

Title:**Decoloniality Essay Competition as a Tool to Empower Students' Academic Writing in Tertiary Institutions**

Scholarly Area: Student learning

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1. Introduction and background

Writing is one of the most important skills for tertiary institution students because it is a clear evidence that a student is in control of a second language. Yet, it is one of the most perplexing skills to many students as they suffer greatly in developing their writing skills, which is at the heart of teaching and learning in tertiary institution (Mukdad 2019:30).

Students writing difficulties cannot be attributed to only one factor, but to a myriad of factors. One of the factors is the colonialism experienced by blacks in South Africa that caused their marginalization leading to underprepared teachers and ineffective teaching in schools Chokwe (2013:377). However, this did not change even after our first democratic elections of 1984, with all the changes that were brought about Pineteh (2014:13). Most students therefore arrive in tertiary institutions lacking English language competency and unfamiliar with how tertiary institutions work, leaving them confused Shalem and Dison (2013:182). Clearly, without proper training such expectations cannot be justified. It is evident that students' writing is not addressed adequately at school level and this is exacerbated by tertiary institutions who do not make academic writing a core skill that every first-year student has to be given upon arriving at tertiary institution (Chokwe 2013:378-379).

2. Theoretical framework

This paper uses both constructivist theory and transformative learning theory.

3. Research question

How can we enhance academic writing of undergraduate students?

4. Aim

This aims to address the challenges of undergraduate students' academic writing.

5. Data collection, selection of research participants and data analysis

The writing center of the University of the Free State (Qwaqwa campus) will introduce an online decoloniality essay writing competition, wherein students who participate receive incentives in the form of money that will be transferred to their student accounts. Advertisements will be sent out through the students' email addresses. Students will show interest by registering for the competition. They will then be given a presentation on decoloniality and be trained on academic writing. They will then be given a choice of writing the first draft and booking for a consultation with the writing center wherein the consultants will discuss issues that they perceive with their structure and referencing.

In order to measure the impact of the intervention, we will review the essays of the students who booked for a consultation. We will compare their first draft against their final draft using the developed rubric; this will enable us to see the difference that the consultations made on

the students' writing. This comparison will also be extended to the students who did not use the writing center to those who used it. This will therefore show us if the interventions that were given to students brought about any changes to their writing skill.

References

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