Teaching Writing to the Nursing Students: Perspectives, Problems, and Practices

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ABSTRACT: *This study is explored the perspectives of using technology to teach academic writing to nursing students at Northern college of Nursing. It aims to investigated the academic writing problems that faced these students and found out the practices that can be used to overcome these problems. The study followed the descriptive and analytical methods. The sample was chosen purposefully from the Northern College of Nursing, Arar, Saudi Arabia, which consists of (21) participants during the year 2022-2023. A questionnaire was used to collect the required data and the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) programme was used to analyze these data. The results of this study revealed that most of the participants believe that usage of technology facilitates teaching academic writing to nursing students and offers rich academic writing skills resources for both instructors and students. The practices should be done according to students' levels and needs to improve their academic writing. Lack of academic writing skills and linguistic knowledge are the cause of nursing students academic writing problems. It concludes that perspectives, problems, and practices about academic writing skills of nursing students are of importance to consider carefully in the further planning and implementation of the study plans in nursing colleges. Language teachers, as well as, language courses should be increased in order to improve students' academic writing skills.*

KEYWORDS: teaching writing, writing in nursing, perspective, problems, practices.

INTRODUCTION

Concerning employment in health-care sectors booming, writing instruction tailored for the nursing professions is in high demand. Writing instruction is critical in the nursing professions because they, current and aspiring, need written communication with patients, peers, mentors, and others. Writing instruction can also help to cultivate professional identity, reflective practice,

empathy, critical thinking, confidence, and organization, as well as research skills (World Health Organization 2016). Teaching writing nursing profession is an essential resource for instructors, scholars, and program administrators in health disciplines, professional and technical communication, health humanities, and interdisciplinary writing studies. It informs the teaching of writing in programs in medicine, nursing, pharmacy and allied health, public health, and other related professions. (World Health Organization 2016).

Moreover, writing and communication are key components of the nursing profession. Because nurses work in interdisciplinary teams of varying expertise and training, whether the setting is clinical (such as hospitals, hospices, urgent care) or other types of organizations (home health, pharmacy, insurance, research lab, etc.). Clear and effective written, verbal, and nonverbal communication using current and emerging technologies is an essential competency for nurses for the delivery of high-quality and safe patient care. In addition, identifies writing as a requisite skill for nursing profession practice (World Health Organization2012). Written communication is important to academic and scholarly discourse to disseminate knowledge within the nursing community. In addition, to meet the growing need for patient care, nurses became increasingly responsible for providing health care. This resulted in a need to increasingly work collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams in which nurses communicate with other care providers (physicians, therapists, etc.) for improved health-care outcomes. This study helps faculty and administrators to meet this demand. It combines conceptual development of writing for the nursing professions as an emergent interdisciplinary with evidence-based practices for instructors in academic, clinical, and community settings. It is also providing a research-based guide to instructional practices for teaching writing to nursing profession, promoting faculty development and bringing together perspectives from writing studies, technical communication, and health humanities.

It has been observed by many instructors that undergraduate nursing students as interdisciplinary need various academic writing skills while most of these students struggle to do their academic writing of assignments or researches. To the extent, they may not achieve the required purposes and this may result in not passing the course or their study may be delayed or, at worst, do not graduate on time. Consequently, some nursing students may not able to complete their study within the timeframe allocated, often leading to their withdrawal from their studies. So, the main problem of this study is that teaching academic writing to interdisciplinary students make it difficult to the instructors at Northern college of Nursing, Arar, Saudi Arabia to handle the students with various academic writing needs and levels. thus, the instructors need to adopt his or her own policies, techniques and practices which are well organized and prepared to suit the demands of the students at the target college.

Research Questions
1. What are the perspectives of using technology to teach academic writing to nursing students?
2. How are practices be prepared to improve academic writing skills of nursing students?

3. What problems do nursing students face in academic writing at Northern college of Nursing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing in Nursing

Clear and effective written, verbal, and nonverbal communication using current and emerging technologies is an essential competency for nurses for the delivery of high-quality and safe patient care Gimenez, J. (2008). The American Association of Colleges of Nursing[7] identifies writing as a requisite skill for nursing practice. Written communication is important to academic and scholarly discourse to disseminate knowledge within the nursing community. In addition, to meet the growing need for patient care, nurses became increasingly responsible for providing care following the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Hobson EH, Waite NM, Briceland LL, (2002). This resulted in a need to increasingly work collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams in which nurses communicate with other care providers (physicians, therapists, etc.) for improved health-care outcomes. As a result, employers began expecting a higher level of education; a BSN has become the standard entry into nursing practice, replacing the more traditional route of an RN with an associate's degree.

Process Pedagogy

The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept. Process pedagogy is widely accepted within the field of writing studies as the most effective pedagogical approach for helping individuals improve their writing. Process pedagogy structures a course with small tasks, drafts, reviews, and revisions leading to a final product. The cycle of drafts-reviews-revisions is essential for writers of all experience levels. Indeed, one of the primary differences between novice and experienced writers, as Flower and Hayes (2008) note, is the amount and level of attention to process, both whether they revise and how they revise. In addition, no one intuitively knows how to give feedback; writers must learn the strategies that lead to giving it rhetorically—that is, to understand the context within which it is being given and to whom. In the classroom, that context is the assignment and grading criteria in addition to assignment and course outcomes. As Wiggins (2012) articulates, there are seven keys to effective feedback: it is goal-oriented, tangible and transparent, actionable, user-friendly (or understandable), timely, ongoing, and consistent. In addition, for revision to be effective, individuals must engage in deep revision; that is, they engage in metacognition—or reflection—to understand the feedback that they receive by reading it thoroughly and making decisions about its usefulness. Just as giving feedback is rhetorical, so too is revision. Revision takes place within a context: the goals, audience, and environment for the writing; it is not simply about proofreading to fix mechanical issues or typos.

Novice writers, however, do not approach this process intuitively nor with the language or experience needed to provide effective and constructive feedback to others. Nor do they intuitively

know what to do with feedback received in order to improve their own work. One task for instructors, then, is to help students to learn the language needed to effectively provide feedback and, in turn, use it. Indeed, as Hattie and Timperley (2018) explain, feedback on tasks and how to improve have more impact on student learning than do praise, rewards, or punishment. A curriculum that facilitates student engagement in process pedagogy through multiple small tasks in which students are asked to give guided and structured feedback and then develop revision plans facilitates learning on multiple levels: improvement in writing, engagement with their learning, engagement with one another, and learning the language, strategies, and moves needed to make learning transferrable to other contexts.

Process pedagogy can be integrated into a learning management system; both Canvas and Blackboard, for example, have "peer-review" functionality (depending on institutional settings). Further, a discussion board can serve as a means of conducting peer reviews. However, the structure and intended functions within these systems limit their capacity to do so effectively, as they are rarely (if ever) grounded in writing studies research or theory. In their collection, Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction, Hewett and Depew (2015) present a solid introduction to teaching in online environments, including learning management systems. In addition, peer-review software such as Eli Review (www.elireview.com) was created by writing studies experts based on the fields' research, theory, and best practice to support peer learning environments using evidence-based teaching practices. Eli bolsters peer review and revision planning by providing a framework in which students engage with one another (anonymously) to first provide feedback and to then develop revision plans based upon it. Importantly, the framework for reviews is created by the course instructor based on the assignment criteria and purpose so that students work through a structured rhetorical process. As such, they may be asked to make decisions on specific traits, rate aspects of a draft (and potentially comment on the reasoning for the rating), provide contextual comments, and final comments. A key to feedback is the emphasis on a heuristic for providing the contextual and overall comments: describe-evaluate-suggest. This heuristic teaches individuals how to provide feedback constructively by paraphrasing what was written (describe), assess it based on criteria (evaluate), and then making targeted specific suggestions for improvement (suggest). Similarly, after receiving feedback, revision plans are guided by a heuristic of select-prioritize-reflect, so students need to read and reflect on the feedback they received before implementing it. Eli, then, meets the seven characteristics that Wiggins identifies as effective feedback. Using this strategy, individuals are stepped through the metacognitive process of choosing which feedback to use (select) based on whether it effectively helps them to meet the goals of the assignment, place it in ranked order (prioritize, a sort of triage), and then reflect on what they will do to revise, how, and why.

An Emergent Interdisciplinary for Teachers
Demand for the health professions has perhaps never been greater. As burdens on health-care systems grow heavier, countries around the globe face alarming shortages of physicians, nurses,

pharmacists, and allied health professionals, who include physician assistants, occupational therapists, and emergency medical technicians. On the whole, the world is facing a shortfall of 18 million health professionals, with rural regions and low- and middle-income countries hit the hardest World Health Organization, (2016). As a partial response, workforce challenges have been repeatedly highlighted by the World Health Assembly, the decision-making arm of the World Health Organization. Among other actions, the Assembly instituted the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife in 2020 and the International Year of Health and Care Workers in 2021, calling greater attention to the training of nursing professionals.

In nursing professions training, students' complete exercises in classrooms ("didactic" instruction) and health-care workplaces ("clinical" instruction), gaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to excel in their chosen specialties as members of a team. These basic trajectories are well-known. What is often unacknowledged, however, is the prominent place of writing: nursing professionals need to learn a variety of written genres while in the classroom or on the job—and often produce them under tight constraints. There have been several foundational studies in this area. Surveying medical schools in the United States, Yanoff and Burg (2009) cataloged the genres considered the most important to teach. At the top of the list were write-ups of patient histories and physician examinations, progress notes and discharge summaries, peer-reviewed publications, and grant proposals. Other important genres included letters to referring doctors, outpatient records, consultation reports, and admitting notes. Nursing education has made extensive use of writing. A curricular review found that, in one nursing program, writing assignments were required in 86% of the courses. Graves, R (2017). In another study, Gimenez, J. (2008) explored the writing assignments of more than 100 nursing and midwifery students at a London university, listing out common genres. These included care plans, case studies, article reviews, portfolios, reflective essays, argumentative essays, and culminating theses.

Challenges of Teaching Writing in Nursing
Writing scholars argue that genres function quite differently in classrooms than in the "real word". In professional and public contexts, genres participate in complex systems that include other genres, people, and practices Dias (2000) In contrast, instructors are the primary audience for classroom writing and an individual's grade is the main goal. Even when instructors ask students to write for an imagined audience in some workplace or public context, their writing is still ultimately evaluated by the instructor Russe (1997). Wardle, E. (2009) describes these as "mutt genres," texts that look like public genres, but within the classroom "their purposes and audiences and audiences are vague or even contradictory". (p774).

Nursing students are expected to produce a lot of writing in their undergraduate courses and writing takes a wide variety of different forms. The students interviewed catalogued a range of assignments-summaries of their nursing philosophy, reflections on communication practices articles summaries clinical care plans to name a few.Meanwhile, classroom nursing genres come

with own unique challenges tied to the community's values and practices.

First, since technical correctness is so critical to the nursing profession, lower-order concerns like formatting, citation, and grammar tend to be overemphasized, making it hard for students to see inter-textual connections to professional genres. Ariail and Smith (2008) show the parallels between nursing instructor's worldview and their approach to writing instruction using metaphor of Foley catheter insertion: Nursing faculty outline structure and criteria for grading. In standardizing the genres their students produce, these health care professionals treat writing as they treat insertion of Foley catheter. Sure, it may have a certain unpleasantness associated with it, but there is a procedure that can be followed.

Another challenge is finding a balance between teaching students to present information objectively while also supporting their future role as patient advocates. Focal student Liz discussed how writing had been a means for her to engage with topics like social justice in high school. Thus, Liz struggled with the neutral stance of her nursing writing: "You have to be very succinct and straight to the point [...] and that's pretty difficult for me especially if it's something that I care about." Ariail and Smith (2008) found that faculty shared in this sense of loss regarding more creative or open-ended writing. In trying to help students learn the genres of the field with explicit assignment and guidelines that focus on form or structure, instructors "wonder if they are sacrificing the more humanistic, creative attributes for which the profession is valorized".

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was followed. A non-experimental descriptive survey that gathering data by means of a questionnaire was followed to collect data from the instructors who work at Northern College of Nursing, Arar, Saudi Arabia about perspectives, problems, and practices of teaching academic writing to nursing students.

Subjects
The population for this study consisted of the instructors who teach academic writing to nursing students at Northern College of Nursing, Arar, Saudi Arabia. The target population for this study constituted of (45) instructors, from which (21) participants are purposefully selected from a numbered staff list.

Instruments
The data for the study is collected from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data are collected from books and articles associated to the subject matter from libraries and web sites. In addition, desk reviews are conducted from the college's relevant offices. Primary data are collected by structured questionnaire which has been selected because it is helpful in gathering information that is unique to individual such as attitude and behavior and its result can be easily and quickly

quantified. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part is about sociodemographic data that includes gender, level of education, and years of experience. The second part of the survey has statements related to the area of teaching academic writing skills, selected and adapted from a previous studies and literature review. A 5-point level Likert scale has been used as follows: 1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. The second part of the questionnaire has helped the researchers to achieve the research's objectives. The questionnaire is delivered online to the samples who have been chosen from the target population.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive statistics that include frequencies and percentages were used for analysis of data. For the questionnaire statements, data are organized under thematic categories and used in the discussions to support results that obtained from the questionnaire. The statistical analysis programme (SPSS) was used to analyze the data.

The first dimension (perspectives) Table (1)

Perspectives: The usage of technology facilitates teaching academic writing to nursing students.								
N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpret-ation
1	Using technology to teach academic writing to nursing students can facilitate learning process.	14	7	0	0	0	6.3	3.1	High
		66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0			
2	Using technology to teaching academic writing skills prepares students for applying theoretical content to practice.	13	7	1			6.2	2.9	High
		61.9%	33.3%	4.8%	0	0			
3	Digital practices improve the student's ability to analyze, synthesize and think critically.	12	8	1	0	0	6.1	2.7	High
		57.1%	38.1%	4.8%					
4	The existence of multiple digital writing tools suits the interdisciplinary nursing students' needs.	7	13	1	0	0	5.9	2.2	High
		33.3%	61.9%	4.8%	0	0			
5	Using technology offers rich academic writing skills resources for both the instructors and students.	12	9	0	0	0	6.2	2.8	High
		57.1%	42.9%	0	0	0			
6	Total	58	44	3	0	0	6.1	2.7	High
		(55.2%)	(41.9%)	(2.9%)	0	0			

From the above table (1) results showed that the first statement's results "Using technology to teach academic writing to nursing students can facilitate learning process", were either just strongly agree (66.7%), or agree (33.3). While the results of the second statement "Using technology to teaching academic writing skills prepares students for applying theoretical content to practice"

clarified that instructors' responds were (61.9%) strongly agree, (33.3%) of respondents selected agree, (4.8%) for natural. The answers to the third statement "Digital practices improve the student's ability to analyze, synthesize and think critically" showed that (57.1%) were strongly agreed and (38.1%) agreed, whereas only (4.8%) natural. According to the responses of participants to the forth statement "The existence of multiple digital writing tools suits the interdisciplinary nursing students' needs" (33.3%) were strongly agreed to this statement, and about (61.9%) of the participants agreed, while only (4.8%) natural. The results of the last statement "Using technology offers rich academic writing skills resources for both the instructors and students" showed that the participants were either strongly agreed (57.1%) or agreed (42.9%). The overall results of this dimension showed that most of the participants strongly agreed or agreed to all statements of the first dimension. In addition, the average mean and standard deviation were (6.1) and (2.7) respectively; this means there was an agreement among the respondents who participated in this study that the usage of technology facilitates teaching academic writing to nursing students. The results of this dimension strongly prove the first point of this study which have reflected the participants' perspectives about this topic

"The usage of technology devices facilitates teaching academic writing to nursing students".

The second dimension (Practices) Table (2)

Practices: Preparing the practices according to students' levels and needs may improve the academic writing skills of nurses' students.								
N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpret-ation
1	Activities such as debate, discussion, problem solving can develop nursing students academic writing skills.	15	6	0	0	0	6.4	3.4	High
		71.4%	28.6%	0	0	0			
2	The methods of practicing academic writing by nursing students must be effective and persuasive.	10	9	2	0	0	6.0	2.4	High
		47.6%	42.9%	9.5%	0	0			
3	Nursing students can acquire academic writing skills automatically through practicing of reading academic texts.	6	12	2	1	0	5.6	2.0	High
		28.6%	57.1%	9.5%	4.8%				
4	The part of writing that is linked to critical thinking and analytical process needs more practicing.	12	8	1	0	0	6.0	2.7	High
		28.6%	38.1%	4.8%					
5	Instructors can support or hinder the students by the comments given about their writing.	9	8	3	1	0	5.7	2.2	High
		42.9%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%				
6	Total	52	43	8	2	0	5.9	2.5	High
		(49.5%)	(41%)	(7.6%)	(1.9%)	0			

The results displayed in the above table (2), concerning practices of academic writing, showed that the (71.4%) of the participants were strongly agreed to the first statement "Activities such as debate, discussion, problem solving can develop nursing students academic writing skills" and (28.6%) were agreed. The results of the second statement "The methods of practicing academic writing by nursing students must be effective and persuasive" were (47.6%) strongly agreed, (42.9%) agreed and only (9.5%) natural. The participants of this study responded to the third statement "Nursing students can acquire academic writing skills automatically through practicing of reading academic texts" as (28.6%) were strongly agreed, (57.1%) agreed, whereas (9.5%) natural and only (4.8%) disagreed. The results of the fourth statement "The part of writing that is linked to critical thinking and analytical process needs more practicing" identified that (28.6%) of the participants were strongly agreed to this statement, (61.9%) agreed, while only (4.8%) natural. The results of last statement "Instructors can support or hinder the students by the comments given about their writing" showed that the percentage of the participants who strongly agreed were (42.9%), (38.1%) agreed, (14.3%) natural and only (4.8%) disagreed to this statement.

The second point **"Preparing the practices according to students' level and needs may improve the academic writing skills of nurses students"** was approved by the results of the above table (2). The results revealed that the majority of the instructors who participated in this study strongly agreed or agreed to the questionnaire statements of this dimension. The value of the overall means was (5.9) and the standard deviation was (2.5). This result strongly proves the second hypothesis.

The third dimension (Problems) Table (3)

N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpret-ation
	Problems: Lack of academic writing skills and linguistic knowledge are the cause of nursing students academic writing problems.								
1	Most of nursing students have come with little or no prior of academic writing experience.	6	10	4	1	0	5.5	1.9	High
		28.6%	47.6%	19%	4.8%	0			
2	Lack of vocabulary, makes it difficult for nursing students to practice academic writing.	13	8	0	0	0	6.3	2.9	High
		61.9%	38.1%	0	0	0			
3	Deficiency of using dictionary or thesaurus by nursing students makes it difficult to understand the words use in their writing.	10	11	0	0	0	6.1	2.5	High
		47.6%	52.4%	0	0	0			
4	Nursing students do not differentiate between creative writing tasks and academic ones.	4	12	5	0	0	5.6	2.0	High
		19%	57.1%	23.8%	0	0			
5	The academic writing style itself is obstacle rather than the content of the assignments.	2	14	2	3	0	5.2	2.2	High
		9.5%	66.7%	9.5%	14.3%	0			
6	Total	35	55	11	4	0	5.7	2.3	High
		(33.3%)	(52.4%)	(10.5%)	(3.8%)	0			

Table (3) above showed the results of the third dimension which was about problems that face nursing students when practicing academic writing. The results of the first statement "Most of nursing students have come with little or no prior of academic writing experience" clarified that (28.6%) of the participants were strongly agreed, (47.6%) were agreed while about (19%) were neutral and only (4.8%) were disagreed. The results of the second statement "Lack of vocabulary, makes it difficult for nursing students to practice academic writing" displayed that there were (61.9%) strongly agreed, (38.1%) agreed. The results of third statement "Deficiency of using dictionary or thesaurus by nursing students makes it difficult to understand the words use in their writing" showed that the participants were either strongly agreed (47.6%) or agreed (52.4%). The results of the fourth statement "Nursing students do not differentiate between creative writing tasks and academic ones" were (19%) strongly agreed to this statement, (57.1%) agreed, while (23.8%) natural. The results of the last statement "The academic writing style itself is obstacle rather than the content of the assignments" showed that (9.5%) were strongly agreed, (66.7%) agreed, (9.5%) natural and (14.3%) disagreed to this statement.

The results of this dimension proved that most of the participants strongly agreed or agreed to all statements of the dimension concerning problems of practicing academic writing by nursing

students in the college under investigation. In addition, the average mean and standard deviation were (5.7) and (2.3) respectively. Therefore, most of the instructors who participated in this study agreed that the students' lack of academic writing skills and linguistic knowledge causes some problems in their academic writing skills. The results of this dimension strongly prove the third point of this study **"Lack of academic writing skills and linguistic knowledge are the cause of nursing students academic writing problems".**

CONCLUSION

According to the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire the researchers have come up with the following findings: The perspectives of most of the instructors who teach nursing students in the college under investigation show that usage of technology facilitates teaching academic writing to nursing students and offers rich academic writing skills resources for both the instructors and students. There are multiple digital writing tools suits the interdisciplinary needs of nursing students as well as the efficient digital practices of writing skills which can improve the student's ability to analyze, synthesize and think critically. The results show that preparing the practices according to students' levels and needs may improve the academic writing skills of nurses' students who study in the target college. Practicing various activities such as debate, discussion, problem solving can develop nursing students academic writing skills. The majority of the participants believe that lack of academic writing skills and linguistic knowledge are the cause of nursing students academic writing problems. Lack of vocabulary and the deficiency of using dictionary makes it difficult for nursing students to complete their academic writing tasks. The results of this study reveal that the academic writing style itself is obstacle rather than the content of the assignments, researches or any other writing tasks that need to be done students.

Limitations
As in all studies, certain limitations constrained the study and the scope of the collected data. first, the survey questionnaires relied heavily on the respondents' self-responses that were selected based on random sampling technique. second, the number of study participants in the questionnaire has narrowed because this study investigated nursing students academic writing problems in one college which is small so that narrowed the range of the collected data. These limitations may decrease the ability of generalizing the results to other nursing colleges in Saudi Arabia. For future research it is suggested researchers explore a mixed methodology namely quantitative and qualitative methods to get a better understanding of the relationship between the variables.

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