

High School Versus College Student's writing Skills

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Abstract: High school curriculum has for a long time been regarded vital as it aims at sharpening every student for the future college and university curriculum. While a student might have the feeling of a high school freshman at the very start of the level of study, the college feeling is nearly drawn after a couple of years in high school. High school writing beyond any doubt has several similarities as college writing to enable students to cope up with college in countries of second speakers of English. However, the differences in writing for the two levels of study definitely outweighs the similarities. In this artical, we seek to establish a detailed analysis on the gap encountered by students in college writing as compared to what they were nurtured on in high school writing.

Key Words: writing skill, gap , collaborative writing

Introduction

The aspects of writing between high schools and colleges in countries which are second speakers of English language differs significantly. The gap between the writings in the two levels of study exists as a result of the writing structural difference, argumentative difference, differences in research, formatting and topic diversity (Williamson, 2018). In most high schools in countries of second speakers of English, there is minimal writing. However, when students join colleges and university they are urged by their teachers to write thereby putting an end to answering questions that they usually did in high schools. College writing demands a proper writing from students unlike high school writing taking into consideration that it is a higher level of education. High school students therefore strives to be able to cope up with the writing requirements of colleges. However, some high school teachers starts to nurture their students earlier enough so that they can cope up properly on joining colleges and universities.

The writing structural gap

Most high school students in second speakers of English language countries usually develop on memorizing of words other than writing unlike their counterparts in Native speakers of English countries. However, any writings that they usually do are fully based on a “keyhole” essay format or what is popularly called the five paragraph theme. In this type of writing structure, the student is encouraged to begin the essay with something that is considered general to the essay topic. Moreover, he or she must again end the essay with something general. The middle section must explain in detail the specifics about the topic in question (Williamson, 2018). The five paragraph theme is basically the best way that any person can write an academic

essay as it is regarded as the most simplified academic writing version that entails stating an idea and supporting it with sufficient evidence.

On the contrary, college professors in second speakers of English language countries discourage their students from using the “keyhole” essay format. Instead, college professors encourage students to shun away from that writing structure by considering it as rigid and strict (Williamson, 2018). Most courses in high school are based on providing exclusive answers to when, what, why and where. Consequently, the five paragraph theme is expected to cover the four questions on focus. On the contrary, college courses only focus on how and why and cannot specifically restrict writings based on the five paragraph theme. College students are therefore at much ease of choosing alternative writing options unlike their high school counterparts.

The Argumentative gap

Most essay writings are based on arguments. A writer lays down an argument on the presented topic before giving sufficient evidence that supports his or her desired notion of the argument. English can be considered as the high school course that is more prevalent to writings unlike other courses such as history and science (Falconer, 2018). However, most high school students in second speakers of English language often have a very little knowledge about writing a research as compared to their college counterparts. High school courses demands extensive research from articles and textbooks to gather enough evidence that aims at supporting an essay argument (Falconer, 2018). Every argumentative essay in high school must not only entail the argument and evidence to support it but also a thesis in the first paragraph of the writing.

College writings also rely to a greater extent on the thesis statement in the first paragraph. However, the thesis statement plays a role of setting up the desired argument while taking a specific position on the argument (Williamson, 2018). College students have better writing skills of research papers than high school students whose main focus is based on memorization. Unlike in high school writings where the thesis statement generalizes on the argument at hand and only establishes position in the conclusion, the thesis statement in college writings informs the reader to consider the evidence provided on the remaining part of the paper (Williamson, 2018).

The research gap

In high school, most students are encouraged to use the internet to do their research before finally writing the research on a particular essay. Therefore, most high school students rely on information collected from Google or Yahoo to develop an argument before presenting the writing in a book-report format (Williamson, 2018). Unlike high school writings, most college writings are fully based on arguments. Most college professors urge their students to shun away from the use of internet to research on the arguments presented within a particular essay. College research papers ensure that the writer collects evidence to prove a point and not prove a point by specific collected evidence.

The Formatting gap

Both college and high school students have no role in determining the type of format that they can use for a specific paper or essay. Professors are tasked with the duty of providing the correct format that every student is expected to comply with. However, the taste of format varies significantly between the two levels of education (Williamson, 2018). Most college professors prefer typed papers to handwritten. Despite the fact, that some high school writings may be handwritten, most essay writings are usually better when typed. However, some courses such as Mathematics or sciences could prove tedious typing and may be handwritten or typed with professionals.

College typed papers must always use Times New Roman and must be 12-point fonts as it is the international standard font even for official letters. However, some professors could prefer that their students use Arial font type unlike the preferred Times New Roman although in rare cases (Williamson, 2018). Some college students are also required to provide a cover page for any writing. Most high school writings not necessarily require a cover page. Some college papers may require the student to include graphics such as charts unlike in High school writing. High school professors consider that it is tedious for students to submit papers with such graphics and therefore advice students to exclude them.

Topic Diversity

Unlike their college and university counterparts, high school students tackle a wide range of courses depending on the curriculum decided by the government of any country. Therefore, high school students have a wider range of topics to write specifically in almost every discipline they undertake (Falconer, 2017). However, very few of these courses are always written by students in second speakers of English countries as most teachers teach on the ask-answer basis. On the other hand college students only write papers on their course of specialization and thus have a less topics to write on. In spite of the fact that high school students write on a diversified number of topics, their writing skills are not expected to match those of college students who also definitely write a lot (Falconer, 2017).

Ways of developing writing skills using collaborative writing tools by high school students

College students indisputably have better writing skills as compared to high school students. However, the modern world offers much for any person who has the passion to improve his or her writing skills using technology. Collaborative writing tools have numerous benefits such as promoting digital storytelling and can by far improve the writing skills of anyone (Nsir, 2015). High school students are encouraged to use virtual collaborative writing tools to better their writing skills before joining colleges and universities. Some web based collaborative writing tools includes, Google, Microsoft teams, yahoo and even you tube (Smarty, 2017).

These collaborative writing tools are useful for both high school students and even college students. Most schools have become prone to the use of Google Apps and Google chrome books to improve the writing skills of their students (Ebener, 2017). Google drive that was previously known as Google docs can be used by high school students to share writing documents, spreadsheets and even research tools amongst themselves (Smarty, 2017). Consequently, the students can share writing ideas that can improve their writing skills when they join colleges and universities. In addition, Google drive enables writers to have full control of their uploaded content. A student therefore has the capability to select on who can view, edit, and share his or her writings.

In order to improve writing skills, Google drive must form part and parcel of any high school student's writings. Moreover, they can share the best writings to students whose writing skills have not developed up to the required standards. High school students can also use Microsoft teams, a platform that combines chats even in workplaces as a virtual collaborative writing tool to enhance better writing skills. Through Microsoft teams such as Skype, they are able to communicate with other students outside the country to improve their writing skills. (Smarty, 2017). Microsoft team also offers Office 365 where the students can practice writing of essays and research papers before sharing with other students using Google docs.

Both Yahoo and Gmail have also been used in the past by writers to develop better writing skills (Nsir, 2015). High school students can have a specific Yahoo or Gmail account where they send their written essays to be verified by their professors. They can also use the Yahoo or Gmail account to obtain the writings of other students therefore diversifying their writing skills. You tube also forms one of the best platforms not only for collaborative writing but also for learning in general since it periodically has videos demonstrating on writing capability of various people (Nsir, 2015).

Using the you tube platform, high school students can obtain information about writing formats and other writing skills such as doing a writing research from videos posted by other students. Collaborative writing tools have proved to be very useful to students whenever they are out of the classroom setting. Students are able to agree collectively on aspects of writing such as paper layouts and their opinion on a particular writing topic. As a result, students who have good writing skills are able to share the skills with others to maintain their writing standards at the same level.

Despite the fact that these collaborative writing tools are of a great importance to high school students, caution must be taken as they evidently expose them to the risk of internet addiction. Students must therefore use some collaborative writing tools such as Google and you tube in a limited manner and only for the purpose of improving their writing skills. The rise of the modern technology not only imposes benefits but also costs that must be keenly considered to maximize the benefits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, high school is undoubtedly the sharpening stone for writing. To become a better writer, one must start to develop better writing skills in high school before joining college or university. High school students must therefore strive to bridge their writing gap with the college and university students. To achieve this, collaborative writing tools must be part of their day to day writings. Furthermore, they must also read written articles and magazines from the internet that forms the core of the writing world. Finally, they must acknowledge that to be perfect in writing they must practice, as practice makes perfect.

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