Imtiaz Bughio, Fizza Sabir & Faraz Bughio
The University of Adelaide

Method to their Madness: Analyzing Students’ Writings Against the RSD Framework
Method to their madness: Analyzing students’ writings against Research Development Skill (RSD) Framework

Imtiaz Ali Bughio
School of Education, The University of Adelaide
imtiaz.bughio@adelaide.edu.au

Fizza Sabir
School of Education, The University of Adelaide
fizza.sabir@adelaide.edu.au

Faraz Ali Bughio
Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan
faraz.bughio@usindh.edu.pk
Conceptual Framework

- **Research Skill Development (RSD) Framework** as a conceptual model

- The RSD includes six facets of inquiry: that the students

  1. “embark on inquiry and so determine a need for knowledge/understanding;
  2. find/generate needed information/data using appropriate methodology;
  3. critically evaluate information/data and the process to find/generate them;
  4. organise information collected/generated;
  5. synthesise and analyse new knowledge;
  6. communicate knowledge and understanding and the processes used to generate them”

  (Willison & O’Regan, 2007 p. 400).
Educational Structure in Pakistan

School education

- Chiefly inspired by the British system.

- The average age of students at the time of admission in the primary level is five. (Bughio, 2013)

- Primary level education: five years
- Middle level education: three years
- Secondary school education: two years
- Higher secondary education: two years

- By the time students are 18, they may enrol in degree colleges/universities for further education.
Educational Structure in Pakistan

University education

- The undergraduate/Bachelor program,
  - Bachelor: a two-year degree,
  - Bachelor (Honours): a three-year degree,
  - Bachelor degree: Four year
  - Some Bachelor degrees e.g., Bachelor in Architecture and medicine require five years.
Research deficit in the educational system of Pakistan

- No formal research training during their school years
- No research-specific courses in the first 3 years of university education
- Some knowledge of research design, principles and methods during four and five-year bachelor degrees
- Thesis as a pre-requisite in a four or five year university degree

(Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2015)
An upward trend for the promotion of research culture

- 1000 research publications in 2009-10
- 5300 publications in 2013-14

These publications are which included faculty members and research students.

(Higher Education Commission, 2013)
English as a Medium of Instruction in University

- Pakistan - a complex country in terms of languages.
  - English: official language
  - Urdu: national language
  - Seven major languages

- The English language was introduced by the British Empire to strengthen their rule in the sub-continent.  
  (Rahman, 1997)

- English - a language of the elite, with little or no functional value  
  (Shamim, 2008)

- English - a language of court proceedings and/or in official (mainly written) correspondence hardly any social interaction.
Methods

- Qualitative analysis
- Secondary data
- Three students of Semester 2, Bachelor of English linguistics
- Each student-five essays as one document
- Essays analysed: 15

- Five topics of the essays:
  - linguistic imperialism in Pakistan,
  - gender discrimination,
  - social problems in Pakistan,
  - internet addiction,
  - the downfall of the education system because of private or government institutions.
Methods

- No research-related subject studied
- Gaining access to students’ essays
  - Gathered secondary data
  - Approached 15 students for their consent
  - Essays were already assessed and marked
  - The results of the essays were finalised
  - This analysis would have no impact on the students’ result
  - Anonymity of participants was ensured
Methods

- Essays were analysed in line with the RSD framework

- One author took lead in this procedure and incorporated the other authors’ opinion/coding as well as part of the analysis.

- The process of analysing essays took about two months, with regular team meetings between the authors.
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facets of research</th>
<th>St 1</th>
<th>St 2</th>
<th>St 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Embark &amp; clarify</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Find &amp; generate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Evaluate &amp; reflect</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d Organize &amp; manage</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e Analyse &amp; synthesise</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Communicate &amp; apply</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 73 27 136
All students practiced five facets of research without being formally taught these facets through any courses during their Bachelor degree.

The students used *evaluative and reflective* facets the most, followed by facets related to *analysing and synthesising*, then *finding and generating*.
Findings and Discussion

- The table shows a difference in frequency for all facets among the three students.
  - Frequency of research facets for student 2 is the highest
  - Student 1 is next
  - Student 3 employed the lowest frequency of research skills.
- This suggests that individual differences also play a role in the employment of research facets in students’ essays.
Findings and Discussion

- Students were able to employ the research facets without being formally exposed to them

- Students do pick up these facets on their own

- It will be interesting for future research to determine how these skills are acquired
Findings and Discussion

- We hypothesise that students have always been encouraged to approach such topics in an evaluative and critical manner.

- They might also have developed these skills while learning how to write and compose essays, reports, debates and speeches during their study at the school and university.

- It is also likely that they have uniquely developed this writing style of evaluating and analysing topics in this way.
Limitations

- Small sample size

- The authors could not gather information from the participants on how and why the students wrote these essays in this way that is using all these skills.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- Students research skills can be enhanced by introducing the Research Skill Development (RSD) Framework through detailed workshops.

- The RSD framework can provide an opportunity for creating conditions where learning can be more systematic and organised by building on students’ previous knowledge through specially-arranged workshops.

(Willison and O’Regan 2007)
Conclusion and Recommendations

- A thorough understanding of the RSD framework can result in developing, refining, and recording the progress of the students’ research skills at all levels.

- Employing this framework can improve students’ research skills and help them learn better.

- Write-ups generated after the RSD framework is formally introduced will yield better results.
References


Method to their madness:
Analyzing students’ writings against Research Development Skill (RSD) Framework

Imtiaz Ali Bughio  
School of Education, The University of Adelaide  
imtiaz.bughio@adelaide.edu.au

Fizza Sabir  
School of Education, The University of Adelaide  
fizza.sabir@adelaide.edu.au

Faraz Ali Bughio  
Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan  
faraz.bughio@usindh.edu.pk