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Academic Writing in Nigerian Universities: A Conceptual Framework for Conflict, Security and Peace Writing Centre at the University of Jos Plateau State.

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Abstract

A sensitisation meeting with 35 Heads of Religious Education Institutions, 25 Heads of NGOs working in Peace and Conflict, and 25 Heads of the Mass Media in Plateau state and the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (CECOMPS) University of Jos revealed a gap in Conflict, Security, and Peace Research and Publishing. The heads asked to collaborate with CECOMPS in research and publishing skills. Thus, publish their raw, drafted materials, and manuscripts of the product of research and outreach activities in Conflict, Security, and Peace Research in Plateau State. Moreover, CECOMPS graduated about 500 students for PGD, and MSc from 2003 to 2023; yet little of this research has been published. CECOMPS' PGD, MSc, and PhD Students have academic writing issues, low rates of thesis completion, and graduation in record time. We argue that there will be inadequate policies for securing our nation without quality research and publishing on Conflict, Security, and Peace. This article uses Actions Research Methodology, a qualitative content analysis of books, journal articles, and internet databases of how a process academic writing approach through teaching, mentoring and coaching addresses writing inadequacies in the US, Europe, Australia, and Africa. Historical Universities like Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Trinity College Dublin resolved these issues by establishing Writing Centres (WC). We developed a game, "Academic Made Simple," based on 18 human body structures, and 15 palms for the sub-writing structures and tested with students in class, offices, and homes to master this genre. We piloted 25% of our concept with 17 students at the Master's level and found that 90% had significant improvement in their writing skills at this level. Eight of the students as 2nd year Master's students are impacting their skills to 80 (ten per group) first-year Master's students through their seminar papers. We recommend a WC at CECOMPS for promoting empirical research and publishing in Conflict, Security and Peace practice in Plateau State, Nigeria. The University of Jos has qualified academic publishers to support students and authors in a WC to do quality research and publish in this genre. It is proposed that CECOMPS stop sit-down exams and introduce essays as Course Exams to promote an academic writing culture. Perhaps, establishing WCs in other Nigerian universities will satisfy the massification of higher education and its diverse student population in Nigeria should further research suggest.

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Keywords: University, Conflict, Security, Peace, Research Writing and Publishing.

Introduction

A sensitisation meeting between the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (CECOMPS) University of Jos and 35 Heads of Religious Education Institutions in 2023, 25 Heads of Nongovernmental Organisations working on Peace and Conflict in 2023, and 25 Heads of the Mass Media in 2024 revealed a gap in Peace and Conflict Research and Publishing. The heads demanded that CECOMPS collaborate with their organisations in Peace and Conflict Research skills: to help analyse and publish their raw, drafted materials, and manuscripts of the product of research and community outreach activities to enhance Peace and Conflict policies in Plateau State. Moreover, CECOMPS has graduated about 500 students for PGD, and MSc from 2003 to 2023; yet little of this research has been published. This was discussed at the CECOMPS Think Tank Meeting 2023. Moreover, CECOMPS' PGD, MSc, and PhD students have academic writing (structural, paragraphing, referencing, etc.) issues, a low rate of thesis completion and graduation in record time as observed at CECOMPS Academic Assembly and Students Thesis Defense in 2024.

Nonetheless, academic writing issues are not unique to CEOMPS and Nigerians. For instance, Namakula and Ndaba reported a low graduation rate at the post-graduate level in South African universities with 1.7 per cent of PhDs and 7 per cent of MScs graduating in record time in 2013. In 2014, the PhDs' declined by 0.4 per cent, but rose by 3.3 per cent in 2015. The master's students on the other had performed at 7.3 per cent and 14.2 per cent in the same years.[1] Namakula and Ndaba recommended the establishment of a WC in South African universities to address post-graduate graduation failures.[2]

Moreover, WCs are a major part of universities in the 21st century. It started in the United States about 40 years ago and has become an essential component of universities' writing curricula, including prestigious research universities.[3] WCs are also found in European and Australian universities. They are built on three principles to improve one's writing: 1) Having a dialogue with the reader; 2) understanding the processes of invention and willingness to participate in those processes; and 3) dialoguing with the written product, for revision and editing.[4] The University of Jos has qualified academic publishers in teaching and peer-review. Hence, we suggest that the necessary skills and competencies for promoting empirical research for peace practice and community security in Plateau State already exist among its university staff. Therefore, the University can establish a WC to support the development of authors to research, draft

1 H. Namakula and M. Ndaba, "Leaving no One Behind: Leveraging Support to Access with Success in Post-Graduate Studies." *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 38, 1 (2024), 28-41, https://dx.doi.org/10.20853/38-1-6248.
2 Namakula and Ndaba, "Leaving no One Behind."
3 Irene Lurkis Clark, "The Writing Centre in the United States," *in Communication Skills: Teaching and Practice.* Vol II. eds. P. J. Hills and Margaret McLauren, (London: Croom Helm, 1988).
4 Clark, "The Writing Centre."

complete manuscripts and have them peer-reviewed, and published. Moreover, WC will empower CECOMPS students with peace and conflict thesis research skills.

Objectives

The objectives of this article are:

1. Raise awareness of the importance of a WC in empowering students and authors to become better empirical researchers, writers and publishers.

2. Develop an academic peace and conflict research, writing, and publishing conceptual framework that empowers students and authors to produce better empirical research writing and publishing in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Methodology

This article uses an Action Research Approach, which involves teaching and mentoring, a qualitative content analysis of books, journal articles, and internet databases of how WCs address academic writing inadequacies in the US, Europe, Australia, and Africa. This method appraises the academic process writing approach. It develops a conceptual framework for writing and publishing in a WC and tests the concept with university students through teaching, mentoring and coaching processes that enhance their knowledge and skills at CECOMPS.

Background

Worldwide: Academic Writing Centres (WCs) are found in Archer-South Africa, Armstrong-India, Bitchener and Emerson-New Zealand, Boch and Frier-France, Brauer and Girgensohn-Germany, Carlino-Argentina, Dan-China, De Micheli and Iglesiav-Argentina, Deane and Gonabcsik-Williams-England, Doleschal-Austria, Garcia-Arroyo and Quintana-Puerto Rico, Golson and Holdijk-Egypt, Gonano and Nelson-Australia, Gonzalez Pinzon-Colombia, Graves and Graves-Canada, Gruber-Austria, Gustafsson and Bostrom-Sweden, Hirsch and Paoli-United States of America.[5] There is no known academic WC in Nigeria. Chris Thaiss et al reported that students, academics and professional staff in universities, university managers, and governments demand the centres in response to the massification of higher education and the increase in heterogeneity of the student population. They satisfy a diverse student community, in terms of increased participation of indigenous people; foreign students; people from a variety of social classes, races, and ethnic groups; distance learners; and students with varied experiences of educational preparation.[6]

[5] Chris Thaiss, Gerd Brauer, Paula Carlino, Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, and Aparna Sinha eds., *Writing Programs Worldwide: Profiles of Academic Writings in Many Places,* (South Carolina: Parlor Press—www.parlorpress.com, 2012), p. 502.
[6] Thaiss et al., *Writing Programs.*

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Consequently, in Nigeria, it is imperative to have WC in our university to promote empirical research for peace practice and community security. The background to students' writing inadequacies in Nigeria is historical due to the lack of resources and trained teachers for public Nigerian primary, and secondary schools. Ogunyemi reports that according to UNICEF "More than 3.3 Million Children Drop Out of School Between Primary 1 and Junior Secondary School (JSS1) in Nigeria Because of Poverty and Other Inhibiting factors."[7] In another report, Sasu reported that in 2018 student drop-out rate in the lower secondary schools in Nigeria by gender was JSS1, 0% boys, 33% girls; JSS 2, 52% boys, 48.2% girls; JSS 3, 50.6% boys, and 49.5% girls.[8]

In another instance, Mr Charles Dgurudu, the National Head of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) on the presentation of awards to the three best schools in Benue state said: "We feel sad when students don't do well in our examinations … There is, however, the need for students, teachers … to redouble their efforts to ensure improvement in teaching and learning in schools."[9] Moreover, in our Secondary Schools, the advent of "miracle passing centres," for examination malpractices has led to students not studying hard. Yet, these students produce wonderful grades at external examinations like NECO and WAEC. In many disciplines, tertiary institutions demand essay writing for exams and assessments. However, a student's ability to compose a good essay involves understanding the process and the conventions of academic essay writing. A major concern here is, given the fact that there is no background training at the primary and secondary levels it will be difficult to attain any proficiency at the tertiary level.

Additionally, frequent strikes by public university staff from 1999 to 2022 have for years produced graduates who are seldom able to compose a write-up. This system has produced students and graduates who cannot conduct research, write, and publish effectively. The poor quality of graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions affects the quality of staff in our civil service and primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions both private and public. Nigerian universities need WCs to help students who have passed through the crashed educational system. A WC at CECOMPS will facilitate students and authors with skills in empirical Peace and Conflict Research and Publishing that will impact Conflict and Peace Policy in Plateau State, and Nigeria.

Literature Review

7 Ifedayo Ogunyemi, "Over 3.3 Million Children Drop Out of School Before JSS1 in Nigeria—UNICEF," *Tribune* 2022, Education, accessed 19 April 2023 https://tribuneonlineng.com/over-3-3-million-children-drop-out-of-school-before-jss1-in-nigeria-unicef/.

8 Doris Dokua Sasu, "Drop-out Rate in Lower Secondary Schools in Nigeria 2018, by Class and Gender," Statista, Society: Education & Science, 2022, accessed 19 April 2023 https://www.statista.com/statistics/1129957/drop-out-rate-in-middle-schools-in-nigeria/.

9 Chidinma Eze, "WAEC Concerned About Rate of Failure." *Daily Post*, 12 September 2014, accessed 19 April 2023, https://dailypost.ng/2014/09/12/waec-concerned-rate-failure/.

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There are 330 institutions in six continents with academic writing centres.[10] These WCs cut across the United States of America, Europe and Africa:

The United States of America

Writing centres (WCs) started in the United States about 40 years ago, and they have become an essential component of universities' writing curricula, even prestigious research universities like Oxford, Harvard, and Trinity College Dublin have them.[11] Kenneth A. Bruffee reported that WCS serve the scholarly interest of acquiring writing skills and the best way to teach university-level writing skills. WCs enable students to learn but are not a "quick fix" for bad student writing. Rather, they are where well-trained tutors enable individual students with writing skills to become better writers.[12] Consequently, Stephanie Evers Ard and Franklin Ard on an academic integrity course through a joint online workshop at the University of South Alabama reported on "The Library and Writing Centre build a workshop: Exploring the impact of an asynchronous online academic integrity course."[13] They collected qualitative and quantitative data through a pre-test and post-test and used an open-ended survey of 1,312 participants. This study found that for students to stop cheating, they should have legitimate options for obtaining academic assistance when needed. Moreover, libraries and WCs can collaborate to help students stop academic misconduct, especially plagiarism; while they embrace and practice academic integrity and culture.

Europe:

WCs are found at historical universities like Oxford and Cambridge. Besides, since the 1990s, professional organisations such as the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW), the European Writing Centres Association (EWCA), and the Writing Development in Higher Education Network (WDHE) have held biennial conferences on academic writing. For instance, in 2001 the University of Warwick Writing Programme organised a conference on "Teaching Writing in Higher Education," which attracted international delegates who came and shared different models and practices for teaching writing.[14]

WCs are established in Europe for various circumstances. For example, John Bitchener cited in Chris Thaiss et al notes that AUT University New Zealand established its Writing Centre to care for a multi-national and multi-cultural population of 42% Pakehas (white New Zealanders), 10% Maori (Indigenous New Zealanders), 11% Pasifika (Pacific Islanders), 27% Asians (East and South

10 Thaiss, et al., *Writing Programs Worldwide,* p. 2.
11 Clark, "The Writing Centre."
12 Kenneth A. Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring and the "Conversation of Mankind," in *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration.* Ed. Gary Olson (Urbana: NCTE, 1984) 3-15.
13 Stephanie Evers Ard and Franklin Ard, "The Library and the Writing Centre Build a Workshop: Exploring the Impact of an Asynchronous Online Academic Integrity Course." New Review of Academic Librarianship. 24, 2-4 (2019) 218-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2019.1644356.
14 Thaiss, et al., Writing Programs Worldwide, p. 500.

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Asian countries) and 10% others.[15] Given the different educational backgrounds of these groups, the university must cater for the diverse needs of its equally diverse student population. Similarly, Marie-Christine Pollet cited in Chris Thaiss et al.[16] states that students at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, are characterised by "a large diversity in their geographic, cultural and social origins" as well as in their educational backgrounds.[17] Furthermore, Twenge suggests that students in Higher Education today are smart but often unprepared for the hard work and challenges they encounter at universities. Hence, providing a WC facilitates the transition to Higher Education by helping students hone and adapt their academic skills.[18] The obvious challenge has been the effectiveness of these WCs.

Kelly and Harding's in a study of "An evaluation of the Academic Writing Centre in Athlone Institute of Technology"[19] reported that a small country like the Republic of Ireland has 18 academic writing centres: five in the universities and 13 in the Institutes of Technology. Students mostly seek to improve their writing concerning planning, paragraphing structure, literature reviews, paraphrasing, referencing, critical analysis, and how to approach assignments. The study found that the centres had strengthened their students. Small workshops and one-on-one sessions with students were most rewarding in achieving the objectives. The AWC tutors recommended that writing skills and writing in the disciplines needed to be promoted across the college. A survey of the students found students sought help in the following aspects of academic writing: 70.45%, structuring a written work, 38.64% writing in an academic style, 29.55% in citing and referencing and writing a literature review, and 25% in paraphrasing and planning and interpreting the assignment. 95% of the students agreed that they benefited from the WC. However, 18% of the students indicated that AWC needed flexible opening hours to help them better. Furthermore, some wanted longer appointments even if it meant fewer sessions and others preferred to receive help from someone with a background in their discipline. Kelly and Harding further recommended closer collaboration between AWC staff and lecturers of the students e.g., co-presentation of assignments briefs.[20]

Yeats et al in a quantitative study examined what a difference a WC makes in UK universities concerning contemporary students who are said to have weaknesses in academic writing.[21] They collected data from 806 students out of which 45 students attended the writing centre and 761 did not. They found that

15 Thaiss, et al., *Writing Programs Worldwide,* p. 502.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 J. M. Twenge, J.M. (2009), "Generational Changes and Their Impact in the Classroom: Teaching Generation ME", *Medical Education,* Vol. 43, (2009) 398-405.
19 Eimear Kelly and Nuala Harding, "An Evaluation of the Academic Writing Centre in Athlone Institute of Technology," in T&L: NATIONAL FORUM for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2016), accessed 19 March 2024. https://eprints.teachingandlearning.ie/id/eprint/6125/.
20 Kelly and Harding, "An Evaluation."
21 Rowena Yeats, Peter Reddy, Anne Wheeler, Carl Senior, and John Murray, "What a Difference a Writing Centre Makes: a Small Scale Study," *Education + Training,* 52,6/7 (2010) 499-507. DOI 10.1108/00400911011068450.

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considerable progress to Year two was significantly associated with attending the WC. Besides that, good academic writing skills were invaluable for achieving higher education; WCs equally helped people of different ages, genders, and at-home/overseas students to get ahead at their jobs.

Africa:

Ethiopia: Simie and Mckinley studied Ethiopian Universities and their Ministry of Education with no colonial language legacy, but have adopted an English medium of instruction (EMI) in the last 70 years.[22] They found that the government had for 20 years expanded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to bring people out of poverty and increase skilled human capital. However, it strained teachers of the English language who lacked English language teaching support; and there was an over-emphasis on internationalism—monolingual English as the language of instruction. They recommended that Ethiopian universities improve support for students with language challenges to improve academic standards.

South Africa: Arbee studied "Factors Underpinning Students' Use or Non-Use of a Writing Centre"[23] at universities in South Africa. It was found that the initial reason for creating WCs in South African Universities was to remedial underprepared black students between secondary school and university.[24] However, the focus has now changed to "academic literacies" to satisfy a range of social, cultural, political and disciplinary reasons.[25] Moreover, it was accepted that the English language is "no one's mother tongue" in South Africa. Similarly, Namakula and Ndaba illustrated that South African universities primarily supported undergraduates more than post-graduates. Their article, "Leavin. g no one behind: Leveraging support to access with success in post-graduate studies"[26] demonstrated that the crisis in the rate of failure, drop-out, or taking longer than expected to graduate in higher education in South African universities was not only due to under-preparedness, supervision challenges, mental health issues and funding, but also university academic writing issues. The under-preparedness of postgraduate students in academic writing and research processes contributes to failures, and drop-out rates citing Kisansa and Lubinga[27] and Massyn's[28] studies. Consequently, they recommended

22 Tolera Simie and Jim McKinley, "English Medium Instruction in Ethiopian University Mission Statement and Languages Policies," (2024) *Language Policy,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-024-09693-8.
23 Aradhna Arbee, "Factors Underpinning Students' Use or Non-Use of a Writing Centre." Per Linguam, *A Journal for Language Learning, Per Linguam*, 36, 1 (2020) 32-46, accessed 29 March 2024 http://dx.doi.org/10.5785/36-1-881.
24 L. Dison, and S. Clarence, "Introduction," in S. Clarence and L. Dison (Eds), *Writing Centres in Higher Education: Working in and Across the Disciplines,* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 5-16, 2017).
25 Arbee, "Factors Underpinning Students."
26 Namakula and Ndaba, "Leaving no One Behind."
27 M. E. Kisansa and M. H. Lubinga, "Strategic and Focused Solutions to Challenges Faced by Medical Postgraduate Students, in Performing Research at a South African University,"

increasing university support (providing a WC, especially for doctoral students) so that the post-graduates could collaborate with supervisors.

Evans-Tokaryk and Shabanza's study, "Academic Literacies in a South African Writing Centre: Student Perspectives on Established Practices"[29] at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa used focus groups and surveys. It was found that most student users of the centre did not speak English as a first language, few spoke it at home, and most students spoke South Africa's ten other languages. Hence, they wanted more writing support concerning lower-order writing skills than is currently offered. This includes, but is not limited to composition courses targeting English as an Additional Language (EAL) without prejudice to the current focus of the writing centre. Correspondingly, Rensburg studied how post-graduate African students found academic identities in the WC of the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg.[30] It was an in-depth study of nine multicultural and multilingual master students in Education Studies and their performance at the WC with tutors. He found that the WC is the best place for students to use as a "rehearsal space" to develop an alternative "discourse selfhood" as they negotiate their academic writing identities. However, he warned that students must avoid a "cut and paste" writing culture in finding their academic identities.

Summary Analysis of Literature Review

Our reviewed literature reveals that WCs were started in American universities 40 years ago to impact writing skills for underprepared students for university studies. It provided a platform for students to seek writing help instead of resorting to plagiarism and academic misconduct. They spread to European universities to serve the same purpose even in historical universities like Oxford and Cambridge. Its establishment in New Zealand and Belgium catered to multicultural and multi-national students with writing challenges. Similarly, in South Africa, writing centres have served the black student population after the post-Apartheid system but later on as centres for enhancing academic writing literacies. In all cases, in the US, Europe, and Africa, WCs have addressed the crisis in graduate/post-graduate failures, drop-outs, and not graduating in record time. The issue with students' writing deals with improving academic planning, literature reviews, paragraph structuring, paraphrasing, referencing, critical writing, and how to approach assignments. These are the same issues we are dealing with in CECOMPS, Plateau State and Nigeria; thus, we can establish a WC at CECOMPS. The centre will empower students significantly to be better writers, progress to the next class, graduate and after graduation, gain

South African Journal of Higher Education 34, 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.20853/34-2-3666.

28 L. Massyn, "Enhancing Completion Rates of Mini Dissertations for a Professional Master's Degree: an Integrated Approach." *The International Journal of Management Education* 16, 1 (2018) 114–20, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2018.01.002.

29 Tyler Evans-Tokaryk and Kabinga Jack Shabanza, "Academic Literacies in a South African Writing Centre: Student Perspectives on Established Practices." *Discourse and Writing/Redactologie*, 32 (2022), accessed 19 March 2024, http://jornals.sfu.ca/dwr.

30 Wilhelm van Rensburg, "The Discourse of Selfhood: Students Negotiating Their Academic Identities in a Writing Centre." *Journal of Language Teaching* 38, 2 (2004) 216-228.

the ability to find work and perform well on the job. WCs use the English for Academic Purposes (EPA) process approach to help students overcome their writing difficulties which we turn to as our theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

Writing Centres (WCs) are a major part of universities in many countries in the 21st century. In the centres, knowledge is created through the collaborative efforts of the student, who provides knowledge on the subject concerning the assignments, and the tutor provides knowledge on the process of academic discourse and standard written English.[31] Tutors use the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) process approach to help students overcome their writing difficulties and become better writers. According to White and Arndt, a process-focused approach is an enabling approach that nurtures the writers' skills to find solutions to their writing problems and achieve their goal—writing better.[32] By implication, students and authors develop all their raw data into a message of academic writing standards. Additionally, Andrew Johnson in *Being and Becoming Teachers of Writing: A Meaning-Based Approach*,[33] subscribes to the EAP process approach and elaborates on a five-step writing process: pre-reading, drafting, revising, editing, publishing and sharing. The steps have their strategies and how the process works with a positive outcome for students as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Five Phases of the Theory, Process Writing Approach for EAP

Independent Variables (Writing Process)	**Intervening Variable (theory) & Moderating Variables (Students activities)**	**Dependent Variables (Students Products)**
1. Pre-Writing	Being motivated Getting ideas together Making plans/ outlines/ notes Conduct interviews/ observations/ inquiries, experiments/surveys Collecting data	Generating ideas Organising ideas Focusing Structuring Data
2. Drafting	Making a first draft (concentrating on WHAT to say)	Drafts
3. Revising	Rewriting/re-planning/ redrafting/ reviews/reshapes/revisits	Drafts

31 Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring," p. 10.
32 R. White and V. Arndt, (1991). *Process Writing*, (Essex: Longman, 1991), p. 5.
33 Andrew Johnson, *Being and Becoming Teachers of Writing: A Meaning-Based Approach,* (Routledge, 2024).

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4. Editing	Proofreading (accuracy of grammar/punctuation/spelling)	Evaluation
5. Publishing/Sharing	Presenting to small or large groups or internet /Conferencing/Publishing houses	Articles/Books/Chapters of books

Source: Adopted from Johnson, 2024: Five-Steps Writing Approach

Figure 1 presents the relational effect of the independent variable writing approach—pre-writing to publishing and the student learning to write the dependent variable. Our literature review demonstrated this approach's positive effects on students; thus, we adopt it for our conceptual framework for the case of students and authors in the Plateau State.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structure by which we demonstrate the relationship between Students and Authors with writing difficulties and how these difficulties are cured in a Writing Centre (WC). Thus, Figures 2, 3, and 4 represent the relational effects of the independent variables—academic structure, intervening variables—knowledge of the theory of academic writing structure, moderating variables—students/authors' activities and the dependent variable—students/authors' writing outputs.

Table 2. Students/Authors' Conceptualisation of Process Writing Approach

Independent Variables (Academic Structures: 4 Hrs. per session)	**Intervening Variables (Academic Theory Input)**	**Moderating Variables (Students Activities)**	**Dependent Variables (Students Presentations)**
1. Academic Writing	English Academic Structure, Five-Steps Writing Process, Five Finger Paragraph, Academic Writing Hands, and Thesis Topic.	Group Formation, Play the game on Academic Writing Structure Hands, and Brainstorm on Research Topic (**Homework**: prereading on the topic chosen)	Thesis, Article, and Essay Structure; Research Title (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors and Peer feedback)
2. Taxonomy of Knowledge	Levels of Knowledge, and Academic Writing Hands: Research	Play the game on the Hands: Research	**Homework**: Narrow down the scope of the research and Drafting the

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	Questions, Objectives, Justification of the Study, Scope of the Study, and Operational Definition of Terms (if any)	Questions, Objectives, Justification of the Study, Scope of the Study, and Operational Definition of Terms.	Research Title, Questions, Objectives, Justification of Study, Scope of Study, and Operational Definition of Terms (if any) accompanied by Peer editing
3.	Mentor feedback	Presentations accompanied by Peer feedback based on the Hands	Draft Research Title, Questions, Objectives, Justification of Study, Scope of Study, & Operational Definition of Terms (if any) (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors & Peer feedback)
4. Theoretical Framework Structure	Principal argument of the theory; and the theory as it applies to research questions/objectives	Play the game on the Hands for a theoretical framework; group discussion theoretical framework.	**Homework**: Drafting Thesis, Article, Essay Theoretical Framework accompanied by Peer feedback
5.	Mentor feedback	Presentation accompanied by Peer feedback in class	Draft Thesis, Article, Essay Theoretical Framework (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors & Peer feedback)
6. Literature Review	Structural options for Literature review: Thematic, Chronological, and Methodological; What literature? Google Search and University Library Portal search	Play the game on the Hands for a Literature Review; search for articles on Google Scholar, and the University Portal.	**Homework**: Reviewing 5 articles on a Thesis, Article, or Essay as a Literature Review accompanied by Peer Editing
7.	Mentor feedback	Presentation accompanie	Draft review of 5 articles on a Thesis,

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		d by Peer feedback in class	or Article, Essay as a Literature Review (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors and Peer feedback)
8. Methodology	Research Design, Population, Sample and Sampling technique, Questions/Questionnaire, Validity/Reliability and Ethical Consideration	Play the game on the Hands for a Methodology; Search for a sample of research similar to student work.	Homework: Research their Thesis, Article, and Essay Methodology
9.	Mentor reviews	Presentation accompanied by Peer feedback in class	Draft of Thesis, Article, & Essay Methodology (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors and Peer feedback)
10. Findings and Discussion	Research Findings and Discussion According to the Research Questions or Objectives following: Content, Narrative, Discourse, Thematic Analysis or Ground Theory and IPA.	Design their interview questions or questionnaire	**Homework**: Carry out field on Thesis, Article, and Essay data collection
11.	Mentor reviews	Presentation accompanied by peer feedback in class	Draft of Thesis, Article, & Essay Findings (revision/amendments/changes are made based on mentors & Peer feedback)
12. Summary, Conclusion, & Recommendations	Research Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations according to research	Work in groups on their Research Summary, Conclusion,	Homework: write Thesis, Article, or Essay Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

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	questions or objectives	and Recommend ations	
13.	Mentor reviews	Presentation accompanie d by peer feedback in class	Draft of Thesis, Article, or Essay Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations (revision/amendmen ts/changes are made based on mentors and Peer feedback)
14. Complete Thesis, Article, Essay Structure	Thesis, Article, or Essay Editing	Begin to edit their Thesis, Article, or Essay for publication	Homework: Complete Thesis, Article, or Essay for Publishers (revision/amendmen ts/changes are made based on mentors & Peer feedback)
15. Publishers	Finding Publishers	Find Publishers for their Thesis, Article, or Essay	Draft Thesis, Article, or Essay sent to Publishers
16. Publishers	Publishers review	Students work with mentors and carry out publishers' reviews	Submit a Draft Thesis, Article, or Essay for publication or to the University.

Source: Authors

Thesis Structure Game

Figure 3: Thesis Structure Made Simple Game Based on 18 Human Body Parts

Numbers	**Human Body Parts**	**Thesis Structure**
1	Body	Abstract
2	Head	Introduction
3	Backside	Background
4	Mouth	Questions
5	Nose	Objectives
6	Kidney	Hypothesis
7	Ears	Problem
8	Eyes	Theory
9	Liver	Justification
10	Hands	Methods
11	Hair	Literature review
12	Heart	Data

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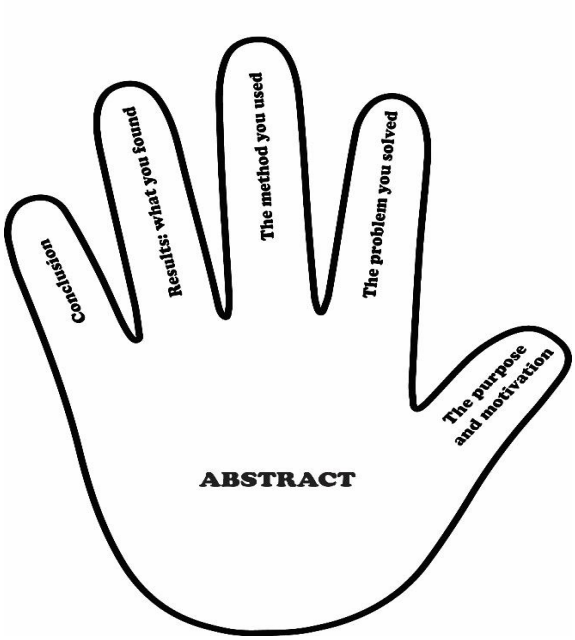
13	Stomach	Body
14	Intestines	Analysis
15	Legs	Conclusion
16	Elbow	Citations and sources
17	Knees	References list
18	Toes	Index

Source: Authors

Sub-Thesis Structure Abstract Hand

Figure 4a: Thesis Sut-Structure Made Simple Game
The abstract of academic writing may comprise the five fingers below.



Source: Authors

Sub-Thesis Structure Introduction Hand

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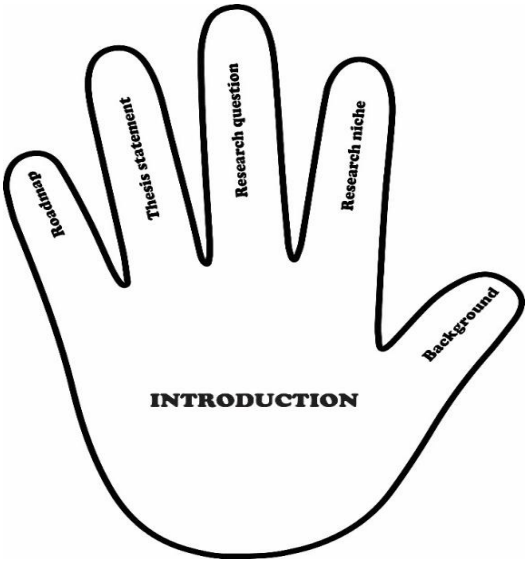
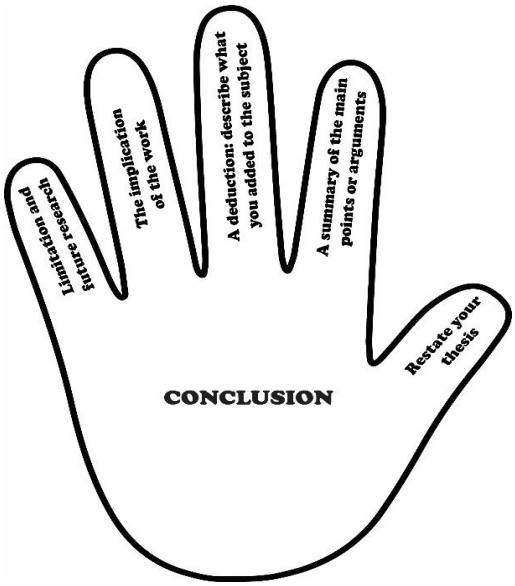
Figure 4b: Thesis Sut-Structure Made Simple Game
The introduction of academic writing may comprise at least two combinations of the fingers below.



Source: Authors

Sub-Thesis Structure Conclusion Hand

Figure 4c: Thesis Sut-Structure Made Simple Game
You may want to use some or a combination to conclude your work



Source: Authors

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Therefore, in Figure 2 a tutor introduces the independent variables—academic structure using a game that students and authors play (Thesis Structure Made Simple), which we have developed based on 18 human body parts (Figure 3). The Students/Authors match the academic structure to the human body parts. Moreover, tutors introduce the substructure of a thesis as in Figure 4. We have developed using 15 palms with the fingers expressing its content: To solve the puzzles in this kit by attaching the right finger to the right palm of the academic writing topics, we present three examples in this article (see Figure 4a-c). In as little as 10 times of repetitions, students who play these two games come to a better understanding of the academic thesis structure and sub-structures. Additionally, the introduction intervening variables—knowledge of the theory of academic writing structure, moderating variables—students/authors' activities and the dependent variable—students/authors' writing outputs. We piloted 25% of this conceptual framework with 17 first-year master students and found a significant improvement in their academic writing skills. Eight of them as second-year master students have impacted their skills to 80 (10 per group) first-year master students in preparation and presentation of their seminar papers.

Recommendations

We recommend the following to the University of Jos:

1. Set up a Writing Centre at CECOMPS to promote empirical research in Peace practice and community Security in the Plateau State. If students are to stop academic cheating, they should be provided with structures to empower them to adapt to academic standards at the university level.

2. A Writing Centre is not a "quick fix" so apply the conceptual framework developed here rigorously in workshops, one-on-one and group sessions. Therefore, students should play the games in their tutorial sessions, at home, and with peers to master them.

3. The Writing Centre instructors should collaborate with lecturers and thesis supervisors.

4. Use qualified academic publishers to support students and authors in the Writing Centre to do quality research and publish in this genre.

5. CECOMPS should stop sit-down exams and introduce essays instead as Course Exams to promote an academic writing culture.

Conclusion

We argued that there would be inadequate policies for securing our nation without quality research and publishing in Conflict, Security, and Peace areas. We revealed a gap in the academic research, writing, and publishing of authors and university students in Plateau State. This gap pertains to planning,

paragraph structuring, paraphrasing, literature review, critical analysis, referencing, and how to approach writing assignments, articles and books. We illustrated that the causes of this gap come from the Nigerian State's lack of funding for, training teachers and lecturers, infrastructures in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and the prolonged strike by Nigerian university staff. These two factors contribute significantly to pupils and students of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions' lack of writing skills, low graduation rates and drop-outs. Thus, we revealed how using a process academic writing approach through teaching, mentoring and coaching in universities in the US, Europe, Australia, and South Africa resolved these issues through Writing Centres. We developed a game, "Academic Made Simple" based on 18 human body structures, and 15 palms for the sub-writing-structures for students and authors to play in the class, workshops, offices, and homes to master this genre. We piloted 25% of our concept with 17 students at the Master's level at the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (CECOMPS) and found that 90% had significant improvement in their writing skills at this level. Eight of the students as second-year Master's students impacted their skills to 80 (ten per group) first-year Master's students with their seminar papers. Therefore, we recommend a Writing Centre at CECOMPS for promoting empirical research in Peace practice and Community Security in Plateau State, Nigeria. Moreover, CECOMPS should stop sit-down exams and introduce essays as Course Exams promoting an academic writing culture. This is a novel start to research in academic writing in Nigeria; hence more research is needed. Perhaps, it might lead to establishing more Writing Centres in other Nigerian universities to satisfy the massification of higher education and its diverse student population in Nigeria and Africa.

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