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Contents

Influence of Time Management and University Climate on Student Study Habit in The South-West, Nigeria

Toward A Better Writing: A Skill of Enhancement and Self Development

Public Relations in Electioneering Process for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Rationale for Students' Involvement in Cultism as Expressed by Undergraduates of Tertiary Institutions in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Government Budgeting for Human Capital Development: A Review of Educational Sector Financing in Nigeria

Students Social Media Competencies and their Attitude towards Adopting Blended Learning Mode of Instruction

An Overview of Family and Community National Security

Security Education and the Teaching of Basic Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future

Second Language Influence on First Language Performance: Appraising Yoruba-English Bilinguals

Electronic Database Resources and Digital Literacy Skills as Determinants of Nigerian Undergraduates' Library Use

Enhancing the Financial Capabilities of Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria for Sustainable Development: A Case for Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron, Akwa Ibom.

Mathematics Education: A Panacea for Sustainable Development

Mind and Giftedness: A Philosophical Examination of Gifted Education

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Editorial Comment

The ***Journal of Capital Development in Behavioural Sciences*** is now out with its third volume! Our conviction that the journal will definitely continue to wax stronger is being further justified. This two-numbers-in-one volume also contains rich articles that have been well edited by our team of erudite scholar-reviewers, editors as well as the obviously committed in-house editors at the prestigious College Press, Jericho, Ibadan which is the publishing arm of Lead City University and its subsidiaries. It is our assurance that you will find in the volume a fountain of well researched knowledge.

Thank you.

The Editorial Team

Contents

Pages

1. Influence of Time Management and University Climate on Student Study Habit in the South-West, Nigeria
Afolakemi OREDEIN and Nyingmah Odilia NKEH 1

2. Toward A Better Writing: A Skill of Enhancement and Self Development
Musibau Adebayo LAWAL 17

3. Public Relations in Electioneering Process for Sustainable Develoment in Nigeria
Lukman Adegboyega ABIOYE 28

4. Rationale for Students' Involvement in Cultism as Expressed by Undergraduates of Tertiary Institutions in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State
Aminat Adeola ODEBODE, Bukola SAIDU, Habibat T. YUSUF and Kabir O. ADEGUNJU 47

5. Government Budgeting For Human Capital Development: A Review of Educational Sector Financing in Nigeria
Yunus Kayode ADEIGBE and Joshua Adewale ADEJUWON 59

6. Students Social Media Competencies and their Attitude towards Adopting Blended Learning Mode of Instruction
Esther F. FOMSI and Chinagorom CHISOM 74

7. An Overview of Family and Community National Security
Taiwo Adebanke OLA 88

8. Security Education Teaching of Basic Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future
Joy-Telu HAMILTON-EKEKE, Esther Benafegha ENAREGHA and Regina Patricia ABAM 104

9. Second Language Influence on First Language Performance: Appraising Yoruba-English Bilinguals
Bolanle Tajudeen OPOOLA 119

10. Electronic Database Resources and Digital Literacy Skills as Determinants of Nigerian Undergraduates' Library Use
Azeez Adebamgbola ADEOYE and Basirat Jumoke ADERIBIGBE 140

11. Enhancing the Financial Capabilities of Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria for Sustainable Development: A Case for Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron
Mkpandiok ARIT and Ukpai Ukpai ENI 158

12. Mathematics Education: A Panacea for Sustainable Development
Christianah Olajumoke SAM-KAYODE 177

13. Mind and Giftedness: A Philosophical Examination of Gifted Education
Akeem AMODU 188

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Toward a Better Writing: A Skill of Enhancement and Self Development

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Abstract

Writing, a skill of academic excellence which is also the visible aspect of literacy is one of the four basic language communication skills. The other skills are speaking, listening, and reading. There is no proper way in which a person can be adequately enhanced and developed without writing ability. In this paper, an attempt is made to highlight some of the skills of writing required of each and every individual that will enable him/her to be an effective writer as to allow the writer accomplish his/her objectives in the field of academic and outside it. The themes of the topic focuses on purpose, problem, the writing process which entails planning, drafting, revising, proofreading, writers block, tips and how to use writing to convey and creates. Conclusions are drawn that writing is a social act which reflects the writers communication ability and recommendation are made that to be an effective writer, there are some tips to be followed such as basing his prose on fact; stay simple, brief and exact, avoid business jargon, overused phrases and terms. Lastly, the writer is expected to make use of creative, accurate and result oriented while one is writing.

Keywords: Writing; literacy and intellectual exposition of the kind of writing present in students. Enhancement; this is an improvement that makes something more agreeable. Self Development; a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage on self-effort

Introduction

Writing is the visible aspect of literacy, it is a way of presenting ideas in print and it is one of the four basic language skills (Lawal, 2015). Writing is a social act which reflects the writer's communication skill and which is difficult to develop and learn especially in Arabic/English as a foreign language context (Lawal,2015)) The aim of writing is to communicate by clearly conveying what the writer encodes which the reader rightly decodes. To achieve this, both parties have to abide by "game rules" these are certain rules the writer has to use to organise the structure into a coherent whole with regard to a particular topic. "Game rule" are what give both the writer and the reader a shared linguistic knowledge for communication (Mao, 2002). It is these rules that the researcher is interested in which can lead learners to better writing.

To be effective in accomplishing their objectives, lecturers as well as students, individuals, leaders, and follower are bound to acquire certain skills. Some of these skills are at times, natural, inborn or individual, like racy skill, leading to public speaking, reading, writing, preaching, giving advice, listening and managing time. Others are group skills like forming and chairing committees, arranging and chairing meetings, group writing, audio visual, talking to the media and establishing local organizations. The other aspect of this paper focuses on how to use writing for growth and self-development through a lively string of practical limitation. The themes of this topic are discussed under the following sub-headings. purpose, and problems; while the writing pedagogy which includes, planning, drafting, revising and proofreading writer's Block; tips and how to use writing to creates and convey.

Purpose

Writing must be purposeful because it is a multi-faceted tools. We write to learn, to inform, persuade, inspire, or even threaten others (Lawal, 2015). It is important to write well because writing can:

- Make ideas and information permanent in a form easily accessible for reference and duplication;
- Move others to act according to its message;
- Free up the writer's time by enabling his ideas to be duplicated and distributed among wider audiences;

- Guide and direct learners by communicating new or different ideas in a precise manner;
- Establish credibility and authority by introducing the writer to the reader;
- Increase chances for success by precisely and permanently spelling out choices or courses of actions;
- Be a very effective means of da'wah (evangelization). (Altalib, 1993)
- As a tool of communication with others, writing must be sharpened through practice. Our choices of words and subject matters are very important in making our writing not only clear and precise but also understandable and interesting.

Problems

Among the problems exhibited by students of Arabic, according to West African Examinations Council May/June Chief Examiner's report of 2005 are; students' inability to express themselves in eloquent Arabic, making grammatical mistakes, and shallow knowledge of modern Arabic at a time. Specifically, in a composition, there was the use of second person singular pronoun in a composition of a "give an account of your first day in your school" as if they were giving "account" of the partners' instead of referring to themselves. Also student responsible to questions on walimat ceremony which you have witnessed fell short of expectation. They wrote irrelevant things instead of explaining the walimat ceremony, they mentioned people for whom it was organised and failed to state rationale behind the ceremony.

Commenting on the chief examiner's report of the West Africa School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) November/December 1992, Awodele (2003) observed that the report shed more light on poor performances of candidates' written English, stating their problem as follows:

> Candidates, most of them cannot write acceptable English sentences. The problem is not only grammatical but also semantic. Many a time, one barely understands what the candidates write. There is a general lack of sensibility to idioms of English, resulting in several ungrammatical collocations. In addition to the above, mechanical accuracy has not improved,

over 90% of the essays had zero under this aspect. We can only appeal to the students to be careful with spellings, punctuations, concordant, etc. (p.84).

Among the most common mistakes that writers make according to Altalib (1993) are:

- Researching and collecting too little or too much data.,
- Organizing the subject matter poorly,
- Failing to revise the first draft,
- Use of words or sentences that are too long,
- Expressing a writer-centred point of view,
- Directing the writing to wrong audience.

Other mistakes which are of grammar include the following:

- Reluctance,
- Run-on sentences,
- Clichés and over-used expressions,
- Lack of structures,
- Circhaic languages,
- Inadequate introduction and conclusion,
- Weak transition

It is expected of all learners, teachers, each and every a sundry to pay good attentions to developing our ability to write well because writing is a powerful and effective tool and a very important means of communication.

The Writing Process

Writing is a process that seems to be complicated but actually demands merely the accomplishment of few basic skills. It can be made easier if we understand our subject, purpose and our students (audience). Given that, we can minimize frustrations associated with writing by breaking up the process into manageable steps as identified by advocator of process approach to writing.

The process approach to writing focuses on, naturally on the process of writing as opposed to the end products, which has always been the

key to the product approach, learners are encourage to be collaboratively involved in planning, organising, drafting, revising (through "conferencing"), proof reading and editing. Language is concentrated on at a discourse levels, this is in contrast to the sentence level focus of the product approach.

The process approach started in the mid-1970s as a replacement for the product approach because of the limitation observed in the product approach: having its methodology rooted in imitation and mechanical grammar (Frith, 2006 and Nunan, 1991).

Yan (2005) posits that the process approach identifies four stages in writing: pre-writing, composing/drafting, revising and editing. The staged are recur sure or non-linear, and they interact with each other through process. The process approach requires and encourages learners to go through same stages as skilled writers do. This approach laid emphasis on linguistic skills over linguistic knowledge (Yan, 2005). Frith (2006) also identifies three key stages leading to publication in process writing, these are pre-writing, drafting and revising.

An important element of the process approach is the meaningfulness it brings to learners who make personal connection to the topic and come to understand the processes they follow when writing about it. This start with pre-writing and brain-storming to generate ideas and activate the schemata, which is one's background experience or world knowledge that allows a writer to relate personal experience to the topic and discover everything he or she wants to say (Yan, 2005).

Advocate of the process writing approach claim the steps (planning, drafting, peer-conferencing, peer-editing, redrafting, et cetera are often repeated when matured writers write, they assert that writing is recursive by nature. So teachers of process writing are expected to sensitize students to the steps, encourage collaborative learning arouse student's interest and make writing an interactive activity (Ming, 2006). Two well known models of the process writing approach are the Graves' (1998) process writing model and Flower & Hayes,(1981) cognitive model. The graves' model is linear and it includes ten stages:

Brainstorming-Planning-Quick Writing-Peer Conferencing-Redrafting-Peer editing-Writing final version-Publishing.

The Flower and Hayes' model, according to Ming (2006), is a recursive one made up of three parts: task environment, the writer's long term memory and writing processes. Writing processes influence and are influenced by the other two parts. The Graves' model offers teachers and students step by step guide through the writing process. The Flower and Hayes' model attempts to describe the writer's complex mental activities and thus provides writing teachers with valuable information on what factors to consider when designing and conducting a lesson (Ming 2006)

Ming (2006) and Chastain (1988) observe that the process writing approach shifts teacher's attention from what students produce to how they produce it and from criticizing writers to creating writers. The process writing approach was quite popular in English Second Learner Teaching situations. A study conducted by Okedara and Oden (2002) showed that the process approach was more effective than teaching composition in English Second Leaner's pedagogy. Instruction in process writing was found to have contributed significantly to differences in the writing achievement scores of the subjects. The findings are consistent with research findings on the usefulness of the process approach over the product approach. The findings also revealed that the subjects who received the writing instructions obtained significantly higher scores in terms of coherence, sequencing and generation of ideas, analysing and synthesising, explanation and details.

The process approach to teaching writing emphasises the writer as an independent producer of text so that teachers allow their students time and opportunity to develop the abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose an evaluation solution. Response is said to be crucial in assisting learners to, move through the stages of writing process and various means of providing feedback are used, which include teacher-student conferencing, peer response, audio tape feedback and reformulation (Hyland, 2003).

Therefore, this approach has been seen as an effective approach in the teaching of writing and has been widely applied by many scholars, like Horotwitz (1986), Tribble (1996), Badger and White (2000), Frith (2006) and Yan (2005). The reason for this according to Badger and White(2000), is that it allows students to understand steps involved in

writing and recognises that what learners bring to the writing classroom contribute to the development of the writing skills.

The Pre-writing Stage/Planning

The pre-writing stage or planning stage includes consideration of audience and purpose in addition to generation of ideas and organization of text (Hedges, 1997). Writing begins with planning, this means thinking about what can and may be written about the subject at hand. i.e. topic which the writer is developing. It can also mean taking notes, i.e. jotting down of points as it comes to the writer's mind, making list, or creating a rough outline of ideas being presented. We jot down the idea and supporting details so that we will not mix a point or present the ideas in an unorganised manner. The thinking, verbalizing, and imagining that precede putting the first word down are just as important as the mechanic of writing the entire piece.

Organizing

The rough outlines of ideas are not in sequential order, and if the students try to arrange the ideas in sequential order before writing such ideas down, they might forget some or most of the ideas and such memory lapses could rub them off rich and useful ideas.

At this stage, students will have to sort their ideas into sequential order. In doing this, reluctant ideas will be dropped. The useful point will be sorted into main ideas and supporting details in the order in which the composition will be written.

Composition/Drafting

To start writing, the first draft must be prepared in concise form, using more words than necessary and avoiding ambiguous words that will confuse the idea being conveyed. While doing so, we must keep the reader and their ability to comprehend the main idea in mind, or use of descriptive examples can often clarify difficult ideas. The time allocated to drafting is well-spent, because the drafting is the foundation of the written piece, once it is ready, we review it to recognized usable element ideas, examples and style of that we may develop them in the revision stage. We should be prepared to throw out part of or all of the draft if it does not work.

Revising

Revising can significantly improve our draft. We go over it to remove unimportant details and clarify any vague ideas. However, revision is not to be considered merely a mechanism for fixing the first draft; it should be treated as a means to create the final product. In this phrase of writing, it is not unusual to change a major portion of our work, its tone, or the point of view from which it is written. This is the time to eliminate any confusion.

Proofreading

When the final draft is ready after one or more revision of the rough or first draft, we then proofread the final manuscript to check for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. For quick reference, it helps to have a dictionary and a handbook of grammar rules. We should make it a rule that if we do not have time to proofread, we do not have time to write. Some people regard the writing at this stage as a finished product and it should be submitted for assessment or publication without any further delay. But all good writers know that when they carefully go over their work, they often find a word, a phrase or a sentence which does not seem to convey the ideas that they are trying to put across. Such word, phrase, or sentence will be replaced by a more suitable one. In short, proofreading according to-Sheal and Attalib (1993) to re-structure faulty sentences, ensure the use of appropriate words to express desired meaning, ensure that sentences and paragraphs are properly checked for correct spelling of words and use of appropriate punctuation marks, to ensure that all the conventions of writing are strictly adhered to.

Writer's Block

Writer's block is a situation or a state of condition where the writer seems to be struck and can't think of another word to write about his/her subject (Attalib, 1993). Several strategies might help to overcome this condition. For example, we could:

a) Force ourselves to keep writing, such that one idea lead to another and we find we are slowly getting back to the subject;
b) Talk to someone about our dilemma, as in the process, generate new leads or ways of approaching the subject;

c) Leave our writing aside for a while and come back to it later with a fresh outlook.

Tips

Some tips for good writing according to Attalib (1993) include:

- Base your prose on facts; stay simple, brief and exact.
- Avoid business jargon, overused phrases and terms,
- Edit for a learner, crisper style, shorten sentences,
- Strengthen unnecessary words by changing noun to verbs,
- Avoid use of noun or adjective as verbs.
- Use the active by making subjects do the action.
- Avoid repetition of words; use synonyms instead.
- Start your first draft by jotting down all your relevant ideas and key words on a piece of paper. Do not worry about ordering and sequence at first; you can group into subsection later.
- Remember what the prophet (Salallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: "the best of words are those that are precise and concise.

Conclusions

Writing creates and conveys, it is one of the four basic language skills, and other three skills are speaking, listening and reading. Writing is a tool of leadership, it is a way of conveying part of you, your priorities, focus, and sense of direction to those you lead or teach. This is in tandem with the statement of Lawal (2015), who noted that writing, is a social act which reflect the writer's communication skill and which is difficult to develop and learn especially in Arabic/English as a foreign language and Arabic/English as a second language context. Students or learner can therefore think of many forms in which they can use writing to create and convey, for instance;

- Internal memos to staff and volunteer workers
- Speeches to members or the public
- Appointment or resignation letters to committees.
- Agreement with other individual and organisations.
- Briefs, working papers, or proposal for supervisors.
- Resolution or minutes of meetings.
- Loping essay or project writing

Students or learners should not write to just fill paper, but use the CAR formula, Be Creative, Accurate and Result oriented.

Recommendations

As a result of what the literature review contained and the problem stated above, it is therefore recommended that:

- Students and individuals should be given proper orientation on writing process so as to enhance self-development.
- Workshops or seminars should be organized for teachers and students as to enable them update their knowledge of writing skill.

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