

## **1.1 A Process- oriented approach to improve academic writing in undergraduates of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Academic writing occupies a large proportion of a student's study time and it causes difficulties to students due to a variety of reasons (Jordan, 1997). The writing modules/ lessons of ESL courses that attempt to instruct students how to set about doing a particular writing task, as Jordan (1997) observes generally create a 'gap between knowing and doing'. Further, grammar, which is usually an integral part of an ESL course, does not tend to have a significant impact on the quality of writing. The process oriented approach has been greatly criticized and rejected at many occasions while at the same time it has still been considered useful (sometimes in combination with other approaches) to teach writing effectively.

This case study was conducted with eight volunteer undergraduates, at the faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. They were taken through a process of an academic writing task required in their first academic year. First, a preliminary investigation was conducted to find out the types of actual writing tasks required. Then the writing process took minimum 6 contact hours of academic writing guidance including peer and teacher feed back. The first and the final drafts of the writing were compared, questionnaires were dispensed and interviews of the participants held to test the effectiveness of the process oriented approach in improving the academic writing skills of the participants. The study revealed that the approach had significant impact on improving the academic writing skills of the undergraduates while it required a considerable amount of commitment from both the student and the teacher