

Writing as Research and Research through Writing

Reflections from Piloting an Academic Writing Workshop in English for Doctoral Research Scholars in a Multilingual University in India

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Abstract This project reflects on the processes and products of designing a pilot course in academic and research writing in English for PhD research scholars in Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit (SSUS), Kalady, Kerala, India. The one-week (40 hours) intensive course was designed for my pedagogy-based Capstone Project for the IWT CLASP Fellows Program to investigate through a pilot designing of an Academic Writing in English Course for doctoral researchers from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, ranging from classical Indian music to European Philosophy and Sanskrit. The students are all non-native speakers of English who had their school education in the regional language of Kerala, Malayalam. They had not attended any academic writing course in their previous education. My goal was to test the relevance and appropriateness of some of the Bard College Institute for Writing & Thinking (IWT) Writing practices in such a multilingual and interdisciplinary classroom of doctoral researchers and reflect on the larger implications for designing academic writing courses based on practice for multilingual students in India. My primary conclusion is that Bard IWT practices, especially private freewriting, focused freewriting and writing to read in the zones are effective in generative writing inside and outside the classroom, facilitating discussion of academic writing processes, and significantly increasing the learner's ability to generate more academic research-based text, as evident from the different kinds of feedback. Finally, I recommend that a skills-based (adapting IWT writing practices) content course can be a positive intervention in improving academic literacies for multilingual and inter-disciplinary learners in a setting like the state of Kerala, India.

1. Introduction

The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries,

and to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (hooks 1994: 207)

India is a multilingual country with 21 official languages listed in the eighth schedule of the constitution and as many regional languages, apart from Hindi, the national language, and English, the language of administration and higher education across the country. As a post-colonial society, India has a long history of engagement with English as a language of colonial power for more than two centuries and in the post-independence era, English has also emerged first as a language of class, place, and caste in addition to becoming the language of knowledge production. In this historical context, I decided to undertake an investigation into the place of writing-based pedagogy through a pilot program of establishing a center for academic writing in a multilingual public university in the southwestern state of Kerala in India.

This public university that is named after one of India's most important philosophers of the monotheistic school of Indian philosophy—the poet and seer in the Hindu tradition, Adi Shankaracharya, is called the Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady (hereafter SSUS, Kalady)

1.1. Communication Skills as Writing Historically, writing, composition or rhetoric was never taught as an independent subject or discipline but was often taught in schools, colleges, and universities as a part of the English language and communication skills courses. When the communicative approach to English language teaching and pedagogy emerged during the 1970s in India, then there were attempts to imbue some elements of writing as a practice into the English studies curriculum. However, it was only very recently and even then, only in some of the new, private liberal arts universities, that writing centers have been established, and writing is being taught as a discipline. In most of the country's more than 1,000 universities, writing or academic and research writing have only recently been introduced by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the statutory and regulatory authority for higher education in India (UGC Ordinance on Academic writing and Research Ethics)

1.2. IWT-based Practices: Two Tales of Adaptations As a part of the IWT CLASP Fellows Program, in the last two years, I applied and adapted many IWT practices that I learned as a participant, first in the IWT online workshops during the pandemic and later as a part of our online modules and in-person meetings. In my regular job as an academic writing instructor in the Center for Academic Writing at Central European University (CEU) Vienna, I experienced in my pedagogy the effect of these practices in not only engaging the learners but also in generating writing as a response to reading. Hence, I decided to try these out in my writing courses at CEU at all three levels—undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students.

2. Background and Scope

2.1. CEU Experiments At CEU, I tried one writing practice, private freewriting, at the beginning of every session—BA, MA, PhD—for five minutes. The practice had been successful enough that a student wrote in the course feedback “private freewriting was one of the most radical steps” that changed her academic writing practice (second year, MA in Nationalism Studies, CEU). In the BA program also, students have been very much taken in by this practice and have often found it liberating in several ways. When I asked students to verbalize their reasons for appreciating private freewriting practices, they often stated that “it allowed me to write what I wanted, even though I never knew I could do it,” “I was never able to do this in my academic writing,” “How can one write without a topic?” and “Structure for me was the beginning and end of writing and I would spend days breaking my head about structure, but now it was all gone!” There was also a common reference to the oft-quoted experience and feedback of “freedom from form, rules, strictures, and structures,” and liberation and spontaneity, which is often the most enamoring part of private freewriting as a practice.

On the one hand, many students found the experience both strange and exciting at the same time. Most of my CEU students were intrigued by its magnetic appeal and among the BA students there was a refreshing spontaneity and empowering character. Everyone was keen to write, none wanted to stop, and most were curious to know at the first instance about what they were allowed to write about. In many ways, the act of private freewriting, in my experience here at CEU, points to its value within the pedagogical methods that can be employed in the teaching and learning of different kinds of academic writing and literacies. I also believe that private freewriting can be a very good path to other forms of writing practices, especially the different kinds of focused freewrites and the larger domain of process writing. Peter Elbow, in his own definitions of private freewriting, has stressed its counter-intuitive powers of text generation and liberation of the learner from the constraints of the rules and expectations of the reader. “Freewriting is the easiest way to get words on paper and the best all-around practice

in writing that I know,” wrote Elbow in the opening line of his chapter on *Freewriting*. (Writing With Power, 13). In his own inimitable simplicity, perhaps comparable to the words of Gandhi, he concludes, “The only point is to keep writing.” (13). Thus, from my CEU experiments in a writing-intensive pedagogy, one of the most influential and visible signs of process has been private freewriting.

In the context of an academic writing course and a class, especially in the context of genre-based teaching, audience and reader are the prime variables. Students are often taught by their professors to “know their audience,” be aware of the purpose of their writing, and structure their arguments to suit the unique features of each discipline's specific genre conventions. In this way, private free writing as an open gambit in an academic writing class can be a doubtful activity as it could set the wrong tone and expectation. In my experiences so far, it has been quite the contrary. Even in my first-year undergraduate course, “Genres of Writing” (2021), in the last two years, students learned to write in a variety of experimental and experiential writing genres, such as portraits, op-eds, and critical review essays, finding the private freewriting sessions a necessary lead-in for writing within structures and genres and also a spur for creativity and imagination.

2.2. Engineering English and Writing in the Technological Worlds—My NIT Lessons Up until recent times, students in primary, secondary, and higher secondary education in India, right up to the college and university, engaged in serious critical reading and writing habits as a part of their academic study in their English language and literature courses. This included STEM students in Kerala, including in premier national institutions of technology such as the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Kozhikode, Kerala, where I began my teaching career as a lecturer in humanities and designed the first course in written communication skills in English for the first-year undergraduate students of engineering and architecture for the University of Calicut in Kerala in 2000. This was not only coincidentally the turn of a new millennium, but in the context of India and the IT sector and the global job market, the year of the Y2K problem. As the lone English (humanities) teacher in a technical university of seven branches of engineering with students selected from a highly competitive national professional entrance examination in the STEM subjects, I had the unenviable opportunity of not only teaching professional oral and written communication skills in English to all the 350 students from 28 states in India with more than 20 different regional languages as their native tongue but also squaring a circle of unlearning for most of these students whose English writing skills were either non-existent or completely learned through Hindi, the national language of India, or in many cases the main lingua franca of the region. In any case, in my eight years of teaching at NIT-K, I learned the hard way that the fundamental issue in the writing pedagogy in India was that there never was an

emphasis on the writing as a process or its development as a discipline outside the English language classrooms. The approach of teaching critical thinking through writing was non-existent and writing proficiency was all based on grammatical correctness and style and vocabulary.

Considering my early and long professional experience of teaching students from a variety of multilingual backgrounds at a technical university in Kerala (1998-2005), I had realized the dire need for a pedagogical intervention in the domain of writing pedagogy in India. After more than a decade and a half of international teaching and consultancy experience and working with students from post-communist countries in the CEE region, I found the two years of the CLASP Fellows Program to be an excellent incubator for my ideas to take shape in designing a new course in academic writing for multilingual students in India.

3. Literature Review There has been some serious thinking through an interdisciplinary lens looking at the long and complex history of the evolution of composition research in the Anglo-American world. In the excellent work, *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research* (ed. Gese Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan, 1992), Susan Miller's essay titled "Writing Theory: Theory Writing," made a very pertinent observation about the necessary and rightful turn in composition research and studies of engaging and studying and the "non- and anti-privileged texts and literary traditions" (82). Miller concludes:

If we can together self-consciously acknowledge the cultural situations of our earliest students and their writing—our roots in marginalized texts—this marginalization and its theoretical and principled sources may empower our purchase on hitherto overlooked writing, writers, and writing situations. (82)

As a teacher of academic writing in English from the Global South, I have been intrigued by the questions of diverse writing traditions existing in the Indian context but have been stuck with the global hegemony of English academic writing traditions retaining their grip, even after seven decades of post-independence post-colonial rule in India. More importantly, Miller's essay in this volume also traces the multidisciplinary roots of composition research and its ties with English studies being frayed with the introduction of new historicism in Black, feminist, queer and other marginalized writings and traditions. In a similar sense, I was motivated to turn my gaze back to my own multilingual roots and the legacy of colonial education in India in shaping our general attitudes towards the teaching and learning of writing as a skill, as an academic expertise, or as a means of dissemination of discursive knowledge in the humanities and social sciences.

3.1. Pedagogies of Gandhi, Friere, and Avijit Pathak As a student, as a learner, and as a teacher and educator, locating my positionality from the Global South, I think it is relevant here in my capstone project to talk about three figures in the world of pedagogy and public life who have been my constant inspiration in teaching philosophy and values about education. Mahatma Gandhi, India's father of the nation, has been an overall inspiration for me in terms of his insistence on education as a constant struggle for self-knowledge and self-improvement. It is not generally known that Gandhi was also a prolific writer who wrote close to a hundred volumes in three languages, Gujarati, Hindi, and English. In the context of India and writing-based teaching and learning, Gandhi's philosophical insights into the role of education in creating thinking, loving, and compassionate citizens has always made me connect my writing pedagogy with the larger goals of community engagement. As an instructor of academic writing in English at CEU, Budapest, I volunteered to teach a writing course based on storytelling and performance for the asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East as part of the Olive program in 2016. As Clara Neary (2023) argues in her chapter on Gandhi's experiments with truth and split selves, I also take inspiration from Gandhi's overall emphasis on the idea of experimentation as a heuristic tool. I think one should draw inspiration from the two central tenets of Gandhian thought that have a clear relevance in pedagogy and education in general but also the teaching and learning of writing, especially in the Global South. The two concepts are practice and experimentation. Gandhi was not only a prolific writer but he also advocated that the experiments with truth should also be experiments in education. He wanted every learning process to be a process of self-discovery and in this sense, Gandhi was consistent in his emphasis on the need for a practice-based pedagogy. Though he was primarily concerned with how students became aware of the questions of truth, ethics, and selfhood, I also believe that there is a certain simplicity in his approach that lends itself in a writing-based curriculum too. Also, in the context of designing a new academic, writing-based pedagogy for multilingual settings in India, I was conscious of the huge rural-urban divides in the Indian context, often accentuated through the role of English as a marker of class and caste. In this sense, I think a writing course that embodies the spirit of practice could also draw sustenance from the Gandhian notions of self-learning and learning through freedom of the individual to undertake their experiments with truth. In fact, some of the writing practices about processing our reflections and process in general are very much akin to Gandhian ideas of meditation and introspection, fundamental to inner growth. In this sense, writing becomes an inward journey into the self and a means of building a community by reflecting on the larger social good.

3.2. Freedom of the Learner and Pedagogy of the Oppressed In his revolutionary classic work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Friere undertook a project of emancipating education in a way that has inspired countless people and brought radical changes in rethinking the dynamics of what happens in a learning space, a classroom, everywhere in the world. Though the book has been critiqued many times and its limitations have been better understood in the last three decades, it has undoubtedly opened up many hidden truths about our understanding of the teaching-learning process. For my own project, I have been drawn to Friere's ideas as a student through the wonderful *Sociology of Education* course taught by my beloved teacher and guru Prof. Avijit Pathak, retired Professor of Sociology, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India. JNU is my Alma Mater and Prof. Pathak's course, classes, writings, and lectures have deeply influenced my philosophy of learning and teaching but also the way I read and think through Gandhi and Friere. It was in his classes that I had the insight of how Friere reflected the teacher-student relationship in an Indian classroom and how the students are listed as Freire's major concern in writing *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which Friere writes, "the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school" (Freire 71) turns out to be oppressive. He reminds us that this narrative also makes us aware that "education is suffering from a narration sickness," in fact, often it is a situation which "involves a narrating Subject [the teacher] and patient, listing objects [the students]" (Freire 71).

Looking at the role of liberatory pedagogy in the composition classroom in the American context, I came across a very thorough, detailed, and rigorous exposition of the connections between Friere's pedagogical principles and its limitations when we try to adopt it in a writing pedagogy. This is the published research of Joshua Daniel Shinn in his thesis, *Liberation is not always so liberating: Rethinking Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy for the writing classroom* (2011). Shinn points out convincingly that the writing classroom needs to empower the student to throw away the cloak of the authority of the academy and its languages and thus allow a free expression of ideas, thoughts, and feelings. In the Indian context, it is the omnipresent figure of authority, the teacher, that then becomes a central issue in the way of students embracing different processes and a practice-based approach to writing in general and academic writing.

3.3. Pedagogy as research—Avijit Pathak In his path-breaking collection, *Ten Lectures on Education: Pedagogic and Sociological Sensibilities* (2020), Avijit Pathak makes a very poetic argument about his own life and career as a teacher molding his profile as a sociologist and thereby calls pedagogy not a laboratory for research but research" (2020). He states in his introduction:

Well, I work on my lectures (*and for me, there is no better research than teaching*), and make a tentative outline for each lecture. However, the classroom has its own dynamics. Yes, my preparation helps me; but I speak freely, spontaneously without looking at my papers. The presence of bright/curious students inspires me; ideas and discourses begin to flow; possibly, something possesses me. I feel the ideas that have emerged from my classroom conversations should reach a wider audience.

In these inspiring and thought-provoking lectures, he not only provides the connections or a truly non-Western outlook with his sources and inspiration coming from Indian texts from different traditions, but he also drives home the point of the role of education in a postcolonial society like India. The role of the teacher and place of pedagogy is analyzed in terms of a larger nation-building enterprise, where the post-independence nation-building process was essentially a way of rediscovering our identity but also forging a community built on values of modernity and progressive thinking. Here, Gandhi, Buddha, Aurobindo rub shoulders with Rousseau and Kant as Pathak invites his readers, who were also his students, to undertake a rediscovering the ethos of life as an educational journey. In many ways, Pathak embodies pedagogy as research and although he does not directly talk about writing-based pedagogy, almost all his values and arguments about a sound pedagogy are very appropriate in using the liberatory potential of writing practices that allow different voices and subaltern and marginalized voices to be heard, written, and read in our classrooms.

4. Towards a Pedagogy of Practice My aim and underlying assumption behind this pedagogic intervention was the firm belief that there are two principles missing from the teaching of writing as a discipline or method or skill in India. First, there is a lack of any role for *practice* as core operating principle in either classroom activities nor the syllabus or curriculum. I would like to invoke Peter Elbow's elucidation of the concept of practice in teaching and learning in general in most of his works on education (*Writing With Power* [1981] and more importantly *Embracing Contraries* [1986]). I decided to assess the needs of the doctoral students by sending out a needs analysis questionnaire. Also, as Prof. Avijit Pathak, sociologist and a very original and radical voice in pedagogy in India, has often said, the hegemony of English in the classroom in Indian universities often drowns out the regional languages, the plurality of voices, the marginalized, the oppressed, the subaltern, the Dalit, the untouchables, the *shudras* and the women (Pathak, 2021). All of these are reflected in the teaching and learning of writing, as writing has always been treated as an integral part of the English studies curriculum and only the process of academic research and doctoral studies uses writing in a very instrumental or transactional way. The act of writing a research article for a scholarly journal or indeed the act

of years doing one's dissertation is often broken down into milestones set by the university administration, namely, deadlines for submitting draft chapters and presentation to supervisors. Given the enormous scale and numbers of the Indian university and higher education landscape in general, it would be perhaps important to bear in mind the practical, logistical difficulties in thinking through practice as a method, a pedagogic principle in the Indian context.

4.1. Designing the Pilot Course As mentioned above, I had three main challenges in designing this pilot course. First, this is mainly completely uncharted territory—apart from recent initiatives from a handful of private, liberal universities set up in a few select locations in India (Ashoka University, Delhi, Jindal Global University, Delhi and KREA University, Telangana State)—as writing studies is a very incipient area of pedagogy in India. Among the universities mentioned here, Ashoka University has one of the first U.S.-modeled writing centers established, however, the university was set up by Indian expatriates from the IT world in California and has been often labeled as yet another case of an elite center for liberal arts education in contemporary India and hence these are not places that would foster a writing-based pedagogy that would be inclusive of multilingual settings, especially for students coming from rural, remote or subaltern backgrounds or marginalized identities. Hence the interventions were perhaps the first of their kind in recent history in India and needed funding and state support; I insisted on making this intervention in a public or state-run institution so that disadvantaged students can also benefit from my inputs. The choice of Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit (SSUS), Kalady, Kerala, was a conscious one for the above and a few other reasons. SSUS has become a pioneer among the public universities in Kerala in aspiring for academic and research excellence through a targeted approach to quality improvement. A very dynamic leadership under Vice Chancellor M.V. Narayanan identified academic writing as a key strategic point of intervention for the university in the next five years. Prof. Narayanan, in a interview with me, shared his views on the topic, not only as a visionary leader of this university's department of Sanskrit Studies but also as an internationally renowned scholar of the oldest form of Sanskrit theater in the world, Kuttiyattam. Prof. Narayanan has not only published in the leading academic journals of the world but also writes and publishes serious articles on theater, culture studies, and performance in leading Malayalam journals. He put his views succinctly:

Writing is not only a skill, but also an essential tool for thinking and needs to be taught beyond languages. English academic writing skills are the need of the hour, but one should not discount the fact that serious writing and knowledge production has been

happening in Sanskrit and Malayalam (the regional language of Kerala) for many centuries. We need to devise a pedagogic method that includes all the linguistic and knowledge traditions in our class and help us articulate arguments for a global audience. (Interview with Author, April 3, 2023)

Thus, following on the suggestions of Prof. Narayanan, I embarked on the designing of this pilot workshop by creating a series of questions for prospective participants as a needs analysis exercise and I collected and analyzed the responses over a period of four weeks. I was also in the meantime nominated and awarded the Eminent Scholar in Residence award by the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) which funded my travel and costs for conducting this one-week intensive workshop in person.

Second, pedagogically speaking, I was conscious of foregrounding “practice” in my pedagogic design, following on the writings of Peter Elbow and also the seminal work of the Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking (IWT), Annandale outlined in the anthology *Writing-Based Teaching: Essential Practices and Enduring Questions* (2009). In their introduction, Teresa Vilardi (2009) outlines how practice is central to IWT practices. Underlying the common thread of this brilliant anthology, Vilardi reminds us that all the individual writers respond to the questions about the roles of writing in teaching and critical thinking in curriculum from their individual perspectives, “but all (authors) emphasize the needs for teachers to develop a *practice* for writing-based teaching, not simply a collection of strategies.” (2)

I draw on the polyphonous meanings of this term in my workshop, making the connections between writing as a means of conducting academic research in the social sciences and humanities and how facilitating an academic and research writing workshop for doctoral students in a multilingual setting in the Global South could also create conditions for thinking about “research” itself as writing. Here I wanted to explore the close connections between process as a heuristic tool in research methods in the humanities and social sciences and the process approach to writing, especially Elbow's axiomatic mantra, “Write, reflect, write,” as embodied in the way so many IWT practices also inform the ideas of research into the learning and teaching of writing. Hence the title of my capstone project, “Writing as Research and Research as Writing,” Finally, the relative unfamiliarity of the methods introduced into process-based writing pedagogy, especially the different types of IWT writing practices in the context of Kerala, gave me a solid hypothesis to test the relevance, efficacy, and appropriateness of IWT Writing practices in a non-American and multilingual context of doctoral researchers.

4.2. Design of the Workshop: Practice Makes Perfect!

In my design of the sessions (see [Appendix B](#) for detailed session plan), I focused on introducing a few writing practices, namely the following:

- Private Freewriting
- Process writing/focused freewriting
- Dialectical notebook
- Writing in the zones

In addition to these practices, I also included some reading activities, as the teaching of reading skills in Indian schools and colleges in general is still very much content- and text- centered. It also has a heavy emphasis on the lecture mode, with note taking and annotation often becoming a regurgitation of the teacher's lecture notes, ably assisted with free online resources or essay notes from the Internet. All in all, I decided to introduce the following textual engagement methods for the workshop:

- Text rendering
- Performative reading (using an actor from the school of performing arts, SSUS Kalady)
- Collaborative reading and loop writing

All in all, the approach was to offer opportunities for the participants, all second-language learners of English, to become acquainted with practices of reading and writing that would help them move away from text-based or content-oriented practices and re-focus on what Peter Elbow calls "embracing contraries," in his work *Embracing Contraries-Explorations in Learning and Teaching* (1987).

5. Analysis of Feedback After the one-week intensive workshop, I collected online anonymous feedback through Google Forms (See [Appendix C](#)). The questions were customized to gauge qualitative feedback of the entire sessions of the workshop. Most importantly, they centered on all the different writing practices, especially the one I had practiced, read, and tried already at CEU, from IWT's set of practices. In short, my focus was to analyze the efficacy of this pilot workshop in multilingual settings through the lens of process and understand how it made an impact or intervention among students of a multilingual setting and at the third degree or doctoral research. The feedback was overall very positive and overwhelming and every participant, even those from a completely Malayalam language medium seemed to recognize the importance of the generative aspects of writing practices, such as private freewriting, writing in the zones and the dialectical notebook, in not only creating new writing based on different kinds of textual renderings, sharings, and readings, but also on active

engagement with peers through a combination of these writing practices.

5.1. Online Feedback Questionnaires A few weeks later, on returning to Vienna, I prepared a detailed set of 10 questions through Microsoft Forms (Attached in [Appendix D](#)) about opinions on each of the writing activities and their impact on the research and writing of PhD scholars. On a close reading of the survey and questionnaire results, the following key points stood out:

- Most responses emphasized how context-free" writing was a liberating act for them as researchers who were striving to produce a thesis in English, although they used multiple languages in their daily and academic life.
- Many respondents cited the efficacy of loop writing, focused freewriting, and the collaborative nature of writing that was useful in creating a "community of writers," even through a short, one-week, intensive workshop.
- They also felt that many of the writing practices, especially the private freewriting, embedded their research in writing and created a writerly space. This aspect came out more clearly in my focus group interviews with a set of students online.
- Also, many suggested how writing as a basis of understanding the process of creating texts as not only a product of research but as a process was one of the most enduring takeaways for them as doctoral students.

6. Conclusion: IWT Practices in a Multilingual Setting

When I put together the workshop feedback, follow-up questionnaire, focus group interviews, and my teaching and reflection journal, several points seemed to emerge about my primary question—What is the relevance of IWT-based process centered and writing activities in a multilingual higher education setting like Kerala. I would like to sum up my pedagogic and phenomenological insights into three main points.

First, the workshop is clear proof that writing-based pedagogy is the need of the hour in Kerala today. Given the general high level of literacy, including media and IT skills, learners are appreciative of writing methods, practices, and pedagogic interventions that focus on process rather than product. The three practices I had started out with in this capstone project, namely, private freewriting, writing in the zones, focused freewriting, and the dialectical notebook method of loop writing, seemed to deconstruct and lay bare the close connections between writing and thinking. This was also clear from the feedback and focus group interviews, which found that the linguistic-, grammar-, and vocabulary-based methods used in the higher

secondary schools and colleges do not address the critical thinking and academic literacy needs of most learners. My use of specific texts that were “non-disciplinary” in the Elbowian sense (a term used in his book, *Embracing Contraries*) makes the relevance of thinking beyond disciplines in the context of writing courses in a multilingual setting very clear and evident.

Second, indeed, the mantra seems to be the magic word, “practice”. Perhaps, one of the biggest conclusions I would like to draw from my capstone project is the multifarious meanings of the concept and phenomena of “practice” that have emerged from my pilot course and workshop. Writing as a practice, the practice of writing practices, all seems to be latent in the responses, feedback, answers, and comments of my participants. In fact, I read these iterations of practice more as a heuristic tool, almost like the framing of my title: doctoral researchers re-discovering their voices through practice. As Elbow argues in his most recent work, *Vernacular Eloquence: What Speech Can Bring to Writing* (2012), it is indeed the characteristics of speech that we are mostly fond of—spontaneity, naturalness and fluidity of expression, that are the strongest inspirations for the most eloquent and clear writing. I would extend his argument into the context of multilingual and oral traditions like that of India and posit that orality must be understood also in terms of the efficacy and success of these writing practices in the classroom.

Finally, I think the experiment I conducted in pedagogy convinces me that we need to rethink writing, literacy, and the teaching and learning of writing, especially in multilingual settings in the era of generative AI tools like ChatGPT. Orality and writing are getting conflated in most digital media, especially the social media networks where most of everyday communication seems to take place. For an increasingly digitally native generation, many of the IWT practices, like handwriting in a notebook is a way to reconnect to certain traditions of learning through culture and religion and the performative and oral registers of text rendering.

All in all, in our current global rethinking of pedagogy as a means of knowledge creation, sharing and dissemination, the role of writing technologies could be best understood in the context of doctoral students and the dialectical relationship between writing as an act of researching the questions of expression, eloquence, and freedom from disciplines, and research as a concomitant act of writing, in the sense of a practice that is ingrained, rooted but also generative, needing liberation from content and disciplinary boundaries.

I would like to present an overview of my entire project through the phases of my proposing this pilot course, the syllabus, the workshop plan and the feedback collected not only from the students but also from Dr Sheethal. S. Kumar, the coordinator in charge of setting up a Centre

for Academic Writing at the Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit (SSUS), Kalady, Kerala.

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Summary link of Feedback responses

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?AnalyzerToken=JIG3q95vaSayhvLfssJbK-8weWuRU3oFE&id=E1nE2VN24kuSC72wOGOB-hOZ06KuSHQtEgwqtQOpb3LIUNVVaT-ThMMlpORIRaSIVQV05LV0QxWTIVTi4u>

Appendix A. SSUS Kalady, Kerala, Pilot Doctoral Academic Writing Workshop

Stage 1 Proposal

Note by Faculty in charge of setting up the Centre for Academic Writing:

SSUS Centre for Academic Writing plans to develop itself at multifaceted levels.

1. Faculty- a peer mentoring level/ peer- tutoring level. This may focus on developing research and writing schedules of the faculty and to ensure that the culture of academic writing is initiated to be further developed. Contents on IPR may also be focused while planning on the course. The ethical issues involved in writing were also shared as a concern to be addressed. The participant group that is identified by the University comes around 20 (one faculty from each discipline). It is a representative sample.

2. Research scholars- as part of their research program in SSUS, they are to publish an article for the successful award of the degree. However, a focused training on how to write, the nuances of academic writing, the technical aspects that are involved with publishing are not part of their training here. These are some of the apprehensions shared by scholars who intend to write primarily in English. Linguistic issues are graver than we imagine. The skills in developing an article in English is seriously an issue, not to mention the academic language part of it.

3. Students–undergraduate and postgraduate– confront different types of issues. To begin with, skills on critical imagination, reading and writing may be addressed together as they are to be developed holistically.

The UG program in SSUS is primarily for languages, liberal arts, and performing arts disciplines. So you may orient yourself in that direction. Postgraduate programs, however, exist for all disciplines. When we plan a writing course for either type of program, it need not orient itself in a specific population that is actually interested in academics but this may have the specific discipline's orientation.

But the Centre may develop courses that are specifically oriented towards a specific target group who are actually interested in academic writing. These courses may be offered to those interested from outside the university also. Points that were crucial for design:

4. Language is a huge concern- particularly English.

5. Possibilities of translation need to be addressed.

6. The nuances of floating courses by the faculty across disciplines and courses.

7. Academic writing need not only focus on the journal or book industry alone, but also the culture of 'Little Magazines' may also be looked into.

8. The international models in academic writing and academic visibility.

9. The importance of SCOPUS and indexes etc. may be discussed also.

Appendix B. One-Week Intensive Course Syllabus: English Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Stage 1 Proposal

Dr. Sanjay Kumar
(Central European University)
March 27 -31, 2023
SSUS. Kalady

Description of the Course

The first two aims of this short course are to get you into writing up your research (or back to writing) and keep you writing, no matter what obstacles stand in your way. Another aim is to get you to rethink/revise the structure of your dissertation (MA/PhD). Finally, the course is designed to help you make your work more accessible through guiding you through the processes of writing for publication in scholarly journals. The course has an emphasis on thesis writing stages and processes: planning the PhD dissertation; this course will start by looking at the overall structure of research article and theses before turning to its primary focus: the body chapters of your thesis where you present/discuss your main findings. The course will also be a support for students who are preparing to write academic writing assignments—term papers, short papers, research articles for graduate level courses and for publication in the case of PhD research scholars.

Course Description and Objectives

The course is an introduction to thesis writing at the PhD level. Every participant should be able to design, structure (macro- and micro level) of a thesis chapter or short article (research based) and learn to provide peer feedback to each other. The course will follow a communicative, small-group discussion and activity-oriented classroom method. Students will be encouraged to actively participate in the “classroom” tasks and also, encouraged to make short presentations based on their writing. Visual aids like Power Point would be also used.

Individual Consultations: Each student will have an opportunity to consult the faculty for a maximum of 25 minutes per session to discuss his/her individual writing issues through a close analysis of their writing samples.

Teaching Methods

- The pedagogic methods to be used in this course will be more learner-centered and provide considerable autonomy for the participants considering their advanced level of scholarship and writing. However, the course faculty will be acting as key facilitators throughout the seminars and also providing extensive and thorough feedback to every participant through the method of writing consultations (3 times 30-45 minutes)
- Each potential participant would be expected to have done some research for his/her doctoral thesis that can be usefully put into a thesis chapter. Also, they should have at least a thesis title and proposal ready for designing the outline and chapters.
- The participants will be expected to present their ongoing research writing to others in the group throughout all the sessions. They may have to even share it sufficiently ahead of the beginning of the course to provide enough time for everyone to read, reflect and provide meaningful feedback on it.
- Finally, there will be presentations and peer review and feedback by all participants. Hence it would be best if the size of the group is small, ideally between 6-10.

Materials

Participants will be asked to work on an article based on their current research, including a dissertation chapter, an article/research note for publication. There is no prescribed textbook for the course. In every class, students will be given handouts, task sheets and samples of different genres in class. Several online and offline resources will be used and referred during the course.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- present findings of your research in an accessible manner;
- continue to fine-tune your overall structure of your research note, paper or thesis;
- more effectively structure your dissertation chapters;
- overcome writer's block and other writing obstacles; and
- continue the writing of your dissertation with confidence.

Schedule

Orientation (T.B.A.)

Topics

- explanation of classwork and assignments, etc.
- defining specific individual needs (e.g., discipline)
- self-introduction, setting and sharing goals:
 1. What are your writing goals and deadlines for Feb 2023?
 2. What do you plan to work on during the course?
 3. Provide a brief overview of your completed/ongoing work*

*Research and possible written output; chapter of a dissertation, research note, article etc.

Assignments

- finalizing a WRITING PLAN (until end of January)
- read assigned readings (until first day of the class)

Day 1 March 27

10:00 – 12:45 SEMINAR—I

10:00 – 10:45 SESSION #1 State of play: Introduction to research writing genres

11:00 – 11:45 SESSION #2 Writing process: stages, writing habits, obstacles, and planning

12:00 – 12:45 SESSION #3 Overview and sharing of writing projects/plans for the course

Topics

- Introduction to Research Writing
- Writing your research article, note, or thesis

- Writing as a process-stages in the research writing process
- Genres of research writing
- Discussion of individual research writing samples in class

14:00 – 15:45 SEMINAR—II

14:00 – 14:45 SESSION #4 Strategies to overcome writing obstacles: Experiences and best practices

15:00 – 15:45 SESSION #5 Strategies Rethinking structure: Overall structure of your paper, note or thesis outlining, macro and microstructure

Topics

- Research Writing Strategies
- Best practices in overcoming writer’s blocks
- Sharing and giving feedback–peer review
- Outlining the structure and argument

16:00 – 18:00 CONSULTATIONS—I

The first day of consultations will focus on a quick appraisal of the “Know Your Writer” questionnaire and the Writing Plans for the course. All participants are requested to make sure that they have shared their answers to the questionnaire and detailed writing plans at least two weeks before the commencement of the course.

Day 2 March 28

10:00 – 14:45 SEMINAR

10:00 – 10:45 SESSION #6 Strategies Writing workshop on outlines

11:00 – 11:45 SESSION #7 Presentations of outlines and structures–peer review

13:00 – 13:45 SESSION #8 Peer review of micro-level structuring

14:00 – 14:45 SESSION #9 Recap of structures, Q&A, discussion topics

- Presenting research in an effective way–structuring your argument
- Outlining the structure– macro and micro level issues
- Discussion of Dunleavy’s advice– individual examples

15:00 – 17:00 CONSULTATIONS

A brief discussion of the preliminary/tentative outline of the genre – article, research note, thesis, thesis chapter.

#Homework for Day 3:

Read “Organizing a Chapter or Paper: The Micro-Structure” in Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD*, pp. 76-102.

Use the weekend for moving from your outlines of the paper to a full first draft. Try to focus on macro and microstructure and spend ideally a full day in writing. You may also try to use as many sources as you can so that we can also analyze your use of other authors in the remaining days of the course. Please bring your first full draft and your notes to the Day 3 seminar.

Day 3 March 29

10:00 – 14:45 SEMINAR

10:00 – 10:45 SESSION #10 Argumentation: Sources, evidence, and issues of plagiarism

11:00 – 11:45 SESSION #11 Writing workshop: Three-minute thesis; abstract and summary

13:00 – 13:45 SESSION #12 Peer review of micro-level structuring

14:00 – 14:45 SESSION #13 Mini presentations of main arguments; introduction and conclusion of chapter of article

Topics

- Argumentation: macro and micro-level
- Bringing out your voice in research writing
- Introduction and conclusion

15:00 – 17:00 CONSULTATIONS

Participants can use this consultation for getting advice, feedback on their macro and micro level structures; any other individual writing issues related to structuring; discuss the parts of the text, etc.

Day 4 March 30

#Pre-Reading for Day 4:

Joan Bolker, "Revising: The Second Draft and Beyond" in *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998) pp. 116-126

Irene Clark, "Writing and Revising" in *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007) pp. 83-102

[See especially "The Revision Process" from p. 91.]

10:00 – 14:45 SEMINAR

10:00 – 10:45 SESSION #14 Writing workshop on different writing techniques

11:00 – 11:45 SESSION #15 Critical reading and note taking strategies

13:00 – 13:45 SESSION #16 From critical reading to critical writing

14:00 – 14:45 SESSION #17 Overcoming Writing Obstacles

Topics

- Writing and reading Strategies for effective research
- Stages of writing and structuring a research paper

- Discussion of individual writing issues and habits

15:00 – 18:00 CONSULTATIONS

Day 5 March 31

#Pre-Reading for Day 5:

Peg Boyle Single, "The Role of Revision" in *Demystifying Dissertation Writing* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2010) pp. 165-177.

John McPhee, "Draft No. 4" in *Draft No. 4: On the Writing Process* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017) pp. 157-175.

10:00 – 14:45 SEMINAR

10:00 – 10:45 SESSION #18 Strategies on publication

11:00 – 11:45 SESSION #19 PRESENTATIONS of Second drafts Peer review-II

13:00 – 13:45 SESSION #20 Proofreading and editing methods

14:00 – 14:45 SESSION #21 Recap of course, Q&A, Discussion

Topics

- Publication of academic research in journal articles
- Recap of the research writing processes
- Discussion of individual writing processes and examples

15:00 – 18:00 CONSULTATIONS

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Appendix C. Online Anonymous Course Feedback (collected immediately after the Workshops)

Q1. How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop?

1. Fair
2. Very Good
3. Excellent
4. Excellent
5. Very Good
6. Excellent
7. Very Good
8. Excellent
9. Excellent
10. Very Good
11. Excellent
12. Good
13. Excellent
14. Excellent
15. Excellent
16. Very Good
17. Excellent
18. Excellent
19. Very Good

Q2. How would you rate the workshop facilitator(s)? Do you have any comments for improvement for the facilitator?

1. Good
2. Very good
3. Excellent
4. Excellent
5. Excellent
6. Excellent
7. Excellent
8. Excellent
9. Excellent
10. Very good
11. Excellent
12. Very good
13. Excellent

14. Excellent
15. Excellent
16. Very good
17. Excellent
18. Excellent
19. Good

Q2.a. Suggestions for improvement:

1. -
2. Add more time for individual consultation session
3. -
4. Keep Dr. Sanjay Sir as an Academic Advisor external
5. Have the workshop planned for an extended period of time, may be over two weeks
6. Need more days in the workshop focusing on two methods daily
7. -
8. -
9. The structure of the program was intensive so that it was difficult to allot time for individual consultation.
10. -
11. We need to maintain this session for a long period with the support of an instructor in the campus and Dr Sanjay online/offline
12. -
13. -
14. -
15. -
16. -
17. I feel it would have been better if the activities were spread out throughout the day instead of having them mostly in the morning and having the powerpoints post lunch when people are relatively less active.
18. -
19. -

Q3. Was the workshop content relevant and helpful for your academic and research writing needs? If yes, please specify the areas and topics.

1. Yes
2. Yes

3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes
7. Yes
8. Yes
9. Yes
10. Yes
11. Yes
12. Yes
13. Yes
14. Yes
15. Yes
16. Yes
17. Yes
18. Yes
19. Yes

Q3.a If yes, specify:

1. dg
2. Paraphrasing session was most effective for my work
3. He taught the process of writing rather than theories about it. It was a hands-on experience and everything was taught through activity rather than lecturing. I was able to understand how to write, pit -falls to avoid and so on.
4. Writing Process, Obstacles of Writing, critical reading & all
5. Note making skills; how to read a text; paraphrasing; how to avoid plagiarism; critical reading; how to write a research proposal; setting up a writing schedule
6. Every session of the workshop was up to the mark
7. The goal of a researcher was set and the idea that the process shall help solve the problem was proved practical.
8. The workshop was very helpful for me to break down all the writing obstructions I had and got great help in article writing.
9. The program gave an pedagogic idea to construct an argument and how important the academic writing in thesis writing process. The program was about learning and unlearning in different aspects according to me
10. I was able to figure out some methods to start my writing process. How to read in order to write, was

something special to know. Critical reading methods as well as the activities done helped a lot.

11. This session was very useful and washed off all kinds of misconceptions regarding academic writings and developed confidence to write.

12. It was more creative and helpful. Teach the technical and structures of writing. The activity based workshop is interesting.

13. chapter organization, paraphrasing etc as well as general international standards of the genre of thesis in academia.

14. Sessions on focused writing, writing to read in the zones, paraphrasing, how to organize an article or paper from abstract to conclusion, dialectical notebook, etc.

15. The workshop was really helpful for understanding how to structure the PhD thesis as well as the research papers for publication. I got an idea about how to read and write simultaneously. I was hesitant to write in English, but through the workshop I was able to enjoy the thrill in writing. It helped in understanding the citation and the ways to avoid plagiarism.

16. Before attending this workshop, I believed that thesis writing was only based on one's language proficiency in English. I am not aware of what doctoral research demands. I don't have any idea about the process of writing. The workshop helps me be aware of my writing habits.

17. The methods on note taking like writing in zones was really helpful. The discussion on what is plagiarism was revelatory and my all time difficult task of framing a title was addressed. Altogether the writing process has been made much easier.

18. I was finding it hard with chapter heading & sub-headings and now I am into track

19. Paraphrasing

Q4. How satisfied are you with the length of the workshop?

1. Just right
2. Too short
3. Too short
4. Just right
5. Too short
6. Just right
7. Just right
8. Too short
9. Just right

10. Just right
11. Just right
12. Just right
13. Just right
14. Just right
15. Too short
16. Too short
17. Too short
18. Just right
19. Just right

Q5. What did you like best about the workshop? Specify.

1. -
2. Individual consultation
3. The way it was taught. Sanjay's background of teaching multi-lingual students can be seen in the way the activities were structured. It wasn't about the language or the structure of thesis but the process which was taught. It was a hands on process where there was group discussions, individual work and a lot of writing.
4. Practical sessions, interaction with research scholars from other department, very good group discussions, analysis, arguments & many new experience about academic writing. Wonderful sessions. I like this workshop very much. Thanks to the co ordinators.
5. Hands-on worksheets and practice writing sessions
6. Collaborative discussions
7. The workshop helped me realise that reading and thinking is writing.
8. Since the workshop focused on the process of academic writing rather than the academic disciplines ,along with practicing writing than simple lecturing made the workshop more effective.
9. The workshop gave a global perspective about academic writing
10. The way which the resource person mingled with all of us irrespective of the different disciplines from which we are.
11. Very interactive and activities oriented workshop, which illuminated the insights and perspectives of my passion for academic writing
12. The workshop based on activities than teaching.
13. Exposure to academic tools and practices in international scenario. Also the manual writing mode for all writing exercises brought out of a sense of strength to

me as a writer/researcher. The resource person as a person and human being is so grounded and friendly. I wish this campus had such a faculty who only deals with writing.

14. Interactive sessions, which attempt to incorporate everyone in the discussions and activities. Patience in listening to the concerns and answering the questions of the scholars.

15. It was activity oriented. So I was able to understand by working it out, what the facilitator was saying.

16. The workshop was a nice experience for me. I liked most that it was a process-oriented (writing-oriented) workshop. It helps me a lot.

17. It was not in the traditional lecture pattern but in an interactive mode with lot of activities involving peers as well.

18. The first and foremost thing is that Sanjay is a good listener with loads of patience and clarified our concerns in an academic way. Its very much useful and definitely will try to implement it in my thesis work.

19. Paraphrasing

Q6. What did you dislike about the workshop? Specify.

1. -
2. Time management
3. The 5 day was too short to cover all these and also we weren't informed that it would be good to have a written paper or have a working paper. Also the personal consultations wasn't planned properly.
4. Nothing. I am very satisfied.
5. Just the time constraint.
6. Compartmented seating arrangement
7. It should have been more specific. It opened up a whole lot to us but we will get more sharp if we focus one after other.
8. As the workshop was just for 5 days,we didn't get enough time for personal consultation and discuss everything of academic writing in detail.
9. We were not able to finish all the academic writing activity due to time constraints
10. Technical issues could have been more considered.
11. 5 days are not enough for us to unlearn and restart the writing process as directed by the trainer....we need constant support from Dr Sanjay
12. The unwanted questions from participants without knowing the actual situations and that lead to twisted discussion with burning more time. Example discussion on plagiarism and title change

13. Not a defect of the workshop itself but every event has its own structure and purpose tailored to it. Hence, some areas like AI tools and its possible potentials and limitations in the context of research could not find an objective space like other elements of writing did.

14. -

15. We needed more time to know about the structuring of the thesis.

16. Duration of the workshop was too short. we don't get enough time for Individual consultation.

17. Not all areas could be addressed, say the use of punctuations though passing reference was made. Again I blame it on the duration of the workshop which is too short according to me.

18. Nothing but we would have get some more longer.

19. No one dislike

Q7. How can we improve this workshop?

1. -

2. Bring more resource persons from this area

3. Conduct these again but in an advanced way for the same group but these can be given to all phd scholars

4. Possibly this can be give as a part of course work of phd. This 5 day workshop is really done well. I wish to get it few years before.

5. Please have it for a longer duration.

6. It would be better if we have some articles with us and have further queries and improvement done based on that material, then it would have been more powerful

7. Each session shall be in detail, one after the other.

8. Either expand the duration of workshop or reduce the number of participants, which may be more effective.

9. There is a lots of technical as well as infrastructure related issues while conducting the workshop

10. -

11. Have to attend regular sessions by Dr. Sanjay

12. Using motherlanguage as more effective.

13. Same as above

14. -

15. This kind of workshop need follow up and more workshops as its advanced stage.

16. -

17. My suggestion would be to make it longer and include more topics...lack of time was a major concern most of the time

18. These kind of work shop have to be done in a period of time so that researchers can take advantage of it.

19. Add historical analysis

Q8. Suggestions to improve functions of SCAW

1. -

2. Time management was very poor. Many of them didn't get the individual consultation

3. conduct more hands on workshops like these. Need to have a thesis advisor at SCAW. Provide editors for writing of students

4. Please start an Academic Centre, a genuine Academic instructor for all Research Scholars. Please give them proper workshops & seminars to write very good thesis in our university.

5. Have an on campus person to assist students with their thesis and paper writing. Have research supervisors also attend this session so that they get updated about how old school modes of thinking are no longer followed religiously.

6. 1-Take feedback from students, 2-Allow different departments to take part in all activity based programs, 3-Have international programs

7. Continuous engagement using the resources within and coordinating scholars within shall itself help in creating results. Setting the process in place seems interesting.

8. It would be nice if SCAW could arrange more writing workshop that focuses on practical writing than theory.

9. It should have a continuity and more researchers should get the benefit out of academic writing

10. -

11. Conduct writing workshops regularly

12. 1.Appoint academic writing instructor to departments or discipline, 2. Consider the students came from backward communities or areas and help to overcome language and writing barriers

13. Realise the lack which scholars had been experiencing since this workshop and patiently listen to their concerns if not settling them all. Fix the information gap about technical, university orders on thesis regulations. It should be easily accessible through SCAW.

14. -

15. While conducting these kinds of workshopes it is also necessary to conduct programmes for helping those students who are struggling to write in English.

- 16. -
- 17. Publicise your activities more among researchers. The activities of the centre were not known prior to the workshop.
- 18. Continue with this type of workshops as it is highly beneficial to scholars.
- 19. -

Q9. Would you recommend this workshop to other students?

- 1. -
- 2. Yes
- 3. Yes
- 4. Yes
- 5. Yes
- 6. Yes
- 7. Yes
- 8. Yes
- 9. Yes
- 10. Yes
- 11. Yes
- 12. Yes
- 13. Yes
- 14. Yes
- 15. Yes
- 16. Yes
- 17. Yes
- 18. Yes
- 19. Yes

Q10. Any additional comments or suggestions? What would be a good follow-up? Any suggestions for the timing and schedule?

- 1. -
- 2. The schedule wasn't follow properly, many of the students didn't get the individual consultation.
- 3. Another six months for an advanced workshop to see whether the strategies taught in the workshop has worked for the participants and to clarify doubts which would have come during the process.
- 4. I like to add more days.

- 5. Have a monthly follow up meeting of the present group of students to review their work's progress. Form reading and writing groups within individual departments.
- 6. Classes could be upto 2pm and then we should have common discussions based on what we have learned
- 7. Monthly follow up of sessions would be most welcome.
- 8. -
- 9. -
- 10. -
- 11. Follow-up from the committee to maintain this group and provide us with writing support for research articles and thesis. Personal consultations for difficult situations while preparing research papers for publishing
- 12. -
- 13. We can discuss this in group
- 14. Thank you so much for providing an opportunity to attend the 5 day workshop on academic writing. Waiting for more such endeavours in the future.
- 15. This writing workshop need follow up and advanced level workshop in which structuring of thesis and research papers can be discussed more.
- 16. -
- 17. A reading group among the participants and work within individual departments
- 18. If we get more time it would be more fruitful
- 19. Time 10 - 4 pm, little better

Q11. Give suggestions on how the future programmes for SCAW should be done.

- 1. -
- 2. Conduct this programme at least once in a year
- 3. More such workshops with people like Sanjay who understand the needs of students
- 4. I think a very good team of teachers are there in it. I hope it work very well in future. thanks to the new team. Thank you once again
- 5. Have such workshops frequently for a longer duration maybe. Rather than theoretical seminars, have more hands-on workshops.
- 6. 1-Take feedback from students, 2-Allow different departments to take part in all activity based programs, 3-Have international programs
- 7. -

8. It would be nice,if someone can address student's writing problems and correct or comment on students work.

9. -

10. -

11. In the future, an academic writing workshop must be mandatory for research scholars, graduates and postgraduate students also

12. Avoid the language difference in selection process or conduct seperate sections for each language group.

13. We can discuss this in group

14. -

15. Research Scholars need a writing instructor to check our writings and correct it on a need basis. Then we will be able to publish more works and produse a good thesis. And we need more workshops to make more clarity.

16. -

17. Close look on the writing style of researchers and support for publication purposes

18. It would be highly recommended if we have a re-source person specifically for academic writing.

19. Conduct on subject wise

Q1. What did you feel about it? Has it changed your writing habit? If so, how? Are you practicing it now?

1. It was a therapeutic exercise which helped my thoughts flow in a very surprising fashion..i never thought i could write that much in a go without any interruption. I am practicing it even now. I try to maintain a journaling book in which i follow the private free writing
2. Yes. It has made me realize that I don't need a topic in my mind to write. It has helped me to get out of writer's block. It also helped me think faster.
3. I got introduced to private free writing for the first time through this workshop.It was great method for me to get rid of my hesitation to start writing. Nowadays when ever i get stuck,or confused about writing,I practice this technique.
4. It was empowering. I don't know if it has changed my writing habit. Not practicing now.
5. Yes,it was helpful
6. I was doing it earlier too,but this time it has more impact,it gives me the confidence to write anything that comes to my mind
7. Yes, it was thoughtful and it influenced my academic life. It increased my confidence level and the practices opened up new ways to resolve the puzzles of mind.
8. According to me this is the best tool to break writing inhibition. It really helped me to change my writing habit by reducing the starting trouble. I practice it frequently as it helps me to settle down.
9. -

Q2. How has the workshop sessions changed your approach to the understanding and practice of academic writing in English. Please specify the changes.

1. Writing in a fashion that supports my arguments was something i learned through the sessions.Also how to write without plagiarizing was a useful exercise
2. Yes. It gave me the confidence that it is possible to write effectively by the techniques taught in the workshop. It also taught me that isn't about grammar or vocabulary but our confidence in writing which is necessary.
3. The workshop helped me to analyze the data in a better way as well as realize how to write without plagiarism.
4. Yes. The materials provided and the exercises definitely increased my understanding and awareness of academic writing.

5. It improved lots of perspectives, including context-free writing practice, which was helpful for gathering of ideas
6. I have learnt to write in a systematic way
7. It was positive. Sanjay was patient and kind. He didn't even laugh at our mistakes. He was always welcoming. And the peers were supportive and encouraging. I felt free and confident to speak and write in English publicly.
8. Till today i have question regarding whether we should focus our academic writing on English. The session anyway helped to get a rather valid reason to write in English is for greater exposure. I think that will keep me motivated.
9. In particular, it raised the confidence within us to write what we think. And not to be judgemental about ourselves.

Q3. What was your favorite writing exercise or activity that we did in class? Why? Did you try it on your own since our workshop? If so, what worked and what did not?

1. Writing in zones. That helped in making a point complete in itself. Discussing a argument from all possible viewpoints and reading it at the end was a satisfying process. I tried it while writing one of my seminar papers in philosophy and it was very helpful.
2. Private free writing is my favorite exercise. This technique has helped me to start writing. It also made me realize that first step to write is actually write. Yes, I have tried it out after that and have told others about it and it has helped others.
3. My favorite was private freewriting and I do practice it whenever I am confused about writing and it works.
4. I haven't tried anything after the workshop. My favorite would be the paraphrasing exercise.
5. Focus free writing
6. I do like private free writing & suggested to many...I practice it frequently
7. It was group discussions and free writing. My favorite was free writing. It was such a magical practice. It can be adapted by every teacher before teaching a subject. It should be promoted in teaching and learning activities. There is nothing that didn't work. I enjoyed every task. It was more like a summer camp for me. So i included free writing in my everyday routine before writing and reading.
8. The favorite activity for me was Dialectical notebook or loop writing. I practiced it with my friend. We did

that based on a movie scene. We were able to bring multiple perspectives about that single scene. The problem i found was mainly to get a partner to do that exercise frequently.

9. Private freewriting is the one which really inspired me. It makes a firm start for further writing.

Q4. Writing to read in the zones—the activity we did in the class is an important part of a writing pedagogy. What was your experience when you did it with me? How has it changed your critical reading practice?

1. That was my favorite among all the exercises. Already mentioned in qn 2 and 3

2. It showed me that this activity helped me to break down bigger articles and would help me during the review of literature phase.

3. It was great and helped a lot in my reading.

4. The focused reading is most often a difficulty to many, but hopefully I didn't have a problem with it. But the exercise was gratifying and I enjoyed it.

5. elaboration of ideas based on target questions

6. It was good enough and it has changed the perspective

7. It was really fun. And i think we need more time to do that exercise ,because critical reading helps to improve critical writing. And practice alone makes us improve our reading skills.

8. Actually when i picked and started to write from the Aristotle article, the first thought that came to my mind was that i will not be able to write even a sentence in the 8 zones. But once the activity started i craved for more space. The exercise helped me to change my critical reading practice by breaking an idea into several parts whichhelps in its holistic understanding and leads to further debates.

9. It was a good experience as well as a good writing exercise. We need to think in multiple ways of the same content or paragraph which of course helps our critical thinking.

Q5. We did “performative reading” in class. What did you make of it as a researcher? Did it help you in any way in your reading methods? If yes, please elaborate. (8 responses)

1. That was a fun exercise.I had the habit of reading aloud even earlier but performative reading was the first.It puts one in the place of the author/ character himself.I did not practice it later though

2. It was a very interesting exercise. I haven't been able to practice it and couldn't understand much about the exercise.

3. Performative reading is great,but it's not my method.

4. I used to do that voice character reading from school times. It is always better and a simulation-stimulation scenario. I still practice it with difficult texts.

5. It was helpful to plan collaborative collaborative learning in various areas of research

6. I don't remember clearly about this activity.

7. Yes, though the text read was quite boring, the activity kept me awake so that i listened and tried to grasp the meaning. As far as I'm concerned to me it was really useful as it will help to lessen our effort.

8. That was obviously a special one, that can be applied for those who feel lethargic in reading. But the only thing we should make sure of is that we are not disturbing anyone around us!

Q6.

1. The workshop helped to forego the fear about writing. Writing can be a very fun active exercise as well

2. Academic writing was a giant problem before the workshop but the workshop broke it down into parts and it made me realize that it is possible to conquer it with the right techniques.

3. I learned the importance of making writing a habit. As soon as I started practicing it, I could see the difference in my writing as well as in my thesis.

4. The workshop was definitely a booster for sure. It was water in an arid land. It ultimately reminded and still reminds to work everyday, and always write what you think, not just say it to someone. Writing teaches writing. Right? Thank you for that lesson. ❤️

5. It has improved a lot

6. Writing activity was a passive thing for me. I used to write my daily journals for years. After workshop i understood that writing is an intellectual activity. It helps me a lot to reduce my academic stresses, and i could write the content more fluently than before. I don't spend more time with confusion and worries. Now i just write what is going on in my mind.and then i get clarity in thinking.

7. One of the most important things that i took from this workshop is that writing and reading should go hand in hand. I am trying to implement this strategy and it is working. Ultimately it's all about writing as a thesis is my final product. Moreover i wish that my publications must speak for me.

8. I felt writing is more friendly, more than something which should be done for a purpose. Of course the writing we do has a purpose but we can further feel free to write on what we think.

Research to Write, Write to Research

Hosted by SSUS Centre for Academic Writing (SCAW)

Date: 27-31 March, 2023

Venue: Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady

The idea for an intense, hands-on training for research scholars to develop their skills in academic writing was fulfilled when Kerala State Higher Education Council through its Erudite Scholar-in-Residence Program approved SCAW's proposal to conduct a five-day programme on "Research to Write, Write to Research." The aim of this proposal was to introduce to the research scholars of the university the idea of academic writing as an imperative academic skill and its significance in developing skills into professional notions of academic writing. Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Senior Lecturer, Central European University, Vienna was the resource person for the five-day Erudite Scholar-in-residence program. There were 23 research scholars from Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, from various disciplines who attended the program for five days.

The general format of the five-day program included hands-on writing practices, discussion on the key issues involved in developing the writing skills, individual consultations etc. The general sessions included themes such as introduction to writing genres, the process of writing, research writing strategies, structuring arguments in writing, using sources effectively for writing, writing for research and publication etc. The most effective and most appreciated part of the program was the hands-on training with writing exercises and the individual consultations with Dr. Sanjay Kumar on a daily basis.

The five- day program addressed the anxieties amongst the scholars about writing for publication, their issues with writing and publishing in research, and introduced them to the basics of critical reading and academic writing. The idea of private freewriting and dialectical notebook was indeed liberating for the participants, as they could develop their writing skills and overcome their inhibitions about writing.

The five- day program was evaluated to be effective, where the scholars were introduced to issues of plagiarism, research ethics in writing, international publishing practices, etc., that provided the scholars with a different perspective on their research. The program included a feedback session on the final day of the program, which was attended by the Hon. Vice Chancellor, SSUS, Hon. Pro- Vice Chancellor, SSUS and the Advisory Committee Members of SCAW along with the resource person, Dr. Sanjay Kumar and coordinator of SCAW. All the participants were vociferous in putting their concerns on the table and they also shared their happiness on how they benefited from the program. The research scholars at large identified such programs to be the most effective skill-based exercise that any higher education institutions must offer for research scholars for their development as future academics.

Some of the suggestions were:

To have a permanent writing instructor in the university to give training and consultations to scholars and faculty members in the university on a regular basis and also can provide services to other service seekers from outside the university.

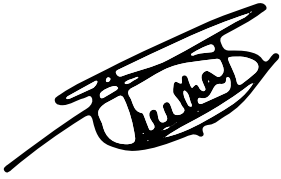
- Academic writing should be made a mandatory course with the Ph. D course work program.
- Create awareness among researchers on the various university regulations on research practices through SCAW
- Have a discipline-specific and language-specific orientation for academic writing biannually.
- Conduct similar programs in association with KSHEC that can bring in resource persons such as Dr. Sanjay annually as a regular program for scholars and faculty members

In addition to these, the participants shared their joy on their takeaways from the program which includes facilitating community writing, introduction to the techniques and process of writing, which were alien to researchers, reader-friendly writing, getting rid of the mental block to writing and above all the slogans that "Thinking is writing and reading is writing" and "Writing leads to writing." The Vice Chancellor and Pro- Vice Chancellor of SSUS responded to the concerns of the researchers and assured a continuation of such exercises in the future and promised that the demand for a full-time instructor shall be considered. But he was apprehensive about including a course on academic

writing in the course work as its practical value may be lost in a classroom setting. Instead, the viability of programs of this genre would be found more effective. But he suggested creating a system wherein the benefitted participants can act as torchbearers for the next group of students and encouraged peer mentorship, which is more feasible an option to cater to the needs of a greater number of researchers and students. Dr. Sanjay also shared his experience and joy after the 5 days spent with the selected researchers. The five-day program opened a new arena for young researchers to develop their skills on reading and writing, as it also made them realize how important is writing towards the knowledge-building process and in creating academic visibility for them. It also led them to the nuances of publishing with international publishers, and how they should frame their writing for academic purposes. Writing as a liberating experience was commonly shared by the scholars who found the program to be extremely vital, especially the role of Dr. Sanjay Kumar as the key instructor. A proposal for getting Dr. Kumar again for another program of a similar genre was put forward for research scholars who have completed two years in their research program with the support of Kerala State Higher Education Council.

SSUS Centre for Academic Writing wholeheartedly appreciates and thanks the support extended from KSHEC in bringing Dr. Sanjay Kumar from Vienna by granting us the Erudite Scholar in-Residence Program. This program has in effect helped in gearing up the research culture and academic temperament in SSUS.

Dr. Sheethal S. Kumar Coordinator SSUS Centre for Academic Writing, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady



Appendix F. A post-workshop email from a participant

Dear Sir,

I am [REDACTED], one among the last batch of researchers you interacted with in SSUS, Kalady. I am writing this email because I am sure this is going to be a long one as I am overwhelmed at this point of time and I will surely be not able to express my joy in a few words.

Let me tell u at the outset that I had been writing continuously ever since the workshop concluded. It is not that I wasnt writing prior to that, but writing now is a completely new experience as I am also enjoying the process. Earlier it used to be a task which I had to complete and the sad fact was that I never felt happy when I read what i wrote as I couldnt see myself in the writeup. After the whole exercise we had during the workshop, now I know that reader friendliness is an important feature and the author himself will be the first reader no matter what. If I cant enjoy my own writing then who can? Now I write for myself first. I always have it at the back of my mind the purpose for which I am writing. Thereafter I look into the larger purpose of its benefit for others. To be frank I didnt have to edit much to cater it to the needs of my reader.

Now why I am telling all this to u.. Everytime I write a sentence that brings a sense of accomplishment I am reminded of you and the efforts you took to make me and others realize the importance of writing and also the fact that writing should not be considered a laborious act. These are my words of gratitude. What better way than to write and share it with you.

Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

With lots of love n respect

Participant Name

Appendix G. Photos of IWT Writing practices that were conducted as part of the Workshop Activities

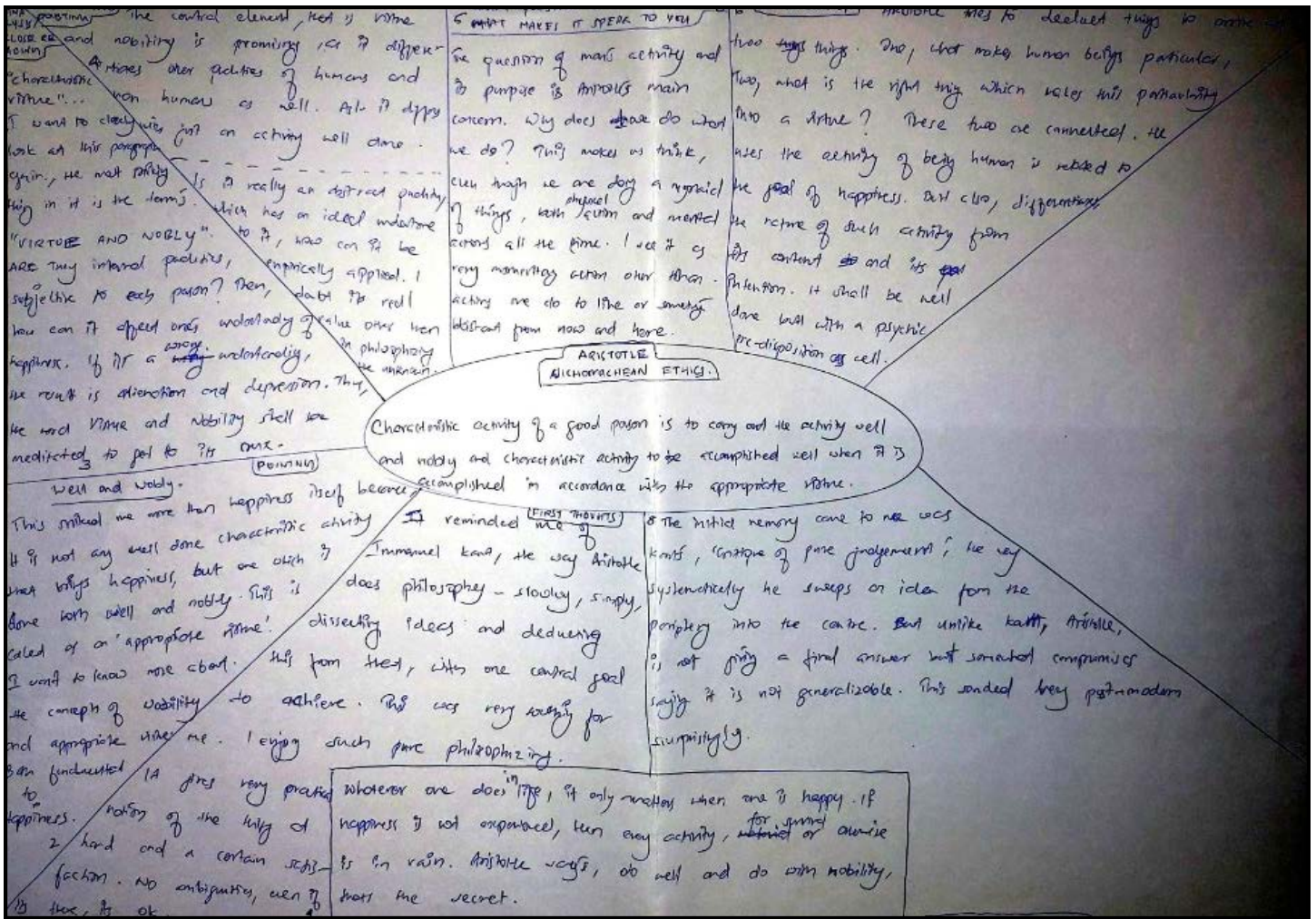


Figure 1. A photo of a Student's Writing in the Zones Activity



Figure 2. Text rendering in class, Workshop Sessions 1 and 2



Figure 3. Final Group photo of Academic Writing Workshop for Doctoral Students at SSUS, Kalady, Kerala. (In the middle- Prof. M.V. Narayanan, Honble. Vice-Chancellor, SSUS, Kalady, Kerala)

Appendix H. An interview that was held after the workshop by the prestigious media portal, The Malabar Journal, a bilingual online portal with a special focus on higher education, published on April 4, 2023: Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rhC9W4mp7g

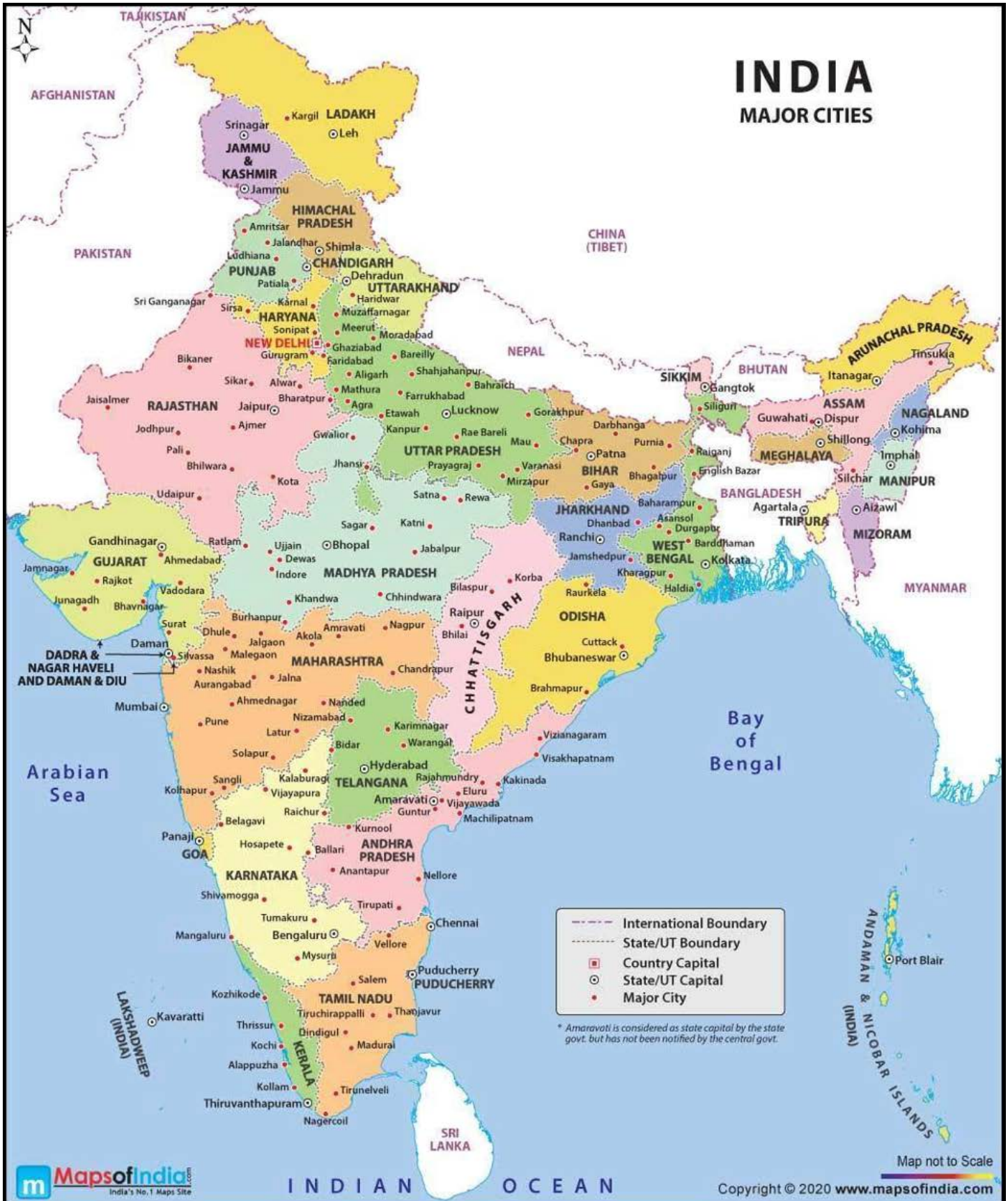


Figure 1. Political Map of India: Source: Census of India (2021)

