World Conference on
Teaching, Learning, and Education

16 - 18 October 2026

Milan , Italy

# Emerging Researcher Reflections on Postgraduate Writing Support: An Autoethnographic Approach

**Dr. Amile Mavundla**

*University of South Africa*

## Abstract

This paper approaches postgraduate academic writing support from the position of an emerging researcher working inside a graduate studies environment where writing development is a daily, practical concern rather than an abstract institutional ideal. Using an autoethnographic approach, the paper reflects on what becomes visible from this in-between position: close enough to postgraduate student experience to recognise its uncertainties, but increasingly embedded in academic practice and institutional support work. It considers the pressure students experience when trying to sound scholarly, the uneven ways in which expectations are communicated, the anxiety of asking for help, and the difficult movement from proposal, coursework or data collection into sustained scholarly argument. Using the Academic Writing for Postgraduate Students project as its point of departure, the paper reflects on the kinds of resources that may be most useful at particular moments in postgraduate writing development. It pays attention to academic voice, criticality, feedback, revision, confidence and the ordinary anxieties that accompany becoming a researcher. The paper argues that emerging researchers have an important role to play in shaping writing support because they can help translate academic expectations into usable guidance while remaining alert to the vulnerabilities that postgraduate writers often carry into the writing process. In doing so, the paper positions writing support as a relational and developmental practice shaped by proximity, reflection and institutional learning.

**Keywords:** Academic Voice; Autoethnography; Criticality; Emerging Researchers; Postgraduate Writing Support