A language barrier

Education is widely acknowledged as being political, but the strong connection between language and power is generally less perceived. Good English academic writing seems to legitimate students' scholarly efforts. Because of this, the easily dismissed, unquestioned, struggle of some students with academic writing, without the consideration of alternative development opportunities, may just reinforce the disadvantage of diverse students and increase inequity in higher education.

Issues of inequity

This AW Learning Framework allows an opportunity to consider the assumptions and the 'homogenising' expectations on university students' writing, and the further complexities that students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, non-traditional, or challenging educational paths, may add to their academic writing development.
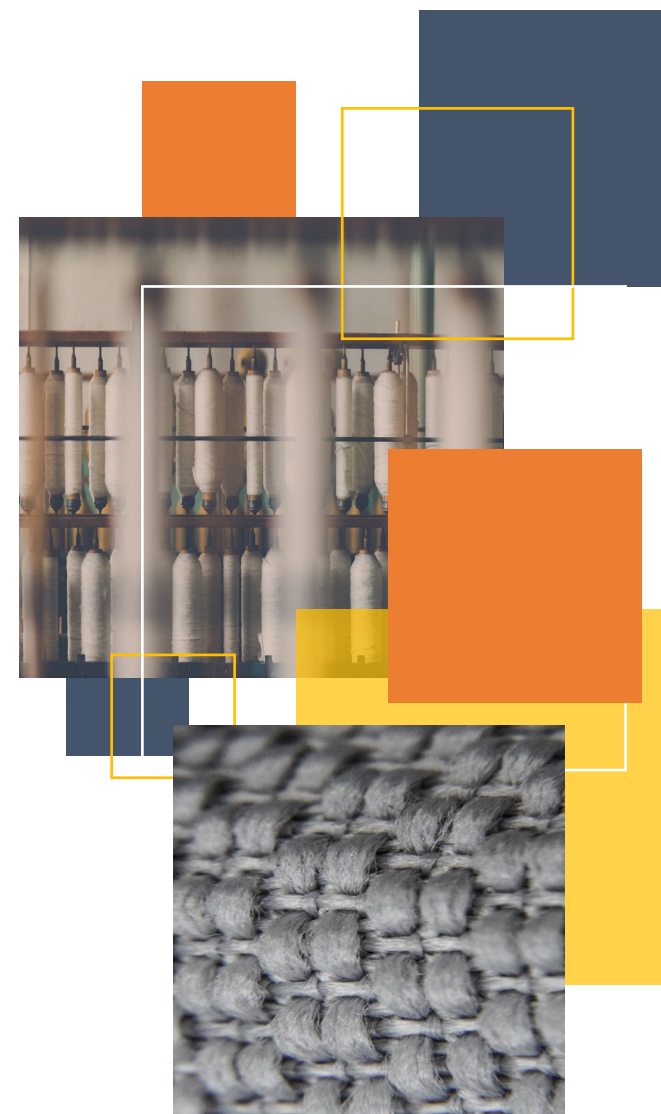
The Learning Framework

This Framework may offer diverse students an opportunity to reflect and 'reconnect' with their voice to overcome the language barrier of English academic writing. For educators, the Framework may suggest a way forward for the scaffolding of students' academic writing, the promotion of learner autonomy, and the rethinking of inclusivity.

Weaving ideas forward

This **CLeaR Fellowship 2020** aimed at designing **1)** a Learning Framework with a decolonial perspective, and **2)** a short academic writing program, based on this learning framework, focused on students' voice.

Contact _a.benton@auckland.ac.nz_ for more information for you or your students

Academic Writing as a Language Barrier.
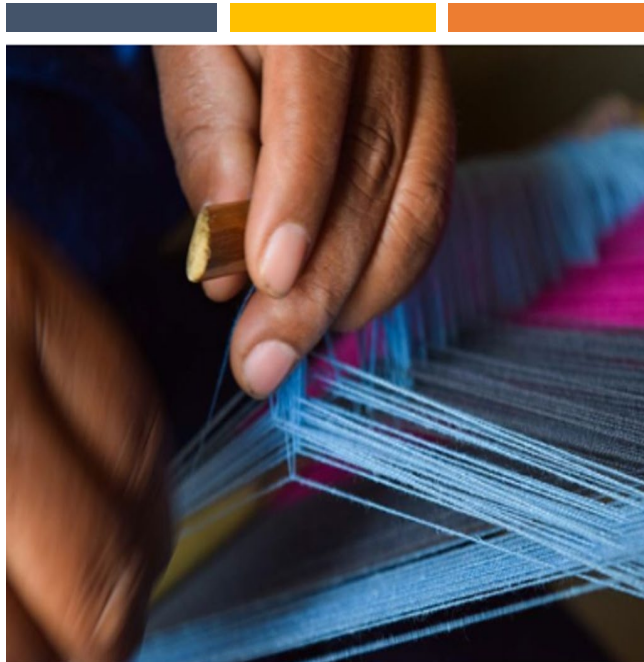# A Learning Framework

Dr Ana María Benton Z

Academic writing at Uni

Based on a self-reflective and critical inquiry into my own writing development and on the notion of voice, I designed an Academic Writing Learning Framework with a decolonial view that might be an invitation to rethink some university assumptions and expectations that can be reproducing social inequities.

After experiencing academic writing as a language barrier in my own doctoral journey and struggling to find my own voice, I completed my doctorate and experienced a shift in perspective on students' identity and students' voice, which also affected my view on the learning opportunities we could provide for the development of academic writing. This personal experience was the origin of the research project; the need to overcome the struggle, develop awareness and agency.

1. Reflection

Students initiate the **five-step** process by reflecting on their experiences and connection with writing; what helps and what is hard, what they enjoy, know, dread. Seeing who they are as writers, and raising awareness on how they learn, what they may need is key to begin**. C**onsidering M**eta-learning.**

2. 'Silence' in writing

Students may focus on number of words, structure, or citing, even when they have no clear idea of what they want to say or contribute. A **Decolonial view**, which looks at power struggles they may resist and which values their unique insights and view, along with fluency activities may help them overcome this 'silence'**.** Exploring freely what the message can be.

"So much of the writing assessment we do seems complicit in sustaining inequality"

(Poe & Inoue, 2016)

3. 'Noise' in writing

At times, students' message is lost within the 'noise' of grammar or structure mistakes in their writing. **Meta-language**, the language used to look at and analyse language, is useful here, along with accuracy and genre awareness activities to adjust and clarify their text.

4. 'Finding balance' (voice)

Finding balance between meaning and expected text structure (genre) is done by considering how to engage the reader. Through **Meta-discourse** (Hyland, 2004), students develop awareness of their 'presence' in the text, their voice, through practical word choices and activities.

5. Designing a learning plan

Praxis (Freire,1970) is key here: Dialogue, 'hopeful inquiry', reflection and action. Identifying needs to continue the journey!

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