W/righting Research Capacity Building: A Preliminary Model to Inform Writing Support Activities for African Researchers

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Abstract

This article contributes to the literature on research capacity building activities that specifically target researchers located at universities in the global South. It argues that although research capacity building activities, usually funded by development agencies in the global North, place some focus on the activity of writing for publication (particularly because of African researchers' low rates of publication in academic journals), such activities do not necessarily take into account theories and research coming from the field of writing studies. Therefore, to address this limitation, this article discusses a particular research capacity building programme that used its funding to focus solely on the activity of writing for publication. The authors reflect on learnings from this writer/writing coach relationship support programme and use them to propose a preliminary model. They recommend that this model could be used to inform the construction of writing support programmes being designed, implemented, and facilitated at African universities to address African researchers' challenges with publication. At this model's foundation is a writing coach who has two attributes: 1) an empirical understanding of the writers' specific contextual challenges with publishing; and 2) three theoretical understandings of writing informed by writing studies research: writing as process, writing as social, and writing as rhetorical.

Keywords: African universities, research capacity building, writing capacity, writing research, writing theory, writing support programmes

African Universities and Research Capacity

African researchers'[1] low rates of publication in international journals[2] have been well documented (e.g. Hofman, Kanyengo, Rapp & Kotzin 2009; Lillis & Curry 2010; Mouton 2010; Tijssen, Mouton, van Leeuwen & Boshoff 2006; Tijssen 2007). Some assume these low rates indicate African researchers are not involved in research activities or have limited capacities to do research. While we do not agree with either of these assumptions, the intention of this article is not to debate this issue but rather to draw attention to a new phenomenon in the world of development, which is the funding of research capacity building activities to address these supposed limited research capacities of African researchers[3]. For example, at the University of Botswana, workshops are conducted on a regular basis, through its Office for Research and Development, to develop its researchers' research capacities. Sessions focus on issues such as, manuscript writing, identifying funding

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[1] We are using the term African researcher to describe a researcher based at a university in an African country for an extended period, yet, not necessarily originating from an African country. For example, the writer whose experiences are discussed in this article, does not originate from South Africa, but has spent a significant period of time both studying and working in a South African university. Although this issue is important to the definition, more significant is her involvement in a research team based at an African university that is attempting to challenge mainstream assumptions about a particular social development issue in Africa.

[2] Lillis and Curry (2010) estimate that researchers from the global North, North America and Europe specifically, are responsible for 30% and 32%, respectively, of the world article outputs in the natural, social, and behavioural sciences, whereas researchers on the African continent are responsible for only 0.9%, with 0.6% of this attributed to South Africa alone.

[3] In further discussions about research capacity building and its place in the African university setting, it will be important to critically analyze the concept of capacity and what it means for the African researcher.

sources, writing research proposals, and ethical issues related to research. These activities are financed and facilitated both by the university as well as outside development funding, often coming from funders based in the global North in the form of grants. In addition to African universities involvement in such activities, development institutions, such as Canada's International Development Research Centre[4] (IDRC) also offer financial and other resource support to its partners in the global South for a wide variety of research capacity building initiatives. These can include mentoring and 'apprenticeship' programmes; training programmes; workshops; conferences; study tours; institutional linkages, partnerships, and/or twining arrangements; e-courses and programs; networks; infrastructure support; base budget support; awards, scholarships, fellowships, internships; and, publications and publication resource support (Lusthaus & Neilson 2005:9).

Although different types of research capacity building initiatives are being used to address African researchers' capacities, there is little discussion about the best practices to support researchers' writing capacities. To address this gap, this article reflects on lessons learned from an unconventional writing support programme funded by Canada's IDRC. The intention of reflecting on these learnings is to use them to begin building a potential model for writing support programmes. Such a model could then be implemented at African universities to support researchers as they write for publication. As these learnings will illustrate, at the core of the model is a writing coach who possesses two attributes: 1) an empirical understanding of African researchers' challenges in writing for publication, meaning he or she has empirically investigated the writing challenges scholars face when writing for publication; and 2) a theoretical understanding of the activity of writing, meaning he or she is well-versed in the wide body of literature on

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[4] Canada's International Development Research Centre is a Canadian crown corporation mandated, in 1970, by its government to fund Southern researchers to do research to find solutions to their countries' development issues. We have chosen to use it as an example for this article because it funded the research capacity building on which our discussion is based. In addition, it also has a strong reputation in the development community as playing a lead role in funding not only the researchers of Southern research but also the development of Southern researchers' abilities to do research.

writing theories[5]. As this reflective article will illustrate, the writer in this writing support programme was able to write two chapters for an edited collection produced by IDRC because the writing coach did the following: 1) empirically understood the writer's challenges writing for publication; 2) analysed and addressed these challenges by relying on the following three theoretical notions of writing: writing as process, writing as social, and writing as rhetorical.

The writing support process discussed here took place when the writer, Kathleen, was supported by Katie, the writing coach, in writing two chapters for publication. This article is based on reflections of the process that emerged from our discussions during and after the coaching relationship ended. These reflections have been used to collaborate in writing this article as well as inform a conference presentation we gave in September, 2010 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Teaching and Learning conference. The emerging reflections provide the catalyst for both this article and our conference presentation which explore the writing support process that emerged for us as we worked together. Specifically, it details the writer-writing coach relationship that formed between the two of us in November, 2010. It combines Katie's knowledge of writing theory, experience as a writing coach and teacher, and studies as a writing researcher with Kathleen's efforts and reflections from her role as writer and researcher in

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[5] Although such research capacity building initiatives could be instituted at universities and for researchers outside the African context, for example at universities in the global North, our focus is specifically on African universities. This is our focus because many of these institutions' low rates of research have led to the assumption that African researchers have limited research capacity. This assumption has then attracted the attention of many development agencies, as well as both Northern and Southern universities, to institute research capacity building programmes to address these supposed limitations. Therefore, it becomes more appropriate to focus on these initiatives in a Southern context, particularly those activities that are focused on writing; yet, are not guided by any empirical or theoretical understanding of the activity.

the field of Information and Communication Technologies for Development research[6].

      This article is structured in the following way: *First*, we discuss the key activities that took place during Katie's writing coaching time at IDRC and this experience's contribution to the writing support model proposed. *Second*, we explain the writing coaching relationship that formed between the two of us. *Third*, we discuss the various theories of writing that informed Katie's work as a writing coach, which are: writing as product, writing as process, writing as social, and writing as rhetorical. In discussing these theoretical ideas about writing, we also use them to analyse the writing-related challenges Kathleen experienced in documenting solutions used to address these respective challenges. In conclusion, based on this analysis, we propose a preliminary model that can begin to inform the design, implementation, and facilitation of writing support programmes at African universities in order to assist their researchers as they write for publication.

An Evolving Recognition of Writing in Research Capacity Building

Before discussing the theories of writing or how the actual writing support relationship worked between Katie and Kathleen, this section describes how IDRC's former Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) programme came to recognise the importance of writing within the larger context of research capacity building.

      Firstly, Katie started working for IDRC's Acacia initiative, the African regional branch of the ICT4D programme, in January 2010. She was contracted for one year to work part-time on the Acacia initiative work and part-time on her own research. The Acacia initiative focused on offering research funding and support to researchers in Africa who were investigating ways in which ICTs could address various development issues in this region. At the time of Katie's arrival, the team needed to write a final prospectus or

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[6] Although both Canadians, Katie is based at a public university in Botswana doing writing research and offering writing support for university students and researchers, and Kathleen is based at a public university in South Africa, doing her PhD and working as a development studies researcher.

end of five-year programme report for a team of external evaluators. The final prospectus report would summarize whether they met their original objectives from 2005, describe their funding allocations to various research projects during the 2005-2010 programme cycle, and share the key research findings and outcomes that had emerged from these funded projects. The Acacia team was responsible for an overwhelming portfolio during the 2010 closure year, and it was suspected that Katie's training in the field of writing studies, which people often assume means she is a strong writer[7], may have helped her secure her position with the Acacia initiative.

As for the final prospectus writing process, a writing coach approach was applied through collaborative writing. The Acacia team leader would explain the initiative's complex research findings and outcomes and Katie would sit at the computer, coach her through the ideas and try to construct these ideas into sentences that would be understood by an audience outside of ICT4D's tight-knit research community. This collaborative writing experience began to help the Acacia Team Leader understand what it meant for Katie to have a background in writing studies. Specifically, the Team Leader realized that coaching did not mean helping writers with grammatical issues but instead facilitated the construction of ideas intended for external audiences, and illustrated how one idea could link with another within the larger story. This particular experience began to show the Team Leader how Katie's abilities as writing coach could contribute to larger writing capacity building activities.

Besides the challenging writing output of the Acacia prospectus report, the team leader's own academic challenges around writing for research purposes came from writing her Masters dissertation. Katie offered her writing coaching assistance to address these challenges. For example, in May 2010, the team leader submitted her dissertation to be evaluated by her committee and she was slightly disappointed with their comments. To assist her, Katie went through the comments and offered some suggestions as to how she could restructure components of the document to address the committee members' concerns. It was also through this particular

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[7] It is important to note that the hiring committee and even the wider Acacia team seemed to have a difficult time understanding, as many people do, what it means to be a 'writing researcher' and a 'writing coach'.

collaboration that the team leader really understood Katie's approach to supporting researchers with writing.

As the Team Leader's paradigm shifted in terms of her understanding of writing and what it meant to be coached with writing for research purposes, she suggested Katie become involved in a writing support programme for ICT4D researchers in Africa. Unfortunately, the confirmed closure of the Acacia initiative meant there would be no financial support to fund such a project. Rather, Katie was hired as a consultant after finishing her research contract to coach the writers responsible for writing a final ICT4D book.

The Book and Writing Coach's Role

The idea of this book emerged from conversations amongst the global ICT4D team members after they realized the wealth of 15 years of research findings and outcomes of the programme after writing the final prospectus report. In July, 2010, this led to the launching of the ICT4D book project. The plan for the book was that members of this team would write co-authored book chapters and the ICT4D managers (Programme Leader and Team Leaders) would make up the editorial committee. Each chapter would focus on one of the global ICT4D research themes: infrastructure, access, regulations, health, governance, education, livelihoods, social inclusion, technical innovation, intellectual property rights, and evaluation.

Katie's role as this project's writing coach was to support the collaborative writing teams as they worked to produce a well-developed draft of their respective chapters. These chapters would then be submitted to the editorial committee for review and the writing teams would produce further drafts if required. In the end, there were eleven (11) different writing teams, corresponding with the number of chapters in the book. Katie worked with the teams but was only able to sustain a writing relationship with one of the chapter writers, Kathleen.

In Kathleen's case, she was the author of two book chapters with various experiences contributing to her participation as author. First, she had spent over three years working for the IDRC's Acacia initiative, first as a research intern, then as a professional development awardee, and finally as a research officer based in the institution's South African satellite office.

These positions provided her with a wealth of knowledge about the research in ICT4D, assisted her with the completion of her Master's dissertation in ICT4D, and allowed her to support the African ICT4D programme and its research partners in various research and administrative activities. More specifically, she had coordinated the gathering of the initial IDRC research findings around ICT4D in the themes of livelihoods and poverty reduction, making her the most suitable candidate to write these chapters.

The Writing Coaching Process

In terms of the writing coaching process itself, Kathleen and Katie would meet either weekly or bi-weekly on Skype to discuss her drafts. Typically, their conversations would last for approximately one to one and a half hours and they would take the following structure: Kathleen would talk about the chapter content and Katie would take notes to determine how Kathleen's knowledge, either in ICT4D livelihoods or poverty reduction, could be organized to structure the chapter's narratives. To do this, Katie would ask Kathleen probing questions about the chapters' subject matter, focusing specifically on various research projects' findings and outcomes. This focus on constructing a chapter narrative and illustrating the relationship between various findings and outcomes came from Katie's reading of the first draft of the chapters and seeing that many of the chapters lacked an overarching narrative or argument. Finding this overarching argument was a key challenge in writing all of the book's chapters because the writers were often overwhelmed and lost in the concreteness of reporting on the ICT4D projects' research findings. To address this issue, Katie tried to help the writers, after gathering all of the research findings and outcomes pertaining to one of the ICT4D research themes, illustrate what the findings meant in terms of using ICTs to address that particular development issue, such as poverty or job creation. To do this, many of the conversations and questions during the coaching sessions would revolve around Katie probing Kathleen about the findings' content and its significance for the larger field of ICT4D research.

During these coaching sessions, after Kathleen and Katie came to an agreed upon understanding of structure and its argument, Kathleen would go away and write about a particular component of the argument. Usually this

would require her to write between one to five pages so neither felt overwhelmed with reading and feedback. She would then send these pages to Katie, who would read them, comment on them using track changes, responding as a reader rather than an editor, and then send the chapter, with its comments, back to Kathleen. Once sending them back and giving Kathleen a short period of time to go through the comments, a Skype conversation would take place to discuss and clarify the comments. After this discussion, the process would begin again, discussing how Kathleen would structure the next section of the chapter or at least how to fit the chapter's next section into the evolving argument. This writing coach process went on for both chapters until late February, 2011. The end result was the completed, yet significant restructuring of, two individual chapters: one on the relationship between poverty and ICTs and one on local economic opportunities and ICTs.

Theoretical Framework: An Overview of Writing Theories

Having described the writing coaching process that Katie and Kathleen used to produce Kathleen's two chapters for the ICT4D book, this section outlines some of the key theories about writing that guide the coaching and teaching of writing, specifically in the post-secondary context, and, which we will argue, could potentially be added to any writing support programme that attempts to address African researchers' challenges with writing for publication. We will use each of these theoretical lenses to analyse three of the major writing challenges Kathleen experienced during our coaching relationship. Although each challenge overlaps these theoretical categories of writing, for the sake of simplicity, we have separated our analysis using each of the theoretical lenses. As we will argue through our analysis, there is value in using these particular theoretical lenses to understand and address Kathleen's writing challenges and a writing support programme will be strong if it is based on both empirical and theoretical ideas about writing.

Writing studies is a field of research that understands writing to be a social phenomenon. It combines hands-on writing practice with the study of writing. It is a field of research that has, since the mid-1960s, seen 'dramatic developments in the study and teaching of writing', as writing 'theorists,

researchers, and teachers have created a complex and detailed account of writing' (Paré 2007:1). These insights have emerged by:

> drawing on a rich variety of sources, including the classical rhetorical tradition of Greece and Rome, contemporary studies of cognition, the sociology of knowledge, research into academic and workplace writing, new literacy theories, the digital revolution, and the current cross-disciplinary fascination with discourse (Paré 2007:1).

Although conceptualisations of writing have shifted over the past decades because of this work, many university teachers and administrators still understand and teach writing as though it is a generic skill or product, equating it only with good style and the appropriate use of grammar (Hillocks 2007). For example, in the field of research capacity building, the few studies that discuss writing in the context of African researchers' challenges with publishing, tend to conceptualize writing using this 'generic skill' lens (e.g. Adewuyi 2008; Wight 2005). These authors argue that African researchers are challenged to publish because of their inadequate knowledge of grammar and the ineffective teaching of grammar at early levels of their national schools system. Thus, to remedy these issues, they suggest that research capacity building activities should understand and address these writing challenges by creating writing support programmes that improve African researchers' basic literacy, particularly by teaching grammar.

In drawing attention to the limitations of previous research on African researchers' challenges with writing, we are not diminishing the importance of thinking about writing as a product. Rather, we are trying to illustrate that our experiences from this coaching relationship highlight that we cannot only understand African researchers' challenges with writing to stem from product related issues. We are making this claim because our experience illustrated that Kathleen experienced much more complex issues when writing for research purposes than those solely linked to grammar or style challenges. Instead, as we will discuss, they were linked to process, social, and rhetorical issues. Furthermore, these non-product related challenges also need to be addressed using methods that understand writing

through these lenses. Based on this finding then, we propose that in addition to conceptualizing writing as product, one adopt a model that guides writing support programmes to address African researchers' writing-related challenges with publication through various lenses, which are writing as product, writing as process, writing as social, and writing as rhetorical (see Figure 1 below). The following section discusses these conceptualizations of writing in greater detail, how they have been put into concrete practice in the university writing classroom, as well as uses them to analyze the writing-related challenges Kathleen experienced during this process.

Figure 1: Proposed Writing Support Model (Bryant 2013)
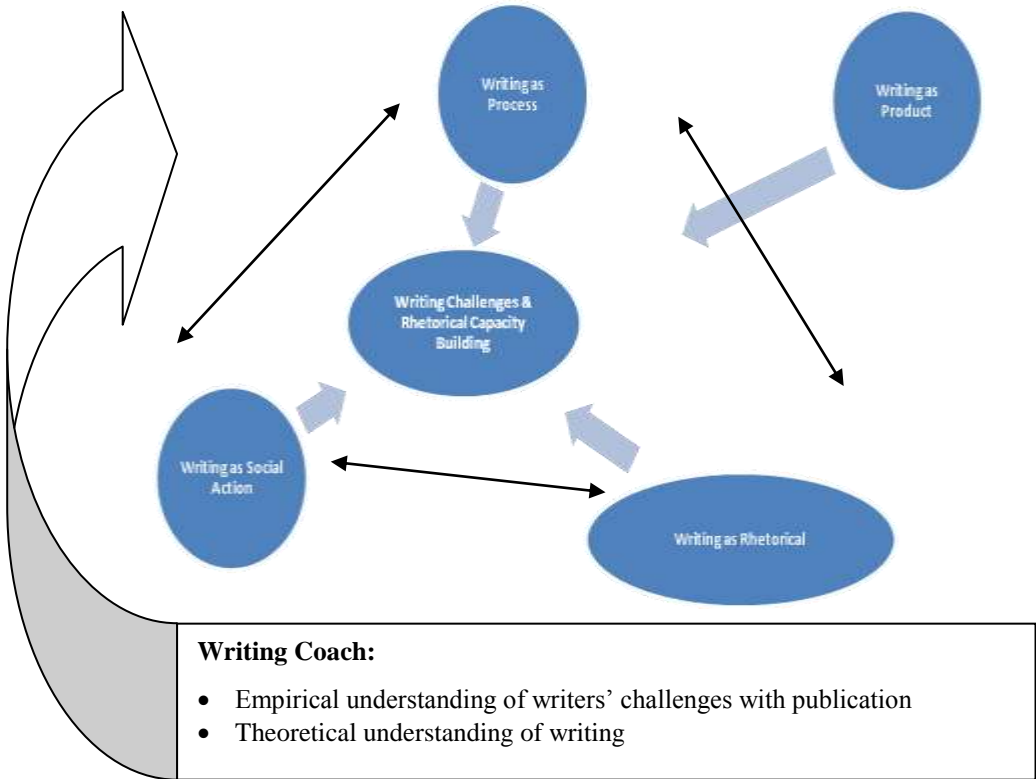
Writing as Product: Conceptualisation

Thinking about writing more broadly than just a product should not 'erase or diminish the physical fact that writing is also a product' because 'on the page or screen is a material object with sections, block quotes, paragraphs, headings, graphs, tables, pictures, boldface, italics, numbers, and other graphic resources that carry meaning', and writers need to understand that 'each of those separate sections *does* something, performs some function, makes writers and readers think in different ways' (Pare 2007:6). This also means that writers must write grammatically and follow and apply other rhetorical conventions appropriately when writing for research purposes, such as the rules of their respective disciplinary referencing style.

Although it is necessary to see writing as a product, challenges arise when it is the only understanding of writing used to make sense of writers' challenges and, thus addresses them in a limited fashion. This often leads to thinking about writing as a skill and decontextualized teaching practices that are based on the assumption that,

> [S]tudents must learn to write correct sentences, then paragraphs, and then some sort of longer theme, which, more often than not, turns out to be a five-paragraph theme. This model of what composition is continues to hold sway. It explains why grammar is strongly associated with writing and why out textbooks on writing devote so many more pages to grammar and usage than to rhetoric and writing (Hillocks 2008:312).

Nightingale (1988) argues that using this notion of writing to make sense of writers' challenges and the solutions to address these challenges comes from the public media as it tends to allege that 'low educational standards ... allow a generation of illiterates to be foisted upon unsuspecting employers' (265). The media advocates for improving the literacy issues of these illiterate graduates by 'set[ting] up some sort of fix-it programme [in tertiary institutions] to correct the problems left over from secondary education' (265). Such fix-it programmes are often guided by the 'assumption ... that if students learn to spell and/or punctuate, they will be literate at last' (Nightingale 1988:265).

This section has highlighted the need to think about writing as a pro-

duct and understand how to address writing-related issues that emerge at the final stages of writing, such as the editing stage. Yet it also illustrates that thinking about writing as product needs to come closer to the final stages of the writing process; therefore it cannot be the only way in which writing challenges are conceptualized and, thus, addressed. This means that any research capacity building programme for writing support must acknowledge the writing as product conceptualization of writing, as well as address product related issues, but it should not be guided by a model that only conceptualizes writing in this way.

Writing as a Process: Conceptualisation

The first conceptualisation of writing that needs to be added to any writing support programme is that of writing as process. Thinking about writing as a process was a highly significant paradigm shift that took place in the field of writing studies during 'the 1960s and 70s'. During this period, researchers acknowledged the 'temporal and developmental dimension of writing, [which] is a process, a gradual movement from blank page to screen to final text' and 'led to a revolution in writing theory, research, and pedagogy' (Paré 2007:5). Although this particular conceptualization of writing came from the expressivist and writing process work of Elbow (1973), Emig (1971), Macrorie (1980), Moffett (1968), and Murray (1968), it was also highly influenced by 'work in grammar, psychology, anthropology, and other fields' (Williams 1998:51). Notably, writing researchers came to see that behaviours were also a significant factor in writing, 'which resulted in more attention to examining and understanding the actions that give birth to writing' (Williams 1998:51). Contrary to thinking about invention being separate from logic, which influenced the conceptualization of writing as product, process movement researchers began to understand the significant role invention played in the activity of writing and worked to help students understand the key role of invention and various activities they could use to construct knowledge about their writing topic.

For example,

the ground-breaking work of Flower and Hayes (e.g., 1981) and others, demonstrated that expert writers engage in complex

cognitive, linguistic, and rhetorical processes as they compose. They are planning, setting goals, considering readers, producing and reviewing text, editing, revising, generating and organizing ideas, and so on. Inexpert writers, by contrast, are often stuck at the level of text production and they are engaged far too early in the editing and revision (Paré 2007:5).

The major idea in the early 1980s was that expert writers' processes should be studied and documented. Using this data, novice writers would be instructed by their writing teachers to use the various writing strategies of these experts and go through their stages of writing to become stronger writers. Although their research found a wide range of writing processes, the processes share the similarity in that that writing is a much more recursive activity than previously thought. This means that writing is not linear as writers often go back and forth between various stages of the writing process. Figure two below provides an example of one writing process:

Figure 2: Writing as Process Model
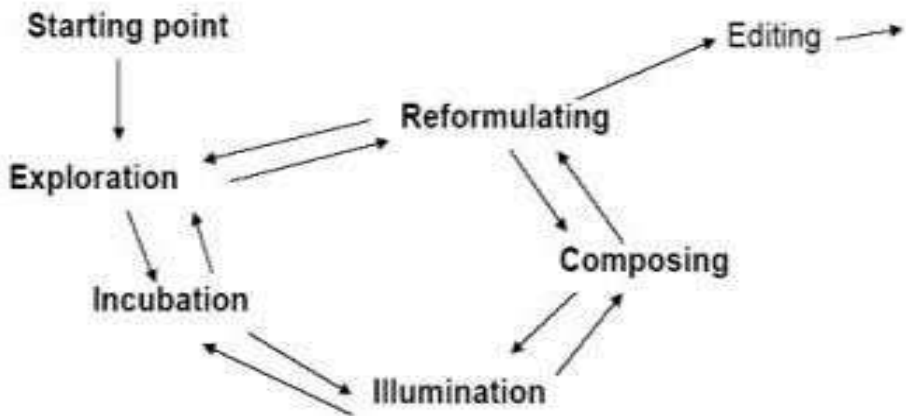
SOURCE: Freedman, The Carleton
University Writing Tutorial Service

To describe this writing process, one can use the example of a writing assignment in a university classroom. The *starting point* begins when the student receives and begins to go through the professor's assignment sheet. The *second stage*, the exploration point, occurs when the student participates in various exploratory activities, such as thinking about the various questions they might want to pursue, doing some preliminary reading and research on these topics, talking with friends and their professor, and so on. The *third stage* of this process, the incubation stage, happens when the student takes a break from thinking about their assignment and engages in unrelated activities, such as hanging out with friends. The *fourth stage*, the illumination stages, occurs when, by moving away from the assignment and taking break, the student can have a break-through realization about their paper. The *fifth stage* of the writing process, the composing process, is when the student actually sits down for an extended period of time to write their paper. It is important to note though, that the student should have been writing throughout the process, but this is the stage when they write for an extended period of time. The *sixth stage* of this writing process, the reformulation stage, is when the student makes large-scale changes to their texts. This is when they move large sections of their writing from one place to another, deleting or adding sections. This stage differs from the *final stage*, which is editing, when the student writer looks for and corrects more micro surface errors in their writing, such as grammatical issues, punctuation, and so on.

These new ideas about writing were important because they started to illustrate the important role invention plays in the writing process and the need to use writing to construct knowledge and not simply display knowledge. For example, Elbow's (1981) technique, free-writing[8] was a key tool used to help students learn how writing could help construct their understanding about a particular issue. This tool also gave students the opportunity to write for a short period of time without the pressure of thinking about grammatical and spelling issues, which can, at times, inhibit

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[8] Freewriting is the technique of writing for an extended period of time, usually ten (10) to twenty (20) minutes without stopping. Typically writers are given a prompt to respond to and asked to follow the rules of continuous writing and ignoring grammatical issues.

one's ability to construct a deeper understanding of the issue. In addition, thinking about writing as a process and designing writing assignments in ways that help students go through each stage of the process can help them understand the significant amount of time required to complete a strong piece of writing. Finally, thinking and research on writing as process also helps students understand and continue to develop their own individual writing process, particularly as they learn about what strategies they can employ at their various stages.

Writing as a Process: Challenge

Kathleen's first writing-related challenge occurred when the first draft of her chapter was heavily critiqued by the book's editorial team. By understanding writing as process though, we can see that the chapter's issues did not stem from poor writing abilities, but rather process-related issues. This happened because, at the early stages of planning the book, the editorial team did not fully understand what they wanted as the chapter's focus. For example, early in the book's development, the editors thought one of the book's chapters should detail research findings from ICT4D supported projects about how ICTs improved people's livelihoods in the developing world. After reading the first draft of this chapter though, they realized they had not originally supported research in this area and instead needed to structure the narrative into two different themes. The first would focus on how ICTs had impacted poverty levels and the second would be on how ICTs had affected local economic opportunities for citizens in the global South. Based on this realization, they asked Kathleen to split the original livelihoods chapter into these two separate chapters.

After this decision was made, as well as after some negotiating, Kathleen, with Katie's support, began working in earnest to reformulate this original chapter into two separate ones. Guided by the conceptualization of writing as process, Katie explained to Kathleen the need to restructure the chapter. This work started in late November, 2011 and finished in early March, 2012 and it was at this point that Kathleen and Katie's writing coach relationship was really solidified. Kathleen had originally assumed that the process was completed once she met her contractual obligations in writing the original chapter and submitting it to the editorial committee for review.

Upon getting this feedback on the chapter, Kathleen had to extend her contract in order to revise the two chapters. In contrast to Kathleen's assumption though, Katie, because of her theoretical understanding that writing is a process, assumed that after a first reading of these chapters, significant changes would be required, particularly because writing, guided by this lens, is a tool to determine one's knowledge or what one knows about a particular issue.

Guided by the conceptualization of writing as process, Katie explained to Kathleen why the chapter needed to be re-structured. This is important to note because rather than assume the chapter's challenges came from grammatical or literacy issues, the assumption most writing support programmes make when a piece of writing does not work, this theoretical understanding of writing helped Katie explain the chapter's issue and guide Kathleen through the next phase of writing. For example, when Katie presented the editorial team's feedback to Kathleen, it could be argued that Kathleen was able to continue working on the chapter because blame for needing to rewrite this one chapter into two separate ones was not placed on her abilities as a writer but because the editorial team needed to read a first draft to realize their supported research investigated issues of the relationship between ICTs, poverty, and local economic development, not livelihoods. Their challenges to understand the specific focus of the chapter most likely arose not only because of ICT4D's interdisciplinary nature but also because the findings and outcomes come from a newly emerging field of research. These things can make it difficult to understand how specific concepts and ideas fit together. Therefore, as the two worked together to write the larger chapter into two separate chapters, they focused heavily on illustrating the relationship between these concepts.

In concluding this section on writing as process and Kathleen's process related challenges, it is important to note that despite important ideas emerging about writing from process theorists, there were also limitations. Specifically, they were critiqued for conceptualizing writing as an individual activity and not understanding how a writer's social context influences a piece of writing. Understanding the social and its influence on the activity of writing, were critiques that the next generation of writing researchers, particularly those working in Rhetorical Genre Theory, discussed in the following section.

Writing as Social: Conceptualization

The theoretical move away from thinking about writing as process to writing as social began in the 1980s with the social construction movement (e.g. Bizzell 1982; Bruffe 1986; Faigley 1986), which shifted thinking in many academic disciplines. The social constructionist movement emphasized the significant ways in which an individual's social context impacts how they act. In the context of writing studies, this thinking influenced a shift away from thinking about writing as process because, although the process idea of writing only 'forms the foundation for expanding the notions of collaboration and audience from work groups to society' (Williams 1998:67-68), it often 'overemphasizes the psychology of individual writers' (Williams 1998:67-68). This ignores that, as an individual writes, they are situated and informed by their social context.

Rhetorical Genre Theory, a sub-field of writing studies, mainly composed of researchers based at North American institutions, was one of the first theories to purport this idea, particularly by understanding genre to be a social action. This means that a genre, a type of writing, such as an essay or a report, is not a generic text type but rather a social action shaped to respond to a particular need the writer perceives to exist in society (see Artemeva & Freedman 2006; Coe, Lingard & Teslenko 2002; Freedman & Medway 1994a; Freedman & Medway 1994b; Giltrow 2002; Miller 1984; Schryer 1994).

This idea is closely linked to the notion that writing is a social action, which can mean two things. First, writing 'is a specialized and collective practice that develops locally, in communities, organizations, and disciplines, and that one learns to join or participate in' (Paré 2007:8). This theoretical understanding means that in the writing classroom, writing cannot be separate from its context but instead needs to be understood in relation to it. For example, in the writing classroom or a particular disciplinary course, such as Psychology, students need to understand how the ways of writing for their discipline connect to how knowledge is constructed in this discipline. Therefore, if they are asked to write a critical analysis, they need to understand how the analysis' different components relate to how knowledge is constructed in this discipline. They must also learn to understand that the way a critical analysis is constructed in their Psychology course differs from how it is constructed in their English Literature course. They must also learn

how this difference is connected to what these disciplines define as knowledge and how this knowledge is then used differently to construct an argument.

The second thing students need to learn is that,

> writing makes things happen, it has consequences…. We don't write writing, we write *something* – a proposal, an argument, a description, a judgment, a directive – something we hope will have an effect, will have results, change minds, spur to action, create solidarity, seed doubt (Paré 2007:8).

As writers then, to ensure our piece of writing does what we want; we must analyze three components of any writing situation. The first component is the situation's social purpose. This means understanding what goal we are trying to achieve with our particular piece of writing. The second component is the situation's audience. This means understanding who we are writing to and what our audience members need to know regarding our topic. The third component is the issue of representation. This means determining how we need to use language and other rhetorical conventions, such as references, statistics, and so on, to meet the piece of writing's purpose and its audiences' expectations.

A key concept to emerge from thinking about writing as social is that of discourse communities (see Beaufort 1997; Miller 1994; Swales 1988). A discourse community is made up of members of particular groups that 'share not only values and views but also language and language conventions' (Williams 1998:69). Guided by this notion, a writing teacher/coach must help writers understand how the discourse of the particular community they have joined or are attempting to join works. Specifically, they must understand how this community uses language to accomplish particular social goals, how they use language to construct their group's particular ways of knowing, and what type of knowledge this group requires to advance their goals (Pare 2007).

Writing as Social: Challenge

Although Kathleen experienced many different challenges throughout her

writing experience that can be explained by the writing as social action lens, we have decided to analyze one that occurred during the reformulation process discussed earlier. This arose because, despite Katie's constant prodding, the editorial team struggled to agree on the book's intended purpose and audience. These struggles made it very difficult for the writers to determine how to structure their chapters, particularly what type of argument or narrative they needed to construct to hold their chapters together as well as language they needed to use to accomplish their chapter's social purpose, and meet their audience's expectations.

For example, one editor wanted each chapter of the book to discuss the research findings from ICT4D studies, particularly studies that may have only been published as grey literature, a location that are difficult for other researchers interested in similar issues to access. For this editor, the book's chapters were intended for an audience of current or future researchers working on similar areas of research. Writing about these findings would then allow these scholars to use the book as a starting point for their own studies or as findings that could help them make sense of their own collected data.

In contrast, the other editor was more interested in having the book be a way to document thinking and learning about the more abstract issues that emerged from fifteen years of funding ICT4D research in the context of the global South. For example, she wanted to use the research findings to document how the ICT4D programme determined the most significant issues needing focus. An example of this would be Acacia's learning that in South Africa they should shift their focus from only funding technological developments to provide wireless access in rural South Africa to funding research that interrogated the impact of telecommunications policies in the country. From supporting research in this regard, they learned that focusing on policies could also lead to improved wireless access in Southern Africa. In this case, although such a discussion could be important for future or even current researchers in this particular field, it would also be specifically relevant to development institutions intending to fund research on issues related to ICT4D. This information might allow new funders in this area to avoid making the same programmatic mistakes IDRC made during its early days. In addition, such a narrative would also illustrate how thinking in the field of ICT4D research had progressed over the fifteen year period.

These conflicting ideas about the book's purpose and audience made it quite difficult for Kathleen to write her chapters. For example, at times when the feedback Katie provided was discussed, the conversation could gravitate back to the editors' expectations for the chapter. Yet, the lack of consensus about these things made these questions difficult for Katie to answer. To overcome this challenge, and what proved to work well in the end, was to disregard this conflict about the book's intended purpose and audience. Instead, Katie tried to help Kathleen create a narrative in the chapter that merged both editors' ideas about the book and chapter's purpose. This meant trying to use the research findings to illustrate how thinking in these two areas of ICT4D research evolved because of the research findings from fifteen years of research funding.

The following section, although closely linked to the notion of writing as social, places less emphasis on genres and more on the issue of rhetorical conventions and the ways they can construct, but more importantly, constrain the construction of knowledge.

Writing as Rhetorical: Conceptualization

The rhetorical conceptualization of writing places emphasis squarely on the relationship between language and knowledge, arguing that knowledge does not exist independent of language but rather that knowledge is constructed through language. It was Plato who began questioning the relationship between 'rhetoric's role in the production of knowledge', asking whether 'truth exist[s] independently of human beings as fixed certainties waiting to be discovered, with rhetoric's role as a supplementary art of presenting those truths persuasively or effectively, or does rhetoric have a constitutive role, a productive force?' (Starke-Meyerring & Pare 2011:6-7).

This means that questions arose then and continue today about the relationship between writing and knowledge. For example, does writing simply illustrate one's already preconstructed knowledge? Or is it through language and writing that knowledge is socially constructed as well as displayed? The later question leads to further questions:

> does rhetoric work to constitute, shape, enable, constrain, challenge, and contest knowledge? Is knowledge rhetorical – the product of

human sociality – always contested, contingent, socio-culturally situated, resulting from advancing, defending, contesting knowledge claims based on arguments and evidence whose acceptability depends on the practices, values, and standards of the communities, institutions, and organizations whose work they do? (Starke-Meyerring & Paré 2011:7).

More recently though, it was the work of Scott (1967; 1976; 1993) that 'brought the debate about the epistemic nature of rhetoric to the forefront of contemporary research and inquiry in rhetoric', by specifically focusing on the question of 'rhetoric as epistemic' (8-9). Emerging from such events as the 'linguistic, interpretive, and rhetorical turn in the social and human sciences ..., the rhetoric of inquiry..., [and] [c]aptured by the 1984 Iowa Symposium on Rhetoric and the Human Sciences and the 1986 Temple University follow-up conference', reason came to be conceptualized as 'inherently rhetorical' (9). This means then that 'rhetoric's function is not simply to dress up and effectively convey some prior truth, but its role is the creation and contestation of understanding and knowledge itself' (9). This understanding of the relationship between knowledge and language has led to rhetorical research in the natural sciences, investigating how scientific knowledge is constructed through language and other rhetorical conventions (see Bazerman 1988; Ceccarelli 2004; Graves 2005; Gross 1990; Harris 1997; Segal 2005), as well as the social sciences and humanities (see Bazerman 1988; Brown 1987; McCloskey 1994).

Despite being closely related to the theoretical idea of writing as social, writing as rhetorical puts specific importance on the relationship between writing and knowing. It does this by emphasizing the ways knowledge is socially constructed by a community's use of language and other rhetorical conventions, such as referencing style and so on. It is an issue rarely discussed in the writing classroom but did emerge to be significant from Kathleen and Katie's writing coach relationship. As will be discussed in the next section, it was significant because of a conflict between the knowledge claim that Kathleen's two communities wanted her to construct in this chapter and the rhetorical conventions she needed to use to construct this claim. To address this issue, Katie needed to help Kathleen develop an understanding of how the narrative or argument she was trying to

construct about the relationship between ICTs and poverty in the global South fit into her research community as well as the funder's ways of understanding it. And then, based on this understanding, particularly because in her case they differed, she needed to understand how to use language and other rhetorical conventions, such as discussions about methodology, to negotiate their conflicting ideas about the chapter's main argument.

Writing as Rhetorical: Challenge

Although the previous two challenges could be experienced by researchers located in any part of the world, the final challenge Kathleen experienced may be more specific to a researcher located in the context of the global South. This challenge arises for researchers in this particular context because they can be caught between the competing knowledge demands of the various communities to whom they are connected. These communities include one's disciplinary research community (often located in the global South) as well as the institutional community where they do research. These two can be in conflict with the international research community and the international funding community (both of which are often located in the global North). In Kathleen's case, she was caught between the international funding community, who offered the resources for research outputs, and the South African research and institutional communities to which she belongs as a researcher. This challenge can be understood through the theoretical lens of writing as rhetorical because she was trying to negotiate how to use language and other rhetorical conventions to address the conflicting knowledge claims which the various communities would want the chapter to make.

For example, the first community was that of the funder, IDRC, and IDRC's ICT4D programme more specifically. This was the funding community for whom she was writing the book chapters, and with whom she had a very strong relationship as she had previously been employed by them for over three years. The second was the research community where she worked full-time, studies part-time, and is the university recipient of project funds from the funding community. In terms of the dilemma, the ICT4D community wanted Kathleen to construct the argument (knowledge) that a recent study it had funded illustrated ICTs could be a tool to address, and

potentially alleviate poverty in Africa. Yet, at the time of submitting the book's chapter, and being a member of the research and institutional communities that investigate issues of ICT and poverty, she knew these findings were yet to be verified. Her reservations were because at the time of the chapter's publication, the findings and papers were still being presented to the research community for scrutiny within their own discipline. Therefore, Kathleen was not nearly as forthcoming as the research funder to present these specific findings on the relationship between ICT and poverty. She wanted to wait, respecting her research community, until a rigorous evaluation of the findings was completed through a disciplinary peer review process.

This situation meant Kathleen was caught between these various communities' conflicting opinions about these findings' readiness for publication. Specifically she was uncertain about what argument the chapter could make and how to construct the argument using the rhetorical conventions of these multiple communities. Specifically, the second community, her research community, often draws on the rhetorical convention of discussing methodology to construct a legitimate argument; yet, in this particular case, Kathleen understood that the analysis methodology of a poverty and ICT article was still under peer review by the research community. Since it was still being reviewed, she did not want to be forced into relying on a certain rhetorical convention, that of the methodology, to construct this argument.

We would argue that our writer-coach relationship uncovered this rhetorical issue as a particularly interesting challenge; yet, unlike the other two challenges discussed earlier, a concrete method was not applied to resolve it. Instead, our reflections only helped us become more aware of these communities' conflicting ideas about the issue. It also allowed us to discuss how Kathleen could use language and other rhetorical conventions to construct an argument about the relationship between ICTs and poverty alleviation in the African context that might satisfy these different communities.

Conclusion
The reflections discussed in this article have perhaps raised more questions

than they have answered. In addition, they are limited because they only rely on learnings from a reflective analysis of a writing support programme that coached only one writer. Yet, our purpose is to use these reflections and insights to simply begin to discuss a particular model that could potentially be used to guide the design, implementation, and facilitation of writing support programmes at African universities. The intention of such programmes would be to address African researchers' supposedly limited research capacities. As has been illustrated by analyzing Kathleen's experiences as she was coached by Katie, at the foundation of this particular model, is a writing coach with both an empirical understanding of the writers' specific contextual challenges with writing, as well as a theoretical understanding of writing from the field of writing studies. This means understanding writing not only as a product, but also as a process, as social, and as rhetorical and using these theoretical understandings to make sense of and address the challenges of the writers they are supporting.

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