

## PAPER PROPOSAL

### **Appraisal of Academic Writing Hideaway Platforms: Giving Voice to Heirs of Orature**

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#### **Academic Abstract (110 words)**

Many academics in the South African higher learning institutions (HLIs) do not reflect an inclination towards embarking in research; more especially among historically black universities (HBU) whose faculty are predominantly African heirs of oral culture (also known as orature), to whom writing is not yet second nature. Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) in South Africa is one university with a low production of research but of late has valiantly embarked on a project to establish an academic support monograph aimed at improving the learning and teaching scholarship. This study presents voiced experiences of the participants of the workshops that took place for the writing of the envisaged SMU monograph.

#### **Detailed Session Proposal (462 words)**

Academics and researchers in universities and universities of technology (hereinafter referred to as higher learning institutions, HLIs) are expected to embark on research in their respective fields. Evidence of doing research is shown by research output by publications in academic journals. However, many academics in the South African HLIs do not reflect an inclination towards embarking in research; more especially among historically black universities (HBU) whose faculty are predominantly African heirs of oral culture (also known as orature), to whom writing is not yet second nature. Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) in South Africa is one university with a low production of research. There are many reasons for this deficiency. The excuse of heavy workload and lack of management support are some of the rumoured reasons for this paucity. Lack of knowledge of research essentials is also another reason that academics provide for their lack of participation in research. In SMU though, the opportunities and platforms for embarking in research are also intermittently presented from various platforms for academics and other employees to do research. These platforms do not always yield the outcomes desired.

One platform the Centre University Teaching and Learning (CUTL) invited colleagues for an opportunity to develop an in-house research bulletin named monograph, in which academics were requested to contribute their research papers in 2015. The delegates and participants of the CUTL manuscript workshops came from different departments, and many were not even familiar with each other. The facilitator (1<sup>st</sup> author) was an experienced English language

expert who understood the basics of human development. In order for delegates to understand the source of their own disinterest in and/or outright resistance to writing, he presented to the delegates the effects of orature and its socioeconomic concomitants. The facilitator used the fictional characters of Bianca and Mpho to allegorically represent the Eurocentric and Afrocentric worldviews respectively. He also trained the delegates on research basics, writing methods, and the use of English in writing academic manuscripts. Training also contained teambuilding sessions, which consisted of fun activities that suited all ages. Some terms that were known to be suitable for non-academic fields were incorporated in the debriefing on the activities. The workshop's use of crowd also seemed to show positive results in motivation.

Many lessons seemed to have been learnt to complete and launch the manuscript. However, the delegates of the workshops are the appropriate source to inform on the lessons they learnt and what they could have missed in the workshop. Delegates, who are joint authors of this paper, had their writing retreats experiences collated through a survey tool. As such, this study is based on the voiced experiences of the participants of the workshop that took place for the writing of the envisaged SMU monograph.