English exam question 10

**Guided writing is a particularly important part of the writing session. Discuss why this is so. How is it different to independent writing?**

Guided writing takes place in small groups and allows the teacher to address the instructional needs of just a few student while the rest of the class work independently (Kinzel, 2008) – eReading 9.

Guided writing is where the child does most of the work and the educator guides and scaffolds. – Encouraging children to write e.g. having them write a caption to the picture they have drawn.

Children can also be encouraged to copy written text. Not by sitting children at desks for hours of copying alphabet letters. Children usually enjoy being encourages to scribble, trace over the educators words, or copy underneath your words. This becomes more meaningful when the words they copy are of their own creation. The aim is the keep developing children’s writing expertise instead of just focussing on getting some aspect of their writing ‘correct’. Copying experiences provide rich opportunities for guiding children’s understanding about the functions of writing and the conventions of print.   
The overall goal of guided writing is not to teach children to write, copy or retell ‘correctly’ although many children will gain a broad range of valuable writing experience through their experiences in the centre. Instead, the goal should be to provide more regular and increasingly sustained guided and scaffolded experiences that provide rich opportunities for educators to engage in meaningful literacy-related talk with children about things that matter to them – their writing; their ideas; their captions, letters or stories and their ongoing ability to express themselves more effectively. (Reading 4 p131-132)

Independent or personal writing is where the child is the writer and the educator is an observer. Children can be supported to become independent writers where they are encouraged and facilitated to write for a variety of their own purposes; where they have access to a wide range of writing implements, materials and equipment across the centre; where children have ample time and space to undertake a variety of meaningful writing activities; and where children are provided with many opportunities to initiate writing experiences for themselves. It is here that the educator, as an informed literacy professional, exercises their judgement when deciding whether to let the child continue to work independently or whether to assist the child in the activity they are engaging in. (Reading 4 p132-3)