

**ENHANCING STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS
IN SELECTED COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I **KASAKULA, MAUREEN C.** do solemnly declare that this thesis is a representation of my work and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree at this or any other university and that to the best of my knowledge, all the information that has been obtained from other sources have been acknowledged.

Signed.....Date.....

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APPROVAL

This thesis by Kasakula, Maureen C. is approved as a full fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy in Literacy and Language Education at the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills in English. The following objectives were addressed: (1) to ascertain whether student teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school level, (2) to investigate what colleges of education were doing to help students understand specific academic writing requirements at college level, (3) to establish support mechanisms used by Colleges of Education to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills, (4) to evaluate lecturers' feedback practice on written assignments at college level and (5) to ascertain whether lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing. The study adopted an emergent mixed method design. Data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, assignment of a task and document analysis. Participants included 5 lecturers and 100 students drawn from five selected Colleges of Education. In this study, it was established that secondary school graduates admitted into colleges had not been adequately exposed to writing relevant texts as foundation for academic writing. It was further established that efforts towards optimizing student teachers' academic writing skills were largely limited to the compulsory teaching of Communication and Study Skills. However, the methods used appeared to have limited students' opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement to effectively master the skills. It was also found that colleges had various support mechanisms that provided students with a favourable environment for developing academic writing skills. However, guidance was lacking in how students could maximize the benefits of the support mechanisms available. Besides, the support mechanisms put in place appeared to have given less attention to lecturers' capacity building for academic writing instruction. The study also found that lecturers' feedback practice on students' written assignments involved drawing students to their weaknesses and strengths through comments, minimal marking and rubrics. However, feedback, purpose, focus and mode, were not comprehensive enough to effectively support learning. It was also established that lecturers did not adequately possess the required skills to effectively teach academic writing. Some of the recommendations made in this study are that student teachers' deficit in basic writing skills should be addressed on their entry into college to strengthen the foundation for academic writing. Lecturers should always ensure that feedback given to students is balanced in purpose, mode and focus to enhance students' learning. Colleges of Education should consider devising academic writing support programme for lecturers to guarantee effective teaching of academic writing in colleges.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest parents Mr. Wilbroad Mubanga Kasakula (Late) and Mrs. Aurelia Nsama Mubanga Kasakula, Right Reverend Bishop Justin Mulenga; Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Mpika (Late) and to Very Rev. Fr. Kennedy Chama Seketa (Late) for their cooperation with God's Divine Plan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CA	Continuous Assessment
CoE	Colleges of Education
OBE	Outcome Based Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education Science Vocational Training and Early Education
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
AW	Academic Writing
SMS	Short Text Messages
NRCNA	National Research Council of National Academies
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
NWP	National Writing Project
CWPA	Council of Writing Program Administrator
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
UNZA	University of Zambia
UNZAREC	University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee
HOD	Head of Department
ZAMISE	Zambia Institute of Special Education

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Over view

This chapter presents the background to the study. It includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and objectives, significance, limitations and delimitation of the study, theoretical framework and the operational definitions of terms used in this thesis. The last section is the chapter summary.

1.1 Background

Writing is known to be one of the literacy skills critical to human communication and success at both individual and society level (Bowker, 2007; Hyland, 2011; Hammer, 2015). In higher education, lecturers use writing to rate students understanding of what they have learnt and it is through academic writing that students demonstrate their knowledge and abilities in written assignments and examinations (Al-hamadi & Sideki, 2015; Bell-Nollan, 2015; Mutwararasibo, 2013; Nyangau, 2009, Jurecic, 2006; Javad-Safa, 2018). According to Bjork et al., (2003), “Writing is not only a prerequisite to academic performance, but one of the core features that provide people with a set of powerful aids for the mastery of all intellectual tasks” (p.28). Thus, a student’s ability to effectively write an academic paper constitutes one of the most significant abilities required at tertiary level (Al-hammadi & Sideki, 2015; Avok Center for Academic Writing and Communication, 2013). Generally, students with good academic writing skills have higher chances of obtaining good grades where as those with poor academic writing skills risk remaining lower in the order of performance (Asif & Farooq, 2013). Thus, proficiency in academic writing remains critical to ones’ success and advancement (Murray & Moore, 2006; Kabianga & Onchera, 2013; Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015) in education.

However, acquisition of academic writing skills has been seen to be challenging at tertiary level (Carless, 2006; Elander *et al.*, 2006; Mutimani, 2016; Pfeiffer & Sivasubramanian, 2016). This is more so for those using English as a second language (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015). This challenge is usually exacerbated by under preparedness or deficit in writing skills at earlier levels of education (Almahadi & Sideki, 2015). There is mounting evidence within and outside Zambia that many students complete their senior secondary school with a low proficiency in writing skills. For example, a study conducted by Bell-Nollan (2015) in the

United States observed that students that completed senior secondary education did not often possess essential writing skills needed to accomplish assignments in college courses. Another study by Fareed, Ashraf and Bila (2016) in Pakistan recorded that academic writing skills exhibited by students in a college of education were “alarming, weak and of substandard” (p.8). Similar results were also recorded by Marinkovic et al, (2016) who noted that new college entrants lack knowledge and skills to successfully deal with the basic writing requirements in particular fields of study. In Zambia, a study by Sidambi (2011) which looked at how composition writing was being taught in Zambia’s high schools in Choma District established that Zambian learners were completing grade twelve (12) with very poor composition writing skills.

According to Zambia’s Education System, foundation for academic writing is laid in early grades when learners begin developing basic writing skills. These skills continue to be natured as learners advance to higher grades following “an interlinked curriculum” (M.O.E, 2013 p. 10). Thus designed, the English language curriculum facilitates development of writing skills from basic to advanced level in line with the 1996 Education Policy (*‘Educating Our Future’*) which states that “Education from basic to higher level constitutes an integrated unified system which would benefit from better articulation among its various levels; conversely, what the higher institutions undertake has an impact ...at school level” (p.97) and vice versa. In principle, senior secondary education is partly preparatory for tertiary education (MOE, 1992) and to ensure that this becomes a reality, one of the goals of the Senior Secondary School English Language Syllabus is that learners should “produce the kind of writing required of them in tertiary education and the world of work” (CDC, 2012 p.2). In this regard extended writing that is practised in summary and composition lessons should help students attain this purpose. The Ministry of Education believes that “improvement in the quality of higher education can only build on improvement in the quality of high school education....” (MOE 1996, p. 97). For academic writing in colleges, this means that students’ weaknesses and strengths in composition at secondary school level are a reflection of weaknesses and strengths at tertiary level and this may further entail that deficit for those entering colleges of education may without any intervention lead to deficit in the output and this may trickle down to lower levels thereby creating a vicious circle affecting the whole system.

To ensure that the Ministry of Education attains its goals, Zambia's Education quality hinges on the value system defined by an Outcome Based Education (OBE) curriculum (CDC, 2013) whose quality is determined by three perspectives: (a) inputs into the system, (b) what happens within the system and (c) the outputs from the system.

Inputs into the System tend to be at the centre of effective education delivery in educational institutions in Zambia. According to the 2013 Curriculum Framework, critical inputs in the education system include finances, resources and infrastructure (CDC, 2013). In view of this, one of the functions that higher education is mandated to fulfil is to “provide facilities appropriate for the pursuit of learning and research and for the acquisition of higher education....” (Higher Education Act of 2013 Article No. 2). For academic writing in Colleges of Education, this may include provision of library space and equipment, internet facilities and teaching and learning materials which may include books and ICT requisites. Emphasizing the importance of such provisions, the 1996 Education Policy '*Educating Our Future*' explains that “The calibre of teaching staff, adequacy of physical space, quality of library holdings...play an important role in determining the quality of those who emerge from higher level institutions” (p.96).

In Zambia, Colleges of Education (CoE) have a mandate of providing teacher education mainly at Diploma level although recent years have seen an introduction of degree programs offered by distance mode. Teacher education takes a period of three years leading to the award of a Diploma in pre- school, primary or secondary school teaching. The colleges are run on full time/part-time and distance modes. Programs offered vary in modes of delivery and enrolment. Some students are enrolled as in-service whereas some are enrolled as pre-service. In-service refers to those that are already serving and need upgrading whereas pre-service refers to initial teacher education that is designed for those who have not had any formal teaching orientation or experience. This study only targeted pre-service student teachers enrolled on full time, particularly, those that were pursuing Primary and Secondary Teachers' Diploma in Literacy and Language teaching.

Colleges of Education are run by either government, churches or private companies. Regardless of location, enrolment in these colleges is generally open to all categories of students meeting basic entry requirements. According to information obtained from college administrators, church run institutions were initially targeting high performing students generally referred to as '*the cream*'. However, this was no longer the case as the number of

institutions offering teacher education has rapidly increased thus, colleges are competing to recruit students. In view of this, all colleges enroll students with different abilities although those enrolled in church run institutions tend to enjoy certain privileges such as (1) equitable access to the available learning/teaching resources, for instance computers (2) individualized attention due to smaller numbers as compared to their counter parts in government run institutions (3) enough classroom and library space and (4) adequate boarding facilities.

With the foregoing, pre-entry college requirements are generally done on the basis of ability which is determined by candidates' performance in their senior secondary school final examinations by way of grades. According to the 1996 Education policy, "satisfactory passes in the school certificate examinations or their level equivalent are required for admission to all higher-level institutions" (*Educating Our Future*, p. 91). However, experience has shown that this standard does not always yield expected results. Some students' even with good grades may lack minimum writing requirements in the English language. This is why it is important to establish whether those who entered colleges had adequate exposure to writing.

What happens within the education system constitutes the processes used to organise, control and deliver education and training (CDC, 2013). For academic writing, this may include curriculum content, teaching methods and techniques employed; assessment and reinforcement strategies, time spent on teaching and learning as well as lecturers' requisite skills for successful handling of academic writing classes. Amongst the principles set to guide the success of an Outcome Based Education (OBE) curriculum is '*clarity of focus*'. This entails that "everything that the teacher and teacher-educator do must be focused on what learners want to know, understand and be able to do successfully" (CDC, 2013, p.16). In the area of academic writing, this may mean identifying the needs of students, focussing on those needs and applying the best practice to enhance students' acquisition of the necessary skills. Zambia's Education Curriculum Framework further guides that "When teachers and teacher-educators teach, they should focus on helping learners acquire the necessary knowledge skills and dispositions that will enable them achieve the desired outcomes (Ibid. CDC, 2013)". This calls for the adoption of best practices in approach and techniques.

Outputs from the system is primarily focused on the products or results of the education system. According to this study, it is expected that those who enter Colleges of Education and undergo education and training should not only possess theoretical knowledge but also exhibit capabilities to successfully accomplish assigned tasks during and after their training.

This is clearly reflected in the Education and Skills Sector Plan 2017-2021 which states that “One of the targets of Teacher Education is to ensure that teachers are well trained and have the requisite skills to sustainably improve learning outcomes” (p.98). Having requisite skills to improve learning outcomes for student teachers may entail possessing the required knowledge and attributes for carrying out academic tasks as students and for their professional performance and life-long learning (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009; Shannon, 2011). This is why enhancing students’ academic writing is one of the challenges faced by higher institutions of learning and in particular Colleges of Education in Zambia.

To try and bridge the gap that exist between secondary and tertiary education, the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) in collaboration with all University of Zambia (UNZA) affiliate Colleges of Education designed Study and Communication Skills Course which has since been implemented in many Colleges of Education. With this course in place, it was hoped that student teacher’s academic writing skills would improve. However, there seemed to be no improvement in student’s academic writing skills as noted in many subsequent External Examiners Reports in Colleges of Education (Zambia Institute of Special Education External Examiner’s Report, 2017; 2018; Kitwe College of Education External Examiner’s Report, 2014; 2015). Besides, it appeared that not much had been done to systematically investigate what CoE were doing to enhance student teachers’ academic writing skills in English as research has shown that many activities students undertake are in most cases unrelated to the kind performed by practitioners in their daily work (Herrington & Oliver, 1995).

An earlier qualitative study by Sichone (2015) looked at factors contributing to poor performance in academic writing at Kitwe college of Education with results showing that lack of practice, creativity and proper models to imitate as well as poor literacy background contributed to student’s poor academic writing skills in a College of Education. However, the study did not address what was being done to enhance student teachers’ academic writing. This is what underscores the importance of this study.

A recent study by Banja and Muzata (2019) looked at whether students of the School of Education at The University of Zambia (UNZA) were adequately prepared in citation and referencing. While this study had a focus on citation and referencing for student teachers at degree level, this study focused on what Colleges of Education were doing to enhance student teachers development of academic writing skills at diploma level. This study further extended the dimensions of inquiry by examining lecturers’ feedback practice and requisite skills for

teaching academic writing, thus, trying to unwrap what may be the cause of students under preparedness in areas such as citation and referencing.

Other related studies include Sidambi, (2011), Kalima (2012), Phiri (2015), and N’gona, (2016) with some of these focusing on factors contributing to poor writing skills at primary and secondary school levels and also on how composition was being taught in secondary schools. While some studies looked at the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners in early grades, this study aimed at extending all these studies by looking at interventions put in place in colleges to mitigate the impact of the problems established in tertiary education especially that this study targeted student teachers who were being prepared to teach English language in both primary and secondary schools. The study was premised on the idea that failure by colleges to improve student teachers’ academic writing skills could be one of the reasons pupils were completing grades twelve (12) with poor writing skills that were being replicated at tertiary level.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Academic Writing is known to be a complex task which poses many challenges to students as new entrants to tertiary level (Hassel & Ridout, 2018). Typical among the challenges are the need to “learn to think like an academic, conduct research like an academic, and write like academic” (Green & Lindinsky, 2012, p.1). These challenges coupled with students’ deficit in basic writing skills at secondary school can be overwhelming and can be a great hindrance to students’ success if not systematically addressed. In Zambia, there is a growing concern over students’ poor academic writing skills at tertiary level. In Colleges of Education, in particular, consecutive External Examiners Reports by University of Zambia (UNZA) staff indicate that the standard of writing exhibited by students fall way below the acceptable standards of college writing (Zambia Institute of Special Education External Examiner’s Report, 2017; 2018, Kitwe College of Education External Examiner’s Report, 2014; 2015). This does not only affect students’ academic performance in college but may also affect their professional performance and advancement as graduate teachers. However, it is not known what Colleges of Education are doing to ensure their students develop the requisite academic writing skills. Thus, the problem set as a question is “*What are Colleges of Education Doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills?*”

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills in English.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study tried to answer the following research questions:

1. to ascertain whether student teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school level
2. to investigate what colleges of education were doing to help students understand specific academic writing requirements at college level
3. to establish support mechanisms used by Colleges of Education to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills
4. to evaluate lecturers' feedback practice on written assignments at college level
5. to ascertain whether lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing

1.5 Main Research Question

What are Colleges of Education doing to ensure that students have requisite academic writing skills in English?

1.5.1 Specific Research Questions

The following specific research questions were addressed in the study:

1. How exposed to writing relevant texts were student teachers at secondary school level?
2. What are colleges of education doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college level?
3. What support mechanisms do Colleges of Education use to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills?
4. How do lecturers' feedback on student teachers' written assignments promote students' development of academic writing skills?
5. What requisite skills do lecturers have to effectively teach academic writing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings could be used by policy makers in Colleges of Education, Educational Curriculum Designers and policy makers in the Ministry of Education to come up with correct interventions in the improvement of academic writing skills at tertiary level. It may also help raise awareness on the need for teachers to pay attention to critical language skills such as writing in their teaching of English language at secondary school and college levels. The study could also open other areas for further research which may continue raising awareness on the various aspects of writing as a language skill and academic writing in particular. It may also contribute to the body of knowledge in Literacy and Language Education.

1.7 Delimitations

The study focused only on what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills in English and the study only targeted third year student teachers.

1.8 Limitation of Study

The study had a number of limitations. Firstly, it was only conducted in five (5) colleges of Education. Hence, findings may not be generalized to other colleges. Secondly, inclusion of first year students and classroom observation of academic writing instruction would have contributed to a better understanding of the problem. Besides, testing first year students' writing abilities on entry into college would have presented a fairer picture of student teachers' exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary school as well as the nature of knowledge and skills they bring with them into college. However, this was not possible as the college calendar had been disrupted by the Corona Virus Pandemic (COVID 19) which prevented students from being in college at the time the study should have been conducted. To counter this weakness, third year students' first assignments in college were used to help determine students' awareness of the essential aspects of an essay which included their ability to use the conventional forms of the written language. The use of one cohort of students also helped to provide a fairer picture of the outcomes of the interventions by testing students' writing abilities in their third and final year in college. Thirdly, the use of analytical scoring for grading the essay test may have affected the reliability of quantitative results as it can make weaker students get higher scores (Hyland, 2019). However, qualitative data helped

counteract this weakness by providing textual evidence of academic writing challenges that students were still facing in their final year in college.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This section presents theoretical and conceptual frameworks that were used in this study. A theoretical framework is generally understood as a blue print that guides the study. It guides the researcher to be systematic enough to identify logical and precisely defined relationships among variables (Basavanthappa, 2007). According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), a theoretical framework “serves as a structure and support of the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance and the research questions”. It “provides a grounding base or an anchor for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis”. (p.12). It is a basis for defining the meaning of a particular study. For Eisenhart (1991), it is “a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory ...constructed by using an established coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships (p.205). With this in mind, this study was guided by the Community of Practice (CoP) theory.

The Community of Practice theory was developed as a learning model by Anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger when they were studying apprenticeship (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017). Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the term ‘Community of Practice’ to refer to the community that serves as a ‘living curriculum’ for the apprentice. According to Wenger (1998), CoP serves as “a living context that can give newcomers access to competence and also can invite a personal experience of engagement by which to incorporate the competence into an identity of participation” (p.214). This, may entail that members of particular disciplines and subject areas constitute a community of practice that has the expertise which new members can learn from (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Based on the anthropological data on apprenticeships drawn from communities such as Yucate midwives in an American Indian Community and the Vai and Gola tailors, Lave & Wenger concluded that learning did not depend on the transmission of facts on a master apprentice relationship but that it is a social process situated in the cultural and historical context. They argued that “Learning is not just receiving or absorbing information, rather, it is increasing participation in communities of practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 49). This participation is at first legitimately peripheral but increases gradually in engagement and

complexity as the learner advances in knowledge and skills in community practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

The Community of Practice (CoP) theory is founded on the social-cultural theories of learning and development (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Jimenez-Sylva & Olson, 2012) also known as situated learning. Social cultural theories of learning advance that all human development and learning have their basis in the social cultural practices that are mediated by use of cultural artifacts, tools and signs (Vygotsky, 1978). The social aspect of learning “is an emphasis on the person as a social participant, as a meaning making entity for whom the social world is a resource for constituting an identity” (Wenger, 2001 p.2). This means, people acquire knowledge and understanding through their active participation and engagement with others in cultural practices that are situated in particular communities such as Colleges of Education (Wenger, 1998). Participation refers to “a process of taking part and also to the relations with others that reflect this process. It suggests both action and connection” (Wenger, 1998 p. 55). For beginners, participation should start with simple tasks from the boundary; an act referred to as ‘*Peripheral Participation*’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, critical to this theory in this study is the social process of shared learning that takes place between practitioners, who are in this case, lecturers and beginners such as student teachers (Wenger, 1998). The theory has two main conceptual dimensions on which this study is anchored. These are ‘*Communities*’ and ‘*Legitimate Peripheral participation*’.

1.9.1 Conceptualizing Community of Practice

There are various interpretations of Community of Practice and this has made the application of the theory difficult in some contexts. In their 1991 book; ‘*Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*’ Lave & Wenger used the term ‘Community of Practice’ to refer to “the naturally occurring processes underlying all knowledge and learning” (Hoadley, 2012 p. 291) and by this, the theory appeared to be detached from learning that takes place in formal contexts like Colleges of Education. However, Wenger’s (1998) and other subsequent works changed the notion of CoP from the learning that occurs naturally to learning that “can be explicitly created and fostered by institutions” (Ibid. Hoadley, 2012). In Wenger’s 1998 work; ‘*Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*’, CoP is presented as an approach to learning that is applicable to various contexts including education (Smith et al., 2017). Wenger defines CoP as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger &

Wenger-Trayner, 2015 p.1). This understanding is however, fluid lacking clarity on the ‘nature’ of groups and therefore difficult to apply in this study.

However, of particular interest to this study is Wenger-Trayner’s clarified conception of CoP in the 2016 article; “*Communities of Practice as a Social Learning Theory: A Conversation with Wenger*” where it is stated that “The notion of community of practice does not primarily refer to a ‘group’ of people per se. Rather, it refers to a social process of negotiating competence in a domain over time” (Farnsworth, Kleanhous and Wenger-Trayner 2016, p.5). This is what this study is focused on. In looking at what Colleges of Education are doing to optimize student teachers academic writing; we are trying to focus on the social processes of negotiating competence for new student teachers in academic writing. Thus, the study assumes that meaningful opportunities for developing student teachers academic writing skills and increasing their confidence in their abilities to write effectively can be possible if given opportunities to reflect and actively participate in the construction of their own understanding of academic writing issues within the Community of Practice model of learning.

1.9.2 Characteristics of a Community of Practice

There are three elements on which the CoP is established. These are domain, community and practice. The word ‘domain’ refers to “the area in which a community claims to have legitimacy to define competence” (Wenger-Trayner, 2014 p.5). The community comprises members for whom the domain is necessary. It defines how members relate and it is also an expression of the boundary between ‘the inside and the outside’ (Wenger, 1998). The term ‘Practice’ refers to “the body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, cases documents, which members share and develop together” (Wenger, 2004 para. 15). It may be looked at as a shared competence that community members identify themselves with (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Below is the graphic representation of the characteristics of Community of Practice.

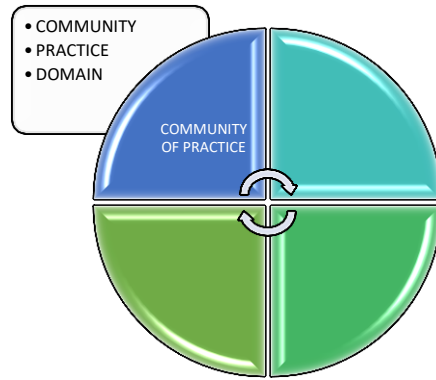


Figure: 1.1 Characteristics of a Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

1.9.3 Dimensions of a Community of Practice

According to Wenger (2010), participants in a CoP develop and negotiate “a set of criteria and expectations by which they recognize membership”. These are joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire (p.180).

Joint Enterprise- This refers to a collective understanding of what the community is and its purpose.

Mutual Engagement- This involves interacting and establishing norms, expectations and relationships within the community which leads to shared meaning on issues of interest.

Shared Repertoire refers to “the use of community resources such as language, artefacts, tools, concepts, methods and standards” (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017 p.212).

According to Wenger (1998) “It is through joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire that a community establishes guidelines as to what it is to be competent, participant, an outsider or somewhere in between” (p.137). Therefore, any member wishing to join a community must be given “access to all the three dimensions of practice in a community: mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation and enterprise, and to the repertoire in use” (p.100). Wenger further states that “establishing such guidelines is crucial for learning to take place” (p.13). For academic writing, this has implications on curriculum content, methods and approaches to teaching, teaching and learning resources as well as requisite knowledge for lecturers offering academic writing support.

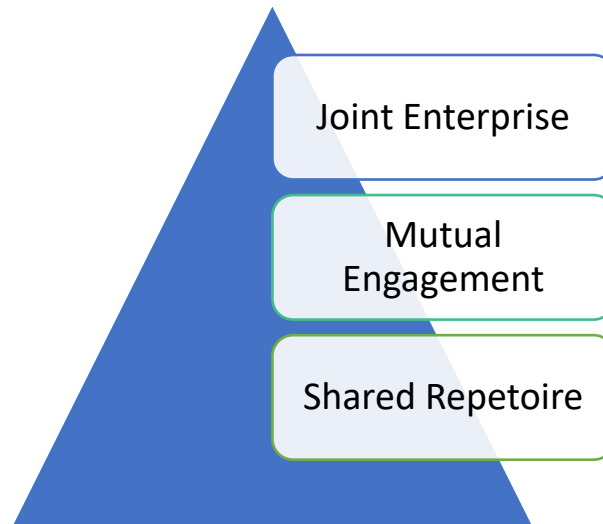


Figure: 1.2 Dimensions of a Community of Practice (Adopted from Wenger, 1998).

1.9.4 Modes of Identification in a Community of Practice

There are three modes of identification through which learning and development or sense of belonging is defined. These are (1) engagement, (2) imagination and (3) alignment. The following is an explanation of each of these concepts:

- a) **Engagement** means “being able to be involved in new activities to perform new tasks and functions; to master new understandings” (Lave & Wenger, 1991 p. 53). It means getting involved in the cultural practices of the community.
- b) **Imagination** means reflecting and constructing an image of the practice and its members and seeing self as one of them
- c) **Alignment** entails following directions aligning self with the expectations of the community; following laid down standards and coordinating of actions towards a common goal (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017 p. 212).

According to Lave & Wenger, the three modes of identification are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, their presence is crucial to the transformation of a CoP into a site of learning.

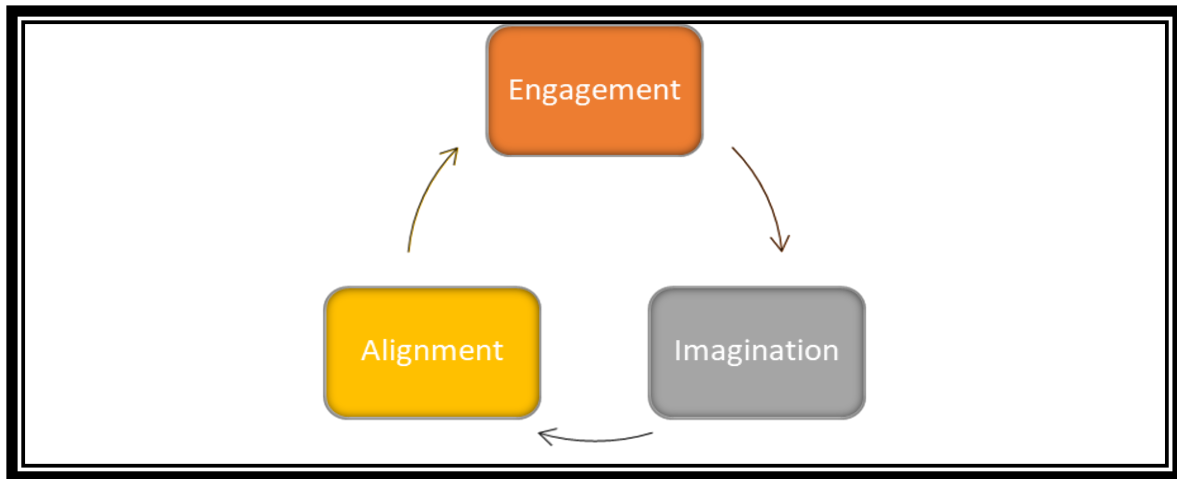


Figure: 1.3 Modes of Identification in a Community of Practice (Adopted from Wenger, 1998).

1.9.5 Communities of Practice and Academic Writing in Colleges of Education

New college entrants cross the boundary of high school education into tertiary Education where they are welcomed into different communities which are part of the broader social system of academia where each community endeavours to build its own practice in relation to the whole system (Wenger, 1998). As part of a broader system of academia, therefore, CoE should have in place strategies that ensure that student teachers are in theory and practice given access to all commonly held beliefs on academic writing as a way of enculturating them to academia. It is these beliefs that act as “glue to hold together the otherwise disparate community of lecturers and student researchers and scholars” (Fulwiler, 2002 p.57) that constitute an academic community. Through collaboration and engagement, new members begin to see who they are, their roles and their future in the practice. They begin to construct an image of themselves as one of the practitioners or an aspirant working towards becoming an expert, thereby increasing their motivation to learn (Wenger, 1998).

Student teachers’ alignment to academic writing practice comes about through increased levels of participation which makes their identities and understanding get ‘*aligned*’ to the practice as they advance in knowledge and skills of academic writing. With time, their levels and forms of participation continue changing until academic writing practice is mastered and internalized eventually leading to full membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2010). However, Jimenez-Sylva & Olson, (2012) noted that, students’ level of participation and type can “be affected by power, motivation and personality” (p. 336) which are typical to situated contexts and this can in turn inhibit students’ learning and development. To address these

possible barriers, they suggested that students must be provided with multiple and varied opportunities in which to collaborate and make meaning of the content. For student teachers in Colleges of Education, this would mean engaging them in collaborative academic writing activities which can be done at different social levels such as between lecturers and students, between students and fellow students and on class level as a whole.

Within Colleges of Education, however, there often exists variations on what happens between disciplines which according to Wenger entails differences (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017). The differences emanate from “different enterprises, different ways of engaging with one another; different histories, repertoires, ways of communicating and capabilities” (Wenger, 2000 p.125). These differences that mostly arise from subject combinations and disciplinary content in CoE practically place student teachers in many communities. Thus, operation in one community entails crossing the boundary of other communities. This often presents itself with a challenge of negotiating between what applies in one instance and what does not in another. However, Wenger (1998) considers crossing of boundaries as an opportunity to transfer some elements of one practice into another; an act she refers to as ‘brokering’ (p.109). Nevertheless, this may not often satisfy the academic writing needs of the usually broad spectrum of disciplines in a college setup. Given that each discipline has its own preferred writing conventions, variations often exist between disciplines on the basis of standards used to form judgement on the quality of a given piece of writing (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009) as explained by Gosling (2003):

The types of writing demanded by academics reflect a variety of specialist genres. Essays required by each discipline have developed as part of the community of practice of each sub text and reflect subtle differences in the ways in which arguments should be presented and authorities referenced, the extent to which personal opinion is acceptable or quotations are expected, the use of terminology (or jargon) and many other subtleties that are rarely made explicit to students (in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p. 122-123).

In this regard, one writing style in one discipline may be judged to be good writing whereas it may not be so in another discipline, for example, natural sciences and social sciences exhibit different discourse patterns and discipline specific discourse which is sometimes not in conformity with the commonly held beliefs that are taught in academic writing courses. In Wenger-Trayner’s words, “Local forms of engagement in practice and definition of competence may be in resistance to policies” (Farnsworth, Kleanhous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016 p.19) thereby causing problems in discipline specific discourse.

In Colleges of Education, for example, academic writing contexts range from subject content, subject methods, classroom presentations and school experience. Each of these may have a locally defined standards that may be different from what is generally acceptable at institutional level. Thus, students' attempt to transfer some elements of one practice into another may sometimes be met with resistance in other communities. This is more so when academic writing instructions are solely handled by one discipline, for example, language experts. In such cases, students may find themselves in awkward situations which may fill them with distrust, resistance and failure to improve in their academic writing endeavors as expressed by Wenger-Trayner who puts it this way, "If you have a strong identification with the competence of a community and see it as a desirable part of your trajectory, rejected claims of competence result in a painful experience and marginalisation (Farnsworth, Kleanhous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016 p.19). In this regard, CoP calls for the need to pay attention to the "complexities within the negotiation of identity and practice" (Ibid) and the researcher agrees with this. In support of this, Gursharan (2017) adds that,

Writing is not a skill that students learn separately from other processes. It is one that combines complex activities including categorizing, building key terms and concepts for a subject, measuring one's relationship to a subject, making new connections, abstracting, figuring out significance and developing arguments (p.233).

Consistent with this view, Wilmot & Sisitka (2015) also argued that academic writing is not merely a set of skills one can acquire outside their discipline or context but a socially mediated social practice. Thus, to ensure that student teachers attain proficiency in academic writing, there must be a connection between subject community and discipline community. A common curriculum and policies that may be in place as determining factors for what constitutes competence may demand supplementary discipline specific in-put to enhance students' proficiency in academic writing. Given that colleges have potential to bring together a variety of lecturers with different expertise (Lave & Wenger, 1991), joint enterprise entails that college lecturers must work together to improve student teachers academic writing skills. There should be mutual engagement amongst lecturers to discuss problems affecting student teachers academic writing which should lead to development of a shared repertoire by way of guidelines and resources. This may enable the entire college community; the field of study, students as individual writers in their respective courses to appreciate and respect discipline specific conventional forms of academic writing (Fulwiler, 2002) thereby, enhancing harmony and proficiency. Whether this was obtaining in Colleges of Education was in part the interest of this study.

1.9.6 Legitimate Peripheral Participation

According to Lave & Wenger (1991) legitimate peripheral participation is “a process by which new comers become part of the community of practice”. It serves as “an important background condition under which new comers become included in a Community of Practice” (Smith, Hayes & Shea p. 213). Thus, peripheral participation can be taken as a transitional phase during which students are engaged in the actual practice “only to a limited degree and with limited responsibility for the ultimate product of a whole” (Lave and Wenger, 1991p.14). This means giving new comers access to mature practice and in the process, embracing mistakes made as part of learning. According to Lave & Wenger, (1991), “New comers’ legitimate peripherality provides them with more than ‘observational’ look out post. It crucially involves participation as a way of learning-of both absorbing and being absorbed in the culture of a Community of Practice” (p.95). According to this theory, participation should begin at the periphery (Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Lave, 2001). Periphery’ is “a region that is neither inside nor fully outside” (Wenger, 1998 p. 117).

1.9.6.1 Dimensions of Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Legitimate entails that all parties involved accept the position of not being experts but as upcoming members of the community of practice while peripheral entails taking a position that is neither outside nor inside but hanging on the edge being given peripheral responsibilities. As for participation, it entails getting engaged in community activities, that is, learning by doing.

1.9.6.2 Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Colleges of Education

Colleges of Education can be said to be CoP in which “a constant process of legitimate peripheral participation takes place” (Hoadley, (2012 p.290). In these institutions, lecturers and student teachers constitute a CoP in which student teachers are engaged in ‘*legitimate peripheral participation*’. For academic writing, legitimate peripheral participation can be viewed as a transitional phase for bridging the gap that exists between senior secondary school writing and college level writing. This is usually a two-way strategy. The first one involves closing knowledge and skills gaps in basic writing usually taken as deficit in secondary school. Fuller et al., (2005) refer to it as a period for ‘catching-up’ (p.51). Peripheral participation is in this case rests on the fact that new entrants often enter colleges with varying gaps in basic writing skills which should be addressed before students can be introduced to college level writing given that basic writing skills are critical foundational

skills to academic writing. However, this can only succeed when colleges are aware of student teachers' weaknesses in basic writing skills on entry into college. This can be done by undertaking a needs assessment for new college entrants. Whether colleges of Education were doing this was in part the interest of this study.

The second strategy is to introduce students to tertiary level writing as demanded of them in college and academia; the communities they are joining. Legitimate peripheral participation can in this case be taken as a period of 'enculturation' into the practice of their community. According to Gavelek & Kong (2012), enculturation is "a process whereby individuals develop their group's culture through experience, observation and instruction" (p.2029). For Colleges of Education, legitimate peripheral participation in the case of academic writing may refer to a period of learning and teaching of students what academic writing constitutes both in their particular subject areas and in academia in general. This entails according students' legitimacy to the social practices of academia (community) enabling them access to the values, beliefs, goals and activities of academic writing. Wenger (1998) suggests the different ways through which this can be done. This includes "lessened intensity, lessened risky, special assistance, less cost of error, close supervision or less production pressure" (p.100). For Lave & Joyce (2011), legitimacy has to do with the degree of depth and length of an assignment or activity. This ultimately entails framing content around student teachers' abilities and resources.

However, the success of legitimate peripheral participation is dependent on the length of time accorded for legitimacy. Insufficient time for legitimacy may affect the outcomes of legitimate peripheral participation. Therefore, beginners must be given enough time of engagement to enhance development of knowledge and skills. Emphasizing this, Lave & Wenger (1991) explained that "an extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture and practice of the community theirs" (p.95). This is critical in the sense that "To learn is to develop the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the communal, cultural practices and to become a fully functioning member of the community" (Gavelek & Kong, 2012 p. 2029). For academic writing in a College of Education, this means giving students enough time of engagement in various activities that enable them interact, share and participate in academic writing as a way of developing their capabilities before they can be engaged in advanced writing. Through their interaction, sharing and participation in particular cultural practices of their community over a period of

time, “they develop their understanding about the practice, about who they are and about what they know in relation to the community and its goals” (Jimenez-Sylva & Olson, 2012 p.336) thereby, becoming proficient in the practice.

In a nutshell, the Community of Practice theory provides some insights that can help us reflect on academic writing support and instruction by offering suggestions on how learning contexts can be organised to promote effective teaching and learning of academic writing at tertiary level. The theory has also dwelt on the need for active engagement and participation of students in academic writing by practitioners. From the theory, it is learnt that new entrants should be introduced to academic writing as peripheral participants learning through observation and guided practice to help them grasp the practice before they can be fully engaged in advanced writing. However, critical to success is the length of time spent on peripheral participation.

1.10 Operational Definitions

<i>College of Education</i>	a college that offers initial teacher training
<i>Academic writing</i>	any writing done to fulfill a requirement of a college or university education
<i>Writing skills</i>	techniques and strategies that one uses to write correctly.
<i>Senior secondary</i>	education provided from the 10 th to the 12 th grade
<i>Academia</i>	people, activities and institutions that are connected with education especially colleges and universities
<i>Academic discourse</i>	Style of writing in academic contexts
<i>Proficiency</i>	having a good standard and ability
<i>Tertiary education</i>	all post-secondary education (higher education). In literature, tertiary and higher education are used synonymously
<i>Lecturers</i>	refers to those charged with educating student teachers in a college or university. In literature, the words teacher educator, tutor, instructor and lecturer are used synonymously
<i>Enhance</i>	intensify efforts towards improving academic writing

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed the introduction to the study. For the purpose of providing a discourse meaning to the study, topic concepts have been defined. The chapter has also looked at the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the objectives. It has also

outlined the research questions, significance of the study, limitations, and delimitations. The next chapter is a review of related literature.

1.12 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter One looks at the background to the study, states the statement of the problem, purpose and the objective of the study. It also outlines research questions which are followed by the significance and delimitation of the study. Next are the definition of terms and the chapter concludes with the Chapter Summary.

Chapter Two reviews literature related to the research topic. First, it reviews general literature addressing conceptual dimensions of academic writing followed by studies conducted in different countries according to the research objectives. The last part is the Chapter Summary.

Chapter Three covers the research methodology. It starts with an overview followed by the study area after which comes the research design followed by the research method, target population and the study sample. Next is the sampling procedure followed by research instruments, validity of instruments, construct validity, reliability of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. Thereafter, the chapter explains data collection strategies followed by ethical considerations and ends with Chapter Summary.

Chapter Four presents findings of the study. All the responses given by the respondents are appearing under this chapter. Related themes also appear as subtitles to avoid repetition in the data presentation.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study. It brings out what the results mean in relation to what other researchers and scholars have written. Different authors, names, and individuals whose works are related to this study are coherently discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

Chapter Six brings out the summary of findings and recommendations which ends with a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

Chapter one provided a background to the study. This chapter reviews some literature on academic writing. According to Creswell (2012), a literature review is “a written summary of articles, books, and other documents that describe the past and current state of knowledge about a topic, organizes the literature into topics and documents a need for a proposed study” (p.105). The literature review was done to broaden my understanding of the topic, establish the gaps and inform research questions (Yin, 2018). To come up with the data, the University of Zambia and Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences libraries and online sources were consulted. The topics discussed were developed from the literature review itself. Conceptual review is done first followed by related studies which are organized according to the objectives of the study. The chapter ends with a summary.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This aspect of the review looked at the definitions of academic writing bringing out the purposes for which academic writing is done, its characteristics, the different styles and genres of academic writing together with the models and approaches to teaching academic writing. The review has also tried to discuss the different dimensions of academic writing bringing out what students may need to understand for them to write effectively.

2.1.1 Conceptualising Academic Writing

There seems to be no outright definition of academic writing. This may be due to the complexity of the dimensions that the concept encompasses. However, scholars have tried to define it in ways that can shed more light on what it may entail in particular contexts such as Colleges of Education (CoE). Generally, definitions of academic writing have been influenced by stages in the academic writing career, that is, the different levels of academic scholarship, academic discipline and field of specialization as well as the purpose for which one is writing (The Avok Centre for Academic Writing and Communication, 2013). The following are some of the ways scholars have attempted to define it.

Academic writing is sometimes referred to as a discipline with its specifications and attributes that distinguish it from other disciplines. It is characterised by certain features such as title, references and attributes ranging from language choice and expression (Akkaya &

Aydin, 2018) which any academic writer is expected to know and apply. Thus understood, academic writing for new entrants in the words of Green & Lindnsky (2012) becomes “the challenging intellectual price of admission to college” (p.v). Although students are exposed to writing in their earlier stages of education, they cannot not be expected to know on their own the standard of writing required in college. The writing skills acquired prior to entering colleges should serve as foundation for the mastery of academic writing which they should learn. It is for this reason that this study sought to establish what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers’ academic writing skills in English.

Academic writing may also be described as a style of expression that researchers use to define intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific areas of expertise (Labaree, 2009). This seem to points to the idea that AW is not just a cognitive act but a social practice defined by the norms of the community of practice. In this respect, it can be suggested that academic writing includes creating identity which is attained through recourse to the established norms of a discipline; “When writing, we put on an identity, a particular way of acting, interacting, thinking and valuing that has meaning for readers in a given context, so what we write for our friends or professionally presents us in different ways” (Ivanic, 1998 in Hyland, 2019 p.33). To clarify this, Chala & Chapeton (2012) add that “Writing embeds ideologies and powers that are intrinsically attached to the writers and that are put together in a dialogical relationship with their voice, influencing their beliefs, ideas and feelings, mediated by their role in their writing event” (p.26). In other words, academic writing is rooted in communities of practice (Graham, 2018) that provide social academic contexts each of which has “acceptable conventions in terms of style and structure as well as language” (de Chazal, 2014 p.187). Academic writing takes place in a social context in the following ways as explained by Lennie-Irvin (2010):

- a. Students’ writing is always embedded within relationships around teaching and learning and these relationships influence the extent to which students come to write successfully in higher education.
- b. Conventions governing exactly what constitutes ‘appropriate academic writing’ are social to the extent that these have developed within specific and academic and disciplinary communities over time.
- c. Students are learning not only to communicate in particular ways, but are learning how to be ‘particular’ kinds of people: that is to write as academics do (p.10).

Thus understood, variations do exist in AW conventions as well as what students may “need to learn” (de Chazal 2014, p.209) and use in particular contexts and fields (Bjork et al., 2003). Consistent with this idea, Chala & Chapeton (2012) argues that “We need to consider writing as a situated social practice as it cannot be similarly applicable to all contexts, situations, purposes and audiences” (p.27). Therefore, optimizing students’ academic writing skills may entail unveiling to them the disciplinary culture and traditions of academic writing as defined (Bazerman, 2004) in a particular community of practice. Whether Colleges of Education were doing this was the question that this study sought to answer.

For some scholars, academic writing is said to be “one of the steps in the academic research process through which scientists report situations of thinking, experience, observation, application, testing...as to the solution of a scientific problem identified” (Akkaya & Aydin 2018, p.129). Consistent with this view, Monippally, Pawar & Shanka (2010) present it as a means of documenting and communicating research process and outcomes. For Greene & Lindinsky (2012), “Academic writing is what scholars do to communicate with other scholars in their fields of study” (p.1). Extending this view, Mutimani (2016), refers to it as “a serious and professional way to communicate with academic peers and university teaching staff” (p.20). Others such as Sajid & Siddiqui (2015) with similar views describe it as “structured research” practiced and used by researchers at higher education level (p. 175). To clarify this, Bahar (2014) adds that “...all principles considered while reporting an academic research and process of textualising it is called academic writing” (p.213). This points to the idea that AW involves demonstration of knowledge and proficiency with “certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting and presenting” (Lennie-Irvin, 2010 p.8) which new students may not be familiar with and may need guidance from old practitioners such as lecturers.

In some instances, academic writing is seen to be “just another form of writing through which human beings communicate with fellow human beings” (Gillet, Hammand & Martala, 2009, p. xix). However, this definition may be misleading in that academic writing has unique qualities which distinguish it from other types of writings and this is what students as new comers may need to understand for them to write effectively. Consistent with this idea, Rankins et al., (2010) argue that “narrow definitions of academic writing do not serve students well because they ignore the rhetorically situated and social bases for writing and the potential role of writing to span the personal, professional and civic areas of students’ lives” (p.56). Thus, by contrast, Sultan (2013) define academic writing as “a distinct style of writing used by those in academia and research communities that is noted for its detached objectivity,

its use of critical analysis and its presentation of a well-structured clear argument based on evidence and reason” (p.139 cited in Schillings et al., 2018 p.1). Nzekwe-Excel (2014) presents it as “a formal style that conforms to a set of conventions in presenting ideas and viewpoints on a particular topic” (p. 12). These definitions summarise the characteristics of academic writing which underscores its uniqueness. This is why understanding how academic writing differs from other types of writing is an essential aspect of a good student. For this reason, assessment of academic work includes “how well a piece of work is structured from introduction through to conclusion” (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009, p. 7). However, as noted by Bailey (2018), “New entrants may not have the capabilities and propensities with traditional higher education practices, expectations and values at the outset” and this is why this study sought to establish what colleges were doing to help students understand specific academic writing conventions in college.

In other instances, academic writing refers to what beginners must learn to participate in particular academic disciplines (Green & Lindnsky, 2012). It may also be understood as components or topics of study whose aim is to equip students with knowledge and skills in academic writing. Academic writing can also refer to a body of knowledge which serves as a resource for advancing academic arguments. As a body of existing knowledge, academic writing in the words of Bjork et al., (2003) calls “for a thoughtful study of the existing sources” (p. 24). This understanding is important in that it spells out some of the skills that new college entrants may need to master if they are to write effectively. As beginners, students must learn to read, analyse and evaluate works written by others, present their own point of view and support it (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). This study sought to establish what CoE were doing to ensure that students have requisite skills to effectively handle academic writing tasks at college level.

From the above definitions, it can be deduced that academic writing can mean different things to different people and contexts. It can refer to a step in the research process or to a body of knowledge and skills that can be pursued by those wishing to engage in academia or to a discipline in its own right. Academic writing can also refer to the entire process of compiling academic research or to pieces of writing that are products of academic inquiry. For people outside academia, it may be taken to be just another form of writing that human beings can utilize. For college students, understanding academic writing as a subject of study, a discipline in its own right, an activity, a process, a step in the research process and as a product of a scientific research constituted the inquiry into what Colleges of Education (CoE)

were doing to optimize student teachers academic writing skills in English. While the depth of knowledge and skills students may need in CoE may not be compared, for example, to what a masters' level student may need, this understanding is important for their success as it may institute confidence in them as they engage in different academic writing activities. For the purpose of this study therefore, academic writing was narrowed down to what students needed to accomplish college assignments with the word assignment extended to include any academic related tasks that involves extended writing.

2.1.2 Purposes of Academic Writing

While writing is known to be a tool for teaching and learning in colleges and universities, the general purposes for which writing is done varies. These range from (1) assessment of knowledge and abilities of students in their various fields, (2) development of students' critical thinking and understanding, (3) enhancement of students learning opportunities beyond lectures to (4) training of students in skills useful in their future professions (Coffin et al., 2003). Specifically, students in colleges and universities write to (a) report on a piece of research the writer has done, (b) answer the questions given, (c) discuss subjects of common interest and give the writer's view and (4) synthesise research done by others (Bailey, 2011, p.3). According to Shannon (2011), academic writing is done to present information about a specific subject precisely and objectively (p.2). It includes explaining a subject, reporting on research findings, analysing and evaluating a subject, expressing opinion on a subject and persuading readers to accept it (Chin et al., 2012). These different purposes constitute what academic writing may be and what it may demand at college level. However, critical to this study was to establish what CoE were doing to ensure that students have requisite skills to attain these purposes.

2.1.3 Genres of Academic Writing

A genre can be defined as “a class of communication events whose members share the same set of communicative purposes” (Swales 1990 p. 58). It can also be understood as a predictable and recurring pattern of everyday academic and literacy texts occurring within a particular culture (Hamond and Derewianka, 2001). According to Hyland (2019), a genre is “a set of texts that share the same socially recognised purpose and so often have similar rhetorical and structural elements to achieve this purpose” (p.273). The word ‘genre’ can also be defined as a “term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations (Hyland, 2008 p. 544). It “represents the norms of

different kinds of writing” (Harmer, 2015 p.363). In academia, genres may refer to the different types of academic writing.

Academic writing genres often come in different forms and structures and they have different purposes (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). Genres of academic writing include essays, research papers, case studies, literature review, project reports, proposals, book reviews, abstracts, case studies, thesis and dissertations. In CoE, however, typical genres include essays often written as out of class assignments and in class examinations, research proposals, reports and other research papers (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). Understanding the type and nature of genres before students can be engaged in writing (Harmer, 2015) is critical to their success. The following is an explanation of some of the genres of academic writing:

2.1.3.1 Academic Essay

According to Soles (2005) an academic essay is a specific writing genre that functions within a set of norms, rules, and conventions (p.22). Academic essays are written to present an argument to the reader and are usually written as a continuous piece of writing without headings or subheadings (Gillett, Hammond and Martala, 2009). Generally, essay texts vary according to function. An essay may comprise different elements depending on whether it is framed as a critical review, a discussion, a personal response or an exposition” (Coffin et al., 2003, p.21).

2.1.3.1.1 The Basic Structure of an Academic Essay

The structure of an academic essay is dependent on the discipline and the type of genre that one is using. However, certain features are common to all types of essays. The following are the common features of an academic essay:

Introduction

An introduction opens academic essay stating the background of the topic. It (a) establishes the voice and tone, or attitude of the writer towards the subject (b) introduces the general topic of the essay (c) states the thesis that will be supported in the body paragraph and (d) provides sign posts of what would be discussed in the essay (Horkoff, 2015). A good introduction is one that helps the reader to understand the purpose and scope of the essay (Bailey, 2015).

Main Body

The main body of an essay is the part that answers the question. It is divided into paragraphs which are linked by phrases and conjunctions (Bailey (2015)). A paragraph can be defined as a group of sentences that deal with a single topic (Publishing, 2012). For Oshima & Hogue (2006), it is “a group of related sentences that discuss one main idea”. Body paragraphs comprises a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding statement.

A topic sentence is a sentence that brings out the main idea of a paragraph. It is mostly the opening sentence in a paragraph. The topic sentence helps connect the idea from the previous paragraph to the current one. It also delimits what will be discussed in a particular paragraph (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). According to Hokoff (2015), “An effective topic sentence combines the main idea with the writers’ personal attitude or opinion”. (p.91). A good topic sentence should (1) clearly specify what will come in the rest of the paragraph (2) contain both the topic and a controlling idea that reveals the writers’ position on the topic (3) be clear and easy to follow (4) not contain supporting details and (5) be engaging to the reader (Horkoff, 2015).

Supporting sentences - are the building blocks of an argument. They bring out more information about the topic. Supporting sentences may focus on description, illustration, explanation and general development of the topic (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Savage & Shaffiei, 2007) depending on the topic in question. Each supporting sentence should be linked to the main idea of the text and should be clear and convincing (Publishing, 2012). The different sentences are linked to the different parts of a paragraph by using reference words, conjunctions and adverbs (Bailey, 2018).

Types of Sentences in English

For students to write essays effectively, they need to have a good mastery in the construction of different types of sentences. Mastering the types of sentences can help them to use a variety of sentences in writing. There are four basic sentence constructions in English which students should be familiar with. These are (1) simple sentence, (2) compound sentence (3) complex sentence and (4) compound complex sentence. A simple sentence is one that has one independent clause while a compound sentence is a sentence that contains two independent clauses which are joined by either a coordinator, conjunctive adverb or a semicolon. As for a complex sentence, it is one that constitutes at least one independent and one dependent clause. Dependent clauses in a complex sentence may either refer to the subject, time

sequence or causal elements of the independent clause. A compound complex sentence is a sentence that comprises at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Horkoff, 2015). The table below shows the types of sentences in English and their Examples:

Table: 2.1 Types of Sentence Patterns in English and their Examples

Type of Sentence	Example
Simple sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He gave me an umbrella. • He travelled to Nakonde.
Compound sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He forgot to lock the door but no one entered the room. • She cleared the land on the first day and planted the maize on the second one.
Complex Sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it was dark, he was able to identify the car which was used by the thieves • It was around midday when Mulenga arrived from South Africa by a Zambia Airways plane. • Because he came late, he was sent out of the exam.
Compound Complex Sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the teacher nearby, they decided to consult on the assignment and they made sure they understood what the question required them to do. • Although Grace went ahead of them to prepare the house for occupation, her companions did not appreciate what she did and they engaged another person to clean the room before they moved in.

Adapted from Oshima & Hogue (2006)

Common Errors Made in Sentences

Students' common sentences problems may be fragments, run-ons, comma splices, choppy and stringy sentences. According to Oshima & Hogue (2006), fragments are incomplete

sentences whereas run-ons and comma splices are “incorrectly joined independent clauses (p.191). Choppy sentences are sentences that are very short and stringy sentences are those with many clauses which are usually joined by conjunctions such as ‘but’ ‘and’ or so. These sentences take a speech like pattern. In other words, they are written as though one is talking.

Linking of Sentences in a Paragraph

The quality of a text is dependent on the logical linkage of sentences. Sentences that build a paragraph are logically linked through the use of transitions (Shannon, 2011; Malia, 2017; Horkoff, 2017). According to Malia (2017) transitions are “words or phrases that show the connection between ideas or sentences” (p.9). Transitional words are used to signal to readers a movement from one idea to the next (Lennie-Irvin, 2010). There are six categories of transitional words used in different texts which students must understand if they are to write effectively. These include (1) spatial order words, (2) time order words, (3) numerical order words, (4) cause/effect order words, (5) comparison contrast order words and (6) general specific order words (Malia, 2017). Transitional words help a writer to move logically and smoothly from one sentence to the next. The following is a table displaying categories and examples of transitional words:

Table: 2. 2 Categories and Examples of Transitional Words

No.	Transitional Words	Examples	Text Type
1	Spatial Order Words	above below besides nearby under	Descriptive Writing
2	Time Order Words	before after finally while next	Narratives
3	Numerical Order Words	first, second, thirdly, equally important	expository writing

4	Cause/Effect Order Words	because, such as, since, for, so... as, consequently, as a result,	expository writing
5	Comparison Contrast Order Words	additionally, just as, as if, similarly, but, yet, only, although on the other hand	Expository express similarities and differences
6	General Specific Order Words	such as, for instance, that is, in fact, in other words, indeed	Descriptive Reports and Arguments.

Adopted from Malia (2017)

Length of a Paragraph

Although there are no strict rules on how long a paragraph should be, Bailey (2015) is of the view that a paragraph should not be less than four or five sentences in length. However, Horkoff (2015) on the contrary, argues that the length of a paragraph does not matter as long as the writers' points are addressed and ideas fully explained. In his view, a paragraph can also comprise two or three sentences when a writer wishes to stress a point or present "succinct supporting ideas" (p.90). However, success in this is dependent on how skilled one is in the development of ideas. Some writers in colleges may find it difficult to develop ideas and may need help in the organization and development of paragraphs. This is why this study sought to establish what CoE were doing to help improve student teachers' writing abilities.

Essay Conclusion

The last part of an essay is a conclusion. A good essay conclusion should summarise the main points in an essay (Bailey, 2015). According to Oshima & Hogue (2006), essay conclusions perform the following functions (a) signals that the essay is coming to an end, (b) reminds the reader of the main points discussed in the text, (c) summarises the subtopics of an essay (d) informs the reader of the writers' final position on the essay (e) and depending on the topic, the conclusion may include predictions, suggestions or consequences and or offer a solution to a particular problem

2.1.3.1.2 Common Essay Patterns in Academic Writing

Generally, essays written in colleges can either be expository or argumentative (Shannon, 2011). The main purpose of an expository essay is to inform the reader about a phenomenon. In an expository essay, the writer seeks to bring out as much information as possible on the topic (Horkoff, 2015). Lennie-Irvin (2010) defines an argument as “a carefully arranged and supported presentation of a view point” (p.9). There are a number of styles that essays can take depending on the topic and questions. The common essays written in colleges include cause effect, compare and contrast, discussion and persuasive also known as argumentative (Bailey, 2015; Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

2.1.3.1.2.1 Cause and Effect Essays

Cause and effect essays are written to determine how two phenomena relate in terms of origin and results (Horkoff, 2015). In these essays, writers are expected to demonstrate the connection between cause and effect (Bailey, 2015). In view of this, the thesis must indicate the writers' opinion on the main cause and main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition. Cause and effect essays require that the writer provides strong evidence to support the argument (Horkoff, 2015).

Organisation of Cause-and-Effect Essays

In terms of organisation, cause and effects essays can be organised in two different ways. One of the ways is block organisation. This is where the two aspects causes and effects are explored separately. The writer can start with writing on one aspect, for example, causes only and only move on to write on the effects once causes are fully explored. The second way is chain organisation. This is where causes and effects follow each other in a chain. The causes are organised in such a way that one particular cause leads to another event which in turn also causes another event (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Cause-and-effect essays use words and phrases that signal cause and effect relationship (Oshima, 2006) in order to express the relationship that occurs between two elements. The table below shows some of the words and phrases that are used to signal cause and effect relationships in texts.

Table: 2.3 Examples of Words and Phrases used in Compare and Contrast Essays

Words used to compare	Words used to contrast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • also • similarly • in the same manner • correspondingly • likewise • equally • by the same token • both • just as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • although, • and yet, • at the same time • but • despite • conversely • instead, • even though, • however, • in contrast, • in spite of, • in opposition, • nevertheless, • on the contrary • on the other hand • still though,

Adapted from Oshima & Hogue (2006)

2.1.3.1.2.2 Discussion Essays

Discussion texts are texts written to present the case from more than one point of view (Hyland, 2019). In a discussion text, the writer must demonstrate a clear knowledge of both sides of the argument and give reasons in support of the position taken (Bailey, 2015).

A discussion text can be organised in two different ways. One of the ways is to discuss the benefits in one section and move on to disadvantages in another section. The other way is to discuss both aspects in turns (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Linguistic Features of Discussion Texts

Discussion texts use impersonal language and as such personal phrases such as ‘I think’, ‘in my opinion’ should be avoided (Bailey, 2015). Below is a table showing some rhetorical features of discussion texts.

Table: 2.4 Linguistic Features of Discussion Texts

Commonly Held Views	Views of Few people
It is believed that...	It can be argued that...
Most people are of the view that...	One view is that...
It is probable that...	
It is generally accepted that....	
Vocabulary for Discussion	
The merits	
advantages	
benefits	

Source: Bailey, (2015)

2.1.3.1.2.3 Persuasive/Argumentative Texts

According to Oshima & Hogue (2006), an argumentative essay is one “in which you agree or disagree with an issue using reasons to support your opinion (p.114). Lennie-Irvin (2010) defines an argument as “a carefully arranged and supported presentation of a view point” (p.9). An argumentative essay requires that the writer takes a stance on an issue, provides reasons and backs the reasons given with solid evidence. Unlike expository writing, this style of writing encompasses opinions, biases and reasons for particular points of view to convince the reader (Publishing, 2012). According to Graham et al., (2016), an argumentative text should have (1) proposition which is the basis of argument, (2) claims about the proposition (3) supporting evidence (facts and opinion) (4) well supported generalisations (5) incorporation of anticipated objections and (5) a strong closure.

Organisation of Persuasive/Argumentative Text

An argumentative text can take a block pattern or a point-by-point pattern. Like any other essay types, it is typically divided into three parts. These are introduction, main body and conclusion (Bailey, 2015).

Introduction - The introductory part of an argumentative essay comprises three things. These are hook statement, background and thesis statement. A hook statement is a statement that captures the interest of reader. Its aim is to instil interest in a reader. This can be achieved by using rhetorical questions, a quotation or an interesting idea. The second aspect is the background and it introduces the topic under discussion without unpacking the main arguments. It helps narrow the topic to a particular focus (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Horkoff, 2015). The thesis statement is the last sentence of an introduction. It clearly states the main argument of the essay.

Main Body - The main body of an argumentative essay is the part that answers the question. It brings out the key issues and it is written in paragraphs. Each new paragraph opens with a topic sentence. The paragraphs constitute a (a) a topic sentence, (b) a claim, (c) evidence and (d) concluding statement. A topic sentence is the main idea of each paragraph. It helps connect ideas from the previous paragraph to the current one. The claim connects the current argument to the main thesis. Its aim is to validate and strengthen the thesis. Each argument is backed by evidence. The evidence should be based on factual information. A paragraph ends with a concluding statement. The purpose of the concluding statement is to summarise the overall significance of the claim to the thesis (Edith Cowan University, 2011).

Conclusion - Like any other type of essays, an argumentative essay ends with a conclusion. The essay conclusion in an argumentative essay does the following:

a. Restates the thesis statement

The first sentence of a conclusion is often the restatement of the thesis statement which is the central idea of the argument. The thesis statement should be presented in certain terms to help convince the reader.

b. Provides a brief summary of sub arguments

This helps the reader to remember the main points raised.

c. Overall concluding statement

A conclusion of an argumentative text ends with a memorable statement that states the importance of the information presented on the topic.

Linguistic Features of an Argumentative Essay

According to Hyland (2008), effective writing of an argumentative text requires a good command of linguistic and rhetoric skills to persuade the reader with clearly organised and coherent paragraphs. The following table shows some of the language features of an argumentative text:

Table: 2.5 Linguistic Features of an Argumentative Text

Aspect of Argument	Linguistic Features
Discussions	uses the present simple tense Referent words; it, they, those, this
Linking paragraphs	First, second, firstly, secondly, to begin with, finally
Supporting Details	Besides, furthermore, in addition, apart from
Expression of the same idea in a different way	In other words, simply said, with this in mind
Diction	Uses descriptive words that appeals to emotion, for instance, amazing, horrible
Giving Examples	For instance, such as, for example, particularly,
Voice	Formal voice that is more authoritative and has more power for persuasion

Adopted from Musadad (2012)

According to Bailey (2011), a research report is a description of a situation or something that has happened (p. 257). Generally, it is meant to describe the research process, procedure and the results obtained in a particular study. A research report comprises different sections that are meant to guide the reader (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). The following table shows the general features of a research report as outlined by Bailey (2018).

Table: 2.6 General Features of a Research Report

No	Feature	Content
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It includes the background to the subject in question• The reasons for conducting research• Review of related studies in the area.
2	Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It describes how the study was conducted• It documents the materials and tools that were used to conduct the study.
3	Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results section explains what was discovered in the study followed by a discussion of the main findings.
4	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The conclusion presents the summary of the work and the main findings of a study.• It states the practical implications of the study• It also makes suggestions for further research
5	References/Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The reference or bibliography section includes a list of other works referenced or cited in your work
6	Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendices document research tools including other materials used in your study

Adopted from Bailey (2018).

2.1.3.2 Project

A project report is a type of academic writing that is written to describe process, progress and results of a scientific research. A project comprises a title page, summary, lists of content, introduction, methodology findings/results, discussion and conclusion. It also includes a Reference or Bibliography section and appendices (Gillette, Hammond & Martala, 2009).

2.1.3.3 Research Proposal

A research proposal is a plan based on an extended piece of work. It includes a title, background, literature review, research questions and objectives, significance of the project, methodology, time-table and bibliography/Reference (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009).

2.1.3.4 Research Paper

This is a long essay that presents a thesis which it supports with original research together with other research findings on the topic (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). The research paper can be organised in different ways depending on the subject in which one is writing (Horkoff, 2015).

Student teachers' understanding of the different types of genres and styles of writing and their rhetorical conventions discussed above may be critical to their success in academic writing. However, what colleges were doing to make students master the conventional writing of the different genres was not known, hence this study.

2.1.4 Institutional Support Structures for Teaching Academic Writing

Research has shown that academic writing success cannot be attained without adequate support structures (Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015). In view of this, there are various ways institutions use to offer academic writing support across the world. Some of the notable ways include (1) dedicated writing courses designed by institutions of higher learning (2) English for academic purposes (3) disciplinary subject courses where each discipline handles its writing courses (4) English for speakers of other languages and (5) departments and study skills or writing centres (de Chazal, 2014). Academic writing support offered can range from exemplars, assessment criteria, implementation of training instruction, use of different modes of feedback and workshops. Given that writing is context based, Coffin et al., (2003) recommends the need to consider "the most appropriate mode" of teaching and learning of academic writing (p.12). However, studies such as Bailey (2018) have revealed that academic writing is usually assessed but rarely taught in many higher learning institutions. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for teaching writing to students. These include (1) the need to reinforce the skills (2) language development (3) writing is a learning style and (4) "writing is a skill in its own write" (Harmer, 1998 p. 79) hence the need to teach it. This study sought to establish what CoE were doing to help improve student teachers' academic writing skills in English.

2.1.5 Models for Teaching Academic Writing

According to Lea and Street, there are three overlapping models that can guide educators in understanding academic writing. The three models, explained below, are Study Skills, Academic Socialization, and Academic Literacy (Lea & Street, 2006).

2.1.5.1 Study Skills Model

The study skills model has a basis on the psychological and linguistic theories of learning where literacy is taken to be a neutral or technical skill which one has to learn and apply in different contexts (Street, 2015). According to this model, writing is primarily seen to be an individual and cognitive skill. The model is premised on the idea that the knowledge of surface features of academic writing can lead to effective writing in different contexts across disciplines. However, this has received criticism from other scholars who called for a different view of academic writing. Scholars such as Coffin et al., (2003) argued that Study Skills specialists may have little subject area knowledge and may not have much communication with lecturers who set writing assignments, provide feedback and assess students' written work. Rankins et al., (2010) also adds that "viewing academic writing as transparent and generalizable can negatively influence the teaching and learning of writing because such a view has potential to under-prepare students to meet the dynamics of changing rhetorical situations, diverse disciplinary conventions, and varied purposes for writing" (p.57). This is why, this study sought in part to establish what colleges of Education were doing to ensure that there was a common understanding of academic writing conventions within and across subject areas and between lecturers and students.

2.1.5.2 The Academic Literacies Model

Academic Literacies model sprung from "New Literacy Studies" whose aim was to move away from a skills-based deficit model of academic writing (Lea & Street, 1998). The model embraces a socio-anthropological view but uses the principles of new literacy studies, multiliteracies and critical discourse analysis (Cumming, 2006). The model considers writing to be a social skill that has to be learnt in authentic contexts within particular disciplines and subject areas and not in different courses and other support structures as social practices (Gee, 2012). It takes cognizance of the social aspect of power and identity and what academic staff expects and how these are interpreted by students. Generally, academic writing is seen to be meaning making in which case, any academic communication is seen to encompass reading and writing of academic discourses which also includes a search and critical evaluation of information (Heinonen & Jorum (no date). Adoption of this approach invites educators to give students many learning opportunities to acquire the discourse in authentic situations. Besides, it demands clarification of what is expected from students (Lea & Street, 2006).

2.1.5.3 Academic Socialization Model

The third model is the Academic Socializations model. This model acknowledges that subject areas and disciplines use different genres and discourses to construct knowledge (Lea & Street, 1998 p.228). Academic socialization model presupposes that students are initiated into a new culture as they seek to become new members of particular academic discourse communities together with their institutional norms, genres and practices for writing (Cumming, 2006). Therefore, helping students to improve their writing skills entails imparting them with knowledge and skills needed to write in particular disciplines and subject areas (Lea and street, 2006). The model invites students to apply appropriate writing styles and genres suitable to particular contexts. It assumes that the writing practiced in particular disciplines and subjects are stable and, in this regard, once students master the writing styles of a particular discipline and subject area, they are able to produce similar texts without any problems (Lea and Street, 2006).

2.1.6 Approaches to Teaching Academic Writing

There are several approaches to teaching academic writing across and within institutions. The following are some of the influential approaches that define how writing is taught:

2.1.6.1 Product Approach

The product approach has its basis on the view that writing as a product is constructed from “the writers’ command of grammatical and lexical knowledge and writing development” (Hyland, 1996 p.3). It “focuses on the linguistic and rhetorical resources writers use to produce a text” (Samsudin, 2015). In this regard, instructors seek to develop students writing in a foreign or second language by focussing on the syntactical and grammatical forms (Nunan, 1988) of a text. Hedge (1988) lists down what is expected in the product approach as shown in the table below:

Table 2.7: Writing Expectations in the Product Approach

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of a range of vocabulary
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• punctuate meaningfully
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a correct layout
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• spellings must be accurate
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use a range of sentence structures
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• link ideas and information across sentences to develop a topic
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop and organise the content clearly and convincingly

Source: Hedge, 1988 (p.8).

When the product approach is adopted, teaching begins with familiarisation of the student with the target text by focusing on its particular features. This is followed by guided writing during which students are expected to produce a text similar to the model text. Lastly, students are asked to write a similar text on their own (Barger & White 2000). However, the product approach is criticised for being lecturer centred as it does not allow for discussion, interaction, discussion or feedback from peers or lecturers (Mourssi, 2013 in Pramila, 2016). Besides, there is more concentration on the final product, thereby, overlooking the audience (Pramila, 2016).

2.1.6.2 The Process Approach to Writing

The process approach to writing emerged as a shift from the product approach in the early 1980's. According to Tribble (1996) the process approach is “an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models” (p.160). The approach is premised on the idea that learning how to write is a developmental process which constitutes “a series of actions or steps” (Andrews & Smith, 2011, p.61) due to the recursive nature of writing. Attention for teaching is paid to the many stages that a piece of writing goes through (Harmer, 2015) and it is believed that successful writing can only be achieved by following certain steps which include prewriting, drafting, revising and editing (Barger and White, 2000). Following these stages, the process approach aims at training students to write as experts do.

The process approach is supported by researchers such as Murray & Moore (2006) who noted that “the best writing emerges from the writer’s willingness to address their own weaknesses to take on board criticism and redraft their work several times before completing it” (p.11).

This is because, each revision enables students to improve on their earlier version, thus, increasing its strength (O'Neill & Gravois, 2014). However, the approach is criticised for its lack of attention to the social context of the writing process even when the author and content are different. Besides, the approach does not provide a good model for learners to follow (Badger & White, 2000). It instead assumes that all writing processes are the same and does not consider difficulties faced by second language learners (Pramila, 2016). In addition to this, the approach can be difficult to achieve due to limited time in some contexts.

2.1.6.3 The Genre Based Approach

The Genre Based Approach to teaching was developed to make up for the deficit observed in the process approach. This approach is concerned with the teaching of specific text types that students may need for them to succeed in various contexts (de Chazal, 2014). According to Andrews & Smith, (2011), a “genre approach focusses on primarily the whole text as typical of a kind or type of text” (p.27). It emphasises the need to teach the linguistic conventions of the genre. This involves raising students’ consciousness by guiding them to explore key lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features of representative samples of target genres (Hyland, 2008, p.559). In the genre approach, students are supported to write by giving them guiding principles on “how to produce meaningful passages” (Byram, 2004 p. 58). “Like the product approach, the genre approach regards writing as a linguistic activity, but unlike the product approach emphasises that writing varies with the social context in which it is produced” (Barger & White, 2000 p.155).

When instructors focus on the genre approach, students are exposed to texts in the genres that they are going to write before they embark on their work. They learn how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing (Tuan, 2011). This means that lecturers are expected to provide students with systematic guidance and well-planned support by engaging them in various activities to enable them attain competence in writing various genres. Teaching using this approach is in three stages. In the first stage, the lecturer models the target genre, starting with introduction which includes examining the features. In the second stage, the lecturer and students construct the text together and lastly, students are made to construct the text independently (Pramila, 2016).

According to Hyland (2004b), the genre approach has the following advantages: Firstly, it is explicit. This means that what is to be learnt is made clear and this in turn facilitates students’ acquisition of skills. Besides, the approach is systematic, thereby, providing a coherent

framework for focusing on both language and contexts. The use of the genre approach ensures that course objectives and content are derived from the needs of the students.

In addition to this, the Genre approach promotes students learning and support by giving teachers a central role in scaffolding students' learning and creativity. The use of genre approach empowers students by giving them access to patterns and possibilities of variations in valued texts. It also encourages students to be critical by utilizing resources that help them understand and challenge valued discourse. Furthermore, it helps increase instructors' awareness of the features of different texts thus enhancing their confidence in advising students to raise their writing standards (in Hyland, 2008 p.547).

However, the genre approach requires rhetorical understanding of the text by lecturers (Pramila, 2016) themselves. Besides, it can inhibit creativity by making students stick to a restrictive formula (Hyland, 2008). Nevertheless, this weakness can be mitigated by integrating it with other approaches such as the process approach which allows for creativity.

From the above discussions, it is observed that each approach has its own limitations and, in this regard, it can be concluded that none of these approaches is perfect. In view of this, some researchers recommend integration of the strength of each (Barger & White, 2000) of these approaches. This can be achieved by adopting the language knowledge of the product and genre approach, the context and purpose espoused in genre approach and the skills need for language use from the process approach (Pramila, 2016). However, this requires careful planning.

2.1.7 Strategies for Teaching Academic Writing

There are many strategies that can be used in the teaching of AW. Hyland (2008) proposed 4 classroom practices that can be applied in teaching academic writing. These are (1) needs analysis, (2) creating a learning cycle, (3) conscious raising and (4) conducting mixed genre portfolios. These are explained below:

Needs Analysis involves attending to grammar as a resource used in the production of texts. According to Hyland (2008), students should be exposed to a repertoire of available linguistic resources for achieving particular purposes in particular contexts. This idea is well supported by Scholtz (2016) who argues that “At first year level, it becomes all the more important for students to be inducted into the ways of understanding how linguistic features provide access to knowledge by reading, writing, thinking reasoning and communicating using the discourse of the community” (p.39).

Creating a learning circle aims at setting the context which should constitute explanation of the genre purpose followed by modelling of the features and style of the particular genre to ensure students understand the different stages and the rhetorical application of the genre. Mariconda & Williamson (2015) emphasized that “students must learn through explicit, objective driven instruction the salient features of the genre, authors’ purpose, and have a strong grasp of basic concepts that inform these understanding” (p.2). This can be followed by engaging students in the construction of the text which should be done with the support of the lecturer/tutor through all the stages. Once this is done, students can then be asked to independently construct the text followed by monitoring of performance by the instructor. When students have successfully completed the exercise, students can be asked to compare the target genre with other genres (Hyland, 2008) to help them see the similarities and differences.

Consciousness Raising involves raising students’ awareness of the critical aspects of target genres. This is critical given that one of the goals of academic writing instructors is to help students understand the different genres of writing so that they can transfer what they know from one situation to the other (Devet, 2018). With a focus on a particular type of text, the lecturer should outline the key features that define a particular genre. This calls for “sufficient exposure” to the models of writing (Klimova, 2013 p.435). Coffin et al., 2003 outlines a model for academic writing pedagogy suitable for higher education learning which works from process to product approach as follows:

- building a context by generating ideas about a topic and considering available reading resources
- modelling and deconstruction in which students write about the topic but with some guidance on structure and organisation
- extensively working with peers to scaffold learning

The above strategies can be effective as they are student centred and therefore, more engaging. Besides, the strategies are in tandem with the higher education shift from operating on an entirely teacher centred model to a more student-centred model (Gosling, 2003 in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal), thereby, enhancing effective learning.

However, a similar model '*Practice-Reflect Instructional Cycle*' recommended by Graham et al., to teach secondary students writing strategies can also be suitable in enhancing college students' AW skills in English. When this is used, academic writers (a) model strategies for students (b) provide students with opportunities to apply and practice modelled strategies and (c) Engage students in evaluating and reflecting upon their own and peers' writing and use of modelled strategies (2016, p.2). Nevertheless, students need time to develop as writers and become familiar with new expectations (Bazerman et al., 2017) otherwise, mere exposure may not yield much result.

Conducting mixed genre portfolios are concerned with "raising students' awareness of text features by encouraging them to reflect on the differences across genres" (Hyland, 2008 p. 560). Students are guided to "explore the key lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features of representative samples of target genres" (Hyland, 2008, p.559). This is important as it is one of the steps pertinent to building students' confidence and proficiency in AW. Raising students' awareness of textual features can enhance students' conformity "to academic discourse..." (Kruse, 2003, p. 25) of different "writing projects" (Devet, 2018, p.191) that they may encounter in their training and future profession. Whether all the above was being integrated in students' academic writing instruction was in part the interest of this study.

2.1.8 Students as Writers in Secondary School

There seems to be a general assumption that secondary school leavers who meet admission requirements into tertiary education do so with knowledge and skills already tailored to meeting academic writing demands of tertiary education. However, this is not often the case. While schools are known to be literate institutions where learners are initiated into writing (Olson, 2008), how much learners develop their writing abilities is often determined by what learners are exposed to and the circumstances they find themselves in as learners. Experience has shown that not every student coming from secondary school receives optimum exposure to learning (Scholtz, 2016). Generally, the different forms of present-day learning modes have increased differences in the writing abilities of those entering tertiary education. In some cases, students may be coming from schools where exposure to writing in general and to

different genres and styles is inadequate (Coffin et al., 2003; Lennie-Irvin, 2010; Bailey, 2011). However, researchers such as Sideki & Alhamadi (2015) have revealed that under preparedness is something that leads to students difficulties in regard to acquainting themselves with academic writing requirements at tertiary level. In other cases, what is taught and how much is taught may be of little help in regard to building learners' writing capabilities to desirable proficiency (Lennie-Irvin, 2010).

Besides, some secondary school learners have poor learning abilities and opportunities (Scholtz, 2016) which affect their writing skills even when they are exposed to good writing practices. In some cases, shortage of teaching and learning resources coupled with poor pedagogical approaches that are often typical in poor resourced communities (Coffin et al., 2003) affect students' acquisition of writing skills. Consequently, students entering higher education may do so with varying abilities in the different aspects of writing.

2.1.8.1 Students as Writers on Entry into Tertiary Education

Generally, students' abilities on entry into tertiary education can be categorised into four groups (Bean, 2011). In the first category are students who require intensive help in basic writing knowledge and skills. This category of students usually need help in a developmental course to build their basic writing skills. The second and third categories are for students who can edit problems out of their drafts when they have time and motivation to do so. However, the second category students may also need some guidance and support. The fourth category of students are those that come to college "as already capable writers". (Bean, 2011 p.79) although this does not entail that they do not need any help as writing can never be fully mastered. Generally, a writer can be an expert in one context and a novice in another context (Andrews & Smith, 2011). Although Neumann (2016) argues that good writing is good writing and that what changes only occurs in the length and complexity of what you write in a different context, existence of notable differences between secondary and tertiary level writing cannot be disputed. It is evident that writing in higher education changes in regard to expectations, quantity and quality of work and material as explained by Horkoff (2015) who states that,

It is not enough to understand course material and summarise it on an exam. You will also be expected to seriously engage with new ideas by reflecting on them, analysing them, critiquing them, making connections, drawing conclusions, or finding new ways of thinking about a given subject. Educationally, you are moving into deeper waters (p.1).

It is clear from the above quotation that there indeed exist substantial differences between the skills needed to succeed in writing in higher education and writing in secondary school.

Upon entry into college, students begin to face new writing demands (Lear & Street, 1998; Ofte, 2014) in terms of audience, content, message, purpose and genre (Lennie-Irvin, 2010). These changes that occur in student writing upon their entry into college calls for students' adjustment in each aspect. It then stands that students' past success in writing at secondary school cannot not guarantee success in writing at college level (Gere, 2019). However, this does not suggest that students must forego their previous writing experiences. How well students adjust to writing is dependent on the type of support given to them at their time of entry and this is why this study sought to investigate support mechanisms colleges were using to help student teachers develop academic writing skills.

2.1.8.2 Managing Students' Transition from Secondary School Writing to College Writing

Basing on the principle that writing is context based, academic writing instructions in college should aim at helping students begin to see their knowledge and skills in a different way (Gere, 2019). In view of this, one of the major tasks of academic writing support in college is to help students begin to see "continuities that extend" from secondary school level writing to college level writing (Gere, 2019, p.23). In principle, these should provide a basis for further writing development (Bazerman et al., 2017). This entails that secondary school writing experience, especially exposure to writing relevant texts such as argumentative becomes an indispensable pre-requisite for adapting to academic writing discourse (MOE, 2013). Research has shown that the complex range of experiences that students enter college with have a bearing in shaping their academic writing experiences and development as new academic writers (Swoffod in Gee, 2019). This is why students' exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary school becomes critical. To illustrate this, Sideki & Alhamad (2015) noted that "If instructions at secondary is tailored to narrative at the expense of expository writing, students might face difficulties at tertiary level" (p.66). Therefore, this study, although focused on academic writing in colleges deemed it necessary to establish whether student teachers were at secondary school adequately exposed to writing relevant texts such as argumentative and expository as a foundation for tertiary level writing.

2.1.8.3 Students' Need for Orientation in Academic Writing

A robust of research continues to advocate for the need to orient students to critical writing needs before they can be assigned tasks (Manuel & Carter, 2016; Chokwe 2013; Klimova, 2013) at tertiary level. Experience has shown that writing cannot be generalized as a single set of skill that applies to all contexts. Rather, it should be seen as a complex “developing accomplishment central to the specialized work of the myriad disciplines of higher education” (Russel in Bjork et al., 2003 p. vi). Hyland (2011) noted that novice writers in academic settings “encounter very different literacy practices to those they are familiar with from their homes, schools, or work places, adding specialised literacies to the basic functional demands of reading and writing in the contemporary world” (p.17). Therefore, “It cannot be assumed that students have a full understanding of the nature of higher education, the demands tutors expect to make on them, and the requirements of the subjects they are studying (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p. 118).

Consistent with this idea, Tribble (1996) intimated that “learners who wish to write in new academic setting have to gain a mastery of the concepts and content of their subject area as well as developing an ability to express themselves effectively and appropriately in foreign language” (p83). They need support in understanding academic writing conventions, bibliography and referencing styles, library skills, use of the internet, note taking from lectures, making presentations, revision and examination techniques (Fry, Ketteridge & Marashal, 2003). They also need guidance in writing different text types and using appropriate style (Klimova, 2013). This includes the ability to read complex texts, understand disciplinary concepts, strategies to synthesize, analyse and critically respond to new information (Lennie-Irvin, 2010).

A study by Gursharani (2017) also proposed the need to discuss concepts such as coherence and to demonstrate cohesion and transition as critical concepts that should be mastered by any writer. According to Malia (2017), cohesion refers to “the creation of a unified and flowing text through the use of transitional words including conjunction and reference words” whereas, “Transitions are words or phrases that show the connection between ideas or sentences” (p.9). According to Shannon (2011), “Coherence has to do with the way in which information presented in a paper is organised to move the reader as effortlessly as possible from the beginning to the end” (p.11). For Murray & Beglar (2009), “Coherence is the quality that makes the text stick together and give it a sense of flow”. In other words, coherence is the logical development of ideas in a text. Students should “understand how cohesion works

and how to develop cohesive devices...they need to understand how lexical chains are constructed in a text by using the same words, related words and synonyms” (Harmer, 2015, p.363) for them to write effectively. As to whether colleges were taking this into consideration was in part the question this study sought to answer.

Setting Priorities

Given that acquiring academic writing skills is a gradual process, a question comes on where academic writing support should begin from. Ideally, lecturers should select priority areas that can enhance student teachers’ smooth transition from secondary writing to college level writing. According to Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal (2003) “early tasks should induct students into processes of inquiry, searching for information and working in groups” (p.118). However, this may depend on students’ abilities and needs on entry. In some cases, students may have a deficit in basic writing skills which may need to be attended to before they can be introduced to tertiary level writing (Wingate, 2006). In support of this view, Gray, & Klapper in their article ‘*Key Aspects of Teaching and Learning in Language*’ noted that “one of the most widely accepted tenets of teaching is to start where the students are, with a view to using their strengths to build confidence, while simultaneously addressing their weaknesses” (2003, in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal p.324). In academic writing, this is important given that students’ success is largely dependent on the strength of the foundation laid in their earlier years of education. Therefore, beginning from where students are can be a sure way to closing the gap that may exist between secondary and tertiary level writing and ideally, this is the essence of learning. Otherwise, students may transfer weaknesses amassed from secondary school to their professional work as teachers.

Nevertheless, early academic writing support should also include emotional support. As new entrants into colleges, students usually exhibit different emotional states which can affect their ability to adjust to their current academic demands. “Typically, they are anxious, lack confidence in their own ability to cope, are full of uncertainty of what is expected of them, and nervous about their relationships with other students and staff” (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p.119). This calls for habit formation. To achieve this, the eight habits of mind framework developed by The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and The National Writing Project (NWP) in America (2011) can be applied. These are flexibility, openness, responsibility, creativity, engagement, persistence, curiosity and metacognition (in Stanley, 2020 p. 99). These habits are important as they are at the core of success. Whether CoE were doing all the above to

optimize student teachers' academic writing skills is one of the questions this study sought to answer.

Helping Students to Understand Questions

Success in any academic writing begins with the correct interpretation of questions. One of the ways that students can be helped to improve their academic writing skills is to teach them how to interpret questions. They should be made to understand that the topic focus for any given task is usually embedded in content words in the question (Malia, 2017). This can help prepare students to tackle different examination and assignment questions with confidence. Below is a table showing instructional words that are used in students' essay writing questions for assignments and examinations:

Table: 2.8 Instructional Words Used in Assignment and Examination Questions and their Expected Answers

Instruction Words	What is Required in the Answer
Discuss	Discuss requires an answer that explains an item or concept, and then gives details about it with supportive information, examples, points for and against, and explanations for the facts put forward. When responding to a question that asks you to discuss, it is important to give both sides of an argument before concluding.
Examine	Examine questions asks you to closely investigate a particular phenomenon paying attention to detail and considering implications.
Explain	To explain requires an answer that offers a rather detailed and exact explanation of an idea or principle, or a set of reasons for a situation or attitude.
Justify	A question that asks you to justify requires an answer that does not only provide the reasons for a position or argument but must also include the main objections that are likely to be made of them. The proposition to be argued may be a negative one.
Analyse	When analyse is used in a question, it requires an answer that takes apart an idea, concept or statement in order to consider all the factors it consists of. Answers of this type should be very methodical and logically organised.
Evaluate	A question that asks a student to evaluate requires an answer that decides and explains how great, valuable or important something is. The writer must pass a judgement backed by a discussion of the evidence or reasoning involved.

Compare	A question that asks you to compare requires an answer that sets items one after another and shows their similarities and differences in a balanced way.
Contrast	A question that asks you to contrast requires an answer that points out only the differences between two items.
Describe	To describe requires an answer that says what something is like and how it works.
Explore	A question that asks a student to explore requires an answer that makes a thorough examination of the subject from different points of view.
Illustrate	Illustration requires that the writer explains and make clarifications using concrete examples and diagrams
Interpret	When you are asked to interpret, the answer should include an explanation of something by making its' meaning explicit. The writer should provide a personal judgement on the topic.

Adapted from Gillet, Hamond & Martala (2009)

Research and Library Skills

Research is known to be the primary source of information that academics use to accomplish the writing activities. Gillet, Hammond and Martala (2009) define research as “a process of looking for and choosing your sources to help you write an academic paper”. Effective research constitutes the following skills:

- a. ability to gather academic information either by listening or reading or having listened or read by writing notes
- b. ability to process information by analysing it
- c. ability to produce information which is distinctively our own (Weideman and Dyk, 2007, p. iv).

Research skills are critical to academic success as ideas that academics advance in writing often require evidence to justify assertions made (Fulwiler, 2002; Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009). This makes research skills an imperative aspect of academic writing development and support which should not be overlooked. Students as new entrants often need support on how to locate and select credible sources as well as access electronic data. However, the ability to do research includes the ability to provide an accurate account of the sources of information as evidence that writers use in academic texts come from books written by experts who have credentials that can be verified (Fulwiler, 2002). This is achieved through citation and referencing. Citation can be defined as a formal reference to

published or unpublished source (University of California 2018 in Banja and Muzata, 2019) whereas referencing is “the acknowledging of sources used in writing an essay, assignment or any other piece of academic work” (Banja & Muzata, 2019 p.68). Referencing helps demonstrate one’s understanding of the topic. It also provides supporting evidence for one’s ideas, arguments and opinions. Referencing can help others to identify sources used in a particular piece of work and also help avoid plagiarism (University of Leeds, 2021). According to Horkoff (2015), plagiarism is using another person’s ideas as your own. Plagiarism is mainly avoided by acknowledging sources used in your text (University of Leeds, 2021). Therefore, it is important to make students understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it (Banja & Muzata, 2019; The University of Sydney, 2021). Students should equally understand the difference between citation and referencing as well as their correct conventions. This is why this study in part sought to establish what CoE were doing to ensure that student teachers have the “capacity to do research, find relevant sources and critically assess them” (Malia. 2017, p. 4) and document sources correctly.

2.1.8.4 Academic Writing and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

In today’s world, technology and other electronic devices play an increasingly important role in how students learn and practice writing (Graham et al., 2016). According to Andrew & Smith (2011), “digitization has transformed not only the writing process and the forms which writing takes in the world, it has also transformed the place of writing in relation to other modes, the length of writing, the design of writing” (p.21). “Writing and writing development can no longer be the preserve of a monomodal approach to communication...” (p.27). This may imply that an academic writing support curriculum that does not recognise the place of technology may not effectively address students’ academic writing needs (Angel & Garcia, 2017). Consistent with this view, the National Research Council of the National Academies (NRCNA) (2012) in America advanced that recognition and integration of the “current tools and practices...used to communicate with others and to gather, evaluate, and synthesize information” (p.4) is critical to students’ academic writing success and should be part of students’ academic writing instruction. Andrews & Smith (2011) also advocated for the adoption of “pedagogies that reflect the changing circumstances of writing and writing development” (p.27). In the words of Bazerman et al., (2017), this entails that “Educators should provide opportunities for all students to become familiar with both the current technologies of text production and manipulation” (p.355).

Some of the technological tools students may need to be familiar with include web search and digital literacy. Digital literacy refers to “the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the internet” (Cornel university 2009 in Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013, p.67) whereas web literacy refers to “the knowledge and use of specific skills needed to locate, analyse, and communicate information found online” (Pilgrim and Martinez, 2013). Web and digital literacy constitute some of the critical 21st century literacy skills inevitable in academic writing development, hence, the need to expose students to their use. Whether CoE were exposing students to web and digital literacy as part of academic writing development was in part the question this study sought to answer.

2.1.8.5 Teaching Language as a Resource for Academic Writing

Given that language is an instrument of thought (Vygotsky, 1977) and therefore, a tool for expressing our thoughts, learning to write entails learning to create meaning through text. However, shaping (texts) require “the manipulation of language within the chosen frames of reference” (Andrews and Smith, 2011, p.6) which new students may not be familiar with and may need guidance before they can attain competence. Having competence in language at tertiary level entails having the ability to use academic discourse. Although pre-college entry requirements may be met in the English language, students cannot be expected to exhibit competence in academic discourse as this does not form part of their earlier experience in secondary school. Consistent with this idea, Weideman & Dyk (2007) argued that “School performance in a language that may become one’s language of learning at tertiary level is neither a good measure of one’s level of academic literacy, nor a sufficient preparation for using academic language across a variety of disciplines” (p.iii). Studies such as Gere (2019) have also shown that teaching language helps improve students’ academic writing abilities. The fact that AW is done in English in Colleges of Education makes it even more critical as “No one speaks or writes academic English as a first language” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1994, p. 8 cited in Gillette, Hammond & Martala 2009, p. xix). In view of this, Coffin et al., (2003) proposed three important things that lectures should investigate in the teaching of language for academic writing:

Firstly, lecturers must identify the kind of language that students need for them to write successfully in higher education. For, example, they must identify linguistic and rhetorical features of an argumentative, narrative, descriptive or expository text. According to de Chazal (2014), “familiarity with generic language... helps students in their writing process”

(190). In the case of this study, students as future language teachers, must “overcome their academic discourse limitations while learning to teach writing (Angel & Garcia, 2017 p.52).

Secondly, particular language use must be availed to students in ways that enhance their learning and motivation for writing. Consistent with this view, Scholtz (2016) argues that “At first year level, it becomes all the more important for students to be inducted into the ways of understanding how linguistic features provide access to knowledge by reading, writing, thinking reasoning and communicating using the discourse of the community” (p.39). Students should be exposed to a repertoire of available linguistic resources for achieving particular purposes in particular contexts (Hyland, 2008). This includes understanding readers and utilizing appropriate language determined by context (Canale & Swain 1980 in Hyland, 1996, p. 31) given that texts are often regarded as ‘a series of appropriate grammatical structures (Hyland, 1996). These must be clearly defined so that there is a clear distinction between them.

Thirdly, academic writing instructors must find ways of building on students existing knowledge of and use of language which may include an accurate determination of students’ current level of academic literacy. According to Klimova (2013), the term ‘literacy’ is almost synonymous with proficiency in the written language. Marinkovic et al., (2016) advanced that “literacy in academic writing requires students to be competent writers of the different genres” (p.96) which may entail mastering the linguistic conventions of target genres. Determination of students’ level of academic literacy can be done by assessing students’ strengths and weaknesses before beginning to teach (Graham *et al.*, 2016). Lectures should also find ways of building on students existing knowledge of and use of language. “How people are able to bring their writing pasts into new contexts provides a basis for further writing development” (Bazerman et al., 2017 p.354) and should not be overlooked. Whether all the above was obtaining in CoE was the question this study sought to answer.

2.1.8.6 Mechanics of Writing

According to Nordquist (2020), writing mechanics are the conventions that govern technical aspects of writing. Examples of these include spellings, punctuation, capitalisation and abbreviations.

Spellings and Punctuations

Writing correct spellings is one of the essential aspects of good writing. This is because incorrect spellings in writing can change the meaning of a sentence, confuse readers as well as make them lose interest in the text (Horkoff, 2015). One of the strategies for ensuring that spellings are correct is to master the key spelling rules, for instance the changes that occur when words end in a consonant or vowel. Writing incorrect spellings can also be avoided by using a dictionary and a spell checker (FESS, 2019). However, students should be made to understand that not all wrongly spelled words can be depicted by a spelling checker. Therefore, each writer must take responsibility in ensuring that all spellings are correct (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Shannon, 2011). One of the strategies that students can use to ensure that spellings are correct is to keep a list of commonly misspelt words as each writer has their own spelling difficulties (Horkoff, 2015; Baley, 2015). The other strategy is to have enough time for editing work.

Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are symbols that the writer uses to “make sense, clarify meaning or create emphasis” (FESS, 2019, p. 39). The purpose of punctuation marks in writing is to indicate to the reader how a particular text should be read, for example, points at which the reader should pause or stop and points of emphasis Horkoff (2015). Below is a table showing some of the commonly used punctuation marks and their uses in writing.

Table: 2.9 Commonly Used Punctuation Marks and their Uses in Texts

Name of Punctuation Mark	Symbol	Use
Full stop	.	Used to mark the end of a sentence
Comma	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To mark a pause in a sentence when for instance, there is a conjunction.• To separate ideas or elements in a series• To add extra information to a basic sentence• Listing a series of items• To introduce a quotation
Colon	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduces a list of items• Introduce a quotation• To expand an idea• To add emphasis

Semi-Colon	;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separate phrases in a list or connect two independent clauses • listing complex items that contain commas
hyphen	-	join two or more words together
Dash	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • place emphasis on the text after or before the dashes • indicate a pause • indicate a range
Parenthesis	()	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To separate information that is not relevant to the meaning of a sentence
Exclamation Mark	!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used to add emphasis or exclaim
Question Mark	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask a question
Apostrophe	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicate ownership or possession
Capitals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first letter in a word in a sentence • for acronyms • pronoun ‘I’ • proper nouns • names of people and their titles • names of months and days • specific places and organisation • to write headings

Adapted From FESS, (2019 p. 41)

2.1.8.7 Academic Diction

Effective academic writing is in part based on the quality of words that the writer uses. This means that writers should be careful with the way they choose their words. A careful selection of words in writing does not only help a writer in presenting information accurately and precisely, but also in developing one’s writing style (Publishing, 2012). For new entrants in college, academic writing instruction and support should include making students understand how word choice helps shape good texts. Students need to understand that using words that have negative connotations, slangs and clichés and overly used general words are informal and cannot be used in academic texts (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Horkoff, 2015). Whether this was considered or not in colleges was the question this study sought to answer.

2.1.8.8 Enhancing Students' Academic Writing Development Through Reading

There is a strong link between the skill of reading and writing (Andrews & Smith, 2011; Chokwe, 2013; Manuel & Carter, 2016; Hyland, 2019). Therefore, one of the most effective ways of becoming a better writer is by reading a lot (Publishing, 2012). According to Andrews & Smith (2011) “We learn to develop the range and depth of writing through its reciprocal relationship with reading (p.10). Greene and Lindinsky (2012) also adds that “An academic writer reads as a writer to understand the issues, situations and questions that lead other writers to make claims” (p.99). This is consistent with Krashen’s reading hypothesis which states that “Reading for meaning especially free voluntary reading is the source of much of our ... writing style, much of our vocabulary and spelling competence, and our ability to use and understand complex grammatical constructions (1997, p. 5). In other words, reading is a prerequisite for academic writing (Harmer, 2015). This may imply that students with poor reading skills may have difficulties in writing. This is evident in a study by Fareed, Ashraf & Bila (2016) which found that one of the causes of poor writing skills was lack of practice in reading. However, students transitioning from secondary school into college may not be conversant with academic reading strategies required at tertiary level (Scholtz, 2016). They may need some instruction and guidance (Angel & Garcia, 2017) as reading strategies depend on the nature of the text and purpose for which one is reading. Emphasizing this view, Bean (2011) stated that “college students need to learn how to fish academic texts which constitute waters deeper than anything they have plunged through”. He further adds that “students need to understand that a good readers’ reading process will vary extensively depending on the readers’ purpose”. “Some reading tasks require only scheming for gist while others’ require closest scrutiny of detail” (p.133). In view of this, Horkoff (2015) proposed four academic reading strategies that can form academic reading instruction and practice as follows:

Survey reading involves getting an overall picture of the text while close reading is reading for understanding. This calls for concentration to identify essential details. Inquiry reading also known as discovery reading involves selecting information related to a given topic. Critical reading is characterized by reasoning, identification of evidence and open mindedness.

All the above strategies are critical to student success as they constitute the reading demands students may face in responding to different writing activities in the course of their training. In view of the above, the National Research Council of the National Academies (2012)

advocated for the development of an integrated system of skills by “using approaches that capitalize on the relationship between reading and writing” arguing that “reading and writing draw on similar knowledge and cognitive processes” (p.15). This idea is also affirmed by Bazerman et al., (2017) who add that “Writing should be taught and used in conjunction with other developing areas such as reading and content learning in the disciplines to mutually facilitate their development” (p.356). To illustrate the relationship that exists between reading and writing, Fitzgerald & Shanahan, (2000) developed a ‘shared knowledge model’ which conceptualize reading and writing as “two buckets drawing water from a common well or two buildings built on a common foundation” (in Graham et al.,2016, p. 32). Accordingly, reading and writing share four types of cognitive processes and knowledge as follows:

Meta-knowledge entails understanding the reading and writing processes in relation to goals and purposes

Domain knowledge refers to subject content that is revealed from reading and writing

Text features encompasses text format, organisation and genre as well as spelling and syntactical combinations

Procedural Knowledge is concerned with integrating complex processes to write compositions and using strategies for accessing information when reading texts (Graham et al., 2016, p.31-32). However, students need to be made aware of this relationship as “Making this relationship explicit aids students in skills development, contribute to their awareness about language, and enhance their textual forms and meanings” (Ibid. The National Research Council of the National Academies, 2012). One of the strategies that can be used to develop students’ writing skills is to design assignments that require students to interact with texts. According to Hirvela & Belcher (2016), reading to write can either be input based or out-put based (In Hyland, 2019). In-put based is where students are made to use reading as input for learning about writing in the second language, mostly, though the “use of models where the rhetorical and linguistic features of distinct genres are illustrated”. To clarify this, Hyland (2019) citing Krashen (1993) further explains that “learners do not learn to write by writing but develop an understanding of style through reading” (p.118). As for output based, this is where “students transfer information from a text they are reading to a text they are writing” (ibid. Hyland, 2019). This entails that students’ writing content is sourced from reading. Therefore, it can be argued that reading enhances academic writing at two levels; firstly, as a resource in regard to information and secondly as a model from which

students learn how to style their academic texts. Whether CoE were making students understand the relationship between reading and writing was in part the interest of this study.

2.1.9 Aligning Curriculum for Academic Writing Instruction to Students' Academic

Writing Needs

One of the critical aspects of any learning and teaching is curriculum content (Sideki & Alhamad, 2016). In the case of academic writing, this entails that educators should have a clear understanding of the needs of students so as to develop programs that can help them develop their AW skills (Hyland, 1996). Generally, students as writers need help in four areas which constitute writing. These are (1) Content knowledge (2) context knowledge (3) language system knowledge and (4) writing process knowledge. Content knowledge is concerned with the understanding of concepts used in a particular subject area while context knowledge requires that the writer understands the social context in which a text will be read. This includes understanding expectations that readers have as well as the co-texts alongside which the text would be read. Language system knowledge demands mastery of the aspects of the language system (lexis) and syntax necessary for the completion of the task while writing process knowledge refers to a writer's ability to select the most appropriate ways of approaching the writing tasks (Tribble 1996, pp 67-68).

Given that students enter colleges with varying abilities in the above aspects, the role of academics is to design a curriculum, teaching methods, strategies, pedagogy and opportunities that promote shared expectations (Maki, 2004 in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003). According to Bazerman et al., (2017), students within the same classroom may show "varying strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of writing, varying control of different genres, different repertoires of expressive resources, different motivations and purposes for writing and unique meanings to express through writing" (p.357). In some cases, students' AW weaknesses can be unique to a particular cohort depending on the times and circumstances that students find themselves in. For example, the current cadre of students have more need for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) than those who were in college twenty years ago. In this regard, students' support needs may vary even among members of the same cohort although this may be overlooked in many Higher Education Institutions. For academic writing instructors therefore, understanding students' needs becomes critical to providing effective support (Swoffod in Gee, 2019; Stanley, 2020). Consistent with this view, Hyland (1996) advanced that:

We have to be able to recognise where learners have already established the knowledge and skills that will support them in fulfilling a task, where there may be clashes between established ways of working and requirements of new kinds of writing and how to help learners should they have the need.... (p.162).

One of the strategies AW instructors can use to identify students' AW needs peculiar to a cohort and to individuals is to conduct diagnostic assessments (Mulenga, 2015) on their entry into college (Gourlay, Sutherland & Thompson, 2008; Andrews & Smith, 2011). This is important as it can help them identify students' areas for improvement which in turn can help them tailor their AW instructions to the specific needs of students. In support of this idea, Gray & Klapper in their article '*Key Aspects of Teaching and Learning in Languages*' noted that "One of the most widely accepted tenets of teaching is to start where the students are, with a view to using their strengths to build confidence, while simultaneously addressing their weaknesses (in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p. 324). Gosling (2003) also added that "Course content is something regarded as sacrosanct but it is pointless teaching content that students are not ready to receive" (in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p.122). This means, what is taught should be aligned to the needs of students.

However, curriculum content regardless of how suitable it may be cannot yield positive results unless it is coupled with appropriate teaching strategies based on students' learning styles. Ideally, the appropriateness of the strategy does not lie in its theoretical argument but in its ability to meet the learning needs of students. This entails that no one strategy can satisfy the learning needs of all students at any particular time as students come with different experiences and expectations. Therefore, it is incumbent upon lecturers to create a learning environment that is accommodative of the different learning styles (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshal, 2003) of individual students. According to Horkoff (2015), students as learners can fall different categories under which learning takes place effectively. One of the categories is that of Visual learners. These are students who are able to understand best when ideas are presented in visual forms. The second category is that of verbal learners. Verbal learners understand ideas through reading and writing about them and taking details. In the third category are auditory learners. These are students whose understanding of ideas is best done through listening to teachers talk about them. The fourth and last category is that of kinaesthetic learners. This category of students learns best through doing something and they prefer hands on activities (Horkoff, 2015). These differences in learning conditions have repercussions on how teaching should be organised if benefits are to be maximised.

Correspondingly, Honey & Mumford (1982) also suggested four categories of students based on their learning styles. According to them, some students are activists. This entails that they respond most positively to learning situations that offer challenges including new experiences and problems, excitement and freedom in their learning. Others are reflectors. Students belonging to this category respond most positively to structured learning activities where they are provided with time to observe, reflect and think and are allowed to work in a detailed manner. There is yet another group called theorists. This group of students respond well to logical, rational structure and clear aims where they are given time for methodical exploration and opportunities to question and stretch their intellect. The last group is that of pragmatists. Pragmatists respond most positively to practically based, immediately relevant-learning activities, which allow scope for practice and using theory (in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p.8). In practice however, Honey & Mumford suggested that the preferred learning style of any individual would include aspects of two or more of these categories. This calls for an adoption of different learning styles. Whether Colleges of Education were conducting diagnostic assessment to help establish the weaknesses and strengths for new entrants and whether lecturers were employing different teaching strategies and whether these were tailored to the different learning needs of students was the question this study sought to answer.

2.1.10 Need for Repeated Practice

Research has shown that writing is learnt by writing (Smith, 2008; Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015; Manuel & Carter, 2016). Therefore, one of the ways to help students develop their academic writing skills is to increase their opportunities for writing practice. This is more so for new entrants into higher education. Constant practice in AW can help students to “explore ideas, develop positions, deliberate about problems and paradoxes, make arguments” (Jurecic, 2006, p.11) and develop new ideas. New students need to do a great deal of writing in order to attain automaticity especially in spellings which helps free capacity “for higher level cognitive processing” (de Chazal, 2014, p.190).

Besides, learning is no longer anchored on remembering facts and knowledge but on striving to understand and critically evaluate what is learnt (Skalicky & Brown, 2009). This suggests that learning requires practical application of knowledge. Similarly, learning to write requires regular opportunities for writing in order to normalize the writing process (Manuel & Carter, 2016). In other words, repeated practice can help students refine their writing skills (Smith,

2008; Harmer, 2015) thereby, becoming better writers. Consistent with this idea, Klimova (2013) also noted that “The most effective method of teaching writing is to let students write as much as possible... and provide them with diagnostic, constructive useful and encouraging feedback” (p. 435).

The need for more practice in academic writing is also emphasized by O’neill and Gravois (2014) who explained that,

Practice provides many opportunities for students to grow in their writing development. Writers do not accumulate process skills and strategies once and for all. They develop and refine writing skills throughout their writing career as they take up new tasks in new genres for new audiences. They grow continuously across personal and professional contexts using numerous writing spaces and technologies (p.4).

However, writing practice should be “supported and natured by lecturers as experts in the field” (Scholtz, 2016, p.39). This is why this study sought to establish whether or not students were being given enough practice in writing and whether their writing practice was being supported and natured by lecturers as experts in the field.

2.1.11 Enhancing Students’ Academic Writing Skills Through Feedback

Feedback is generally known to be one of the essential aspects of teaching and learning. According to Gere (2019) feedback refers to “Getting another persons’ view on an approach to an assignment, receiving a response to a draft, sharing a really finished piece with a colleague who has copy editing skills, and receiving suggestions for revision from an instructor” (p.186). For Larsen-Freeman (2003), feedback is “the evaluative information available to learners concerning their linguistic performance” (p.123). However, this definition may be problematic as it appears to restrict feedback on the linguistic features of a text. Ideally, feedback cannot just be about linguistic performance, academic writing is a multipurpose skill that requires attention to various skills such as content knowledge and writing styles. Thus, Hyland’s definition which states that “Feedback is the response to a persons’ performance of a task which carries information that can be used for improvement” (Hyland, 2019 p.171) was found to be more appropriate for this study.

2.1.11.1 Benefits of Giving Feedback on Students’ Work

Providing feedback on students’ written works is known to be one of the critical components of teaching writing (Coffin et al., 2003). According to Gere (2019), feedback can be helpful to both students and lecturers. Students’ failure in some tasks can reflect the instructors’ weaknesses in knowledge and skills, hence, lecturers’ reflection on students’ written work can help them make pedagogical adjustments which can enhance students’ learning.

Feedback provides room for lecturers to make clarifications, elaborations, suggestions and corrections on the mistakes made by students in a piece of writing. It does not only help “highlight issues that need improvement or attention but also identifies exceptional language production to praise students for their success” (Harmer 1998, p.263). Coffin et al., (2003) explains that providing feedback is important as it “can justify and explain marks awarded for a piece of writing; it can highlight the academic conventions within which students are expected to write; and it can suggest ways for students to improve in their future writing” (p.17). This is critical as it is believed to support learning by feeding forward; a practice contemporary researcher continue to advocate for.

2.1.11.2 Challenges of Giving Feedback

Feedback is known to be a complex process (Coffin et al., 2003) that calls for extra attention if the purpose is to help students reflect on their work and make the necessary changes. While it is an important pedagogical resource, feedback also involves delicate social interactions that can affect the relationship between the lecturer and students and influence instruction (Hyland, 1996). According to Coffin et al., (2003),

particular ways of communicating feedback contribute...to students understanding of the comments they receive, to what they feel about these comments and the establishment of a particular kind of relationship between lecturers and students or more generally those who give and receive feedback (p.111).

The above quotation indicates that giving feedback comes with many challenges which can sometimes obscure and defeat the main purpose. The table below outlines some research-based challenges faced in providing feedback:

Table: 2.10 Challenges Faced in Providing Feedback

No.	Challenge
1	the purpose of feedback is left unstated
2	there is often a mismatch between lecturers and students understanding about what is required in academic writing
3	students may find lecturers comments to be unclear, confusing and vague
4	students may meet with different and inconsistent comments from different lecturers on a similar type of writing
5	the kind of feedback lecturers provide and the way this is expressed are informed by lecturer’s disciplinary backgrounds, personal interests and values
6	feedback does not always correspond with published guidelines or criterion
7	feedback is not as helpful as either lecturers or students would like it to be
8	giving and receiving feedback is an emotional and rational activity

Source: Coffin et al., (2003) p.103

The challenges outlined in the above table suggests that care must be taken to ensure that feedback given is appropriate for the purpose. Inappropriate feedback can lead to frustration and apprehension on the part of a student (William, 2003 in Angel & Garcia, 2017) and thereby hinder learning which must be the focus. For example, a study by Wilson & Post found that feedback for some students was empowering while for others, receiving varying feedback from different instructors became an obstacle which made them begin to see writing as being subjective and arbitrary making it difficult for them to engage in writing (in Gere, 2019).

In some cases, feedback provided may not be related to the purpose of the assignment given while in other cases, lecturers can comment on students' inabilities in a manner that is judgemental and personal. However, personal comments do not promote students' learning (Brookhart, 2008) although they help create dialogue between the lecturer and the student. Feedback should instead be focused on correcting students' mistakes. According to Angel & Garcia (2017), "Corrective feedback can guide students in textual and composition features in order to improve their product" (p.54). To achieve this, Hyland (2019) proposes the following:

- Write personalised comments to maintain a dialogue between reader and writer
- Provide guidance where necessary avoiding advise that is too directive or prescriptive
- Make text specific comments and not based on general rules
- Write both specific margin comments and a summarising end comment (p.179).

However, Hattie & Timperley (2007) argues that feedback must contain feedforward and feed up information where feed up entails making clear what is expected from the learner by providing assessment criteria- clarifying points of strength and weaknesses. Feed forward involves showing the learner how to proceed and improve. Whether lecturers' feedback in colleges were applying all the above was in part the question this study sought to establish.

2.1.11.3 Methods of Giving Feedback on Students' Written Work

There many ways that can be used to give feedback on students' written work. However, the most common ones include (a) commentary, (b) coversheets, (c) minimal marking, (d)recorded comments and (e)computer mediated (Hyland, 2019 p.175).

Commentary

Giving feedback includes making hand written comments on a text to indicate a students' strengths and weaknesses. Written comments can be integrated in the text or be placed in the

essay margins or be written as a comprehensive endnote (Hyland, 2019). Some practitioners tend to support feedback given as a comprehensive end note arguing that it affords more opportunities and space for the lecturer to summarise and focus on the key points as well as make general observations. However, the comments written in the margin are also supported on the basis of immediacy and proximity by way of “appearing at the exact point in the text where the issue occurs” (Hyland, 2019 p. 175). Comments can be based on what a student has written, or on how it has been written. The comments can also be based on praising a student or giving an encouraging remark. In other instances, feedback can be provided by correcting the mistake that a student has made (Harmer, 2015).

Cover Sheets

Cover sheets are another form of commentary and often comes with it. The cover sheet provides information on the criteria used in the assessment of a particular task and shows the performance of a student in regard to the criteria (Hyland, 2019).

Minimal Marking

This refers to the use of codes for in-text form-based feedback. In academic writing, codes are marking symbols that are used to indicate that a student has made a mistake (Harmer, 2015). The symbols are used to indicate the point where an error has occurred and also define the error that has been made in a piece of writing. Minimal marking is said to be effective in that it provides for the active involvement of students by encouraging them to think about their errors which in turn motivates them to make corrections themselves. It also enhances students’ development of “self-editing strategies” which in turn promotes learning. Minimal marking provides more time for substantive comments (Hyland 2019, p.176) as compared to other forms of feedback. However, minimal marking is also criticised for focusing on surface errors as “rhetorical and communicative aspects” are not catered for. The table below shows some of the common codes used in student writing and their meaning.

Table: 2.11 Examples of Marking Symbols Used in Minimal Marking and their Meaning

Marking Symbols	Meaning
Sp	spelling error
WO	mistake in word order
G	grammar mistake
T	wrong tense
wf	wrong form
a/f	wrong singular or plural form
WW	wrong word
{ }	not necessary
?M	meaning not clear
p	punctuation mistake
F/I	too formal or informal
NA	inappropriate usage
x	unnecessary
frag	sentence fragment

(Adopted from Harmer, 2015 and Hyland, 2019)

However, students must be taught the meaning of the symbols if they are to benefit (Harmer, 2015). This entails that instruction on the meaning of symbols should precede academic writing activities although, many lecturers may assume that students are already familiar with their meanings from secondary school.

Recorded Commentary

This refers to audio comments based on students' task that are recorded on either a smart phone, digital recorder or computer. The comments are then sent to the student together with the script as a pod cast or email attachment (Hyland, 2019).

Computer Mediated Feedback

This is the type of feedback that is given to students through a computer either by email, wikis or chat rooms (Tafazoli, Nosratzadeh, & Hossein, 2014 in Hyland, 2019). Computer mediated feedback is good in that it provides an opportunity for students to collaborate with their lecturers. However, Hyland argues that computer feedback can be more useful when integrated with other forms of lecturer responses (2019). Consistent with this view, Harmer

(2015) also stated that the ideal situation for giving feedback is “to be able to sit down with the student in individual conference and go through his or her work” (p.164).

2.1.11.4 Strategies for Providing Feedback

Strategies for providing feedback vary in terms of (a) timing (b) amount (c) mode and (d) audience (Brookhart, 2008). Below is an explanation of each of these:

Timing

In regard to timing, feedback should be given when learning goals are still fresh in the minds of students. Some researchers suggest that delayed feedback can be a missed opportunity for learning (Brookhart, 2008). However, feedback can still be slightly delayed to “give students time to process information and attain a comprehensive review of their thinking and processing” (p.5).

Mode of Feedback

Generally, the mode of giving feedback can either be interactive, written and demonstrative. However, some scholars advocate for the integration of the various forms. For example, a study by Schillings et al., (2018) noted that written feedback alone may be insufficient in improving students’ academic writing skills. Whatever mode is used, lecturers must be aware of its effectiveness and of how it is perceived by the students (Harmer, 2015). Depending on the performance, some students may resent some modes of feedback, for instance, poor performance can discourage some students to read through the comments and learn from them.

Amount

Academic writing encompasses various skills for which students need support if they are to improve their writing skills. However, research has shown that most academic writing comments lectures make on students written scripts tend to be more focused on language problems and errors (Hyland, 1996; Angel & Garcia, 2017). In regard to improving students’ academic writing skills, this can be restrictive in that it inhibits students’ awareness of other textual components such as “organisation, content and presentation” (Hyland, 2019 p.178) which help shape good texts. Nevertheless, this does not suggest that feedback should focus on every aspect of the task (Hyland 2019). According to Gibson & Simpson (2004) the focus of feedback should be on major learning goals based on student’s level of development and not on every weakness and error observed in students’ written work. Consistent with this view, Harmer (2015) noted that commenting on every error can be intimidating to students.

Therefore, feedback providers must choose what and how much to focus on depending on students' current needs and the nature of the tasks.

One of the ways that can help lecturers to choose what and how much to focus on is to distinguish between mistakes that students can correct themselves and those that can be corrected by lecturers by categorising them into three groups. These are slips, errors and attempts (Harmer, 2015). According to Edge, slips are those mistakes which students can correct by themselves once it is pointed to them while errors are mistakes for which students need an explanation as they cannot correct themselves. Attempts are those that students try to say but do not know the correct way of saying it (Edge 1989 Chapter 2 in Harmer, 2015). A clear distinction of these can guide lecturers to target students' learning goals, thereby, enhancing academic writing development Correspondingly, Hattie & Timperley (2007) also distinguishes four levels at which feedback can be given on students' written work as shown in the figure below:

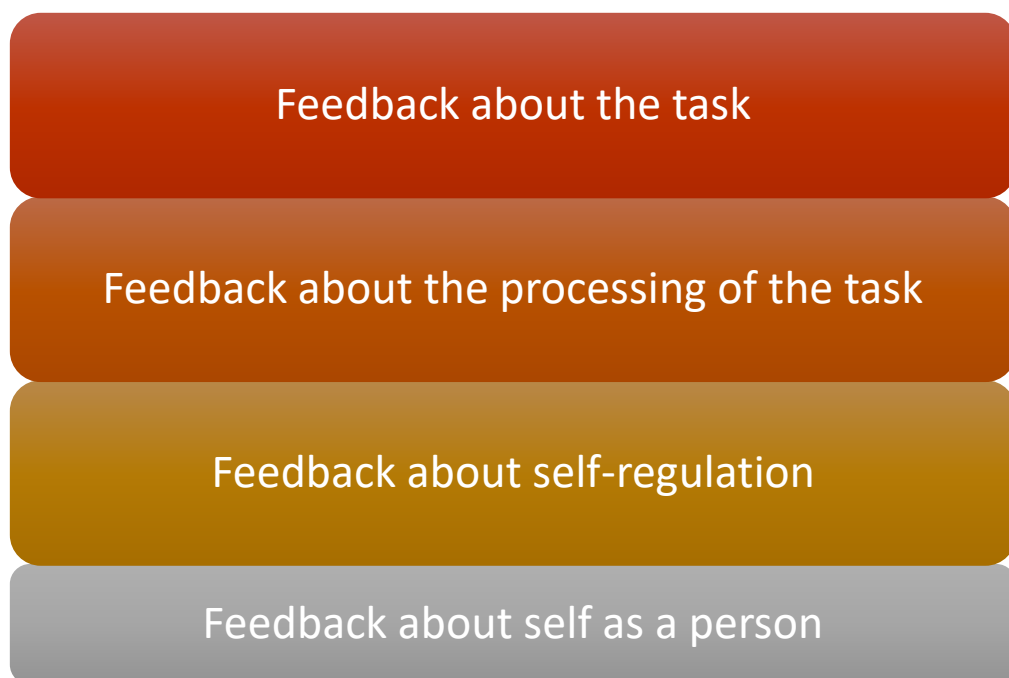


Figure: 1.4 Levels of Feedback According to Hattie & Timperley (2007)

Figure 1.4 above shows the different levels of feedback that can enhance students' learning. Feedback about the task includes information about errors, depth or quality of the work, need for more information and the neatness of the format while feedback about the processing of the task looks at how the task was processed and makes suggestions on how it could have been done. Feedback about self-regulation helps students to examine and control their learning by drawing their attention to rules and regulations and feedback about the self as a

person is concerned with the students' disposition in relation to the task (Brookhart, 2008, p.20). Nevertheless, students' individual differences should be considered when attending to errors (Hyland, 2019).

2.1.11.5 Balance of Comments in Terms of Purpose

While making comments can help students reflect on their performance, it is essential that comments made are balanced in purpose. Balancing comments in regard to purpose can enable students to not only be aware of their weaknesses and a possible route of action but also their strengths (Brookhart, 2008; Twagirimana, 2017). According to Hyland (2019), feedback must include (1) comments in praise of students' strengths in some aspects of the text, (2) criticism on errors made in the text and (3) suggestions that provide guidance on the course of action for improvement based on the learning goals of a particular task. In academic writing development, balancing the purpose of feedback can help boost students' motivation to improve in their areas of weaknesses. In Colleges of Education however, it was not known whether the purpose of feedback on students' written assignments was being balanced in purpose and whether it was being targeted on major learning goals hence, this study.

Audience for Feedback

Feedback can also be done at individual or classroom level. Individual feedback enables students to receive individualised attention. However, research has shown that whole class feedback is more appropriate when the problem is common to many students although it "works best when it has a strong sense of the audience" (Brookhart, 2008, p. 17).

2.1.11.6 Using rubrics to Provide Informative Feedback

Research has shown that academic writing can be fostered by making assessment and marking criteria explicit" (Gourlay, Sutherland & Thomson, 2008 p.35). One of the strategies instructors can use to make assessment and marking criteria explicit is by using rubrics. A rubric is an assessment tool used in the evaluation of written work (Graham et al., 2016). Lecturers can use rubrics to provide informative feedback on student's work by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses and by identifying areas for improvement (Chowdhury, 2019 p.64). Use of rubrics has the following advantages: (a) notifies students of what is expected, (b) can help provide informative and timely feedback (c) enhances grading consistency and fair assessment (d) can foster student learning and self-assessment (Chowdhury, 2019).

There are two types of rubrics which can be used in grading students. These are holistic and analytical. A holistic rubric is one that provides a single score for the entire work and is usually based on the overall impression of the marker on the student's work (Hyland, 2019). Holistic rubrics are useful in giving a general impression of the performance of an individual and are more effective for grading simple work. However, holistic rubric lack detailed analysis of performance. It does not provide good feedback on students who may need to understand their weaknesses and strength (Earl, 2003). Consistent with this view, Hyland (2019) stated that "Reducing writing to a single score means that teachers cannot gain diagnostic information which they can then feedback into teaching" (p.217).

Analytical Rubric is one that breaks down the work according to defined attributes which are separately graded with each aspect contributing to the overall grade (Chastain, 1988; Huba, 2000). One of the advantages of analytic rubric in student assessment is that a separate score is assigned for each attribute, thus, helping students to understand their areas of strengths and weaknesses. Analytic rubric can be effective in rating complex performance and in providing feedback to students. Besides, it provides more information on the quality of the work as regards strengths and weaknesses. Hyland (2019) adds that "analytic rubrics promote reflection and professional development by encouraging teachers to think about what comprises good writing in a particular task" (p.218). However, preparation of an analytical rubric is time consuming and may not be the best when dealing with huge numbers of students.

Qualities of a Good Rubric

A good rubric is one that provides information on what students need to succeed in their work. It should provide a detailed explanation of performance in the different aspects of the task. A good rubric must be practical and not complicated in regard to use and must be fairly applied to all categories of students (Huba, 2000). In this study however, it was not known whether lecturers were using rubrics to point to student errors and whether these rubrics were providing information on what students needed to succeed in their work, hence the study.

2.1.12 Lecturers' Need for Training in Academic Writing Support

The need for lecturers' training in academic writing support is well documented. For example, a recent study by Street (2015) recommended that academic writing tutors and not just students also need support. However, there seems to be a general consensus that lecturers understand what academic writing instructions demand. In some cases, they may

find themselves teaching academic writing content that they are not familiar with or have little knowledge about. In other instances, lecturers may fail to apply what they know about the subject in question or even care or see the need to do something about their current knowledge and skills as noted by Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal (2003) who stated that:

Some academics teach students without having much formal knowledge of how students learn. Many lecturers know how they learnt/learn best, but do not necessarily consider how *their* students learn and if the way *they* teach is predicated on enabling learning to happen (p.8).

Consistent with this idea, a study by Bell-Nolan (2015) that sought to understand teachers' beliefs, experiences and common core tensions in the teaching of writing across the curriculum established that teachers had limited skills due to insufficient training in the teaching of critical aspects of writing and in helping students acquire skills of writing across the curriculum.

In view of the above, some academic writing scholars have identified some of the areas in which lecturers or tutors can be trained to build their capacity for academic writing instruction. For example, Devet, (2018) suggested that tutors can be trained on how to use students' prior knowledge, dispositions, reflection, context and genres so that they can identify moments in tutorials where they may point students in the direction of transfer of knowledge. In support of this idea, Hyland (2019) noted that teachers lacking training and or confidence may fail to acknowledge the differences and choice in writing and in this way, they may overlook the importance of considering the context of language use and end up presenting genres as rigid, abstract models. This entails that training of lecturers in academic writing support for students can help them gain expertise in selecting an appropriate approach to writing by looking at the different dimensions of different texts.

Connected to this is the need for lecturers to keep abreast with current developments in academic writing (MOE, 1977). While lecturers may have been exposed to academic writing as students, they may not be familiar with the new developments such as use of information and technology (ICT) in AW. They may need some training in the use of electronic gadgets for academic purposes for their benefit and that of their students. According to Pilgrim & Martinez (2013), "Educators need to understand the importance of knowledge about internet searches, hyperlinks, search engines, and other components of internet searches explaining that "this knowledge is crucial to help students find reliable information on line, while keeping them safe in the process" (p. 65). This is important as it may help lecturers fulfil their

mandatory roles of being motivators, resource and feedback providers (Harmer, 2015). This is why this study sought to establish whether academic writing lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing to new college entrants in Colleges of Education in Zambia.

2.2 Review of Studies

The previous section looked at general literature on academic writing. This section reviews some studies related to this study. The review is in line with the questions of the study.

2.2.1 Students' Exposure to Writing Relevant Texts at Secondary School Level

In Zambia, Sidambi (2011) conducted a mixed method study that had a focus on how composition writing was being taught in Zambia's high schools in Choma District. Data was collected through lesson observations and interviews with teachers who were teaching English. The study established that teachers who were teaching English in the two sampled schools had limited knowledge in the types of composition, composition writing skills and the actual teaching procedures of composition writing. Similar results were also recorded in another study by N'gona (2016). The study which sought to establish factors that contributed to poor performance in English composition writing among grade 12 pupils in Kabwe District revealed that teachers lacked various skills in various important areas of teaching composition in secondary schools. Since secondary education is preparatory for tertiary education (Focus on Learning, 1992), lack of such knowledge by those teaching at secondary level may limit students' exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary school and this may deprive them of foundational skills which may without any intervention affect their academic writing performance in tertiary education. Besides, the lack of knowledge seen in teachers who were teaching composition at secondary school may apply to those teaching academic writing in colleges who may fail to effectively teach those who enter colleges with deficit from secondary schools. This is why this study sought to establish whether new college students were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in preparation for writing in college and whether lecturers who were teaching in colleges had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing to new entrants in Colleges of Education.

In Kenya, Onchera and Manyasi (2013) conducted a study that sought to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to appropriate functional texts varieties and also to identify the kind of support teachers gave learners in their functional writing tasks as well as to

determine how exposure to different texts influenced teachers' approach to teaching functional writing for effective communication. The study was based on Hylands' theory of teaching writing, Hymes concept of Communicative competence and Widdowsons' concept of communicative language teaching. Data was collected through lesson observations, students' self-evaluation and interview schedules to capture the actual teaching and learning of writing. The study found that students were not fully exposed to varieties of functional writing texts and that teachers were not giving adequate support to learners. On the contrary, Klimova (2013) stated that students should be exposed to "sufficient models of writing" (p.435) which may either be standard or substandard to help them begin to differentiate the different types of writing. In support of this, Wilmot & Sisitka (2015) add that writing is learnt by writing.

Although this study is not looking at learners at secondary school level, these results are important as students' limited exposure to writing varieties of texts at secondary school may affect students' writing abilities upon entry into college. While this study was conducted in secondary schools in Kenya, the present study was conducted in Colleges of Education in Zambia. Besides, the study by Ochera and Manyasi (2013) was based on Hyland's theory of teaching writing, Hymes concept of Communicative competence and Widdowson's concept of communicative language teaching, this study was guided by the Community of Practice theory of learning which is more aligned to learning that takes place in a college communities of practice.

In another study in Zambia, Mulenga (2017) conducted a study that sought to establish learner's proficiency in the use of discourse markers to enhance coherence and comprehensibility in composition writing at grade twelve using a descriptive design. Data were collected from 300 scripts comprising two samples of written pieces of discourse produced by each of the 150 pupils. A four stage qualitative data approach was used to analyse data. The study found that learners were aware of the importance of using discourse markers in enhancing coherence and comprehensibility in composition writing at grade twelve. However, inadequate proficiency was suggested as only 44 out of the 107 available discourse markers were utilized in 300 scripts. In regard to preparation for entry into college (CDC,2012), this is a significant gap although the study was done on a small sample, it provides a glimpse of what may be obtaining at Senior Secondary School level and may imply that many students begin their tertiary education with low or no proficiency in writing

skills. However, it appears that no study has been conducted to look at what colleges were doing to address students' writing skills deficit upon entry into college.

2.2.2 Helping Students Teachers Understand Specific Academic Writing Requirements

In Malaysia, Mahusaleh, (2010) conducted a case study which sought to investigate academic writing problems of the Arab postgraduate students of the college of business. Interviews were used to collect data from masters' students. Results of the study revealed that problems faced by students in academic writing ranged from vocabulary, register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling and references. Although the study was conducted on post graduate students at master's level and in a college of business, problems faced by students appeared to be a result of deficit in basic writing skills at secondary school level and may review what may obtain when students are not adequately exposed to writing at secondary school. The results may also suggest that failure to address students' deficit from secondary school may have far reaching consequences on students who wish to advance to higher levels of education. Contrary to this, there is empirical evidence showing that any person can improve their writing skills (Manuel and Carter, 2016). Therefore, it is incumbent upon higher learning institution to orient students to academic writing conventions as suggested by Chokwe (2013) who stated that "Higher Education Institutions should endeavour to correct what the schooling system failed to do by designing effective writing programs that will catapult students into contextual academic discourses within their respective disciplines" (p.380). This is why this study sought exposed to writing relevant texts with the term 'relevant texts' encompassing the use of the forms and conventions of the written language.

In 2014, Pineteh conducted a study that sought to establish challenges faced by undergraduate students in academic writing and their implications on students' academic development at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa. Data was collected through interviews with 20 second year students, reflections with first year students as well as discussion with 4 lecturers who were teaching Communication and Study Skills. The study revealed that challenges faced by students included lack of mastery of academic writing conventions, analysis of topics for writing, using writing to construct social identity, ability to research and apply knowledge across different contexts and poor sentence skills. Although this study was conducted in a university, these results highlight some of the challenges that students in CoE may also face in their first year in college. Challenges such as ability to research, mastery of academic writing conventions and using writing to construct social identity may be beyond students' experience in secondary school as noted by Bell-Nollan

(2015) who stated that secondary school leavers do not often have essential writing skills to accomplish tasks assigned in college courses. Stanley (2020) adds that college courses require genre knowledge, research methods and rhetorical awareness that students may not have practiced before (p.97). Therefore, it is incumbent upon colleges to orient students to academic writing conventions. Consistent with this view, Chokwe (2013) suggested that “Higher Education Institutions should endeavour to correct what the schooling system failed to do by designing effective writing programs that will catapult students into contextual academic discourses within their respective disciplines as well as effective teacher training” (p.380). Whether Communication and Study Skills introduced as a way of helping students improve their academic writing skills was effective was in part what this study sought to investigate.

In Zambia, Sichone (2015) conducted a mixed method study that sought to establish factors that contributed to poor performance in academic writing at Kitwe College of Education. Data was collected using questionnaires and structured interviews and descriptive analysis was used to establish factors that contributed to poor performance. Results of the study revealed that lack of practice and creativity, code switching, lack of proper role models in the college; poor literacy backgrounds as well as spending too much time on social media were among the factors that contributed to student poor performance in academic writing. In view of these findings, the study recommended the need to review the course content and place more emphasis on literacy skills basing on the idea that these form a basis for academic writing. Although colleges had introduced the Study and Communication Skills Course meant to improve students’ academic writing, it was not known whether the course incorporated salient academic literacy skills that enhance students’ academic writing needs and this is in part is what this study sought to establish.

In Norway, Ofte (2014) conducted a study that aimed at clarifying the students’ understanding of an academic text and academic writing in English and how well they felt they mastered academic writing in the second language. Data was collected through a questionnaire administered to 18 student teachers studying English at a Norwegian Teacher Education College. Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire revealed that students had elements of metalinguistic awareness about writing in the second language but their awareness was limited in regard to the particular use of academic vocabulary. The study also reviewed that the students lacked metalinguistic competence that is necessary in putting their

awareness into practice. In this respect, it was concluded that there was need to raise students, metalinguistic awareness as a way of facilitating their further development in academic writing proficiency in the second language. The study further noted that metalinguistic conversations could be an important tool in this process and also that it was important to focus on such conversations as facilitating academic writing proficiency is needed in higher education.

Although the study was conducted on students with a different linguistic background, the findings of this study are important as they show that language is an important aspect of academic writing support that student writers may need in colleges. Consistent with these findings, Canale & Swain's (1980) framework suggest that writers need at least four types of competences to communicate effectively. These are:

- (a) Grammatical competence which is the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and the language system.
- (b) Discourse competence which refers to the knowledge of genre and the rhetorical patterns that create them.
- (c) Sociolinguistic competence which is concerned with the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts, understanding readers and adopting appropriate authorial attitude in communication.
- (d) Strategic competence which refers to ones' ability to use a variety of communicative strategies (cited in Hyland, 1996 p.31).

However, students cannot develop these competencies on their own. This calls for the need to demonstrate, scaffold and give support (Manuel and Carter, 2016). Whether lecturers were demonstrating, scaffolding and giving support to help student teachers acquire linguistic skills for effective academic writing in Colleges of Education is in part the question this study sought to answer.

In another related study in Botswana, Nteneke & Ramoroka (2015) conducted a study to establish undergraduate and lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of academic writing activities and instruction given in a communication and Academic Literacy Skills Academic Writing Module. In this study, 46 students and 2 lecturers who were teaching the course were probed through a questionnaire on their instruction and assessment of the course. 12 students were also interviewed in a focus group. Results of the study reviewed that lecturers and students had different perceptions about the effectiveness of the academic writing activities

and instructions. The differences in perception on the effectiveness of academic writing activities and instructions between students and their lecturers may explain why it may be difficult to improve students' academic writing skills and may suggest that interventions put in place were not learner centered. On the contrary, lecturers should consider the perceptions of students if they are to consider a learner centered approach to learning and teaching (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003). Whether this was obtaining in CoE was in part the interest of the study.

In the United States of America, Gurel Cennetkusu (2017) conducted a quantitative study which sought to examine the needs, means and successful practices of academic writing in English as a second/foreign language at a prominent US university using a case study design. Data was collected through a comprehensive survey which utilized in-depth interviews and analysis of samples of student's academic writing. In this study, it was noted that awareness of the expectations and practices of all parties involved was more likely to produce successful writers at tertiary level. These results are in tandem with Palmer & et al., (2014) who also noted that making academic literacy expectations explicit through teaching and assessment practices was essential to improving students' academic writing abilities. However, there often exists discrepancy between expectations of academics and the skills that students possess in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving, integration of literature and the application of communication skills (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). In view of this, this study sought to establish whether Colleges of Education academics were making academic writing expectations explicit as a way of optimizing student teachers' academic writing skills in Colleges of Education.

In Zimbabwe, Gonye et al. (2012) conducted a case study on the nature of academic writing, weaknesses inherent among first year undergraduate university students of Great Zimbabwe University (GZU)). Interviews, document analysis and questionnaires were used to collect data which were later analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Results of the study revealed that undergraduate first year students written papers were characterized by multiple weaknesses. Basing on this, the study made several recommendations amongst which were the need to treat writing as a process and not as a product and the use of an integrated approach to teaching academic writing. The process approach to writing recommended in this study is well supported by researchers, for example, a study by O'Sullivan & Cleary (2014) observed that non-awareness of the writing process and of strategies and skills to help

students write well makes them struggle with writing. A study by Samsudin (2015) also advocated for the need to use procedural know-how explicitly and disclose what goes on in the process of writing academic texts to help learners write correctly.

However, given that none of the approaches is perfect (Pramila, 2016), integration of the approaches proposed in this study is one of the strategies for addressing limitations of each (de Chazal, 2014) as concluded by Pramila (2016) who stated that “teaching writing to ESL/EFL learners can be significantly more effective and enjoyable if the instructor is able to make the best use of the advantages of different teaching approaches with flexibility to meet the students’ needs”. However, “this requires careful planning and implementation of various approaches, methods and techniques in the classroom and beyond” (2016 p.146). Whether colleges of education in Zambia were doing any of this was the question this study sought to answer.

In Namibia, Mutimani (2016) conducted a study that sought to investigate challenges that were being experienced by Bachelor of Education students in using English at the University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo campus using a mixed method design. Data was collected through a questionnaire, individual interviews, and document analysis. The results of the study showed that despite being subjected to instructions, students were still facing academic writing challenges which were a result of linguistic and general literacy background and students’ attitude towards academic writing. Some of the recommendations made were the need to integrate literacy in the curriculum of all disciplines, promotion of multi-modal teaching strategies and assessment, collaboration between language lecturers and core-course specialists, intensive academic reading and writing workshops. Although this study is not looking at challenges faced by college students in academic writing, the challenges faced by Bachelor of Education students in Namibia may reflect the challenges that students who go into tertiary education institutions such as Colleges of Education face and may point to the need for intervention. In Zambia, however, what colleges of Education were doing to help student teachers overcome academic writing challenges was not known.

2.2.3 Support to Promote Student Teachers’ Development of Academic Writing Skills

In Rwanda, Mutwarasibo (2013) conducted a study to examine how undergraduate university students in Ruanda experienced collaborative process writing as an instructional method capable of helping them improve their academic writing abilities in English. Data was collected through group interviews carried out in English after all groups had finished writing

an argumentative essay using the collaborative process writing method. In their responses, students indicated that they still faced challenges in writing in English in the area of planning, organization, cohesion, coherence and grammar. However, combining collaboration process with the reflective exercises and classroom reporting strategies introduced by their instructor helped students identify the persistent writing difficulties and plan a course of action to tackle them. These results are in confirmation that learning requires opportunities for practice and exploration, space for thinking or reflecting ‘in your heard’ and for interaction with others and learning from and with peers and experts (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal 2003, p.22). Coffin et al., (2003) also advocates for the need to provide contextualized opportunities for engaging in academic writing tasks that students feel contribute towards their development as academic writers in tertiary contexts. However, it was not known if CoE were using collaborative writing as an instructional method for teaching academic writing and whether they were giving student teachers enough time for practice, exploration in academic writing and collaboration hence, this study.

In Pakistan, Fareed, Ashraf and Bila (2016) conducted a study that aimed at investigating Pakistan’s undergraduate English Second Language learners’ (ESL) writing problems and factors that hindered their writing skills and also to obtain suggestions on what could be done to improve Pakistan’s ESL learner’s writing skills. In this study, a sample of student’s written scripts were thematically analyzed to come up with problems faced. The study established that insufficient linguistic proficiency, grammar and syntax, reliance on the first language, lack of ideas, weak structural organization and lack of ideas were the major problems faced by Pakistan’s undergraduate ESL learners. The problems faced by students in academic writing as well as factors contributing to such problems may be a result of limited or lack of support (Kabianga & Onchera, 2013). While this study is not looking at problems faced by students and factors that hinder their academic writing, a knowledge of problems faced by undergraduate students in a university in Pakistan is important to this study as it underscores the need for academic writing support for new entrants at tertiary level and this is the focus of this study.

In South Africa, Pfeiffer and Sivasubramanian (2016) conducted a qualitative study that sought to establish the kind of strategies that could assist second language students with English language writing and also to offer useful insights into the educational practice and prevalence of writing for self-expression. Autobiographical writing, journal entries and

personal-response writing were analyzed. The study found that student writing improved over a continuum of writing tasks of an evolutionary daily living nature. Through this, students were able to explore and check their self-expression thereby improving their writing skills. These results are in affirmation of the idea that writing is learnt by writing (Gourlay, Sutherland & Thomson, 2008; Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015). However, this can only be successful if writing practice is centered on writing to learn (Harmer, 2015). Whether student teachers were being engaged in academic writing practice as a support strategy for promoting the development of academic writing skills is one of the questions this study sought to answer.

In England, Nzekwe-Excel (2014) conducted a quantitative study which sought to explore if academic writing workshops contributed to students learning and performance in assessment at Aston University. Data was collected from 65 undergraduate mathematics students who were enrolled in a Communication/ Academic Writing Skills module in the first semester of their first year of their study. An independent T -test was conducted to compare the mean performance of the students based on their attendance of academic writing workshops. Results of the study showed that students who attended 2-5 workshops performed much better than those who attended 0-1 writing workshop. These results show that academic writing support interventions such as writing workshops are critical to improving students' academic writing skills and underscores the importance of this study.

However, the effectiveness of academic writing support interventions may depend on the content and duration of the support and commitment of the students themselves. While this study was conducted on students who were in their first semester in their first year in college, assessing students' academic writing abilities in their third and final year after having undertaken a course in academic writing in their first year in college is equally important as it provides a picture of the impact that the intervention has had on students' writing abilities over the years. In this study, an assessment of student teachers' writing abilities in their final year in college enhanced a fair reflection on what Colleges of Education were doing as it helped provide a picture of the impact that the intervention has had on students' improvement of academic writing skills.

2.2.4 Feedback Practice on Student Teachers' Written Assignments

In Kenya, Kimanzi, Bwire & Miima (2019) conducted a study that investigated the influence of teacher feedback techniques on secondary school students' writing skills in Nairobi

County using a descriptive survey. Questionnaires, lesson observations and document analysis of students' marked essays were used to gather data in Njiru Sub- County. The findings showed that the most used feedback strategies by teachers were grades and codes. The also revealed that teacher feedback was valued by students. Some of the recommendations made included the need for consistence use of effective feedback strategies that ensure that the learner is actively involved in the lessons. While this study focused on the influence of feedback techniques on secondary school students' writing skills in Kenya, the present study sought to determine whether or not lecturers' feedback practice was contributing to student teachers' improvement of academic writing skills in Colleges of Education in Zambia.

In another related study in Kenya, Nthiga, (2010) conducted a study on second language pedagogy feedback practices in Kenyan secondary schools. The study revealed that error feedback plus teacher written comments were the most commonly used feedback provision methods with teachers' feedback mostly However, Hyland (1996) advises that "written feedback must respond to all aspects of student texts: structure, organization, style, content and presentation" (p.185). This is important in that a bias towards improving students' language skills at the expense of other academic discourse features may not yield proficiency in student's academic writing. Therefore, feedback must be sufficient and relevant if students are to improve their linguistic and academic writing skills (Klimova, 2013). Consistent with this view, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggested that feedback must do the following:

- a) helps clarify what good performance is
- b) facilitates the development of self-assessment in learning
- c) delivers high quality information to students about their learning
- d) encourages teacher and peer dialogue about learning
- e) encourages positive motivational beliefs and self esteem
- f) provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
- g) provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching (p.17).

In this study, however, it was not known whether feedback practice was reflective of the above principles, hence, this study.

In Nepal, Sapkota (2013) conducted an Action Research that focused on the development of writing skills through peer and teacher correction techniques with the aim of testing the progress of the students while writing an essay. Data was collected through test items. Students were at first given a pre-test followed by teacher and peer correction after which a

post test was administered. Results of the study showed that students improved their writing skills in the post test. They were able to use words in an increased order and form grammatically correct sentences in their writing of tests and were seen to make less grammatical errors in the post test than in the pre-test. Besides, students' writing mechanics as regards punctuation, proper use of paragraphs, cohesion and coherence in writing were also seen to improve. These results demonstrate that working with peers and cultivating peer-based communities of practice provide additional support and intellectual stimulation (Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015) which can enhance students' improvement of their academic writing skills.

However, the fact that a comment or suggestion has been made by a lecturer or student does not necessarily mean that it is correct. Research has shown that "peers are not trained teachers and their comments may be vague and unhelpful or even overly critical or sarcastic" (Hyland 1996 p. 198). Gere (2019) also noted that "Peers, instructors and editors can be wrong and that learning to discern which feedback or assessment is most valuable is part of writers' continually learning" (p.186). Thus, part of academic writing support lecturers can provide is to make students understand how they can look for and critically engage with instructors' feedback" (Wilson & Post in Gere, 2019, p.54). This cannot only help them to become independent learners, but also build their ability to edit and correct their own work, thereby building on their proficiency. Whether or not CoE were using peer and lecturer feedback to improve student teachers' AW skills in English and whether or not lecturers were helping students to understand how they could critically engage with lecturers' feedback was in part the question this study sought to answer.

In Ruanda, Twagilimana (2017) conducted a qualitative study that sought to critically examine the extent to which feedback practices as part of strategies used in assessment of student work are meaningful to the expected learning process at the former University of Ruanda. Data was collected through analysis of key documents which included students' scripts, class observations and interviews of lecturers and students. The study reviewed that student were not likely to make appropriate use of assessment to improve their writing as the type of feedback observed was surrounded by confusion in regard to lecturers' expectations and what was academically acceptable in an academic text. Therefore, the study recommended a dialogue of participation to ensure that students were familiar with discourse strategies expected of them in a university. Although this study was conducted in a university, what was obtaining can also happen in CoE. Therefore, a dialogue of

'participation' recommended in this study is important as it is student centred and can help students and lecturers to have a common understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in academic discourse. According to Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshal (2003), part of being student centered "is recognizing that ... each student approaches the subject from their own perspective, their own unique past experience and their own understanding of themselves and their aspirations" (p.114). Therefore, it is critical that lecturers initiate individual dialogue with students so as to correct their past misconceptions and make expectations clear. Face-to-face dialogue is also supported by Whitaker (2009) who stated that "it gives students an opportunity to seek clarification and explanation from the lecturer and peers" (p.9). Whether this was being practiced in CoE is in part the question this study sought to answer.

In the Netherlands, Schillings et al., (2018) conducted a literature review of face-to-face dialogue intervention studies with emphasis on the key elements of intervention and outcomes in terms of students' perceptions and other indicators and the methodological characteristics of the studies for the presence of feed up, feedback and feedforward. Each intervention was analysed for the presence of feed-up, feedback and feed-forward information. The study established that most interventions were found to have used all feedback elements, assessment criteria, and feedback and feedforward information. Interventions were also perceived by students to be beneficial appreciating criteria and exemplars as they were able to clarify what was expected of them. In this review, feedback dialogue was found to be an effective intervention for improving students' academic writing skills. These results are in tandem with Brookhart (2008) who also advocated for interactive feedback. As to whether lecturers' feedback practice included dialogue with student teachers was in part the interest of this study.

2.2.5 Lecturer's Skills for effective Teaching of Academic Writing

In the United Kingdom, Adams (2011) conducted a study that sought to investigate peer tutoring for academic writing support in a UK university. Three students were trained to tutor their peers in academic writing. Qualitative data was collected from both peer tutors and tutees, and quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire administered by the institution's careers' department. The study established a positive effect on the tutors' self-perception of their own employability and understanding of the conversions of academic writing. Similar results were also recorded in a study conducted by O'sullivan & Clearly (2014) in Ireland. This study that sought to establish whether their peer tutoring in academic

writing module, the module used to train regional centers' undergraduate tutors in writing was satisfactory by looking at the most critical criteria for what constitutes 'engagement' in particular and whether that engagement led or failed to lead to a more formative satisfying university experience for students who took part in the module and those students with whom they were eventually to come in contact in their later roles as peer tutors in writing. The peer tutoring approach adopted by the regional writing center proved to be an appropriate pedagogical approach to the development of academic writing skills in their context.

Although the above studies were conducted in universities, their results review the importance of tutoring for academic writing support and are consistent with Chokwe (2013) who emphasized that lecturers should "ensure that they are fully equipped and trained to help students with academic writing (p.378). In support of this view, a recent study by Banja & Muzata (2019) which sought to investigate whether students of the School of Education at the University of Zambia were adequately prepared in citation and referencing attributed students' failure to demonstrate understanding of these skills to lecturers' inconsistencies. The inconsistencies exhibited by lecturers may be a result of limited knowledge and understanding of the correct conventions of citation and referencing. However, this can be addressed through peer tutoring for academic writing support (O'sullivan & Clearly, 2014) by lecturers. Whether lecturers involved in teaching academic writing in colleges were practicing peer tutoring for academic writing support was one of the questions this study sought to answer.

In another study in the United Kingdom, Davis (2018) conducted an exploratory study to ascertain teachers' views on the importance of publishing in relation to its impact on their practice, profession and institution with a particular focus on their experiences of publishing and the obstacles they encountered. Data was collected through interviews with teachers of academic writing who worked within English for Academic Purposes at UK universities and were actively engaged in publishing. Results of the study indicated that publishing by teachers of academic writing was important in regard to their understanding and supporting of students in writing and that it could improve teachers' individual reputation in their institutions and the status of their profession. However, it was noted that there were many barriers to publishing. This included lack of time, support, mentoring as well as hostility from line managers. Nevertheless, it was suggested that networks, collaboration initiatives and more informal writing opportunities can encourage academic writing teachers to publish more for themselves.

The need for lecturers to be writers themselves is indeed a critical aspect in academic writing support and development. This is because AW is generally perceived to be a difficult task by many students and as such, lecturers' engagement in writing helps demystify it (Donnelly, 2014). This idea is consistent with Andrew & Smith (2011) who stated that "From pedagogical point of view, techniques for improving writing will include practice by the very teachers who are teaching it" (Andrew & Smith, 2011, p.10). This may entail that lecturers' engagement in publishing can help them gain the expertise to become more effective in their academic writing support for students by increasing their knowledge and skills on what constitutes academic writing. It can also help them to understand difficulties that students face in developing texts, thereby, selecting the best support strategies. In this study however, it was not known whether lecturers involved in teaching academic writing were themselves practicing academic writing through publishing.

In Saudi Arabia, Almubak (2016) conducted a study that looked at problems encountered by English second language tutors in teaching writing skills to students in ordinary classrooms in the university of Jazan context. The study which utilised a survey method concluded that problems associated with the teaching of writing skills can be addressed by employing various approaches knowing that good writing requires preparation and suitable feedback which teachers must never underestimate. In the current study however, it was not known whether lecturers had been subjected to formal instruction and support for them to use appropriate approaches to teaching the various dimensions of academic writing and to effectively provide feedback that promotes student learning and development of academic writing skills. Hence this study.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has tried to review theoretical and general literature related to academic writing. According to the reviewed literature, academic writing is one of the critical skills required for student success at tertiary level. However, students have challenges in mastering academic writing. The challenges range from under preparedness at secondary school level, lack of orientation to academic writing, lack of knowledge and skills in teaching writing at secondary school level, different expectations by both students and lecturers, limited practice and exposure to writing different texts and poor feedback practice. However, the literature indicates that academic writing is a situated literacy that needs to be explicitly taught if students are to master academic writing conventions. In view of this, the literature highlights

some of the components that should be considered in academic writing support. Three models of academic writing and support structures used by different institutions are discussed. The literature also discusses some of the approaches to teaching academic writing: process, genre and product approaches. However, it is noted that each of these approaches has limitations. Other aspects of academic writing discussed include academic writing as a concept, strategies for teaching academic writing, genres and styles of academic writing, language as a resource for academic writing, reading, importance of ICT, library skills, citation and referencing and feedback. The review has also looked at some of the studies that have been conducted across the globe. In summary, it can be said that academic writing instructions are an inevitable aspect of academic writing support in higher education. However, its success is dependent on the content, approach, model, strategies and lecturers'/tutors' requisite skills. This study sought to establish what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure student teachers have requisite academic writing skills. The next chapter addresses research methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous chapter looked at literature related to this study. This chapter discusses the methodology that was used to collect data. According to Crotty (2003), methodology is a “strategy, plan of action process or decision lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes” (p.3). In this study, a mixed research methodology was used to establish what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers’ academic writing skills. The chapter begins by discussing epistemology and ontology as basic foundations of research that define an approach to a particular study. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods are also explained. The study sites, design, sampling, sampling procedures, data collection instruments and strategies, analysis of data and ethical considerations have also been attended to. Ethical principles and how they were adhered together with limitations are also explained. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.1 Research Paradigm

In any study, the choice of research methodology, methods, literature and research design is based on a particular research paradigm or world view. According to Grix (2004), “people who want to conduct clear, precise research and evaluate other’s research studies need to understand the philosophical underpinnings that inform their choice of research questions, methodology, methods and intentions” (p.57). Therefore, selection of a paradigm is the first step to a successful research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), defined paradigms as “assumptions that a researcher makes about reality, how knowledge is obtained and the methods of gaining knowledge” (p.21). A research paradigm comprises “the general theoretical assumptions and law, and techniques for their application that members of a scientific community adopt” (Chalmers, 1982 p. 90). Thus, it comprises ontological and epistemological assumptions. The research paradigm comprises ontological and epistemological assumptions (Chalmers, 1982) that interact to inform the methodology which in turn define the methods used in the collection of data.

3.1.1 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

Ontology can be described as a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of reality. According to (Kiivunga and Kuyini, (2017), it is concerned with “the assumptions we make in order to believe that something makes sense or is real, or the very nature or essence of the social phenomena we are investigating” (p.27). It seeks to understand “whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently from human conceptions and interpretations, and closely related to this, whether there is a shared social reality or only multiple, context-specific ones” (Ormston et. al, 2014, p.4). Ontology can also be described as a two-dimension philosophy that offers an objective or positivist and subjective also known as interpretive or constructive stance on the nature of reality. The objective stance of ontology asserts that “social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors” (Bryman, 2012). According to this view, meaningful realities are embodied in objects awaiting discovery and are independent of human influence (Crotty, 1998; Muijs, 2004). Therefore, those who conduct research do it objectively on the grounds that the phenomena under study exist independent of them and therefore, do not affect or disturb what is being observed (Rehman, & Alharthi, 2016). The objective stance of ontology favors quantitative research. A constructive stance advances that all knowledge is constructed by human interactions with the world and is developed and transmitted within the social context (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This means that “there are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on single events and situations” (Cohen et al., 2002, p. 22) created by individuals as they see the world. Under this assumption, the best way to understand any phenomena is to view it in its “natural context” (Atieno, 2009, p. 14). This ontological position is more aligned to qualitative research.

Epistemology can be defined as a branch of philosophy that studies knowledge and its validity. Crotty (2003) define it as “the way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p. 3). According to Kivunga & Kuyini (2017) epistemology is concerned with “the very base of knowledge- its nature, and forms and how it can be acquired, and how it can be communicated to other human beings” (p.27). In other words, epistemology is concerned with knowledge generation, validation and dissemination. Epistemological assumptions define the criteria used by humans to acquire knowledge and this criteria in turn influences the researcher’s interpretation of research questions, choice of method, data collection, analysis and interpretation.

In research, epistemology interacts with ontology in defining research methodology depending on the researcher's stance. If the researcher's ontological standing is on a "singular, verifiable reality and truth" (Patton, 2002, p. 134), the researcher will conduct a study that seeks to test, observe, measure and quantify. If the researcher's world view is on the contrary assumed to be individual based and subjective, the researcher will ask the views of those who live it (Jackson, 2013). If knowledge is ontologically viewed as reality that is independent of participants' interpretation, epistemologically, this entails that knowledge should be obtained through observation and experiments. In a case where knowledge is ontologically viewed as being a human construct subject to individual interpretation, epistemologically, this means that knowledge should be obtained "through sense making and meaning" (Jackson, 2013, p. 54). Depending on which stance is taken, a researcher will decide whether or not to adopt a quantitative, objective and test-based study or a qualitative subjective and interpretative study or a mixed methods study (ibid. Jackson, 2013) in which both designs are integrated. In this study, both views were embraced and this led to the adoption of a mixed method.

3.2 Research Approach

Traditionally, there are two major competing research traditions: qualitative and quantitative with each having different epistemological and ontological basis (Tracy, 2010; Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2014). The aim of this study was to establish what Colleges of Education (CoE) were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills. In this regard, it was felt that optimizing students' academic writing is a human construction that finds its expression and meaning in the interactions between student teachers and their lecturers in Colleges of Education. Therefore, the best way to get information was to engage the same people involved in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

However, the researcher was also of the view that integration of an objectivist view by way of illustration would enhance a better understanding of the problem under study, hence, the researcher adopted a Mixed approach that allowed for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.1 Qualitative

Qualitative research is generally defined as one whose data is recorded in non-numerical form (Strauss, & Corbin, 1990; Lowie & Seton, 2013; Mandal, 2018). It "is an approach for

exploring and understanding the meaning individual groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Qualitative research takes a subjective stance which ascribes to multiple realities (Maarouf, 2019). For qualitative researchers, “Reality is not ‘out there’, to be objectively and dispassionately observed by us, but it is at least in part constructed by us and by our observations” (Kabir, 2016). Informed by this, qualitative researchers endeavour to study things in their natural settings and the purpose of the researcher is to make sense of a phenomenon as understood by the people involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hamersley, 2013; Mohajan, 2018).

Qualitative researchers take interest in processes, meaning and understanding of the phenomena through the use of text and artifacts (Atieno, 2009). According to Flick (2018), qualitative research utilizes text as its data mode with data collection methods ranging from interviews, observation, and document analysis from which data is derived in form of text by “recording and transcription and the methods for interpretation begin from the texts” (p. xxxi). Research takes place in the natural environment and the researcher is fully immersed in the study drawing as close as possible to the participants. Values that people attach to situations are of great significance and the researcher pays attention to them (Kivunga & Kuyini, 2017). In qualitative research, understanding of individuals and not groups are important as people can have different views each of which can be correct (Mohajan, 2018). To exemplify this, Rehman & Alharthi (2016) explains that “In the case of different well-argued interpretations about one phenomenon, one interpretation is not chosen or preferred over others as the ‘correct’ one but the existence of multiple knowledge is accepted...” (p.55).

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument who collects detailed information through a degree of involvement in the actual experience (Creswell, 2009; Heighan, & Croker, 2009). Qualitative research is inductive in nature and in this regard, lessons that researchers draw from the study have their basis on the views of participants and not on predetermined ideas of the researcher (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative study is aimed at discovering patterns or theories that help explain a phenomenon. In this approach, credibility of the study can be determined by triangulation and by seeking authentication of results from the participants (Suter, 2012). Qualitative approach is useful in examining a limited number of cases. However, it is context based and as such, results cannot be generalized to other contexts (Heighan, & Croker, 2009; Maarouf, 2019).

3.2.2 Quantitative

Muijs (2004) quoting Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) define quantitative research as “Explaining the phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular, statistics)” (p.1). The quantitative paradigm is empirical in nature and is also known as scientific research (Atieno, 2009, p. 13). In quantitative research, the focus of the study is on testing theories and hypothesis in order to understand cause and effect of phenomena (Taylor & Medina, 2011; Suter, 2012). While objectivity in qualitative research is subjective (Muijs, 2004) and only arrived at through intersubjectivity agreement, quantitative research is objective. Thus, methods used under this design are those that maximize objectivity in which case, the researcher is independent of the phenomena under investigation. Objectivity entails “minimizing all sources of biasness” and eliminating subjective ideas “as humanly as possible” (Kivunga & Kuyini, 2017). This is achieved through administration of standardized measurements. Quantitative researchers examine variables to test theories (Suter, 2012; Creswell, 2014) which help them to provide explanations and make predictions basing on measurable outcomes (Kivunga and Kuyini, 2017).

Quantitative research is value free (Maarouf, 2019). Therefore, researchers’ values should not impact what is being researched (Crotty, 2003) by remaining independent of the problem under investigation. The type of research conducted under this paradigm is deductive in nature and the researcher’s aim is to generalize the findings in order to develop a theory which in turn helps to predict, explain and unveil the meaning of a particular phenomenon. However, the quantitative method is criticized for its lack of depth and for being highly structured, thereby, making it difficult to conduct “a follow-up” in case of unexpected outcomes or information (Ryan, 2006 p. 21) in the course of the study. Nevertheless, the quantitative approach has the advantage of “providing quantitative precise results and being relatively quicker in data collection and analysis” (Maarouf, 2019, p.2) as compared to qualitative research.

3.2.3 Some Misunderstandings about Qualitative and Quantitative Approach

For some scholars, the major distinguishing factor between quantitative and qualitative research lies in the use of numbers in quantitative and text in qualitative. On this basis, some quantitative and qualitative purists argue that the two approaches cannot be mixed in one study. However, scholars such as Wills, Jost and Nilakanta (2007) argue that “the idea that

quantitative researchers use numbers as data while qualitative researchers do not is not true” “Number based research methods often are used by qualitative researchers and a growing number of quantitative researchers use qualitative data” (p.5). Therefore, the primary focus of research is not the type of data collected, but the foundational assumptions held by the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

In essence, quantitative and qualitative research need not be taken as binary opposites or as “two discrete opposite approaches” but a representation of two ends of a continuum. One study can in this regard be more quantitative than qualitative or “vice versa” (Maarouf, 2019, p.2) depending on the researcher’s desire. In support of this Guba & Lincoln (1994) noted that “both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm (p.185) and adding to this voice, Rehman & Alharthi (2016) points out that “One should choose methods and methodology which one finds most suitable for investigating the phenomena one sets out to investigate” (p 58). In support of this, Wills, Jost and Nilakanta (2007) argue that “scholars and research consumers should be willing to acknowledge that the view points and procedures based on other paradigms are accepted and used by “reasonable scholars” even if they do not agree with them” (p.8). In this study, quantitative procedures were used in a qualitative dominant study as they were seen to be suitable in providing illustrations for the meaning of qualitative results.

3.2.4 Mixed Approach

Mixed method research can be understood as studies that “are products of the pragmatic paradigm and that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2008, p.22). These studies involve “integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014, p.4). In mixed research, a researcher intentionally decides to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches at different stages of the research process (Creswell, 2011). Peirce, Dewey and James who developed the pragmatist world view contend that “the meaning and truth of any idea is a function of its practical outcomes” (Muijs 2004, p.6). Therefore, pragmatists focus on how well something works to solve a particular problem by adopting a method that allows for the use of a research design and methods best suited for addressing a particular problem (Kivunga & Kuyini, 2017). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018), Mixed approach “concerns not only mixing data but also mixing paradigms, ontologies,

epistemologies and axiologies in order to give a fair rounded picture of the phenomenon under investigation” (p.34).

3.2.4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Method Approach

Mixed methods design is extoled for:

- a. Its flexibility in which case, a research design is influenced by what a researcher wants to establish and not by predefined epistemological assumptions (Muijs, 2004).
- b. The researcher enjoys the freedom to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods to varying degrees (Creswell, 2012).
- c. Collection of both qualitative and quantitative data enhances a better understanding of the problem in question.
- d. The researcher is free to give prominence to one design without altering the significance of the other one in the complementary role and the researcher agrees with this.

However, mixed research methods are difficult to conduct as they demand expertise on the part of the researcher. Besides, conducting a mixed method study demands a great deal of time, effort and resources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.2.4.2 Rationale for Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

There are many reasons for which qualitative and quantitative research methods can be combined. Some of the notable reasons for mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods are: (a) to enable the confirmation or corroboration of results from each method, (b) to enable or to develop analysis in order to provide richer data and (c) to initiate new modes of thinking by attending to paradoxes that emerge from the two data sources (Rossman and Wilson 1985 in Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p.115). Clark and Creswell (2007) argued that “the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone (p.5). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) looks at Mixed method research as “an important way of looking at the social and educational world that is formed by a pragmatic paradigm of practicality in answering research purposes and research questions ‘what works’ in planning, conducting and reporting research” (p. 34). In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were combined in order to enable analysis, provide richer data and to corroborate results. Qualitative method which formed a major component of the study allows for creativity (Suter, 2012) which the researcher took advantage of.

3.3 Research Design

A research design can be defined as a formal written set of specifications and procedures for conducting and controlling a research project (Leedy, 1985). According to Creswell (2009), research designs are “Plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed data collections and analysis” (p.3). Adding to this, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) provide an elaborate definition that summarises what constitutes a research design. They define research design thus:

a plan for, and foundations of approaching, operationalising and investigating the research problem or issue, setting out the approach, theories and methodologies to be employed; the type of data required, how they will be collected (instrumentation) from whom (the population and sample); how the data will be analysed, interpreted and reported, the warrants to be adduced to defend the conclusions drawn and the degree of trust that can be placed in the validity and reliability of each element of the research; and the sequence of the research (p.238).

Thus understood, it can be argued that a research design enhances a logical presentation of instruments and procedures that a researcher employs in a study, thereby, reducing the misinterpretation of the social phenomenon being investigated (Adegoke & Adedayo, 2010). This study adopted a mixed method design as the researcher believed that combining the two designs helps attain a comprehensive understanding of the problem in question (Creswell, 2014).

Mixed method designs can be fixed or emergent (Creswell, 2012). Fixed method designs are those designs where the use of quantitative and qualitative methods is predetermined and planned at the start of the study and procedures implemented as planned (Creswell, 2014, p.53) whereas emergent mixed methods design are those that arise in the process of data collection (Creswell, 2012). This study used an emergent mixed method design. According to De Allegri et al., (2020), an emergent mixed method design is “any design that is born out of an iterative dialogue between quantitative and qualitative strains of data collection and analysis strategies as a study unravels (p. 102). In this study, a quantitative aspect was integrated into an otherwise qualitative study (Atieno, 2009; Creswell, 2014) when the study was in progress. Student teachers were given an essay writing task in which they were assessed in different aspects of an academic essay. The essay writing test generated both quantitative and qualitative data. The integration of a quantitative aspect into an otherwise

qualitative research in the field was aimed at providing a balanced and informative reflection on question two which looked at what Colleges of Education were doing to make student teachers' understand specific academic writing requirements at college level. This was according to Hoppen, Hayashi, and Abib (2019) who argued that “research and its process cannot be a sort of straight jacket, it is always necessary to safe guard the innovative potential and changes brought about by the research field and the scientific findings” (p.102) of a study.

However, the choice of mixed method designs are dependent on four factors which the researcher should put into consideration. The first is interaction in which case, the researcher should determine the point at which qualitative and quantitative data is going to be mixed. The Second is the priority of strategy which should consider whether the two will take an equal status with either qualitative or quantitative being dominant. Thirdly, one should consider the sequence of data collection whether data will be collected in sequences, for example, starting with quantitative and then collecting qualitative data or vice versa. Fourthly, the point at which data will be merged, whether it is at data collection, data analysis, or data interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time. Results were mixed at interpretation and the study was qualitative dominant with quantitative aspect taking a complementary role (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Quantitative statistical results and qualitative results were compared and contrasted at interpretation for corroboration and validation of the findings (Creswell, 2012) on research question No.2.

Qualitative data generated from document analysis on feedback practice results were assigned numerical values to help illustrate the meaning of the data. Assigning quantitative values to qualitative data at analysis stage was done to provide a deeper insight into the meaning of data. In this study, the researcher took advantage of the similarities of the quantitative and qualitative methods which opens up new possibilities for interpretation to illustrate the meaning of qualitative data. This was according to Atieno (2009) who argued that “anything that is qualitative can be assigned meaningful numerical values” which can be “manipulated to help one achieve greater insight into the meaning of the data” (p.17).

3.4 Target Population

According to Muijs (2004 p.16), population in research refers to “the group of people we want to generalize to” (p.16). In this study, the study population included all colleges of education in Zambia, Heads of Department (HODs) for Literacy and Language or lecturers teaching Communication and Study Skills, all Literacy and Language students in Colleges of Education and all Heads of Department (HODs) for Literacy and Language in Colleges of Education.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sample for the study was drawn from five (5) colleges of education. This comprised 3 Church and 2 government run colleges. Colleges of Education were selected from four different provinces of varying social and economic standing as a way of increasing diversity in the nature of students and colleges. Particular colleges were selected using simple random sampling. Inclusion of public and church run colleges was based on the idea that church run institutions tend to perform better than public institutions and as such, it was believed that inclusion of both categories would help provide a sample of typical student teachers in Zambia.

Selection of three church run as opposed to two public ones was informed by the fact that students’ population in church run colleges are usually relatively smaller with less diversity in terms of capabilities in comparison with public run ones which have huge numbers. The researcher was of the view that three church run colleges in the study would help increase the diversity of students with regard to knowledge and skills in academic writing. The three church run colleges comprised one relatively big college which in terms of population could be relatively compared to public ones while the other two were moderately small. Put together, the researcher was of the view that the diversity of student population in three church run colleges could relatively compare with the population of students in the two public colleges.

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

Different purposive sampling procedures were used in this study as it targeted a group of subjects believed to be reliable for this particular study (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). There are many types of purposive sampling. These include heterogeneous, homogenous, typical case,

extreme, critical case or expert sampling (Patton, 1990). Below is an explanation of how each category of participants was sampled:

3.5.1.1 Selection of Colleges of Education

To select Colleges of Education, typical case sampling was used. Typical case sampling is used when you want to illustrate a phenomenon (Patton, 1990). It includes “the most typical cases of the group” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018 p. 219). The choice of church run and public CoE was on account that these two types of colleges are typical of the nature of colleges offering teacher education in Zambia. Sampling by case which involved a simple random selection of colleges was also used to select particular church and public run colleges for the study. Below is the table showing the distribution of colleges by location and status.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Colleges by Location and Status

College	Locality	Proprietor
A	Peri-urban	Church
B	Urban	Government
C	Peri-urban	Church
D	Rural	Church
E	Urban	Government

Source: Field Data.

3.5.1.2 Selection of Student Teachers

To select student teachers, homogeneous sampling was used. This type of sampling is used to select persons of similar traits (Patton, 1992). Third year students recruited in this study were selected on the basis of being literacy and language students in their final year college. Three students with hearing impairment were also included as they were part of the main stream with no exceptional help with regard to academic writing support.

Students were selected with the help of lecturers who compiled a list of students from different classes from which participants were selected. To select 10 male and female students, the researcher used simple random sampling. To do this, two baskets containing 20 pieces of paper with markings of letter X were placed in two different boxes with ten being put in each. These were fused with other pieces of paper which had no markings. The

students were then asked to pick one piece of paper from boxes which were labeled male and female. Students who picked papers marked with X were recruited in the study. This helped the researcher to come up with 10 male and 10 female third year students making a total of 20 students from each college.

Initially, first year students were supposed to be part of the study and were supposed to be subjected to the essay writing test before they were subjected to any formal instruction on academic writing. However, on entering the field, the researcher opted to use the same cohort of students because student teachers' academic year had been interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic and so, it was not possible to reach five colleges before first years were subjected to academic writing orientation and instruction as was intended. Classroom observation of academic writing instruction for first years could not also take place for the same reason.

Student teachers were all pursuing a diploma in either primary or secondary school teaching of Literacy and Language. The students had a diverse background with some coming from rural and urban communities and having graduated from private, public or church run secondary schools and were in their final (third year) in college at the time of this study. Both male and female students were equally represented in the study. Among the students sampled were three with Special Education Needs (SEN) also drawn from the main stream. All the three were deaf and they were all drawn from the same college. Below is a table showing the distribution of students by gender and number.

Table 3.2 Distribution of Students by Gender and Number

College	Male	Female	Total Per College
A	10	10	20
B	10	10	20
C	10	10	20
D	10	10	20
E	10	10	20
Total	50	50	100

Source: Field Data

3.5.1.3 Selection of Lecturers

To select lecturers, expert sampling was used. Expert sampling involves selecting a sample of persons with known or demonstrable expertise or experience in a particular area (Patton, 1990). In this study, Heads of Department for Literacy and Language and other languages were recruited on account that efforts to improve students' academic writing skills in Colleges of Education generally fell under their jurisdiction as language lecturers.

The lecturers involved in the study were all specialised in teaching English language. However, they had different qualifications. They all stood in as lecturer and Head of Department (HOD) Languages. Below is a table showing the distribution of lecturers by gender, education level and the number of years in service and in teaching academic writing.

Table 3.3 Distribution of Lecturers by Gender/Education Level/Years in Service

Participant	Gender	Education Level/Area of Specialization	Years in Service	Years in Teaching of Academic Writing
Lecturer 1	M	Bachelors' Degree in English and Linguistics and African Languages	25	12
Lecturer 2	M	Bachelors' Degree in English and Civic Education	14	5
Lecturer 3	F	Masters' Degree in Literacy and Learning	23	8
Lecturer 4	F	Masters' Degree in Education Management	23	6
Lecturer 5	F	Master's Degree in Literacy and Learning	25	8

Source: Field Data

3.5.1.4 Selection of Student Teachers to Participate in Focus Groups Discussions

Out of the 20 students recruited from each of the five sampled colleges, participants for the focus group discussions were selected using simple random sampling. To achieve this, the names of students were written on different pieces of paper and placed in two separate

baskets with one labelled ‘male’ and the other ‘female’. After this, one of the students was asked to be picking one piece of paper and read it out to the rest and the first seven names to be picked in total were recruited for the Focus Group discussion. The number of male and female was determined by the number of times a name is drawn from each category at the count of seven.

3.5.2 Sample Size

A sample can be described as a subset of the population that represents the entire study population (Pacho, 2015). The sample for this study was a hundred and five (105) with one (1) head of Department for Literacy and Language and twenty (20) third-year students being drawn from each college. Below is the table showing the distribution of the study sample.

Table: 3.4 Distribution of Participants by Number

College	Lecturers	Students
1	1	20
2	1	20
3	1	20
4	1	20
5	1	20
Total	5	100
	TOTAL	105

3.6 Research Instruments

In order for the researcher to get views from respondents, a number of instruments were used. In qualitative research which formed the larger part of the study, it is typical to collect data through interviews, document reviews, and observations (Creswell, 2009; Creswell; 2013; Suter, 2012). Interview guides, document check lists, individual interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were used to collect qualitative data and an essay writing task was used to collect quantitative data. The following is a description of each:

3.6.1 Semi Structured Interview Guide for Lecturers

Interview guides were used to collect data from Literacy and Language Departmental Heads. This was to help answer questions on:

- a. what colleges of education were doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college level
- b. establish support mechanisms used by Colleges of Education to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills
- c. help determine whether lecturers had requisite skills for teaching academic writing
- d. help evaluate lecturers' feedback practice on students written assignments.

3.6.2 Focus Group Interview Guide for Student Teachers

A focus group interview guide was used to collect data from student teachers to answer qualitative questions on what CoE were doing to ensure that student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college, help identify support mechanisms used by colleges, and establish lecturers' feedback practice on written assignments.

3.6.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted on student teachers' first assignments in college to help ascertain if lecturers had requisite skills to adequately teach academic writing and on student teachers' marked scripts of the essay writing test to establish student teachers' academic writing weaknesses in their final year in college.

3.6.4 Document checklist

A document checklist describing the different categories of feedback was used to check for lecturers' feedback practice on student teachers' marked assignments.

3.6.5 Essay Writing Task

An essay writing task asking students to answer the question: "*Advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools*" was used to test students' academic writing abilities in their final year in college. The essay writing task came as a follow-up on what colleges were doing to ensure that students understand specific academic writing requirements at college level. This was important as the task generated quantitative and qualitative results which enabled the researcher to reflect on student teachers' academic writing abilities in terms of scores and in the use of the forms and conventions of the written language in their final year in college. In doing this, the researcher was of the view that this would enhance a fair reflection on what

colleges were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in colleges as entities and collectively. The following is a summary of how each instrument was used in the study:

Table: 3.5 Questions and Instruments Used to Answer Them

No.	Question	Data Collection Instruments
1	Were student teachers adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school?	Document check list/interview guide/ Focus group interview guide
2	What were Colleges of Education doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements	Interview Guide/ Focused group Essay writing task
3	What support mechanisms do Colleges of Education use to help develop student's academic writing skills?	Interview guide /focused group interview guide
4	What are lecturers' feedback practices on students written assignments?	Document check list/interviews guide/Focus Group interview guide
5	Do language lecturers have the requisite skills to teach academic writing?	Interview guide/ document checklist

3.7 Pilot Test

A pilot study was conducted in one private college that was not part of the sample to help determine the suitability of the instruments (Canals, 2017). Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions were pilot tested to help refine the questions. The pilot study helped the researcher to make some adjustments on the framing of some individual and focused group interview questions which the researcher felt needed fine-tuning to make them more explicit. For example, questions six for lecturers which read 'How do you help students understand specific academic writing requirements was removed as it appeared to be general; thus, attracting answers that needed specific questions like "What do you do to make students understand concepts such as cohesion and coherence?". The pilot study also revealed some weakness in the design which enabled the researcher to make some adjustments (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Initially, the design was purely qualitative but after piloting it, it was realized that there was need to administer a test to students in their final year in college to help

ascertain the effectiveness of academic writing support and instructions. This led to the adoption of an emergent mixed method design. After the pilot was completed and adjustments made, the researcher proceeded to collect data in selected Colleges of Education.

3.8 Data Collection

Data collection usually began with a visit to a particular college to make prior arrangements with college administration. During the visit, the researcher explained the kind and number of people and the type of documents that the researcher wanted in preparation for data collection exercise (Creswell, 2012; Kabir, 2016). Identification of student teachers to take part in the study was done with the help of lecturers who availed lists of student's names from where a sample was drawn. Rooms for particular exercises both for students and lecturers were assigned and shown to the researcher well in advance.

3.8.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews which mostly comprised open ended questions were used to elicit data from selected lecturers that were involved in teaching academic writing. This was to give room for participants to express themselves (Jackson, 2013). Brenner (2006) asserts that “a semi structured protocol has the advantage of asking all informants the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow-up questions that build on the responses received” (p.362) Besides, semi structured interviews unlike unstructured interviews enable the interviewer to control the flow of conversation and direct it towards issues relevant to the particular research topic (Brenner, 2006; Brinkmann, 2018). Collecting data through interviews was advantageous for interviews are known to be reasonably objective (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010) and leave room for probing (Creswell, 2012) thereby, allowing for clarity and detail (Canals, 2017). For all participants, the interviews took place at their places of work (offices) except for one who opted to be interviewed on phone due to an engagement at the time of the visit. Phone interview was used for this participant as it also produces credible data just like interviews conducted when the researcher is physically present (Kabir, 2016). The following process was followed to conduct the interviews:

The researcher started by welcoming the participants and introducing herself as a way of calming the participants (Kabir, 2016). Thereafter, the researcher introduced the research to the participants explaining the topic and the reason for the research with adherence to ethical guidelines (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). After participants had given their consent, the

researcher asked for permission to record the interview and after permission was given proceeded to conduct the interview. This started with the more general questions to allow participants open up and provide answers in full (Brenner, 2006) and then moved on to specific ones.

During the interview, the researcher was taking down some notes coupled with audio recording. According to Brenner (2006), “An audio tape recording allows an interviewer to focus on the conversation with an informant and carries a more complete record of the informants’ actual words” (p.365). The researcher tried to enhance an in-depth elicitation of information by trying to frame the questions clearly and by probing. Towards the end of the interview participants were notified that the interview was coming to an end. This was done to help ease the atmosphere and return to normal interactions (Creswell, 2012). The interview ended with thanking the participants who were also reassured that data collected was going to be put into safe custody and that information obtained from the exercise was purely for academic purposes. The interview data was later transcribed (Creswell, 2013).

3.8.2 Focus Group Discussions

Bryman (2008) define focused group discussion as “a form of group interview in which there are several participants” (p.694). Canals, (2017) explains that “participants (in focus group discussions) are invited to talk about their views, attitudes and beliefs in relation to a particular subject, concept or idea” (p.396). In this study, 5 focus group discussions involving 7 students in each group were conducted for student teachers. The focus group was suitable for this group of participants as it is socially oriented and it allows the researcher to obtain data in a more natural way, thereby increasing the validity of information (Creswell, 2007). Besides, the use of focus group discussions enabled participants to expand the responses of others thereby bringing up ideas that may have otherwise remained undisclosed (Creswell, 2012).

Each of the focus groups comprised 7 students; a number that the researcher felt was small enough to warrant participants’ adequate sharing of views and big enough to warrant divergent views (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher began by introducing herself and the topic of the research as well as its purpose. The participants were also taken through the ethical guidelines after which informed consent was given in willingness to take part in the study (Creswell, 2012; Atieno, 2009). All focus group discussions were conducted in a room that was assigned by the college for the purpose. During the process, the researcher was

mindful of group dynamics knowing that some people can dominate the discussion (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 2012). This helped the researcher to involve everyone (Atieno, 2009). Individual participants were given a chance to “express their views without any interruption” in the way their responses were coming out (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 p. 145). During the process, the researcher was making brief notes (Creswell, 2012) coupled with audio recording. Towards the end of the focused group interview, the researcher thanked the participants further reassuring them that the data obtained was merely for academic purposes.

3.8.3 Document Analysis

According to Bowen (2009), “document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and as electronic material (p.27). Document analysis was advantageous in this research as it enabled the researcher to obtain the words and expressions of participants (Atieno, 2009). Besides, the researcher was able to access the documents at own convenience (Creswell, 2009). Each document was reviewed and evaluated for a particular purpose as explained below:

3.8.3.1 Analysis of the Senior Secondary English Language Syllabus for Content on Writing Relevant Texts

The Senior Secondary English language syllabus was analysed and checked for inclusion of essential topics that expose students to writing relevant texts such as argumentative essays as foundation for academic writing.

3.8.3.2 Analysis of Student Teachers’ First Assignment Inclusion of the essential aspects of an Essay and ability to use the forms and conventions of the written language

Selected student teachers’ first essays in college were analysed for the inclusion of the essential aspects of an essay. The essential aspects of an essay assessed were introduction, main body, conclusion and general lay out. Ability to use the forms and conventions of the written language looked at the correctness of grammar, spellings and punctuation. This was to help ascertain whether students had been adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school. From each college, 20 scripts were randomly selected from student teachers’ literacy and language files which were availed to the researcher on request. Only students’ first essays in Literacy and Language were considered. However, there were variations on the point of time in essays were written in their first term in college. The dates on assignments showed that some essays had been written at the very beginning of the term whereas others showed that some essays were written towards the end of the term. In this

regard, it was possible that some students had been exposed to some academic writing instruction before their first assignment.

3.8.3.3 Analysis of students' Written Assignments on Feedback Practice

Students written essays were checked and analyzed to help establish lecturers' feedback practice on students written assignments. The checklist comprising aspects considered important in feedback was used to help answer question on whether lecturers' feedback practice on student teachers' written assignments. The designed checklist aimed at considering whether or not feedback was balanced in focus, purpose and mode. Although these themes and their subcategories are qualitative, some of the results were, in line with Atieno (2009) "assigned meaningful numerical values" by counting to enhance "greater insight into the meaning of the data" (p.17).

3.8.3.4 Analysis of Students Written Assignments for Balance of Feedback Focus

To help determine the focus of comments on students' marked assignments, all the comments and errors regardless of frequency were listed down and categorised according to skills in general terms and nature in specific terms. For example, a spelling error fell under language category and was defined as 'incorrect' in specific terms. All the errors were listed, categorised and counted according to categories and results recorded in both thematic and numerical terms.

3.8.3.5 Analysis of Students' Marked Assignment for Balance Feedback Purpose

To help determine whether the comments made on students' assignment essays were balanced in regard to purpose, 20 marked assignments were sampled for analysis from each college bringing the number to 100. The balance of comments in this study referred to whether feedback comments on students' marked assignments included praise, criticism, and suggestions for improvement. Praise comments were those that were based on students' strengths whereas criticism comments were those that merely identified errors made in the text. Suggestion comments were those that provided guidance on what students needed to do to correct the errors made in the text. The comments made on each students' marked assignment were listed down and categorised as praise, criticism and suggestion. These were then counted and results recorded.

3.8.3.6 Analysis of Student Teachers' Marked Assignments for Feedback Mode

Student teachers' marked assignments were analysed for mode of feedback to help validate what was obtained from interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with student

teachers. Each script was checked for the presence of comments on the assignment and for possible invitations of students to see lecturers in person.

3.8.3.7 Analysis of students' Marked Essays to Help Determine if Lecturers had Requisite Skills

To help establish if lecturers had requisite skills to adequately teach academic writing, a total of 100 scripts were randomly sampled from students' course files taking 20 from each college. Student essays were examined for the correctness of comments made, advice given and penalties slated. Lecturers' errors and inconsistencies were identified and recorded.

3.8.3.8 Analysis of Third Year Students' Essay Tests for Common Problems in their Final Year in College

To help identify students' common weaknesses in academic writing in their final year in college, essays written in the essay writing task in this study were used as these represented the latest level of academic writing skills of students just a few months before graduation. In this respect, only 94 scripts were analyzed as some students did not complete and hand in their essays. Document analysis of student teachers' common errors in academic writing in their final year in college adopted an error analysis framework proposed by Corder (1974). According to Corder, typical error analysis involves the following steps: (1) collection of learner language sample, (2) identification of errors (3) description of errors (4) explanation of errors and (5) evaluation of errors.

For the purpose of this study, student teachers' test essays in this study were used. Each essay was closely examined to identify common errors. Students' common errors were those that were found in more than 8 students in each college. The number eight was chosen as it translated into more than 40% of participants in each college; a number that was seen to be significant in reflecting on what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in English. The errors were then described and examples of each extracted from the texts for authentication.

3.8.4 Essay Writing Task

An essay writing task was administered to third year student teachers to help establish students' abilities to write an academic essay in their final year in college and to provide textual evidence of students' common errors in academic writing. Students' common errors were targeted to help determine students' areas of difficulties in academic writing in their final year in college. This was important as it helped provide a picture of what was still

lacking in optimizing student teachers' academic writing skills in their final year in college. The essay prompt given was "*Advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools*". The essay prompt provided for the need to explain the concepts used, present and support a proposition and provide explanations for the reasons put forward on both sides of the argument before concluding (Hyland, 2019) thereby, creating an opportunity for students to exhibit their knowledge of the essential aspects of an academic essay and ability to use conventional forms of the written language.

The essay writing task was administered to 20 students in each college. In this regard, 100 students were expected to write the essay but only 94 completed and submitted their essays. Out of this number, three (3) participants from college 5 were visually impaired. The essay writing task was for this group of students extended by 30 minutes following college guidelines on their treatment under assessment conditions. While the essay writing task was 60 minutes, the visually impaired students were expected to complete the exercise in 90 minutes. The essay writing task took place in one class and all students started and ended at the same time. During the process, the researcher was present to ensure that there were no interruptions and that the time limit was adhered to. After the test, all scripts were collected and each essay was marked. Analytic scoring based on the essential features of an academic text was used to grade students' performance (Hyland, 2019). Analytic scoring was used as the researcher wanted to spot the strengths and weaknesses of the students (Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014) in writing an academic essay. The marking rubric was based on essay structure; introduction, main body and conclusion, grammar, writing mechanics, cohesion and coherence, argumentation and conclusion (Refer to Appendix 1.3).

The marking of the test was done by two examiners who were identified by the researcher as a way of mitigating biasness since the researcher was also a lecturer in the same field. When marking was completed, all scripts were checked for consistence and accuracy by the researcher after which scores obtained by each student were added and recorded according to each college. In cases where there was a difference in the allocation of marks by the two examiners, results were added and divided by 2 to find the average mark which was recorded.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be understood as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a volume of data. It involves searching for general statements regarding relationships among categories of collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). According to Sherman (2007), data analysis is “the vehicle used to generate and validate interpretations, formulate inferences, and draw conclusions” (p.147). It is a breakdown of data into meaningful units of a particular study. Mixed method approach was used to analyze data as results combined both subjective and objective elements (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007; Ponce & Maldonado, 2015). In mixed method approach, “The type of data analysis varied depending on the type of mixed design used” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p.135). The mixed analysis utilised in this study was not design or phase based. It was merely done for complementarity and triangulation (Kabir, 2016).

3.9.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis according to Creswell (2013) comprises “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally presenting the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p180). Below is an example of how the codes were created.

Table: 3.6 An Example of How the Codes were Created

THEMES	CODES	
	Lecturer Support	- Academic writing workshop
Feedback Practise	Comments	- some just give marks without comments - some comments are very good but the grade is very low - some just write ‘fair’ even when the mark is 78 - comments are clear and specific - some comments are not clear
	Clarity of Comments	- Some comments are too general - When not clear, I

Source: Field Work

In this study, data analysis of qualitative data began in the field as data collection and analysis happen simultaneously (Suter, 2012). After each days’ work, the researcher took time to go through the data to get a general picture of the data and to organize information for

storage purposes. This was coupled with expanding field notes or memos in the researchers' journal as well as noting down key concepts as impressed on the researcher. This helped to focus on data as it came from the field rather than concentrate on what research questions defined.

When data organization was completed, the researcher took time to read through the data as a way of making sense of it by identifying patterns and establishing similarities and differences. After this, the researcher looked for codes that guided placement of data drawn from different data sources of the study (Creswell, 2013). Creswell, (2013) define coding as “process of aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different data bases being used in a study and then assigning a label to the code” (p 297). The cut and paste in Microsoft Word coding procedure was used to help discover recurring patterns (Suter, 2012) in the data. Data coding was followed by the development of themes from the codes. In qualitative research, themes are “broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Development of codes and themes was in this study a back-and-forth exercise with more coming up and some being merged or discarded completely. This exercise was at first daunting on the part of the researcher and it called for creativity and openness to multiple possibilities (Patton, 2002 in Suter, 2012) which the researcher ascribed to and eventually managed to overcome the difficulties. Below is a figure summarizing the strategies used in qualitative data analysis.

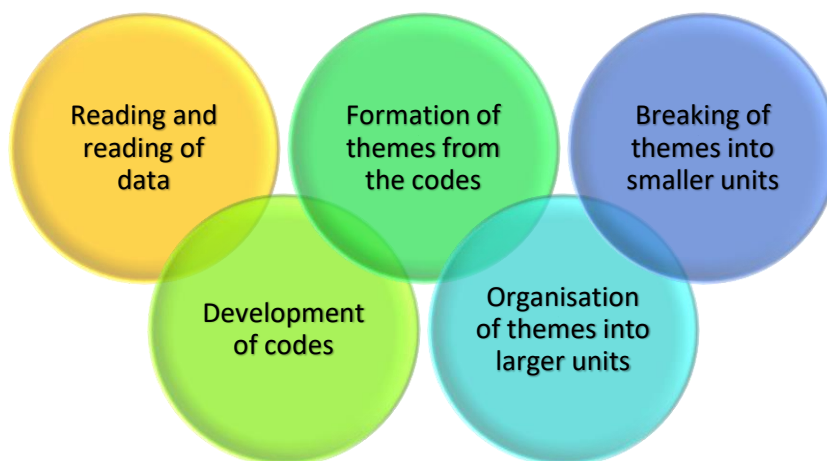


Figure: 3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis Strategy (Adapted from Creswell, 2013).

3.9.2 Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data obtained from an essay writing task was analysed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics: mean, median, mode and standard deviation were used to analyse the scores of 94 students that took part in essay writing task using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis was first done to determine students' performance in the essay writing test in each college and in the five colleges. Inferential statistics were also calculated to help determine whether there was a significant difference in students' academic writing abilities among the five colleges.

3.10 Validity, Reliability, Trustworthiness

The concepts of validity reliability and trustworthiness are important in research as they help determine the credibility of the study. In research, validity can be understood as “the extent to which interpretations of data are warranted by the theories and evidence used” (Ary et., al 2002 p. 267 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018), research is rated reliable when and if it produces similar results on a similar group of respondents in similar contexts and trustworthiness is “the term used for reliability in qualitative research (p. 267).

3.10.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity of research instruments refers to the degree to which they can elicit data required in a particular study (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013). It answers the question on whether instruments were able to gather information they were intended to gather (Creswell, 2009). In this study, validity of the instruments was ensured by undertaking a pilot study which allowed the researcher to make some adjustments to the instruments. This was also done by comparing data obtained from one type of instrument with data obtained with a different type to ascertain their collaboration. Data obtained from focused group interview with student teachers were crosschecked with data obtained from semi structured interviews with lectures and from document analysis.

For quantitative data, validity of the instruments was ascertained by utilizing expert knowledge derived from literature Korb (2012). The essay prompt for the essay writing test provided for the need to explain the concepts used, present and support a proposition and provide explanations for the reasons put forward on both sides of the argument before concluding (Hyland, 2019) which enabled the researcher to attain construct validity. Analytic

scoring based on the essential features of an academic text was used to grade students' performance (Hyland, 2019).

3.10.2 Research Validity

In research literature, criteria for evaluating mixed method research has not been adequately explored. However, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) in their book '*Designing and Conducting Mixed Method*' made attempts to discuss validity for mixed methods research and outlined the following:

- a) use of criteria for assessing each aspect of the mixed method, that is qualitative and quantitative
- b) Use of rigorous method to attain trust worthiness
- c) setting the study within philosophical assumptions

In view of this, qualitative data was analyzed qualitatively while quantitative data was analyzed quantitatively. The use of rigorous method to attain trustworthiness was attained by providing a thick description of the research process. As for setting the study within philosophical assumptions, a pragmatic paradigm which provide for the use of quantitative and qualitative method in a study was adopted.

3.10.3 Validity of Qualitative Research

While quantitative research follows a structured and rigid design which can be monitored and evaluated systematically, qualitative research can be fluid with planning and implementation sometimes happening simultaneously (Cypress, 2017). In this regard, criteria for validity of qualitative research are said to be questionable and there is no agreement on the criteria for evaluating it. However, all qualitative researchers often utilize some strategies to enhance the credibility of their studies. For example, Guba & Lincoln (1985) advocated for five key concepts that can be used to assess the quality of qualitative research. These are (1) credibility which looks at whether participants being researched feel findings reflect their experiences, (2) transferability of findings which is focused on whether results of a particular study can be applied to other situations of similar standing (Suter, 2012), (3) dependability which require that the research is conducted in such a way that undertaking the same study by another person would produce similar results, (4) confirmability which considers "whether findings are a product of participants' responses and not the researcher's biases, motivations, interests or perspectives" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p.290) and (5) authenticity which is

concerned with “whether the research community agrees that findings are useful and have meaning” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p.116).

Creswell, (2014) also outlines eight validity strategies that are used in qualitative methods research. These are (1) triangulation, (2) bias or researcher reflexivity, (3) member checking, (4) prolonged time in the field, (5) external auditor, (7) rich and thick description and (8) peer debriefing (Prasad, 2019). Most of these are already included in Lincoln & Guba’s evaluative measures. Of all these, reflexivity seems to be an overarching criteria as it is based on the researchers’ intellectual, intuitive, creative and analytical abilities. Consistent with this view, Patton (1990) stated that validity and reliability of qualitative research is largely dependent on the researcher as a data collection instrument. This was critical to this study as the nature of the topic and position of researcher demanded it.

3.10.3.1 Researcher Reflexivity

According to Berge (2015) reflexivity is “the continual internal dialogue and critical evaluation of the researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome” (p.221). Berger further describes reflexivity as the “turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one’s own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation” (p. 222). This involves being aware of the biases that one brings to the study either as an insider or outsider in the topic under investigation. Personal reflexivity also refers to “how researchers’ position in relation to the population group and issues under study may impact the research process and its analytic stance” (Berger, 2015 p.229).

In this study, the researcher was an insider on the topic under investigation and the field in which the study was being undertaken. Population group included lecturers and student teachers who could easily identify with the researcher, who, although undertaking the study as a student was also a lecturer in the same field. Therefore, maintaining a balance between the researchers’ experience and that of participants was critical to ensuring quality. Efforts to reduce on personal biasness was in this study done by keeping a journal for self-supervision and by conducting repeated reviews of data to help identify personal biasness.

Sensitive to power differentials that exist between researcher as lecturer and participants as students, the researcher tried “to bridge the power differentials between herself and the

participants” (Brenner, 2006, p.367) by focusing on her personal role as a student researcher wishing to learn from student teachers’ experiences in academic writing and also by revealing the topic under investigation. This appeared to have worked well as seen in students’ openness to talk about issues. For lecturers, power differentials were less anticipated as they were taken to be peers in the field. However, some lecturers exhibited resistance when students’ written works were sought for and only availed them reluctantly.

Since the study was qualitative dominant, the researcher, also took cognisance of the view that “Validity in qualitative research cannot be seen as a product of something isolated...it is an ongoing process and should be confronted from the beginning of the research until its publication” (Hoppien, Hayashi and Abib, 2019 p.103). Therefore, care was taken throughout the research process to ensure each step taken contributed to the overall quality of the work.

3.10.4 Use of Rigorous Method to Attain Trustworthiness

In this study, the researcher made attempts to attain trustworthiness through “provision of a detailed and transparent report of decisions and their rationale” (Berger, 2015, p.222). This helped provide a lens through which the study can be evaluated (Heighan, & Croker (2009).

3.10.4.1 Setting the Study within Philosophical Assumptions

The approach used in this study drew its basis from the ontological and epistemological assumptions which influenced the choice of methods. The researcher adopted a pragmatic view that allowed for the use of what the researcher believed would help address the problem in question.

3.10. 5 Reliability

According to Bryman (2001), reliability is a term concerned with ensuring that while recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith by not overtly allowing personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and of the research findings derived from it (p.174). In view of this, reliability of the study was assured through triangulation. According to Hayashi, Hoppen and Abib (2019), triangulation “consists of the interrelationship between the information obtained from the data that was collected from different sources to increase the understanding of the study in question, thus improving the reliability of the study” (p.101). In this study, multiple sources of data included conducting open ended individual interviews, review of various documents, assignment of a task and

focus group interviews (Creswell, 2009; Tracy, 2010). Triangulation was used as it enhanced comparison, cross checking of data which enabled the researcher to assess the consistency of information from different sources and at different times (Patton, 1990) and in this way, support “the strength of interpretations and conclusions” (Pacho, 2015, p. 51).

3.11 Ethical Issues

In research, ethics are principles of right and wrong acceptable to a particular group of people (Marshal and Rossman, 2011). For Aydin (2015), research ethics are “...a set of moral rules that researchers must follow regarding the data collection, synthesis, evaluation, interpretation and publication of results in the process of seeking a solution to a problem” (p.38). John & Christensen (2008) refer to them as a set of guiding principles that assist researchers in conducting ethical studies. Saunders & Lewis (2003) outlined ethical issues that should be considered in a study as follows: (1) rights of privacy of individuals, (2) voluntary participation, (3) consent and possible deception of participants, (4) maintenance of the data provided by participants and anonymity, (5) reaction of participants to the ways in which researchers seek to collect data, (6) effects of participants of the way in which data is analyzed and reported, (7) behavior and objectivity of the researcher (in Mohajan, 2018 p.131). In this study, the researcher tried to uphold these in the following way:

Before undertaking the study, the researcher obtained permission from The University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee (UNZAREC) and to this effect, clearance was given. Permission to conduct the study in Colleges of Education was obtained from the Permanent Secretary; Ministry of General Education. Access to particular colleges was made possible through Provincial Education Office’s consent to the Permanent Secretary’s permission and entry into each college was done through College Principals with the intention to visit the college first being communicated on phone and in person on entry.

At the start of the study, the researcher revealed her identity as researcher and explained the nature and purpose of the study to the participants (Marshal and Rossman, 2011). Next, participants were taken through ethical guidelines both verbally and in written after which they were given a chance to ask questions where they did not understand. Thereafter, participants gave their consent to take part in the study by signing a consent form which was availed to each of them (Canals, 2017) explaining (a) the nature of the research, (b) procedures in which participants were expected to participate (c) descriptions of the means by which confidentiality was protected, (d) a list of contact people to whom questions and

complaints about the research could be directed and (e) the risks and benefits of the research (Brenner, 2006, p.362).

During the study, the views of participants were respected and kept confidential (Creswell, 2012) and any information obtained was by no means released to any unauthorized person in whatever circumstance (Creswell, 2007; Canals, 2017). Participation was voluntary and during data collection, participants were assured that withdrawal from the study was permissible with no consequences and that their names even after publication of the results were to remain anonymous.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that was used in the study. It covers the study area, the design, target population, study sample and sampling, data collection instruments and procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations together with philosophical assumptions that influenced the choice of the design. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The previous chapter looked at the methodology used in the study. This chapter presents the findings on what Colleges of Education (CoE) were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills. The findings are based on the data that was obtained from interviews with lecturers that were teaching academic writing, focus group discussions with third year students, an essay writing test and document analysis of student teachers' first written essays in college, Senior Secondary English Language Syllabus and Communication and Study Skills course outline. The findings are presented according to research questions as presented in Chapter one: (1) How exposed to writing relevant texts were student teachers at secondary school level? (2) What are colleges of education doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college level? (3) What support mechanisms do Colleges of Education use to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills? (4) How do lecturers' feedback on student teachers' written assignments promote students' development of academic writing skills? (5) What requisite skills do lecturers have to effectively teach academic writing? In order to keep data source anonymous, pseudo names have been used as explained on ethical issues in Chapter three above.

4.1.1 How Exposed to Writing Relevant Texts were Student Teachers at Secondary School

Question 1 sought to establish whether or not student teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school. This question was answered first by document analysis of the Senior Secondary School English Language Syllabus. The analysis was done to help ascertain whether the syllabus content included topics that serve as foundation for college writing. Second, by conducting a document analysis of student teachers' first assignments in college. This was done to examine students' writing abilities in the essential aspects of an essay in order to ascertain whether they were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school and third, by holding focus group discussions with student teachers. The focus group discussions were held to identify some of the challenges students faced in writing their first assignments in order to ascertain adequacy of student exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary school.

4.1.2 Findings from the Senior Secondary English Language Syllabus

A review of the Senior Secondary School English Language syllabus showed that the syllabus included topics that could be deemed relevant or preparatory for college writing. Relevant topics for this study included topics on writing different types of compositions and the forms and conventions of the written language for writing different texts. These were outlined in the terminal, specific objectives and proposed specific writing skills.

4.1.2.1 Terminal Objectives of Senior Secondary School Writing

According to the syllabus, students were expected to attain the objectives outlined in the table below:

Table: 4.1 Terminal Objectives of the Senior English Language Syllabus

No	Terminal Objectives
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">produce the kinds of writing which are required for personal, non-academic use
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">produce the kind of writing required in other subjects
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">produce the kind of writings which are likely to be required in tertiary education or in the world of work
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">express in writing their personal ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge and feelings with clarity and fluency
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">write with only minor lexical and grammatical errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">write in an appropriate register (Suit the written language use to a particular audience and purpose)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">select relevant information from a written source, make notes and write a prose summary (Note making)

Source: MOE, (2012)

As can be seen in the above table, some of the objectives directly referred to tertiary education and others dealt with issues relevant to college writing although there could be other factors that could inhibit the attainment of these objectives.

4.1.2.2 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the Senior Secondary English Language syllabus were found to have reflected skills that were relevant for college writing. According to the Senior Secondary English Language syllabus, secondary school graduates were expected to have abilities to accomplish the tasks outline in table 4.2:

Table: 4.2 Specific Objectives of Writing in the Senior English Language Syllabus

No.	Specific Objectives of Writing
1	produce an extended piece of descriptive writing
2	produce an extended piece of narrative writing
3	write reports
4	produce written material in other subjects
5	write a detailed explanation of a process
6	write logically and persuasively in favor of or against a topic
7	select relevant information from a written source; make notes and write a prose summary (note taking)

Source: MOE, (2012)

As can be seen in the above table, all the skills reflected in the specific objectives of the syllabus could be deemed preparatory for college writing although outcomes may be affected by how these objectives are implemented.

4.1.2.3 Proposed Specific Writing Skills

The Senior Secondary English Language Syllabus also contained topics that aimed at developing students' ability to use the forms and conventions of written language for writing different texts. According to the syllabus, senior secondary school learners were expected to possess the skills outlined in the table below:

Table: 4.3 Proposed Specific Writing Skills of the Senior Secondary English Language Syllabus

No.	Proposed Specific Writing Skills
1	synthesize information from several sources
2	plan their written work
	use the forms and conventions of written languages appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write in paragraphs • write legibly • spell correctly • write grammatically using a variety of sentence patterns • punctuate correctly • use appropriate words and expressions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use link words effectively • use colloquialisms (when appropriate) • use contractions (when appropriate) • use quotations when appropriate
3	Write according to chronological order of importance
4	write in a balanced manner
5	write showing awareness of what is relevant and what is not
6	write in precise detail when necessary
7	proof read their written work (for grammatical errors, repetition, omissions, spellings, mistakes and faulty capitalization)

Source: MOE, (2012)

All the above were deemed relevant to building secondary school learners' foundation for college writing although there could be other factors that could affect the outcomes.

4.1.2 Student Teachers' Quality of Writing in their first Essays in College

Student teachers' first essays were qualitatively analyzed to help determine whether students had adequately been exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school. Based on what is provided in the syllabus it was expected that students could not display some weaknesses if they had been properly instructed in writing. Areas looked at included essay structure, writing mechanics and language structure which included grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary use. Table 4.6 below shows some of the weaknesses exhibited by student teachers in their first essays in college.

Table: 4. 4 Writing Weaknesses Exhibited by Students in their First Essays in College

	Category	Students' Common Writing Weaknesses on Entry into College
1	Essay Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor or omission of an introduction • omission of or poorly expressed conclusion • poor organisation of paragraphs-poor development of paragraphs (too long or too short)
4	Writing Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paragraphing –no indentation of paragraphs • no paragraphing • punctuation- wrong use of or omission of punctuation marks • use of incorrect spellings
5	Language Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grammar –poor sentence constructions • spellings- use of wrong spellings; • non-expansion of points • limited vocabulary- poor expressions • cohesion and coherence-illogical organisation of ideas • incorrect use of transitional signals

Source: Field Data

4.1.3 Analysis of Student Teachers' Performance in the Essential Aspects of an Academic Essay

The reason for analyzing first essays in college was to assess whether students had been adequately prepared for tertiary education in secondary school. This was done by considering some key features of texts that are expected to be observed, for instance, in argumentative essays. The analysis of assignments focused on students' inclusion of the essential features of an essay. The essential features of an essay assessed were introduction, main body, conclusion and general lay out. Analysis of students' introduction involved considering whether topic purpose was stated and essay structure outlined and whether key terms were defined. The main body of the essay was assessed on whether the student was able to write one point per paragraph, link sentences and paragraphs logically and support each argument by evidence, facts and or examples. The essay conclusion was assessed on whether it was linked to the question, whether it was based on evidence, whether it summarized the main points and on whether it was substantial. Essay layout was assessed on neatness and legibility. The essential aspects of an essay were tabulated and inclusion of each was marked

by a tick (✓) while the absence of each aspect was marked with a cross (X). Essay neatness included good handwriting, correct margin lines and clean cancellation of mistakes. Legibility referred to ease of reading (University of Essex, 2008). Inclusion of the above essential aspects was not based on their correctness or completeness but on students' awareness of the features.

4.1.3.1 Analysis of Students' First Essays on Introduction

This section presents the findings on the analysis of essay introduction of student essays. The analysis of students' introduction considered whether introductions written by students in their first essays in college included a statement of purpose of the given task, essay outline and definition of key concepts. Below is a table showing what was found in each category:

Table: 4.5 Results of Student Teachers' Essays on Introduction

Category of Analysis	Number	Number of Essays
Statement of purpose	80	80
Essay outline	00	00
Definition of key concepts	20	20

Source: Field Data

Table 4.5 above indicates that only essay purpose and definition of key terms were present in essay introductions with essay purpose being found in 80 essays and the definition of key terms in 20 essays only. No essay outline was present in any of the analysed essays.

4.1.3.2 Analysis of Students' Essays on Main Body

The analysis of student essays on main body looked at whether students were able to write one point per paragraph, link paragraphs logically and show evidence or give examples to support an argument. Table 4.8 below shows the results of students' first essays on the main body of an essay.

Table: 4.6 Results of the Analysis of Students' Written Essays on Main Body

No.	Category of Analysis	Number of Essays
1	One point per paragraph	66
2	Logical linkage of paragraphs	20
3	Support of each argument by evidence	45

Source: Field Data

Table 4.6 above shows that writing one point per paragraph was present in 66 essays while support of each argument with examples was present in 45 essays and logical linkage of paragraphs was found in 20 essays out of the 100 that were analysed.

4.1.3.3 Analysis of Students' First Essays on Lay Out

Analysis of essay layout looked at whether students' essays were neat and legible. Essay neatness included good handwriting, correct margin lines and clean cancellation of mistakes and legibility referred to ease of reading (University of Essex, 2008).

Table: 4.7 Results of Student's First Essays on Layout

No.	Category	Number of Essays
1	Neatness	78
2	Legibility	100

Source: Field Data

Table 4.7 above shows that 78 essays were neat and all the 100 were legible.

4.1.3.4 Analysis of Student on Essays Conclusions

Analysis of essay conclusions considered whether a student was able to link his/her conclusion to the question, whether the conclusion was based on evidence, whether it summarized the main points and whether the conclusion was substantial. Below is a table showing what was established.

Table 4.8 Results of Students' First Essays on Conclusion

No	Category of Analysis	Number of Essays
1	The conclusion summarises the main points	10
2	The conclusion is substantial	12
3	The conclusion is based on evidence	30
4	The conclusion is linked to the question	64

Source: Field Data

Table 4.8 above shows that the summary of the main points in the conclusion of the essay was only present in 10 essays, conclusions that were substantial were present in 12 essays, basing conclusion on evidence was found in 30 essays and linking conclusion to the question was present in 64 essays.

4.1.4 Common Difficulties Faced by Student Teachers in Writing their First Assignment in College as Obtained from Focused Group Discussions

After analysing students' essays as shown above, a focus group discussion was conducted in which students were interviewed to find out the challenges they faced that would explain the findings above. Answers to this question were meant to help ascertain if challenges faced by student teachers on their entry into college suggested limited exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary schools. Below is the table summarising what was obtained from five focus group discussions held with student teachers. The first column indicates areas in which students had difficulties and the second column indicates difficulties as expressed by students.

Table 4. 9 Common Difficulties Faced by Students in Writing the First Assignment in College

	Category	Writing Difficulties faced by students on Entry into College
1	Essay Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to write an introduction • organization of the essay • lay out of the work • writing conclusions • how to develop a paragraph • how to come up with a topic sentence
2	Citation and Referencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quoting • citation and referencing • how to avoid plagiarism • paraphrasing • punctuating references • use of APA referencing • writing references from the net
3	Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sources of information • use of the library • choosing relevant points • how to research • getting exact information from the computer • knowing what is acceptable and what is not

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarizing of ideas • how to avoid plagiarism to write in your own words • summarizing ideas
4	Writing Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing on plain papers • punctuation • connecting points and words • meeting required number of pages • punctuation • paragraphing • spellings
5	Language Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grammar • connecting ideas • limited vocabulary • proper expression of ideas
6	Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of computers • use of gargets in regard to typing as required by the college • lack of smart phones and computers • Typing assignments

Source: Field data

4.1.4.1 Summary of Findings on whether or Not Student Teachers were Adequately Exposed to Writing Relevant Texts at Secondary School

Question 4.1 sought to establish whether student teachers had been adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school. Data collected from the Senior Secondary School English language syllabus showed that topics that could give learners foundational skills for college writing were present in the syllabus. However, students' first assignments in college and the difficulties students faced in writing their first assignments showed that students entered colleges with varying gaps in basic writing skills, thus, suggesting limited exposure.

4.2 What are Colleges of Education Doing to Ensure that Student Teachers Understand Specific Academic Writing Requirements at College Level

The second question sought to elicit information on what colleges were doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college level. This question was answered in two parts. The first part of the question looked at the strategies that colleges were using to make students understand what was required in the different aspects of

academic writing. Data for addressing this part of the question was collected by conducting face to face interviews with lecturers and by holding focus group discussions with student teachers. The second part of the question looked at third year students' academic writing abilities in their final year in college. This was to help ascertain whether interventions put in place were effectively helping students to improve their academic writing abilities. The data for answering this part of the question was collected through administering an essay writing test to students that were in their final year in college.

4.2.1 Findings from Interviews with Lecturers and Focus Group Discussions with Students

Lecturers and students were asked to explain what was being done to make students understand what is acceptable and what is not in academic writing. The study found that students were being assisted to understand what is acceptable and what is not in two ways. The first was through general orientation of students which was being conducted at the onset of their first term in college and the second was through the compulsory teaching of Communication and Study Skills wherein were embedded some topics on academic writing.

4.2.1.1 General Orientation on Academic Writing

Interview data from lecturers revealed that general orientation on academic writing was one of the first activities carried out to prepare students for the writing activities that they were expected to undertake in their training. The orientation period on academic writing ranged from 2 to 4 lessons for the whole process and each college ensured that this was done within the first two weeks of students' first term in college. General orientation was often conducted by selected lecturers from different study areas. The orientation included teaching students how to write an academic paper as one lecturer explained:

We take them (students) through steps on how to present an academic paper. We guide them through different steps and expectations are given. When allocated classes, we move with them because in classes they are smaller, we give them an activity and we attend to them as individuals (Lecturer 2)

Another lecturer from another college stated that:

A full orientation is given to all first years. They are from the start taught the writing skills...how to cite, how to write a reference list and how to develop the main body (Lecturer 4)

Another one also stated that:

Students are given guidelines on how to understand command words, plan essays, the parts of an essay and many more things related to academic writing (Lecturer 3)

The views of lecturers were also affirmed by students in all colleges.

When we came, lecturers took us through what is expected of us in academic writing. They told us what is involved in research, issues of plagiarism, submission of assignments and many more things (FGD. 5)

Before the term ended, a class was organised to teach us on how to write an assignment and cite using APA (FGD. 1)

We were taught how to cite and write references by lecturers for literacy and language and from Social Studies. They taught us how to explain things in your own words in concord with the question. How to use the best approach to answer complex questions like compare and contrast (FGD.3)

Some lecturers were teaching us how they want their assignments to be written. They encouraged us to use group work in order to source for a lot of points in the assignment (FGD. 2)

However, some students felt that there was little supervision and or guidance after orientation in academic writing. Some stated that they were in many cases left on their own; a situation they felt affected their development of academic writing skills.

There must be closer supervision when you have oriented learners, you don't just leave them, you have to closely monitor and help them; you call them and guide them. It is better that way... it is better that lecturers identify each and every student's weakness to give individual attention (FGD 4).

Orientation by the orientation team was not as much as expected. Many things were left out. Lecturers from Language were telling us that these things you will learn them from other subjects, other subjects also say you will learn them from language. In the end, we just do what you think is right and it does not really help. When students come first, even if they orient them, each lecturer in each study area must conduct an orientation for the first time (FGD 2).

We had problems on lay out, citation and reference which is a problem even now especially with the language department, because when we first came, we were not guided (FGD. 1)

Some student in three colleges claimed to have had difficulties in writing down what lecturers were teaching during orientation. They felt that lecturers were too fast in their presentations. Many students also felt that orientation on academic writing came long after they had been given the first assignments.

It was difficult to capture information during orientation. Lecturers were too fast. We felt intimidated (FGD 3)

The college should have proper induction of students before the beginning of an academic year ‘I got 12% in the first assignment because I did not know how to write the assignment (FGD 1)

If only the college would help us the first week we are in college. We were given six assignments in the first week of the term to submit in the second week on the same day. I finished one ream of paper rewriting the same things because we were not guided (FGD. 4).

However, some lecturers pointed out that although assignments may be given before orientation, the due date would usually be pushed to a later date to ensure that students are adequately orientated.

Assignment can be given in the first week but we give a longer period for the due date. We make sure that students are adequately prepared before we collect the first assignment (Lecturer 5).

Consistent with the above stated ideas, researchers such as Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal (2003) propose that students need time to overcome their anxiety, develop their confidence and ability to cope and overcome their nervousness.

4.2.1.2 Provision of Specific Guidelines on Essay Writing

Students in the colleges visited reported having been given specific guidelines on writing an academic essay. The table below shows a summary of guidelines mentioned in the focus group discussions with student teachers. The responses were organised according to the categories on which guidelines were focused.

Table: 4. 10 Specific Guidelines Given to Student on Academic Writing

No	Category	Specific Guideline Given
1	Essay Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay lay out must have three parts; introduction, main body and conclusion • ideas should be logically sequenced • the essay should have paragraphs • each paragraph must have a topic sentence
2	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction must have three things: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) topic statement, b) question statement and c) definition of terms
3	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always include a conclusion on your essay • summarise your work to make a conclusion
4	Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use correct spellings and grammar • use impersonal words

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use formal diction
5	Mechanics of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always plan your work before beginning to write • every paragraph must have a topic sentence • use different types of connectives • font size-use 12 Times Roman and 1.5 spacing • follow instructions • use different types of connecting words • give practical or real-life examples • avoid abbreviations • paragraphs must be indented in hand written essays • proof read your assignment before handing in • always take note of comments made on your work
6	Citation and referencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research thoroughly in order to have enough points for the essay • reference where you got information from • include quotations to show evidence • avoid plagiarism • follow alphabetical order when writing references • the title of a book has to be underlined • use not less than 4 references • use in-text citation • use APA style of referencing

Source: Field Data

4.2.1.3 Compulsory Teaching of Communication and Study Skills

Both students and lecturers revealed that all colleges were teaching the Communication and Study Skills course wherein were embedded some topics on academic writing. The course was collaboratively developed by Colleges of Education (CoE), the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) and the University of Zambia (UNZA) and was being offered to all students in their first year in college. Explaining this, one lecturer said:

Apart from an induction program during orientation, all students are required to take communication and Study Skills in their first year and they are encouraged to seek guidance from lecturers when writing assignments. (L.1)

Another lecturer said:

We deliberately teach communication and study skills where research, study skills and academic writing styles are emphasised (L.2)

Lecturers were also asked to explain what colleges were doing to identify academic writing support needs of new students. In response to this question, lecturers in three colleges revealed that the course was often preceded by giving students a diagnostic essay writing test to help identify student teachers' weaknesses and strengths.

In every study area, students are given assignments in which they are told to present their work in essay form. We assess them on how they are responding to determine their weaknesses (L.1)

We take each group as a cohort. We don't rush. We give them work to assess their skills, even there, there are variations. We have students that fail to cope with college work and those that are trying (L.4)

As a follow-up to the responses given, lecturers were asked to explain how the needs assessment results influenced academic writing support and instruction. In response to this question, lecturers revealed that the results that lecturers were obtaining from the needs assessment were not being used to inform content on academic writing instruction for new entrants. Colleges were only following what was outlined in the Communication and Study Skills course.

We give them an assessment. However, that does not help much as we stick to the prescribed curriculum which I think is not tailored to the needs of students (L.3)

Assessment is somehow just done as a routine exercise. Normally, it does not change what is planned. We only teach what is provided for in Communication and Study Skills although, I sometimes bring in my own material which I think can help especially in grammar.

However, variations were reported in the manner each college was administering the course with regard to (a) duration and target group (b) course lecturers and (c) course content on academic writing.

Variation in Duration and Target Group

Although Communication and Study Skills was designed as a one-year course, some lecturers from two government run colleges stated that students pursuing primary teachers' diploma were only taught for one term while those that were pursuing secondary teachers' diploma were given a full year course. Asked as to why there was this difference, lecturers felt that students pursuing primary teachers' diploma had limited time on account of the number of courses in their program.

Variation in Course Lecturers

In four of the five colleges in the study, Communication and Study Skills was being taught by language specialists from the Literacy and Language Department while in one church run college, lecturers from other specialities (Education Department) were the ones handling the course. Some lecturers from two government run colleges expressed desire to have the course delivered by the Education Department. Asked as to why they were contemplating this, responses from the lecturers seemed to suggest colleges were not yet sure of the best way of helping students improve their academic writing.

We are still searching for the best way to help students. We still feel that somehow somewhere we are missing it (Lecturer 3)

Well, we see it as one of the possibilities... it can also work (Lecturer 4)

However, students had different views with some suggesting that academic writing was better taught in their subject areas while others felt that everyone needed to be involved. Nevertheless, students from a college in which the course was being handled by the Education Department strongly expressed that the course was better taught by language experts whom they felt were more focused and clearer.

Language experts should offer the course. They are more specific. In language there is more consistency but in other departments, it is something else (FGD.3)

When Language lecturers teach, there is uniformity but these others ...there is a lot of conflicting views when you write what that lecturer wants. Normally, that is the big challenge (FGD.2)

The views of student teachers were also in agreement with those of language lecturers charged with teaching academic writing who also stated that their expectations were sometimes in conflict with expectations of lecturers from other study areas:

Students find it a challenge when they write assignments from other departments because we are particular with everything. We find that other lecturers want different things and we end up confusing students (Lecturer 3)

As a section, we look for things other lecturers are not looking for. We engage everyone, we are particular with every aspect. We usually hold meetings where we remind ourselves on what is expected and, in this way, we move together (Lecturer 4)

Variation of Course Content on Academic Writing

Although all colleges claimed to have been using the course designed by Ministry of General Education in Collaboration with University of Zambia, a close examination of

Communication and Study Skills content for each college revealed variations in topics on academic writing including the name of the course for one church-run college. The following are some of the variations observed in academic writing content among colleges:

- i. Only one church run college (College A) had topics on features of different types of texts, for example, cause/effect, descriptive and compare and contrast.
- ii. One public college (College B) did not have any topic on language and library skills
- iii. The name of the course in which students were learning academic writing was in one church run college (college D) called '*Language and Communication Skills Course*'. The content of the course also appeared to have a bias towards language components which included parts of speech, punctuation, tenses, structure of a sentence and language varieties.
- iv. Topics on the process of writing were only reflected in college B and E all of which were public colleges
- v. Topics related to the teaching of grammar were only found in two church run colleges (Colleges A & C).

However, the following topics were included in course outlines for academic writing in all colleges:

- a) The concept of academic writing
- b) Essay structure-introduction, main body and conclusion
- c) Library skills-(using the library and parts of a library)
- d) Citation and referencing
- e) Research skills (note making and note taking)

Responses from both students and lecturers suggested that the course was perceived to have challenges that were detrimental to students' development of writing skills. These included (i) conflicting views on academic writing conventions by lecturers (ii) duration of the course and (iii) resentment of the course by student teachers. Below is an explanation of each of these.

Conflicting Views on Academic Writing Conventions by Lecturers

Many students said that lecturers had different views on academic writing conventions and that this affected their understanding of what was correct and what was not.

There are conflicting views amongst lecturers on what is acceptable and what is not. I feel they are confusing us. We find that every year we are learning new things. It is really disturbing like for this week is when I came to hear about this ‘Ibid’ (FGD 3)

Some lecturers have their preferred style of writing and referencing, so for me, I find it very difficult. Each lecturer should abide by the same academic writing rules so that as we get into third year, we polish-up (FGD 1)

There is a lot of conflicting views amongst lecturers. Normally that is the big challenge. We do not know how they mark and what they follow...lecturers should have a common understanding of how assignments should be written (FGD 4)

Conflicting views on academic writing conventions were also observed in lecturers’ comments on students’ marked assignments (*c.f* question 5 in this study).

Resentment of the Course by Student Teachers

Many students felt that the relevance of academic writing instruction was not made explicit in the beginning and because of this, many had a negative attitude with some shunning the course.

It is now that I appreciate the importance of the course. At first, I thought they were just troubling us. I only did the course to fulfil the requirement. For me, the course was a repetition of what I was learning in Literacy and Language (FGD 1)

There is need for clear demonstration of the relevance of the course in academic writing right from the beginning. At first, I did not know why we were learning how to write. For me passing English at grade twelve means I can write properly...but now I know that there is a lot (FGD 3)

Many lecturers were also in agreement that students exhibited resistance to undertaking academic writing instruction (Communication and Study Skills Course) with many looking at it as an extra load on their part.

Students show no interest. After teaching experience, there is laxity. They only concentrate in their first year (Lecturer 3)

Students resent the course. They only do it for formality’s sake. They don’t believe that the course is meant to help them in their learning (Lecturer 2)

Contrary to these findings, research has shown that students need support and instruction to understand the “nature of higher education, the demands tutors expect to make on them, and the requirements of the subjects they are studying” (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003 p. 118). Besides, the writing done in college is different from the writing done in secondary schools (Hyland, 2011). Therefore, resentment of the course by students may be detrimental to their development of academic writing skills.

Duration of the Course

Many students across colleges felt that course duration was not enough to make students acquire the skills. Some were of the view that lecturers were merely rushing them through the course without considering whether they were acquiring the skills or not. Communication and Study Skills was only appearing on the time-table either once for a two-hour period or twice for single hour periods in a week. Apart from students in one church run college, many felt that teaching academic writing needed to run through the three-year period if they were to attain proficiency.

Guidance should be done from year one to year three. One year is not doing much. We find that every year we are learning new things (FGD1)

Academic writing should be taught in parts so that you understand. Lecturers should be specific when showing us to write assignments because we continue making the same mistakes. Guidance should be done from year one to year three (FGD 2).

Consistent with students' views, students as writers need help in content, context, language system and writing process knowledge (Tribble, 1996) each of which may demand some considerable time if they are to master the skills.

Lecturers were also of the view that the time given for academic writing instruction was only enough to cover the basics of academic writing which was not enough if students were to attain proficiency. For example, responding to a question on the depth of academic writing content in the Communication and Study Skills Course, the following responses were given:

We have it (academic writing instruction) as basics as time is limiting. Teaching Academic writing should be a continuous process and not a one-year program (Lecturer 2).

There isn't much time that we dedicate to help them (students) improve their writing skills. We have difficulties in creating time for extra lessons. We would want to do more but time is a limiting factor (Lecturer 4)

Special cases are given more attention. However, the mode of education controls what we can do. You realise colleges lack deliberate policy to address the key weaknesses. Academic writing should be a continuous process (L. 3)

According to the Ministry of General Education (2018), Communication and Study Skills is a one year course aimed at introducing first year students to communication, academic writing and study skills and it is envisaged that completion of this course would impart specific

communication and writing skills required in academia (Ministry of General Education, 2018).

However, some students in one church-run college felt that the duration for academic writing instruction was enough. The problem was that the course lacked practical activities.

The duration of the course is okay but there is too much emphasis on theory and not on practice. We need to have more writing activities, for example, imaginative writing to help us improve on creativity (FGD. 4)

I think we have enough time to learn but we need to do more practice in the things we learn (FGD. 4)

The above responses from the students are in tandem with the idea that writing is learnt by writing (Smith, 2008; Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015; Manuel & Carter, 2016) and this may imply that the teaching strategies used by colleges were not meeting the needs of students.

4.2.1.4 What Lecturers were Doing to Make Students Understand Key Concepts

A question was raised to establish what lecturers were doing to help students understand key concepts such as transitions, cohesion and coherence. This was to help ascertain whether there were times when lecturers would model the skills or provide samples of previous works to help students grasp the concepts. In response to this question, lecturers had different views:

I just explain the terminologies and give students samples of works lacking cohesion and coherence (L 1).

On the issue of cohesive ties, we guide them but it is really difficult to really know if they have gotten the concept. We only realise after going through the work (L 2).

We give them texts and discuss the ties to make them see. We teach them to use transitional phrases to connect the ideas (L 3)

To make students understand key concepts such as coherence, cohesion and transition, I usually define these key concepts theoretically. I also ask students to pragmatically answer questions. Each student is given a text to practically analyse and identify academic problems embedded in the text. Students are made to identify areas in the text which do not represent academic writing (L 5)

However, the need for modelling and samples was strongly expressed by many students across colleges:

We need to be given models during class, for example, assignments written by previous groups. Lecturers should also demonstrate what they mean. There is little practice in academic writing (FGD. 1)

The problem is that they (lecturers) just explain things. We need to see how it is done not just telling us but at least show us practical examples (FGD. 2)

Although we are learning these things, there is no modelling. They only direct you to ask other peers. This is why we still have serious problems. For me, referencing is still a problem (FGD. 4)

Nevertheless, students in one church-run college reported some experiences of being engaged in some practical activities to reinforce their knowledge and skills.

When showing us how references are written, we were usually given practical exercises there and then and were controlled and when we were taught about catch statement, each and every one was asked to write a catch statement (FGD 4).

However, a response from one lecturer indicated that lecturers had their own reasons for not providing students with sample texts:

We avoid showing them previous works. We feel that the sample is deceptive (L4).

According to Mariconda & Williamson (2015), “students must learn through explicit, objective driven instruction the salient features of the genre, authors’ purpose, and have a strong grasp of basic concepts that inform these understanding” (p.2). These findings thus, suggest that students were not given full access to the academic writing models needed for their full grasp of the knowledge and skills.

4.2.1.5 What was being done to Help Students to Practice Comprehensive Reading

Based on the relationship between reading and writing, lecturers were asked to explain what was being done to systematically help student teachers practice comprehensive reading as a good foundation for academic writing. In response to this question, lecturers across colleges reviewed that apart from giving students tutorial questions that required them to search for information and make presentations in class, not much was being done with some attributing this to lack of time.

We have less time for reading. We have not carried out such an activity except that when we give them a chance to conduct tutorials, we give them topics to read and come back for presentation to the whole class (L. 4)

We are not doing much. We only encourage them to read a good number of books just to improve on academic writing (L. 2).

4.2.1.6 Student Teachers’ Engagement in Other Writing Activities

A question was also raised to establish if students were engaged in any other writing activities apart from writing assignments and examinations. Responses from both lecturers

and students indicated that apart from a few who were members of the research club in some colleges, students were generally not involved in any other writing activities.

I only write for a college bulletin where we write about things happening in the college (FGD 1).

We are engaged in research called college focus. We conduct research which we first present in the chapel and later to all students (FGD 3).

We do not engage them in any other writing activities apart from when they come as first years (L. 3).

They write articles to contribute to the magazine. When we are teaching them, we deliberately give them to write stories but we do not grade those stories as they are not on the curriculum (L.4).

4.2.2 Student Teachers' Academic Writing Problems in their Final Year in College

As a follow-up on determination of student teachers' academic writing abilities in their final year in college, an essay writing task was administered to third year student teachers to help generate qualitative and quantitative data. This was important as it enhanced a better reflection on what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in English. The major focus of qualitative data was to provide textual evidence that reflected student teachers' ability to use the forms and conventions of written language. Quantitative data was used to gauge students' performance in terms of scores across colleges. The essay prompt given was "*Advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools*". The essay prompt provided for the need to explain the concepts used, present and support a proposition and provide explanations for the reasons put forward on both sides of the argument before concluding (Hyland, 2019) thereby, creating an opportunity for students to exhibit their ability to use the forms and conventions of written language in their final year in college. Analytic scoring based on the essential features of an academic text was used to grade students' performance (Hyland, 2019).

4.2.3 Presentation of Quantitative Findings on Students' Writing Abilities in their Final Year in College

This section presents findings from the essay writing test that was given to students in all colleges.

4.2.3.1 Distribution of Student Teachers' Performance in the Test According to Colleges

Table 4.14 presents descriptive statistics of the students' performance on the test. The total marks for the test were 40. The results are presented in terms of mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and range.

Table: 4.11 Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum, Maximum and Range

College	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Range
College A	21.0000	18	5.47723	12.00	31.00	19.00
College B	22.8889	18	4.45750	17.00	31.00	14.00
College C	23.3889	18	3.41517	16.00	29.00	13.00
College D	25.0500	20	6.08255	14.00	35.00	21.00
College E	21.9000	20	6.617	8.00	37.00	29.00
Total	22.8723	94	5.45013	8.00	37.00	29.00

Source: Field data

The above summary table shows that out of a total score of 40, college: A (n=18) had a mean score of 21, standard deviation of 5.47723, minimum performance of 12 and maximum of 31. The range between the highest and lowest score was 19. College B (n=18) had a mean score of 22.8889, a standard deviation of 4.45750 with the minimum score being 17 and maximum 31. The difference in range between the highest and lowest score was 14. College C (n=18) had a mean score of 23.3889, standard deviation of 3.41517 and the minimum score of 16 while the maximum score was 29 with the range between the highest and lowest score being 13. College D (n=20) had a mean score of 25.0500, standard deviation of 6.08255, minimum performance of 14 and maximum 35. The range between the highest and the lowest score was 21. College E (n=20) had a mean score of 21.9000, standard deviation of 6.657 with the minimum score being 8 and maximum 37. The difference in range was 29. The five colleges (n=94) had a mean score of 22.8723 and a standard deviation of 5.45013 with minimum score being 8 and maximum being 37. The range between the highest and lowest score is 29 for all colleges. The average score across colleges out of 40 was 22.8 which was just slightly above half the total marks. The highest mean score came from college D with 25 although it also had the second largest range. The rest of the colleges as shown in table 4.10 clustered closely to the mean between 21 and 23. Figure 4.5 below presents the means and ranges of marks for each college. As can be seen, the marks are almost in a straight line showing similar performance across colleges.

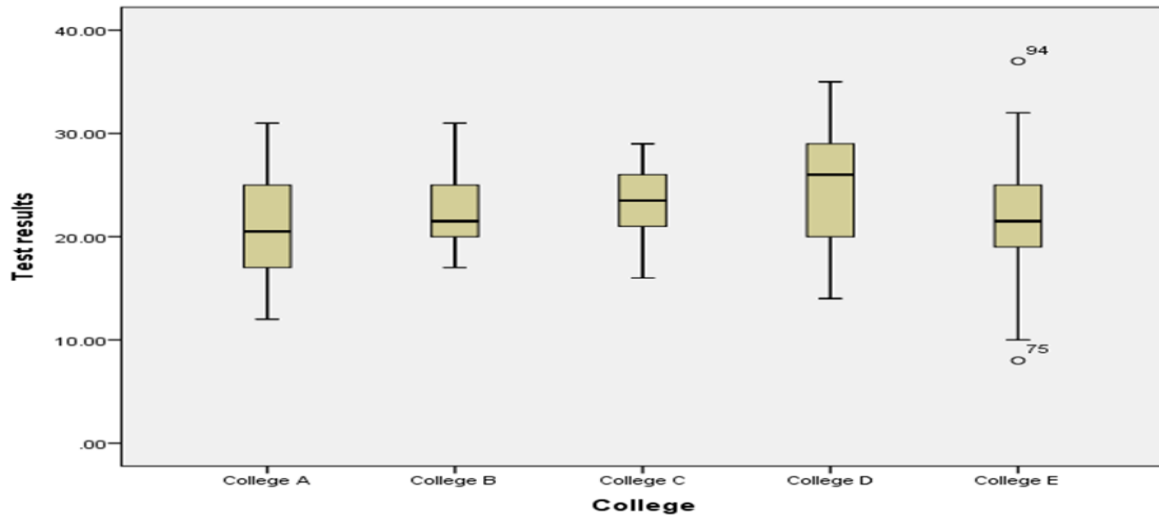


Figure: 4.5 Student Teachers' Means and Ranges of Marks for Each College

Figure 4.5 above shows that college D had the highest mean followed by C and next was B followed by E with A being the lowest. However, the differences were minimal. The spread of abilities was found to be greater in D and E but lowest in C.

4.2.3.2 Hypothesis Testing

In order to assess whether the results from the colleges in the essay writing test were statistically different, an independent samples Kruskal Wallis Hypothesis test was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). As expected of descriptive statistics, there was no statistically significant difference across the colleges as shown in figure 4.6 below.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Test results is the same across categories of College.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.203	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure: 4.6 Hypothesis Test Summary

Figure 4.6 above shows that there was no statistically significant difference among the five colleges of education in performance on the academic writing test, $\chi^2(4) = 5.953, p = 0.203$.

4.2.2.1 Presentation of Qualitative Findings on Student Teachers' Academic Writing Abilities in the Final Year in College

This section presents qualitative findings on student teachers' academic writing abilities in the essay writing test in their final year in college. Student teachers' test essays were carefully analysed to help identify their common errors in essay writing in their final year in college. The common errors made by students helped determine areas of difficulty and so provide a picture of what was still lacking in optimizing their academic writing skills in college. Student teachers' common errors in the test essay were those that were found in more than 8 scripts in each particular college. The number 8 was chosen as it represented more than 40% participants per college which was significant to warrant a fair argument. An error was deemed to be a weakness if it appeared more than three times in a student's essay. The aspects of essay writing analysed included essay organisation from introduction to conclusion and the use of conventional forms of the written language, for instance tenses, spelling, cohesive devices and meta-discourse. This was important as it helped determine students' areas of difficulty which enhanced a better reflection on what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in English. The following were the findings:

4.2.2.2 Essay Organization from Introduction to Conclusion

Introduction

Students' common errors on introduction included writing of incomplete introduction, poor organisation and omission of introduction.

Incomplete introduction

Incomplete introductions were those that had elements such as essay purpose, structure and definition of key terms missing as shown below:

A phone is a small electronic device that can be used for many things such as communication, keeping of materials and other things. Therefore, this essay will ponder on the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in Zambian schools (College B) [Essay structure not stated]

A phone is a programmable device that can be used to send receive and retrieve information from the internet. Therefore, this essay will discuss the advantages of using cell phones in schools (College A)

These findings may suggest that students were not made aware of the textual features to make them conform "to academic discourse..." (Kruse, 2003, p. 25).

Poor organization of Introduction

Poorly organised introductions were packed with incoherent and sometimes irrelevant ideas, incorrect grammar and rumbling sentences as can be seen in the following:

Phones are gadgets that are used in communication from the sender to the receiver and the feedback to the sender. The advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life world wide and anyone can communicate to each and every tribe using a phone in a simple language (english). Therefore, this essay will discuss on the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools (College E)

Technology is a broad term that encompasses a lot of things within it, technology involves use of electronic devices such as computers, laptops and cell phones and many others. Therefore, this scholarly work aims at discussing the advantages of using cell phones in schools (College D).

Omission of introduction

Cases of students omitting an introduction were common in students' test essays across colleges. This was seen in students going straight into the main body of the text.

Cell phones are very important to every human being. This is because it has brought improvement in human life through using it. Cell phones are helping learners in schools, colleges and universities to do research or study. For instance if the learners are been given the home work research they use cell phones to find the answers through google (College A) [The essay has no introduction

Main Body of the Essay

A number of problems were seen in the main body of the essay. These included discussing more than one point in a paragraph, failure to provide enough evidence, poor linkage of paragraphs and poor support of arguments by evidence, facts or examples.

Discussing more than One Point in a Paragraph

Some students could raise and discuss as many as three different points in one paragraph,

Cell phones also contain internet facilities that can assist learners and teachers in terms of research; for the learners to research more on the topics they learn, for teachers to research more on the content they wish to dispense. Another advantage of cell phone use in schools is the handing out of course work; homework, handouts, pamphlets as well as research work. This can save on time and also help a learner that may have been absent due to various reasons. Cell phones have a social aspect in terms of social media platforms these are beneficial for online group discussions, sharing of information pertaining to school work. In a time when the world is plagued with contagious viruses, such as covid 19 where social distance is required these social platforms can be very helpful (College C).

Failure to Provide Comprehensive Evidence

In some cases, students could raise good points but fail to provide enough evidence to warrant the claims. In other instances, examples or evidence given were not clearly explained or related to the claims made.

The second advantage is that, it will help pupils to be exposed to the new way of learning. For instance, e-learning. This simply means that, pupils will be able to interact with other friends from other places just in order for them to discuss something concerning their studies (College B)

Another disadvantage is that learners end up downloading bad things such as pornographic videos instead of them concentrating in classrooms as a result it will disturb a learners mind and that learners will not be able to concentrate in class. If a learner receives a phone call in class the learner may be disturbed depending on the type of call the learner receives Sometimes it may be a funeral or any other bad thing. (College A)

Poor Linkage of Paragraphs

Use of wrong linking words that rendered connections between paragraphs illogical was common to students across colleges:

First and foremost, it is important to understand the key word in this essay and that is technology. Technology is any electronic device used to communicate such as by computing and cell phones. (College C)

However, there are a number of advantages of using cell phones in schools. Firstly, it helps learners to search and acquire certain information easily and quick. For example, if students have been given an assignment on entrepreneurship one cannot easily manage to come up with the required needed work by him/herself alone, as a result one must look for information using the phone. (College E)

Therefore, another advantage of using phones in schools is that to research on works given from our teachers or lecturers. this means that you can't research on works or discussion given to our teacher without using google. (College A)

Illogical Presentation and Development of Ideas

The manner in which topic sentences were structured in some essays could not provide a clear sense of direction and this affected the progression of the argument making it look awkward.

Furthermore, the other advantage of using cell phones in schools is that there is advancement in technology which has led to improvement to human life especially students, because you can put books in a cell phone and that cell phone will be used for educational purposes, reading of information and studying can be done through the mobile (College A).

Poor Development of Argument

Students' ability to effectively develop arguments was found to be low and problematic in all colleges. Some students' inability to develop meaningful arguments led to repeated and rumbling sentences which were generally awkward.

again phones in schools have a lot of advantages in such a way that it is a very easiest and direct way of finding information, phones doesn't take a long time just finding the information (College E)

Other disadvantage include the way the internet is expensive in short, it is expensive and it is not available or accessible to everyone. Not every student has a smart phone which has access to the internet because it is expensive and not cheap. It is expensive in such a way that it goes at a fee, for one to have a smart phone money is needed, for one to have access to the internet money is involved in that bundles are bought at a price, therefore, it is not everyone who is able to have such kind of technology (College C)

Lack of Cohesion and Coherence

Many students in the low performing category had serious problems with cohesion and coherence. Their essays were full of disjointed ideas that made the text difficult to comprehend:

Some students has led to improvement in human life, they are not interesting in schools, some students interesting in their using cell phones in schools without attend that is not good using cell phone in schools. It is because not improve in their school. Students need to stop using cell phones in schools. Some students are not improvement in human life because of using cell phones (College E) (Deaf student)

There are many things that going through which we disadvantage using cell phones in schools. Because of the poor, some students and learners are impossible to effort themselves that which are not help them in their daily life such as here college we have many things to do like assignments, group discussion or anything that required us to research them cell phones in school. But some of them don't and the other bad network or poor wifi that will nothing anything for them to understand. Other bad is that some lecturers are not cooperation to each other which it led us to have disadvantage cell phone in schools or colleges that is the reason we go through like these matters (College E) (Deaf)

Conclusion

Student teachers' problems in writing conclusions were characterised by failure to link conclusion to the question, restate the purpose of the essay or summarise the main points, poor organisation and mixed ideas or introducing new ones. Some conclusions were either vague, unrelated to the topic or simply left out.

Incomplete conclusions

This involved leaving out some essential aspects of a conclusion. Students with incomplete conclusions were not able to restate the main points or provide a summary or provide proper evidence and or state one's position.

To sum-up using of phones in schools is good when it is used for academic purposes in good manner. But it is not good when it is used out of academically work, otherwise phones make life easier (College E)

In conclusion, this essay has discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools (College C)

In conclusion, one can say that technology has improved many skills in human life such as secretariat and many others (College A)

Failure to Link Conclusion to the Question

Many students could not clearly link their conclusion to the question:

Finally, the advantage of cell phones is put or must put first because we are in a modern world (College B)

This paper has discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in school. Therefore, whatever maybe the case, human being will continue to develop, such services are vital to keep them going forward. Life is about the choices (College D)

Failure to Restate the Main Purpose of the Essay or Summarize the Main Points

Some conclusions were written as an afterthought in a very simplistic way which resulted in abrupt ending of the essay:

All in all, cell phones has brought in schools good and bad. (College E)

In conclusion, cell phones are highly merited as it gives access dissemination of lots of information (College B)

Grammar

Grammar was a serious problem to many students across colleges. Some could hardly complete a paragraph without a grammatical error. Students' poor grammatical skills were exhibited in wrong sentence constructions, wrong tenses, use of contracted forms, and incorrect use of pronouns and subject verb agreement.

Incorrect Grammatical Constructions

Furthermore, our hearing impaired in the college to everyone knows how to sign but some just use written and phone. Thus is the reason they keep communicate, thus is very simple way of communication to them. (College E).

All in all, cell phones are important in schools because learners learn a lot with friends and get used on how to use especially like this covid online learning (College C)

Incorrect Use of Tenses

Use of tenses was a common problem among students. It was common to find students mixing the past, present and future tenses incorrectly.

In a situation where the pupil *could* not understand what was being taught in class, the learner *will* be able to search through the internet and *watching* tutorials via you tube (College E)

Most students/learners *did* not per attention when they *are* learning, they *did* not use phones for academic purpose. For example *they use* phone on face book whatsapp and internet. Student they *do not* study the *spend* most of the time on their phones (College A)

However, using phones in school *it is* also good to the learner; because the time learners *are going to spent* to find the information *will be* less, as the result learners *will have* time to do other activities (College E)

Incorrect use of pronouns

Firstly cell phone in school is used communication it is very different from those days where *people they* live with old technology For example using cell phones in *schools it* helps learners to communicate.

Some *parents they* just buy phones for their children without monitoring their usages (College E).

Subject verb agreement

Cell phones are very important to every human being. This is because *it* has brought improvement in human life through *using it*. Cell phones are helping learners in schools, colleges and universities to do research or study. For instance if the learners are been given the home work research they use cell

Another advantage is that *it is* used for communication *phones* helps students communicate with each other with things pertaining to school quick and easy e.g when there is a make-up lecture in the afternoon, the phone might be used in order to inform other students on the progress and provide more information on the lecture (College C)

Use of Informal Language

Use of abbreviations and contracted forms was one of the common problems found in students teachers' test essays.

There are many advantages of using cell phone in schools, cell phones help when there is an emergency that requires help from people who are not close *i.e* in a boarding school, a lot of things happen and require agent attention *e.g* when there is fire, a patient who needs serious medical attention, fights, thieves robbery *e.t.c* (College C)

It is a very easiest and direct way of finding information, phones *doesn't* take long period of time just finding the information (College A)

The poor linguistic abilities by students in their final year in college suggest that students did not meet the desirable outcomes of Communication and Study Skills of using appropriate grammar and vocabulary in their academic papers (MoGE, 2018).

Run-on sentences

Problems of run-on sentences were found in a number of essays. Some students' grammatical constructions were structured in such a manner that they appeared like spoken words.

The first disadvantage is that learners tend not to be studying because they feel they have everything it takes to pass examinations they develop a poor habit of studying mainly when they are with their phones try to start researching once they open their data other notifications starts opening driving their attention from what they intended to research they find themselves responding to the charts their friends are sending. (College E)

Writing Mechanics

Writing mechanics also appeared to be a challenge to many students. Many exhibited weaknesses in spellings and word choice.

Spelling Errors

Incorrectly spelt words most of which were a result of word sound association were common across colleges. Some students could hardly complete a paragraph without a spelling error.

Another disadvantage is that phones promote *leznness*. Most of the time the teacher will be delivering in class and learner will be *bezy* on social media without paying attention. At times a learner might be watching a *move* on a phone (College E)

If a student has a phone he/she can store the information on that phone without *calling heave* books in the bag (College C)

This disadvantage is very common even on the *sival* servants, *insteady* (College C)

Use of wrong words

Firstly, pupils loose concentration when the teacher is teaching. For example, pupils will start thinking that even if I have not attended class, *how* research *own* my own of which she don't even know if the information he/she is the right imformation (College B)

Firstly, *how* talk of the advantages of using cell phones in schools and then how get back to the disadvantages (College A)

The above results indicate that the course designed to help improve students' academic writing skills was not effective in improving students' writing abilities. Similar results were also recorded by Mutimani (2016) who established that despite being subjected to instructions on academic writing, students were still facing academic writing challenges which were a result of linguistic and general literacy background.

4.2.4 Summary of What Colleges of Education were Doing to Make Student Teachers Understand Specific Academic Writing Requirements at College Level

Question 2 focussed on establishing what CoE were doing to make students understand specific academic writing requirements at college level. The compulsory teaching of Communication and Study Skills was found to be the main strategy that colleges were using to make students understand specific academic writing requirements. This was being complemented with general orientation on what is required in academic writing. However, this seemed not to have been adequately addressing student teachers' academic writing needs. Although there was a difference in lecturers and content on academic writing, results of the hypothesis test on student teachers' performance in their final year in college showed that there was no statistically significant difference in performance among colleges. Many students were still exhibiting considerable weaknesses in various dimensions of academic writing with linguistic problems appearing to be the major challenge.

4.3 What Support Mechanisms Do Colleges Use to Promote Students' Development of Academic Writing Skills

Question 4 sought to elicit information on initiatives that were deliberately undertaken by colleges to support student teachers' development of academic writing skills. Data was collected through interviews with college lecturers and focus group discussions with student teachers. This question targeted Heads of Department (HoD) for Literacy and Language and lecturers who were teaching academic writing. However, one person stood in for the two roles in each college. The study found that colleges used various support mechanisms to promote students' development of academic writing skills categorised as institutional and individual (student/lecturer) discussed below.

4.3.1 Institutional Support

Institutional support initiatives used in all colleges included provision of infrastructure and equipment such as computers, access to internet, library and classroom space.

a. Provision of Computers

Students in all colleges visited had access to computer labs where they were able to use college computers for research. However, many colleges did not have enough computers to cater for all the students. Out of the five colleges visited, only two church-run colleges expressed satisfaction with the number of computers and computer rooms for students' access.

Students have access to computers. We have two computer labs and we make sure that each student has access (College C).

Students have access to the computer lab although it cannot accommodate many students at once. The population of students is huge and so, we have a problem ensuring that student have access to computers at their convenience (College B).

Library and Classroom Space

Students across colleges had libraries and students were oriented on their use. However, many college libraries did not have books that were up to date to meet students' research needs. Three of the colleges also reported having limited library space which could only be used by a limited number of students at a particular time. Asked as to whether students were able to access E-books on E-library. Many students declined stating that E- books were time-consuming with some stating that they had little knowledge on how to use E-library.

We have no access to E-books. It is very difficult unless you know the tittle of the book you are searching for. This takes much of our time (FGD 3).

We rarely use E- library. You find that they ask you to buy a book and you only need that book for one assignment and it is expensive (FGD1).

Given that one of the outcomes of the Communication and Study Skills course is that students should effectively use the library and other sources of information (Ministry of General Education, 2018), this finding may suggest that student teachers were not exposed to web literacy for them to understand how to locate, analyse, and communicate information found online (Pilgrim and Martinez, 2013).

Internet Connectivity

All colleges visited were connected to the internet and students in all colleges acknowledged having access to the internet provided by colleges. However, many students observed that they were not utilizing the service for academic benefits. Some expressed limited knowledge on using internet to source for information and effectively use the same information.

Access to internet is more of a distractor than a benefit... it is used more for social media than for academic purposes and leads to plagiarism and laziness (FGD 3).

Internet access is there but we are not taught how to find information on internet and how to change those words so that we are not caught with plagiarism (FGD 4)

Ideally, helping students acquire knowledge in internet searches, hyperlinks and search engines should include safeguarding them from distractive tendencies (Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013) such as those expressed by students.

4.3.2 Student Teachers' Support

Support for student teachers included engagement in practical activities, provision of learner support materials, formation of language related clubs and having an open-door policy.

Engagement in Practical Activities

Some lecturers stated that they engaged students in practical activities as a way of enhancing their academic writing skills development.

We give them (students) tutorials or group work to present before their classmates. We want them to learn to search for information, organise it and present it. After presentation, comments are made on the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation. In this way, they are guided and we usually ask them to submit their written presentation (Lecturer 3).

Students from the same colleges were also in agreement with what lecturers were saying as expressed in the following:

The college gives us practical activities to help us improve writing. For example, a program called Moodle, they upload some activities which help us improve writing (FGD 4).

They give us group work where we come-up with power point and we have issues of symposium where selected students present to fellow students mostly research (FGD 3).

However, this was not a common practice in all the colleges visited. Out of the five colleges visited, only two church-run colleges reported having been doing this.

Provision of Learner Support Materials

Students in all colleges visited reported that lecturers were providing them with modules and pamphlets. Modules comprised course content for Communication and Study Skills/ Language and Communication Skills and pamphlets contained supplementary materials on topics related to academic writing:

After orientation, we were given handouts on academic writing (FGD 1)

During orientation, we were given samples on how references should be written (FGD 5).

A lecturer in one church run college also revealed that college administrators were encouraging lecturers to share their academic research papers with students by providing relevant materials such as paper.

Whenever a lecturer writes an academic paper, we make copies and distribute to the students. Usually, the college facilitates this (College 4).

Although the researcher was not availed with any academic papers that lecturers had shared with students, research has shown that availing students with academic writing materials produced by lecturers can help demystify academic writing (Donnelly, 2014) by making students believe that they too can successfully engage in it. Scholars such as Andrew & Smith (2011) advance that techniques for improving writing should include practice by those engaged in teaching.

Magazine Article and Cycle Writing

One college reported having introduced Magazine article writing with as a way of helping students develop and improve their self-expression and lecturers were encouraging students to write articles to contribute to the magazine. Another church run college with a similar intention reported having introduced '*cycle writing*' where students were required to collaborate in composing a story on a given title. Story composition would start with the lecturer who would provide a title and pass it to students who would take turns in developing the story from beginning to the end. However, lecturers did not provide any evidence to show what students were doing.

Formation of Clubs

Students in two church run colleges revealed that their colleges had introduced language related clubs such as poetry, drama and debate with the aim of helping sharpen students' language and critical thinking skills. Existence of research clubs were also reported in two church run colleges. Research club members were engaged in research after which they would make presentations to the entire college.

We have a research club called 'College Focus'. We conduct research and come up with power point which we first present in the chapel and also present to all students and lecturers (FGD 4)

We have an issue of symposium where selected students conduct research and present research findings to fellow students during which comments are made (FGD 3)

The responses from students were also in agreement with lecturers from three church-run colleges. However, materials produced by students could not be availed to the researcher for authentication.

Open Door Policy

Many students stated that their colleges had an open-door policy which allowed them to approach lecturers on any issue pertaining to writing assignments.

Each student is encouraged to see the lecturer from that particular course whenever they have a challenge or whenever there is an assignment (FGD 1)

Lecturers in all colleges were also in agreement that students were free to approach any lecturer for consultation whenever they saw it necessary.

4.3.3 Lecturer Support

Support mechanisms for lecturers were only reported in two church run colleges. College administrators were said to have been sponsoring research activities with the aim of helping build lecturers' capacity to help their students develop research skills. At the time of this study, one college claimed to have been working on a research report based on a study done in the teaching of literacy.

4.3.4 Summary of Support Mechanisms Used by Colleges to Promote Student Teachers' Development of Academic Writing Skills

Question 3 was aimed at eliciting information on initiatives deliberately undertaken by colleges to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills. The figure below summarises the findings:

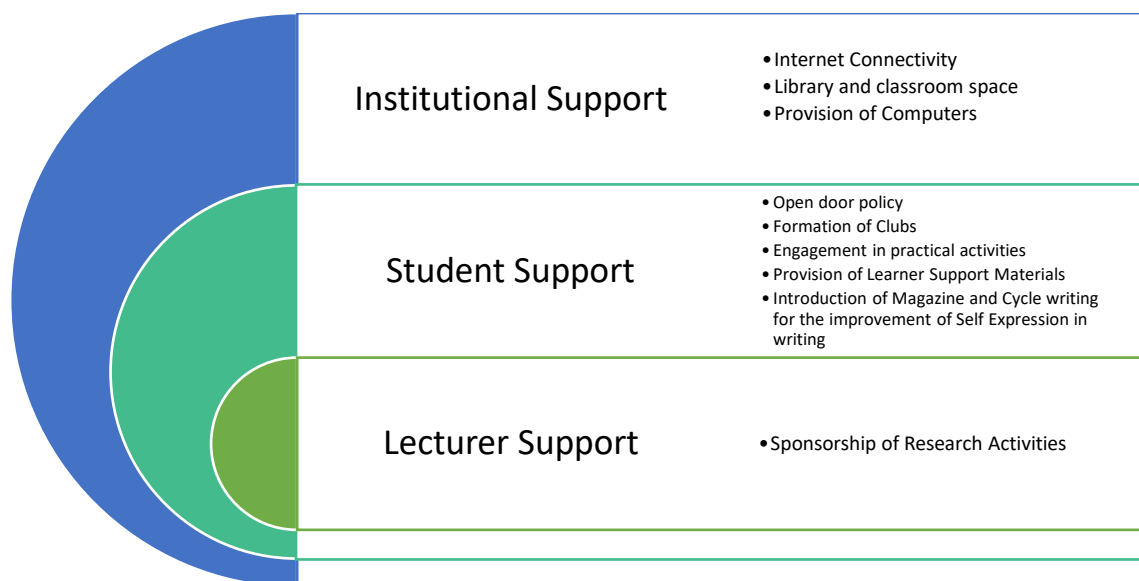


Figure: 4.7 Summary of Support Mechanisms Used By Colleges to Promote Student Teachers’ Development of Academic Writing Skills

4.4 How do Lecturers’ Feedback Practice on Student Teachers’ Written Assignments Promote Students’ Learning?

Question 4 was aimed at eliciting information on how lecturers were communicating feedback on student teachers’ written assignments. Feedback practice looked at the timing of feedback, how lecturers helped students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, mode, focus and purpose of feedback.

4.4.1 Timing of Feedback on Written Assignments

A question was raised to establish if the timing of feedback was within the acceptable limits that can promote students’ learning of academic writing. Both lecturers and students were asked to express their opinion on whether or not lecturers were taking long to give students feedback on written assignments. Both students and lecturers had different views on the timing of feedback. Some lecturers stated that efforts were made to give feedback within the limits of the expected time frame while others were of the view that feedback depended on the nature of the work:

Time for feedback depends on the nature of the task. Some tasks require more time while others do not (Lecturer 2)

Sometimes we delay due to the amount of work and the numbers. Otherwise, we know that feedback must be given soon after the exercise but we do not always do that (L 1)

Although we do not always return assignments in good time, we often make efforts and we even remind ourselves of the need to do so because this helps students to improve...but it is difficult. We are sometimes overwhelmed by the numbers (L5)

Students were equally of different views. Some felt that assignments were returned in good time while others felt that the timing for feedback varied from lecturer to lecturer. Some said that some lecturers were in the habit of delaying while some would always return assignments in good time.

For some lecturers, it does not take long but for some, you have to wait and wait. Sometimes you even forget about the assignment (FGD 3)

Our lecturer for English is always on time. You always get your work maybe after two weeks. If she delays, she even explains why. But for some subjects, they take long. (FGD 4)

Some assignments are only returned at the end of the term when they give you CA (Continuous Assessment) (FGD 2).

From the responses above, it can be deduced that feedback was not always given within acceptable limits that promote student learning. Although feedback can sometimes be delayed to give students enough time to “process the information and attain a comprehensive review of their thinking and processing” (Brookhart, 2008 p.5), withholding feedback on students to as long as end of the term may suggest that feedback timing was poor and could not attain its purpose.

4.4.2 How Lecturers were Helping Students to understand their Strengths and Weaknesses

Lecturers were asked to explain what they were doing to make students understand their weakness and strengths in their written assignments. This was to ascertain whether lecturers were using appropriate conventional marking symbols and whether students were familiar with the meaning of the symbols. The responses to this question suggested that lecturers were helping students to understand their weaknesses and strengths by marking and grading of their work. This included using minimal marking, rubrics, written comments, underlining and or cancelling and correcting of mistakes. Below is an explanation of each.

4.4.2.1 Minimal Marking

Minimal marking involved using conventional marking symbols to highlight and define the errors made by students in their written work as stated in the following,

During marking, we draw a line under the word which is wrong and indicate the mistake made on top, for example, ww, sp. At times we even ask students to see us for more explanations (Lecturer.2).

We use marking symbols which are standardised by the college. For example, Sp.- spelling, Str.- Structure and w/w for wrong word (Lecturer 1)

However, some students claimed that they were not familiar with the meaning of some of the conventional symbols that lecturers were using to communicate feedback.

Some symbols used by lecturers are not known. Some will just write 'A' or 'R' and circle it. You do not understand what they mean (FGD 2).

I do not understand what it means when they just write dashes in front of a word or slashes in the margins (FGD 3).

Nevertheless, three lecturers claimed to have been teaching the meaning of particular conventional symbols as part of the course on academic writing. For example, responding to a question on how they ensured that students understood comments written on their marked assignments, one lecturer gave the following response,

Before students are given assignments, they are made to interpret and identify the semantics of the common comments they are to meet in their marked essays (Lecturer 4)

4.4.2.1.1 Mismatch between Emphasis on Skills and Allocation of Marks

Some students reported that the emphasis made on some aspects of academic essays did not correspond with the allocation of marks and that this cast doubts on the importance of such aspects.

Some do not mark introduction. Why do they say it is important but they don't give you the marks? (FGD 1)

They always talk about references. They even write comments but no marks are given. I think they should give marks to make you pay more attention...And these things of references and citation give us many problems (FGD 3)

Some lecturers were also in agreement that although some aspects of academic writing were emphasized and checked for in students' essays, no marks were allocated. For example, responding to a question on the proportion of marks lecturers gave for content in relation to grammar, some lecturers said,

We pay attention to stylistic features and although we also make comments on grammar, we do not really attach marks to grammar. We allocate more marks on content than on writing mechanics and language (L 4)

We just correct grammar. We do not really attach marks to grammar (L 5).

Asked on whether allocation of marks included consideration for text language features of a particular text such as argumentative, many lectures posited that less attention was paid to such. In many cases, concentration was more on whether the student had correctly answered the question or not as explained thus:

In terms of marks allocation, we pay more attention to content. We don't follow much of those. Most of it is only discursive. We give them information on the types of essays but we do not follow that when marking and mostly we give them discursive questions (L 3).

We do not consider whether we are giving an argumentative essay or a descriptive essay...we may even give them a similar type throughout the course depending on who is preparing the questions because we alternate (L 4).

The above responses from lecturers suggest that lecturers may not have been paying attention to helping students on how to handle different types of questions, although, this is part of the support needed in improving their academic writing skills (Malia, 2017).

4.4.2.2 Using a Marking Rubric

Lecturers' responses to a question on what they did to ensure that there was consistency in the allocation of marks on student teachers' written work revealed that lecturers were also using marking rubrics to give feedback as explained by some lecturers,

Many times, we make a marking rubric which shows how we allocate marks. This helps the student to know they got a particular grade (Lecturer 2).

We allocate marks according to the skills. If it is an exam, every lecturer is supposed to follow the same (Lecturer: 4).

The use of marking rubrics reported by lecturers have many advantages that can support student learning, for instance, rubrics can help students understand what is expected of them, provide informative and timely feedback and enhances grading consistency (Chowdhury, 2019).

4.4.2.3 Using Written Comments

Using written comments was found to be one of the ways lecturers used to help students understand their weaknesses and strengths in their written work.

When we are marking students' work, we highlight and underline errors and also make a comment so that students can understand (L 5).

As lecturers, we ensure every time we are marking, we see how the students are writing, look at mechanical writing skills and highlight challenges (L 3)

Each time she finishes marking, she will put a comment and when you come into class, read out to the whole class and she would tell you how you were supposed to do it (FGD 4)

However, some students stated that some lecturers were not consistent in writing comments on their written work. In some cases, a lecturer would simply write a grade without writing any comment on the essay or indicating any errors made. In other cases, the comments made would not match with the grade given on the assigned task and in some cases, comments made lacked clarity,

Some lecturers comment and give appropriate grades but others no matter how you write, you have few comments and low grades (FGD 3).

Some even if you get the highest mark, they just write 'fare'. Some will rate you high but give you low marks, for example, excellent but it is 44 percent; very good but it is 45 percent (FGD 4)

Responses from two lecturers affirmed the views of students as seen in the following,

In my case, I only highlight errors in the first year and tell my students to follow the same in subsequent years. The only problem is when you are given a class you did not handle in the first year. You find students making the same mistakes (L 5)

Some lecturers do not write comments when they are marking. In some cases, you only find a grade on a four paged essay and you even wonder how one arrived at that particular grade and it is not that a student did not make any mistake (L 4).

4.4.2.3.1 Clarity of Comments

Students were asked to state whether comments made were clear and easy to understand. Students had different views on the clarity of comments. Some were of the view that comments made on their essays were clear and specific, while some felt that they were too general and confusing making it difficult for them to know what to do.

The comments are clear and easy to understand (FGD 1)

Sometimes, the lecturer just writes 'how' and you do not understand. You need to make a follow-up to ask what was meant (FGD 5)

Some comments are very confusing. Sometimes they only write ‘what is this as if you are there to explain what you meant (FGD 4).

Asked on whether there were times when lecturers would seek clarity on what a student had written, many students denied having had this chance. However, few students from two church- run colleges agreed to have had times when lecturers called them for clarification on what they had written. For example, one student said:

The lecturer called me and asked me to convince him and eventually gave me the mark (FGD 3)

However, students generally felt that they were in many cases made to redo the assignments with little or no guidance.

They just cancel and write ‘redo’ and they tell you “Bring this assignment in two days-time” without even guiding you on what to do (FGD 3)

The failure by lecturers to provide guidance on what students should do contradicts the ideals of the Community of Practice model of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and suggests that students were being denied full access to academic writing practice (Wenger, 1998)..

As a follow-up to their responses, students were asked on what they were doing when asked to redo the assignments with little or no guidance. In response to this question, many students stated that they resorted to copying from their peers who obtained higher marks in the same assignment.

Searching for information becomes laborious. You find that you only get one assignment for someone who did well and only edit English where there is important you put vital. Sometimes you just go to the internet...cut...paste and edit (FGD 3).

You just copy from someone who did well and sometimes if it is above 40 you just go for the same marks when they give you an option to rewrite or keep the same grade (FGD 2).

Some students stated that they resorted to rewriting typed assignment in their own handwriting without changing anything and ended up scoring a higher or better grade.

Sometimes you rewrite the typed one in your own handwriting and they give you high marks (FGD 2).

There are times you simply copy the same assignment in your own handwriting and submit. When I did this, I got a better grade although not very good

(FGD 1).

Some lecturers implicitly agreed with the views of students indicating that errors were rarely followed-up due to limited time as expressed by one lecturer:

More often than never, we do not have time to engage students on the difficulties they face. There is no time to do this. It is something desirable but difficult to do due to a lack of time (Lecturer: 4).

A lecturer from another college also said:

There isn't much time that we dedicate to help them (students) improve. There is less time for us to offer extra lessons. Usually, we have difficulties in creating time for this (Lecturer: 2).

4.4.2.4 Findings from Document Analysis of Student Teachers' Marked Assignments

Student teachers' marked essays were also analysed to help validate some of the things that were revealed through interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with student teachers. The results of document analysis of student teachers' marked assignments confirmed that lecturers were in some cases using analytic rubrics to award marks and holistic rubrics in other cases. In cases where analytic rubrics were used, lecturers broke down the allocation of marks so that each skill is assigned a particular mark, for example, spellings [3] argumentation [5], punctuation [2]. The performance of students in each aspect would then be added to give a final grade. Below is a grid showing how lecturers were using a rubric to grade students' assignments.

Table: 4. 12 Sample of Marking Rubric

Reference	00
Language	2/5
Handwriting	2/5
Map drawing	2/4
Regional varieties	6/7
Dialect justification	00/03
Dialects	8/18
Total	20/45

Source: Field Work (Students' Marked Assignment)

For holistic rubrics, some ticks would carry one mark while others would carry two or more marks up-to as much as five per tick. The marks would then be added to give a final grade that was mostly converted to a percentage.

Communicating feedback through written comments was also seen in students' assignments. Lecturers were either inserting comments within the text or writing them as a summary at the end of or on the first page of the assignment as shown below:

Avoid writing assignments at gun point

You must be serious with academic work

Reference writing must be improved (Comments written as summary at the end of the text College A)

Use inverted commas for examples used (College: A)

What is the relevance of this quote? (College B)

Do not write as if you are talking (Comments inserted in the text)

However, inconsistency was observed in the way lecturers were making comments on student essays. Out of the 100 scripts reviewed from the five colleges, twenty-eight (28) scripts did not have any comments. Inconsistency was also seen in comments on good performance. Some essays with grades as high as 90% were found to have no comments in praise or motivation of a student for scoring a high mark.

4.4.3 Mode of Feedback

The study also looked at the mode lecturers were using to communicate feedback. The modes of feedback in this study referred to means through which feedback was communicated to students. This was to help ascertain whether the modes lecturers were using supported students' development of academic writing skills. The responses from both students and lecturers showed that lecturers were mostly using written modes with interactive and integrated modes only being used occasionally.

Written Mode

Responses from lecturers across colleges suggested that lecturers were mainly using written comments to give students feedback on their written assignments. Some said that comments were sometimes written on the title page (cover page) of the assignment and sometimes on a tick grid or integrated within texts. Some lecturers stated that they preferred writing comments on the last page of the assignment as a summary as stated by one lecturer,

We mainly write comments on what we see as we are marking. Sometimes, we go on writing as we mark and sometimes, we write on the last page of the assignment (L 1)

Another one also said,

I usually give feedback through comments. The title page of students' assignments is designed in such a way that it has a grid for marks allocation and comments. If there are few comments, I write them there but I also comment inside the text (L 2)

Interactive Mode

Responses from both lecturers and students suggested that lecturers were also using interactive mode to give feedback. However, lecturers only used interactive mode as a supplement to written mode when lecturers felt that students needed extra guidance. Both students and lecturers stated that interactive feedback involved engaging students in face-to-face dialogue over their performance. Lecturers claimed to have been using interactive feedback to help students understand where they went wrong and to show them how to correct their errors.

When some cases are more serious, we call them and talk to them and ask them to rewrite (L. 3).

At times, we give them one to one interaction for those we feel are still behind

Integrated Mode

Responses from students suggested that lecturers were also using integrated modes to give feedback on written assignments. This involved using two or more of the modes of feedback, for example, writing down the comments on a students' script and engaging the concerned student in a face-to-face dialogue on the written comments and sometimes demonstrating how something was supposed to be done.

At times, they will write, 'see me' and give you a one –on-one conversation (FGD 3).

4.4.4 Findings from Document Analysis of Student Teachers' Marked Assignments

Students' written assignments were also analyzed to help authenticate what was obtained in the interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students. Results of the analysis of student teachers' marked assignments also revealed that lecturers were using written mode to communicate feedback as shown below,

You must study hard and consult the lecturer before you write an assignment
(College C)

Use your own examples (College B)

Is this one sentence? Be clear in your writing (College E)

Use of interactive mode was also suggested in comments requesting students to see lecturers in person as follows,

See me please! (College A)

You seem not to understand the question. See me for guidance please! (College B)

4.4.3 Audience of Feedback

A question was also raised to find out whether feedback was being communicated to students as individuals or to them as a class. The findings showed that feedback was mainly being communicated at individual level through marking of assignments and at times through face-to-face dialogue with a particular student.

Individual Level

Responses from lecturers and students suggested that feedback on students' performance was communicated at individual level through marking of individual students' assignments. However, individualised feedback was also being provided by meeting concerned students in person. Nevertheless, this was only done in cases when the poor performance of a student called for dialogue with a lecturer.

In terms of feedback, we receive many comments. At times they will write 'see me' and give you a one-on-one attention (FGD1)

Sometimes students appear not to have understood the comments. We are open for students to come for clarity (L.1)

Whole Class Level

The responses from lecturers suggested that lecturers were also giving feedback some feedback at class level. Some lecturers explained that common errors made by students raised the need for instruction which led to classroom coaching. Sometimes, classroom coaching included cancelling of assignments and assigning of new tasks after coaching.

Sometimes we do it (feedback) at class level, we go through the question and sometimes we cancel the assignment and guide (L. 4)

Students create a learning opportunity, so we deviate. Many times, we go back to class and talk about the common mistakes (L 2).

The views of lecturers were also in agreement with those of students. Some students explained that lecturers addressed common errors made by students at classroom level. Asked to give examples of such situations, some students said,

At the end of the term each and every student was required to write an academic essay as a test and the question was compulsory. After marking, they came to class and talked about the general errors that we made and we were controlled (FGD 3).

When marking, some (lecturers) write down errors and come to class to explain the general errors (FGD 4).

4.4.4 Balance of Comments in Regard to Purpose

The study also sought to determine whether feedback comments made on student teachers' marked assignments were balanced in purpose. Balance of comments in purpose referred to comments that included praise, criticism and suggestions for improvement. Praise comments were those that were based on students' strengths whereas criticism comments were those that merely identified errors made in the text. Suggestion comments were those that provided guidance on what students needed to do to correct the errors made in the text.

4.4.4.1 Findings from Focus Group Discussions with Student Teachers

Lecturers had conflicting views with students. While lecturers across colleges claimed to have been balancing the comments, many students felt that comments were mostly bent on weaknesses without acknowledging strengths of students in many cases.

(Comments) only talk about what was wrong and not what was correct. You even get demoralised. You even lose appetite. I think they should also encourage us by recognising our efforts...because like this, it is very discouraging (FGD 3).

The way comments come... it is only about wrong things. At least they should also write about good things to motivate you. You try but only mistakes follow you (FGD 1).

Some students were also of the view that some of the comments made on their essays were not academically relevant.

Some comments are very bad. For example, a lecturer writes, 'as old as you are'. 'You must be ashamed'. You even develop negative feeling about yourself...they make you think you are very bad (FGD 4).

Some of the things lecturers write.... mmm. Which school were you at or what is this? Who was your language teacher? This makes you feel bad...You can even hate the course' (FGD 1)

4.4.4.2 Findings from Document Analysis of Student Teachers' Marked Assignments

A total of 388 comments were extracted from 100 student teachers' marked assignments and categorised into three groups; praise, criticism, and suggestions. These were then counted and

results recorded. The following is a summary of what was established from document analysis:

Table 4.13 Balance of the Purpose of Feedback Comments in Student Essays

No	Purpose of Feedback Comment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Suggestions	33	9
2	Criticism	335	86
4	Praise	20	5
	TOTAL	388	100

The above table shows that out of the 388 comments found on student essays, 86 % (n=335) were criticisms, 9% (n=33) were suggestions and 5% (n=20) were in praise of students' performance suggesting that many comments made on student essays were based on criticism.

4.4.4.3 Balance of the Focus of Feedback on Student Teachers' Marked Essays

The study also looked at the balance of the focus of feedback on student teachers' marked assignments. This was to help determine which of the skills received more attention in terms of feedback and also to help determine how helpful this kind of feedback was in regard to improving students' academic writing skills. To do this, all the comments and errors regardless of frequency were listed down and categorised according to skills in general terms and nature in specific terms. For example, a spelling error fell under language category and was defined as incorrect in specific terms. The following table displays the focus of comments, nature and frequency in student essays:

Table: 4.14 Focus of Feedback Comments, Nature and Frequency in Student Essays

Focus of Comments	Nature of Comments	Frequency
Subject Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incomplete answer - wrong answer - omission of essential steps - wrong interpretation of question - poor explanation - question not fully answered - lack of seriousness - lack of clarity - irrelevant information - insufficient example - confusion of ideas - no clear distinction 	63
Citation and Referencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incorrect punctuation - not underlining titles - wrong quotation - confusion of authors' name and town of publication - failure to underline titles - inclusion of first name for in-text citations - omission of some authors in the reference section - good acknowledgement of data sources 	74
Linguistic related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - omission of punctuation marks - wrong punctuation - incorrect spelling - capitalisation - run-on sentences - wrong word - wrong tense - lack of concord (subject Verb agreement) - poor sentence structure - use of informal language - use of contractions 	148

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of abbreviations - use of first-person pronouns 	
Writing Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poor handwriting - not neat - not leaving enough margin on the left - need to type the work - use of tippex - weak writing skills - omission of page numbers - failure to underline titles - lack of summary skills - poor essay structure - good performance - good writing skills - indentation of paragraphs - omission of paragraphs - poor development of paragraphs 	60
Introduction and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - omission of introduction - omission of conclusion - incomplete introduction - incomplete conclusion - poor introduction 	9
Plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - book lifting - copying examples 	2
Proof reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient editing - typographical errors 	4
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient evidence - limited points - poor reading skills - good research skills 	13
Cohesion and Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incorrect transitional words - incomplete thought - disjointed sentence structures - good flow of information 	15
TOTAL		388

Source: Field Data

Results in the above table show that out of the 388 total comments made on student teachers' marked essays, 148 were focused on linguistic related skills, 74 were on citation and referencing, 63 on subject content, 60 were focused on writing mechanics, 15 on cohesion and coherence, 13 on research related skills, 9 on introduction and conclusion while 4 were focused on proof reading and 2 on plagiarism.

4.4.5 Summary of Findings on Lecturers' Feedback practice on Student Teachers' Written Assignments

Question 4 sought to establish how lecturers were communicating feedback on students' written assignments. Results showed that lecturers' feedback practice mainly involved drawing students to their strengths and weaknesses. This was achieved by using marking symbols, rubrics, and comments. However, feedback was not always given in good time. Some lecturers could delay their feedback to as long as end of the term. Feedback was mainly given through written mode with interactive and integrated modes only being used occasionally. For audience, most feedback was given in the absence of students except when students' performance called for individual or classroom dialogue. In terms of purpose and focus, lecturers' feedback on student teachers' assignments was found to be short of balance.

4.5. Q.5 What Requisite Skills Do Lecturers Have for Teaching Academic Writing

Question 5 sought to establish whether lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing. The data for this question was obtained from interviews with lecturers who were involved in teaching academic writing and document analysis of students' marked assignments. The following were the findings:

4.5.1 Lecturers' Exposure to Training on Academic Writing Instruction

Lecturers were asked to state whether they had been exposed to any training aimed at building their capacity in teaching academic writing. In response to this question, all the lecturers interviewed expressed that they had not undertaken any formal training to enhance their knowledge and skills in academic writing instruction. However, efforts to engage lecturers in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities were reported in some colleges. This involved conducting seminars and workshops on academic writing related topics.

We conduct a seminar as a section where we teach, share samples, how to develop the main body, how to cite and write the reference list. When we meet

group tutors, we emphasise lay out, paragraph development and introduction (L.3)

The college has a policy driven by the department. We conduct meetings where we share knowledge of what is good writing. We engage everyone”. External facilitators also come to share on how to set probing questions, how to mark. Mostly, professors from the USA shared how to write encouraging comments and the college facilitated for this (L.4)

However, the practice was not common to all colleges. Out of the five colleges that participated in the study, only two church-run colleges were engaged in activities deliberately designed to build their capacity for academic writing instruction. Some lecturers stated that colleges worked on the assumption that every lecturer knew what was academically correct while some felt that their colleges did not have room for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities which could have created an opportunity for capacity building in academic writing instruction.

Our focus is on students and not lecturers. We take it that everyone should know what is correct (L3).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) which should help us is not prominent in our college (L 2).

We have no specific training undertaken. We have subject association at provincial level. However, we only look at basic writing skills. We need specialised training (L 5)

4.5.2 Lecturers’ Easiness in Teaching Academic Writing

As a follow-up to the response on exposure to any training on academic writing support and instruction, lecturers were also asked to state whether they were comfortable in teaching academic writing. Although all agreed that they were comfortable, their responses seemed to suggest that their knowledge base merely rested on having undertaken a course in Communication and Study Skills as undergraduate students while at the university and on being teachers of English language; with some likening academic writing instruction to teaching composition writing.

I am very comfortable because I undertook a course in Study and Communication skills at The University of Zambia (L 2).

I am very comfortable in teaching because I have interest in academic writing...for me there isn’t much difference in the way I was teaching composition (L 4).

On further probe as to whether there were no areas in which lecturers felt constrained in helping students understand academic writing concepts, four out of the five lecturers interviewed expressed discontentment.

Sometimes you may feel you are there helping students but sometimes you are not sure.... It is helpful when you sit as a group. However, we take it that everyone is comfortable, that's where we miss it (L 3).

It is not always easy. There are times when we swap because I feel some topics can be better handled by others. Sometimes we are not sure of what we teach. We even argue amongst ourselves. There is need for capacity building in this area (L 4).

4.5.3 Findings from Document Analysis of Students' Marked Scripts

Data for question 5 was also collected through document analysis of student's marked scripts. To do this, a total of 100 scripts were randomly sampled from students' course files taking 20 from each college. Student essays were analysed for lecturers' correction of errors, correctness of comments made, penalties slated and advice given. The findings raised questions on lecturers' requisite skills in citation and referencing as seen in lecturers' failure to penalise obvious errors made by students, comments made, advice given and corrections made.

4.5.3.1 Failure to Penalise Errors Related to Citation and Referencing

Many obvious errors made by students on referencing and in-text citation; including related punctuation and grammar were not penalised or corrected, thus, raising a question on lecturers' requisite skills. The following table lists down some examples of errors made by students but not attended to by lecturers:

Table: 4. 15 Examples of Student Teachers' Errors Not Penalised by Lecturers

College	Error	Nature of Error
1	1. According to Hindle (1971), stated that...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorrect grammar in citation
2	1. Edward, Sapir. (1956). said that we..... 2. Sheil, (2016). cited that, oral....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ incorrect punctuation for in-text citation ▪ use of authors first and sir names
3	1. According to A.S Hornby..... 2. Solomon G. (1976) also..... 3. According to Paul states that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of author's initials for in-text citation ▪ incorrect grammar
5	1. Fullmore, (2002). asserts that..... 2. Sapir (1921:8). Defined..... 3. Corone. (2008). cited that..... 4. Rutherford, (2009). alluded another.... 5. SNOWIC. E (2007) Is literacy enough? baltimore M.D: Brokers publishing Company 6. Francis B. R (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorrect punctuation for in-text citation ▪ Punctuation/ ▪ grammar ▪ Capitalization ▪ Use of authors' initials for in-text citation

Source: Field Work

4.5.3.2 Making Incorrect Comments and Giving Wrong Advice

Some of the correction comments made on student essays were wrong. For example, a student using APA style of referencing was advised to write both the first and sir names of

authors in full in the reference list as follows: “Write the names in full to avoid failure of identifying authors” (wrong advice given).

In another incidence, a student had wrongly put a full stop after year of publication in an in-text citation. Instead of penalising the student for wrong punctuation or making a correction, the lecturer inserted a pronoun which was incorrect.

According to Sillars (2007:23). **(he)** defines... (College 2).

According to Adler (1978:1), **(he/she)** ... (Lecturer inserts pronoun making the phrase to be grammatically wrong) (College 5).

In one script, a student who began a concluding paragraph with a phrase ‘In conclusion’ was given the following advice: “Use finally when concluding” (College: 2)

4.5.4 Lecturers’ Engagement in Academic Writing Activities

A question was also raised to establish whether lecturers were involved in any academic writing related activities as a way of improving their knowledge and skills in academic writing. Out of the five lecturers that participated in the study, only two agreed to have been involved in some academic writing activities. The rest stated that they were only involved in non-academic writing activities.

I do a lot of writing...project proposals...writing stories around what is happening and speeches during graduation (Lecturer 2)

I am involved in writing college minutes and literary analysis of syllabus novels or short stories for students studying Literature in English (Lecturer 4).

Apart from writing modules and lecture notes, I am not involved in any writing activities (lecturer 3)

4.5.5 Summary of Findings on Lecturers Requisite Skills to Effectively Teach Academic Writing

Question 5 sought to establish whether or not lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing to new students. The findings showed that lecturers had not been exposed to any formal training on academic writing instruction and support for students. Many colleges, did not have any room for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities through which lecturers could access support and training on academic writing instruction. Besides this, most lecturers who were teaching academic writing were not involved in any academic writing activities which could help them improve their knowledge and skills on

academic writing with many lacking confidences in teaching some components of academic writing to beginners.

4.6 Suggestion from Lecturers and Student Teachers on What Should be Done to Help Improve Student Teachers' Academic Writing Skills in English

Basing on the experience lecturers had in teaching academic writing and student teachers as third years in college, an open-ended question was asked to make suggestions on what participants felt should be done to improve student teachers' academic writing skills.

4.6.1 Academic Writing Support Focus

Many lecturers felt that there was need to review academic writing content in the Communication and Study Skills course to make it more focused on academic writing.

We have a shallow curriculum. We need to have a course that effectively prepare students for academic writing.

Some topics like language awareness should be reduced to an amount relevant to academic writing and concentrate more on writing to give them (students) more time to practice writing. We have to bring in simple writing tasks about themselves, their background and about the college (L 4)

What we have might not apply to all categories of students. Some students need to start at a certain level even when they are in college. There is need to bring in simple work like writing about themselves and their background in college to enable them develop basic writing skills. As it is, curriculum does not meet the capacity of all students (L 3)

We need extra topics- some topics..... we only teach them to fulfil the aspects of the curriculum. Centrally set exams give you the motivation to teach but as things are, we only focus on teaching what relates to the exam. (L2).

Students also felt that some of the skills needed were not addressed in the course. For example, a number of students suggested that there was need to learn how to use different gadgets for academic benefits and also to learn web search. Students in two church-run colleges emphasised that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be part and parcel of what is taught in academic writing.

ICT should be compulsory and should have a straight connection to academic writing as they don't usually teach (FGD 4)

We need to learn how to search for information on the web and how to change those words so that you are not caught with plagiarism (FGD 3)

Some students also felt that academic writing instruction should be focused on areas where students have serious problems.

They should put more emphasis on areas where students have more problems, for example, grammar, citation and referencing (FGD 4)

Lecturers should sit down and come-up with one thing. There is need to have a common view. Academic writing support should be a continuous process and not a once off activity (FGD 1)

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings on what colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in English. The findings have been presented according to the research questions; whether or not student teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school, what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements; support mechanisms used by colleges to enhance student teachers' development of academic writing skills, lecturers' feedback practice on student teachers' written assignments and on whether lecturers had requisite skills for teaching academic writing. The chapter ends with a summary. The next chapter discusses findings on what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers' academic writing skills in English.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

The purpose of this study was to establish what Colleges of Education (CoE) were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing (AW) skills. The previous chapter was a presentation of the findings of the study. This chapter discusses the findings of the study according to the research objectives as presented in chapter 1: to ascertain whether student teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school level (2) to investigate what colleges of education were doing to help students understand specific academic writing requirements at college level (3) to establish support mechanisms used by Colleges of Education to promote student teachers' development of academic writing skills (4) to evaluate lecturers' feedback practice on written assignments at college level (5) to ascertain whether lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing.

5.1 Student Teachers' Exposure to Writing Relevant Texts at Secondary School

Results of the document analysis of the Senior Secondary School English Language syllabus showed that the syllabus had content that could prepare secondary school learners for college writing. The inclusion in the syllabus of topics on writing different types of compositions such as reports, persuasive, descriptive and narrative along with topics on the development of secondary school learners' basic research skills such as summary, synthesizing information from several sources and planning provided for secondary school learners' exposure to foundational knowledge for college writing. These coupled with the inclusion of topics on the use of the conventional forms of the written language such as writing in paragraphs, use of link words, quotations and sentence varieties were enough to see new college entrants equipped with foundational skills for college writing. This resonated well with the Ministry of Education's desire of having secondary school learners "produce the kind of writing required of them in tertiary education and the world of work" (CDC, 2012 p. 22).

However, student teachers' variations in strengths and weaknesses in the essential features of an essay, for instance, omission of introduction and conclusions, poor development of paragraphs, writing an essay with no paragraphs and poor grammatical constructions exhibited in their first assignment in college together with difficulties faced in writing their first assignment as obtained from focus group discussions suggested limited exposure to basic

foundational knowledge and skills in writing relevant texts. These confirm an earlier study by Sidambi (2011) which showed that secondary school learners completed their senior secondary education with poor composition writing skills. The results also confirm that factors such as poor learning abilities of students, shortage of teaching and learning resources, knowledge of the teachers and poor pedagogical approaches (Coffin et al., 2003; Lennie-Irvin, 2010; Bailey, 2011) already discussed in *chapter two* of this study can indeed affect secondary school learners' foundation for academic writing at tertiary level. This is why addressing students' skills gaps in foundational knowledge should be part of academic writing support programs as suggested by Chokwe (2013). Consistent with this view, Russel intimated that the "The 'bad' writing of many students [on entry into tertiary education] becomes not merely a deficit to be remedied, but a necessary stage in students' understanding and entering..." higher learning institutions and professions (Russel in Bjork et al., 2003 p.434). This is what legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger, 1998) may entail in college communities of practice. Without this, there may not be meaningful improvement in students' academic writing skills.

Students' inadequate exposure to writing relevant texts in secondary school observed in this study also suggests that new college entrants often present themselves before two challenges that can have adverse effects on their development of academic writing skills. Firstly, they have to overcome their deficit in foundational writing skills which can become a transitional barrier that may hinder them from performing well and or derail their adjustment to new writing demands at college level. Secondly, students have to adjust to meeting the new academic writing standards demanded at tertiary level given that writing at college is different from writing at secondary school level (Flower, 1990; Heath, 1993 in Deane et al., 2008). College students need to undergo explicit instruction to master the different academic writing genres in both their standard and non-standard forms (Klimova, 2013), know what assignments require, understand the meaning of concepts such as coherence and cohesion (Gursharan, 2017) and their use in writing as discussed in chapter two of this study. Without this, students may have difficulties in writing their academic papers. This is why knowledge of academic writing conventions need not be taken to be part of '*common sense knowledge*' (Coffin et al. 2003) that students should possess upon entry into college. As suggested by Kruse (2003) "These must be taught as they are inherently connected to the traditions, forms of thinking, modes of communication and research methods of the academic world" (cited in Bjork et al., 2003 p.19). The failure to do so, may deprive students of the essential knowledge

and skills needed to attain proficiency in academic writing and in their future practice as graduates from college.

Although this study did not look at the reasons why student teachers were not adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school, students' deficit in the reviewed texts varied in seriousness with some being moderate and easy to address and others being very serious and calling for serious intervention in foundational skills. For instance, students in the highest performing category exhibited problems in capitalisation, punctuation, spellings and repetition while those in the average performing category exhibited problems of incorrect spellings and word forms, lack of subject verb agreement, use of word contractions, omission of punctuation, poor argumentation and incorrect punctuations. For those in the low performing category, errors ranged from omission of introduction and conclusion, poor sentence construction, use of wrong words and verb forms, construction of run-on sentences, use of abbreviations, omission of punctuation marks, use of incorrect spellings, use of informal language, incorrect use of transitional words and capitalisation. The results confirm that students admitted into colleges have different areas of need for help and may include those that need help in a developmental course (Bean, 2011). This is why, addressing students' deficit in basic writing skills prior to implementing academic writing instruction can be critical to ensuring that they have requisite academic writing skills and may constitute what giving students access to competence (Wenger, 1998) in colleges may entail. Without this, students can be deprived of foundational knowledge and depending on the seriousness of the problems, some may fail to adjust and may end up completing their training with little or no improvement in academic writing.

While academic writing support should be preceded by needs assessment to help identify students' critical needs for support as suggested by Hyland (1996), lecturers in this study were not utilizing results of the needs assessments conducted on students' entry into college to inform academic writing support content. The assessment was merely being done for formality. In teaching academic writing to new students, lecturers were simply following topics as stipulated in the Communication and Study Skills Course. This may explain why some were of the view that academic writing support was not tailored to the needs of students. In the words of Gosling (2003), it can be argued that colleges treated academic writing course content as something '*sacrosanct*' much to the disadvantage of students whose needs could not be met with the existing content as seen in the seriousness of some of weaknesses exhibited by students in the essay writing test in their final year in college. The

failure by college to modify academic writing content embedded in the Communication and Study Skills course to suit the needs of students can be taken to be a denial of the legitimacy that new students should be accorded in line with the Community of Practice model of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and a violation of the tenets of teaching that demand that learning starts from where students are (Gray, & Klapper in Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003).

The failure by colleges to utilize diagnostic assessment results of students' writing abilities on entry into college to inform academic writing content can hinder students from making a smooth transition from secondary school writing to college writing. This may in part explain why some seemed to have gone through their three-year training without making much progress in their writing abilities. In this study, most of the problems exhibited in the essay writing test by student teachers, for instance, incorrect use of transitions between paragraphs, incorrect spellings and punctuation, poor development of paragraphs and the omission of critical components of an essay appeared to have originated from secondary school and persisted through to their third and final year in college. Given that the study was conducted a few months before students' graduation, it was probable that those students graduated with the same problems and their problems were likely to be replicated in different ways in their professional life as teachers of English. These results clearly demonstrate that inadequate exposure and engagement of students to writing relevant texts at secondary school can have far reaching consequences (Chokwe, 2013) that can also affect the quality of outputs from colleges (MoE, 2013) if not addressed. Therefore, it may be imperative to identify and address students' limitations in foundational writing skills on their entry into college.

5.2 What Colleges of Education were Doing to Make Students Understand Specific Academic Writing Requirements at College Level

Orientation of students in academic writing was found to be the first step that colleges were taking to introduce students to what is required in writing in college. This was a good practice as it helped lecturers to give students access to the commonly held beliefs (Wenger, 1998) on writing in college. By giving students guidelines on academic writing, colleges were working towards initiating students into what is known of expert practices (Hyland, 1996) while unveiling to them what writing in higher education demands (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003). The guidelines helped lecturers make explicit (Palmer et al., 2014) what they were expecting students to do in academic writing and facilitated lecturers' and students' common

understanding of academic writing practice (Fulwiler, 2002) in college. This is critical to improving student's academic writing skills (Gurel Cennetkusu, 2017). In other words, orientation was the means through which colleges were giving new students access to academic writing practice thereby, working towards integrating them into an academic community as advanced in the Community of Practice theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

However, the lack of supervision and guidance after orientation and the failure of lecturers to take responsibility of addressing problems encountered by students as reported by students suggested that there was no collaboration between lecturers. It may also mean that academic writing support for students was not taken to be a joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998) that calls for collaboration in colleges. This was detrimental to students' development of academic writing skills. While academic writing instruction may be a responsibility of selected lecturers who in this study were mostly language specialists, reinforcement and refinement of what is taught should be the responsibility of all lecturers across disciplines. This is because it is through the tasks that they assign and the feedback they provide on the assigned tasks that students begin to make sense of what is learnt and its practical application in various contexts. It is therefore important to understand that students begin to align themselves to the practice of their subject areas through collaboration and engagement with their lecturers as experts (Wenger, 1998). Without this, orientation of students may not be expected to yield positive results.

The conflicting views of lecturers on academic writing conventions reported in this study could be a result of not having access to the commonly held beliefs (Fulwiler, 2002) on academic writing in colleges. The fact that subject areas and disciplines use different genres and discourses to construct knowledge (Lea & Street, 1998), programs that enhance collaboration and engagement (Wenger, 1991) between lecturers both within and across subject areas and disciplines and academic writing instructors need not be an option as they are critical to improving students' academic writing skills. In this study, collaboration between lecturers was lacking and this could be the reason why there was little supervision and guidance after orientation and could also explain why lecturers were failing to take responsibility to address specific academic writing needs of students. As proposed in the Community of Practice model of learning, there must be mutual engagement between lecturers involved in academic writing instruction and the ones teaching other subjects to

ensure that there is access to “their actions, negotiations and enterprise, and to the repertoire in use” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 100). Without this, the efforts made can be futile.

The teaching of Communication and Study Skills was found to be the main strategy through which colleges ensured that students understood specific academic writing requirements in Colleges of Education (CoE). Given that teaching Communication and Study Skills is part of academic writing support strategies used in higher institutions of learning (De Chazal, 2014) and that formal instructions are an essential aspect of academic writing support (Njekwe-Excel (2014), it can be argued that CoE were in this way working towards building their own practice in relation to the whole system of academia (Wenger, 1998). However, priority in this study appeared to have been given to assessing students than to enhancing their development of academic writing skills. Ideally, assignment of tasks to new comers should come after addressing their’ critical writing needs (Manuel & Carter, 2016; Chokwe 2013; Klimova, 2013; Gursharan, 2017). Thus, the giving of assignments to students in the first week of their entry into college as reported in this study may be seen to be ill timed even if the due date is extended. This is because, students may not at this time be ready to face the challenges that come with emotional adjustment in a new academic environment. Rather than focus on assessment, lecturers should first work on the emotional states of the students by engaging them in activities that can help calm their anxiety, stimulate their confidence and raise their motivation to learn (Fry, Kitteridge & Marshall, 2003). This is one way through which students can be afforded legitimacy as new comers (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The difficulties faced by students in capturing information during orientation lessons and in writing their first assignments and the feeling of being intimidated reported in this study may suggest that students were still strangers to their lecturers and their new academic environment. In asking for proper orientation, therefore, students seemed to be appealing for legitimacy through “lessened intensity, lessened risk, and special assistance, less cost of error, close supervision or less production pressure” (Wenger, 1998). The failure to do so may lead to students having challenges in making academic writing culture of their own (Gavalek & Gong, 2012). However, legitimacy can only work well when it is coupled with formation of habits such as “flexibility, openness, responsibility, creativity, persistence, curiosity and metacognition” (Stanley, 2020 p. 99) through engagement (Wenger, 1998). Without this, students’ journey to full membership and autonomy as regards proficiency can be slow.

Although teaching writing provides for the use of different approaches (Pramila, 2016), in this study, lectures were mainly using lecture method. This is at variant with the ideals of the Community of Practice where learning does not depend on the transmission of facts on a master apprentice relationship. Instead, CoP demands that students get immersed in the practice and not just receive or absorb information (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The constant use of lecture method by lecturers in this study seemed to have denied students opportunities to reflect and actively participate in the construction of their own understanding of academic writing (Herrington & Oliver, 1995). This may explain why many students appeared to be facing many challenges despite being subjected to formal instruction. The different ways through which effective learning takes place (Honey & Mumford, 1982) seemed to have been overlooked by colleges. On the contrary, meeting students' individual learning needs demands flexibility in approach, method and techniques as suggested by Pramila (2016). This is why, increased participation of learners in the learning process advocated by the Community of Practice theory may be critical to optimizing students' academic writing skills.

It appeared that student's exposure to formal instruction on academic writing was not coupled with coaching and scaffolding as expressed by students and as evidenced in students' failure to translate theory into practice in their essay writing test. These results reflect what may happen when students have limited practice and engagement (Wenger, 1998; Mutwarasibo, 2013) on academic writing practice and may explain why students' grasp of concepts appeared to be low even with lengthy explanations as reported by lecturers in this study. On the contrary, students' ability to write well is dependent on their instructors' willingness to explain and demonstrate the essential skills for academic writing (Bell Nollan, 2015). This is also backed by Murray & Moore (2006) who also emphasised that "No amount of theorising and intellectualising of writing is going to make more successful writing patterns unless accompanied by an undertaking to engage in practical strategies and to plan effective writing tactics" (p.18). The results confirm that academic writing instruction should include modelling of processes by lecturers as experts (Herrington & Oliver, 1995) failure to which there can be no meaningful improvement in students' writing abilities as was the case in this study.

The need for an extended period of teaching of academic writing from year one to year three as suggested by many students and lecturers and also attested to by the poor academic writing abilities of some of students in the essay writing test just a few months into graduation may be an indication of the seriousness of the problem and an appeal for an extended period of

legitimacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to give students enough time to master the required skills. Therefore, consideration needs to be made on what colleges can do to give students enough time to master the skills.

Although evaluating the usefulness of individual components of academic writing content embedded in the Communication and Study skills course was not in the interest of this study, it appeared that topics included were not effectively addressing the needs of students as writers at tertiary level. Some of the skills required for effective academic writing, for instance, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its related components were not provided for in the content in all colleges visited. Essentially, academic writing support program for students should focus on topics aimed at building students' (1) content (2) context (3) language system and (4) writing process knowledge since this is what they need to write effectively (Tribble, 1996). However, the choice of academic writing content embedded in the Communication and Study Skills course seemed not to have been based on these four areas of knowledge that students need to write effectively. Therefore, it may be necessary to systematically review the course to ensure that it addresses all the critical areas students need to write effectively. This is what giving students access to the practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) may entail in academic writing. It is only then that students can be expected to improve their writing skills.

Students' engagement in academic writing activities appeared to be restricted. Apart from a few that were engaged in research clubs in some colleges, most students were only writing for assessment. This may suggest that students were denied opportunities to write for learning as proposed by Harmer (2015). These results are at variance with researchers such as Smith (2008), Jimenez-Silva & Olson (2012), Wilmot & Lotz-Sistka (2015) and Manuel & Carter (2016) who advocate for increased practice in writing. Given that academic writing is a kind of culture and cultures are developed through experience, students needed not only receive instructions in particular academic writing practices, but also have a personal experience of writing target texts and making observations from them as advanced by Gavalek & Gong (2012). Practice as part of the learning process cannot not only facilitate students' grasp of concepts, but also enhance their alignment to the Community of Practice which in this case is academia in general and colleges in particular. It is through this that students can eventually become experts (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in writing. As noted by Lennie-Irvin (2010), "Students' writing is always embedded within relationships around teaching and learning and these relationships influence the extent to which students come to write successfully in higher

education” (p.10). This shows how critical it may be for colleges to engage students in writing activities deliberately designed for learning (Harmer, 2015) and not always for assessment purposes.

The encouragement of students to read extensively as reported in this study is a good practice for indeed extensive reading helps one to become a better writer (Publishing, 2012). However, mere encouragement may not do much unless students have access to appropriate literature. In this study, lecturers did not state how they ensured that students’ reading materials were those that could promote their AW development. Although a mention was made that some colleges were encouraging lecturers to share their published research materials with students, this can be restrictive and depending on the topics, the benefits can be minimal as the material may not be suitable for the students at this level. However, students may need guidance on how they can access appropriate literature beyond lecturers’ publications. This is why teaching students on how to locate materials that promote their academic writing development (Malia, 2017) should form part of student engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1991) for academic writing support that is offered to students in colleges.

It is clear from the findings that colleges were not making any effort to systematically help student teachers practice comprehensive reading as recommended by Bean (2011). Given that successful academic writing includes ability to read complex texts (Lennie-Irvin, 2010) which new college entrants may not have practiced before (Bean, 2011; Scholtz, 2016), the failure to guide or expose them to appropriate reading materials and styles can be detrimental to their development of research skills (Hyland, 2019). This can inhibit students’ effectiveness in academic writing (Bean, 2011) for indeed, learning to read for multiple purposes is essential at college level (Marulanda & Martinez, 2017). Besides, research has shown that adopting and teaching the different academic reading strategies can enhance students’ development of critical thinking, vocabulary development and ability to select appropriate writing styles (Krashen, 1997) as discussed in chapter 2 of this study. In view of this, the need to integrate the teaching of academic writing with reading proposed by Bazerman et. al. (2017) and to adopt teaching approaches that make use of the relationship that exist between the two skills as suggested by the National Research Council of the National Academies (2012) can be critical to improving student teachers’ academic writing skills.

Results of the analysis of student teachers' performance in the essay test written as a follow-up to what Colleges of Education were doing to make student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements showed that students' writing ability in their final year in college was satisfactory with students having an average performance of 22.8 out of 40 marks across colleges. However, the average performance of 22.87 out of 40 marks of students in the essay writing test across colleges shows that students' writing abilities in their final year in college were still low and may suggest that interventions put in place were not effectively addressing their academic writing needs. One of the reasons for this could be that the approach and methods employed in the teaching of academic writing could not give students opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement to effectively master the skills (Herrington & Oliver, 1995). The failure of lecturers to model the skills or provide students with models to help them grasp concepts such as cohesion and coherence reported in this study can be a great hindrance to students' mastery of academic writing skills. This is why the need for demonstration, scaffolding and support advanced by Manuel & Carter (2016) should be upheld.

Quantitatively, there appeared to be no difference in students' academic writing abilities among the five colleges with individual college results of the Kruskal-Wallis independent test not showing any statistically significant difference in students' performance in the essay writing test $\chi^2(4) = 5.953$, $p = 0.203$. This may suggest that colleges were facing similar problems. The minimal difference in performance found in Colleges D and E shown in fig. 4.5 (*c.f. chapter 4*) may be a result of different factors that may have given these colleges some advantages over others. One of the reasons for the higher spread of abilities in college D may be a result of the college having an emphasis on linguistic related skills in their academic writing as seen in the title of the course and in its content. The other could be the existence of a research club which gave some students opportunities to engage in academic writing activities besides the usual college assignments, thus, increasing their engagement (Wenger, 1998) and exposure to academic writing activities. The higher spread of abilities in college E may be a result of its urban location and public status which increases the diversity of students enrolled. The low spread of abilities in college C can be attributed to its rural location as such localities tend to attract students from surrounding rural communities and families of similar economic status and often with limited access to well-resourced schools.

Generally, there appeared to be some improvement in the quality and structure of essays by comparison with those written on their entry into college. Although the analysis of essays written on entry and in students' final year was not done correspondingly for each, student teachers' increased awareness of the essential aspects of an academic essay; introduction, main body along with conclusion, discussion of one point per paragraph, indentation of paragraphs and support of arguments with examples were clearly demonstrated by students across colleges. Nevertheless, thoroughness, accuracy and clarity of thought and expression seemed to be a problem to many especially with those with poor linguistic skills. Despite being aware of the essential aspects of academic essay, students could not exhibit full knowledge, for instance, of what constitutes an introduction and conclusion and the proper use of cohesive devices. In many cases, students would only include one or two aspects of, for instance, an introduction leaving out other important aspects such as outlining how the essay is structured and defining key terms. One of the reasons could be limited exposure (Herrington & Oliver, 1995) to critical knowledge areas such as content, context, language system and writing process as suggested by Tribble (1996). Another could be denial of access to all the dimensions of the practice (Wenger, 1998) that can help them master new knowledge and skills (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Many essays written by students in their final year were full of linguistic related problems that found expression in illogical presentation and development of arguments, choppy and run-on sentences, incorrect spellings and punctuation, poor paragraph development, incoherent and or incomprehensible ideas (Refer to Appendix: 2). These findings are in confirmation of the view that linguistic competence is required for one to write effectively (Tribble, 1996; Moll, 2000) and may suggest that students' linguistic problems was one of the major hindrances to the improvement of academic writing skills in Colleges of Education. It is for this reason that linguistic related instruction should form part of academic writing support (Coffin et al. 2003; Gillete, Hammond & Martala, 2009; Andrew & Smith, 2011; Ofte, 2014) offered to students in colleges. Without this, students may have challenges in attaining proficiency in academic writing and may end up graduating with minimal improvement in their academic writing abilities as was anticipated in the case of this study.

The qualitative analysis of individual students' test essays showed some differences in the quality and length of essays written by students from different colleges. The essays written by many students from Colleges A, D (church-run) and E (public college) appeared to be better

in quality and length compared to those written by many students from other colleges. A close examination of the possible reasons for this showed that college A had supplementary linguistic components deliberately designed to help improve student teachers' academic writing skills. College D had also shown its biasness towards language related components by embedding academic writing instruction in a course called "*Language and Communication Skills*". Besides, colleges A and D were church-run and as such, students had higher chances of getting individual attention and having access to available resources due to their smaller population compared to public colleges. What was interesting was that the highest and lowest scores came from a public college (college E) which had three deaf students in the sample out of whom were the two with the lowest scores and one whose essay could barely be comprehended. Unlike the two church run colleges whose uniqueness in the area of language was clearly seen and can be attributed to the good performance of students in terms of quality, nothing appeared to be unique about college E apart from its urban location. It then stands that improvement in the quality of essays for college E could as well be attributed to its urban location as colleges located in urban areas tend to attract students who could have had exposure to well-resourced schools and families in regard to development of their linguistic skills.

However, most weaknesses observed in essays written by students in their final year of training were common across colleges. For instance, many could not clearly demonstrate awareness of the rhetorical conventions of a discussion text which was the type they were tested on. They also appeared not to be aware of the different styles of presenting both sides of argument in a discussion (Oshima & Hogue, 2006) as all the 94 essays written by students a few months before their graduation had a similar organisation pattern. One of the reasons could be lack of formal instruction, engagement and practice (Herrington & Oliver, 1995) in writing different texts. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), "access to practice rather than instruction..." is critical to learning (p.85). In this study, however, lecturers admitted that no attention was being given to genre conventions and to the different styles of writing. Similarly, grammar which seemed to be one of the major problems students were facing was in most cases not receiving particular attention. Apart from helping students to see their linguistic errors, lecturers appeared not to have been doing much to help students correct their errors or to reinforce their strengths when grading their work. This was detrimental to students' development of their academic writing skills and may be taken to be a denial of access to the practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Given that the need to improve writing skills is not only important for students' immediate academic achievement but also for their future professional practice and career development, the continued struggle of some student teachers in basic writing skills such as sentence construction, use of transitions, spellings, punctuation and paragraph development just a few months into their graduation should be of concern to educationists. These results are not in conformity with the Outcome Based Education (OBE) desired by the Ministry of Education in Zambia (CDC, 2013) and may suggest that education was failing in its role of building student teachers' capacity for the provision of quality education (MOE, 1996) since "the quality of an education system depends heavily on the quality of its teachers" (MOE, 1996 p. 107). Therefore, it is critical that colleges devise interventions that ensures that student teachers' limitations are addressed before graduating as failure to do so may affect education outcomes of trainee teachers.

The poor academic writing abilities exhibited by some students in their final year in college may have nothing to do with AW writing support in colleges but their calibre as secondary school graduates. Poor knowledge of English leading to the construction of incomprehensible sentences and incoherent ideas seen in this study may be way beyond what academic writing support in college can address due to limited time and content. Given the status English occupies not only in education but also in the public service (Wakumelo, 2013) and the fact that students who took part in this study were being prepared to teach English language, these results should challenge the modalities taken in the admission of students into college. It should not be overlooked that Zambia advocates for an Outcome Based Education (OBE) where the quality of graduates is determined by the quality of inputs (MoE, 2013). The previous practice of assessing the calibre of students on admission mentioned in this study in some colleges but now discarded may need to be revived to save the image of the education sector, particularly, Colleges of Education. The failure to do so may compromise the standards of education not only at college level but also at secondary and primary school levels (MoE, 2013) and conversely the entire education system.

5.3 Support Mechanisms Used to Promote Student Teachers' Development of Academic Writing Skills

Institutional support materials such as internet access, classroom and library space and computer labs provided by colleges to students were a good initiative and in support of an Outcome-Based Education (CDC, 2013) as they constituted some of the critical inputs that

define the quality of education desirable in Zambia. Through this, colleges were working towards fulfilling the mandate of setting an environment appropriate for the pursuit of learning and research and for the acquisition of higher education as stipulated in Article No. 2. of the Higher Education Act of 2013 to which they are a part. This is also supportive of learning desirable in a Community of Practice as it helped students have access to resources needed by academic writers. However, provision of internet and library space without guidance on how students can maximize their benefits in regard to academic writing may be of little help in improving students' academic writing skills. In this study, the use of internet and its related components such as web search, hyperlinks and search engines (Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013) can be taken to be part of the College of Education Community of Practice's shared repertoire (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that should be availed to student teachers as new members. However, this did not form part of AW support for them. Whether by choice or oversight, these components were obviously part of the students' critical AW needs considering that online search engines provided an alternative to college libraries most of which were said to have outdated books in stock. In fact, students' access to the internet was a means to their access to a wide range of sources needed to accomplish assigned tasks.

However, student teachers' access to internet was perceived to be more of a distractor than a benefit to them. This could have resulted from lack of knowledge and skills needed to locate, analyse and use the information to accomplish assigned tasks. As pointed by Pilgrim & Martinez (2013), it is the responsibility of lecturers to guide students on how to find reliable information on line, and to keep them safe from distractive vices that come with internet access. This is what is desirable in a Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In fact, the shortage of library space and lack of books with latest information on subjects reported in this study needed not be a problem if students were effectively guided on the use of the internet and its related benefits in research.

Formation of research clubs can be said to be one way through which colleges created an opportunity for students' active participation and engagement with fellow students and with lecturers as experts, thereby, promoting a shared learning (Wenger, 1998). Besides, being members of research clubs helped students have room for collaboration with lecturers and engagement in AW practice which can facilitate their alignment to the practice of the academic community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2010). However, the problem is that clubs are joined on interest and can only take a small number of students living the majority

with no support. Apart from this, the clubs were not prominent in all colleges, for instance, out of the five colleges that took part in the study, only two had research clubs that were active. Therefore, colleges may need to consider support programs that are accommodative of all categories of students otherwise, clubs alone may have little impact in improving academic writing skills of many students who may not be willing to participate in them.

Introduction of clubs such as Magazine article writing as a way of improving students' AW skills may sound odd and misplaced. However, this can be taken to be one of the ways through which colleges were trying to strengthen students' basic foundation skills of writing which appeared to be lacking as seen in Question 1 of this study. Magazine and cycle writing were said to have been introduced for the purpose of helping develop students' self-expression. This is where students' development of linguistic and other mechanical skills such as spellings and punctuation (Horkof, 2015) all of which are critical to effective writing are embedded. As seen in some of the problems exhibited by students in their essay writing in their final year in college, some students need assistance in basic foundational skills of writing (Bean, 2011). Therefore, introduction of clubs aimed at building students' basic writing skills can be taken to be one of the strategies colleges were using to enhance student teachers' development of AW skills for writing is learnt by writing (Smith, 2008; Wilmot & Lotz-Sisitka, 2015; Manuel & Carter, 2016). It can also be another way of giving students legitimacy and of engaging them (Wenger, 1998) as new comers in colleges as communities of practice.

However, successful contribution of students' club membership in the development of academic writing skills may depend on the support of lecturers as experts (Scholtz, 2016, p.39). In this study, lecturers did not explain what they were doing to ensure that students' membership in these clubs attain its end. Besides, membership in such clubs may normally attract those that are already capable of writing at acceptable standards than the ones that need support in foundational skills. In this regard, there may be need to consider adopting programs that are tailored to students' needs and are open to all students.

Provision of learner support materials such as modules are a good practice as these acts as back-up to what is learnt in class. However, learner support materials can only be useful when their provision is coupled with appropriate pedagogical practices such as scaffolding and modelling (Lilora, 2015; Manuel & Carter, 2016). This is because, more than possessing knowledge, effective writing requires that students have procedural knowhow as suggested

by Samsudin (2015) and O'Sullivan & Cleary (2014). Thus, the need for modelling and provision of samples expressed by students in this study should not be underestimated. It could be the reason why they were still having problems in aspects such as argumentation and paragraph development (Manuel & Carter 2016; Jurecic, 2006; O'Neill & Gravois, 2014; de Chazal, 2014) even at third year in college. If lecturers were to systematically evaluate their own teaching approach, they may realize that students' failure to grasp the concepts were partly a result of lecturers' failure to meaningfully engage them in the learning process. This is why adopting approaches such as the four classroom practices proposed by Hyland (2008) and the model for academic writing pedagogy suitable for higher education advanced by Coffin et al., (2003) can yield more positive results in that they are student centered and that students are taken through a practical and natural learning process.

5.3 Lecturers' Feedback Practice on Students Written Assignments

Results of the study showed that lecturers' feedback practice generally involved drawing students to their weaknesses and strengths using conventional marking codes each of which can be supportive of student learning in its own way, for example, the use of analytic rubrics to provide feedback facilitated grading consistency and fair assessment of all students (Hyland, 2019), thus, promoting students' reflection on their performance in different aspects of (Chowdhury, 2019) AW. However, inconsistency was noted in the use of analytic rubrics. Out of the 100 scripts revealed, 28 of them only showed a grade without providing any further information on how particular grades were arrived at. Although the use of holistic rubrics in the 28 scripts forms an alternative to how grading can be done on students' work (Hyland, 2019), it may have little impact on improving students' AW skills (Earl 2003) and may defeat the purpose of feedback as a teaching/learning strategy. This may explain why some students felt discontented at being awarded marks that denied them information on how particular grades were obtained in particular assignments. Therefore, consistent use of analytic rubrics in feedback may be necessary in the grading of students works if the purpose is to support their development of academic writing skills.

Minimal marking as a means of giving feedback can be taken to be a form of engagement and participation (Wenger, 1998) that gave students an opportunity to negotiate their competence (Farnsworth, Kleanhous & Wenger Trayner, 2016) in the academic writing practice of college communities. It facilitated student teachers' reflection on their marked assignments as defined by marking codes (Harmer, 2015). This was good as it is one of the means through

which students can begin to align themselves to the community of experts (Wenger, 1998) in colleges. It can also help lecturers to provide substantial comments on particular pieces of work, thus, unveiling academic writing practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) to students as new comers in academia.

However, the use of minimal marking to provide feedback without ensuring that students understand the meaning of the codes as reported in this study can make feedback irrelevant (Harmer, 2015). Although it is often assumed that students understand the meanings of marking codes from secondary school experience, the inadequate exposure to essential aspects of writing in secondary school and the deficit in knowledge that often characterize new entrants (*cf. chapter 2*) should be reason enough for lecturers to try if not to teach the meaning of the common codes as new knowledge, at least, as revision on what students may have learnt but forgotten. The failure to do so may be a denial of access of students to a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) of academic writing conventions in colleges as communities of practice where they are members. This can be detrimental to student learning and it may render lecturers' feedback inefficient.

In as much as minimal marking is good in regard to students' engagement and participation in their learning (Harmer, 2015), its impact on improving student teachers' academic writing skills may be limited on account that marking codes can only provide information on surface errors of the text (Hyland, 2019). This cannot only deprive students of information on rhetorical and communicative aspects of texts but can also inhibit lecturers from getting information needed to inform their future lectures as suggested by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006). Nevertheless, minimal marking can be complemented by making comprehensive written comments (Hyland, 2019) integrated within or placed at the end of the text. This can help lecturers make feedback information on the rhetorical and communicative features of target texts more explicit (Palmer et al., 2014) and therefore, more efficient in improving students' academic writing skills.

However, complementing minimal marking with comprehensive comments can only be effective if the comments are clear and specific as suggested by Gurel Cennetkusu (2017) who noted that "the more details and clearer the feedback is, the easier it is for the students to figure out how they are supposed to correct their mistakes and to learn how to write better in the second language" (p.316). Thus, the lack of clarity of some of the comments made by lecturers on marked assignments as reported by students in this study can be a hindrance to

the development of students' academic writing skills. Therefore, it may be necessary to ensure that the comments made are clear and specific to help students understand what is expected of them. It is only then that feedback can serve its purpose.

Although attempts were made to use different modes of feedback which created opportunities for lecturers to clarify students' misconceptions, make elaborations, highlight issues that need attention, make suggestions and corrections and give encouragement to students, particular modes of feedback can only be effective in as far as they are able to satisfy students' learning needs. In this study, lecturers were mostly using the written mode with integrated feedback involving dialogue and demonstration only being used sparingly. However, studies have shown that written comments alone may not be effective (Schillings et al., 2018) especially with students that are struggling with AW development. This may however, depend on how informative the comments are. The mere cancellation of assignments and reassignment of the task without giving students any guidance on what to do or helping students understand how and why their work is incorrect as was mostly the case in this study may be frustrating and can inhibit students' appreciation of feedback (Coffin et al., 2003). On the contrary, engaging students in a dialogue (Harmer, 2015; Twagirimana 2017; William & Black in Schillings et.al, 2018) on the written comments can help turn feedback into a learning tool that can help students improve their AW skills. Therefore, integrated feedback involving dialogue and demonstration although used at a small scale could be more effective in that it created opportunities for students to interact with their lecturers and learn from them as experts (Larson & Marsh, 2005) in the light of the Community of Practice ideals.

Focusing feedback on one skill at the expense of other critical features of AW can be detrimental to students' development of AW skills. Having 148 out of 388 comments focused on linguistic related skills compared to 15 on cohesion and coherence, 13 on research and 9 on introduction and conclusion combined suggested that there was more focus on linguistic skills than any other skills. These findings replicate previous studies such as Hyland (1996), Nthiga (2010) and Malia (2017) which also recorded that most feedback comments made by lecturers are linguistic related. This kind of feedback appears to rest on Larsen-Freeman's (2003) definition which seemingly portrays linguistics as the sole focus of feedback. While linguistic competence is demanded and is indeed one of the most critical skills that is more appreciated by second language learners (Hyland, 1996), it cannot be the sole focus of academic writing support. Comments on areas such as referencing, organization and content (Hyland, 2019) are within the students' level of development (Gibson & Simpson, 2004) and

thus, overlooking their importance may be a cause of failure for students' improvement in AW. Ironically in this study, grammar which appeared to have been receiving more attention on feedback appeared to be the main obstacle to students' academic writing skills as discussed in question 1 above. One of the reasons could be lack of engagement (Herrington & Oliver, 1995) of students on the problems that they were facing. Apart from helping students to identify their weakness, lecturers were not doing much to guide students on what they could do to address their problems. Another reason could be that clarity of focus (CDC, 2013) was lacking in addressing the critical academic writing problems of student teachers. This is contrary to the ideals of an Out Come Based Education curriculum advanced in Zambia's Educational System.

Being one of the strategies for providing academic writing support, feedback should indeed attend to all essential aspects of the target work (Hyland, 1996; Hyland, 2019). In this study, this may explain why students were questioning the rationale behind putting emphasis on, for instance, the inclusion of introduction but not allocating any marks or making any comments on the same. This may imply that students found feedback to be motivational and can suggest that failure to provide informative feedback on some critical elements of academic writing such as introduction and conclusion inhibited students from reflecting on their weaknesses in these areas thereby making them remain behind in academic writing development. These results are in confirmation of Hyland's (1996) view that "Many students see their teachers' feedback as crucial to their improvement as writers" (p.178). This is a confirmation that care must be taken to ensure that feedback given on students' written work carries information on all critical aspects of the task to enhance students' improvement (Hyland, 2019) in academic writing.

In terms of purpose, lecturers' feedback comments on students' written assignments appeared to be biased towards criticism as evident in the results of the analysis of marked essays. While it is important to make students understand their areas of weakness in AW, the 86 % (n=335) criticisms compared to 9% (n=33) suggestions and 5% (n=20) in praise of students' efforts out of the 388 comments was way too high and can indeed be demotivating (Harmer, 2015) as was stated by the students in this study. Similarly, comments that attack a students' age and academic background as reported by students, although not seen in any of the reviewed texts can cause apprehension and frustration (William, 2003 in Angel & Garcia, 2017) and cannot support learning (Brookhart, 2008). Therefore, consideration must be made to ensure that feedback given takes equal weight on criticism, suggestions and praise if

feedback is to make any meaningful contribution to students' improvement and learning of academic writing.

Although peer feedback is known to be effective in learning, its use appeared not to be appreciated in all the colleges visited in this study. While it could be true that peer feedback was not being used on account of students not trusting one another, the problem could be with lecturers' failure to adopt it as a pedagogical strategy (Adams, 2011) that can be part of the teaching process (Wilson & Post in Gere, 2019). Peer feedback can be taken to be one of the cultural practices that can be mastered through participation and engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, the problem is that peer feedback is embedded in student centred approaches, for instance, process approach which lecturers were not using in this study. This can in part explain why students could not trust their peers for correction. While it is true that peers can error in their feedback (Gere, 2019), it is also true that peer feedback can help students understand things better than they would from lecturers (Schillings et al., 2018). Thus, it is incumbent upon lecturers to ensure that peer feedback is integrated in the teaching process. As suggested by Mariconda & Williamson (2015), students need scaffolding to understand and apply concepts. This can be achieved by according students' opportunities for participation and engagement in the learning process, for instance, giving students some group work on given topics and asking them to make comments on the work done by their fellow students in other groups (Wenger, 1998; O'sullivan and Clearly 2014). When this is done under the guidance of lecturers, students can begin to see how the input of their fellow students can help them to improve their work and so begin to appreciate peer feedback. Eventually, peer feedback can be embraced as a learning tool by all students.

On lecturers having conflicting views on AW conventions, it must be known that this cannot be fully avoided on account that the manner in which feedback is provided and expressed is determined by lecturer's disciplinary backgrounds, personal interests and values (Coffin et al., 2003). This is more so when there is no collaboration between lecturers across disciplines. In this study, Communication and Study Skills course; the major driver of AW support in colleges was mainly taught by language specialists whose teaching appeared not to be in liaison with lecturers from other disciplines (Coffin et al., 2003). This in itself attests to the idea that conflicting views cannot be avoided. While it is painful for students to meet resistance and rejection of competence in some contexts (Farnsworth, Kleanhous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016) as the case was in this study, it should be understood that the differences in understanding may be a result of the boundaries that students cross from one subject area into

another where the practice may be different from what is learnt in academic writing support program. Although some students' viewed language lecturers to be more consistent and preferable for AW instruction, their consistency may not be a result of having a common understanding of academic writing conventions as members of the same college community but of shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) as members of the same subject community. This may entail that conflicting views experienced by students may be in part a result of belonging to different communities of practice within the larger community of academia in colleges.

However, conflicting views can be lessened if academic writing support is taken to be a joint enterprise where there is mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998) of lecturers for a common understanding of AW conventions. The differences in focus of feedback between language lecturers and those from other subject areas observed in this study may be a result of not having a shared repertoire. In fact, it should be realised that academic practice is rooted in particular communities of practice (Graham, 2018) marked by boundaries that define the repertoire in use. The fact that academic writing was being taught by language lecturers who had not received any formal training on academic writing instruction as will be discussed in question five (5) of this study, conflicting views can only be avoided when colleges create an environment that provides for lecturers' interaction on matters related to academic writing support for students. Bringing lecturers together and utilizing their different expertise can make colleges develop the most appropriate content and mode of teaching and learning of academic writing (Coffin et al., 2003) which can help address the interests of all disciplines. Without this, conflicting views on what is acceptable and what is not cannot be avoided.

Seminars, workshops and other Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities that could provide opportunities for mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998) within and across subject areas were found not to be operational in most colleges. This deprived lecturers of a forum for interaction, establishment of norms, expectations and relationships (Smith, Hayes, & Shea 2017) for a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) as expected in a Community of Practice. Out of the five colleges that took part in this study, only one reported having been engaged in such activities. However, it should be understood that academic writing support is a joint enterprise whose success is dependent on the knowledge and skills of all lecturers not only those charged with teaching academic writing as a course but also, of those offering subject content in various disciplines. Therefore, there must be mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998) across disciplines to ensure that what is taught is not contradicted but supported in practice (Fulwiler, 2002).

In this study, the timing of feedback was not often within acceptable limits than can promote student learning. The withholding of feedback to as long as end of the term denied students an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses when their learning goals were still fresh on their minds contrary to Brookhart (2008). This was detrimental to student learning and improvement of their academic writing skills. In fact, giving feedback is one way of giving students access to commonly held beliefs on academic writing (Fulwiler, 2002) thus, enculturating them to the writing practice of the college community. Therefore, it is suggested that there should be consistency in providing feedback within acceptable time to promote student learning. Otherwise, feedback purpose can be defeated.

5.4 Lecturers Requisite Skills to Effectively Teach Academic Writing

Results of the analysis of students' marked assignments suggested that lecturers did not have the skills required to effectively teach academic writing. This was seen in their inconsistencies in citation, referencing along with related linguistic conventions and failure to penalise or correct obvious errors in students written assignments. While their failure to penalise or correct obvious errors made by students could be a result of negligence, giving incorrect advice and wrongly correcting students' work clearly demonstrates that lecturers had limited knowledge and skills in academic writing conventions and practices. These findings are at variance with the ideals of a CoP which supposes that lecturers should have the expertise that students can learn from (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The limited knowledge and skills exhibited by lecturers in this study raises the need for colleges to embrace empowerment strategies such as peer tutoring for academic writing support (Adams, 2011; Chokwe, 2013; O'Sullivan & Clearly, 2014) as these have been proved to be useful in improving lecturers' competence in teaching. This is in tandem with the 1977 Ministry of Education policy document which states that, "a good teacher is not a product of chance. He is a product of good education both academically and professionally.... this among other things, implies that those who educate and train our teachers must themselves be highly competent and of superior quality (MoE, 1977 p.70). Therefore, efforts must be made to ensure that lecturers have the required competence to teach academic writing. According to the 1996 Education Policy statement, "Promoting the highest standard of education and learning entails giving attention to various interdependent factors" (p.4). In regard to optimizing student teachers' academic writing skills, one of the interdependent factors is capacity building for lecturers. Without this, lecturers may lack a solid knowledge base and

this may rob them of confidence in the teaching of academic writing as was the case in this study.

Participants in this study included three students with hearing impairment who may have needed special support as was suggested in their essay writing performance where two of them only scored 8 and 10 marks respectively. Although discussing the huddles of inclusive education is not in the interest of this study, it is worth mentioning that lecturers may have been ill equipped for this category of students. According to the 1977 Ministry of Education Policy document, “Good teaching demands that the teacher should not only possess a correct attitude and adequate knowledge of the subjects he teaches but also keep abreast of developments in those subjects and in the objectives and methods of teaching (MoE, 1977 p.61). Besides, the professional competence of teachers does not only depend on initial training but also on Continuous Professional Development (MoE, 1996). This is what Wenger-Trayner & Wenger (2015) in their article, ‘*Communities of Practice: A Brief Introduction*’ mean in stating that “Learning in a community is not limited to novices.... The practice of a community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone”. Therefore, the engagement of lecturers in CPD activities for the purpose of increasing knowledge and skills in AW instruction and support for students need not be an option for lecturers but should be part and parcel of their professional life. The knowledge about internet searches, hyperlinks and search engines proposed by Pilgrim & Martinez (2013) and approaches to teaching academic writing are just some among the many skills that lecturers may need to strengthen through workshops and seminars to help them teach academic writing effectively. Thus, efforts made by some colleges to hold seminars and workshops for the purpose of empowering lecturers in AW support for students should be supported as they provide an alternative to formal training which can be costly and is currently not provided for in higher institutions of learning.

It is clear from the findings that lecturers had limited knowledge and skills in academic writing conventions. This could be a result of poor training (Bell-Nolan, 2015) and is a demonstration of what may obtain when lecturers’ requisite skills are left to chance. Giving students wrong advice and taking what is correct to be incorrect as seen in this study can be misleading to those who do not know what is correct and confusing to those who know. These results are in support of the view that those being prepared to teach English language should overcome their ‘*academic discourse limitations*’ (Angel & Garcia, 2017) as failure to

do so may render them incompetent for their future profession (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009; Shannon, 2011). In support of this, Mulenga (2015) contends that:

One of the hallmarks of a profession is the mastery by the practitioner, in this case the teacher, of a body of knowledge and skills and autonomy in practice in the application of the knowledge and skills. Thus, student teachers on any teacher education curriculum should, by the time of graduation, have acquired the knowledge and skills needed for the trade and be able to confidently apply them effectively in their practice (p. 160).

This also goes to show how critical it is that colleges devise strategies that ensure that lecturers receive support in AW instruction (Street, 2015). This is more so because “Writing is one of the most important skills that second language students need to develop and the ability to teach writing is central to the expertise of a well-trained language teacher” (Hyland, 1996 p.x).

Results of this study showed that most of the lecturers involved in teaching academic writing were themselves not practicing academic writing. Out of the five that took part in this study, only two were making attempts to write for publication. This could be one of the reasons why lecturers were lacking confidence in teaching some components of academic writing. Given that AW is a group culture mastered through experience, observation and instruction (Govaleck & Gong, 2012), consistent engagement in AW activities can help lecturers develop expertise through their writing experience and observations in the course of publishing. This can in turn help them determine students’ probable difficulties in AW and areas of emphasis (Devet, 2018) in their support and instructions. It can also give them opportunities to receive formal instruction through feedback that academic writers receive from experts in their publication process. Thus, by not engaging in academic writing activities, lecturers were denying themselves opportunities to gain expertise and confidence in the teaching of AW. They were also depriving students of role models in learning to write academically. Therefore, it may be necessary to encourage lecturers to be more involved in AW activities for publishing for it is indeed a pedagogical strategy (Andrew & Smith, 2011) that can help them to teach effectively.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has tried to shed some light on the findings on what Colleges of Education were doing to optimize student teachers’ academic writing skills in English. The discussions are in line with the research objectives which included the following: to ascertain whether student

teachers were adequately exposed to writing relevant texts at secondary school level, investigate what colleges of education were doing to help student teachers understand specific academic writing requirements at college level, establish support mechanisms used by Colleges of Education to enhance student teachers' academic writing development, establish lecturers' feedback practice on written assignments at college level and to ascertain whether lecturers had requisite skills to effectively teach academic writing. The chapter ends with a summary.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The previous chapter tried to shed some light on the meaning of the findings of the study. This chapter summarises the findings and draws the conclusion by bringing out some of the lessons learnt from the findings, recommendations made and suggestions for further research. It also highlights the lessons learnt alongside contributions made to the body of knowledge. The ultimate goal of this study was to investigate what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills in English.

6.1 Conclusions

Although the secondary school syllabus had content that could adequately prepare students for college writing, the study established that student teachers were not adequately exposed to writing relevant texts in secondary school. Many entered colleges with varying gaps in basic writing skills and this deprived them of essential foundational skills for academic writing.

The study further found that compulsory teaching of Communication and Study Skills was the main strategy that colleges were using to make student understand specific academic writing requirements. However, the methods used appeared to have limited students' opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement to effectively master the skills. Despite being in their final year in college, many were still exhibiting considerable weaknesses in various dimensions of academic writing with linguistic related problems appearing to be the major weakness for most of them.

The study also established that Colleges of Education had put in place different support mechanisms aimed at promoting student teachers' academic writing skills. However, guidance was lacking in how students could maximize the benefits of the support given to them, for instance, guidance on how to source for credible information on the internet was lacking. Besides, the support mechanisms put in place in colleges appeared to have given less attention to building the capacity of lecturers for academic writing instruction and support.

The study also reviewed that lecturers' feedback practice on student teachers' written assignments generally involved drawing students to their weaknesses and strengths through comments, minimal marking and rubrics. However, feedback purpose, focus and mode, were

not comprehensive enough to effectively support learning. Criticism appeared to be the main purpose for which lecturers were giving feedback with suggestions and praise being given very little attention. Similarly, most feedback comments were focused on linguistic problems at the expense of other relevant skills. Feedback mode used was mainly written with integrated and interactive modes known to support learning only being used sparingly. Feedback was not always given to students within the acceptable limits and this often affected the benefits that students could get from it.

The findings of the study further showed that lecturers involved in teaching academic writing had not accessed any formal instruction on academic writing instruction and support. Besides, many colleges had no opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities through which lecturers could access support and training. Additionally, most lecturers who taught academic writing were not involved in any academic writing related activities which could help them gain some expertise on academic writing conventions for effective teaching. Consequently, they sometimes lacked confidence in teaching some components of academic writing, exhibited inconsistency and utilized inappropriate teaching methods which limited their engagement of students in learning and support.

In summary, it can be argued that although teaching Communication and Study Skills appeared to have helped raise students' awareness of most of the critical aspects of academic writing, improvement in writing abilities were still minimal especially for those with serious linguistic problems. Some of the reasons attributed to this included students' deficit in foundational knowledge, limited opportunities for engagement and practice, inappropriate teaching methods, inadequate content on academic writing and lecturers' limited capacity to effectively teach academic writing. Of all of these, however, lecturers' limited capacity to handle academic writing instructions and support appeared to be the main hindrance to ensuring that students have requisite academic writing skills in Colleges of Education. Therefore, this study identified capacity building on academic writing support and instruction for lecturers to be critical to enhancing student teachers academic writing skills in Colleges of Education.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

This study was guided by the Community of Practice theory. This theory offered suggestions on how learning contexts can be organised to promote effective teaching and learning of academic writing at tertiary level. However, going by the ideals of the Community of Practice

Model of learning, there still remained many gaps in the efforts colleges were making in ensuring that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills. These gaps show that the Community of Practice model remain valid in the improvement of academic writing skills and thus, addressing them would help students' academic writing abilities in colleges. Some of them are explained below:

To begin with, academic writing content embedded in the Communication and Study Skills appeared to be inadequate for students' mastery of academic writing skills. Some critical dimensions of academic writing practice, for instance, comprehensive reading and the use of ICT were not part of academic writing content that students were learning. This was one way through which students were denied full access to the commonly held beliefs (Fulwiler, 2002) on academic writing practice and in this way, their mastery of academic writing skills was made difficult.

Collaboration on academic writing support and instruction was lacking amongst lecturers across disciplines. Many colleges did not have opportunities for mutual engagement (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017) to warrant a common understanding of academic writing conventions. In most colleges, academic writing support and instruction was taken to be the responsibility of language experts. Consequently, lecturers exhibited inconsistency in academic writing conventions and practices leaving students with doubts on the acceptable conventions and also on what counted as good academic writing practice in their different specialisations. It is as though colleges were opposed to the proposal by Bharutham & Mckenna (2012: 582) which says, "In order for ...students to acquire the practices required for HE success, the form and function of the latter need to be made explicit...students need to be provided with a map of their discipline's norms" (in Scholtz, 2016, p.39).

The lack of access to training on academic writing support and instruction by lecturers and of not engaging in research and publishing, deprived lecturers of requisite skills to confidently teach academic writing and also hindered them from having a common understanding of academic writing conventions as a Community of Practice. This made them fail to provide the expertise needed to guide and support students as required in a Community of Practice Model. Most of the issues that appeared to limit the success of interventions put in place by colleges can be overcome if lecturers are formally trained and supported in teaching academic writing. However, as argued by Bharutham & Mckenna (2012), lecturers responsible for teaching academic writing in Colleges of Education appeared to be unaware

of the existence of some academic writing conventions and norms or saw them as common-sense knowledge (in Scholtz, 2016, p.39) thus, depriving students of the guidance and support needed for the mastery of academic writing skills.

As new members of a Community of Practice, students could not be accorded full participation and engagement in academic writing. Their access to information, resources, expert knowledge such as modelling and scaffolding and opportunities for participation in mature practice was limited with academic writing being taught passively. Students were mostly writing for assessment purposes. This in turn reduced their period of enculturation, experience, observation and instruction in academic writing practice contrary to the ideals of learning in a Community of Practice which requires that students be given access to expert practice. Consequently, they could not gain a full mastery of the values, beliefs, goals and activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991) of academic writing.

6.3 The Study's Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The purpose of this study was to establish what Colleges of Education were doing to ensure that student teachers have requisite academic writing skills in English. Although this study had some limitations, the results have provided some insights on which practitioners can base their decisions as they try to work on improving students' academic writing skills at tertiary level. The study has made a number of contributions to the body of knowledge on academic writing in general and in particular to the teaching of academic writing in Zambia. Some of these contributions are explained below.

To begin with, academic writing is one of the topics that are underexplored in Zambia. Educational researchers appear to have paid little attention to writing at this level. Generally, studies related to writing appear to have a bias towards primary and secondary school levels. As a result, there is scanty literature on academic writing in Zambia. Based on the objectives pursued, the study helped bring the topic of academic writing to a different level, thereby raising more debate which in itself is a contribution to the body of knowledge.

Secondly, the study has tried to systematically isolate some of the problems that may be rendering existing interventions on academic writing ineffective in Zambia in general and in Colleges of Education in particular. This has provided information to those who may seek to understand why academic writing is still a problem in colleges and has helped to answer some of the pertinent questions raised in the teaching of academic writing at tertiary level.

Thirdly, the study has come up with a model that can help counteract existing problems in the teaching of academic writing in Zambia. The holistic model of intervention proposed is aimed at reducing the gaps that exist in the efforts made in enhancing student teachers' improvement of academic writing skills in English. Below is the proposed holistic model of intervention for enhancing student teachers' academic writing skills.

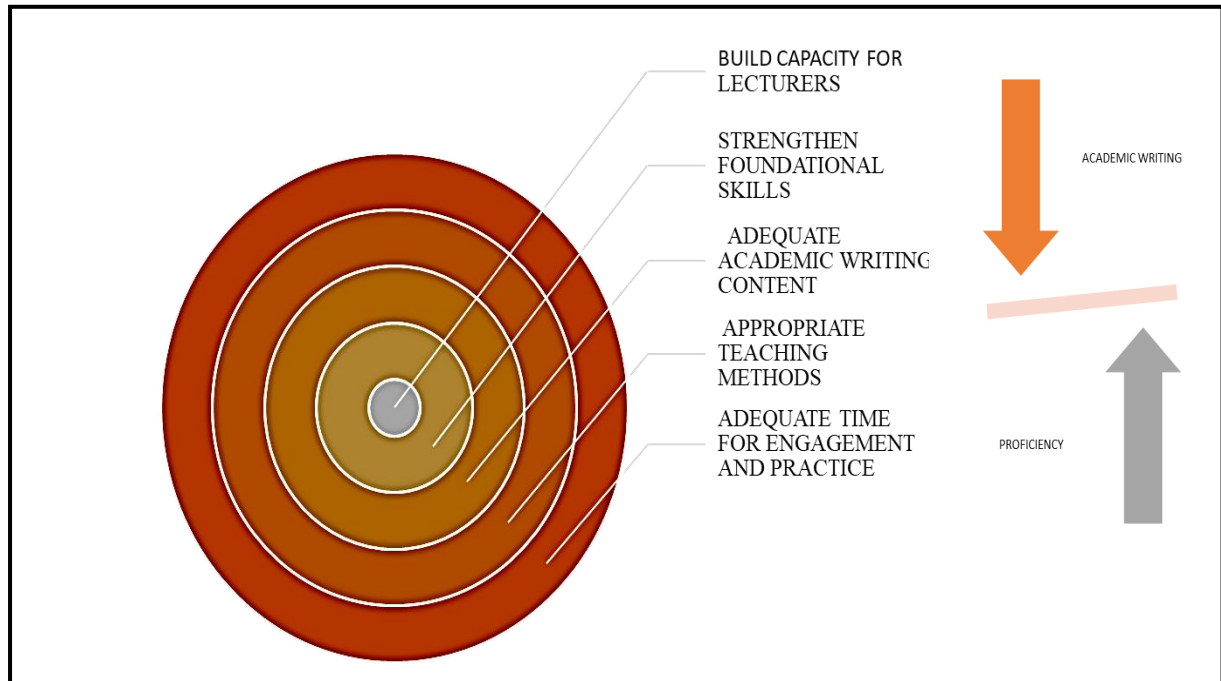


Figure: 6.1 Holistic Model of Intervention for Improving Students' Academic Writing Skills

Figure 6.1 above provides a multi-dimensional model of intervention for enhancing students' improvement of academic writing skills basing on the findings of the study. Below is an explanation of what each of the dimensions means.

Building the capacity of lecturers in theory and practice stands to be the most critical aspect of the intervention on which other aspects are anchored. The capacity of lecturers in both theory and practice will enhance their ability to teach academic writing by giving them confidence. It will also give them the expertise to use appropriate methods in the teaching of academic writing. Eventually, this will ensure that students get the support they need in the different dimensions of academic writing.

Strengthening students' foundational skills in key areas such as grammar, mechanics of writing, styles of writing together with their rhetorical conventions, will give students a firm grounding in the use of conventional forms of the written language and styles of writing. This

will in turn increase their capacity for further learning and development of academic writing skills.

Adequate Academic Writing Content informed by diagnostic assessment will enhance students' exposure to academic writing practice as regards subject content, for instance, sources of information, writing context such as disciplinary conventions and genres, language system, for instance, rhetorical conventions of the different styles of writing and the writing process all of which are critical to effective writing.

Appropriate teaching methods which includes explicit instruction, scaffolding through guided practice, independent writing practice, collaborative writing activities, collaboration of lecturers across disciplines and good feedback practices coupled with adequate academic writing content will ensure that student have an all rounded access to academic writing practices required of them at tertiary level. This will in turn increase their confidence and capacity to handle different academic writing assignments.

Adequate Time of Engagement and Practice in the different dimensions of academic writing, for instance, research, comprehensive reading, genres of academic writing, cohesion and coherence, will ensure that students gain mastery of academic writing practice and conventions, thereby, attaining proficiency in academic writing.

6.3.1 Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education should come up with a program aimed at building the capacity of lecturers in academic writing support and instruction.
2. Colleges should align their academic writing topics to the needs of students by conducting a needs assessment at the onset of training and by acting on the outcome of the findings
3. Colleges of Education should consider reviewing the current Communication and Study Skills course to identify the weak areas and replace them with relevant topics that are directly related to developing students' academic writing skills.
4. Colleges should teach the most critical aspects of academic writing with appropriate methods to maximize the benefits

5. Academic Writing Support content should include the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as it is one of the critical aspects of academic writing skills needed by students
6. Lecturers should always ensure that feedback given to students is comprehensive in purpose, focus and mode to enhance students' learning

6.3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

The topic of academic writing appears to be under explored in Zambia. Therefore, it may be necessary to continue pursuing it from different dimensions for informed practice. The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. Optimising students' essay writing at grade 12 level
2. A study on academic writing at university level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Interview Guide for Language Lecturers in Colleges of Education

Date.....
Name of College.....
Gender Male/Female.....
No of Years in service.....
Highest
Qualification.....
Number of years in teaching Academic Writing if any.....
Type of College Public/ Grant Aided/ Private.....
Locality of College (Rural/ Urban.....

1. What is your understanding of academic writing?
2. What measures has the college put in place to ensure students develop academic writing skills
3. How does the college ensure that there is a common understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in academic writing?
4. What do you do as lecturers to identify academic writing needs of new entrants into college?
5. When teaching academic writing, what do you do to make students understand key concepts such as coherence, cohesion and transition?
6. How do you help students acquire skills in handling different types of texts?
7. What do you do to draw student's attention to errors made in their academic papers?
8. When grading students' essays, what is the proportion of marks for content in relation to language?
9. What is your opinion on the length of time you take to give students feedback on their written assignments? Would you say you take too long or not?
10. What measures do you take to correct students' common weaknesses and errors in academic writing?
11. How do you help students practice comprehensive reading rather than surface reading?
12. What specific training have you undertaken to enhance your knowledge and skills in teaching academic writing?
13. How comfortable are you in teaching academic writing?
14. As a language lecturer, what academic writing activities are you involved in

Appendix 1.2: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Third Year Student Teachers

Date.....

Gender.....

Name of college.....

Locality:

Rural/Urban.....

Status:

Public/Private/Grant Aided.....

1. What is your understanding of academic writing?
2. After enrolment in first year, how long did it take before you were given the first written assignment?
3. What problems did you face in writing the first assignment in college?
4. How has the college helped you to understand what is acceptable and what is not in academic writing?
5. Are you sometimes shown model essays to help you understand how you can write your assignments?
6. What do your lecturers do to help you understand comments they write on your assignments?
7. Are you given a chance to explain why you wrote something that the lecturer deems wrong?
8. Apart from writing examinations and assignments, what other writing activities are you engaged in?
9. What would you say on the length of time lecturers take to give you feedback on your written work? Would you say they take too long or not?
10. What problems are you still facing in academic writing?

Appendix 1.3: Document Checklist for Students' Access to Writing Relevant Texts in Secondary School

	Essential Aspects of an Academic Essay	Assessment Criteria	YES/NO
1	Introduction	Is the topic mentioned? Is the essay purpose stated? Is the essay structure outlined? Are the key terms defined?	
2	Main Body	Is there only one point per paragraph? Are the paragraphs logically linked? Are the arguments supported by evidence or examples	
3	Conclusion	Is there a direct link between conclusion and the question? Are the main points summarized? Is the conclusion substantial (full paragraph)?	

Appendix1.4: Essay Test Question for Third Year Students

Instructions:

1. You are required to write an academic essay in response to the given question.
2. Do not write your names on the script. Instead use the given college code (College A B.C.D.E)
3. You have 5 minutes to read through the question before you start writing.
4. Time for writing is 1 hour. (60 Minutes)
5. You are not allowed to use your phones or consult your friends during this exercise.

Question:

Advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

Appendix 1.5: Check List for Lecturers' Feedback Practice on Student Teachers' Written Assignments

Name of College:

Date.....

	Feedback Practice	Result	Comments
1	Mode		
2	Audience		
3	Balance of comments in terms of purpose		
4	Balance of comments in terms of focus		

Appendix 1.6: Marking Schemes for Third Year Students' Essay Writing Test

Total marks [40]

ATTRIBUTES/SKILLS	NUMBER OF MARKS PER ITEM
PRESENTATION 1. Margins 2. Paragraphs 3. Title placement	 [1] [2] [1]
STRUCTURE a. Introduction b. Main body (answering of the question) c. Conclusion	 [2] [10] [2]
WRITING MECHANICS a. Development of paragraphs b. Spellings c. Grammar d. Punctuation e. Legibility	 [2] [2] [4] [2] [2]
COHESION AND COHERENCE a. Logical development of ideas b. Transition between paragraphs (correct use of discourse markers)	 [2] [2]
ARGUMENT a. Logical development of argument b. Accurate presentation of evidence	 [2] [2]
CONCLUSION Summation of ideas	 [2]

Source: Thomson & Ellis, (1994)

Appendix 2.1: Sample of students' First Essays Written in College

Communication involves sending ^{and} receiving and interpreting information. At all times, people communicate with others, whether verbally or non-verbally. The verbal or non-verbal interaction with others shows how our communication should be received, filtered and understood. This is known as our communication style, as suggested by Norton in 1978. Communication styles have been linked to self-esteem, confidence and feelings of control. Communication styles connect people in the new venture context, customers, employees, or other organizational stakeholders. Everyone typically has a dominant or primary style, a style that is observed by others and the ability to adapt that style. Some people are more direct in their communication, whereas others are indirect. Some people may be open while others are reserved. Therefore, there are a lot of communication styles that we often use in our day to day communication processes. However, this paper sets out to discuss some communication styles.

As the first consideration, being assertive demonstrates high self-esteem and as a communication style, it is both balanced and effective. Assertive communicators are confident and able to balance the need to achieve and respect the views of others. Their style and ~~their~~ behaviour is neither aggressive nor passive. ^{addition, (2014)} Prolong states, "assertive communication style is characterized by trying to reach a mutually agreed upon solution. For instance, 'I'm sorry, but I can't attend the group study as I have a meeting already planned for that time,' is a phrase that can be used by an assertive communicator."

In this scenario, the recipients are likely to trust and respect the communicator to do the right thing. They can also feel that the raising of their concerns with the communicator would be required.

Passive communication style is a style in which individuals develop a pattern of avoiding expressing their opinions or feelings, protecting their rights, and identifying and meeting their needs. Norton, (1979) pointed out that "passive communicators usually feel to express their feelings or needs, allowing others to express themselves." They can display a lack of eye contact, poor body posture and

Communication is said to be an exchange of meaning through a common system of symbols. ~~Barriers to effective communication~~ are things that hinder effective communication. There are a lot of things that hinder effective communication. Among them is the physiological barrier, psychological barrier, cognitive barrier, geographical barrier and cultural barrier. Therefore, this piece of academic writing will focus on explaining the five barriers to effective communication.

Physiological barrier is initially concerned with the disabilities of a learner. Examples of physiological barrier include ^{and} loss of memory, hunger, poor eyesight, poor hearing skills. People with short-term memories tend to forget easily the information communicated to them thus, it is hard to communicate to them as they would not remember what was

The term culture refers to the complex collection of knowledge, language, values, beliefs and customs that link and give a common identity to a particular group of people at a specific point in time.

According to Stewart and Leaf (1995), all social units develop a culture. Even in two-person relationships, a culture develops over time. In friendship and romantic relationships for example, partners develop their own history, shared experiences, language patterns, habits and customs that give that relationship a special character, a character that differentiates it in various ways from other relationships. (Ruben and Brent, 1992). This might be in terms of special dates, places, songs or events that come to have a unique and important symbolic meaning for two individuals.

Groups also develop cultures composed of the collection of rules, customs and other characteristics that give an identity to the social unit. According to Schuler and Herberf (1989), where a group traditionally meets, whether meetings begin on time or not, what topics are discussed, how discussions are made and how the group socialises are all elements of what over time become defining and differentiating elements of its culture.

Organisations also have cultures, often apparent in particular patterns of dress, layout of work spaces, meeting styles and functions, ways of thinking about and talking about the nature and directions of the organisation, leadership styles and so on.

According to Gutfkunst and William B, (1991), the most rich and complex cultures are those that are associated with a society or a nation, and the term culture

According to Górsady et al. (1996) language is the passing
of exchange of information, it distinguishes what is
living from what is non living. According to Him language
is spoken by both living and non living things
as long as there is feedback.

(Fromkin/Rodman 1993: 176) ^{defined language as} the study of the speech sounds
that occur in human languages to represent meanings. is
called language. The language spoken by animals
activities under this definition because animals
only use sound to transmit and get a feedback
formation. Animals have a language which
unfortunately can not be understood by human beings
it is also a language.

Language is a systemic way of transmitting
information from one person to another. Language is vital for
beings and society. Unfortunately for those
not ~~speaks~~ speak they use symbols to
communicate with others thus, giving us many
forms of language as they are many forms
of communicating. In addition, there
is language than just spoken words

The audio-lingual and the grammar translation method are two strategies and interventions that can be used for teaching of second and foreign languages. Hence the purpose of this article is to compare and contrast the audio-lingual and grammar translation methods of teaching a language.

According to ~~David~~ Larsen (1986, p.13) states techniques and principles in language teaching. It provides expanded descriptions of some common / typical techniques where one translation of a literary passage targets language to native language and therefore both the audio-lingual and the grammar translation when teaching a language emphasizes interaction as the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language.

Comparing the audio-lingual and grammar translation, Larsen in both languages have knowledge that goes beyond the input they received, in that they are able to construct correct utterances like phrases, sentences and questions.

According to Claudine Krisk (1995) stated in the primary school language teaching method is a comprehensive approach that helps teachers to decide what language skills to develop, what activities and resources to choose how to plan for progression. In both the audio-lingual and the grammar translation too strategies and interventions are used for the teaching of a second language. One of the strategies used is the method of reaching through what has been taught in understanding it properly.

According to Howard (1984, p. 98) said that for students it is very important as a medium replacing of traditional texts with simple sentences translating them into other different languages.

Appendix 2.2: Sample of Lecturers' Feedback Practice on Student Teachers' Written Assignments

The most interesting part of English grammar is active and passive voices, and most English courses focus on learning them. It is usually the trick part for learners in English grammar and it can be confusing to many. Active voice is a form of verb in which subject is typically the person or thing performing the action which can take direct objects while Passive voice is a set off form of a verb in which the subject undergoes the action of a verb. Therefore, the main aim of this academic paper writing is to discuss about the difference between active and passive voices in English and determine how each of the two voices can be used. ✓

To begin with, when using an active voice, the subject performs the action noted by the main verb. Therefore the sentence being spoken directly gives out direct meaning of a sentence.

Jayunta (1998 p.803) stated that, "active voice has an indirect object as well as direct object."

Meaning when such a verb is put into passive voice, it experiences the action performed by its subject while the verb on the other hand de-emphasize the identity of a person performing the action. Consequently between active and passive voices in a particular sentence is a matter of a style. For example, the local evening news was anchors by doing a somersault from Jane and the final elements by doing a triple somersault was completed by Mary. However, this emphasizes the verb which happened before. use own examples

Besides that, in active voice, the agent is the doer of action and the receiver is the person or thing that is affected by the action while in passive voice the receiver is the subject and the agent is often not mentioned, it is included and it occurs as a proposition's phrase. Thlewis (2000, p.51) alluded that, "The agent is the object of the sentence and the receiver is the object while in passive voice the receiver is the subject and the agent is often not mentioned which included, it occurs as a prepositions phrase." For example, Soka gives each new employee a tour of the plant. When you use this voice in a sentence, the action should perform an action indicated by the verb. Therefore, this means that the passive is common with animate, for example the verb acts upon the noun or the subject which receives instead of initiate the action, this shows that all what has been talked in passive represents something happened already.

Moreover in active voice, Thomas (1938 p.30) pointed out ^{that} to say, "the object can become the subject, but when such a verb is put into passive either the agent can become the doer of an action." for example when the chief manager has assigned some women to clean the celebration place where the usually take place; The voice here also is in the present while in passive voice

show when you are about to write an example.

Gupta (2013 p.250) stated that, "passive is generally avoided in writing active, they are preferable to passive sentence however, if the passive is used at all, it should be used as scientific, object, formal, legal writing and speech." In short, even when the agent is unknown or self-evident and when the process denoted by the verb is more important than the active subject. For example Cameroon was beaten by Congo when the team was not full while in active Congo has beaten Cameroon.

IS this one sentence? Be clear in your writing

More to the above, active voice is usually stronger, more direct way of expressing ideas while passive voice can only be used when someone wants to emphasize the receiver of the action or de-emphasize the performer of the action and if you do not know who the performer is. Jones (1998 p. 286) alluded that "in active voice a verb shows the subject that something has been done to the subject." This means that the active voice perform the action of the verb and the structures are used in spoken English.

In addition, for example, active voice, Jean has swallowed the pot while in passive voice, the pot was swallowed by Jean. This really shows that the sentence in active voice shows something which is happening now while in passive voice, structures are really used in spoken English to express the passive structure that may be used in making indirect orders request and advice. For example if someone is requested to post the letter using an active voice, it will be the other way round.

Furthermore, Klomove (1993, p.143) alluded that "the active voice for languages in which the sole argument of some other place predicts is marked like the subject of a transitive verb while in passive voice the sole argument of the other place is marked like the object of a transitive verb." However, these systems are sometimes referred to as intransitive which are found in languages. For example, Americans and Indians speak different languages when they are arguing.

In support to the above, active voice also shows that the subject is typically the person performing the action while in passive voice the subject is not active but act as an agent. Burry (1990 p.143) stipulated that "the sentence may be contrasted with the form that had been done before the movement of the object that form is termed as active." This entails that, some active voice which was done before can be written using passive voice. For example, all learners were occupied in one room, this simply also indicates that the action was done before.

Despite that, Burry (1990 p.210) also added to say, "active voice do not use the same verb while passive voice uses the same verb from which the present perfect and past perfect tenses in active voice." This simply means that, the helping words are always used when the verb is in the passive voice. For example, the mother has beaten her child, on the other hand we say, the child was beaten by her mother, which shows that the action done in active is in present tense and the action done in passive is in past tense.

More to the above, changing the voice of the verb which takes both direct and indirect object in active and passive voices is another different, such that when a verb in active takes both direct and indirect objects and then the two can become the subject of the verb when a verb itself is put into passive and the meaning of sentence is preserved. The object does not become the subject while a verb in passive voice takes an indirect object.

Apart from that, many scholars and researchers in the field of literature have one thing in common and active voice have few words which makes them conscience and easy to read while passive voice have long sentence and many words which makes it hard for many people read, it is worthy nothing that many people do not want to read huge or brock texts because they feel bored. Reading short sentences clear out massages which means that they do not waste much time only actual writing because it compares to an active sentence, for instance the police men were attacked by the robbers, this shows that the subject undergoes the action (Thomas 1938 p.78).

Above all, it is important to note that a sentence cannot be turned into passive voice unless it has a direct object since active verbs undergo a major change in passive, these sentences tend to be longer than active voices and they are less direct and express a neutral or objective tones. Sometimes the person performing the action can be omitted from the sentences, for example the king signed the agreement with the trading.

To sum up, it is said that the active voice is used when the agent is the doer of an action which is made prominent while the passive voice is therefore generally referred to the passive form involving the use or an identity and the agent is not known, when it is formed the suitable tense of the verb should be followed by the past participle. Hence, active voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action stated by the verb while in passive voice sentences, the subject is acted upon the verb.

lang- 4, 5
refs- 5

You have not adequately covered the 2nd part of the question

3

16.5

use recent books please!!

There has never been a time that education never existed in as far as the history of Zambia is concerned. It has existed in three forms, and those forms have been outstanding in their own perspectives. Education is the process of imparting knowledge, skill and values. Education has evolved to meet the needs of each society over time and traceable evidence can be seen even today, and it is in this History that the country even today continues to build its philosophy to meet the needs of society in education sector. The three forms or types of education are formal, informal and non-formal. Therefore, this paper will discuss the types of education systems and give examples of programmes set in each in relation to the Zambian setting. It will start by explaining informal, non-formal and finally formal education and thereafter, a conclusion will be drawn.

Informal education is the oldest education system in Zambia; it is also referred as tradition or indigenous education. It has been in place from way back before the missionaries entered this country. It is the life long process whereby every individual acquires attitude, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences. This type of education has no curriculum or a set standard to follow. Mwanakatwe (2013, P.1) states that "it is true that this skills of reading, writing and mathematical computation as we know them today were not part of tradition education, nonetheless the role of tradition was vital and in fact indispensable for the smooth integration of growing children into society." this indeed shows that it was mainly done through observation and imitation. Most of it is done by elders with experience, young ones are encouraged to observe and participate where possible, it prepare one for life long, not only that it require active participation. Since it is orally arranged story telling is one of its values, it also has games and plays that take the interest of young learners. One of the methods of deliveries is through lecture. Informal education is flexible and it can be repeated several time as it is cheap to teach, even under privileged learner can afford it. Experience is its ultimate goal. Since it is oral kind of education, meaning it does not require writing. Learner cannot choose what they want to learn, all they do is follow the activities of the day. Not meeting its expectations can be rewarded with a punishment. Culture is highly respected in this kind of education.

This kind of education has some kind of disadvantages or rather limitations, they range from poorly arranged and not having a clear frame work as to what it intend to achieve at the end. Not only that it does not only have professionals, mainly it is done for a survival. Furthermore, some of its practise can be bad; they may not meet the required standard. For example, circumeision in tradition is done without proper medical care, in the process the child may even die from bleeding. Others encounter diseases like HIV/AIDS in the process. Missionaries regarded it as barbaric kind of education. Nevertheless, it has done its part and to some extent it can still be used today with a different approach that would look into other factors.

Informal education has its aim in Zambian setting, as a country that has culture that has to be passed on from elder; it serves to preserve culture because it is through it that values and beliefs are transmitted. Despite some of its weakness, tradition education still has an important bearing in the modern school. They further say that it reminds us of importance of realism because it involves children in real life situation. Basically, its main aim is to see that

handle because it has a physical teacher all the time. Dean (1994, p.73) says that "every teacher present materials to children in ways which capture attention and help them to focus on what is important" Educators have much control over learning and can complete what is set in the curriculum within the stipulated time.

But this type of education is expensive in Zambia, though it is provided for free in government schools under primary, from grade eight to twelve one has to pay. As a result only a few privileged are able to meet its cost all the time. With unpredictable economical change, higher education has been the most expensive part in Zambia. Not only that, in recent years it has been accused or blamed by some section of society that it never meet the needs of society, learner left school with no practical experiences of whatsoever. This has to the revision of curriculum which includes the vocational training among others. All this has been done to meet the demand of present society and technological advances that have taken a great shape over time.

The main aim of this education in Zambian setting today is to have knowledge to understand, learning to do, learner should not always rely on theories, practical subject must be taught in all level as the child progresses, wisdom, as human beings, one need wisdom to set priorities right to suit the needs of each learner at a given level and at the end character formation completes the aim this of education, educators are looking to learners who will portray a good character in society. For example, this education is divided into stages, nursery, primary, junior secondary and senior secondary, each stage is systematically planned to archive and suit the learners. By doing this, it has been highly competitive, valued and recommendable.

In conclusion, everyone is a learning machine. One can learn constantly and in so many ways, others learn by doing, by observing, by listening, by reading, and by teaching others. One also learns through informal, non- formal and formal means. The three types of education depend on each other, having weaknesses and some strength; one is expected to make the best of each type at any given time. Each form is meeting the needs of society on different levels. With change in social, economic and technology, learners are expected to make positive contribution at different levels of education. Certainly the ultimate goal is to make well rounded individual who will fit in society.

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X

Besides, on what was being discussed in the above paragraph about the active and passive voices on how they describe each other. The sentences in active voices are very preferable choice. *because ...*
 Glencoe (2000, p.111) states that, "A verb is in the active voice when the subject performs the action of the verb, A verb is in passive voice when the subject receives the action of the verb". *? what is the relevance of this quote?*
 To simplify what is being said above here is an example: Lame is writing an assignment and assignment was written by Lame. In these sentences who was the subject? The subject was the person who was writing an assignment (Lame). someone can easily understand that whenever you see a sentence where one does something to someone, it is the active voice.

The word itself defines, active means involved in doing it or acting on something .It can take a lot of time for someone to understand or distinguish between the active and passive voices but on the other hand, it cannot .It cannot take long time to understand the difference between these two voices how? If, it is story or reading a story book there must be one thing doing something to something, you can be able to say this is an active voice but if something was done to something it is the passive voice, the conjunctional words change either from past participle to present participle or either from past continuous tense to present continuous tense, it depends with the sentence the way it is. An example the dog chased the ball (Active), the ball was chased by the dog (passive).

use your own words as much as possible

Don't write as if you are talking

16

Two superficially distinct sentence structures would be for example: Charlie broke the window and the window was broken by Charlie. In traditional terminology, the first is an active sentence and the second one is passive. The distinctive between them, be claimed, is a difference in their surface structure that is the syntactic form they take as actual English sentences. However, this difference in sentences is very closely related, even identical, at some less superficial, *incomplete* (Yule, 1985, p.102).

In addition, If this was to be read among people who do not understand the active and the passive voices, these two sentences could not be understood because of the way the words are arranged and how they appear, but someone who understands the English language particularly, the active and passive voice could be able to identify the two sentences, in this case Charlie (subject) acted upon the window (object) and the window was broken by Charlie, the object is acted upon by the subject. The two sentences are closely related and identical but different in appearance.

Misunderstanding of English language may occur if active and passive voices are not understood. According to Murthy (1998, p.286) states that "voice is the form of the verb which indicates whether a person or a thing does something or something has been done to a person or a thing". This voice has a class of two similar words, the Active voice and the Passive voice. Active voice, when a verb form shows that the subject has done something, it is known as Active voice. Example, Madhavi wrote a letter. Passive voice, when a verb form shows that something has been done to the subject, it is known as passive voice. Example: A letter was written by Madhavi. (Murthy, 1998, p.286) It is good for everyone using English language to understand the active and passive voices. Therefore, this academic paper writing will discuss the distinction between the active and passive voices and how each of the two voices is used.

To start with, understanding the differences in active and passive voices to everyone using English language should focus on the subject and the object of a sentence. Huddleston (1988, p.176) "At general level the terms active and passive voice apply grammatically distinct clause construction different in the way the syntactic function of the subject". This means that in active voice the subject acts upon the object while in passive voice the object is acted upon by the subject, the meaning remains the same in both voices but the arrangement of the words (subject and object) changes. For example in active voice: we are going to watch a movie tonight, while in passive voice, a movie is going to be watched by us tonight.

Equally important what should be noticed when differentiating active and passive voice. Kenneavy & Warriner (1993, p.694) "Notice that the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence. The subject of the active sentence is now given only in a prepositional phrase, which could even be omitted". This is another way of differentiating the active and passive voices. Kinneavy puts it in another way; object being acted upon in the active voice sentence becomes the subject in the passive voice. What was Kinneavy trying to say, for example: Rena is playing music and music was being played by Rena. The music in the first sentence is the object and Rena is the subject but in the passive voice, the object (music) is going to be the object in passive voice. This can help many readers or learners to read and understand the article they are reading if, they concentrate a lot on what a subject is, in the sentence and what is an object in the voice sentences.

3

full of first

use inverted commas for examples used

not differently the sentences

not

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- Avoid using assignments at 'gun point'
- You must be serious with academic work
- Reference writing must be improved

$$\text{Reference} = \frac{00}{3}$$

$$\text{Language} = \frac{2}{5}$$

$$\text{Handwriting} = \frac{2}{5}$$

$$\text{Map drawing} = \frac{2}{4}$$

$$\text{Provinces} = \frac{4}{5}$$

$$\text{Regional varieties} = \frac{6}{7}$$

$$\text{Dialect Justification} = \frac{00}{3}$$

$$\text{Dialects} = \frac{08}{3}$$

$$\frac{24 \times 100}{50}$$

48%

improve

immediately

Appendix 2.3 Sample of Test Essays Written in Student's Third Year in College

6TH COLLEGE

37
40

A cell phone can simply be defined as a tool or device for communication. Other than the function of communication, a cell phone also does or has other functions that may include research purposes, storing information, analysing of certain data and many other functions. Despite having the various functions, a cell phone has both advantages and disadvantages especially in schools. Therefore this piece of academic writing will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

To start with, a cell phone has many advantages that are useful in our daily lives. Some of these advantages include; Communication. A cell phone in schools is useful in terms of communicating about the various activities that are taking place in school between learners themselves (higher institutions) and their lecturers. An example can be a situation where a lecturer informs his or her class that he ^{is} ~~won't~~ ^{confirmed} be able to lecture them on a particular day. The cell phone has helped the lecturer and his or her learners to communicate.

It can also be used to inform people about important meetings especially between members of staff. In primary schools, a cell phone is of good advantage as it helps a teacher and parent of the pupil to inform each other about any development on a pupil (learner).

A cell phone can also be used for storage of information. A phone has the capacity to store various information and/or documents. In higher institutions, a cell phone is used for storage of information by students as

It helps those that do not have laptops to keep ^{with} them documents and other files on. Therefore, a cell phone works of a very good advantage to the students.

In relation to storage of information, a cell phone, especially smart phones, are of a very good use in terms of research on the internet. Many students in various schools would make use of their phones in researching about different things that they learn about as well as their given assignments. Therefore, a medium of research purposes is another advantage of a cell phone.

A part from the above advantages, a cell phone in schools also helps students to learn online. Cell phones have been advanced such that even if someone does not attend classes physically, he or she can still learn online. This happens in cases where a lecturer fails to show up to class but decides to teach using the ~~the~~ cellphone.

Other instances can be where a teacher fails to show up but manages to send an activity or exercise on the phone using a social media (WhatsApp) to keep his or her students busy.

Despite having the above advantages, a cell phone also has its short comings well known as disadvantages. Some of these disadvantages include, fast spreading of false information among students in an institution. For example, a lecturer may want to give students a test and not specify the date, but the way the students may communicate about the test with their friends may totally bring confusion.

Other disadvantages can include misuse of the cell phones by the students. Some students tend to use cell phones for other immoral practices such as watching of pornographic materials instead of other school work research.

A cell phone is also on the disadvantage part in situations where learners start being lazy in terms of reading their books and just start using their phones to get answers to almost everything.

Some students even start sneaking into the exam with their cell phones because of laziness to study. They resort to using cell phones to search for some answers in the exam.

Cell phones also act as a disturbance during lessons. This is because, a lecturer may be busy teaching but immediately his cell phone rings, he might be disturbed to go and answer his phone. Other than that, some learners instead of paying attention to what is being taught, they may be busy with their cell phones on social media and other platforms.

In conclusion, this essay has discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using a cell phone in schools. The advantages include communication, entertainment, storage of various information while the disadvantages include misinforming each other, resorting to immoral acts especially on social media, disturbances during important lessons and meetings and many more. The advantages and disadvantages have been laid out to clearly show how useful and unuseful a cell phone can be in schools.

College Three

31
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Technology in the recent years has undergone a lot of advancement in the recent years. In education, it has led to a number of pros and cons. Since the advancement of technology has led to improvement in human life, the following academic essay is designed to bring out a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

Cellular phones as technological devices have a number of advantages in a school setup. Firstly, these devices that contain applications can be used in the improvement of the teaching and learning process. Applications such as English skills, online dictionaries, calculators, mathematics apps, and so on can help the learners to further their knowledge of the content and concepts that are taught in schools. These applications can also be useful to slow learners as well as learners with disabilities, in the sense that these applications as aids can enable quicker understanding for slow learners. (The) learners with learning disabilities such as poor eyesight, hearing disabilities, dyslexia and others can also use these devices as an advantage over their ability.

Cell phones also contain internet facilities that can assist learners and teachers in terms of research, for the learners to research more on the topics they learn, for the teachers to research more on the content they wish to dispense. Another advantage of cell phone use in schools is the handing out of course work, home work, handouts, pamphlets as well as research work. This can save on time and also help a learner that may have been absent due to various reasons. Cell phones have a social aspect in terms of social media platforms, these are beneficial for online group discussions, sharing of information pertaining to school work. In a time when the world is plagued with contagious viruses, such as Covid 19, where social distance is required, these social platforms can be very useful.

(1)

The use of cell phones in schools can also have an advantage in terms of interaction. Social interaction amongst learners is important in that it helps build confidence, study skills, openness which reduce on issues of deviant behavior.

The advancement of technology has also brought about a number of negative aspects, especially in the school set-up. It in a way encourages laziness in learners in that they are able to use various applications and internet facilities to answer work given to them by teachers. There are situations ^{where} learners will use internet facilities on a cell phone to ask teachers irrelevant questions during a lesson. In schools another disadvantage of using cell phones is cyber bullying. The children use the social media facilities to make fun of or insult and hurt their fellow ^{or} learner. Due to the difference of financial ability, not all learners can afford cell phones, hence, this ^{could} be another drawback.

Learners that are undergoing different changes pertaining to puberty tend to misuse the internet services on their phones through the watching of age inappropriate material, which can be damaging ^{to} them psychologically. There is also concern of lack of concentration during classes or lessons in the sense that the cell phones can be a distraction to the learners as their attention will be on the phones rather than the core business which is learning. During assessment or testing, ~~a~~ a disadvantage of having cell phones in schools is, they would encourage a lot of cheating and examination malpractice in that the learners will use the applications and services on the phone during the exam as well as before ^{Cont} in order to attain leakages. Lastly, cell phones can be a problem in a school setup when it comes to the channel of communication in that, if a child has a problem in school, instead of seeking assistance from the teacher or administration. They would communicate with their parents or guardians which will cause an issue due the administrations lack of knowledge of the problem or situation.

(7)

In hindsight technology has led to the improvement of human life. But ^{even} though this is the case, the introduction of cell phone use in schools without strict monitoring and supervision, could be very detrimental to the teaching and learning process which is the most cardinal aspect of education.

(3)

The simplest form of technology is the development and use of tools. Technology advancement has led to the improvement in human life, and therefore, one of the means of technology is the use of cell phones.

In line with the above statement, this essay discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

To begin with the advantages, the use of cell phone is important in schools for communication purposes. This simply means that members of staff or students will be able to communicate effectively within a short period of time. Not whereby one has to move from one department to the other, instead will use a phone call.

Secondly, the use of cell phones encourages research skills in the learners. This means that the learners would be able to research on their own and find information through the means of Google. Not where learners are been spoon fed.

Thirdly, learners would be able to read extensively. This means that through the use of cell phones, the students would be able to read solidly, and will have the reading skills. Whereby they would try by all means to read different books on the Internet.

Further, it reduces (on) the price of text books and costs like extra lessons fees. This is where one was suppose to buy a text book worth K150 but buys airtime for K5 and buy internet bundles and

start downloading the same book on the Internet and download a certain video on a certain topic where one didn't understand and learn it on the Internet through the use of the phone.

Furthermore, the use of cell phones in schools has an advantage for the teacher for it makes the work of the teacher very easy in terms of choosing the right teaching methods, the teaching and learning materials and resources. It will help the teacher to choose the appropriate education materials by looking at the age of the learners and the

The use of cell phones in schools have got alot of advantages where some of them are mentioned above. on the other hand, the use of cell phones in schools was disadvantage as mentioned below.

To begin with, the use of cell phones encourages learners into watching irrelevant movies. for example instead of a learner to watch educational movies would start watching pornographic movies which are not even benefiting them academically, which would cause deviant behaviours.

Secondly, it encourages laziness in both the learners and the teachers. This would happen where the teacher instead of going to class and teach the learners on 'one on one' discuss but will post the work on maybe whatsapp class group of which disadvantages those that using the advanced phones. In learners, it encourages learners not to study the work given by their lecturers or teachers. This is how laziness comes about.

Thirdly, the use of cell phones in schools would result into cyber bullying and child trafficking. This simply means that through the internet, one can be mocked by the unknown and also the known people. The learners may also be transported illegally by the unknown people due to the faking done on internet. For example, what happened recently by the mid June 2020 people were been fucked by inventing an K100 and earning K600 that encourage theft.

In conclusion,

Last but not the least, the use of cell phones in schools are disadvantaged for they could promote theft and boasting to the learners who have the means of acquiring cell phones and fake information could be spread through the use of phones.

Finally, the use of phones in schools have got advantages and that it has improved on connecting people of the world to another. And is disadvantage to learners for it would promote laziness in the and also deviant behaviours.

23
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Ans) From the time human being have been on this earth a lot of things have change due to the coming in of technology. Therefore, this piece of writing will discuss the advancement in technology on how it has led to the improved in human life, then show the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

Firstly, what is technology? Technology is the organization of knowledge for practical purpose. What does this mean? It means that people have in time used their knowledge to come up with things that will help them easy work. Indeed, human life has improved so much, some time way back, people need to move from places to places on foot which made them to take time to reach their destinations, communication was also very difficult (some were killed to single take information to other places, while others traveled far places).

Secondly, in this discussion let's look at the advantages that have come with technology by bring cell phones in schools. In this phones have really help learners in the sense that, learners are able to use cell phones for research purpose. In this wise, lots of learners can now learn and teach themselves in a lot of things. Some learn are able to do some research work for their study and their own understanding.

The other advantage of using cell phones in schools is that learners can access a lot of information and keep them for use. Long ago, students and pupil only had the liberty to access information which is not the case today. Today, students have all the books they need just on their tips on their smart phones and can use the information at any time they feel like.

The coming in of cell phones has also made work easy. However, most of the work can be done on the cell phones. That is, students are able to do their calculations on the phones, typing is also done on the phones, communication also is done on the phones etc. This means that work has been simplified and there is no need to start moving up and down for certain things to be done.

With the advantages, we can go on and on, but let's also take a look at the disadvantages that cell phones have brought.

Firstly is time, a lot of learners are just too much into the use of cell phones, and this has made most of the learner perform poorly when it comes to academic work. They have put their phones first, then lastly academic.

Secondly is they do not know when to use it and how to use it. The misuse of the cell phones by learner has made some do certain things that they are not allowed to do and see.

Lastly, even though cell phone have that space for storage, most of the learner store books that are not even necessary and still can't read those books they keep.

In conclusion, cell phones have come in order to change our way of life, so what is only need for us is know "when", "where" and "how" to use them.

College 6

Advantage in technology has led to improvement in human life.

- it helps to using cell phones in schools or college is that to ~~read~~ research something that required us to know what is good which we don't know
- it helps us to have to communication in different ways that we need
- it helps us to researching the exercise or question that we have so that find a way we answer them. other good is that to have communication some lecturers that we need them to help us to know the things that we can't do on that so that they correct us in a way that we will do our better and improvement at an
- College communication different kinds of programs that we have in our colleges or schools which are some people wants to know that things that will be.

Disadvantages of using cell phones in schools

- there are many things that going through which are disadvantages using cell phones in schools because of the poor some students and learners are impossible to effort themselves that which are not help them in their daily life such as here colleges we have many things to do like assignments, group discussion or anything that required us to research them cell phones in schools but some of them don't and other the other bad network or poor wifi that will nothing anything for them to understand other bad is that some lecturers are not cooperation to each other which it led us to have disadvantage cell phones in schools or colleges that is the reason we go through like these matters

10
40

15/40

15/40

Cell phones are devices that are used for communication, researching, downloading different informations, videos, keeping informations, and many other activities.

This piece of writing will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools. Starting with advantages of cell phones in schools, cell phones have so many advantages below are some of them.

Cell phones help for instance learners when researching information from internet. When students are given work to do it is very ^{easy to} find information on internet concerning to the work given. ~~that~~ at there are libraries in schools but they do not contain all informations.

Cell phones are very vital because they used to communicate with different people within and outside the country. Cell phones have made things easy in this generations rather than in the past.

Cell phones (are) act as a storage, this means that people use cell phones to store informations, videos, pictures, music and many more. This is very useful for students, computer workers, researchers, teachers and other people mostly work with soft copies materials.

The other advantage is cell phones are used as a teaching/learning aid. This means that learners or teachers can use cell phones as a teaching/learning resources. When a teacher for example forget a spelling of a word he/she can just a phone and search in a word or maybe a teacher is teaching about communication he/she can use a cell phone as a resource.

Turning to the disadvantages of a cell phones. Cell phones mostly disturb the lessons. This means that when a teacher is teaching learners with a phone will start face booking, what sapping, watching different things on internet while the lesson or lecture is taking place instead of ~~concent~~ concentrating to the lecturer.

Second is cell phones lead to laziness. In these days people are more used of internet, facebook and whatsapp and they spend more time just watching un rational things, hence they do not want to work. They spent more hours on internet than on work especially students.

This is (the reason) why ~~us~~ students ~~are~~ are graduating with low marks.

Third one is cell phones have leads female students into prostitutions. This is because some students are dependent they like to be on internet while they do not have money to buy bundles hence they will engage themselves in doing prostitution so that they collect money from men and buy bundles.

The other one is cell phones improve dullness in students this is because when students are given work to do they always consult from google or internet instead of thinking on their own.

SEA (6 course)

08/40

Advancement in technology has led to improvement in human life. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cell phones in schools, incoherent.

Advantage of using cell phone in schools, it is because some students need to searching for assignments or question for discuss the groups. Some people students interesting in their

cell phones in schools it is because of assignments or searching for some question and answers, or friends call to someone else. Many

students of using cell phones in schools, some student interesting in their use phone without attend ~~school~~ class. Student should

be off phone when ^{go} lecture come in class and teaching as students should be off

phone. Sometime you can not hear listen what topic ^{teaching,} because of phones in class.

Some students has led to improvement in human life, some students has not to improvement

in human life, they are not interesting in schools, they some student interesting in their

using cell phone in schools without attend that is not good using cell phone in schools.

It is because not improve in their school

students needs to stop using cell phones in school. Some students are not improvement

In human life because of using cell phone. Disadvantages of using cell phones in schools. Stop using cell phones in schools. Some pupils are not interesting in their school or class because pupils interesting in using cell phone in schools without class or attend.

Pupils to stop using cell phones in school and leave at home or keep room. But some pupils want to using phone, may some one or friend to help or send some money that is what pupils says but it is not good use phone in school. Bad of using cell phone in schools or class. May some pupils don't attend in class when lecture come in class and teaching so that you can attend in class? but some pupils can not attend of our class because of using cell phone in schools without attend in class.

It is important to communication with one another. To help someone to send using cell phone or researching for assignments. When someone ask what is the meaning of mark body, then someone to research for google. First you should understand the questions, then answers, introduction. Sometime students can not understand the research for google.

In most high school, the majority of the students own a cell phone. Whatever the rule are at their school about cell phone, student use them. Sometime they are taught by their teachers, but most of the time students get away with it. Incoherent ideas!

In human life because of using cell phone. Disadvantages of using cell phones in schools, stop using cell phones in schools, some pupils are not interesting in their school or class because pupils interesting in using cell phone in schools without class or attend.

Pupils to stop using cell phones in school and leave at home or keep room. But some pupils want to use phone, may some one or friend to help or send some money that is what pupils says but it is not good use phone in school. Bad of using cell phone in schools or class, may some pupils don't attend in class when lecture come in class and teaching is that you can attend in class? but some pupils can not attend of our class because of using cell phone in schools without attend in class.

It is important to communication with one another. To help someone to send using cell phone or researching for assignments. When someone ask what is the meaning of math body, then someone to research for google. First you should understand the questions, then answers, introduction, sometime students can not understand the research for google.

In most high school, the majority of the students own a cell phone. Whatever the rule are at their school about cell phone, student use them. Sometime they are caught by their teachers, but most of the time students get away with it.
Incoherent ideas!

Appendix 3.1: Request for Permission to Conduct the Study in Colleges of Education

School of Graduate Studies and Research
Great East Road Campus
P.O Box 32379

LUSAKA

20th January, 2019.

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of General Education
LUSAKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

I am a post graduate student at the University of Zambia on field research in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree ‘Doctor of Philosophy in Language and Literacy’. The theme of my study is *‘Optimizing Students’ Academic writing Skills at Tertiary Level: A Case of Selected Colleges of Education’*. The study is aimed at establishing what colleges of Education are doing to ensure that student teachers attain proficiency in academic writing.

The research is intended to capture data with regard to my research topic. The outcomes of this study will be purely for academic purposes in fulfilment of the partial requirements for the award of the said degree.

I therefore, request your good office for permission to conduct my research in selected Colleges of Education.

Your favorable response to my request will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Sr. Kasakula, Maureen C.

PhD. Student, UNZA.

Appendix 3.2: Ministry of Education's Permission to Conduct Research in Colleges of Education

All communications should be addressed to:
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education
Not to any individual by name

Telephone: 250855/251315/251283
251293/211318/251291
251003/251319



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

In reply please quote

No. MOGE/4/15/19

P. O. BOX 50093
LUSAKA

3rd July 2019

C/o The University of Zambia
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Great East Road Campus
P.O. Box 32379
LUSAKA.

ATT: Sr. Kasakula, Maureen

Dear Sir:

REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Refer to your request dated 10th May 2019.

I have no objection to your request as regards undertaking a research in the Colleges of Education. Permission is hereby granted.

However, I wish to advise that you pay courtesy call to the Provincial Education Officer in the Provinces you will visit for further instruction and guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr. Jobbicks Kalumba', written over a circular stamp.

Dr. Jobbicks Kalumba (PhD)
Permanent Secretary
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Appendix 3.3: Ethical Clearance Letter from the University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
APPROVAL OF STUDY

4th December, 2020.

REF NO.HSSREC-2020-MAR-002

Maureen Chishala Kasakula
LUSAKA

Dear Ms. Kasakula,

RE: “OPTIMIZING STUDENT ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS AT TERTIARY LEVEL: A CASE OF SELECTED COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA”

Reference is made to your protocol dated 1st September, 2020. HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC-2020- MAR-002
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 10 th December, 2020	Expiry Date: 9 th December, 2021
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	9 th December, 2021
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	• English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

Conditions of Approval

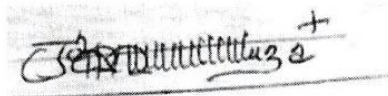
- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled "late submissions" and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.

- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.
- A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where noted above regarding subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. J. Mwanza
DR. JASON MWANZA
 Dip. Clin. Med. Sc., BA.M.Soc., PhD

CHAIRPERSON
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - IRB

cc: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
 Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
 Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Appendix 3.4: Participant Information Sheet



HSSREC FORM 1b

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Telephone: +260-211-290258/293937

P O Box 32379

Fax: +260-211-290258/293937
Zambia

Lusaka,

E-mail drgs@unza.zm

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Please read this document and sign below only if you accept to take part in the study. Your signature is required for your participation in the study. If you need a copy of this form, it can be provided for you.

Introduction:

This study is entitled '*Optimizing Students' Academic Writing Skills at Tertiary Level: A Case of Selected Colleges of Education*' is directed by a PhD Student in Literacy and Language Education at The University of Zambia. The document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in the study.

Description of the Study

You are invited to participate in the study on 'Optimizing Student's Academic Writing Skills at Tertiary Level' 'The study is trying to investigate what Colleges of Education are doing to optimize student teacher's academic writing skills.

Time Frame of the Study

The data collection process will take approximately six months.

Risk and Benefits

In the course of participation in the study,

- You may experience fatigue as a result of the period required to complete the interview.
- You may experience emotional discomfort in the process or responding to the interview.
- Direct benefits from the study are not guaranteed although your participation gives you an opportunity to contribute to a study that may help the Zambian community in the area of Literacy and Language Education in general and particularly academic writing.

Confidentiality

All the information collected in this study shall be treated as confidential and no unauthorized person shall have access to the information. To ensure there is confidentiality, the data collected will have no identification information.

Participation Rights

Participation in this study is on voluntary basis. If in the process you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences for you.

- All personal identification information will be kept confidential and the responses will be kept under lock and key in respect to The University of Zambia Regulations. In case of the publication of the research findings, your identity will still remain undisclosed.

Voluntary Consent

I have read and all the information about this research has been explained to me as contained in the participants’ information sheet. I had an opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I now consent to voluntarily be a participant in this study and I fully understand that I have the right to end the interview at any time, and to choose to answer or not to particular questions that are asked in the study.

My Signature below says that I am willing to participate in this research.

Participant’s Name (printed).....

Participant’s Signature: Consent

Date.....

Appendix 4.1: Students' Score Results According to Colleges

Total Score	College A (n=18)	College B (n=18)	College C (n=18)	College D (n=20)	College E (n=20)
<i>Score/</i>	12	17	16	14	8
<i>40</i>	14	18	19	16	10
	15	18	20	17	18
	15	21	21	18	18
	17	21	21	19	19
	18	21	22	21	19
	19	20	22	23	20
	19	20	22	24	20
	20	20	23	24	20
	21	22	24	26	21
	22	23	24	26	22
	22	23	24	28	22
	24	23	26	28	22
	25	25	26	28	24
	28	27	26	27	24
	28	31	28	30	26
	28	31	28	31	26
	31	31	29	31	32
				35	30
				35	37

Source: Field Data

Appendix 4.2: Errors and Comments on Students' Written Essays

1. falsefully – (error underlined)
2. secretly (error underlined)
3. The- capitalising-corrected (error corrected)
4. Brown Spenser (error underlined)
5. fullstop (error underlined)
6. adds (correction made)
7. fourthly (error underlined)
8. attemping (error underlined)
9. smosting (error underlined)
10. you did not understand the first part of the question (error explained)
11. you must consult your lecturers before you write the assignment
12. very good work (76%) [block percentage marks not assigned per tick] (praise)
13. according to Mutonga (2013) elaborated that (error underlined)
14. reference writing must be improved
15. reference writing must be improved
16. improve immediately
17. wrong references (error identification and explanation)
18. You must study hard and consult the lecturer before you write an assignment (68%
Good though) (information and praise)
19. plane (sp. circled) (error identified by circling)
20. ordere (error underlined)
21. It capitalisation (error underlined)
22. the trick (error underlined)
23. discuss about (error underlined)
24. is this the spelling? (question)
25. use your own examples (instructive)
26. to say that (correction made)
27. show when you are about to write an example
28. Is this one sentence? Be clear in your writing.
29. Jean has swallowed the pot (error underlined)
30. 1993, (correction made)
31. have few words (error underlined)

32. them conscience and easy (error underlined)
33. Thomas 1938? p.78 (question mark)
34. use recent books please!!! (instructive)
35. voice(s) (error circled)
36. you have not adequately covered the second part of the question (explanation made)
37. If (,) (error circled)
38. states that (error crossed)
39. a thing (") (error circled)
40. ^ (omission indicated)
41. needed two examples (directive made)
42. ? (question mark)
43. ^ omission because.... (identified and corrected)
44. ^ (omission indicated)
45. (".) full stop first. (error circled and corrected)
46. remain(s) (error circled)
47. voice (:) (error circled)
48. use inverted commas for examples used
49. ^ (omission indicated)
50. spelt differently in the references (explanation)
51. in the voice sentences (error underlined)
52. because.... (directive)
53. } What is the relevance of this quote? (error identified and probing question asked)
54. Do not write as if you are talking
55. use your own words as much as possible
56. incomplete (error explained)
57. understand the differences between these two voices how? (error underlined)
58. You can be able to say (error underlined)
59. Not on your reference list (informative)
60. what are the uses of the two voices? (question)
61. So what is your conclusion? (question)
62. Q? (question asked)
63. is (error cancelled)
64. covered (error cancelled)
65. //(directive)

66. ----omission of indentation indicated (error indicated by dashes)
67. R (capital letter inserted) (error corrected)
68. underline titles please (informative)
69. Sir names only (informative)
70. According to Noamy Chomsky (1981:105) he stated that (error underlined)
71. could Wt? (error underlined and explained with a symbol for wrong tense)
72. Complete name is for the reference list!
73. Spenser Arnold In text citation requires a sir name only (error underlined and explained)
74. Says who? (question)
75. Halliday M.K (1976:19) (error underlined)
76. Ramlan D.K (1978) (error underlined)
77. Bear K (2008:11) (error underlined)
78. wrong (error explained)
79. (we) [ww] (error identified by circling and explained using rubrics)
80. transforms the function of (error underlined)
81. not true (informative)
82. Carstairs Cathy (error underlined)
83. we (ww) (error identified and explained using rubrics)
84. ^ omission (year) (error identified and explained)
85. Authors' Sir-name is followed by year of publication (error explanation)
86. wrong
87. Do not miss some suffixes that look like empty morphemes but have a functional role (instructive)
88. We (ww) (error identified and explained)
89. Avoid personal pronouns
90. Routledge (error circled)
91. A publisher and not a name of a person
92. take note of the comments
93. (LG)(error circled)
94. Longman (error circled)
95. (JP) (error circled)
96. English Grammar (error underlined)
97. New York (error circled)

98. (PL;) (error circled)
99. Write the names in full to avoid failure of identifying authors (wrong advice)
100. Good connection of sentences and acknowledgement of data sources (praise)
101. Not correct
102. underline titles please
103. 92% excellent (Praise)
104. A very well written paper. (Praise)
105. Keep it up please! (Praise)
106. (1996) (error corrected)
107. “ (error corrected)
108. ^ defined language (omission error identified and corrected)
109. ? (question mark only)
110. ? (question mark only)
111. incomprehensive (informative)
112. Avoid writing assignments at gun point
113. you must be serious with academic work
114. reference writing must be improved
115. ? (question mark only)
116. ? (question raised with a symbol)
117. about sp (error identified and explained with a symbol)
118. define [defined] (error identified and corrected)
119. You must underline titles of published books
120. Your essay lacks cohesion and coherence
121. principle [principal] identified and corrected (error identified and corrected)
122. referes (error underlined)
123. slytest (error underlined)
124. its [ww] (identified and explained with a symbol)
125. ----- (error indicated by lines)
126. ----- (error indicated by lines)
127. ----- (error indicated by lines)
128. -----(error indicated by lines)
129. ^ (omission indicated by a symbol)
130. ----- (error indicated by lines)
131. -----(error indicated by lines)

132. Achebe, C. (error corrected)
133. explain the difference clearly
134. work on grammar
135. improve on reference writing
136. phrases (error underlined)
137. pays (error underlined)
138. English (error corrected)
139. about (error underlined)
140. English (error corrected)
141. is (error corrected)
142. has (error corrected)
143. states (error cancelled)
144. Mather (error underlined)
145. desire (error underlined)
146. You spent more time on information not answering the question given
147. you should have written more on the functions of a noun
148. Your references are not correctly written and punctuated
149. work on your grammar too
150. work on spellings
151. avoid tippex
152. 'we' [ww] (error identified and described using a symbol)
153. Do not confuse yourself. Derivational morphemes change word class
154. Give a precise introduction and conclusion
155. explain the differences in character clearly
156. work on reference writing
157. make corrections
158. Examples needed in some parts
159. handwriting could be improved on
160. put in reported speech
161. A fairly good attempt (praise)
162. You really did good work here (praise)
163. Are all ideas wrapped up in good language yours? All right 84%
164. A lot of grammatical errors
165. read more to improve (instructive)

166. You had points but expression was weak in many areas (strengths and weakness identified and explained)
167. avoid one sentence paragraph
168. English weak in some parts
169. Citation poorly handled but on the whole, you tried hard (strength and weakness identified)
170. your essay has no paragraphs
171. you ought to indent your paragraphs
172. pay attention to spellings
173. always proof read your work before submission
174. what is the meaning of this? (question)
175. Where is the title? (question)
176. work on your grammar
177. he/she (error corrected)
178. describes (error corrected)
179. ; (error identified)
180. etc. (error explained)
181. VARIES (error underlined)
182. title should be in bold print or any other font which would distinguish it from other parts of the reference (instructive)
183. receive 'c' (error underlined and explained with a symbol)
184. massage w/w (error underlined and described)
185. messages 'sp' (error underlined and described with a symbol.)
186. ^ (keyton 2010) (error underlined)
187. (also) (error circled)
188. started 'T' (error identified and described with a symbol)
189. ^ ??? (question marks only)
190. to 'Str.' (error underlined and described with a symbol)
191. receiver (error underlined and corrected)
192. explain (underlined and corrected)
193. send er (error correction)
194. process (underlined and corrected)
195. being s (error corrected)
196. massage w/w (underlined and error described with a symbol)

197. To the source the receiver or destination is technically known as decoding
(underlined and a probing question ‘meaning?’ written on top)
198. message (error underlined)
199. a message w/w (error underlined and described with a symbol)
200. will enables Str.(error underlined and described with a symbol)
201. feedback this is the Repet. (error underlined and described with a symbol)
202. he define (error underlined)
203. accept s (error underlined and correction made)
204. adjust ‘T’(error underlined and described with a symbol)
205. what? (question asked)
206. ^ Pun. (omission error identified and described with a symbol)
207. he/she (omission error corrected)
208. went ‘T’(error identified and described with a symbol)
209. process (error underlined)
210. much (error underlined)
211. is (error crossed and correction made)
212. ^ Pun. (omission error indicated and explained with a symbol)
213. define s (error underlined and corrected)
214. ‘it’ (error corrected)
215. message (error crossed)
216. receives ‘sp’(word underlined and explained with a symbol)
217. Pun.(omission error of a full stop identified and described with a symbol.)
218. all message (error underlined and described with a symbol)
219. principle ww (error underlined and described with a symbol)
220. basic (error underlined and explained with a symbol ‘c’)
221. to (error corrected ‘of’)
222. improve s (error underlined underlined and correction made)
223. effective attending also (error underlined with question marks ??? included)
224. ^ (omission error identified)
225. ^ being (omission error identified and corrected)
226. most interpret the sender’s attention??? (error underlined and explained as ‘not clear’)
227. You should have a written, precise introduction and conclusion
228. You must be serious with academic work

229. put in reported speech
230. not very clear
231. revisit study skills (in
232. Discuss (error underlined)
233. please make sure your points are clearly explained
234. fairly good
235. explain
236. ?? (question)
237. question not answered
238. incomplete
239. grammatical sentences (error underlined)
240. // (error indicated with a symbol)
241. // (error indicated with a symbol)
242. // (error indicated with a symbol)
243. not necessary
244. improve language use
245. improve your handwriting
246. good try!!!
247. references lower case
248. please revisit study skills on referencing
249. not clear
250. incompleted (error underlined)
251. not really (
252. devise sp (error explained with a symbol 'sp')
253. forget (error underlined with comment 'really')
254. observation (error underlined)
255. tabrarasa (error underlined)
256. incomplete!
257. us (error circled and question asked; 'with who')
258. not clear
259. source
260. not clear
261. Robert, (2007: 162). Stipulates that (error underlined)
262. improve your essay organisation (informative)

263. paragraph your work properly (informative)
264. revisit your sentence construction (informative)
265. reading is reading (error underlined)
266. reader read (error underlined)
267. be neat (informative)
268. introduction incomplete (informative)
269. Sapir, (1921:8) . Defined (full stop error circled)
270. please write neatly (informative)
271. write neatly (informative)
272. Hall (9168) Alluded that ('that' error circled)
273. Use direct quotation (directive)
274. Complex human polysemous (error underlined)
275. please check spellings and punctuation
276. definition sp. (error explained with a symbol)
277. English (correction made by Capitalising 'E')
278. Write neatly and have your work edited
279. good try (praise)
280. Is this the Sir Name?
281. write properly
282. punctuate your letter
283. depicts sp. (Error identified and explained with a symbol)
284. Many purpose (error underlined)
285. punctuate your work properly
286. punctuate your entries properly
287. referred sp. (Error identified and explained with a symbol)
288. improve introduction
289. improve the paragraphing
290. improve summary skills
291. edit your work
292. please revisit study skills
293. question not answered
294. improve your introduction
295. source? (question)
296. write neatly

297. improve!!
298. please write neatly
299. please revisit study skills
300. wrongly answered
301. some steps are left out
302. what is this?
303. excellent
304. good try
305. incomplete
306. not very clear
307. how?
308. please make sure that you fully understand the question
309. fairly good (praise)
310. revisit study skills for direct quotations
311. source
312. try to analyse the different definitions
313. revisit study skills on citation
314. good (praise)
315. use town of publication
316. too long!!
317. you were to explain how you would teach
318. question not fully answered
319. please revisit study skills on referencing
320. improve your introduction
321. faster (error corrected)
322. page number
323. extrinsic (error underlined)
324. therefore, (correction made by inserting a comma)
325. please revisit study skills on referencing
326. show clear evidence of research
327. improve introduction
328. page numbers
329. do not write like notes

330. improve your summary skills
331. please have your work edited
332. please revisit referencing skills
333. have your work typed
334. check your spellings
335. your (error circled followed by a question; 'who?')
336. good attempt
337. please make sure you read and understand what you read
338. have your work edited
339. do not break words anyhow
340. improve your summary skills
341. make sure your margins are properly drawn
342. please edit your work and make proper sentence construction
343. explain points clearly
344. improve your research skills
345. improve your citation skills
346. make sure your essay is passive
347. fairly good (praise)
348. fairly good (praise)
349. improve introduction
350. maybe we are (error underlined)
351. we are (Question asked 'who are the we?')
352. coping sp. (error identified and explained by a symbol)
353. Teacher (error corrected by capitalising 'T')
354. discussing with (error underlined)
355. according to him 'question asked 'who'
356. have your details typed
357. check spellings
358. be formal
359. please make sure you cite the source to support your thought
360. make sure your essay is passive
361. cite sources to help you discuss effectively
362. please revisit study skills in referencing
363. make sure your essay is passive

364. And so?
365. improve summary skills
366. endurance the pain sp.
367. check what Maxwell says
368. publicized error underlined
369. not necessary
370. please revisit your study skills
371. no new work in conclusion- summarise your work
372. make sure your points are enough to help you answer the question adequately
373. improve your margin lines (informative)
374. good
375. is the reason to
376. show clear evidence of research
377. please read more
378. make sure your work is typed
379. improve your introduction
380. draw proper lines and have your work typed
381. improve your introduction
382. cite properly
383. make sure your essay is passive and avoid all the don'ts
384. cite situations which help you answer the question
385. please check referencing skills
386. revisit study skills for direct quotations
387. try to analyse the different definitions
388. revisit study skills on citations

***28 /100 essays had ticks with no comments.

Publications:

1. Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Primary Schools in Zambia -International Journal of Current Science **IJCSP22B1004**
2. Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Primary Schools in Mungwi District, Zambia- International Journal of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (**IJLCLE**)
3. Optimising Students' Academic Writing Skills in Colleges of Education in Zambia- International Journal of Current Science Publications (**IJCSP**)