratives. There might have been varying degrees of success in terms of transference of these skills into the writings of the students. However, the teachers reported that many of the students gained knowledge of some of the narrative writing skills. In addition, the teachers found the students applying the concepts learnt in their writing.

I see a lot of adjectives used, and a lot more, a lot of variation in sentences, in sentence structure.

(Teacher J, School 3)

2. Better Acquisition of Language Skills through Contextual Learning

Another aim of the research was to discover whether students would be better able to acquire language skills if they were taught through the contextual cues found in the literature text. The answer from the research seems to be in the affirmative. According to some teachers, the students appeared to learn better because contextual examples from the literature text were used to convey concepts.

In this programme, we actually had some exercise on adjectives and there was a model for them to see the
passage, that actually was a model to them, to show them that they should use adjectives in certain ways, and so then they began to realise that sentences are formed from words and certain words pieced together make sentences and it’s how you piece these words together that make good sentences and it was through this that I was able to show to them how to write a complete sentence and a proper sentence and a lot of them learnt.

(Teacher J, School 3)

The same teacher had also mentioned that such examples were often missing in the conventional English textbooks used in many schools.

3. Learning through Group Work and Different Modes

The programme was also designed on the premise that the students had different learning styles and preferences. Within the lessons there was group work as well as individual work. There were varying activities, from drawing to dramatization to presentations. The different approaches used in teaching the lessons appeared to have succeeded in getting students to enjoy the learning process as well as gain in knowledge and skills.

One useful exercise according to some of the teachers was the peer-editing that the students were required to complete before handing in the final drafts of their narratives.

They learnt from each other because they would point out the mistakes and I think it is very good, because some of the feedback they gave to their classmates are quite positive.

(Teacher E, School 1)

In addition to learning from each other, some of the teachers also mentioned that the students appeared to enjoy working in groups.

A lot of the entire programme was done based on group work, and interactive activities so, and they really enjoyed that. I think that helped a great deal to make the programme more lively and enjoyable for
them, so even when they wouldn’t really understand the concepts, they had fun working with each other. That helped, I would say significantly, the group work, yes.

(Teacher M, School 4)

The diverse activities appear to have interested the students as well. Teacher M from School 4 elaborated on one activity that the students enjoyed particularly.

The one I remember most clearly is the activity where they had to change Lenny’s character and situation based on the story, so he is no longer, you know, the way he is. They had to change him completely and see how it affected the rest of the story and it was fantastic, they enjoyed it completely and they did a really good job of twisting him around, so that was fun.

(Teacher M, School 4)

Another activity teachers mentioned was one in which groups of students were required to draw one of the characters from the story and include in the picture symbols of the character traits of that character. The students appeared to have enjoyed doing creative work in groups. By including different kinds of activities in the LDEP to cater to different students with diverse learning preferences, the LDEP was able to generate interest in the learning process among many of the students. It is important that students enjoy the learning process so that they may be motivated to learn.

4. Enhanced Analysis of a Literature Text

No test instruments were designed to evaluate whether learning of literary analysis occurred. However, it would be valuable to attempt to discover if the programme improved the skills of the students in literary analysis as well. Since it was an integrated programme, it was important to discover if the programme succeeded in imparting language and literary analytical skills. If the programme
aided in the teaching of one subject but failed in the other, its usefulness in imparting skills in both areas as an integrated programme would become questionable. Therefore, during the interviews with the Literature teachers, they were asked about the progress of the students in literary analysis and the Literature teachers reported that generally the students showed an improvement when analysing a literature text. The Literature teacher from School 3 spoke of how the lessons on literary analysis even elicited some good work from the weak class, Class 16.

> I have spoken to the English teacher and she is thinking that they are a bit slow, you know, but in the Literature class I think they have performed marvellously.

(Teacher I, School 3)

Teacher I went on to state that the LDEP had enabled the students ‘to speak up among their peers’. Another teacher in School 4 commented that the students during the LDEP

> really re-look at their text and I feel that sometimes they ask more intelligent questions.

(Teacher K, School 4)

Teacher K was of the opinion that the lively group discussions had helped the students to analyse the stories better. Before the LDEP, during English classes, the students would work on short comprehension passages, and these did not give students any opportunity to participate in peer discussions.

5. Reduction in Duplication of Concepts Taught

There were two teachers who taught both English and Literature in two of the schools that do not have an integrated English and Literature programme. One of these teachers had spoken of the overlap that existed when she taught English and Literature as two separate subjects (c.f. pp.182-183). However, through the LDEP, she was able to reduce the duplication.

> I cut down on repetition. I just teach them the structure as I would in an English lesson or even in a
Literature lesson; I just move on to identifying the different elements and tie it back to writing. So, I think right now they see, I think the students actually see how closely related English Language and Literature analysis can be.

(Teacher A, School 1)

Teacher A also stated that sometimes her students were unable to make a clear distinction between English and Literature, which she considered ‘healthy’. Some of her students had actually noted down, as Teacher A reports:

Oh, I am not sure what Literature is about still but I definitely know that it helps me in my writing. I write better now. I at least know how to write an essay, and structure it.

(Teacher A, School 1)

6. Improving Students’ Knowledge of Grammar Usage

In interviews before the implementation of the LDEP, a few of the teachers spoke of some students having a poor knowledge of grammatical rules. Various factors were attributed the poor knowledge of grammatical rules. For some teachers the contributing factors included the non-English speaking home backgrounds of the students and the communicative form of teaching language in recent times with no explicit teaching of grammar concepts. Modern technology was also mentioned as playing a contributory role in the deterioration of the English language.

The use of MSN [Microsoft Network] is a big hit. They write to each other in sms [short message service] language which is very, very bad for students. They end up writing essays for us in sms language.

(Teacher J, School 3)

With the explicit teaching of grammar, the students were made aware of what constituted accurate grammatical construction of sentences. As one teacher expressed it, the advantages of the LDEP might be that

the kids will familiarise themselves with the grammatical aspect, which is what they are lacking of,
because for most of the kids, they don’t really know
the technical aspect and as well as using the text by
itself it serves as a double-edged sword in the sense
that they are revising for their Literature, at the same
time they are doing their English; it is actually quite as
good as well as a comprehensive.

(Teacher C, School 1)

The LDEP appears to have achieved its main aim of imparting narrative writing
techniques to many of the students through the contextual use of the literature
text. In addition, it appears to have improved the literary analytical skills of the
students, and for one English and Literature teacher reduced the overlaps that
exist in the teaching of Literature and English as separate subjects. Additionally,
the inclusion of activity-based lessons, peer learning and the contextual teaching
of concepts enabled the teachers to facilitate the learning process.

Feedback of the Teachers on the Weaknesses in the LDEP

Some drawbacks mentioned by the teachers related to the curriculum directly
while other weaknesses pertained to the implementation of the programme.
There were also some comments that were related to the lack of preparedness of
some teachers in teaching the curriculum.

A. Limitations in the Curriculum

Among the drawbacks, the teachers cited the technical nature of the lessons
during which grammatical concepts were taught and the lack of reinforcements of
the taught concepts. A few teachers also mentioned the discrepancy that existed
between what the students were expected to produce in examinations and what
was taught during the LDEP. One of the teachers was of the opinion that the
LDEP would work better with older students.
1. The Technical Nature of the Grammar Components of the Lessons

At the beginning of each language lesson, the students were taught explicitly selected grammatical rules that would be useful when the students wrote the narratives. However, some of the teachers found that the students became bored during the explicit teaching of these skills.

They liked all the fun activities but they didn’t like the technical part of the language, nobody did.

(Teacher A, School 1)

In addition, some of the students also found the concepts rather difficult to comprehend. Some teachers felt that some of the students needed to be more proficient in the language to understand the concepts. One of the teachers gave an example of a lesson that her students had difficulty grasping because of the technical nature of the lessons.

The idea of clauses they managed to get after a while, but the effects was hard, like the effect of the different tenses. They caught only the simpler ones, like past and present, I mean we have been drilling that for a very long time, but when it came slightly further down, how it can change the text, they can point out for the obvious ones, but it takes them a lot longer time and I feel that they are still pretty weak in identifying what tense will do to their piece of work.

(Teacher K, School 4)

Even though another teacher from the same school thought most of the concepts were within the grasp of the students in her class, the teaching of the concepts went into what she termed as the ‘nitty-gritties of grammar, and technicality’. It was a kind of integration that she did not envision at the beginning of the programme. She thought that she herself would go for a literature-based curriculum. The type of integration that she would select would be one in which the level of integration might be slightly different. We wouldn’t really focus as much on the grammatical side
of things, so the miniscule details, focusing on a few devices, the main ones in depth.

(Teacher M, School 4)

Though some teachers may have reservations about the teaching of grammar concepts, there appears to be a real need to teach these concepts (c.f. p.39). Since grammar is an integral aspect of language acquisition, a more detailed discussion and recommendations on ways to improve the teaching of the concepts are found in Chapter 6, 'Evaluation of the LDEP' (pp.243-244).

2. Lack of Reinforcements of Taught Concepts

A few of the teachers were of the opinion that there was a lack of reinforcement of the taught concepts. The lack of reinforcement meant that there might not have been transference of the concepts learnt to the end-product, namely the narratives that the students produced.

There was not enough reinforcement on quite a lot of areas and they did not have time to assimilate even though we lengthened the time of the programme. They were not able to assimilate, especially things, abstract things like the effects of clauses.

(Teacher K, School 4)

Teacher H felt that weaker students especially needed the reinforcements. She felt that more time should have been devoted to the teaching of each concept.

For the weaker girls what was spent for one period can be the teaching for one period but a lot of follow up is needed for that lesson to work, so that might take on another week of work.

(Teacher H, School 3)

From some of the feedback of the teachers, it appears that in attempting to implement a comprehensive programme within a short span of time to teach narrative writing skills, more topics than some of the classes could master were
included. Additionally, there were too few reinforcements of concepts in the LDEP. Ideally, the topics should be covered over at least a semester (half a year) with more stories or literature texts used to teach the relevant skills. The use of more short stories may counter the complaint by some of the students that using the same story during English and Literature was boring.

They grew very quickly tired of using the same story, they are complaining, oh, no not the same story again.

(Teacher A, School 1)

3. Discrepancy in the Learning Outcomes of the LDEP and the Schools

A number of teachers mentioned that the objective of the experimental curriculum did not match the output that the students were expected to generate in school. Teacher G spoke of the impracticalities of incorporating the skills learnt within the one hour students are usually given to complete a composition.

They are more sensitive to these changes and they will be more careful but they also mentioned that these skills that they acquired or become more aware of are not possible to transfer in their day to day lessons.

(Teacher G, School 2)

In addition, one of the Literature teachers was apprehensive that in the final examination, the students in her experimental class will not perform as well as the control classes.

You are covering so many things at a touch-and-go sort of pace so that they didn’t help because now they lack that ability to interpret something at a deeper level, at a more critical level, and they don’t have the writing stylistics to back up their points of view. So they don’t know how to elaborate on a point, so these are things that they have yet to learn.

(Teacher M, School 4)

Another teacher from the same school taught the LDEP to the experimental class and English and Literature to control classes. From a class test assessing the
students on their writing skills that both classes completed she observed that
there were differences in the way they approached the test question.

Two weeks after the programme ended, I felt that
some of them [in the experimental class] are still
unable to understand the question because you see in
your programme you asked them to write on anything,
anything that they wanted but without that focus, I
realised that they seemed to have forgotten how to read
the question requirements carefully…. This class,
compared to my other [control] classes… I felt that
more of them did not understand the requirement [of
the test question].

(Teacher K, School 4)

The concern that the programme would adversely affect the performances of the
students in the experimental group in the examinations came mainly from School
4. When learning is exam-oriented and exams are set with the intent that certain
prerequisites be fulfilled, students who are taught skills and not those pre-
requisites might not do well. The aim of the LDEP was not to teach how to score
in an exam, but to make sure certain narrative-writing skills were learnt. In the
teaching of Literature the intent was to guide students to appreciate literary
analysis. The researcher was aware that Secondary One students would be
learning Literature for the first time. Therefore, the literature component of the
LDEP was designed as an initiation into literary analysis. It was felt that the form
of a literary essay could be learnt at a later stage when the students would be
better able to appreciate literary analysis. At this point it might be pertinent to
consider the comments made by the teachers from School 4 during the small
group interview before the implementation of the programme.

Teacher M: With literature, it is always a challenge
because a lot of our students come in, hearing from
Teacher K: Horror stories about literature.
Teacher M: That Lit is a very, very difficult subject,
that it is enormously impossible to score, to do well,
and this
4. **Age-appropriateness of the LDEP**

Though most of the teachers who commented on the difficulty level and technical nature of some of the lessons did not link these limitations to age, a teacher from School 1 thought the students in Secondary One were too young to appreciate the usefulness of the programme.

Yeah, I think age-related, because if you, we conduct such a lesson in the upper sec[ondary] they would gain a lot from the lesson and they would give a lot of positive feedback… because they are more mature in comparison to the sec[ondary] 1.

(Teacher B, School 1)

Due to time constraints and the requirements of the individual schools, there were some limitations to the programme. There could have been more reinforcements of some of the concepts taught. Additionally, the difficulty level or the repetitive nature of the grammatical concepts taught may be resolved through individual class teachers providing greater input. Likewise, the input of the schools on examination or test requirements would ensure that the students are not disadvantaged for the examinations or tests. In relation of the age-appropriateness of the programme materials, there is evidence from the quantitative and qualitative data to indicate that the Secondary One students improved in their writing skills and understood at least some of the grammatical concepts taught (c.f. p.112, p.159 and pp.184-185 & pp.189-190).

**Limitations in the Implementation of the LDEP**

In School 3 in particular there were problems from the outset when the programme was implemented. There was a series of miscommunications and by the time the programme was ready to be implemented, there were tight time
constraints as well. These time constraints led to the English teachers from School 3 not being well-briefed about the programme since the briefing held by the researcher during the June holidays was attended by only the Literature teachers. The English teachers were then given a quick overview just before the implementation once school reopened for Term 3.

The English teachers in School 3 felt that there was a need for a briefing especially since they did not have enough time to acquaint themselves with the teaching materials or the Literature text before they taught.

The materials that came to me was kind of last-minute and I didn’t look ahead to see what was at the end of it. I was caught up more with preparing for what is to happen tomorrow and next week. I wasn’t thinking of the whole programme as a whole…. But when we had that National Day break, I took the time to sit down and read from the first plan all the way to the end, then I realised exactly what it was and I was better able to then carry out the lessons.

(Teacher J, School 3)

Teacher H from the same school also mentioned that being better prepared would have helped her to implement the lessons more effectively.

I would have been a little bit more effective if I know more of what programme is all about, like I would like to know what actually is wanted taught, right, maybe a thorough briefing would have helped.

(Teacher H, School 3)

The inadequate briefing also meant that there were some misconceptions about the programme in School 3. The Literature teachers from School 1, Phase 1 and School 4 worked closely with the English teachers to ensure that the programme flowed smoothly. In School 2, the same teacher taught both components to all her three classes. In line with the objective of the programme, it was important to see English and Literature as an integrated whole. The Literature lessons were designed to guide the students to better appreciate the art of narration which, in
turn, would aid them in the creation of their own pieces of narratives. In School 3 and School 1, Phase 2, there was little or no liaising between the English and Literature teachers. Therefore, there was a repetition of activities in School 1, Phase 2 and an improper sequencing of lessons in School 3.

I sort of modified but basically I think the activities that you had recommended though I have carried out at different parts, you know as different from that was recommended by you at the juncture.

(Teacher I, School 3)

It is interesting to note that among the four schools the students from School 3 attained the lowest improvement score ES of 0.18 in the writing skills assessment (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130). It is possible that the lack of a thorough briefing, inadequate coordination between the English and Literature teachers and an improper sequencing of lessons might have contributed to lower ES of the improvement score in the writing skills assessment in School 3. On the other hand, the repetition of activities appeared not to have been detrimental since the ES of the improvement score in the writing skills assessment achieved by the students in School 1, Phase 2 was 0.42 (t = 3.701, df = 75). However, it must also be noted that the ES of the improvement score in the writing skills assessment attained by the students in School 1, Phase 1 was higher at 0.51 (t = 5.854, df = 133).

The problems that the teachers in School 3 encountered indicate that a thorough briefing is essential. It is also important that the teachers acquaint themselves fully with the programme and its aims before teaching. Due to time constraints and a series of miscommunications, in School 3 a thorough briefing or a meeting with the English teachers in June before the implementation of the programme could not be held. Recommendations on how the programme might be better implemented are given in Chapter 6, ‘Evaluation of the LDEP’ (pp.243-245).
Unfamiliarity of the Teachers in Teaching LDEP-based Grammar

Some of the teachers were of the opinion that they did not have the experience or knowledge to teach the grammar components in the way it was expected of them. Not only were they expected to teach certain grammar concepts but the teaching of those concepts was designed to illuminate their usefulness when writing narratives. For example, the types of sentences were not merely defined but the different effects of these types of sentences on the reader were also meant to be conveyed to the students. It involved a utilitarian approach to learning grammar. Knowledge of grammatical rules had to be interlinked with an understanding of their practicalities. The approach was new to many of the teachers and the teachers had limited time to acquaint themselves with this approach.

On the day before the lesson itself I would go to do my own research on the technical aspect… I find it really uphill task to learn some of the lessons; they were very good by itself… but I was not able to deliver whatever is in the lesson plans to the kids, and at the end of it maybe I would think that I am in fact short-changing my kids in a way because I am not able to give them all the things that they should know, you know.

(Teacher E, School 1)

Running a workshop on the programme before the implementation would have been helpful in reassuring the teachers and in allowing them to approach the LDEP with greater confidence.

Modifications to the LDEP as Suggested by the Teachers

The teachers were asked to offer suggestions on modifications that they felt should be made to the LDEP. One of the suggestions offered was that the teachers should be well-briefed and perhaps, even involved in the planning process of the curriculum.

Teachers have got to know exactly what they are supposed to do with it because if we go in and teach
what we think is necessary but may not be the right thing, the focus is all wrong, then I think it’s going to defeat the purpose.

(Teacher H, School 3)

She went on to say that the curriculum should also be appropriate to the ability level of the students. Her class was made of students who had a weaker command of the language than the other classes in the school. She felt that some of her students had problems grasping a few of the concepts.

A couple of teachers in School 1 that made use of two short stories to teach the grammatical concepts felt that the lessons could be spread over more stories. Teacher M from another school in which two short stories were also utilised felt that the stories should be more carefully chosen so that the students would find them interesting.

For me I suppose the stories chosen because of the restriction of the school to the stories that were chosen, perhaps, if we used slightly different stories it would help to make it slightly more interesting.

(Teacher M, School 4)

Additionally, some teachers felt that there should be more reinforcement of the taught concepts. A few also felt that there were too many concepts taught during a short period of time.

I do not know about the level, you know, about the amount of grammar, that I would teach, you know… maybe it would be less at each time… yeah, more spaced out.

(Teacher L, School 4)

A problem that schools with different teachers teaching English and Literature encountered was the difficulty in coordinating the English and Literature components of the integrated programme. One teacher had the following useful suggestion to offer:
If there is a chart actually done up you know that we can go and just make a mark that this lesson has been done. If she has already completed say, Lesson 9, Period 9, it would good for her to make a mark there, then, I would know then I can proceed with my lessons.

(Teacher J, School 3)

The Literature teacher from School 1 mentioned that quick meetings snatched on the way out of school or during recess breaks made it possible for her to coordinate the lessons with the English teachers.

It’s feasible. Sometimes, when they are not even physically at their desk, I would just leave a note to say where I am and I would offer suggestions as to what they should teach next so that I can easily catch up and we can move on from where I left off.

(Teacher A, School 1)

This teacher also mentioned that there would be logistics to be taken care of if the school decided to implement the programme. For example, there may be difficulties arising from the timetabling of different number of periods for English and Literature teachers in a week.

The teachers reported that generally there was evidence to demonstrate that learning did occur. Many of the students also found some of the approaches used during the LDEP and the group activities interesting. However, some of them also found the pace of the learning too fast. They reported that there were few reinforcements and some students experienced difficulty in grasping some of the grammatical concepts taught. Nevertheless, almost all the teachers would teach under the LDEP if they could modify the programme to suit the abilities of the students in their classes and were given more time to get better acquainted with the programme.
FEEDBACK FROM THE STUDENTS

There were 119 students from the seventeen experimental classes in the four schools interviewed at the end of the LDEP. Teachers either selected the students or asked for volunteers to participate in the interview. About seven students from each class comprised each small group. (For the semi-structured small group interview schedule, please refer to Appendix 7). During the small group interviews, the students were asked:

- if there were any differences between the LDEP and the usual English and Literature (or English in the case of School 2) lessons that they had before the programme,
- to describe lessons during the LDEP that were enjoyable or not enjoyable,
- whether they felt the LDEP had helped them to improve in their narrative writing skills,
- whether they would recommend the LDEP to their peers, and
- the reasons for recommending or not recommending the programme.

All the small group interviews were conducted in the respective schools after the lessons had ended for the day. The interviews were facilitated by the researcher and audio-recorded with the explicit consent of the participants. The interviews were transcribed from the audio-recordings and reviewed to ensure accuracy before the transcriptions were transferred to N6 (c.f. pp.82-83). In the following description and discussion of the findings, the quotations from the students are highlighted through the use of indented text and a different font. Additionally, omissions are indicated through the use of ellipsis and elaborations or clarifications are included within brackets.

Positive Reactions

Most of the students interviewed in the four schools reacted positively towards the programme. The positive reactions related to the different kinds of activities
that were part of the programme, group work and the learning of the grammar concepts. Many students also thought that their writing skills had improved.

1. *Interesting Activities*

Many of the students interviewed mentioned a number of activities that they enjoyed. One such activity involved the changing of the character traits of the characters in the story, thereby altering the storyline. Another was to draw a character and include symbols of his/her character traits.

   The fun of it, we made a totally new story which was so interesting [laughter from the students].

   (Female student from Class 20, School 3)

   Female student: We were supposed to draw a portrait of the character based on their character traits, yeah.

   Male student: Love drawing.

   (Students from Class 6, School 1)

The hands-on nature of the activities generated a greater interest in the learning. It also helped them to better visualise abstract ideas such as characterisation.

   [Teacher D] lets us have more hands-on on the work, like getting together and draw the picture instead of reading the book and think how she looks like and all this.

   (Male student from Class 8, School 1)

The LDEP included the different approaches to interest the students in the learning process and the programme appears to have achieved its aim. The different approaches used in teaching the writing skills and literary analysis generated interest in many of the students.

2. *Benefits of Group Work*

Many of the students, both females and males, commented on the benefits of working in groups. They felt that they learnt more from the group interaction than from only the teacher or through working individually.
Student 1: Understanding was strengthened because of this discussion we did.

Student 2: Also the presentation and group work, it somehow makes us improve in our oral presentation skills when we present our work in front of the class.

Student 3: At the same time also, it lets us share our views so we understand better.

(Male students from Class 11, School 2)

According to a female student from Class 1, School 1 working as a team led to her group coming up with many different answers. If she were to work on her own, the answers that she could generate would be limited. In pooling their ideas, they were able to learn more from each other. Another way in which they learnt from each other was through peer-editing which many of them found useful.

3. Better Understanding of Grammar

The combination of theory with application in the LDEP appears to have led to greater learning. Grammar concepts and writing skills were first explicitly taught before the students practised on the application of the theory either in groups or individually.

In School 2, there was a debate among some of the students as to whether the grammar taught was repetitious. Two of the students thought that the grammatical rules were too basic and they had learnt them in primary school. The other five students disagreed, saying that they had acquired new knowledge from the explicit teaching of grammar. According to one of the students,

You are going into a more detailed understanding of this phrases, clauses, and basically English grammar.

(Male student from Class 11, School 2)
Even though the grammatical concepts the students had to learn appeared rudimentary, the students were expected to attain a deeper understanding of the concepts. For instance, it was not enough that the students learnt what was an independent clause or dependent clause. They were expected to know that an independent clause can stand on its own as a sentence whereas the dependent clause cannot be a complete sentence. In doing so, it was hoped that they would construct fewer sentence fragments. Another example could be found in the demonstration of how to achieve an intended effect on the reader by varying the types of sentences used. Many students realised there was a difference in the way grammar concepts were taught during the LDEP while there were others who could not differentiate between what they had learnt in primary school and what they learnt under the programme. It may be useful to articulate lesson objectives to the students beforehand so that they could appreciate the reason and the purpose for learning the grammar concepts.

4. **Improved Writing Skills**

In answer to the question on whether they felt that their writing skills had improved, the majority of the students interviewed thought that they were writing better. Some mentioned varying the sentence structures more so as to create an intended effect on the reader.

> I learnt that it was not just quantity but quality of the work... even though the sentences are shorter but they have a greater impact on the person that’s reading it.

(Male student from Class 8, School 1)

Others mentioned being more aware of grammatical errors, and making a conscious effort not to commit them. Yet others spoke of adding descriptive words to make the story more interesting. Many of them also thought of the elements of a narrative, such as conflict, rising action, climax and resolution, when writing their narratives.

> [Teacher E] say after the programme, we write better. Because last time when we write essays, it used to be
very simple, a lot of grammar mistakes, the plot is [unclear, interrupted], and all those tense mistakes and grammar mistakes, yeah but then after the programme, now we know how to make this interesting, make it truly exciting.

(Female student from Class 7, School 1)

The main purpose of the LDEP was to improve the writing skills of the students and it appears to have been achieved. Even though the programme ran for a short period of time, many of the students thought that they had improved. According to them, they were making use of the devices taught during the lessons to write better narratives.

5. Enhanced Learning through the use of the Literature text

Since the Literature text was the vehicle through which the students learnt grammar and writing skills, it was also important to discover if the students found the use of the text a useful medium. According to some students, there were benefits to learning from a literature text.

Furthermore, the grammar inside the book is better, and the vocab is better, and it’s like, there are more, like, descriptive words and better adjectives, compared to the [English] textbook.

(Female student from Class 20, School 3)

Other students in Schools 1 and 3, which did not have an integrated English and Literature programme, also mentioned preferring the literature text to the English textbook to learn English. Some were of the opinion that they were better able to understand the elements of a narrative such as conflict and resolution from the literature text.

It is more detailed, we learn more…. the underlying message, the theme, the plot.

(Female student from Class 23, School 4)
Students from School 2 which has an integrated literature-based English programme also mentioned learning more from the LDEP. They felt that the combined teaching of grammar and writing techniques through using the literature text helped them to better understand narrative writing techniques.

There are such details when reading the whole story and how changing them can actually affect the whole book, you know.

(Male student from Class 13, School 2)

The change from a literature-based English programme to the LDEP appears to have also induced some students to pay greater attention in class.

In Terms 1 and 2 we were working purely on Literature, maybe some of us did not really appreciate it, but then, somehow in Term 3, with the introduction of teaching grammar within these books, then a lot of people actually woke up.

(Male student from Class 11, School 2)

From the point of view of the students, the combination of Literature with learning language skills had resulted in improvement in their language skills as well as literary analysis of the literature text.

6. Learning More through the LDEP

Some of the students mentioned that they learnt more from the programme than during the usual English classes. They were of the opinion that they had gained in language skills during the programme. Some students also mentioned that they preferred the lessons conducted during the LDEP to their usual English lessons.

Yes, it makes more interesting, we have more things to learn, not just sit there, bored to death, yeah [laughs].

(Female student from Class 7, School 1)

A few students reported being able to internalise the taught concepts as the LDEP enabled them to acquire and remember these concepts.
I think like we learn better, as in, the things get screwed, stick in your brain longer.

(Female student from Class 20, School 3)

In acquiring knowledge, a few students were also of the opinion that the learning had practical utility that differed from an exam-oriented approach to education.

We can see in this programme that, yeah, we are actually learning for the sake of learning, not learning for the sake of exams and such things.

(Male student from Class 15, School 2)

Toward the conclusion of the interview, the students were asked if they would recommend the programme to other students. Many of the students reported that they would recommend the programme because it helped them in their writing.

Of course, I will recommend to my friends, even to a friend who is good in English because it will be a revision and he would perform better in the examinations. However it depends on the person; if the person is only interested in fooling around, he will not learn.

(Male Student from Class 5, School 1)

A few students mentioned that the programme allowed them to become independent learners rather than depending on the teachers and the textbook for the answers all the time. Additionally, some expressed the opinion that they gained new knowledge as well.

Yeah, I will recommend the programme to our peers because I found that the programme taught me several new writing styles.

(Male student from Class 13, School 2)

Not only did they gain in knowledge, but according to some students they also enjoyed themselves while learning under the programme.
I think I will recommend this programme because… it makes the lesson more interesting, it’s also, and ah, not only is it interesting, it is also more informative.

(Female student from Class 20, School 3)

**Negative Reactions**

Students reported some negative evaluations of the LDEP. Most of the negative reactions towards the programme related to the explicit teaching of the grammar concepts and the mode of teaching these concepts. Other negative reactions pertained to group work and a lack of reinforcements of taught concepts.

1. *Explicit Teaching of Grammar Uninteresting*

Some of the students were of the opinion that there should be more activities and that the explicit teaching of the concepts was tiresome. According to these students at times too much time was spent in going over the PowerPoint slides which were used to teach the concepts.

Since the theory is so long, we never paid enough attention so it’s like quite tough for us to answer the questions in the exercises.

(Male Student from Class 6, School 1)

A couple of students also made reference to the mode in which they were taught through the PowerPoint slides.

It is like she will just go through the PowerPoint slides instead of like interacting with us more.

(Female student from Class 6, School 1)

The lesson plans were designed in such a way that the explicit teaching of the lessons were to take no more than fifteen minutes. In some cases, it appears that whole periods, of up to thirty-five minutes or even more, were spent on teaching these concepts. The LDEP was designed to be interactive to stimulate the interest of the students and a whole period spent by students listening to a lecture would be counterproductive. It must, however, be noted that it was the
first time the programme was being implemented. It would take teachers time to get acquainted with the materials and mode of teaching. Once that occurs, there will be no need to read off the PowerPoint slides. Then, there can be face-to-face teaching and interaction with the students. Another problem might lie in the fact that the PowerPoint slides were standard ones that were given to all schools, irrespective of the ability levels of the students. In classes where the students are weaker, fewer concepts than the ones originally planned would have to be taught. Teachers would have to decide on the pace and number of concepts to be taught during each lesson. In that way, perhaps, the explicit teaching of the concepts could be made more accessible to the students.

Some students also mentioned disliking the taking down of the notes found on the PowerPoint slides. In addition, a couple of students from School 4 spoke of being told to memorise the notes. These statements came as a surprise to the researcher since the lesson plans did not require the students to memorise the notes.

Because of Literature-Driven English Programme… because we have to memorise all the clauses, phrases and tenses, so and when we have to identify the themes and all that, so it is hard to memorise all these things when we have a test, so we get confused.

(Male student from Class 23, School 4)

If the students had been expected to memorise the notes on the PowerPoint slides, it would actually go against the intent of the LDEP. The definitions and explanations of the concepts on the PowerPoint slides were meant to provide background information to aid the students in completing the follow-up activities.

2. Perceived Weaker Performance in School Tests due to the LDEP

The group of students from Class 23 was particularly hostile during the small group interview. According to them they had performed badly in their English and Literature tests because of the programme.
Female student: Maybe when this programme started, my English dropped.

Male student: It tested us on the normal Common Test. I failed very badly.

(Students from Class 23, School 4)

There are a number of possible reasons why the students might not have done as well in their school tests as they did in the mid-year examinations. The comprehension test given after the programme, as Teachers K and L from School 4 admitted, was comparatively more difficult than the one given during the mid-year examinations. They were also sitting for a Literature test for the first time so there was no preceding test to which they could compare it. Moreover, the Literature test also required them to have knowledge of the form and style of a formal literature essay. The students were not taught to write formal Literature essays during the programme. However, in the writing and reading comprehension post-tests that they completed at the end of the programme, they had performed better than the control group of students in their school (p.135 & p.155).

3. Too few reinforcements

A few students from School 2 and School 1 mentioned that the lack of reinforcements of the concepts taught would result in them forgetting what they had learnt. They could easily return to their old writing habits. For long-term retention of skills taught it is necessary to have these skills reinforced more often.

However, the way these concepts are reinforced is also important. The English teacher considered her students in Class 16 weak and so, she gave them additional exercises on some of the taught concepts. She also went over some of the concepts several times. The students from the class expressed their dislike for the English class.
She is actually trying to get it in our head, like but we can’t get it in our head because she is doing it over and over again so we are like so bored that we don’t want to listen anymore.

(Female student from Class 16, School 3)

It is important that the concepts once explicitly taught are reinforced through activities or exercises rather than more explicit teaching of the concepts.

4. Disadvantages of Group Work

Though students generally liked working in groups, some students reported on how group work could be abused. They mentioned students who were uncooperative or even took advantage of the hardworking students. Some are uncooperative, and do not do the work.

(Female student from Class 8, School 1)

When there is group work or peer-editing, guidelines and rules must be set in place to minimise abuse taking place. Further recommendations to better implement the LDEP in this respect can be found in the next chapter, ‘Evaluating the LDEP’ (c.f. pp.244-245).

Many of the students interviewed were of the opinion that they had learnt more during the LDEP than during their usual English lessons and that their writing skills had improved through the use of the Literature text to teach language skills. They also mentioned enjoying the group work and some of the activities. However, some of the students reported disliking the explicit teaching of grammar concepts as it made the lessons uninteresting. A few of the students also mentioned that there were too few reinforcements of concepts taught while others observed students taking advantage of group work by not contributing during the group work.
DISCUSSION OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND CLASSES WITH DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

In this section, data from the observations, field notes, log book entries as well as data from the interviews conducted with the teachers and students are used to assess the difficulties that were encountered during the course of the research. Possible reasons for the differences between the outcomes of most of the experimental classes and Class 4, School 1 and Class 18, School 3 are also offered. In addition, the qualitative data collected from Class 9, School 1 are also presented to further ascertain the reasons for the quantitative data from Class 9 being unreliable. The quantitative data were excluded from the analysis due to the possibility that they were unreliable. However, the qualitative data are included because the observation and field notes may aid in discovering additional reasons for the quantitative data being unreliable. Moreover, in a face-to-face interview with the researcher, the comments of the students might be more genuine and it would be possible to gain some insights into the opinions of some of the students in Class 9 about the LDEP.

Difficulties Encountered During the LDEP

Difficulties were encountered during the conduct of the research project due to the characteristics inherent in this research project. In classical experimental methodology, replications are designed to be consistent across the variables through controlling most of the variables so that these replications can be attributable to the influence of one or more specific variables (Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc 2004; Thomas 2005). However, such replications would not reflect the naturalistic situations in schools which cannot be experimentally controlled (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble 2003). There is appreciable variability across and within schools with many factors playing a role. Curriculum initiative project is useful when it takes into account this variability that is common in schools (Murray & Lawrence 2000). Therefore, in a curriculum initiative project it is important to discover if the curriculum would be effective in spite of the
variables in the different kinds of schools in which it is implemented. In this project, a number of difficulties were encountered precisely because the intent was not to interfere with pre-existing conditions or characters of the participating schools. It made the findings from the project all the more robust because the effectiveness of the curriculum was tested in natural conditions.

Difficulties were encountered particularly in two schools, School 3 and School 1 (Phase 2). In School 3, there was miscommunication from the beginning of the programme. Three Literature teachers were informed of the meeting with the researcher during the June holidays in 2004 before the implementation of the programme but the English teachers were not informed. Among the Literature teachers, only one of them went on to teach the experimental classes. Another taught the control classes and the third teacher did not teach the level but was the Literature coordinator. When the researcher met the English teachers, there was no time to fully acquaint them with the programme. The lesson outline and lesson plans were provided and a general overview was furnished. However, the teachers were not provided with an in-depth summary of the lessons and the ways in which they could fulfil the objectives of the research. The English teachers were also given the Literature textbook on which the English lessons were to be based a few days before they were expected to teach. It left them with little opportunity to read the book as well as the set of lesson plans. The inadequate understanding of the objectives of the LDEP led to a lack of coordination between the English and Literature teachers in this school and an improper sequencing of the Literature component of the lessons.

In School 1 during Phase 2, the Literature teacher who taught all the classes declined to meet with the researcher or provide feedback. During the small group interview, a couple of students mentioned that there was repetition of activities during the Literature and English classes. One of the English teachers also mentioned that due to time constraints, the English teachers did not meet up with the Literature teacher to coordinate lessons. However, there was an overall
coordinator for the programme in School 1 and she kept in touch with the
teachers though she taught during Phase 1 but not during Phase 2.

In addition, in a few classes in School 1, Phase 2, the periods were also long. In
one class, the students had one period of Literature in the morning, followed by
triple periods of English. When the period for explicit teaching of concepts was
extended much beyond ten or fifteen minutes with little movement for the
students during the approximately two hours of Literature and English lessons,
these students had difficulty focusing or becoming involved in the lessons. The
researcher had neglected to ask for the timetabling of the English and Literature
classes in the schools. It was only during the observation of the classes that she
realised the long hours the students had to spend on the two subjects. In such
circumstances, it is imperative that students move around and are involved in
active, preferably interactive, work rather than spend the time passively listening
to the teachers. In addition, there was no coordination between the English and
Literature teachers in this one school. Since there were repetitions of activities,
as reported by the students, it is not surprising that the students became bored
during some of the lessons.

Then sometimes, immediately after Literature there is
English, four straight periods of Literature and
English. Yeah, four straight periods, so that was, and
that was the lesson when we had that duplicate thing,
it’s always in that four periods the duplicate thing
[repetition of activities].

[Researcher: And in the four periods, sometimes you
just sit and watch slides, no activities?]
Ah yeah, not really, sometimes, not a lot, maybe in
[the English] lessons, ah, then we have activities, if in
our Literature teacher’s, we usually just listen.

(Student from Class 7, School 1)

Another difficulty arose because there was no workshop on the LDEP before the
implementation of the programme. Initially, the researcher intended to hold a
workshop before the programme was implemented in each of the four schools. However, due to time constraints arising from the teachers not having the time to attend these workshops no workshops were held at the beginning. Instead, an overview of the programme as well as outlines and lesson plans were presented and teachers were advised to refer to the researcher should they encounter any difficulty in the course of their teaching. However, while teaching, teachers in Schools 1, 3 and 4 experienced difficulties. When the researcher was informed of these difficulties, she went over some of the lessons with the teachers. The researcher also modelled the teaching of a lesson in School 1 during Phase 1 and in School 3 toward the middle of the programme. More detailed overview of the lessons was also conducted with the teachers from School 1, Phase 2. In School 4, some time was spent with Teacher K who voiced her reservations with some of the lessons. She mentioned having difficulty finding resources on the Internet on how to teach sentence types and the effects of each on the reader. She was informed that the lessons did not originate from the Internet but was designed by the researcher. Suggestions on how to conduct the lesson were offered. The researcher advised the teachers to notify her should they experience further difficulties. However, few teachers did and it was toward the end that some teachers reported the students having difficulty with understanding some of the concepts taught. The teachers might have had difficulty consulting the researcher during the course of the teaching of the programme. They might have encountered the problems while teaching and it would be too late to consult the researcher at that point. They might have also been trying to cope with teaching unfamiliar materials and dealing with the usual administrative and other duties. During the school term, they simply may not have had the time to consult the researcher.

Most of the schools and teachers were cooperative and followed the lesson plans as much as possible. Minor modifications made to the lesson plans included using transparencies instead of vanguard sheets or PowerPoint. In one or two cases, the modifications were somewhat significant. From the log book entries
and during lesson observations of Class 23, it was noted that Teacher K either
did not follow through with all the lessons or modified the lessons. In a log book
entry of Teacher K, she mentioned not assigning her students the narrative
writing and the peer-editing exercises ‘due to time constraints’. The exercise on
creating their own narratives was a culmination of all the activities in the
programme leading to the students creating the end-product, their own
narratives. In essence, that was the summative activity of the programme. In
addition, during one of the observations, for one particular lesson instead of
having a whole class discussion the class was divided into smaller groups. Many
of the students appeared confused about what was expected of them. The
purpose of having a whole class discussion was to aid the students in carrying
out the activity. The researcher had felt when designing the lesson that the
activity was not an easy one and the students would not be able to complete it
without guidance. In a whole class discussion, the input from the teacher and a
wider group of students might have helped the students to better understand
what was expected of them and to actively participate in the activity. That could
be one of the reasons why Teacher K and the students from Class 23 during the
small group interview mentioned the lessons being difficult for the students. A
more detailed briefing of the lessons and objectives of the lessons as well as a
workshop might have better prepared the teacher and others to teach the
lessons.

The difficulties that arose during the implementation and the teaching of the
LDEP added to the variability in the project. The presence of this variability was
important in a curriculum initiative project of this sort. The curriculum, tested in
such diverse circumstances, led to significant improvements in the writing and
reading comprehension skills of the experimental group of students in the
schools (c.f. Chapter 4). Admittedly, the Effect Sizes of the improvement scores
in the writing skills assessment were not uniformly large, particularly in the case
of School 3 (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130). However, it is argued that this increases the
validity claim. In the face of these large variations, including those that were
encountered unexpectedly in schools, the experimental group of students improved over the control group of students in all the schools. The LDEP appears to have inherent merits that aid in improving the writing and reading comprehension skills of the students.

Two classes that showed little quantitative improvement in the writing assessments were Class 4, School 1 and Class 18, School 3. Class 4 attained an improvement score ES of 0.08 and Class 18 an improvement score ES of 0.04 in the writing skills assessment (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). Possible reasons as to why they might not have performed as well as the other classes are offered in the next section.

**Class 4, School 1**

According to the English teacher, when comparing Class 4 with another experimental class, Class 2 that she taught, there were differences in the attitude of the students.

For [Class 4], it’s a very restless bunch. I think, actually I should say that half of them benefited, the other half I am not very sure whether they have benefited…. But for [Class 2] they are quite responsive and quite, they are able to sit still. I think yeah, most of them benefited.

(Teacher B, School 1)

Class 2 gained an improvement ES of 0.64 in the writing assessment (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). During the first observation of Class 2, the teacher had to leave the class because one of her students was taken ill suddenly. She was out of the class for a long time, and yet, most of the students remained on-task, completing the group assignment given before the teacher left the room. In observing Class 4 the first time, they were working on the drawing of the characters and most appeared to be engrossed in it. However, during the second observation, many students were off-task. The teacher spent quite a bit of time dealing with
misbehaving students. The activity involved getting them to change the storyline after altering the characters. The students were observed during the second part of the double period and they were already working on their assignment. The students were given additional time to finish their group assignment, and in the end, only one group managed to present their group work. In comparison to Class 2, many of the students in Class 4 appear not to be self-motivated. When the students in Class 4 were engaged in a task that they enjoyed, the drawing of the characters, they were engrossed. However, for the second activity few were engaged in the activity. In addition, when the researcher went in to observe the second time, during the second of double periods, the students were asked to take out their thermometers to check their temperatures. While the teacher went round checking the palms of the students, a group of boys started playing with their thermometers. Such a distraction could easily divert the attention of restless students from the assigned activity.

In the teaching of any curriculum, the cooperation of the students in the classes would also be needed to make the curriculum a success. If the students do not listen, it is hardly likely that any learning can take place. To further illustrate this point, the performance of another group of classes taught by the same teacher might be examined. In School 2, the same teacher taught all the three experimental classes. The Effect Sizes in the improvement scores of two of the classes, Classes 13 and 15, were similar, being 0.71 and 0.67 respectively (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). The ES of the improvement score of the third Class 11 was much lower at 0.29 (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). During the observations of these three classes, it was found that the students from Class 15 were generally quieter than those from Classes 11 and 13. Though Class 13 can be noisy during group work, most of the students did their assigned class work. In addition, when the teacher questioned them, they offered appropriate answers, indicating that they were listening during the explicit teaching of the grammar concepts and writing techniques. On the other hand, the students from Class 11 were more boisterous. During the second lesson that was observed by the
researcher, when the teacher realised that most of the students were not
listening during the explicit teaching of certain grammatical concepts, she began
quizzing them. Most of them could not answer her.

Class 18, School 3

Class 18 was another experimental class that showed little improvement in the
writing skills post-test. According to the English teacher who also taught another
experimental class, Class 20 (with an improvement ES of 0.30 in the writing skills
assessment, c.f. Table 4.16, p.134), the students from Class 18 were generally
weaker in English. More girls in Class 18 came from a Mandarin-speaking
background whereas more girls in Class 20 came from an English-speaking
background. The girls from Class 18 were also less ‘motivated to do well
academically’ (Teacher J, School 3) than the girls from Class 20. The English
teacher who taught Classes 2 and 4 in School 1 also said that more students in
Class 4 came from a Mandarin-speaking background and that Class 4 was less
motivated than Class 2. Further research needs to be conducted to ascertain if
there is a correlation between the Mandarin-speaking background of students
and the lack of motivation to learn in an English language classroom.

During the second observation of Class 18, it was noticed that the teacher was
having difficulty holding the attention of the students in Class 18 because at least
a third of them were off-task. During the group activity, instead of focusing on the
activity the students were talking about unrelated matters, or revising for their
upcoming Common Test. Common Tests are scheduled tests that all the classes
in the level complete toward the end of a term.

Further pertinent evidence comes from the writing skills post-test. Class 18 was
the experimental class with the highest number of students with incomplete
scripts that could not be analysed. In the writing skills assessment eight (of the
thirty-eight) post-test scripts of the students were excluded from the analysis.
Their English teacher reported the students spending too much time working on
their outlines, and she had to prompt them many times to hurry up to finish within the time limit of thirty minutes. The Common tests and revision for these tests may have worn-out the students or the half-hour given to complete the writing test may have been insufficient. For practical reasons, the students were only given half an hour to complete the writing tests. The short time was a drawback as some students alluded to hurrying to finish their narratives within the short time given. Students in Singapore are normally given an hour in which to complete their compositions.

**Class 9, School 1**

The qualitative data of Class 9, School 1 were included for two reasons. The qualitative data might further explain why the quantitative data could be deemed unreliable. Additionally, the students in the small group could provide useful information to how at least some of the students in the class felt about the programme. Unlike the quantitative data, feedback from the observation and the English teacher could be more reliable. The feedback from the small group of students about the programme might also be reliable since the mechanics of a small group interview, which involves face-to-face interview with the researcher, may influence the group members to offer genuine feedback.

In general, the comments from the small group of students from Class 9 about the LDEP were positive. Some found the PowerPoint presentation, through which the grammar concepts were explicitly taught, uninteresting but useful. All the students also mentioned that they felt they were writing better narratives. According to one student, when her Literature teacher gave

> tips on how to elaborate each paragraph, such as the introduction, climax, um, ideas keep flowing out of my head, and I can read, I can write so many things in just one paragraph and my grades has improved, since I failed for my, I think, mid-year, till now, then I pass.

(Female Student, Class 9, School 1)
All the students also said that they would recommend the programme to their peers.

Student 1 [female]: [The programme is] exciting, fun and excellent [laughter from the other students]. Adjective, what!

Student 2 [male]: Yes, because we know how to write an essay.

(Students from Class 9, School 1)

Some of the students commented that half the class were not attentive during lessons and that the teacher had difficulty getting the class to pay attention in class. From the class observation too, it was clear that few students were listening to the English teacher. She had to raise her voice on several occasions. Many of the students did not appear motivated to learn. The English teacher also reported that she had difficulty motivating the class to learn. According to her these students being from a Normal (Academic) class were not as academically motivated as the students from the Express stream.

In general, Class 9 was boisterous and seemed uninterested in learning. Though many appeared not to have paid attention, the students in the small group said that they had gained from the programme. From the terms that the students used during the interview in relation to the concepts they had learnt it was clear that these students in the small group had learnt some of the concepts. However, in general the class might not have gained much from the LDEP.
CONCLUSION

The qualitative data from the interviews with the teachers and students, observations of the experimental classes, field notes and log books of the teachers reveal that generally the students had benefited from the programme though there were some limitations expressed.

Positive feedback from the teachers and students include:

1. The advantages of an integrated Literature and English Language programme that some teachers alluded to before the implementation of the LDEP were realised during the LDEP. These advantages comprise reducing the duplication that arise from teaching two inter-related subjects separately and enhancing language skills through teaching contextually by utilising the literature text (c.f. pp.183-186). The teachers were of the opinion that the students achieved better reading comprehension skills during the LDEP because the students were taught in context (c.f. pp.187-188) and one of the two teachers who taught English and Literature remarked that there was no repetition in the teaching of similar skills under the LDEP (c.f. pp.188-189).

2. Many teachers and students reported that language skills and knowledge of grammar were enhanced during the LDEP (c.f. pp.184-185, pp.189-190 & pp.203-205).

3. Teachers mentioned that the group work and diverse activities included in the LDEP had stimulated interest of the students in the lessons (c.f. pp.186-187).

4. Many students commented that they enjoyed many of the activities and the group work (c.f. pp.202-203).
5. Some teachers also reported that the literary analytical skills of the students were enhanced through the LDEP (c.f. pp.187-188) while some students were of the opinion that not only had they learnt better with the help of the literature text but that they had also learnt more under the LDEP (c.f. 205-207).

There were also limitations and these limitations are described below:

1. Some teachers observed that the technical nature of the explicit teaching of grammar was boring for the students and that some students found it difficult to grasp some of the lessons (c.f. p.191). Students also mentioned that they found the explicit teaching of grammar boring (c.f. p.208).

2. Teachers and students commented on the lack of reinforcements of the taught grammar concepts (c.f. p.192 & p.210).

3. A few teachers from two schools were of the opinion that the objectives of the LDEP would not adequately prepare their students to meet the demands of the examinations set by their schools (c.f. pp.193-194). Some students from one school also perceived that their performances in tests had deteriorated after the LDEP (c.f. pp.209-210).

4. Some students also commented on the disadvantages of group work during which some students took advantage of the hardworking students (c.f. p.211).

5. Some problems were encountered during the implementation of the programme in Schools 3 and 1 (Phase 2). The English teachers in School 3 were inadequately briefed about the programme and there was also improper sequencing of the Literature component of the lessons (c.f. p.213). The difficulties encountered by the teachers in School 3 may have
contributed to the much lower improvement score ES of the students in the writing skills assessment in comparison to the improvement score ES of the students in the other three schools (c.f. p.197). In School 1 (Phase 2) there was inadequate liaising between the English and Literature teachers which led to a repetition of activities (c.f. pp.213-214). Some teachers reported experiencing difficulty in teaching the unfamiliar materials under the LDEP (c.f. p.198).

Students from two experimental classes with negligible positive improvement score ES in the writing skills were observed to be unmotivated and inattentive in class during the explicit teaching and group activities (c.f. pp.217-219). The feedback from the small group of students from Class 9 indicates that many students in Class 9 of School 1 were also unmotivated and inattentive though some of the students claimed that they had gained from the LDEP (c.f. pp.220-221).

The teachers also suggested some ways in which the curriculum could be modified so as to improve its effectiveness (c.f. pp.198-200). Some teachers suggested that there should be more reinforcement of the taught concepts and that more short stories should be utilised for the programme. The English teachers in School 3 mentioned that there should be a more thorough briefing. Some teachers also offered ways in which there could be better coordination between the English and Literature teachers when teaching under an integrated programme such as the LDEP.

There were teething problems with the implementation and execution of some of the lessons. There were also concerns about the difficulty level of certain grammatical concepts that were taught and lack of reinforcements of the taught concepts. In a couple of classes the lack of motivation in many of the students may have contributed to a lower achievement than the other classes in the post-test. However, from the point of view of many of the teachers and students, the
LDEP was effective in improving the writing skills and literary comprehension of many of the students. Many students also found some of the activities and group work enjoyable. The overall consensus of most teachers and students was that the LDEP achieved real improvements. Additionally, according to many of the students, they would recommend it to their peers.

The next Chapter combines the quantitative and qualitative findings in Chapters 4 and 5 to evaluate the programme. In synthesising the evidence from the mixed methods findings, Chapter 6 attempts to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and utility of the LDEP. Recommendations on how the programme could be further improved are also offered in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6
Evaluating the Literature-Driven English Programme

Introduction

In this chapter, the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP) is evaluated to ascertain if it was successful, and if it was, to what extent it was successful. In evaluating the programme the conclusions reached from the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 are used. The quantitative data from Chapter 4 and the qualitative data from Chapter 5 are synthesised in order to develop a more holistic picture. The quantitative evidence from the pre-test and post-test writing and reading comprehension skills assessment and surveys are combined with the perceptions and opinions of the teachers and students to evaluate the LDEP.

There were three areas, namely writing skills, reading comprehension skills and the teaching of grammar that formed the core of the LDEP. Due to time constraints, the focus was largely on improving narrative writing and imparting knowledge of selected grammar concepts and to a lesser extent, on enhancing reading comprehension skills. These grammar concepts were chosen because it was felt that knowledge of these concepts would aid in writing narratives. In this chapter, the LDEP is evaluated from the perspective of whether there were improvements in writing and reading comprehension skills and increased understanding of the grammar concepts taught. Apart from improvements in each of the three areas, the limitations of the LDEP are also examined. Finally, in view of the shortcomings, recommendations on how the LDEP can be further improved are suggested.
The Literature-Driven English Programme

Writing Skills

Narrative writing skills were taught during the Literature-Driven English Programme (LDEP). The students were instructed in selected grammar concepts and narrative writing techniques that would aid in the writing of narratives.

The writing skills of the students in the experimental and control groups were assessed through pre-tests that were completed before the LDEP was implemented as well as through post-tests completed at the conclusion of the LDEP. Teachers and students were also asked to comment on the benefits and weaknesses of the LDEP in relation to the teaching of writing skills.

Benefits

According to the quantitative and qualitative findings, the students in the experimental group generally improved in their writing skills under the LDEP (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112, pp.184-185 & pp.204-205). On the other hand, the post-test mean score in the writing skills assessment of the students from the control group remained similar to their pre-test mean score (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112). The students in the experimental group improved across the various sub-groups based on gender, ability, class, school and stream. The improvement scores were all the more remarkable considering that the LDEP was a language programme that ran for a relatively short span of time.

An evaluation of the LDEP in the area of writing skills is not complete without reviewing the Effect Sizes of the writing skills improvement scores of the students as a whole as well as those within the sub-groups. These sub-groups were created based on gender, ability, stream, school, school type and class. Overall,
the ES of the improvement scores of the students in the experimental group in the writing skills test was a moderate 0.44 (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112). These boys and girls came from four different schools, streams and were of different abilities. An ES of 0.44 gained by such a diverse group of students during a short language programme is significant, more so since the control group of students from three of the same schools did not improve. In addition, among the sub-groups, there were substantial gains in the improvement scores as well.

Since the control group of students did not improve, only the experimental groups of students were categorised into sub-groups to study if there were improvements across the sub-groups as well. Among the sub-group based on gender, both boys and girls in the experimental group achieved moderate improvement score Effect Sizes, with the boys gaining a slightly larger ES of 0.50 compared to the ES of 0.39 of the girls (c.f. Table 4.10, p.124). As noted in the literature review, it is often reported that boys do not perform as well as girls in English (Cleary 1992; Hawkes 2001; Head 1999; Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996; Wong, Lam & Ho 2002). However, in the LDEP, not only did the experimental group of boys improve but the mean improvement score ES of these boys was also slightly larger than the mean improvement score ES attained the experimental group of girls. The LDEP may aid in reducing the disparity that exists between the achievements of the boys and girls in English Language.

Among the students with the different PSLE English Grades, the improvement score Effect Sizes was moderate to strong, with students with Grades A* and C achieving Effect Sizes of 0.56 and 0.57 respectively and students with Grades A and B gaining Effect Sizes of 0.39 and 0.46 (c.f. Table 4.8, p.122). Based on gender and PSLE English grades, the boys achieved a moderate to large improvement score Effect Sizes of between 0.43 and 1.40 (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125). The girls with Grades A* to B gained improvement Effect Sizes of between 0.37 and 0.61 (c.f. Table 4.12, p.126). According to the findings, the
LDEP benefited the students regardless of gender and ability. This is an important finding since there is evidence to show that boys often do not perform well in English Language (Hawkes 2001; Head 1999; Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools & Equal Opportunities Commission 1996). The evidence indicates that the LDEP aids boys independent of varying abilities to improve their writing skills.

In the research, there were two streams, the Special/Express and the Normal (Academic). Most secondary students in Singapore are either in the Special/Express or Normal (Academic) streams. The Normal (Academic) students comprise a smaller group as the largest group of secondary students are in the Express/Special stream. While the Special/Express stream students improved, it is significant that the Normal (Academic) students also improved. The ES of the average improvement score in the writing skills test of the Normal (Academic) students was a large 0.88 (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). The findings demonstrate that the LDEP benefited students across a wide spectrum of abilities.

With regard to the achievement displayed by the individual schools, students in the experimental group from all four schools improved while the control group in three of the schools did not improve (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112). One of the schools, School 1, did not have a control group of students. Schools 1, 2 and 4 registered similarly strong improvement score Effect Sizes of between 0.48 and 0.56 (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130). Though the improvement score ES of School 3 was smaller at 0.18 (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130), the control group in School 3 did not improve and possibly registered a decrease compared to the experimental classes (c.f. p.135). Most of the individual experimental classes also displayed improvements in the writing skills assessment with the improvement score Effect Sizes ranging from a respectable 0.29 to a large 0.88 (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). Only two of the fourteen experimental classes registered slight improvement score Effect Sizes of 0.04 and 0.08. The evidence reveals that generally in the schools and most of
the classes, the LDEP had a positive influence on the writing skills of the experimental group of students.

In terms of the different teachers who taught the experimental curriculum, there is evidence to suggest that the curriculum had an impact irrespective of the different teaching styles and teacher personalities. Twelve teachers taught the fourteen experimental classes and in one school, School 4, three teachers taught the experimental as well as the control classes. In most of the classes in three of the schools, each of the classes was taught by separate English and Literature teachers during the LDEP. Despite being taught by different teachers most of the experimental classes achieved moderate to large Effect Sizes in the improvement scores. Even when most of the classes were instructed by different teachers in the English and Literature components of the LDEP which led to overlaps and inconsistencies due to miscommunication or lack of coordination these classes improved. In School 4 where the same teachers taught the experimental and control classes, the experimental classes achieved improvement score Effect Sizes of 0.41 and 0.68. On the other hand, the control classes taught by the same teachers did not improve in the writing skills test. The students, in fact, achieved negative mean improvement scores in the writing skills test (c.f. Table 4.17, p.135). The findings suggest that the curriculum was effective in imparting writing skills regardless of the different class dynamics, school cultures or teaching styles.

In the surveys many students gave feedback that there was improvement in their writing skills. In the surveys that the students in the experimental group completed, between 64% and close to 80% of the students reported using the different techniques and concepts taught to improve their narrative writing skills (c.f. p.160). A high percentage of over 75% of the students had at least used some of the techniques and concepts taught (c.f. p.159). According to the responses of the students in the survey, the LDEP was successful in stimulating students to apply what was taught during the lessons.
In examining the qualitative data that included interviews with students and teachers, there was also positive feedback. Many teachers in the experimental group commented that they observed an improvement in the writing of the students (c.f. pp.184-185). Some of the teachers observed the students acquiring knowledge of the concepts or techniques taught. They also mentioned that many of the students used more descriptive words and varied the sentence structures (c.f. p.185).

Many of the students interviewed also felt that they had improved in their writing (c.f. pp.204-205). Both the male and female students reported employing some of the techniques and concepts taught, thereby creating more interesting narratives (c.f. pp.204-205). The evidence from the quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates that many of the students, male and female, improved in their writing skills and they were also applying the relevant techniques and concepts taught during the LDEP. The literal replication of positive outcomes in the writing skills assessment as substantiated by the quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates that there are inherent merits in the LDEP that enhance the writing skills of the students.

**Reading Comprehension Skills**

The intent of the research was to discover if by analysing the content and language of the literature text, the reading comprehension skills of the experimental group of students would improve as well. There was no direct instruction of reading comprehension skills in the pilot version of the LDEP. The increase in reading comprehension was hypothesised to flow from the explicit teaching of narrative writing skills and literary analysis rather than from direct instruction. Therefore, there was a possibility that the reading comprehension skills of the students would improve when students were guided to analyse and study the literature text from the point of view of a writer.
The reading comprehension skills of the experimental and control group of students were assessed through a pre-test and a post-test to discover if there was an improvement in either or both groups of students. The experimental group of teachers and students were also interviewed and the students completed surveys at the end. Though the focus of the interviews and surveys was on the writing skills and literary analysis, some insights on whether the LDEP aided in improving comprehension skills were gained as well.

**Benefits**

The pre-test and post-test results of the students with PSLE English grades A, B and C in Schools 3 and 4 and those from the Normal (Academic) class in School 1 were analysed. The reasons for the exclusion of the results of the Express students in Schools 1 and 2, and those of students with Grade A* in Schools 3 and 4 are offered in pp.143-145.

The quantitative data pertaining to the reading comprehension skills of students from Schools 3 and 4 indicate that generally, the students in the experimental group improved more than the control group. The experimental group gained a strong improvement ES of 0.64 as opposed to the moderate ES of 0.43 of the control group (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). The integration of reading and writing and the use of the literature text for analysis and as a tool to teach language skills appear to have better enhanced the reading comprehension skills of the experimental group of students compared to the control group. Here it is noted that the control group of students were explicitly taught comprehension skills and they also completed comprehension exercises as part of their ordinary class work. Though the pilot LDEP did not have explicit reading comprehension exercises the students increased in reading comprehension skills more than the control group which had explicit activities in reading comprehension. The greater improvement registered by the experimental group suggests that the LDEP may be more effective in enhancing comprehension skills than the conventional mode of teaching these skills.
In comparisons between the sub-groups within the experimental group and control group, most of the different sub-groups within the experimental group also improved more than the corresponding sub-groups within the control group. Across gender and PSLE English grades, generally the experimental group improved more than the control group of students (c.f. pp.150-152). The experimental group of girls achieved an ES of 0.60 whereas the improvement score ES of the control group of girls was 0.41 (c.f. Table 4.27, p.149). The evidence also indicates that the experimental group of boys gained much more from the LDEP than the control group of boys. The boys in the experimental group achieved a large improvement ES of 0.92 whereas the control group of boys achieved a moderate ES of 0.49 (c.f. Table 4.27, p.149). With regard to gender, both girls and boys in the experimental group improved more than the girls and boys in the control group. However, the achievement by the experimental group of boys was noteworthy in that the magnitude of the improvement was greater than that of the experimental group of girls or the control group of boys. Though the findings demonstrate that the LDEP had been successful in enhancing the comprehension skills of both boys and girls, the evidence reveals that the boys may have benefited more than the girls.

The girls with PSLE English Grade A achieved a moderate reading improvement score ES of 0.37 whereas the improvement score ES achieved by the control group of girls with Grade A was a small 0.19 (c.f. p.151). With regard to PSLE English Grades A and B, the boys in the experimental group gained much larger improvement Effect Sizes of 0.68 and 1.40 respectively in contrast to the control group of boys with Effect Sizes of 0.28 and 0.66 (c.f. p.150). The experimental group of girls with Grade A and the experimental group of boys with Grades A and B gained more in terms of enhanced reading comprehension skills than the girls and boys with the corresponding grades in the control group.

There were negligible differences in the achievement findings of Schools 3 and 4. In School 3, the experimental group achieved a large reading improvement score
ES of 0.63 as opposed to the moderate ES of 0.39 of the control group (c.f. Table 4.30, p.154). In School 4, the experimental group also achieved a large improvement score ES of 0.65 while the ES of the control group stood at 0.46 (c.f. Table 4.31, p.155). Again, despite the differences between the two schools, one being an all-girls’ government-aided school and the other a government co-educational school, the improvements of the experimental groups were similarly greater than the improvements registered by the control groups in these schools. From the findings it can be ascertained that the LDEP may have been more effective than the usual curricula of these schools in improving reading comprehension skills.

The reading comprehension results of the Normal (Academic) class in School 1 were also analysed. Though there was no control group of Normal (Academic) class, the achievement registered by these students were in themselves notable. The Normal (Academic) class of students achieved a large ES of 1.10 in the reading comprehension improvement scores (c.f. Table 4.33, p.156). Boys and girls registered large Effect Sizes of 1.15 and 1.01 respectively (c.f. Table 4.33, p.156). The findings indicate that the LDEP was successful in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of the students in the Normal (Academic) stream.

Through the close reading of and interaction with the literature text during the LDEP, the reading comprehension skills of the students with PSLE English grades A and B in the experimental group in Schools 3 and 4 had improved substantially more than comparable students in the control group (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). Likewise, the experimental group of students in the Normal (Academic) class in School 1 also registered large improvements (c.f. Table 4.33, p.156). The LDEP appears to have been effective in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of the students, irrespective of gender, ability, stream or school.
The surveys that the students completed and the interviews with the teachers focused on improvement in writing skills and literary analysis. In terms of literary analysis, around 70% of the students, both males and females, said the lessons during the LDEP were helpful in analysing the literature text (c.f. p.160). Many of the literature teachers felt that the LDEP was useful in teaching literary analysis (c.f. pp.187-188) though one teacher felt that during the LDEP there was insufficient literary analysis of the literature text (c.f. p.193). Though literary analysis is different from reading comprehension in some ways, it is also similar in that comprehension of the text is gained through analysis. Therefore, it is possible that the responses of the students in the survey, indicating that literary analysis was advanced during the programme, might imply a developing general reading comprehension skill as well. The literal replication of enhanced reading improvement scores of the experimental group of students with Grades A and B in Schools 3 and 4 suggests that the LDEP aided in enhancing the reading comprehension skill of these students regardless of gender or ability.

**Understanding of Grammar Concepts Taught**

Six grammar concepts were taught during the LDEP to enhance the writing skills of the students. There are some researchers who argue against the explicit teaching of grammar (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer 1965; Cox 1995; Hartwell 1985; Hillocks & Smith 1991). It was the intent of this research to discover if using the literature text as a tool to explicitly teach grammar in context would aid in the students learning and applying the taught grammar concepts. In the surveys that the students completed, they were asked to respond to the number of concepts that they had learnt. In addition, in interviews with teachers and students, they were asked to give feedback on the teaching of grammar concepts.

**Benefits**

There is evidence to indicate that the teaching of the grammar concepts had increased the awareness of these concepts in many students. About 75% of the
students surveyed reported understanding three or more out of the six concepts taught (c.f. p.159).

There were five sub-categories under which the students were assessed in the writing skills assessment. One of the sub-categories was “convention”, under which students were assessed on grammatical correctness. Under this sub-category, the students in the control group did not show any improvement but the experimental group improved (c.f. pp.115-116). The quantitative data from the surveys and the writing skills assessment indicate that the explicit teaching of grammar concepts during the LDEP resulted in the students both learning some of the concepts and applying them in their written work as well.

From the qualitative data derived from the interviews with teachers and students, it also appears that the explicit teaching of these concepts has had an effect on the learning of the students. According to the teachers the students had become more aware of some of the concepts taught (c.f. pp.189-190).

They are a bit more aware, you know, because of all the drilling, you know, identify the adjectives, and identify this, you know, I think they are a bit more aware in, as opposed to if we didn’t do this.

(Teacher L, School 4)

Students reported applying some of the taught concepts (c.f. pp.206-207). They also mentioned that arriving at an understanding of the utilitarian purpose of some of the concepts had changed the way they viewed writing.

As for the grammar, the one that shocked me the most is actually the activity where we had to change the grammar, the tenses of each word and how it changes the whole meaning of the sentence. So I do use it now because, just you can see how it changes, and how your writing, how someone can view your writing in the wrong way if you should use the wrong tense.

(Male student from Class 13, School 2)
On the other hand, a few teachers expressed misgivings about the teaching of grammar (c.f. pp.190-191). They reported that some students experienced difficulty in grasping a few of the concepts and some students become bored during the lessons. There was also some caution expressed against the amount of attention paid to the teaching of grammar concepts.

However, when the LDEP was designed, it was felt that there was a need to revisit and teach grammatical conventions since in Singapore and in the United States there were concerns in recent years about the declining standards in English (Davie 2003; Vavra 2003). During the interviews with teachers, they also mentioned the poor knowledge of grammatical rules evident in the writings of their students (c.f. p.189).

It appears that many students who enter secondary schools do not have a sound knowledge of the grammatical rules that would help them in writing as well as reading comprehension.

They don’t seem to have firm knowledge of grammar and how to use it.

(Teacher A, School 1)

There are local students coming from non-English speaking backgrounds and they often converse in the local colloquial language, *Singlish*. In addition, teachers from Schools 2 and 4 also mentioned that in their schools there were students from other countries, especially China, who were very weak in English.

The weaker ones, they tend to translate their thoughts from Chinese to English and somehow there are expressions that become very awkward, these are of course exceptional students, very weak students, but generally, the basic level difficulties in grammar, difficulties in expressing themselves.

(Teacher G, from School 2)
Additionally, there were concerns that the bilingual policy and the communicative form of teaching English have led to deterioration in the standard of English (c.f. p.189). The use of modern communication technology, such as mobiles and the internet, has also led to a decline in the standard of English (c.f. p.189). There appears to be a real need to teach students grammar concepts. In Singapore as well as in the United States, the concerns about the declining standards in relation to English Language (c.f. p.19, p.39) have led to calls to return to the basics. In the United States, for instance, advocates for a return to the explicit teaching of grammar include Hagemann (2003) and Vavra (2003). It was partly in view of this expressed need to arrest declining standards that the teaching of grammar concepts was incorporated into the LDEP.

In designing the explicit teaching materials of the selected grammar concepts, a conscious effort was made to move away from the traditional mode of teaching formal grammar through the use of isolated examples and through completing exercises that were divorced from context. Some of the teachers were also wary of teaching grammar explicitly (c.f. p.191). One of the teachers mentioned that the teaching of formal grammar is not very useful in imparting the necessary grammar concepts to the students.

Grammar and usage – perhaps you have students who diligently learn new words but they use them wrongly because they learn them in isolation from the context, then we have another problem.

(Teacher A, School 1)

During the LDEP, the students were taught contextually through the use of examples from the literature text. In addition, the students were expected to complete grammar exercises extracted from the literature text. It was hoped that the contextual teaching of grammar concepts through the use of concrete examples from the literature text would help the students learn the concepts better. There are however, improvements that could be made to the implementation and teaching of these grammatical concepts. Recommended
improvements are suggested toward the end of this chapter under "Suggested Improvements" (c.f. pp.243-245).

In summary, it may be useful to examine the comments of the teacher from School 2 with regard to the explicit teaching of grammar. In School 2, the English programme for the lower secondary students was an integrated one, modelled after a Literature-Based English Curriculum (LBEC). In her first interview before the implementation of the LDEP, the teacher from School 2 commented:

Of course, there are weaknesses in it [LBEC] that there is less emphasis on grammar, so the students get less exposure to grammar. But then, we found that some of these, even if we teach grammar, transfer does not usually automatically take place, so perhaps, we hope that as we go along, as the students are exposed more and more to literature, they will get a sense of how language is being used.

(Teacher G, School 2)

In the interview after the implementation of the LDEP, on being asked whether the programme was useful, she said:

Certainly yes, also helps extremely with the narrative writing because… it managed to convey to the students how the changes in the structures will change the focus or emphasis of the narrative writing, so they were aware of it.

(Teacher G, School 2)

The quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrate that many students had improved in their understanding of the grammatical concepts and were applying what they had learnt in their writing as well. The evidence indicates that the explicit teaching of grammar concepts had aided in the improvement of the writing skills of these students.
In the LDEP the imbalance found in the LBEC caused by the absence of the explicit teaching of grammar is corrected by linking the explicit teaching of grammar to the study of the literature text. The literature text becomes the vehicle through which students are taught to become better writers and readers. While in a LBEC it is hoped that students will gain language skills through interaction with the literature text, in the LDEP the learning of identified skills and concepts are explicitly taught. In the course of the research, during the programme the students were guided in gaining an appreciation of the literature text as a model of well-crafted language. During the implementation of the programme it was hoped that, through the process of theory application, they would be able to transfer knowledge of the craft into their own compositions when creating their narratives. The outcomes imply that there was transference of concepts taught when the students composed their narratives.

**Drawbacks of the LDEP**

Generally, the students in the experimental group improved in their writing skills (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112) while the control group did not improve. In the reading comprehension assessment, the students with Grades A and B in the experimental group generally performed better than the students with similar grades in the control group (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). However, due to the nature of the curriculum initiative project during which the variables were not manipulated and teachers retained full control over the teaching of the given materials (c.f. pp.66-67), there were limitations. A few teachers reported encountering difficulties during the implementation of the programme and some teachers expressed reservations over some parts of the programme.

A few of the teachers from Schools 1, 3 and 4 found that some of the lessons in the uniform curriculum implemented in four diverse schools were difficult for some of their students (c.f. p.191). In School 1, one of the teachers was of the opinion that the Secondary One students were too young for a programme like the LDEP (c.f. p.195). According to her, the older students, from Secondary Two
onward, would have benefited more from the lessons than the Secondary One students.

In another school, School 3, the teachers alluded to the difficulties they encountered in having access to the curriculum just before the implementation of the programme. The programme outline was sent to the school at least three months earlier and the researcher requested for a meeting with the English and Literature teachers during the June holidays. However, due to lack of adequate communication, the researcher met only the Literature teachers during the school holidays. As a result the English teachers in School 3 had a short period of time to acquaint themselves with the curriculum before teaching under the programme (c.f. pp.195-197).

Some teachers and a few of the students reported that there were inadequate reinforcements of the concepts taught (c.f. pp.192, 210). Due to the short period allowed for the programme in all the four schools, there was no time to include more exercises to reinforce the taught concepts. Thus, the aim of the current research was limited to studying the effect of the short-term learning of the concepts taught during the programme. However, the feedback on the relatively few reinforcements is viewed constructively as it leads to the useful suggestion to include more reinforcements of the learnt material in future implementations of the LDEP.

With regard to the reading comprehension skills, it could not be ascertained whether the LDEP had been successful with students who scored in the highest percentiles in the pre-test in the reading comprehension skills assessment. The reading comprehension test instrument was a uniform instrument designed to cater to students of different abilities. In attempting to make the test accessible to the low ability students the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test became less challenging for the students with PSLE English Grade A* or close to it. A more challenging instrument with more differentiated difficulty levels would
have been helpful in discovering if the programme was useful in improving the reading comprehension skills of the higher ability students as well. Further implementations of the LDEP should incorporate assessment instruments that address a wider range of abilities.

Some of the teachers expressed reservations over the explicit teaching of the grammar concepts. Additionally, some of the students were of the opinion that the teaching of these concepts was boring (c.f. p.208). Among the teachers who expressed reservations, there were a few who thought that they were losing the interest of their students when the grammar concepts were taught explicitly (c.f. p.191). The objective of the explicit teaching of grammar concepts was obvious to some students but to others they were just learning “grammar”. Students who understood the objective appeared to appreciate the need to learn grammar and were more amenable to the teaching of these grammar concepts (c.f. pp.203-204 & p.206). It may be difficult to make a lesson a hundred percent “fun”, and not all “fun” lessons may be educationally enriching. Therefore, it is important to inform the students of the objectives of the grammar lessons and link these lessons to their writing, reading comprehension or literary lessons. It is also important for the students to be aware that recall of concepts already taught could be just as important as learning new concepts.

The LDEP included many activities that involved students working in groups. While many of the students enjoyed the group work (c.f. pp.186-187 & pp.202-203), there were also problems with group work (c.f. p.211). The lesson plans did not specify any ground rules or expectations for group work. Since teachers would have different ground rules or expectations for their classes, the researcher was not in favour of imposing her own version of rules and expectations. Again, this is the nature of naturalistic research where the abilities and teaching styles of the teachers cover a spectrum and the teachers are volunteers of unknown ability before the LDEP was implemented.
Suggested Improvements

The following suggestions are offered as a means of improving on the LDEP should the LDEP be implemented in schools in the future.

1. *Teachers and Students Having Access to More Information on the LDEP*

There were students who complained that the explicit teaching of the grammar component of the LDEP was uninteresting (c.f. p.208) and some thought some parts of the grammar component were repetitive of lessons learnt in primary school (c.f. p.203). Thus, one of the suggestions pertains to ensuring that students are informed of the overall objectives of the programme as well as the sub-objectives of each of the lessons so that they can appreciate the links between the lessons. Understanding the objective of each of the lessons might help the students to better appreciate the LDEP.

In one of the schools, teachers encountered problems when teaching under the LDEP because they were not adequately briefed about the programme (c.f. pp.195-197). Additionally, a few teachers had misconceptions about the programme (c.f. pp.213-216) and some teachers felt uncomfortable teaching the programme because they were unfamiliar with the curriculum (c.f. p.198). Teachers themselves should also have sufficient time to acquaint themselves with the theory behind the LDEP. They should be made aware of the reasons for grammar being taught explicitly and the ways in which the teaching of grammar under LDEP is different from the conventional mode of teaching grammar. With a greater understanding of the mode of teaching grammar and with relevant resources being made available to them, the teachers may feel more comfortable teaching the lessons. If the teachers assume greater ownership of the teaching materials, it may follow that there would be greater understanding and appreciation of the explicit teaching of the materials. For instance, PowerPoint presentations of the explicit teaching materials could be less frequently used. Instead, teachers could have interactive lessons with their students, acting as
instructors as well as facilitators, in the learning of the grammar concepts. In addition, other modes of presenting the explicit teaching materials could be utilised. For example, in one of the lessons the clauses were taught by getting volunteers to come up to the front of the class and demonstrate the different clauses.

Because of the way the lesson was taught they were more interested. We had nine people to the front of the class holding different types of clauses, so in a way it was some sort of a demonstration that they enjoyed. They don’t like lessons where definitions are stated, whether on the whiteboard or PowerPoint slides and then asked to identify. They don’t seem to like that. I think they like movements.

(Teacher A, School 1)

2. **Inclusion of More Reinforcements**

Some teachers and students were of the opinion that there were too few reinforcements of taught concepts (c.f. pp.192 & 210). To facilitate long-term learning, more reinforcements should be included in the curriculum. In addition, these reinforcements should be in the form of activities, and not more explicit teaching or lectures. More explicit teaching might have the reverse effect of causing students to lose interest in the lessons (c.f. pp.210-211).

3. **Setting Ground Rules for Group Work**

Many students claimed that they learnt better from their peers (c.f. pp.201-202) and because of that, group work should continue to play a big role in the LDEP. However, some students reported that there had been abuses during the group work (c.f. p.211). Teachers should set ground rules to ensure that students do not take advantage of hard work of other students which may demoralise the hardworking students.

I don’t enjoy because the group work is not actually group work, only a few persons doing it.

(Student from Class 18, School 3)
The rules would also act as a safeguard to prevent excess socialising which would be detrimental to learning.

It’s their comfort zone… they like to talk, then never, you know, remember about the work we are supposed to do, until the teacher scolding us.

(Female student from Class 9, School 1)

Group work can also take up a lot of valuable teaching and learning time and therefore, it is important to set a schedule and keep to it.

If the class ain’t cooperative, right, then the teachers can’t get the class to go into, how do you say, groups fast enough, then there might not be much time for presentation and stuff.

(Female Student from Class 24, School 4)

Group work can lead to good learning experiences but it can also lead to anger and frustration because children have a strong sense of fair play. Therefore, it is important to have rules in place and inform the students of the group expectations before they begin working in groups.

4. **Develop the LDEP to Extend it over a School Year and Include More English Language Skills**

Due to the short duration of the current research the focus was on writing skills. The LDEP should be further developed to include the teaching of more English Language skills and extended to include the curriculum for the entire school year.

5. **Develop package of Resource Materials for the Teachers**

Some teachers had reported that they did not feel confident teaching under the LDEP because they were not familiar with the materials used or the methods of teaching employed during the programme (c.f. p.198). Developing a package of resource materials and having resource teachers to aid in orienting and acquainting the teachers with the LDEP would enable the teachers to approach teaching under the LDEP with more confidence.
Conclusion

Under the three main areas of the LDEP that were measured, namely writing skills, reading comprehension skills and the teaching of grammar concepts, there were positive outcomes. The experimental group of students improved in the writing skills assessment whereas the control group of students did not improve. Across differences of gender, school, class, stream and abilities, in general, there was improvement in the performances of the experimental group of students. In the reading comprehension skills assessment, the results of students with Grades A and B from Schools 3 and 4, and those of the Normal (Academic) class in School 1 were analysed. Again, the experimental group of students displayed greater improvement than the control group of students. Even within the sub-groups of gender, school, stream and ability, the experimental group of students improved more than the control group of students. The students and teachers also mentioned observing improvements in writing skills and literary analytical skills. Additionally, most students in the experimental group appeared to have grasped and applied some of the taught grammar concepts in their narratives. On the other hand, the students from the control group did not display any improvement in the area of “convention” in their writing. The teachers and students in the experimental group also reported that the students were applying grammar concepts when composing their narratives.

The teachers and students mentioned some weaknesses in the programme. The difficulty level of some of the lessons and problems encountered during the implementation of the programme were mentioned along with the lack of adequate reinforcements of the concepts taught. Some students found the teaching of the grammar concepts uninteresting, and some teachers also had reservations about the teaching of the grammar concepts. A further group of students reported disliking group work because group work processes were sometimes abused by students not doing the assigned work.
In light of the weaknesses mentioned by the participants, some improvements to the programme are suggested. Students and teachers should have more information about the programme, especially with regard to the teaching of grammar concepts. Teachers should have ample opportunity to get well-acquainted with the programme, the materials and modes of teaching the materials. There should also be ground rules for the group work and more reinforcements of the concepts should be included in the programme.

In the next and concluding chapter, the research is evaluated through assessing whether the research questions were answered. In addition, the practical and theoretical implications and limitations are covered. Recommended improvements to the research are also offered should future research be undertaken in this area of curriculum development. Finally, the significance of the research is discussed.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the key research questions that were raised in Chapter 1 are answered. These research questions are examined with reference to the quantitative and qualitative findings presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to discover if these questions were answered in the affirmative during the course of the research on the LDEP. In addition, the practical and theoretical implications of this research are considered. To what extent was the utilitarian aim of the research achieved? If there were any theoretical implications, were there any discrepancies between these theoretical and practical implications? Apart from the limitations of the research, proposed improvements are also suggested for future research endeavours in this area.

Figure 7.1 offers an overview of Chapter 7. As Figure 7.1 indicates, from the outcomes of the research, an attempt is made to answer the key research questions and the five sub-questions. Then, the practical implications of an curriculum initiative project which was conducted in naturalistic environments and studied as multiple site case studies are offered in the light of the findings. Aside from the practical implications, the implications of the LDEP as a theory pertaining to the teaching of English Language are examined (Figure 7.1). The practical and theoretical limitations of conducting the multiple site case studies as well as suggestions for improvements should future research in the area be undertaken are also offered at the end (Figure 7.1).
Outcomes from the Research

Answering Key Research Questions

Implications

Practical
Theoretical

Suggestions for future research

Limitations

Practical
Theoretical

Significance of the Study
Answering Key Research Questions

There are five sub-questions as well as a major research question that this research sought to answer (c.f. p.12). The major research question asks whether an integrated English language and literature curriculum would enhance the English Language skills of the students. Three of the sub-questions relate to whether teaching contextually and using a literature text to teach narrative writing skills and grammar would improve the writing skills of the students. The fourth sub-question asks whether reading comprehension skills would improve if a literature text is used to teach comprehension skills contextually. The final sub-question focuses on whether literary analysis is aided by the combined analysis of the language and content of the text.

In this section, evidence from the quantitative findings found in Chapter 4, the qualitative findings located in Chapter 5 as well as the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of the programme in Chapter 6 are combined to answer the major research questions and the sub-questions.

The five sub-questions which were generated from the major research question (c.f. p.12) are given below.

1. Are the students able to write more effective narratives if they use a given literature text as a model of a good narrative?

The literature text was an integral part of the LDEP. It was employed to highlight to the students the features of an effective narrative. One of the sub-questions relates to discovering if the use of the literature text as a tool to teach narrative writing skills was successful. The question is answered through the analysis of the quantitative data from the writing skills pre-test and post-test scores and surveys as well as the qualitative data from the interviews with the teachers and the small group of students from each of the experimental classes.

The students in the experimental group improved in the writing skills assessment while the students in the control group did not improve (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112).
The teachers who taught the experimental group of students observed improvements in the writing skills of the students (c.f. pp.184-185) while many of the students during the small group interviews were of the opinion that their writing skills had improved (c.f. pp.204-205). Additionally, some of these students in the experimental group also commented that the literature text helped them to better appreciate the different writing techniques used (c.f. pp.205-206). Schools 1, 3 and 4 did not have integrated English and Literature programmes yet many of the students of these schools mentioned that they preferred using the Literature text to the English textbook which included extracts, not complete stories (c.f. p.205). Some of the students from School 2, which had a literature-based English programme, also mentioned that analysing the literature text developed their understanding of how to use the different narrative writing techniques effectively (c.f. pp.206). Moreover, over 65% of the students who completed the survey reported understanding the elements of a story better under the LDEP (c.f. p.160). In understanding the elements of a story, through having the narrative writing features of the literature text highlighted, the students were better able to appreciate these features and apply them in their own pieces of writing (c.f. pp.204-206). These quantitative and qualitative findings are in accord with the suggestion of Marcus (1977) and Bakhtin (1981) that the literature text can aid the students in acquiring technical knowledge of a particular genre of writing.

The evidence presented in this section substantially supports the claim that students are able to write more effective narratives if they use a given literature text as a model of a good narrative.

2. Do students become better writers if they are taught contextually rather than in “bits and pieces”? 

Another aspect of the LDEP was the teaching of writing skills contextually with the aid of a literature text. By making use of the literature text as a holistic piece of work from which writing skills could be learned contextually, it was hoped that the writing skills of the students would improve as well. This question is
answered with the aid of the qualitative data consisting of the interviews with the teachers and students.

Through the LDEP, the students were taught skills contextually when they examined the literature text as a complete work instead of studying extracts of works. In analysing the text in its entirety, the students were able to read a story from the beginning to the end and identify all the narrative elements therein. Some of the teachers were of the opinion that teaching contextually through the literature text had helped the students to better understand the concepts taught (c.f. pp.185-186). Students offered various examples to demonstrate the usefulness of learning contextually (c.f. pp.205-206). By including in the lessons on the elements of a story exercises that required students to identify the fundamentals of narrative writing in the literature text, the students were able to see in a concrete way the effects of the different features of a narrative. It appears that learning about the elements of a narrative from the literature text had aided the students in transferring these concepts into their own writing. Some students reported considering the elements of a narrative when writing their own narratives (c.f. pp.204-205). The improvement that the students in the experimental group displayed appears to give credence to the calls made by Knoeller (2003) and Langer and Flihan (2000) to link reading with writing so as to improve writing skills.

Comments by the teachers and students on how the literature text had helped students improve their narrative writing skills are substantiated by the overall improvement in writing displayed by the students (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112). From these strands of evidence it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that learning writing skills in context from a complete work of literature aids the students in becoming better writers.

3. Are students able to produce a more grammatically accurate piece of writing if they are taught in context through a Literature text?

During the LDEP, the students were taught selected grammatical concepts through the literature text. It was hoped that through teaching these concepts in context by highlighting the manner in which these concepts are utilised in the
literature text, the students would begin to learn to employ these concepts in their own narratives. Teaching contextually also meant employing a utilitarian approach to the learning of the grammar concepts. This question is answered through the findings from the quantitative data comprising the writing pre-test and post-test scores and surveys as well as the qualitative data from the interviews with the teachers and students.

Apart from showing greater improvement in the category of “conventions” in the post-test from the students in the control group (c.f. pp.115-116), many of the students in the experimental group also mentioned in the surveys they completed that they had grasped at least three of the six concepts taught (c.f. p.159). Some of the teachers also mentioned during the concluding interviews that they saw a greater awareness of grammatical rules and a conscious effort being made by the students to incorporate in their writing at least some of the taught grammatical concepts (c.f. pp.189-190 & pp.185-186). In the small group interviews, some students stated that they paid greater attention to the grammatical aspect of their writing (c.f. pp.204-205). It appears that teaching grammar explicitly through the use of the literature text helped many of the students to grasp some of the grammatical concepts taught and to apply these concepts when writing their narratives.

The evidence presented in this section and in pp.235-240 substantiates the stance that the contextual teaching of grammar leads to the students producing a grammatically more accurate piece of writing.

4. Are students able to comprehend better if they are taught comprehension skills in context through a Literature text?

Through the literary analysis and analysis of the language of the literature text during the teaching of the writing skills, it was hoped that the comprehension skills of the students in the experimental group would improve. To discover if there was improvement in the reading comprehension skills of the experimental group of students, the quantitative data from the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test scores are examined.
With regard to students with PSLE English Grade A*, or close to it, it was found that the reading comprehension tests may not have been challenging enough for them. The inconsistent results of these high ability students may be due to the “ceiling effect” or the phenomenon of regression to the mean (c.f. pp.143). Thus, only the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test results of students with PSLE English Grades A, B and C from Schools 3 and 4 were analysed (c.f. pp.144-145). However, there were too few students with Grade C and the results of the students were excluded from the discussion of the findings. The experimental group of students from Schools 3 and 4 performed better than the control group of students from the same schools (c.f. Table 4.25, p.146). Among the students with PSLE English Grades A and B from Schools 3 and 4, generally the experimental group performed better than the control group (c.f. Table 4.26, p.148). When the results were analysed by gender, it was found that the boys and girls in the experimental group performed better than their counterparts in the control group (c.f. Table 4.27, p.149).

The experimental group of students with Grades A and B had improved more than the control group of students with similar grades in the reading comprehension skills assessment. The greater improvement displayed by this group of students in the experimental group indicate that the experimental group of students may have benefited from the merging of the learning of writing skills with reading skills and the study of literature. Under the LDEP, reading skills were not explicitly taught but were expected to flow from the literary analysis and the teaching of writing skills. This finding agrees with the suggestion made by Langer (1999) and Langer and Flihan (2000) that combining the teaching of reading and writing skills along with literary analysis would aid in improving reading comprehension.

The claim that there is improvement in the comprehension skills of the students taught comprehension skills contextually with the aid of the literature text is substantiated by the evidence presented in this section and in pp.232-235.
5. Are students better able to critically analyse a Literature text if, in addition to content, they analyse the language of the text as well?

Under the LDEP, the literature text was also utilised as a tool to teach language skills. It was hoped that the integration of the study of literature and the teaching of language skills would aid in developing the literary analytical skills of the students as well. The quantitative data from the survey as well as the qualitative data from interviews are used to discover if the literary analytical skills of the students improved as well.

During Literature lessons the focus is usually on the analysis of the narrative in the literature text. The writing craft of the author is often not analysed. In the LDEP, the students were led to explore the techniques of the craft used by the author in creating the narrative. According to about seventy percent of the students surveyed, the literature text helped them in the analysis of the story (c.f. p.160). Teachers also felt that the students were more critical in their analysis (c.f. pp.187-188). The LDEP, by combining the study of Literature with English language, appears to have aided the students to critically analyse the literature text as reported by participant students and their teachers.

The survey findings and comments by the teachers during the interviews are persuasive in supporting the position that students are better able to critically analyse a literature text if they analyse the content and language of the literature text.

Having answered the sub-questions, the major research question is next answered.

Does an integrated English language and literature curriculum enhance the English Language skills of the students?

The major research question relates to the integrated programme as a whole. As an integrated English Language and Literature programme, did the LDEP aid in developing the English Language skills of the students? In answering the question, conclusions drawn from the responses to the sub-questions are
utilised. These responses include all the findings from the quantitative and the qualitative data. The quantitative data comprise writing and reading comprehension pre-test and post-test results and survey findings while the qualitative data consist of interviews, log book entries, field notes and observational notes.

From the answers to the research sub-questions, it is apparent that the experimental group of students had improved over the control group in the reading comprehension and writing skills assessments (c.f. pp.250-255). In addition, teachers and students also reported an improvement in literary analysis (c.f. p.255). The affirmative answers to the research sub-questions indicate that the students from the experimental group had improved in English Language skills through integration when the literature text was used to teach language skills. More detailed conclusions from the findings are presented in the next paragraph.

The students from the four schools produced better crafted narratives in the post-test (c.f. Table 4.14, p.130). Most of the students also improved compared to their counterparts in the control groups (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112). Though School 3 did not fare as well as the students from Schools 1, 2 and 4, the students from School 3 nevertheless showed signs of improvement in the post-test over the pre-test whereas the students in control group from their school did not improve at all (c.f. p.135). The improvements displayed by most of the students in the experimental group were apparent even across the various sub-groups based on the mediating variables mentioned in the next paragraph. Since the control group had negative improvement scores, the writing pre-test and post-test results of the group were not analysed further.

Among the sub-group based on gender, boys and girls improved in the writing skills test (c.f. Table 4.10, p.124). Students with different PSLE English grades, indicating differing language abilities, also improved irrespective of the PSLE English grades (c.f. Table 4.8, p.122). Likewise, the boys with different PSLE English grades improved (c.f. Table 4.11, p.125) and so did the girls with PSLE English grades A*, A and B (c.f. Table 4.12, p.126).
The Normal (Academic) class improved in the writing skills assessment with a large improvement score ES of 0.88 (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). Most of the students in the Express classes also improved in their writing (c.f. Table 4.16, p.134). There was improvement irrespective of the styles of different teachers. The experimental classes improved in the writing skills assessment whereas the control classes taught by the same teachers did not improve (c.f. Table 4.17, p.135). Within all the sub-groups, created on the basis of the different variables, the experimental group of students improved in the writing skills assessment. Not only did the experimental group of students improve and the control group did not improve, but students within each sub-group in the experimental group displayed improvement in the writing skills test. The findings indicate that the integrated English and Literature programme aided the experimental group of students to improve in the writing skills, irrespective of the variations in ability, streams, gender, school and class cultures and teaching styles.

From the perceptions of the students of their own performances in their writing assignments over the course of the LDEP, most of them felt that they had shown some improvement in their writing. In the survey completed by the students in the experimental group (c.f. p.160) and from the interviews conducted with the small groups of students from all the experimental classes in the four schools (c.f. pp.204-205) many of the students felt that they had improved in some aspects of narrative writing. Similarly, some of the teachers also felt that the students had improved in their narrative writing skills (c.f. pp.184-185).

In the reading comprehension assessment, there might have been a ceiling effect for the students more fluent in the English Language. Generally, these students in the experimental and control groups did not display much improvement in the post-test. The reading comprehension pre-test and post-test were uniform tests with just four, out of twenty-five questions, being higher order questions in each test (c.f. Appendix 11). It is probable that most of the students who were already competent in reading comprehension did not find the tests challenging. Thus, the results of the Express students in Schools 1 and 2 and those of students with PSLE English grade A* from Schools 3 and 4 were excluded (c.f. pp.142-145). When the reading comprehension results of students
with Grades A, B and C from Schools 3 and 4 and the results of the students from the Normal (Academic) class from School 1 were analysed, it was determined that the experimental group performed better than the control group across the two schools and across sub-groups of different variables (c.f. pp.232-234). These variables included gender, PSLE English grades and schools. Additionally, the Normal (Academic) class achieved a large improvement score ES of 1.10 in the reading comprehension assessment (c.f. Table 4.33, p.156). Furthermore, it should be remembered that reading comprehension was not explicitly taught in the LDEP but was anticipated as a flow-on effect of the explicitly taught writing skills programme and the literary analysis carried out during some of the lessons.

In summary, it appears that the integrated LDEP was a contributory factor in the improvement registered by the students in their writing skills. The LDEP also appears to have contributed to the improvement displayed by students from the Normal (Academic) class and the Express students with Grades A, B and C in their reading comprehension skills. Even though the programme ran for a very short period of time and many topics were covered, it appears to have had a positive impact on the students. Overall, an integrated English and Literature curriculum appears to have advanced the writing and reading comprehension skills of the students.

The evidence supports the claim that teaching contextually and utilising the literature text to highlight features of an effective narrative and to teach grammar would improve the writing skills of the students. Additionally, reading comprehension skills appear to be enhanced through the use of the literature text as a tool to teach these skills contextually. There is also persuasive evidence to demonstrate that analysing the content and the language of the literature text improves the ability of the students to critically analyse the text. Finally, the evidence substantiates the contention that the English Language skills of the students are further developed through an integrated language and literature curriculum. Thus, there are strong indications from the evidences derived from the quantitative (c.f. Chapter 4) and qualitative (c.f. Chapter 5) findings and from the conclusions reached in Chapter 6 to suggest that the use of the literature text
aids in the learning of writing and reading comprehension skills because content and language are taught in context and in conjunction with each other.

**Practical Implications**

In this section the practical implications of conducting a multiple site curriculum initiative project are examined. In any school system within a district, region or country, there are many variables to consider. In order to discover if a curriculum would be successful in teaching the requisite skills, a curriculum development project must be undertaken and tested in naturalistic conditions where many variables could play an influential role in the success or failure of the project.

If the curriculum does not succeed, then the causes could be innumerable and the lack of controlled conditions would mean there may be little chance of discovering a cause for the failure. However, from the start the intent was not to discover under what conditions the curriculum would work. Rather, the aim was to ascertain whether the curriculum was strong enough pedagogically to enhance the language skills of various students, in different schools that included a diversity of norms and teachers with differing teaching styles.

In being able to describe the improvements of students across a wide diversity of naturally occurring situations, the research intent was achieved. The curriculum was tested in naturalistic conditions. The curriculum was taught by different teachers, to students of differing streams and abilities and in schools with different working styles and needs. There were control groups of students in three schools which followed the usual school curriculum. Comparison with these control groups of students also enabled the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the LDEP.

In most schools in Singapore, class sizes are rather large with each class accommodating close to forty students. Classes include students of varying language abilities. Therefore, testing a standardised curriculum, the LDEP, in diverse conditions would increase the applicability of the findings and perhaps, be of use to more schools. The curriculum, since it appeared to have improved
the writing and reading comprehension skills of most of the students, regardless of gender, language ability, stream or school may well succeed in other schools as well. Since the texts that were used for the project were chosen by the schools the LDEP demonstrates that it is adaptable to multiple texts and is not dependent on any particular text. The success of this project should be a strong encouragement to other educators to try the curriculum in other schools, and preferably for a longer period.

**Theoretical Implications**

In addition to practical implications, there are also theoretical implications. The research was based on the theory that an integrated Literature and English programme that includes the explicit teaching of grammar would aid in the development of the English Language skills of the students. The literature text used as a tool could be used to teach language skills contextually, thereby linking reading with the acquisition of language skills.

The success of the curriculum may give credence to the belief of other researchers that there should be a more direct inter-relatedness between the teaching of writing and reading and the contextual teaching of language and grammar (Langer & Flihan 2000; Shafer 2001; Smoot 2001). Similarly, the LDEP also draws on the advantages suggested by advocates of learning through process (Daiker, Kerek & Morenberg 1990; Shafer 2001) and those who espouse the virtues of teaching explicitly (Fox 1998; Hagemann 2003). The success of the LDEP indicates that the explicit and implicit teaching of skills can be effectively combined to advance the learning of language skills. The combination of explicit teaching of skills and then getting students to apply those skills appear to have worked in improving the writing and reading comprehension skills of many students.

**Practical Limitations**

There were some practical limitations to this research. The researcher – and thus, the research – was limited by her own resources of time and availability. Other limitations were a consequence of conducting a curriculum initiative project
in naturalistic environments in four diverse schools with many variables. There were also constraints that arose from adjusting and adapting to the needs and requirements of the individual schools.

A description of the limitations is presented below.

1. There were limited time and resources available to the researcher in the conduct of the research. The researcher was working alone in schools that could afford only a limited time to complete the programme. One consequence of the time limitation was the short period of time the researcher could spend with the teachers from each of the four schools. As a result, she left it to the teachers to get back to her if they had any difficulty in the implementation of the LDEP. As it happened, many teachers did not contact the researcher to request for assistance, and the researcher became aware of some problems only during school visits and interviews at the end of the programme. However, studying four diverse schools as case studies increased the utility of the findings in that it may lead to wider contextual generalisation and generate greater interest than if the implications of the LDEP on one case study was explored (c.f. pp.63-64). Moreover, the reduced contact time with the teachers also ensured that the teachers had full ownership over their classes and acted as colleagues in the research process (c.f. p.67).

2. The original design provided for in-service preparation of the teachers. The preference of the teachers was to omit the in-service preparation since the teachers were also under time constraints as they had school commitments to fulfil even during the holidays. Though an attempt was made to include comprehensive briefings before the implementation of the LDEP, it became apparent during the implementation of the programme that these briefings were inadequate. If a workshop on the programme was held before the implementation, more of the teachers would have been better prepared to teach the programme. At the same time, the current research being an curriculum initiative project was viewed as part of an evolving process of understanding the effectiveness of the LDEP as
an integrated English and Literature programme (c.f. p.55). Practical constraints were in fact beneficial as they allowed for a better appreciation of the inherent merits of the LDEP. In spite of the constraints, generally the experimental group of students improved in their writing and reading comprehension skills (c.f. Table 4.3, p.112, Table 4.25, p.146).

3. There was the possibility that the texts selected by the schools might have inherent limitations. For instance, the content may be unappealing to many of the students, and that could impede the learning of the different skills. The selected texts may also not be good models of effective writing. In the two co-educational schools the stories appealed to girls more than the boys. In School 1 one of the stories appealed to only half the male students, and in School 4, the first story appealed to about half the male students and the second appealed to a quarter of the male students (c.f. pp.163-164). Yet, the male students registered a larger improvement score Effect Size than the girls in the writing skills assessment (c.f. Table 4.10, p.124) and the male students in School 4 improved by a large improvement score ES of 0.92 in the reading comprehension assessment (c.f. Table 4.27, p.149). The LDEP appears to have been successful in improving language skills even when the literature texts may have had inherent limitations.

4. The variability within classes and across schools in this small sample could have made the analysis of the findings difficult if there were inconsistent outcomes across the schools or even within a school. There were differences in the findings of two of the classes and School 3 compared to the findings of the other classes and schools. However, there were similarities between the two classes as many of the students in these two classes were unmotivated and inattentive in class (c.f. pp.217-219). With regard to School 3, there were problems with the implementation of the LDEP in the school that were not encountered by the other three schools (c.f. pp.195-197). Theoretical replications may be generated from the similarities between the two classes and the unique problems encountered in School 3. It may be hypothesised that lack of
motivation, inattentiveness during lessons and implementation problems that led to inappropriate sequencing of lessons and inadequate preparedness of the teachers to teach under the programme (c.f. pp.217-219 & pp.195-197) could adversely affect the effectiveness of the LDEP.

5. The period of about five to six weeks spent in each of the seventeen experimental classes may have been shorter than desirable. The short time frame meant that there was insufficient time for more reinforcements to be included because a large number of concepts was covered within the given time span. However, though a longer period would have been preferable, the short period in the current research did not adversely affect the research. The LDEP dealt with the teaching of particular skills and only these skills were assessed or evaluated. Thus, in the case of the current research, the issue of a short time span did not prove to be detrimental to the conclusions drawn about the learning of those skills. Time period may be more relevant in a study on whether there is long-term retention of taught concepts but this is outside the scope of the current research.

6. There was also the possibility that since the research was being conducted in multiple sites with very different characteristics there would be no literal or theoretical replications (Yin 1994). However, the outcomes from the research yielded literal replications (c.f. p.231, p.235).

7. The different schools had different needs and adjustments had to be made. Only one of the schools had an integrated programme where the same teacher taught the English and Literature components under English Language. In the other three schools, in most cases, different teachers taught English and Literature. Having two teachers to teach an integrated programme such as the LDEP presented some difficulties for the schools and the researcher. To aid the teachers, steps were taken to differentiate the English and Literature lessons in the lesson outlines and plans of these three schools. In two of the schools without an integrated
programme coordinators were appointed to ensure that there was coordination between the English and Literature teachers.

There were practical limitations in the current research. However, in the current research because its design incorporated elements of action research with multiple cases these limitations might be viewed as strengths (c.f. p.13).

**Theoretical Limitations**

There were a number of theoretical limitations to the current curriculum initiative project undertaken in multiple sites. There was the problem of reconciling the conflicts that could arise from the many variables found in the multiple sites. Another limitation was related to the discrepancies in outcomes and discovering the reasons for these discrepancies. Finally, if no reasons could be discovered for the discrepancies, there was a possibility that no theory could be created from the research.

The theoretical limitations are elaborated upon below:

1. One of the limitations included reconciling the many differences and conflicts in the pertinent variables. For instance, when findings from the results of the writing skills assessment were analysed from the perspective of gender, the girls from the two co-educational schools and a girls’ school were grouped together. However, the outcome of the improvement score Effect Size of the students from the girls’ school was lower than the Effect Sizes of the other schools. Therefore, during the analyses it was decided that the performance of all the girls as one sub-unit of gender would be analysed. Then, a second sub-unit was created to differentiate the performances of the girls from the co-educational schools from the performance of the girls in the girls’ school. The broader analyses prevented a hasty conclusion being drawn based on gender. Instead of basing the conclusion merely on gender, other factors were taken into account (c.f. pp.195-197).
2. The second challenge lay in explaining any possible discrepancies in outcomes between schools or classes. Since there were many variables, it would be difficult to decide on which variable or variables might have influenced the difference in the outcomes. For example, Schools 1, 2 and 4 registered similar improvements but the improvement achieved by the students in School 3 was significantly lower. An attempt was made to answer the question by examining the unique implementation difficulties encountered by the teachers in School 3 (c.f. pp.195-197).

3. The final challenge rested on the premise that if there were discrepancies to which answers could not be easily sought, there could be no literal or theoretical replication. Then, the results would be pertinent only to the individual cases and would have no significance for any other schools. Fortunately, in the research on the LDEP, there were more similarities than discrepancies and an attempt could be made to theorise about the differences whenever discrepancies did crop up. Within classes with discrepancies there were similarities. At the same time between these classes and the other experimental classes there were differences.

**Suggestions for future research**

In this section, some suggestions are offered for future research on the LDEP. Since many of the students in the experimental group in the four schools displayed improvement in the writing skills and reading comprehension tests, in spite of the uncontrolled variables and limitations, there appears to be merit in the LDEP. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to conduct research in this area in other schools for a longer period of time. The suggestions offered below take into account the limitations experienced during the course of this research so that there may be fewer limitations when future research into the LDEP is conducted.

The following suggestions are offered when future research on the LDEP is undertaken:
1. Some of the teachers commented that their students had difficulty grasping some of the taught concepts (c.f. p.191 & p.199). Teachers should be actively supported to adapt the curriculum where necessary. For instance, if they observe their students experiencing difficulty when learning a particular concept, they should be encouraged to include more exercises and more explanations. The explanations, in the form of explicit teaching, should however, not take more than fifteen minutes of the class time since some students had complained about the long duration of the explicit teaching (c.f. p.208). Instead, more time should be spent on teaching the concepts through activity-based work as discontent was expressed over the repeated explicit teaching of concepts (c.f. pp.210-211).

2. Some teachers had reported that there were too few reinforcements of taught concepts since too many concepts were taught during a short time span (c.f. p.192). The five to six week programme should therefore be extended to at least a term (ten weeks) or even a semester (half a year), thereby allowing for more time for the teaching of the concepts. At the same time, it would be possible to include more reinforcements of the concepts taught. Moreover, more literary analysis of the literature text could be included as well which would counter the objection that some topics were treated superficially (c.f. p.193).

3. More language skills should be taught and adequate test instruments for language skills other than writing should be included. Due to the short duration of the research, the focus was mainly on the writing skills. More lesson time should be given to the reading comprehension skills component especially with regard to teaching students more skilled in reading comprehension. The performances of students more competent in reading comprehension could not be assessed because of an inadequate test instrument for high ability students (c.f. pp.142-143). Additionally lessons on oral communication and vocabulary should also be included and assessed to discover the effectiveness of the LDEP in improving the skills in these areas.
4. It would be preferable to extend the research on the LDEP to cover the curriculum of a single year. Other levels in the secondary school should also be included in the programme. By implementing the LDEP across all the levels in a secondary school for a whole year it may be possible to fully assess the effectiveness of the LDEP as a language instruction model for secondary school students.

5. There are advantages to including a broader range of student ages. Apart from the Secondary One classes, the students from the other levels, Secondary Two to Four or Five, could become participants to see if the programme would work for them as well. There was a suggestion from one of the teachers that the LDEP might work even better with older students (c.f. p.195). Moreover, extending to the other levels would mean that there will be continuity to the LDEP. When students move from Secondary One to Two, it would be beneficial if they could continue with the programme in Secondary Two.

6. The survey responses of the students indicate that some of the texts may not have been popular with some students in particular the male students (c.f. pp.163-164). A few teachers also commented on disadvantages of using some of the texts selected by the schools (c.f. 199). It might be preferable to carefully choose the literature texts so as to take into account the preferences of the students and the utility of the texts in teaching the selected concepts. With regard to the literature texts chosen for the LDEP, they were selected beforehand by the respective schools even before these schools had a chance to look at the curriculum. The selected texts should be age-appropriate, interest the students and be good models of effective writing in terms of the language usage and writing genre being taught.

Additionally, the study of the implementation of a uniform curriculum in diverse schools with students of various abilities has generated recommendations on the ways in which the LDEP can be further developed. The teachers and the
researcher have suggested significant improvements to the LDEP itself (c.f. pp.198-200, pp.243-245). These planned improvements include:

- Modifying the curriculum, where necessary, to better suit the individual needs of the learners as some teachers reported that there were students who had difficulty grasping some of the taught concepts (c.f. pp.198-199),
- Including more reinforcements of the concepts taught through additional exercises and activities (c.f. p.199, p.244),
- Making the overall objective and sub-objectives of the programme and lessons respectively clear to the students (c.f. p.243),
- Ensuring explicit teaching does not take up more than fifteen minutes of lesson time (c.f. p.208),
- Diversifying the explicit teaching component so that varied approaches are used (c.f. p.244),
- Ensuring that long periods include interactive activities (c.f. p.214), and
- Setting ground rules and expectations for group work (c.f. pp.244-245).

Significance of the Study

This research on the LDEP is significant for a number of reasons. It was conducted in multiple sites without manipulating any of the variables. In other words, the curriculum was tested in naturalistic conditions in four schools. In spite of the existence of so many variables, the curriculum succeeded in improving the language skills of many of the students in the experimental group. The LDEP appears to have merit as a curriculum since it was effective in developing language skills.

As a curriculum, the LDEP brings the literary text and the student together. The central principle of the LDEP is that the literature text as a model of communication in action assumes the role of an expert. The teacher acts as a facilitator to highlight where there is merit in the text in terms of the language and literary analysis. In being made aware of these merits, students would be able to transfer what they have learnt into their narratives. An additional consequence of interacting with the text is that the student could also become a better reader.
The aim of this research was to discover if the students could be led, explicitly and implicitly, to make the appropriate learning links with the text and be instructed to use the text as a model to aid in their own journey in becoming an effective reader and writer. By implementing the LDEP in four different schools, the researcher also hoped to discover if this form of curriculum could succeed in the real world where the presence of many variables within and between schools could be a daunting task for any researcher who wants to conduct a research into a curriculum initiative.

In the current research, in all four schools, the experimental group of students improved in the writing skills assessment (c.f. p.112). In Schools 3 and 4 the experimental group of students also improved in the reading comprehension skills assessment (c.f. p.146). The findings and analysis in Chapters 4, 5 & 6 support the claim that the LDEP could likely succeed in other schools as well since it had been tested under naturalistic, and not controlled, conditions and appeared to have succeeded in imparting writing and reading comprehension skills to the different sub-categories of students in diverse schools.

Many of the students, over various intersections of gender and skill level, appear to have internalised the concepts and learnt more effectively when they were taught through the LDEP. Thus, teachers have at their disposal a curriculum that appears to have been an effective mode of teaching English Language skills to the Secondary One students in Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Singapore.

The LDEP has succeeded with the Secondary One students, in spite of the many different conditions found in a naturalistic group of classes in four different types of schools in Singapore. It is recommended as the next step that the programme be tested in a broader context to discover if more students might be aided in their development as readers and writers through the LDEP.
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## APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1a

Preliminary Survey
Survey of the Sec. 1 English Language and Literature Programmes

School: _________________________________________________________

Person Completing this Survey: ________________________________

Position: ________________________________

Email address: ___________________________

The following questions pertain to the English and Literature programmes that you offer to your Sec. 1 students. Please reflect on the practice and the recommended programme in your school when completing the survey.

Please circle the appropriate answer or insert arrows where required.

1) Circle the components that you teach under English Language.
   
   Comprehension  Composition  Vocabulary
   Grammar  Oral Communication  Literature

2) Are there any other components that you teach under English Language?
   Please name and describe them.
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

3) Do you have an integrated English and Literature Programme?
   Yes  No

4) Do you believe that English and Literature should be integrated?
   Yes  No

   Explain why you think they should, or should not, be integrated.
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
The second part of the survey relates to the stimulus material used to teach English Language components.

For the following, please draw arrows to show which of the component/s you use to teach another component?

**Example:** If you make use of Comprehension passages to stimulate the teaching of composition and to prompt Oral Communication exercises as well as make use of themes taken from Literature texts to stimulate lessons pertaining to Oral Communication, then you will graphically present the information as shown in the next column:

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<th>6)</th>
<th>7)</th>
<th>8)</th>
<th>9)</th>
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<td><strong>VOCABULARY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ORAL COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
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5) Do you use a textbook to teach English?
   Yes    No

6) If yes, what is the title and who is the author of the textbook?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

7) If Literature is taught in Sec. 1, please name the texts used.
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

8) Would you be interested in finding out more about this research?
   Yes    No

Once again, all the help rendered and time taken out of your busy schedule to complete this survey is very much appreciated. Thank you.
APPENDIX 1b

Results of the Analysis of the Preliminary Survey

The following results were obtained from a preliminary survey conducted on 165 schools.

21 schools responded. 5 schools stated that they have an integrated English and Literature Programme and among those schools, the number of components that were combined was 4, 8, 8, 20 and 28.

The number of components that the 21 schools combined is shown in the chart below:

<table>
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<td>1</td>
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<table>
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<th>Combinations of Literature and…</th>
<th>No. of schools with the combinations</th>
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<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 1c

What English teachers say about the Integration of English and Literature

Why English and Literature Should be Integrated...
1) Aids in the learning of language.
2) Strengthens language skills.
3) Makes EL learning more interesting.
4) Provides rich resource for learning the language.
5) Expose child to the complexities of the language and hence, enrich the child's education.
6) Synergy - links very closely aligned.
7) Thin Line separating the two subjects.
8) Excellent base to start EL lessons (for basic comprehension, inferential meaning, vocabulary, etc.).
9) Appreciation of language through literature texts.
10) Artificial to teach literature appreciation without going into technicalities of the text - need 'both' to appreciate the texts.
11) Provides a more holistic development of the learning of the language.
12) Complement each other.
13) Literature promotes reading and increases vocabulary, will help in comprehension as well.
14) Themes from Literature can be used for the teaching of text types.
15) Though English and Literature is not integrated, the English textbook contains text-type based units which include poetry/drama and prose.
16) Both overlap in content and skills taught at many points.
17) Literature is language, and integrating it will get students exposed to more texts that use different text types.
18) Literature will add colour to EL by showing students how the text can be appreciated.

Why English and Literature Should not be Integrated...
1) Not all EL teachers are comfortable teaching Literature.
2) Too much emphasis on technicalities does not promote a deep appreciation of the text.
3) Teachers trained to teach English may not have the 'background' (knowledge) to teach Literature to facilitate the integration.
4) Staffing constraints and comfort levels with literature-based texts and activities.
5) Not all EL teachers are literature trained.
6) Literature skills (text based questions) need time.
7) Danger of Literature being subsumed in English especially since few eventually take Literature at 'O' levels.
8) Literature is a very difficult subject for the boys.
## Sample Lesson Outline

### School 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>35-min periods</th>
<th>EL/LIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-test</strong></td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-test (Written Expression)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-test</strong></td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-test (Reading Comprehension)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prose (Narrative)</strong></td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Stories</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Analysis</strong></td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Shakespeare and Merchant of Venice</td>
<td></td>
<td>LIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Shakespearean Comedies and Merchant of Venice (Group work)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clauses</strong></td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clauses, Phrases (PowerPoint presentation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group work (identifying the clauses, phrases) – refer to handout</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group work (use of clauses and phrases to create intended effect, create a passage with clauses, phrases, specify them and the intended effect)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation of group work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Analysis</strong></td>
<td>10 min</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme/Conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>LIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 min.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Guided class discussion on how the author develops theme, conflict and plot.</td>
<td></td>
<td>LIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of the devices used by the author to develop the theme, conflict and plot.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Structure</strong></td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Simple, Compound, Complex)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refer to Chapters 6 &amp; 7. Identify the different types of sentences in page 59, paragraph 2 and page 60, the final two paragraphs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>E(Wk 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time (min)</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Go over the sentence structure, pp. 59 (paragraph 2) &amp; 60 (final two paragraphs)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Class Discussion on the effect of different sentence structures on the piece of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Role-playing – changing the sentence structure to create different effects (whole class participation) • Individual work (homework)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td>• Creating an Effect • Effective Use of Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer feedback on homework assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Go over how sentences help to create an effect (PowerPoint Presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Group work – Choose any page from Chapter 10 &amp; 11 and rewrite to show how a different sentence structure can make the writing ineffective • Group sharing of their work (commenting on changed sentence structure and their effect on the writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td>• Character Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Group work – students draw representations of the major characters from Chapters 1 &amp; 3 and discuss how the drawings correspond to the characters found in the book. • Groups share in class what they have come up with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Class Discussion on how the characters have influenced the story. • Individually the students write down how each character has shaped the story, and how each is important to the story (up to Chapter 12). Individual work to be collected at the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 min.</strong></td>
<td>• Characterisation • Creating an Effect • Effective Use of Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Each group is given a character to work on. The members are the experts on the character. They are given the task of changing the character traits of the character, and thus, changing the manner in which the character influences the story. • Each expert from each group joins other experts from other groups and thus, they create a new group. In this group, they recreate the story. (There will be some members of the group that will form the ‘audience’.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The groups present the changed storylines. • The ‘audience’ judges which story is plausible and which isn’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>35 min.</strong></td>
<td>• Theme, Conflict • Written Comprehension and Literary Knowledge of the chapter • The class forms a circle. The teacher starts passing a ball or any other object around while music is being played. When the music stops, the student left with the ball/other object starts the ball rolling by connecting the conflict with the theme found in the story up to Chapter 12. After that, the others join in by dissenting or agreeing and elaborating on what the student had said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative Writing</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Plotting the Outline (Creating a plot, theme, conflict, and characters)</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>Students return to their seats and answer a worksheet assessing them on their comprehension and literary knowledge of Chapters 1 to 12. <strong>EL (Wk 2)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Students work individually on coming up with their outlines for their narrative pieces of writing. <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Role-playing (giving feedback in a sensitive manner) <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group work – in groups, students share their outlines and get feedback <strong>EL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Tenses</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Effect of Tenses on Storyline</strong></td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>Students work individually on coming up with their outlines for their narrative pieces of writing <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Role-playing (giving feedback in a sensitive manner) <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group work – in groups, students share their outlines and get feedback <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tenses</strong> (PowerPoint presentation) <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Identify the different tenses found in pg. 71, paragraph 7 to the first paragraph of pg. 72 (until “… I have the proof from you.”). <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Think-Pair-Share – They share in what way/s the tenses help in the telling of the selected passage <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Class Discussion – Students are given handouts in which the tenses have been changed. By referring to the original passage, there is a class discussion on how the storyline has also changed. <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Individually, the students refer to another handout in which the tenses are altered so that they are grammatically incorrect. By not referring to the original they correct them and give explanations of why the tenses are incorrect in the original handout and why they were corrected. <strong>EL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Rising Action, Climax, Resolution (PowerPoint presentation) <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group work – Identifying the rising action, climax and resolution in Chapters 14 &amp; 16 through role-playing. <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Class discussion on the rising action, climax and resolution and a critique on how effectively these elements are used in Chapters 14 &amp; 16. <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Setting, Mood and Tone (PowerPoint presentation) <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group work – In groups, the students have the option of presenting the setting, mood and tone graphically, or through song, music or poetry (Chapter 17). <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group presentation <strong>LIT</strong>&lt;br&gt;Individual the students work on their narrative pieces by considering the setting they want and the mood and tone that they want to achieve. <strong>EL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives and Adverbs</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation on adjectives and adverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Students refer to pg. 81, paragraph 2 to pg. 83, paragraph 5, and they are to identify the adjectives and adverbs. Go over the answers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL (Wk 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Analysis</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Students refer to handout which has the adjectives and adverbs removed. Then, they refer to the corresponding pages, 85 &amp; 86, and analyse the effects that the adjectives and adverbs have on the piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Class discussion of how the adjectives and adverbs did, or did not, enhance the selected section of the writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Analysis</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Define simile, metaphor and personification. Place pictures on the board and call on students at random to describe the pictures using a simile, metaphor or personification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Devices (Metaphor, Simile, Personification)</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Refer to selected passages in pages 87 and 88 (or Act V Scene 1), and individually, the students are to identify the literary devices used. Go over the answers and at random, choose students to ask what type of imagery is created by the use of such devices.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Group work – students are to identify the literary devices and elaborate on the imageries that are created.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Writing</td>
<td>25 min.</td>
<td>Group work – reading of drafts and receiving peer feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-editing &amp; Peer-editing symbols</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>The pieces of work are displayed on the wall and the students move around, looking at them. Remind the students to bring in their first drafts for the next lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving feedback on drafts</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>Peer-editing – PowerPoint presentation. Handouts on peer-editing symbols are given out. Expectations for the final draft are expressed and instruction sheet for the final draft is handed out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for the final draft</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Writing</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Group work – students work individually on making changes to their drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Analysis</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>As a class, overall themes found in chapters 1 to 17 are discussed. Students also discuss what they did or didn’t like in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Themes</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Comprehension</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>Students complete the written comprehension and literary analysis individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>EL (Wk 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Expression</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX 2b
SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

SCHOOL 2

LESSON PLANS

(For inclusion in this Appendix minor additions and revisions were made to the original lesson plans offered to the participating teacher so as to ensure clarity and smooth transition from one appendix to the other. The term ‘lesson plan’ is inserted and the term ‘Appendix’ in the original is substituted with ‘Appendage’.)

WEEKS ONE – TWO (I)

PERIOD ONE (Lesson Plan 1)

Objective:
- The students will be assessed on their reading and writing skills through a pre-test.
PERIOD TWO (Lesson Plan 2)

Objectives:
- The students will identify the characteristics of a short story, in general, and science fiction, specifically.
- They will also identify features that they find appealing about robots.

Resources:
1 large piece of mahjong or butcher paper, 4 or 5 different coloured markers, masking tape/magnetic buttons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives for the unit and the period.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Mahjong paper, masking tape/magnetic buttons, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. With the help of masking tape or magnetic tabs, put up on the whiteboard a piece of mahjong paper, headlined ‘Short Stories’. Place the markers on the ledge of the whiteboard. Explain to the students that they are to write down what they think a short story should contain. Invite the students to come up and individually note down the elements.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Go over what the students have written. As each element is read out ask if anyone disagrees with what is written, and if yes, why.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Include features that they may have missed out (refer to Appendage 2), and ask students to come up with what they think are distinctive features of a science fiction.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Divide the class into 2 large groups of robots and humans. The robots are to come up with reasons why robots would be beneficial to humanity, and the humans are to refute these reasons. They are given 5 min. to think of their cases. Then, the robots start off by forwarding their case, after which the humans rebut. Each time a case is forwarded or rebutted, no more than a min. should be taken.</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 2

Elements of a Short-Story
PERIOD THREE (Lesson Plan 3)

Objectives:
- The students will identify clauses and phrases and understand their usefulness.
- They will also use clauses and phrases effectively in their own piece of writing.

Resources:
'I, Robot', handouts for homework assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inform students that they are to take notes of the PowerPoint presentation.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation (Appendage 3a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Inform students that they are to take notes of the PowerPoint presentation.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go over clauses and phrases (PowerPoint presentation – refer to Appendage 3a).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ask students to refer to paragraphs 1 to 3, page 2 of ‘Robbie’ and identify the</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Go over the answers. Invite students to comment on the effect that the clauses and</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Example of effects: to clarify, elaborate or explain further. An independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask students to get into their respective groups that they were in during the</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>clause may also be used to create tension or evoke surprise in the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Groups present by reading out their passages. After each group presents, the other</td>
<td>20 min</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The students are given their homework assignment.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Handout – Appendage 3b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 3a
(The slides on 'Clauses and Phrases,' offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

CLAUSE
It is part of a sentence and contains a subject and information about the subject.

There are two kinds of clauses, namely,

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
An independent clause can stand on its own; it is a simple sentence that contains a complete thought.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE
A dependent clause cannot stand on its own; it is a fragment or a sentence fragment that does not contain a complete thought and therefore needs an independent clause to make sense.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES
Examples: I went to the market. and I bought a bag of apples.

DEPENDENT CLAUSES
Examples: 'As I reached for the river,' I heard a sigh of relief.

Exercise
Identify the independent and dependent clauses in the following excerpt from 'Cheer' by Alice Daley:

God was Spain, even if He'd made it hard to learn to Our voices were a straight line. Her story was published in a drawer as she concentrated on painting the school basketball team.


She read it again, and again. The tip of her ear pricked with anger.

PHRASES
It is a group of words not containing a verb and its subject. It is used as a single part of speech.

Examples:
Students in England are expected to work in many areas.

Hustling gently in the streets, the woman wore a head for the eye.

H  The term includes an adverb substituting with a preposition.
I will not take time off to hold the recreation.

Identify the phrases and clauses in the following extract from 'Little Women' by Louisa May Alcott:

The clock struck one, and, having swept up the hearth, Beth put a pair of slippers down to warm.

Somehow the sight of the old shoes had an effect upon the girls; for mother was coming, and everyone brightened to welcome her.

Meg stopped lecturing, and lighted the lamp. Amy got out of the easy chair without being asked. 'I forgot how tired she was as she sat up to hold the slippers near to the illustration.'
APPENDAGE 3b

Write a one-paragraph story using the following story starter, ‘Being given the title of “Class Clown” is.....’. Below your story identify the clauses and phrases and explain what effect they have on your story.

Being given the title of ‘Class Clown’ is

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clauses:</th>
<th>Effect on the Story</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases:</th>
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</table>
PERIOD FOUR (Lesson Plan 4)

Objectives:
- The students will identify the conflict and theme as well as map out the plot of ‘Robbie’ in ‘I, Robot’.
- They will also be able to elaborate on how the author develops the conflict, theme and plot.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’, handouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Example: CONFLICT - the tension that arises in the story because of a problem that the characters have to resolve. THEME - The underlying message that the author is trying to get across. In a good story, the theme should not be explicitly stated. It often comes across through the other elements including the plot. PLOT - The plot is the major events that occur in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduce what are theme, conflict and plot.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Divide students into groups of four. Each group is given a handout. They are told</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that they will be given 10 min. to identify the conflict, theme and plot in</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Robbie’. After the 10 min., they will present their findings. As successive groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>present, if there is any duplication in the findings, the groups are to skip those.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The groups prepare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The groups share what they had come up with.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 4b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. As a class, the students discuss how the author develops the conflict, theme and</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plot, by making use of the questions found in Appendage 4b.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 4a

CONFLICT

PLOT

THEME
APPENDAGE 4b

How does the author bring out the tension in the story?

- Is it directly stated?
- If it is indirect, what devices does he use to create the tension?
- Does the language reveal the tension?
- Is it effective in stirring up feelings in you?

How does the author create the plot?

- Are the main events explicitly stated?
- Or do you have to suggest what some of them are?
- If you do have to guess, what is it that helps you to guess what the plot is?
- Does the language help to bring out the plot?

How does the reader arrive at the theme?

- Does the author make use of language to bring out the theme?
- If yes, give specific instances of the use of language to reveal the theme.
- Does the author make use of plot to bring out the theme?
- What parts of the plot allow you, the reader, to understand the underlying message in the story?
PERIOD FIVE (Lesson Plan 5)

Objectives:
- The students will differentiate between simple, compound or complex sentence.
- They will also appreciate how different sentence structures create a different effect.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’, strips of vanguard sheets with clauses from pg. 42, 3rd paragraph, handouts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Invite 9 volunteers and each is given the role of being either an independent or subordinate clause. Then, through role-play, get them to form simple, compound or complex sentences. As they create the sentences, go over the definition of each type.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 5a Simple Sentence: One complete thought; one independent clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compound Sentence: Two or more independent clauses; 2 or more simple sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complex Sentence: One independent clause and at least one dependent clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask the students to identify the simple, compound and complex sentences in p. 43, paragraphs 3 to 6 of ‘Runaround’.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Go over the different sentence structures.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Invite the students to offer their views on how the different sentence structures create an effect on the story.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Place the vanguard strips of clauses, with the conjunctions removed, on the board. Get the 9 volunteers (6 with the clauses and 3 with a pair of different conjunctions each) who were involved in the role-playing activity to come up again. Assign clauses to each of them and shift them around so as to change the sentence structure. Invite students to comment on the effect.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hand out the homework assignment on creating an effect through varying the sentence structure.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 5c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because she was paralysed with fear

She froze for a moment

She saw the giant squid-like creature

As it turned and squirmed

With its tentacles jerking back and forth

It came toward her

She screamed

She gasped for breath

As she ran into the dark cave
Robot SPD 13 was near enough to be seen in detail now

His graceful, streamlined body threw out blazing highlights

He loped with easy speed across the broken ground

His name was derived from his serial initials, of course

It was apt

The SPD models were among the fastest robots

But And

As Since

For Because
Change the sentence structure of some of the sentences below to create what you think is the appropriate effect. Then in the table below, state what is the effect that you are trying to create.

Peter turned. He looked at Jane. He was amazed to see that she remained unmoved. All the children were wailing and howling and the din was more than he could take! He was about to ask her when suddenly, out of the blue, Sam appeared and he looked very upset with his eyes opened wide and lips firmely pressed against each other. “What on earth is happening?” Peter thought to himself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Passage</th>
<th>Intended effect of changes made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERIOD SIX (Lesson 6)

Objective:
- The students will be able to produce an effective piece of writing with varying sentence structures so that the intended effect is created.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Count the students off from 1 to 8, to create 8 groups of about 5 members each.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inform the students that each member in the group will read out his homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignment to the group and the rest in the group will comment on how the different</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentence structures have affected their perceptions of the story.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ‘Sentence Structure and Creating an Effect’ – PowerPoint Presentation.</td>
<td>18 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In the same groups, the students choose any page in ‘Runaround’ and rewrite a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph found in it. They have to change the sentence structure.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The groups read aloud their rewrites and explain how it has made the piece of</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing ineffective or more effective.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 6

(The slides on ‘Sentence Structure and Creating an Effect,’ offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

Selecting the appropriate sentence structure to create a desired effect:

- What effect do I want to achieve?
  - Do the opposite create balance? If yes, use passive sentences.
  - Do I want to be reactive or being the focus? If yes, use active or passive sentences.

- What syntax is allowed?
  - Can I combine or separate sentences to flow with my writing?
  - How does a long sentence affect the pacing of my essay?

- Would a smooth flow be achieved?
  - Avoid using 3 or more sentences to share the writing smoothly.
  - Avoid using 3 or more sentences to show the transitions from one to the other.

Read through the samples. Under each sample, two versions are given. Which of the two do you think is more effective?

Sample 1:

I want to the market. I met with my mother. He went to the fish stall. My mother bargained with the fishmonger. She managed to buy the fish at a good price.

I want to the market with my mother. At the fish stall, my mother bargained with the fishmonger who sold her a fish at a good price.

Sample 2:

Have you considered what it might be like if we have no dreams? Well, I have. On several occasions, I have thought about a life that does not go beyond the boundaries of my present capabilities. Just imagine—a life without dreams would be a life with limited options. Instead, it would be boring for it would be a life with limited possibilities.

Have you ever wondered what it might be like if we have no dreams? Well, I have. On several occasions, I have thought about a life that goes beyond the boundaries of my present capabilities. Just imagine—a life without dreams would be a life with limited options. Instead, it would be a life with limited possibilities. It would be a life without excitement. It would be a life without creativity. It would be a life that is boring.
PERIOD SEVEN (Lesson Plan 7)

Objective:
- The students will be able to identify the character traits of the characters in 'Runaround' of 'I, Robot'.

Resources:
'I, Robot', 8 smaller and 2 larger pieces of mahjong paper, markers, masking tape/magnetic tabs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td>Mahjong Paper, markers, masking tape/magnetic tabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students are told to get into the same groups they were in during the previous</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesson. Then, each group is told to choose a character from 'Runaround', and draw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a representation of the character. They should be able to explain how the drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>represents the character. Each group is given a piece of mahjong paper and markers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While the students are working, attach two large pieces of mahjong paper on the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>board.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inform the groups that while they are presenting, a member from each group has to</td>
<td>18 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>note down the character traits of the character they have chosen on one of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large mahjong papers on the board. The groups present.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. As a class, go over the character traits of each character, and discuss how the</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>character traits influence the action in the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Individually, each student chooses a character and writes down why the character</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>is appealing or unappealing. Individual work is collected at the end of class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERIOD EIGHT (Lesson Plan 8)

Objectives:
- The students will display an understanding of how characters affect the storyline by altering the character traits of a character from 'I, Robot', thereby changing the storyline.

Resources:
'I, Robot'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students are divided into five groups by counting off from one to five. Each group is given an index card with the name of a character from 'Reason' and told to change the character traits of that character.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 5 from each group are chosen to be experts of the character. One of them will remain in the group while others will each move to one of the other groups. The remaining group members will make up one large group, and become the audience.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In the new groups, the experts will discuss how the change may affect the way the characters behave in the story, thereby changing the storyline. They, then, recreate a synopsis of the storyline based on changed characters. Meanwhile, the audience will discuss the changes in the characters and what would be a plausible and improbable change in the storyline with the change in characters.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The experts share their stories.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. At the end, the 'audience' share whether they agree with the changes and why it is plausible or not.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 8

Powell

Donovan

Cutie

MC

The Master
PERIOD NINE (Lesson Plan 9)

Objectives:
- The students will display an understanding of the theme and conflict found in ‘Reason’.
- They will display an understanding and comprehension of ‘Robbie’ and ‘Runaround’ as well as analyse the characters and themes in the chapters.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’, worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students form a circle. The teacher explains that as the music is played, a</td>
<td>28 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ball will be passed around. When the music stops, whoever has the ball has to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appendage 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the conflict in ‘Reason’. After that, the others create a discussion by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>either agreeing or dissenting with him. Then the music plays again, and it stops;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the one with the ball could discuss the theme. The others participate thereafter.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next round, the one with the ball could offer his opinion on what he</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>thought of the conflict, theme or the story in general. The process continues.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students are given worksheets to assess their reading comprehension and literary</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analysis skills. The assessment is based on ‘Robbie’ and ‘Runaround’.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 9

Name: ____________________________  Class: ____________

Reading Comprehension and Literary Analysis

Open Book Assessment

(30 min.)

1) Why did Robbie find Mrs. Weston a “source of uneasiness” (p. 6, last paragraph)? [2]

From pages 8 – 11:
2) Give 2 reasons why Mrs. Weston wanted to sell Robbie back to the company (p.10, paragraph 4). [2]

From page 27:
3) Substitute “asphyxiated” (last paragraph) with another appropriate word. [1]

From pages 28 – 36:
4) Why would “mobile speaking robots” be the “final straw” for the humans? [2]
5) How did the makers attempt to counter the objections of the world governments? [3]

From page 46:
6) Explain in what way volcanic action would be a danger to Speedy. [3]

From ‘Robbie’ and ‘Runaround’:
7) Robbie and Speedy displayed human characteristics. What were they? [3]
   In your opinion, would these characteristics endear them to humans or frighten humans? Why? [4]
WEEKS THREE – FOUR (II)

PERIOD ONE (Lesson Plan 10)

Objectives:
- Each student will plot an outline of a narrative he will create and include conflict, theme/s and characters in the outline.
- The students will also assess the effectiveness of any given storyline.

Resources:
Handouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 10a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review what are conflict, plot and theme. Explain how characters make a story come alive.</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask students to work on creating their own outlines.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Invite 10 volunteers to take part in a role-play. They are given scripts. They are divided into 2 groups of 5. One group will assess a member’s outline in a sensitive and helpful manner whereas the other group will display insensitivity and offer unhelpful suggestions.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 10b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Count the students off from 1 to 5 so that 5 groups are formed. Inform the students that they are to assess the outlines of each member and give feedback. Stress that they are to give positive and helpful suggestions. The students get into groups and share their outlines.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 10a

(The relevant slides on ‘Creating a Narrative’, offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

CONFLICT
A problem that is generated within the story to create tension. Without a conflict, there is no story to tell as interest in any story is created by a problem that needs to be resolved.

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

THEME
The main idea, message or lesson of the story. The theme should not be about ordinary or mundane aspects of life. Even if the theme has been explored before, if it grips the attention of the reader, then it’s fine. However, ensure that the theme, though not new, is treated in a novel or unique way.

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

PLOT
The action and events in the story. Often, the events in the story capture the reader’s attention. Pay careful attention to your choice of action — it should be one that is realistic and interesting enough to interest the reader.
Offering Feedback in an insensitive manner

(This script is to give students an idea of how to act out their roles. They are expected to be spontaneous and add on to what the characters are saying. They are to be given about 2 to 2 and half minutes to act. In addition, allow the students to use their own names. In the script below, characters are known as Character 1, 2 and so on.)

Character 1: Hmmm… this is so boring. Really, (Character 2), you have no imagination. Do you think anyone would want to read your story?!

Character 2: I… I think it is okay… it’s not that bad! (Looks at the other group members for support)

Character 3: Well, yeah, maybe, parts of this are passable, I guess. But you know the character, Ah Meng, whom you have here? Well, he is so boring. I mean, I can understand why (Character 1) finds it, you know, sort of uninteresting.

Character 1: See, what did I tell you?! Really, (Character 2) you have to write better than this if you want to have people reading your story. You heard what Mrs. Chan said, don’t have flat characters. Your characters are all flat!

Character 4: Maybe, you could make it more interesting by having the character, Sam die tragically at the end (and he acts out, with a lot of melodrama how Sam might die in the end. The rest, except Character 2, are laughing. Character 2 looks hurt, and falls silent.)

Character 1: You crack me up! (And he laughs louder.)

Character 3: Come on, you guys. It’s not that bad. Give him a break!

Character 2: No, I don’t want anyone’s sympathy! Thank you for nothing! (And he leaves in a huff.)
Offering Feedback in a sensitive manner

Character 1: Hmmm… there are some really interesting parts here. I like the way you built up suspense. It did make me want to find out more.

Character 3: Yes, I thought the storyline was interesting. However, do you think perhaps, the part where the accident occurs might be somewhat predictable?

Character 2: That is true. I should perhaps think of some other event, something unexpected, huh?

Character 3: Yes, something a little out of the ordinary would take the readers by surprise. But I thought the ending was great. It did make me sad.

Character 4: I felt moved too by the ending, and I could relate to two of the characters. You showed the mean side of one and the good side of the other well. But, I don’t know… but do you think that perhaps the character, Sam is a little…. Um… what did Mrs. Chan say? Oh yees, um… ‘flat’? I don’t know, but could Sam’s character be developed further perhaps? Have him be either a comedian or a serious guy. I don’t know… What do you think?

Character 2: I don’t want him to be a comedian because he brings out the theme, which is sort of serious.

Character 1: I agree with (Character 2). He does bring out the theme. Could you then add some events that would bring out his importance and make him more interesting to the reader?

Character 2: Yes, I could think of something there.

Character 3: Hey, I think this is a good story. Just needs some polishing up, otherwise, it’s fine. Don’t you think so, guys?

Characters 1 & 4 together: Yes, it is.

Character 2: Thanks, guys! This sure helps.
PERIOD TWO (Lesson Plan 11)

Objectives:
- The students will be able to identify the different tenses.
- They will also be able to explain how the storyline would change if the tenses were changed.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go over the different tenses (PowerPoint presentation).</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 11a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students are asked to refer to the last paragraph of p.58, all the way to the third paragraph of p.59 and to identify the different tenses found there.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Each student turns to his neighbour and they take turns to share how the tenses help in telling the selected passage.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Give students handouts in which the tenses have been changed. They are told to refer to the original passage on pp.76 – 77 in ‘I, Robot’ and as a class, discuss how the alteration has changed the meaning of the passage as well.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 11b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students are given handouts in which the tenses are grammatically incorrect. Without referring to the original passage, they are to make corrections and explain why they have made the corrections. At the end of the class, they are to hand those in.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 11c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(The slides on ‘Tenses’, offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

**APPENDAGE 11a**

**GRAMMAR**

**TENSES**

They denote moments in time. They are expressed by verbs that have changed in form to show the time the action or of the statement made.

**PRESENT PERECT TENSE**

(a) Action occurring over a period of time (up to the present moment)

(b) Action occurring occurring at no definite time in the past

**EXAMPLES:**

(a) I have been waiting for my English teacher for the last two hours.

(b) They smell what you say to him.

(c) I have taken his position.

**FUTURE PERFECT TENSE**

Rephrases action (Action 1) that will be completed in the future before another future action (Action 2)

**EXAMPLES:**

(a) By the time the bus arrives, we will have waited for an hour.

(b) When the man calls my name, I will have paid my dues.

(c) They will have received the card when you reach the hotel.
Donovan fell into a troubled slumber and Powell’s weary eyes rested upon him enviously. The signal-flash glared over and over again, but the Earthman paid no attention. It all would be unimportant! All! Perhaps Cutie had been right—and he was only an inferior being with a made-to-order memory and a life that outlived its purpose!

He wished he were!

Cutie was standing before him. “You don’t answer the flash, so I walked in.” His voice was low. “You didn’t look at all well, and I was afraid your term of existence will draw to an end. Still, do you like to see some of the readings recorded today?”

Dimly, Powell was aware that the robot had been making a friendly gesture, perhaps to quiet some lingering remorse in forcibly replacing the humans at the controls of the station. He would have accepted the sheets held out to him to gaze at them unseeingly.

Cutie seemed pleased. “Of course, it was a great privilege to have served the Master. You mustn’t feel too badly about my replacing you.”

Powell grunted and shifting from one sheet to the other mechanically, his blurred sight focused upon a thin red line that wobbled its way across the ruled paper.
Without referring to the text, identify the incorrect tenses in the following extract by underlining them, make the corrections and explain why the corrections were made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect Tenses</th>
<th>Corrections</th>
<th>Reasons for changing the tenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robots were, of course, manufactured on Earth, but their shipment through space will be much simpler if it would be done in parts to be put together at their place of use. It also, incidentally, eliminated the possibility of robots, in complete adjustment, wandering off while still on Earth and thus bringing the U.S. Robots face to face with the strict laws against robots on Earth. Still, it places upon men such a Powell and Donovan the necessity of synthesis of complete robots, – a grievous and complicated task. Powell and Donovan would not have been so aware of that fact as upon that particular day when, in the assembly room, they were to undertake to create a robot under the watchful eyes of QT-1, Prophet of the Master. The robot in question, a simple MC model, laid upon the table, almost complete. Three hours’ work leaves only the head undone, and Powell had paused to swab his forehead and glances uncertainly at Cutie.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERIOD THREE (Lesson Plan 12)

Objectives:
- The students will identify instances of rising action, climax and resolution in ‘I, Robot’.
- They will also be able to critique these elements and explain how they help, or do not help, to arrest the attention of the reader.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objective.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Get students to identify rising action, climax and resolution the story, ‘Little Red Riding Hood’. A graphic organiser may be used for this purpose (refer to Appendage 12).</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Divide the students into groups of ten so that there are four groups. Each group is given a chapter from ‘I, Robot’ to work on. They have the task of acting out in not more than 5 min. the rising action, climax and resolution. All members of the group must participate. Apart from the characters, group members can be the narrator, act as props or be a director. They are given 10 min. to prepare.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. After each group finishes with its role-playing, there is a class discussion on these three elements and on how effectively they are used in the chapter.</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 12

Identify the rising action, climax and resolution in ‘Red Riding Hood’

CLIMAX

RESOLUTION
PERIOD FOUR (Lesson Plan 13)

Objectives:
- The students will identify setting, mood and tone and how they help to enhance the story.
- They will also be able to create the rising action, climax resolution as well as the appropriate setting, mood and tone for their own narratives.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go over Setting, Mood and Tone (PowerPoint presentation).</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Divide students into groups of 5, and ask them to analyse the setting, mood and tone in ‘Catch that Rabbit’. They are to represent what they perceive to be the setting, mood and tone in the chapter graphically or through song, music or poetry. Groups that want to make graphical representations may be given mahjong or butcher paper.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The groups work on their group assignment.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Groups present.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students work on drafting out rising action, climax, resolution, the setting, mood and tone that they want to create in their narratives. They are to finish off at home.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 13

(The relevant slides on 'Creating a Narrative', offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS
CHARACTERS
People or animals that have roles in the story. When giving the character a voice, make sure that the character is believable. Observing people or animals and understanding human nature or animal characteristics might be one way of ensuring you have the reader's attention when you breathe life into the characters.

SETTING
Place and time of a story's events. Include where and when the story is taking place. A setting can be crucial to a story for it can lead to a better understanding of the story (through, for instance, the use of chronology, or by setting it against a historical background).

MOOD
The feelings a story expresses. Feelings expressed in the story should touch the feelings of the reader. In other words, an appropriate mood can attract the reader because it would have created a reaction in the reader.

TONE
The author's attitude. The tone, along with the mood, can elicit a response from the reader. A boring, monotonous tone can easily put off the reader, but a piece of writing that has a confidential or conversational tone, for example, would immediately build a rapport with the reader.
PERIOD FIVE (Lesson Plan 14)

Objectives:
- The students will identify adjectives and adverbs in a given passage.
- They will also explain how adjectives and adverbs enhance a narrative.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Define and explain what are adjectives and adverbs (PowerPoint presentation).</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 14a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask students to refer to p.86, to p.87, 1st two lines, and to identify the adjectives and adverbs.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Go over the answers.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students are given a handout in which the adjectives and adverbs have been removed.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 14b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. As a class, students share their analysis.</td>
<td>8 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ask students to begin work on drafting their narratives, and they are to have bring their completed drafts to work on during Period 7.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 14a

(The slides on ‘Adjectives and Adverbs’, offered as soft copy to the participating teacher, are reproduced below.)

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives describe the noun or pronoun, thus giving the reader a visual picture of what is being described.
Examples: They were rich.
I looked at the hot sense and felt the intense heat.

ADVERBS

Adverbs describe a verb, an adjective or another adverb.
Examples: The train moved slowly.
The intensely hot sun was unbearable.
He inched his way very slowly into the room.

Exercise
Which are the adjectives and which are the adverbs?

I went very quickly into the wooden shed. It was somewhat dilapidated and yet, there was a homely feeling to it. I walked up to the old chest of drawers and, with a piece of crumpled newspaper that I found lying nearby, I wiped off the dust from the surface. Yes, it was still there. I had thought the childishly drawn picture of a wilting flower would have faded with age. But no, it was still there. Slowly, I traced the outlines with my index finger and sighed. It’s been a long time, such a long time.
Powell threw a book, and Donovan went tumbling off his seat.

“Your job,” said Powell, “for the years has been to test robots under working conditions for United States Robots. Because you and I have been so injudicious as to display proficiency at the task, we’ve been rewarded with the jobs. That,” he jabbed holes in Donovan’s direction, “is your work. You’ve been griping about it, from memory, since about five minutes after the United States Robots signed you up. Why don’t you resign?”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” Donovan rolled onto his stomach, and took a grip on his hair to hold his head up. “There’s a principle involved. After all, as a trouble shooter, I’ve played a part in the development of robots. There’s the principle of aiding advance. But don’t get me wrong. It’s not the principle that keeps me going; it’s the money they pay us. Greg!”

Powell jumped at Donovan’s shout, and his eyes followed the redhead’s to the visiplate, when goggled. He whispered,” Jupiter!”
PERIOD SIX (Lesson Plan 15)

Objectives:
• The students will identify the different literary devices in a given passage.
• They will also explain how the literary devices enhance a narrative.

Resources:
‘I, Robot’, pictures, masking tape or magnetic buttons, 10 pieces of mahjong paper, markers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Define personification, simile and metaphor. Then place on the board pictures.</td>
<td>17 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask students to refer to pp.101 to 103, and identify the literary devices found in the page.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>‘I, Robot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Go over the answers. As each answer is given, randomly call on students and ask them what image is created through the use of the literary device.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Get students who are seated close by to form groups of 4. Each group is given a small piece of mahjong paper, and as a headline they are to note down the chapter, page no, and paragraphs (not more than 4) they have chosen to elaborate on the imageries that they find in it.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Mahjong paper, marker pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ask the groups to display the mahjong paper on the wall, and the students go around viewing the group work.</td>
<td>8 min.</td>
<td>Masking tape/magnetic buttons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Remind the students to bring in their drafts for the next lesson.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personification

Things, animals, or abstract terms (such as, those relating to feelings or ideas) are personified when they are given human characteristics.

Examples: The sun smiled brightly. The clouds frowned before they began to tear.

Simile

It is the direct comparison of dissimilar objects using the terms ‘as… as’, ‘as’, or ‘like’.

Examples: He is as stiff as a flag-pole. She danced like a gazelle.

Metaphor

It is the indirect comparison of dissimilar objects.

Examples: Peter is a lion when he is angered. Filly is a mouse; she won’t speak up.
PERIOD SEVEN (Lesson Plan 16)

Objectives:
- The students will complete the first drafts of their narratives.
- They will be able to analyse one another’s narratives and give constructive feedback.

Resources:
'I, Robot', Handouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 16a,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go over the areas to be edited and peer-editing symbols.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 16b (to be printed on transparencies and as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hand out a copy of the peer-editing symbols, and narrative evaluation sheets.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>handouts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are then, told to get into the groups that they had formed in the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>previous class. They are asked to share their stories with other members of the group,</td>
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<tr>
<td>and group members are to give feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Students share their stories and receive feedback from their peers.</td>
<td>27 min.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Go over the instructions on what is expected in the final drafts of their</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 16c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narratives. Hand them the instruction sheet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 16a

Areas to Consider
- Language: Grammar, Use of Adjectives, Adverbs and Literary Devices, Mechanics (such as punctuation), Use of sentence structure
- Storyline: Plot (rising action, climax, resolution), conflict, theme, setting, tone, mood and characters
- Organisation: smooth flow from idea to idea, clarity in the organisation of plot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Evaluation</th>
<th>Is/Are there…</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conflict?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A theme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising action?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climax?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An interesting plot?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An appropriate tone?</td>
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<tr>
<td>An appealing tone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An appropriate mood?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interesting theme?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A theme that would touch the reader?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic characters?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting characters?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic dialogue, if any?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of vivid imageries through the use of adjectives, adverbs and literary devices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of concrete details and/or examples?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical errors?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical errors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity in the organisation of the plot?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth flow from one event to another?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An appropriate use of sentence structure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation in the sentence structure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# EDITING SYMBOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Move text</td>
<td>She wants to go also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delete</td>
<td>Megan is quite very happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>Insert</td>
<td>that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>Insert period</td>
<td>was free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insert comma</td>
<td>As she walked in she saw him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transpose</td>
<td>to quickly run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¶</td>
<td>Begin paragraph</td>
<td>took it. ¶ In the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Make lower case</td>
<td>the principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≡</td>
<td>Capitalise</td>
<td>prime minister Goh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: *Prentice Hall Literature*
Instructions for the final draft:

☺ Go over the suggestions that your peers have offered you. Make the necessary changes.

☺ Read through your narrative again, and ask yourself the following questions:
   - Does the purpose of my writing this narrative come across?
   - Was everything that I had written clear to my peer editors?
   - Did my peer editors respond in the way I would like them to?
   - Did I organise the plot in the best possible way?
   - Was the plot interesting to my peer editors?
   - Are there any changes I can make so as to produce a more appealing plot or manner of writing?

☺ Now, write your final draft. In writing your final draft, make sure the grammar and spelling are correct. Make sure you have used the appropriate words. Ensure also that you have use the correction punctuation.

☺ You may make use of the computer to type out your final draft. You may add illustrations and a cover page.

☺ The final product should be placed in a folder, or you may bind your piece of writing in a variety of ways. For example, you could punch holes and use a ribbon to bind the pages. Or, you could metallic or plastic file binders. You could also staple the pages in the middle on the left hand side and run coloured scotch tape down the left hand margin on the front as well as the back.
PERIOD EIGHT (Lesson Plan 17)

Objectives:
- The students will identify and elaborate on the overall themes found in Chapters 1 – 4 of 'I, Robot'.
- They will also be display their understanding and appreciation of Chapters 1 – 4.

Resources:
'I, Robot'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Procedures</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Resources/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Give an overview of the objectives.</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Get the class to form a circle. Pick a student to talk about any overall theme that he found running through from Chapters 1 – 4. Once he is done, he is to select someone else who will continue on the theme he had chosen or talk about another theme.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask students about what they liked or didn’t like about the chapters in 'I, Robot'. They can bring in the manner in which the language is used.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The students are given a handout that will assess their understanding and appreciation of Chapters 1 – 4.</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Appendage 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDAGE 17

Name: ______________________(        )   Class: ____________

Reading Comprehension and Literary Analysis

Open Book Assessment

(30 min.)

From pages 75 – 76:
1) Explain in your own words why logical reasoning can be flawed. [4]

From page 81, last paragraph:
2) Why was Powell grinning when he boarded the ship? [3]

From page 85:
3) Substitute “prima donnaish” (5th paragraph) with an appropriate word or phrase. [1]

From pages 1 to 110:
4) After reading the four stories, do you agree that the robots can never be harmful to man because of the three laws that they have to follow? Make use of examples from at least two of the stories to substantiate the stand that you take. [12]

PERIOD NINE (Lesson Plan 18)

Objective:
• The students will be assessed on their reading and writing skills through a post-test.
APPENDIX 3a

Pre-Test

TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

PASSAGE A

(25 minutes)

In this test of reading comprehension, you will be required to read an extract and then, complete a cloze passage that is based on the given extract.

Instructions:

Read the following instructions carefully.

😊 Spend about 10 minutes reading through the passage.

😊 You may fill in the blanks with a single word or with more than one word.

😊 In most cases, you are required to fill in the blanks with your own words. You will not find the words in the passage.

😊 If any of the blank spaces is insufficient for your answer, note down the answer number on the back page of your answer sheet and write out the complete answer there.

😊 If you are unsure about any of the answers, go on to answering the next question. Don’t spend too much time on one answer.

😊 When you have finished, read through the whole passage on the answer sheet to make sure it makes sense.
The following passage is an extract from Lewis Carroll’s ‘Alice in Wonderland’. Read the passage carefully, and then fill in the blanks on the answer sheet with the appropriate word or words.

So she was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (when she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but, when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.

Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything: then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and book-shelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed: it was labelled "ORANGE MARMALADE" but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar, for fear of killing somebody underneath, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.
"Well!" thought Alice to herself. "After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down-stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!" (Which was very likely true.)

Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end? "I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?" she said aloud. "I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think —" (for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her lessons in the school-room, and though this was not a very good opportunity for showing off her knowledge, as there was no one to listen to her, still it was good practice to say it over) "— yes that's about the right distance — but then I wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?" (Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.)

Presently she began again. "I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! The antipathies, I think —" (she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word) "— but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?" (and she tried to curtsey as she spoke — fancy, curtseying as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) "And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking! No, it'll never do to ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere."

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. "Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!" (Dinah was the cat.) "I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and was saying to her, very earnestly, "Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?" when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of sticks and dry leaves, and the fall was over.
Alice ran after the Rabbit because ___________________________ and wanted to find out more about the Rabbit. It was the start of her _______________ as she fell downwards into the rabbit-hole till her fall ____________________________________.

Alice should have considered it rather ________ that the Rabbit __________, but she didn’t. However, when the Rabbit glanced at a watch, Alice became ____________ and dashed after it. Into a rabbit-hole she followed it and soon, she found herself falling downwards. One might wonder why a young girl like Alice didn’t get ______________ by the whole experience but Alice was no ______________ girl.

When she saw a jar with the label “ORANGE MARMALADE”, she reached out for it. On finding it empty, she left it in a cupboard instead of dropping it because she was a ________________ girl. As she continued her ________________, she wondered at _______________. She thought aloud about the “Latitude or Longitude” although she had no clue what they __________. They were words that would have _______________ any listener. Unfortunately, there was no one, but then again, maybe it was _______________ that there was no one around for she knew she had used the word “antipathies” _______________. She would have certainly felt _______________ if anyone was around. No, she liked people to think that she was ________________.

But Alice was also a ______________ young girl who said “please” and curtseyed even when falling!

Just then she __________ her cat, Dinah, and she hoped that Dinah would be ______________. She began to __________ Dinah and wished her cat was with her although she wondered what it would __________. Then, she began to have a __________ dream in which she and Dinah were walking hand in hand and ________________!

Finally, she ________________ when she landed on a pile of sticks and dry leaves.
APPENDIX 3b

Pre-Test

TEST OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

PROMPT ONE

(30 MINUTES)

Instructions:
Read the given instructions carefully.

😊 Before writing your narrative, take 5 minutes to think about the plot of your story. You may want to write down the plot before starting to write your story.

😊 Give yourself 5 minutes at the end to read through your story and correct any errors that you might have made.

Read the story starter below, and write a short narrative, of no more than 300 words, on a separate sheet of paper.

“No,” I muttered under my breath. I looked straight into his eyes and said firmly, “No, I am not upset. I should be, but I am not.”

It was about a month ago …
APPENDIX 4a
Post-Test

TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

PASSAGE B

(25 minutes)

In this test of reading comprehension, you will be required to read an extract and then, complete a cloze passage that is based on the given extract.

Instructions:

Read the following instructions carefully.

😊 Spend about 10 minutes reading through the passage.
😊 You may fill in the blanks with a single word or with more than one word.
😊 In most cases, you are required to fill in the blanks with your own words. You will not find the words in the passage.
😊 If any of the blank spaces is insufficient for your answer, note down the answer number on the back page of your answer sheet and write out the complete answer there.
😊 If you are unsure about any of the answers, go on to answering the next question. Don’t spend too much time on one answer.
😊 When you have finished, read through the whole passage on the answer sheet to make sure it makes sense.
PASSAGE TWO

The following passage is an extract from Lewis Carroll’s ‘Alice in Wonderland’. Read the passage carefully, and then fill in the blanks on the answer sheet with the appropriate word or words.

By this time she had found her way into a tidy little room with a table in the window, and on it (as she had hoped) a fan and two or three pairs of tiny white kid-gloves: she took up the fan and a pair of the gloves, and was just going to leave the room, when her eye fell upon a little bottle that stood near the looking-glass. There was no label this time with the words "DRINK ME," but nevertheless she uncorked it and put it to her lips. "I know something interesting is sure to happen," she said to herself, "whenever I eat or drink anything: so I'll just see what this bottle does. I do hope it'll make me grow large again, for really I'm quite tired of being such a tiny little thing!"

It did so indeed, and much sooner than she had expected: before she had drunk half the bottle, she found her head pressing against the ceiling, and had to stoop to save her neck from being broken. She hastily put down the bottle, saying to herself "That's quite enough – I hope I shan't grow any more – As it is, I can't get out at the door – I do wish I hadn't drunk quite so much!"

Alas! It was too late to wish that! She went on growing, and growing, and very soon had to kneel down on the floor: in another minute there was not even room for this, and she tried the effect of lying down with one elbow against the door, and the other arm curled round her head. Still she went on growing, and, as a last resource, she put one arm out of the window, and one foot up the chimney, and said to herself "Now I can do no more, whatever happens. What will become of me?"

Luckily for Alice, the little magic bottle had now had its full effect, and she grew no larger; still it was very uncomfortable, and, as there seemed to be no sort of chance of her ever getting out of the room again, no wonder she felt unhappy.

"It was much pleasanter at home," thought poor Alice, "when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole – and yet – and yet – it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life! I do wonder what can have happened to me! When I used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one! There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll
write one – but I'm grown up now," she added in a sorrowful tone: "at least there's no room to grow up any more here."

"But then," thought Alice, "shall I never get any older than I am now? That'll be a comfort, one way – never to be an old woman – but then – always to have lessons to learn! Oh, I shouldn't like that!"

"Oh, you foolish Alice" she answered herself. "How can you learn lessons in here? Why, there's hardly room for you, and no room at all for any lesson-books!"

And so she went on, taking first one side and then the other, and making quite a conversation of it altogether; but after a few minutes she heard a voice outside, and stopped to listen.

"Mary Ann! Mary Ann!" said the voice. "Fetch me my gloves this moment!"

Then came a little pattering of feet on the stairs. Alice knew it was the Rabbit coming to look for her, and she trembled till she shook the house, quite forgetting that she was now about a thousand times as large as the Rabbit, and had no reason to be afraid of it.

Presently the Rabbit came up to the door, and tried to open it; but, as the door opened inwards, and Alice's elbow was pressed hard against it, that attempt proved a failure. Alice heard it say to itself "Then I'll go round and get in at the window."

"That you won't!" thought Alice, and, after waiting till she fancied she heard the Rabbit just under the window, she suddenly spread out her hand, and made a snatch in the air. She did not get hold of anything, but she heard a little shriek and a fall, and a crash of broken glass, from which she concluded that it was just possible it had fallen into a cucumber-frame, or something of the sort.
Out of ______________________, Alice drank from a little bottle and ___________________________________.  The size proved to be an advantage because, when the Rabbit came looking for her, __________ _________________________.

When Alice spied a little bottle, she was __________ to drink from it because she was hoping _______________________________.

Before she had half-emptied the bottle, she found herself __________ until finally, she had one arm sticking out of the window and ___________________________________.  She began to feel unhappy because she _______________________________.

Then, Alice thought of home and she felt ___________.  She __________ she was back home.  Life was less complicated without one’s size __________ always and animals ___________________.

However, for a moment she felt consoled thinking that if she couldn’t ___________________________________. she also couldn’t become old.

Just then, the Rabbit came ___________ for Mary Ann who was ___________.  She grew ____________ although the Rabbit wouldn’t be able to __________________ because she was ___________________________________.

After the Rabbit made ___________ attempts to get into the _________ through the door, it decided to try the window.  Alice decided to ____________ it from getting in.  She reached out and grabbed at thin air.  The Rabbit ____________ when he saw the ___________________________________________________________________.  He then fell and was probably ____________ because he fell on broken glass.  It is quite likely that Alice didn’t feel sorry for the Rabbit because it may have ______________________________.
APPENDIX 4b
Post-Test

TEST OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

PROMPT TWO

(30 MINUTES)

Instructions:
Read the given instructions carefully.

😊 Before writing your narrative, take 5 minutes to think about the plot of your story. You may want to write down the plot before starting to write your story.

😊 Give yourself 5 minutes at the end to read through your story and correct any errors that you might have made.

Read the story starter below, and write a short narrative, of no more than 300 words, on a separate sheet of paper.

I could not believe my eyes. There it was, the…
APPENDIX 5a
Rubrics for the Writing Assessment
Adapted from: Illinois State Board of Education’s ‘ISAT Writing Sample Book’ (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>☑ Subject and unifying event clear and maintained throughout ☑ Logical development of main (and minor) event(s) ☑ Employs an interesting and original introduction that clearly sets the purpose ☑ Reactions are effectively connected to unifying event ☑ Interesting and creative closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ All major and minor events well-developed through use of appropriate details ☑ Use of 3 or more strategies to elaborate (different perspectives, others’ reactions, dialogue, etc.) ☑ Most episodes show depth of development ☑ Effective use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice that enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Clear, effective and appropriate structure ☑ Appropriate and purposeful paragraphing ☑ Cohesion demonstrated by effective use of a few varied devices (transitions, pronouns, parallel structure, etc.) ☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes and reactions ☑ Varied sentence structure and word choice produce cohesion</td>
<td>☑ Mastery of sentence construction, with very few run-ons and/or fragments ☑ Mastery of verb tense and subject-verb agreement ☑ Appropriate and effective use of word choice ☑ Mastery of punctuation ☑ Very few spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Subject and unifying event clearly stated, but not maintained throughout</td>
<td>Most of the major and minor events adequately developed through use of appropriate details</td>
<td>Clear and appropriate structure</td>
<td>Well constructed sentences, with some run-ons and/or fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>☑ Subject and unifying event clearly stated, but not maintained throughout</td>
<td>☑ One or two major logical flaws</td>
<td>☑ Has an introduction that states the purpose</td>
<td>☑ Generally, word choices are appropriate and effective, with a few mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Has closing but doesn’t unify the writing</td>
<td>☑ Reactions are present, but a few may be irrelevant or inadequately expressed</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at showing some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Generally correct use of punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Subject and unifying event clearly stated, but not maintained throughout</td>
<td>☑ Reactions are present, but a few may be irrelevant or inadequately expressed</td>
<td>☑ Effective closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ Some variation in sentence structure and word choice, leading to cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Employs an effective opening that clearly sets the purpose</td>
<td>☑ Effective closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ Use of at least 2 strategies to elaborate (different perspectives, others’ reactions, dialogue, etc.)</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Reactions are present and relevant to the unifying event</td>
<td>☑ Use of at least 2 strategies to elaborate (different perspectives, others’ reactions, dialogue, etc.)</td>
<td>☑ Some variation in sentence structure and word choice, leading to cohesion</td>
<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Effective closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ Clear and appropriate structure</td>
<td>☑ Use of only a single strategy to elaborate</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Well constructed sentences, with some run-ons and/or fragments</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Lack of varied devices and/or irrelevant transitional devices</td>
<td>☑ Adequately constructed sentences, with run-ons and/or fragments that hampers compre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Development of main (and minor) event(s) is(are) generally logical with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ One major digression</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Subject and unifying event clear and maintained throughout</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Monotonous sentence structuring, thus, hampering cohesion in places</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Most of the major and minor events well-developed through the use of appropriate details</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Use of at least 2 strategies to elaborate (different perspectives, others’ reactions, dialogue, etc.)</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Clear and appropriate structure</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
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<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Development of main (and minor) event(s) is(are) generally logical with minor lapses</td>
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<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Employs an effective opening that clearly sets the purpose</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Reactions are present and relevant to the unifying event</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Effective closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
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<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
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<td>☑ Clear and appropriate structure</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Use of at least 2 strategies to elaborate (different perspectives, others’ reactions, dialogue, etc.)</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Reactions are present and relevant to the unifying event</td>
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<td>☑ Some depth in development</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ Effective closing which unifies the writing</td>
<td>☑ Interrelated and logically presented episodes, with minor lapses</td>
<td>☑ Attempt at use of literary devices, adjectives, adverbs and word choice to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>☑ Some spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>☐ Subject and/or event may be vague or there is a string of unrelated events ☐ Serious logical lapses in narrative; many repetitions or redundancies ☐ Out of focus introduction or no introduction ☐ No reactions ☐ Irrelevant or no conclusion</td>
<td>☐ Major and minor events not adequately developed through use of appropriate details ☐ No evidence of use of any strategy to elaborate ☐ No depth in development ☐ No attempt at using different means to enhance narrative</td>
<td>☐ Vague or unclear narrative structure ☐ Limited evidence of appropriate paragraphing ☐ Irrelevant or inappropriate devices, including transitional ☐ Two or more major digressions ☐ Cohesion hampered in much of the narrative by monotonous sentence structuring</td>
<td>☐ Not appropriately constructed sentences ☐ Some confusing tense shifts and errors in subject-verb agreement ☐ Many errors in choice of words ☐ Inadequate punctuation or wrong punctuation used ☐ Many spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>☐ Subject/event unclear ☐ No reactions ☐ Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met</td>
<td>☐ No elaboration of major event ☐ Lack of details generally ☐ Insufficient writing to show that the criteria are met</td>
<td>☐ Little or no evidence of structure ☐ Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met</td>
<td>☐ Conventions not observed or too many wrong usages ☐ Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 5b

### List of Acceptable and Unacceptable Answers: Reading Comprehension

### SUGGESTED ANSWERS

### PASSAGE ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION NO.</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE ANSWERS</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>She had never seen a rabbit wearing a waist-coat/having a watch or looking at a watch</td>
<td>She was curious, of its waist-coat pocket, it took out/had a watch, she was surprised that/ wondered why the rabbit had a waist-coat pocket and/or watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Journey, fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Was broken by a pile of sticks and dry leaves, was broken, ended on a heap of sticks and dry leaves, reached the floor of the hole, ended in Wonderland</td>
<td>On a pile of sticks and dry leaves, landed on a pile...leaves, was over, ended, came to an end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4*</td>
<td>Strange, weird, odd, unusual, peculiar, abnormal, extraordinary, remarkable, funny (colloq.), surprising</td>
<td>Suspicious, special, unlikely, shocking, awkward, wild, frightening, horrifying, silly, stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5*</td>
<td>Spoke, was talking to itself, talked</td>
<td>Was wearing clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Curious, inquisitive, intrigued</td>
<td>Suspicious, interested, startled, puzzled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Frightened, scared, troubled, startled, freaked out, spooked, shaken</td>
<td>Shoked, astonished, traumatized, amazed, surprised, excited, overwhelmed, stunned, intimidated, stumped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ordinary, usual, common, average, typical</td>
<td>Normal, cowardly, timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Considerate, thoughtful, responsible</td>
<td>Good, understanding, kind, kind-hearted, sensible, caring, cautious, mindful, concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fall, way down, descent, journey down the deep well</td>
<td>Journey, journey down, endless fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Distance she had travelled, how deep she had gone</td>
<td>Depth of the well/tunnel, the distance, how deep she was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Meant, were</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Impressed, sounded grand/good to, caught the attention of</td>
<td>Been grand to, sounded nice (if there were), attracted, mesmerised, captivated, pleased, amazed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A good thing, fortunate, lucky, just as well, good/better/best</td>
<td>Right, a relief, blessing in disguise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Wrongly, incorrectly, inappropriately</td>
<td>The wrong word, which did not sound right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Embarrassed, ashamed, awkward, silly, stupid, little</td>
<td>Bad, uneasy, uncomfortable, shy, happy, ignorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Smart, clever, intelligent, not ignorant, bright, knowledgeable, educated</td>
<td>Genius, good in vocabulary, brilliant, sophisticated, intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Polite, courteous, respectful, well-mannered (accepted: good-mannered)</td>
<td>Nice, pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Thought of, remembered</td>
<td>Missed, dreamt of,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fed</td>
<td>Alright, fine, taken care of, missing her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>Thought of, dreamt of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Eat, catch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Strange, weird, funny, silly, ridiculous, bizarre, crazy, curious, extraordinary, unrealistic (accepted)</td>
<td>Wild, stupid, splendid, nice, mysterious, amazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Talking, chatting, having a conversation</td>
<td>Speaking/talking to her cat, talking with it, were saying, Dinah was talking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Woke up, snapped out of the dream, came back to reality, pulled back to earth
Got up, stopped (falling), returned to her senses

* Q.4 & Q.5 are connected; even if one of the responses is correct, but together, they don’t make sense, then, both responses should be marked incorrect.

### PASSAGE TWO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION NO.</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE ANSWERS</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Curiosity, desperation</td>
<td>Nowhere, sudden, the room, temptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grew/became very large/very big/huge/gigantic</td>
<td>Grew bigger and bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>She was able to protect herself, she was able to scare him, it was afraid of her instead of she being afraid of it, was able to prevent it from entering the room</td>
<td>She wouldn’t have to be afraid, she was bigger than the Rabbit, she tried all ways to stop him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tempted, willing, desperate, planning, bold enough, unhesitant, ready</td>
<td>Going, determined, eager, lured, wishing, interested, forced, wanted, obliged, curious enough, attracted, hoping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>She would get back to her normal size, she would grow large again</td>
<td>Would grow bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Growing (accepted; grew)</td>
<td>Bigger, pressing against the ceiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>One foot up the chimney</td>
<td>Elbow resting on the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>She thought she would never be able to get out of the room/house (again), she would not get out of the room ever again</td>
<td>Could not leave the room, could not get out again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sad, homesick, unhappy, depressed, miserable, home was much pleasanter</td>
<td>Upset, bad, regretful, remorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Wished</td>
<td>hoped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Changing, varying, altering, growing bigger and smaller</td>
<td>Bigger/smaller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ordering one/her around, controlling her, dominating, bullying her, giving orders, in charge</td>
<td>Ordering, commanding, ordering about, torturing her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Grow any bigger/any more, grow taller</td>
<td>Become older, grow up (anymore), grow, grow any older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Looking, searching</td>
<td>Shouting, calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Stuck, grew bigger, his maid, trembling, her, herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Frightened, scared, afraid, fearful, timid</td>
<td>Nervous, bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Hurt/harm her, torture her, do anything to her, bully her</td>
<td>Order her around, get her, get to her, beat/scold/catch her, scare her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bigger than it was, 1000 times bigger than it</td>
<td>Huge, too big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Unsuccessful, fruitless, futile, failed, useless</td>
<td>Several, few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Room</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Prevent, stop, hinder, block</td>
<td>chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Was shocked/terrified/startled, received a shock, shrieked, panicked, was scared</td>
<td>Fell, jumped, was surprised, was frantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Large hand sticking out of the window/grabbing at thin air, the size of Mary Ann’s arms (accepted)</td>
<td>Overgrown Alice, Alice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Hurt, injured, cut, in pain</td>
<td>Unconscious, dead, fainted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Threatened/frightened her, treated Alice as a maid, bullied her, bossed her around, scolded her, been abusive to Alice, unpleasant to her</td>
<td>not been nice to her, bitten/irritated/offended/disturbed her, hurt her, made her suffer, harmed her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6a

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule: Teachers

Before Implementation of the Programme

- Could you comment on the current English and Literature Programme/s that you have in your school?
  - How do you teach Language skills and concepts?
  - What are some of the strengths of the Programme/s?
  - What are some of the difficulties that you face…
    - With regard to teaching the materials,
    - With regard to the students that you teach?
- What aspects of teaching the curriculum/curricular do you enjoy?
- Could you comment on some of the students in your class?
  - How many are fluent? Any difficulties in teaching them?
  - How many weak students do you have? What are some of the difficulties encountered in teaching them?
- Do you think English and Literature should be integrated?
  - What are your fears or concerns?
  - What are your hopes?
APPENDIX 6b

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule: Teachers

After Implementation of the Programme

• Before the start of this 4-week Programme, you mentioned your fears or concerns regarding the integration of Literature and English. Do you think your fears or concerns were realised?
• What were some of the difficulties encountered when teaching?
• You also mentioned your hopes for an integrated programme. Did your experience strengthen those hopes?
• What were the benefits?
• Did you observe any positive reactions from the students to this Programme? What were they?
• Did you observe any negative reactions from the students to this Programme? What were they?
• Would you be keen on continuing to teach this programme? Why, or why not?
• To sum up, would you persuade a colleague of yours to try out this approach? If yes, how would you persuade her/him?
APPENDIX 7

Semi-Structured Small Group Interview Schedule: Students

After the implementation of the Programme

- What do you think of the 4-week programme that you just had?
  - Were there lessons that you did not enjoy? Why did you not enjoy those lessons?
  - Were there lessons that you did enjoy? What made those lessons enjoyable?

- Were there any differences between this programme and the English and Literature classes that you had in Terms 1 & 2? What kinds of differences were there?
  - Do you find yourself using more appropriate sentences after this programme?
  - Do you find yourself using the grammar concepts that you learnt during this programme in your own piece of writing?

- What writing skills did you learn during this programme? Do you find yourself using those skills in your own writing?
  - Do you think you write better after this programme?

- To sum up, can you tell me your feelings, positive or negative, about the 4-week programme?
  - Would you recommend that your friends, who have not been under this Programme, to go for this Programme?
# APPENDIX 8

## Survey: Students

**Personal Details:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age: _______</th>
<th>Gender: _______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**PSLE Score for English:**

**Language Most Frequently Spoken at home:**

**Language Most Frequently Spoken with friends:**

1) **Do you enjoy reading?** *(Please circle your response.)*
   - Yes
   - No

2) **If yes, what kind of books do you enjoy reading?** What makes this kind of books interesting?
   
   ______________________________________________________
   
   ______________________________________________________
   
   ______________________________________________________

3) **Did you enjoy reading ‘I, Robot’?** *(Please circle your response.)*
   - Yes
   - No

4) **What made ‘I, Robot’ interesting, or uninteresting, to read?**
   
   ______________________________________________________
   
   ______________________________________________________
   
   ______________________________________________________

5) **Before the start of this 4-week programme, did you enjoy English lessons?** *(Please circle your response.)*
   - Yes
   - No
6) Give reasons as to why you enjoyed, or did not enjoy, the lessons?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

7) Before the start of this 4-week programme, did you enjoy Literature lessons?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

8) Give reasons as to why you enjoyed, or did not enjoy, the lessons?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

9) Did you enjoy the 4-week Integrated English and Literature Programme? (Please circle your response.)
Yes   No

10) What made the 4-week Programme enjoyable, or less enjoyable?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

11) Which of the following grammar concepts did you manage to grasp after the 4-week programme? (Circle where appropriate.)
a. None  
b. Clauses  
c. Phrases  
d. Sentence Types  
e. Tenses  
f. Adjectives  
g. Adverbs
12) Do you try to create more appropriate types of sentences to suit the content of your writing after the 4-week programme? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

13) After the 4-week programme, where appropriate, do you try to include adjectives, adverbs or other descriptive words when you write? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

14) Are you more aware of the appropriate tenses to use in your writing after the 4-week programme? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

15) Do you find that you are writing better now than you were at the end of Term 2? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

16) Does the literature text help you to understand the elements of a story better? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

17) Were the lessons useful in helping you to analyse the text? *(Please circle your response.)*
   Yes   No

18) What did you learn from the analysis of the text?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
19) What difficulties did you have with the text?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

20) If you were asked to give your comments on the Programme, what positive comments would you make about the Programme?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

21) What negative comments would you make about the Programme?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Your help and cooperation in helping to complete this survey is much appreciated. Thank You!
APPENDIX 9

Semi-Structured Observation Schedule

Teacher:      Date:
School:      Level:
Period/Time:      Lesson:

Description of Classroom
Room Fittings     spare   cluttered
Walls           bare   functional displays   colourful displays
Arrangement of furn.     rows   clusters   workgroups   circle/s   random
computers for students     no computers for students
teacher’s computer and projector     no teacher’s computer and projector

Description of the Students, and how they enter the classroom
purposeful   expectantly   routine   regret
Do they settle down immediately?    Yes   No

Start of Lesson
Is there a movement of furniture?    Yes   No
How long does it take for students to settle down?
Almost immediately         3   5   6   7   8   9   10
Is the objective of the lesson stated?    Yes   No
Is a brief overview of the lesson given?    Yes   No
Does the teacher plunge into activities?    Yes   No
Apart from the objective and overview, what introductory address, if any, is given?

End of Lesson:
If there is homework,
Is the link between classwork and homework explained?    Yes   No
Are the students clearly told what was expected of them?    Yes   No
Are student enquiries about the homework entertained?    Yes   No
Is there closure?                        Yes   No
If yes, what was included in the closure?
Summary   Eliciting student views on lesson   A brief mention of next lesson
During Lesson
Does the teacher follow the lesson plan?

If no, what 'extras' has the teacher added in?

If no, what parts of the lesson are ignored?

How do the students react?
No. of students,
Interested Fairly Interested Can’t be bothered Bored

Do students actively participate in the lesson...

Through questioning
Yes Number No Number

Through getting involved in the group activities
Yes Number No Number

Through taking part in class discussions
Yes Number No Number

Through doing the assigned written work
Yes Number No Number

Comments, if any, made on the text:
Adverse:

Positive:
APPENDIX 10a

MoE Approval to Conduct Preliminary Survey in Singapore

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1 NORTH BUONA VISTA DRIVE
SINGAPORE 136675
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

MOULDING THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

EDUN N32-07-005 Vol. 75
28 Oct 2003

Ms Pereira Mary Delfin
Centre for Research and Graduate Studies
University of Notre Dame
P.O. Box 1225
Premantle, WA 6959
Australia

Dear Ms Pereira,

PRELIMINARY DATA-COLLECTION TO STUDY THE PRACTICES THAT ARE CURRENTLY ADOPTED IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SINGAPORE

I refer to your application letter dated 24 Oct 2003 requesting for approval to collect data from schools.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has no objection to your request to conduct research in 165 secondary schools. Please approach the independent schools directly for approval to conduct survey. Please use the attached letter, including Annex A, the application form and the approved questionnaires to seek approval from the principals and during actual survey.

Please observe the following conditions of approval for conducting survey in schools:

a) adhere to the approved research proposal;
b) not to publish your findings without clearance from the Ministry of Education;
c) make sure that the schools’ participation in the research have been recorded in Annex A.
d) all surveys to be completed within 6 months from the date of this letter.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter by contacting me at Tel: 68796065 or Ms Sulaimah at Tel: 68792833. Alternatively, we can also be reached at any of the e-mail addresses at the top right hand corner of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Teo Kit Eng (Miss)
Head, Data Administration 3
Data Administration Centre
for PERMANENT SECRETARY (EDUCATION)

Public Service for the 21st Century

Request No: RQ/0577
APPENDIX 10b

MoE Approval to Conduct Research in Singapore

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
I NORTHOSKIA VELTA DRUG
SINGAPORE 138873
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
MOLDING THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

EDUN N32-07-005 Vol. 78

20 Mar 2004

Ms Mary Delfina Pereira
Bldg 43 Tanglin Halt Road
#04-231
Singapore 1-42043

Dear Ms Pereira

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING A LITERATURE-DRIVEN ENGLISH CURRICULUM TO SECONDARY ONE STUDENTS IN SINGAPORE: AN ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY

I refer to your application letter dated 17 Mar 2004 requesting for approval to collect data from schools.

2 I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has no objection to your request to conduct research in 6 secondary schools. Please use the attached letter, including Annex A and the application forms to seek approval from the principals and during actual study.

3 Please observe the following conditions of approval for conducting research in schools:
   a) adhere to the approved research proposal;
   b) not to publish your findings without clearance from the Ministry of Education;
   c) make sure that the schools’ participation in the research have been recorded in Annex A;
   d) all surveys to be completed within 6 months from the date of this letter.

4 Please acknowledge receipt of this letter by contacting me at Tel: 68790465 or Ms Sulaimah at Tel: 68793833. Alternatively, we can also be reached at any of the e-mail addresses at the top right hand corner of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Teo Kian Eng (Miss)
Head, Data Administration 3
Data Administration Centre
for PERMANENT SECRETARY (EDUCATION)

Public Service for the 21st Century
Ms Delfin Pereira  
College of Education  
The University of Notre Dame  

Tuesday, 23 March 2004

Dear Ms Pereira,

I have received your Application to Undertake Research Involving Human Subjects regarding your intended doctoral research. The title of your research is: The effectiveness of teaching a literature-driven English curriculum to secondary one students in Singapore: An action research case study.

I have read your Application. I accept that your Application conforms to the NH&MRC Guidelines for research and the University of Notre Dame Australia guidelines for research. I approve your research to be conducted in the manner described in your Application and I trust that you will successfully conduct your research in Singapore.

As Chairman of the interim Research Ethics Committee, I endorse and approve your research to be conducted as a doctoral research student.

Prof. Tony Ryan  
Chair  
Interim Research Ethics Committee
### APPENDIX 11

**Assessment of the Difficulty Level of the Questions: Reading Comprehension**

Co-relation in the level of difficulty between Passage One and Passage Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage One</th>
<th>Type of Required Answers</th>
<th>Passage Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1, A.2</td>
<td>Reconstruct a writer’s general message from specific statements.</td>
<td>A.2, A.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.16, A.21</td>
<td>Infer an emotion from a few scattered clues and from the writer’s tone.</td>
<td>A.9, A.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>