CREATING SUCCESS IN ACADEMIC WRITING: FROM SECONDARY TO HIGHER EDUCATION
A WORKSHOP FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

by

Nang Saluna Wong Sowat

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Abstract

The academic transition from one’s native language to English medium instruction is a challenging experience for second language learners (L2). This is especially true for students who are learning a new subject at the same time. Research has shown that although L2 students have undergone at least eleven years of learning English as a communicative language, this does not guarantee success in their tertiary education. Some common challenges include understanding textbooks written in English, being aware of the academic writing process, lack of confidence in their writing and unfamiliarity with the nature of academic writing and disciplinary genres, such as citing references and writing expectations.

Students in Malaysia do not learn academic English explicitly in secondary schools. Yet, students who envisage pursuing their tertiary education abroad must be equipped with English academic skills. Certainly, these skills must be taught directly, extensively, and explicitly, prior to their tertiary education abroad.

As such, this project focuses on the English academic gap. There are four chapters. After the introduction which traces the evolution of English language instruction in Malaysia is a chapter that reviews studies on genres of academic writing, understanding language challenges in English medium instruction and analytical writing through building critical thinking. The third chapter via a workshop is designed to achieve three learning goals: (1) to enhance academic writing skills and (2) to develop analytical writing through critical thinking skills and (3) building of positive mindsets. This project concludes with the sharing of my academic writing experience while studying in a university setting and suggestions for the benefit of non-native speakers of English.
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Federation of Malaysia comprises thirteen states, eleven in the Peninsula and two Sarawak and Sabah, on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia. The capital city Kuala Lumpur has 1.6 million citizens while the total population of Malaysia is 28.5 million. Malaysia is a unique constitutional monarchy, patterned along the Westminster parliamentary system, with the King as head of state and a prime minister as head of government.

In Malaysia there are about 260,000 students pursuing their post-secondary studies among which about 80,000 (30.7%) students are currently studying abroad (Malaysian Higher Education Department, 2011). Most of them were selected and sponsored by the Malaysian Government to further their studies in English medium instruction universities abroad.

However, most of these students are non-native speakers of English. Their transition from secondary school to higher education is fraught with difficulties (Fong, Lim, & Stapa, 2009). In general, research has proven that second language learners (L2) face many language related challenges while pursuing tertiary education abroad (Dooey, 2010; Ferris & Tagg, 1996). The challenges identified are, understanding the assignments, writing competency, critical thinking and understanding the accent of the instructors. Additionally, it has been a concern among educational researchers and this is
reflected by the number of investigations on low literacy attainment in English among Malaysian learners (Musa, Koo, & Azman, 2012). Overall, academic writing has been identified as one of the main challenges (Evans & Morrison, 2011). As a result, L2 students face greater academic and personal challenges compared to domestic English speaking students.

Studies have shown that on average L2 learners will take at least five years of exposure to the English medium academic environment in order to catch up with native speakers (Cummins, 1981; Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000). In my view and based on my experience, there is a need for Malaysian students to have substantial awareness of academic language expectations to enable them to engage effectively in the academic sphere. This project helps Malaysian post-secondary students in their academic transition en-route to undergraduate studies in English medium universities. This project enhances students’ academic writing skills and develops their analytical writing skills through critical thinking and positive mindsets.

**English Education Landscape in Malaysia**

Malaysia, like some other Asian countries, strives to be a developed and high-income nation as it enters the year 2020. Various initiatives, such as the National Economic Model (NEM) and the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) have been introduced on the national scale. Besides this, human capital development has been identified as one of the ways to support this vision. An emphasis on higher education abroad is one of the key initiatives introduced. However, this initiative often involves a high cost of
investment to sponsors, educators and parents, and a big adjustment in the life of the aspiring student.

College readiness is crucial to a student’s academic success. According to the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2015, of the core subjects English is the worst performing subject. However, many Malaysian students are not ready for college due to academic language gaps—low English attainment and previous strong emphasis on communicative reading and writing skills, and the memorizing of grammatical rules at secondary school level. It is observed that when post-secondary students make an academic transition they are expected to have both academic literacy and critical thinking competencies. By reducing the academic literacy and critical thinking literacy gaps between two different education systems i.e., the Malaysian education system and the language expectations in English medium institutions abroad a student’s college readiness could be enhanced. This, in turn, maximizes the country’s investment. The key question is, “Are students ready for college and university abroad?” To answer this question, it is important to first understand the Malaysian education system and to examine how it has shaped its citizens.

**English Education Policy in Malaysia**

Britain established its first colony in the Malay Peninsula when she acquired Penang Island (Prince of Wales Island) in 1786. Most of the Malay Peninsula, including
Singapore (1819) and Malacca (1824) came under British control during the 19th and early 20th century (Omar, 2004).

The Federation of Malaya achieved independence on 31st August 1957. Six years later, on 16th September 1963 the Federation, along with Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore, formed the Federation of Malaysia. English, which was entrenched during British rule, is today an active second language among large sections of the Malaysian populace.

The Razak Report of 1956 was the foundation for the development of the Malaysian Education system. This report declared that Bahasa Malaysia (BM) must be taught in all schools (Ministry of Education, Federation of Malaya, 1956) as the government identified the language as its national language. Bahasa Malaysia plays a pivotal role in uniting various ethnic groups in Malaysia and education has been identified as one of the best ways to streamline multi-language usage in schools (Yusof, 2006). Prior to this report, different languages were used for different types of schools. For example, BM was used as the medium of instruction in Malay schools, English was used as the medium of instruction in English schools, Mandarin was used as the medium of instruction in Chinese schools, and Tamil was used in Tamil schools. As such, BM is the language that unites multi-lingual Malaysia. Overall, although BM is the national language of Malaysia, English is necessary for employment opportunities and future learning development (Rajaretnam, & Nalliah, 1999).
The National Philosophy of Education in Malaysia (Education Act, 1996) states that:

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large. (p. 11)

This underlying principle is translated into the school curriculum in Malaysia. In general, it encourages the development of balanced, well-rounded, trained and skilled individuals who cherish the national aspiration for unity and becoming a high performance nation. The Education Act (1996) covers education from pre-primary, primary, secondary, and the post-secondary level. This Act stipulates the use of BM as the medium of instruction in all educational institutions. To ensure that English will also be used effectively in schools, a minimum of 150-300 minutes per week of instruction is allocated (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). This UNESCO report states that the English language curriculum emphasizes basic skills that focus on speaking, listening, reading, and writing. At the end of six years of primary education, there is a Primary School Assessment Test or Ujian Penilaian
Sekolah Rendah (UPSR). The evaluation is carried out to assess the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Secondary education follows six years of primary education. At this level, education aims to further develop the potential of an individual as stipulated in the Education Act of 1996. The use of BM is emphasized and reinforced in the curriculum. However, there is no increase in English language instruction, rather a reduction to 200 minutes per week (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). Upon completing five years of education at the secondary level, students take the national examination. The Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education is equivalent to the O-Level, an ordinary level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which is an academic qualification set by the examination boards in the United Kingdom (UK). The SPM examination is the second last public examination before a student begins studying for a bachelor’s degree at university level. Most of the scholarship recipients, or any self-sponsored students, will continue their studies in Malaysia at private colleges for foundation studies or Cambridge A-Level studies (the Advanced Level of the GCE) prior to enrolling in higher education abroad. At this point, students switching from Malay medium instruction to English medium instruction experience a dramatic change in their education system.

The Malaysian Education system has implicitly conceptualized “English proficiency” for relatively superficial “functional purposes” (Muniandy, Sekharan Nair, Krishnan & Ahmad, 2010, p.146). English, being the second language, is learnt for communicative purposes instead of preparing students for academic settings. The
communicative syllabus emphasized the teaching of language functions and de-emphasized the teaching of grammar. Thus, many students are ill-prepared for the language demands of English Literature, Social-Studies, Science and Mathematics.

This new education policy not only ill-prepared students for academic English, but has also resulted in the erosion of English language standards. Under this policy, a credit in English was not necessary as a pre-condition for Malaysian public university entry starting in 1998. A study has reported that even after eleven years of learning English at Malaysian primary and secondary schools, students are not proficient in the English language (Nor Hashimah Jalaludin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar, 2008). The study suggested that the weakness lies in the areas of grammar, particularly in the areas of morphology and syntax. The declining quality of English in Malaysia is also clearly manifested in the quality of English spoken by a large number of Malaysians, especially the younger generation (Gill, 1993).

In conclusion, students in Malaysia are not sufficiently prepared for English as an academic language. The education policy mentioned above has impacted negatively on the quality of English in Malaysia. The effect of this policy became obvious when it was seen as contributing to massive graduate unemployment: in 2002, 44,000 graduates were unemployed (Lee, 2004). The condition is now worsening and it has been consistently ranked as one of the top five issues facing Malaysian employers and in the 2011 SPM results, only 28% of students achieved a minimum credit in the General Certificate of English (GCE) i.e., at O-Level English Language Cambridge 1119 (Malaysian Education
Blueprint 2013-2025). As a result many local graduates failed to get jobs because of their incompetence in the English language, especially during their interview (Chan & Tan, 2008).

**Workshop Rationale**

The current educational policy has impacted negatively on the English language proficiency of its citizens. English is the second language in schools and the syllabus is designed to enable students to use the language for communicative purposes, knowledge acquisition and for future workplace needs (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 2003). However, many students are still not proficient in the English language even at knowledge acquisition (Gill, 1993; Nor Hasimah Jalaludin et al., 2008). They are also not competent for the academic demands at a higher level of education. Consequently, L2 students studying in English medium universities abroad, where the language spoken is other than one’s own language, will experience challenges on a personal level.

In my journey as an L2 student at an English medium university abroad, I understood the magnitude of the stress that this implies. I have learned that for second language learners to participate in and excel at their studies abroad, they must overcome the steep learning curve in different subject areas as well as understand the academic language itself. As mentioned above research has shown that, on average, L2 learners require at least five years of exposure to an English medium academic environment in order to catch-up with the native language learners (Cummins, 1981; Hakuta, et al., 2000). In my opinion, most Malaysian students need to boost their English language and
have substantial academic literacy awareness and critical thinking competencies in order to improve their college readiness. Thus, there is a need for remedial intervention for Malaysian students who envisage furthering their studies in English medium institutions and to compete in a globalised economy. Therefore, I have designed a workshop that targets and prepares these post-secondary school students in academic English as my Master of Education (M.Ed.) project.

**Overview of the Project**

This project is organized into four chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter reviews research studies in academic writing, critical thinking in academic writing and the challenges faced by L2 students. I also explore and review articles that provide me a better understanding of post-secondary academic writing.

In chapter three, I present the workshop designed for secondary school graduates for both enhancing academic writing and developing analytical writing. This workshop is meant for use in a classroom setting. Ideally, the participants are fresh post-graduated secondary students who will be pursuing pre-university courses. I have also included lessons for developing critical thinking and embedding positive mindsets in order to develop resilient students. I found that having a positive mindset is imperative for students facing future obstacles while studying abroad.

At the end of each workshop, a list of learning resources is attached to further nurture students in these areas. There are two workshops and each need at least six hours.
Both workshops are designed as bridging programs for L2 students to accelerate their learning transition.

Learning reflection will be discussed in chapter four. Here, I share my experience as an L2 learner and writer in an English medium instruction university abroad. In addition, I also provide and present some suggestions for further development in this area.
Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I identify and elaborate on the intellectual demands of academic language and the key challenges faced by L2 students which have guided me in developing a blueprint for my project—a workshop that provides academic transition training to Malaysian post-secondary students’ en-route to undergraduate studies in English medium universities.

Three literature themes underpin the development of this workshop. Firstly, understanding genres of academic writing will shed light on the academic language expectations for each student. Secondly, literature on second language learners’ challenges in using English as a medium of instruction and English language challenges will be explored. Next, I discuss analytical writing through the building of critical thinking skills. Finally, a conclusion from the literature review will inform, enlighten and address the learning needs of the students in the workshop.

Understanding the Demand—Genres in Academic Writing

“Academic language refers to the disciplinary registers that students encounter in secondary years, and using academic language calls for advanced proficiency in complex language across subject areas” (Schleppegrell & O’Hallaron, 2011, p.1). Academic language reflects students’ ability to understand and express themselves in both oral and written modes, concepts, and ideas that are relevant to their success in school (Cummings & Yee-Fun, 2007). It is seen as “highly complex and influenced by layers of context and
a good understanding of this complexity in university content classrooms, and examining faculties view on academic writing” will result in a successful academic writing instruction (Zhu, 2004, p.45).

Researchers continue to debate the dimensions of academic language within applied linguistics. Within this debate, there are many discussions in the area of laying out students’ arguments, building their voices and ideas, linking students’ prior knowledge and experience, and presenting a higher order of thinking in academic tasks. Additionally, successful academic writing also includes clear exposition and an appropriate relationship to one’s audience (Hyland, 2007). In this relationship, readers are convinced or persuaded by the writers to see things in a way determined by the writers. According to Schleppegrell & O’Hallaron (2011), over time academic writers set high expectations for their students. Students need to build bridges between their prior knowledge and experience and what is being learned. Students must move from simple to complex expression of ideas, attain a higher order of thinking, and promote the usage of academic tasks through meaningful tasks, in content and language learning.

Types of Academic Tasks

Academic genres vary both within and across academic disciplines. Within the academic sphere, students are required to prepare a range of writing tasks. Depending on the discipline, these could vary from essays, laboratory reports, case-studies, book reviews and research proposals. Different genres can be constructed and evaluated in different ways. Research has shown that such variation embodies different social
relationships between the reader and the writer as well as different values and beliefs (Chang & Swales, 1999; Conrad, 1996; Johns, 2008).

In one of the earliest studies on students’ academic writing tasks, Horowitz (1986) analysed 54 writing assignments from 29 courses taught in 17 departments. This study identified seven categories of academic writing tasks expected of students: a summary of or a reaction to a reading, an annotated bibliography, a report on a specified participant’s experience, a connection of theory and data, a case-study, a synthesis of multiple sources, and a research project. The study provided a clear idea of typical assessment tasks that university students might face with respect to university writing. It can be a guide in stimulating those tasks in English academic writing courses in Malaysia.

Overall, academic writing in specific disciplinary courses indicates that writing serves different purposes in different courses (DasBender, 2011; Jordan, 1997; Zhu, 2004). Therefore, students need to assume different social roles in each writing assignment, because the communicative principles are intricately intertwined with the roles of the student, the context and purpose of writing. One survey looked at academic writing from the beginning of undergraduate and graduate courses (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984). This survey examined 190 academic departments at 34 universities in the United States and Canada with high foreign student enrollments. The study found that disciplines with relatively light writing requirements (e.g., electrical engineering) reported that only a few short writing assignments were required of first year students. Longer research papers were commonly assigned in the areas of business, civil engineering and psychology.
Additionally, it was found that faculty members evaluate their students’ writing based on discourse level characteristics (e.g., paper organization and quality of content) rather than at the word or sentence level, such as punctuation/spelling, sentence structure and range of vocabulary. Even though some important common elements among the different departments were reported, this study indicated that different disciplines do not uniformly agree on the writing assessment tasks or on a single preferred criteria for evaluating students’ assignments.

**Raison d’être for the Workshop**

L2 university students are expected to produce a range of writing genres during their academic studies. However, what they need to know in order to succeed in their academic writing is not always explained clearly to them. Therefore, providing a better understanding of the range of written genres that students need to produce in an academic setting is critically important.

Within the workshop, the activities provide students with various academic writing tasks. Throughout the workshop, the activities prepare the students to be rhetorically flexible, to be well versed in inquiry strategies, and to empower them to develop an awareness of, and sensitivity to, academic contexts, texts and tasks their courses or instructors require. These activities will help them excel in the academic sphere and in their future careers.
Understanding Academic Language Challenges

As mentioned earlier, attending university for the first time can be a stressful experience for many college and university freshmen (Dyson & Renk, 2006). College readiness is important for all students progressing towards higher education and it is crucial in determining student success. Previous studies on Malaysian students’ turnover and adjustment have also reported that the transition from post-secondary school to tertiary education can be stressful (Elias, Mahyuddin, & Uli, 2009) and academic adjustment was found to be a predictor for academic success. It is reported that academic adjustments are required for first year students to succeed in university (Elias et al., 2009).

In most advanced countries, the central grade 11 and 12 English curriculum is geared toward the development of students’ knowledge and skills needed either for higher education or for the workplace (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2012; Ministry of Education, Ontario 2007). As secondary students at this grade, they are allowed to select their course of choice; university preparation, university or college preparation, college preparation or the workplace course route. In the academic or college route, the courses were designed to equip students with knowledge and skills needed to meet the entrance requirements for university programs. This will enable them to succeed in higher education as the English courses are designed to equip them with academic language skills (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2012; & Ministry of Education, Ontario 2007). However, in Malaysia, English curricula for these grades were designed for basic linguistic skills and knowledge. It was organized
in a manner to reflect the way English is used in society for everyday life in Malaysia and memorizing of grammatical rules (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 2004). As a result, many L2 Malaysian students are faced with linguistic as well as cognitive challenges while pursuing tertiary education at English medium instruction universities (Renganathan, 2000).

Generally, writing in the academic sphere is a new kind of writing for all international students who now have to write exams or prepare coursework in English (Bailey, 2006) and it involves transferring general skills of writing such as logical organization, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics (Zhu, 2004). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) summarize the transition processes:

It should be understood that post-secondary L2s are still developing their proficiency in academic English. Learning English at the same time as they are studying core content areas through English. Thus, they must perform “double the work” of native English speaking students in higher institutions. And, at the same time they are being held to the same accountability standards as their native English speaking peers. (p.1)

Understandably, academic writing is challenging for L2 students. Usually to write well in a second language means successful development of L2’s written skills in the new culture which is the academic culture. But, what does this “new culture” mean to these students? In this respect, “students entering in this new culture need a specialized literacy that consists of the ability to use discipline-specific rhetorical and linguistic conventions to serve their purposes as writers” (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991, p.191). The
acculturation of this process involves the socio-cultural dimension of academic writing and it is usually governed by the members of specific discourse communities (Zhu, 2004).

**English Academic Challenges in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, secondary school backgrounds are diverse. This diversity is from a variety of races, Malay, Chinese and Indian, together with a multitude of ethno linguistic groups speaking more than eighty languages in East and West Malaysia (Omar, 2004). Small wonder then that Malaysia is one of the most complex linguistic communities in the world. Despite many differences, these students attend elementary and secondary school under one roof. Likewise, at the post-secondary level, they are expected to use English for subjects across a range of disciplines. It is challenging and onerous for students to acquire new knowledge while learning English at the same time. Also, research has shown that ethnicity has a dramatic impact on a child (Yusof, 2008). Many educators have recognized this challenge for L2 students. In fact in 1962, Birmingham University appears to be the first institution to be seriously concerned about the needs of international students (Jordan, 2002). Under this initiative, the university analysed international students’ problems and developed appropriate teaching materials for their students.

In Malaysia, research studies involving English academic and higher education learners are relatively small. A study conducted on first year adjustment difficulties at local public universities where Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction, reported academic problems such as difficulties in understanding textbooks written in English as
one of the main adjustment difficulties for students (Ahmad, Fauziah, Azemi, Zailani, 2002, cited in Elias et al. 2009). Also, Malaysian students at tertiary level are found to have limited vocabulary knowledge, are weak at understanding long sentences or sentences with difficult words (Nambiar, 2007), have limited critical ability to respond appropriately to academic texts (Ahmad Mazli Muhamad, 2007) and lack the conventions of academic writing (Krishnakumari, Paul-Evanson, & Selvanayagam, 2010 cited in Musa et al. 2012). In another study investigating 167 first year students’ reading and writing skills while pursuing their studies in a Malaysian private university, where English is the medium of instruction, revealed success in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) is not an accurate indicator of students’ proficiency in the English language (Renganathan, 2000). This study showed that even students who excelled in this national examination were still weak in basic linguistic knowledge. She concluded that this could be due to the skills gap between higher learning institutions’ academic language expectations and what is emphasized in schools. With respect to students studying abroad, this condition is more serious since students have to compete with native speakers of English who usually have a strong foundation in academic language.

A review of related literature on Asian students also reveals similar challenges in adapting to English medium instruction. A study by Evans & Morrison (2011) of L2 students’ transition experience at a Hong Kong institution has reported the same challenges. These were found to be weak in basic linguistic competency. Besides that, academic writing was identified as the students’ principal source of difficulty among all
academic tasks when they were first year undergraduates. Four language-related challenges were identified when adjusting to the demands of English medium education in Hong Kong. These were: 1) uncertainty over their professors’ requirements, 2) unfamiliarity with disciplinary genres and referencing, 3) inexperience in planning their writing, and 4) inability to communicate their understanding of the subject using their own academic prose.

In similar vein, I sought a better understanding of L2 students’ academic challenges while studying abroad. This directed me to a study conducted by Leki (2007). This research has contributed to a richer understanding of L2 undergraduates’ academic writing experiences in American universities. Her study involved a detailed analysis of four immigrant and international students. The findings pointed out that there was a disconnection in practice between English as Second Language (ESL) courses, and courses in a student’s major field. In addition, she argues that what was taught generically as “writing” in ESL and first year composition courses, such as models of prose, notions of invention, plagiarism and citation, is specific only to English and humanities courses. She concluded that all the writing courses were irrelevant to the students’ academic language requirements during their degree programs. Consequently, what seems more important is determining success in the “socio-academic relationship” (p.264). This is defined as “a category of social interaction with peers and with faculty that proved to be critical to the students” (p.265). Instructors of L2 writing should talk with students more about their priorities for learning and use their classroom as a place for students to
discover and explore ethnographically the literacy demands that await them in higher 
education.

Another challenging area in academic writing is the use of sources to support the 
writers’ voice, which is inevitable at university level. Many young L2 writers find citing 
sources challenging, and textual plagiarism happens more often for this group than for L1 
writers (Pecorari, 2003; Shi, 2004). Wette (2011) conducted an action research study and 
identified a problem in citation by 78 undergraduate L2 writers who were in their second 
semester or the second year of study. Over half (45) of the participants were from 
Malaysia. This research began with a pre-course assessment followed by an eight-hour 
unit on writing using sources and concluded with a post-evaluation of students’ progress. 
A comparison of pre and post-unit scores revealed that students made rule-governed 
choices when writing using sources. It was proven that many L2 writers had difficulty 
extracting core or specific meaning from complex source texts. It will be even more 
challenging for them to form macro-propositions about text content and to have a good 
vocabulary of subordinate terms. There is another study which reported similar issues 
such as plagiarism, knowledge of written academic genres, the absence of the student’s 
own voice, coherence, and the linking of theory to practice (Phakiti & Li, 2011). This 
study found that these issues prevailed not only at the undergraduate level but also at the 
postgraduate level. To conclude, these limitations, as well as under-developed 
disciplinary knowledge, can add up to a significant degree of difficulty for L2 students.
**Raison d’être for the Workshop**

Based on the above literature review, there is clear evidence of problems in English academic writing amongst Asian undergraduate L2 students. Many of these empirical studies have implications for instructional design. The exploration of the learning gap was achieved by studying the nature and the demands of academic writing, identifying the challenges, and gaining understanding of how the education system shapes the L2 learners.

Overall many students, especially L2 students, went through stages of the writing process with limited knowledge of writing skills, limited exposure to the reading materials of their discipline, and inadequate feedback (Maharsi, 2011). I have identified three major challenges encountered by these students:

- Lack of awareness of the writing processes: understanding essay or assignment requirements, planning, paraphrasing, organization of the essay, and the proof-reading process.
- Lack of confidence in thought processes or their voice in writing to communicate their knowledge and understanding using critical thinking skills.
- Unfamiliarity with the nature of academic writing elements, disciplinary genres, referencing and writing expectations.

On the other hand, these studies also indicate that the students can overcome their literacy problems through a combination of strong motivation, hard work, effective learning strategies, and supportive peer networks (Berman & Cheng 2010; Phakiti & Li,
However, it is imperative for a student to be competent in language areas to cope with academic demands and be ultimately successful in the academic sphere (Cumming, 1981; Ferris and Tagg, 1996; 1996b; Graham 1987; Sarudin, 1994; Zhao, 1993 cited in Berman & Cheng, 2010) and first year adaption is requisite for success in university (Elias et al., 2009). Using the information gathered in the analysis directs me to the next section of literature review. Here I review research that defines critical thinking in writing and discussions on L2 critical thinking conditions.

**Analytical Writing through Building Critical Thinking**

One of the important skills in academic writing—analytical writing involves the use of critical thinking, the lack of which has been of concern for faculty members (Elsegood, 2007). In recent years, critical thinking has become a subject for debate in many educational circles. Most of the time, this skill is indirectly taught in the course of teaching a particular subject. Today, the imparting of critical thinking skills takes centre-stage. As such, educators have become more focused in teaching “thinking skills” of various kinds in contrast to teaching information and content (Fisher, 2001, p.1).

As an L2 learner, I find it a challenge to develop my own style and voice in writing, particularly in analyzing and evaluating arguments or ideas cogently and coherently. I believe there is a reciprocal relationship between critical thinking and the writing process. In light of this, I attempt a critical analysis by defining what critical thinking is and its importance to academic writing.
What is Critical Thinking?

The meaning of critical thinking has been debated for at least one hundred years. Fischer (2001) called this skill “reflective thinking” quoting John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educator who was widely recognized as the “father” of modern thinking. Dewey defined reflective thought as:

“active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends”. (Dewey, 1933, P. 9)

Dewey defined critical thinking as reflective thought which is to suspend judgment, maintain a healthy skepticism, and exercise an open mind. He suggested that it has both an intellectual and an emotional component. The term “critical thinking”, on the other hand, is perceived as a process that is fundamental to all disciplines (DasBender, 2011). Fisher sees critical thinking as a means of examining and analyzing primary resources in order to understand the context in which they were written. Thus, a student must be taught to examine, analyse, question, and reflect on what he has learned. A different insight into these definitions of critical thinking is the term “cognitive activity” (Cottrell, 2005, p. 1). Cottrell defines critical thinking as a complex process of deliberation which involves a wide range of skills and attitudes such as:

- Identifying other’s positions;
- Evaluating the evidence;
- Weighing up opposition arguments and evidence fairly;
• Recognizing techniques used to make certain positions;
• Drawing conclusions based on sound evidence and sensible assumptions; and
• Presenting a point of view in a structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others.

Ultimately, this process will be conveyed through speech and writing. These skills are needed in making a structured argument, judging credibility of a source, making a decision, and presenting one’s own voice. According to Cottrell, this voice needs to be presented in a structured, clear, and concise way that convinces others. As a student in higher education, critical thinking skills are deemed important to produce texts that are intelligibly academic. But applying critical thinking to construct an individual voice is not as simple as it appears (Alagozlu, 2007). These skills are also intertwined with other elements such as culture, upbringing, and norms (Atkinson, 1997; Trans, 2011). Indeed, Fox (1994) depicts clearly its relationship to socio-cultural elements as:

“Critical thinking” or “analysis” has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques—it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one’s country. This is why “critical analysis” is so hard for faculty members to talk about; because it is learned intuitively, it is easy to recognize, like a face or a personality, but it is not so easily defined and is not at all simple to explain to someone who has been brought up differently” (Fox, 1994, p. 125).
On the whole, the ability to produce an individual voice was described as *authorial identity* (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001). However, researchers have proven Asian L2 communication skills are lacking an individual voice and critical skills (Alagozlu, 2007; Stapleton, 2002).

**Critical Thinking in the L2 Context**

In Malaysia, the education policy over the last three decades has resulted in the inability of many post-secondary students to think critically (Ahmad, 1998). This is due to the nature of the approach to teaching that was not designed to encourage critical thinking but rather to allow students to memorize facts, which is a low-level of cognition (Hussin, 2006). Based on previously discussed research, this situation will become more critical and lead to atrocious conditions of English proficiency amongst L2 learners at English medium instruction universities. As a matter of fact, recently, the Malaysian Prime Minister has recognized this problem (Economic Planning Unit, 2006). Human capital and upgrading the mentality and intellectual capacity of the nation have been identified as the country’s top priority in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (March 26, 2006). Following this Plan, all Malaysian public universities must introduce soft skills and incorporate them in the undergraduate syllabus and one of the soft skills is critical thinking skills (Shakir, 2009).

Research into critical thinking and academic writing in Malaysia is still very limited. Only a few studies have investigated this particular area in relation to classroom practices and student soft skill competencies (Hussin, 2006; Shakir, 2009). However,
there are numerous studies conducted to investigate the critical thinking of Asian students studying abroad. One such study was conducted by Trans (2011). This study investigated Chinese and Vietnamese international students from two disciplines namely, Economics and Education, in displaying their critical thinking through disciplinary writing in an Australian university. The researcher concluded the study with two fundamental points. Firstly, the finding was congruent with other researchers that tend to challenge generalization of Asian students as passive learners. Secondly, socio-cultural issues were not the only factors that influence the development of critical thinking. I found this study valuable especially in gaining deeper insights into L2 learners’ internal struggles in displaying critical thinking through their writing.

In light of this, lecturers and supervisors from Western universities commented that South East Asian students’ written work is lacking in argument, student work seems to lack a clear critical focus, and sometimes is merely descriptive containing no argument at all (Davies, n.d.). According to this study and the researcher’s past involvement at incorporating critical thinking into his English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program, he has been using a simple but effective approach to develop his L2 students’ language and critical thinking skills simultaneously, regardless of their language proficiency levels. A simple but effective approach to deconstructing, reconstructing and constructing ‘claims and supports’ in spoken and written texts using diagrams to ‘map’ logical reasoning was used. It seems that this framework offers a useful set of principles for teaching critical thinking in EAP programs, and also has implications for cross-cultural teaching and
learning because it recognizes that approaches to knowledge construction differ from one culture to another.

A recent study which sought to explore cultural differences in critical thinking skills was conducted by Lun, Fischer & Ward (2010). This study compares critical thinking performance between Asian and Western students. The result shows that there was only a marginal significance between critical thinking and L2 academic performance. Thus we note that critical thinking is positively related to students’ English proficiency. It was found to predict L2 students’ academic performance after discounting their English proficiency and general intellectual ability. In other words, it appeared that this skill had a positive effect on their academic performance regardless of their cultural background. Also, it confirmed that critical thinking appeared to be more of a linguistic issue rather than a cultural issue.

In view of the literature review, it is evident that critical thinking is inextricably linked to English language proficiency and not cultural differences. It is axiomatic that language proficiency plays a very important role in students’ academic performance. If the L2 students possess lower levels of English proficiency, they may be cognitively loaded during their studies. Now it is clear that L2 transition academic challenges are not merely language problems but also involve higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, a smooth academic transition and a better understanding of the importance of these skills is vital as it impacts student’s academic performance. Needless to say, it is essential for L2 learners to acquire these skills prior to and while studying in English language medium universities abroad.
Raison d’être for the Workshop

In the earlier literature review, I examined the nature of the academic writing challenges faced by L2 students and concluded with a detailed discussion of critical thinking which is an important skill in the academic sphere. The next question explores learning to write for L2 students and how we can ensure that such learners write well while preparing for a successful tertiary education.

We are well aware that writing effectively is a basic requirement for student success in tertiary education. For native English speakers, this skill is acquired through multiple opportunities to write across all subjects in school. In reality, L2 students have limited opportunities to develop their writing skills in English across subjects. As L2 students, learning to write involves more than just writing alone. In general, there are three fundamentals to second-language writing: a) features of the texts that they produce, b) the composing process that they use while they write and c) the socio-cultural contexts in which they write (Cumming, 2001). Based on the literature review above, L2 student challenges are overcome by: having positive mindsets and habits and modification of learning strategies through their experiences with writing, reading and critical analysis which can serve as a foundation for effective writing at tertiary level (Berman & Cheng, 2010; Phakiti & Li, 2011). But as each secondary student may experience different learning experiences and enroll in different disciplines at various institutions, it is almost impossible for the course instructors to meet their diverse needs. My research on this question has navigated me towards an “on the shelf” framework to make the learning module more effective.
A recent project, conducted jointly by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Writing Project (NWP) (2011), has shown that habits of mind and experiences are central to success in tertiary education and beyond. The project identified these two elements as the main factors in determining students’ success as they enter tertiary education. It was also reported that standardized writing curricula or assessment instruments that emphasize formulaic writing will not reinforce the habits of mind and the experiences necessary for success, since students invariably encounter various writing demands during their post-secondary education.

According to the above project, students who have these habits of mind and experiences are well positioned to meet the writing challenges in the full spectrum of English medium instruction and later in their careers. In this framework, habits of mind refer to both intellectual and practical ways of approaching learning which will enhance students’ success. The framework identified eight essential habits of mind for success in college or university level writing:

- Curiosity—the desire to know more about the world.
- Openness—the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world.
- Engagement—a sense of investment and involvement in learning.
- Creativity—the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas.
- Persistence—the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short and long-term projects.
- Responsibility—the ability to accept ownership for one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions.
- Flexibility—the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.
- Metacognition—the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.

The second part of this framework offers educators suggestions on how they can nurture these habits of mind through writing, reading, and critical analysis experiences. Overall these experiences aim to develop students’:

- Rhetorical knowledge—the ability to analyse and act on understanding of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts;
- Critical thinking—the ability to analyse a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research;
- Writing processes—multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research;
- Knowledge of conventions—the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing; and
• Ability to compose in multiple environments—from using traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies.

The above framework is adapted and adopted to guide the workshop in my project. It presents a holistic approach and has been tested to be effective for success in a post-secondary setting. It identifies the habits of mind and kinds of writing experiences that best prepare students for success. This framework will prepare students for the different challenges that are not only in academic demands but in many aspects of life abroad. These challenges vary and are unique by country, university, and discipline that students hope to pursue. Therefore, it is important to foster the right habits of mind through writing and critical analysis in the workshop.

Conclusion

The present literature review identifies six key areas of English academic language challenges faced by L2 students while studying at English medium universities. Evidence from previous studies clearly indicates the six areas as follows:

• Difficulty in understanding essay or assignment requirements;
• Lack of awareness of the writing process;
• Lack of confidence in thought processes and presenting one’s own voice in writing;
• Unfamiliarity with the nature of academic writing, its elements and disciplinary genres and referencing;
• Lack of high-order thinking skills; and
• Inability to articulate arguments clearly.
It is my hope that the workshop presented in chapter three will improve Malaysian post-secondary students’ college readiness, especially in the area of academic writing and analytical thinking skills. In addition, I have included building a positive mindset as one of the learning goals so that the students will have a strong inner being and the fortitude to face the challenges of university life abroad.
Chapter Three

Introduction

This chapter outlines proposed learning intervention via workshop that emerged from the literature review. It describes the rationale for learning goals, activities, performance tasks and useful resources to address the six challenges faced by L2 students while pursuing their studies in English medium universities.

This workshop is divided into two units. It is designed to achieve three main learning goals: 1) enhancing academic writing and 2) developing analytical writing skills through building critical thinking skills and 3) fostering positive mindsets.

Rationale

For L2 students learning, acquiring information and mastering new skills is a progressive process. It takes time, discipline, practice and continuous effort to hone these skills. It is obvious from research that there are many hurdles for L2 students in the English language learning domain (Berman & Cheng, 2010; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Phakiti & Li, 2011). In Malaysia, writing in English is a major challenge faced by L2 learners who are transitioning from secondary school to post-secondary education (Fong et al., 2009). This challenge occurs because of the current Malaysian education policy, and different learning experiences due to geographical areas, religious practices and multi-linguistic backgrounds which have an impact on students’ college readiness and level of English proficiency (Musa et al.2012).

Also, as mentioned earlier, critical thinking is linked to English language proficiency. Therefore, developing high-order thinking skills is deemed critical in
developing writing skills. Recognizing that, understanding what is critical thinking and logical reasoning, analyzing texts and situations, and building criticism will help students to develop their analytical writing.

Hence, remedial intervention at post-secondary level is essential in order to improve students’ college readiness and thus improve their academic performance in English medium universities. The workshop is designed as a bridge to reduce the gaps in English academic and analytical writing among L2 students.

**Overall Workshop Plan**

This workshop is designed to be used as a training workshop or by individuals as a self-study guide. The workshop is designed to achieve the learning goals outlined above. It is planned in the following order: *Session 1: Enhancing Academic Writing Workshop* and *Session 2: Developing Analytical Writing through Building Critical Thinking and Positive Mindsets.*

**Intended Audience**

This workshop is intended for L2 learners in Malaysia who have graduated from secondary schools and plan to pursue post-secondary studies in English medium instruction. Ideally, it is to be used before the university preparatory course begins. Although it is planned for Malaysian students, it can be used for students in other international institutions with L2 learners.

**Workshop Pre-requisites**

Students must obtain at least an “A” grade in English in the Malaysian National Examination or Band 6 for IELTS (the International English Language Testing System)
or a score of 79 in the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) IBT Test to attend the workshop.

**Workshop Hours**

The workshop is designed to be implemented over a two-day period. Each unit requires at least six hours per session. A gap of two weeks is needed between the two workshop sessions. This is to allow students to apply the new skills acquired and to give sufficient time for the instructor before proceeding to the next session.

**Learning Goals**

There are ten activities in this workshop, all designed to accelerate the academic transition of secondary L2 students with a focus on academic writing and analytical thinking. In addition, each activity fosters a positive mindset in order to develop a more resilient student. Each of the established learning goals in the unit supports the overall objectives of the workshop. These learning goals are converted into specific performance targets (performance tasks) in order to determine whether the objectives of the workshop are achieved.

The goals and targeted performance tasks for each workshop are outlined below:

**Session One: Enhancing Academic Writing Skills**

This unit introduces academic writing genres, techniques, and tools of academic writing. Students will achieve the following learning goals by performing the accompanying tasks. The following table lists the tasks that students need to perform in order to achieve the learning objectives on the left.
Table 1: Session One—Learning Goals and Expected Performance Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
<th>Expected Performance Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • **Know and understand** the meaning of **academic writing** and its importance to academic success | • Define the meaning of academic writing  
• Identify and describe three possible language and cultural challenges on arrival abroad and  
• List at least three writing challenges faced by the student |
| • **Learn the 12 step writing process** - multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research by applying the right knowledge of conventions e.g., spelling, punctuation, and grammar | • Determine the 12 step writing process; identify, sort, and order main ideas and supporting details for writing tasks using a variety of strategies; select the organizational pattern best suited to the content and the purpose  
• Maintain a systematic record for data storage and retrieval  
• Use the bibliography worksheet correctly  
• Revise text by editing and proofreading their written work and their peer’s written work by applying the right conventions |
| • **Develop rhetorical knowledge**  
- The ability to analyse and act on understanding of audience, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts | • Identify and analyse texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, and themes correctly e.g., personal narrative, descriptive essay, response paper, analytical or critical writing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
<th>Expected Performance Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Learn and have the opportunity to practice key rhetorical concepts such as audience, purpose, context, and genre through writing and analysis of a variety of types of texts (nonfiction, informational, imaginative, printed, visual, spatial and auditory) | - Write an academic letter—identify the topic, purpose, and audience for a variety of writing tasks  
  - Shape ideas, concepts, and present arguments with coherence and clarity |

- **Learn about writing conventions** – the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of research writing (American Psychological Association-APA, Modern Language Association-MLA) such as:
  - Plagiarism;
  - Right behavior of an ethical writer

- Understand the ethics of scholarly work:
  - Know how to paraphrase and cite properly following particular disciplinary styles
  - Explain the meaning of plagiarism and explain the consequences of it

- Respond to writing tasks and assignments by using editing, proofreading skills and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, and refine written work
- Regularly proofread and make necessary corrections on their writing
- Identify at least three examples of right behavior of an ethical writer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
<th>Expected Performance Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ethical writer; and</td>
<td>• Correctly use and apply either APA or MLA style documentation in research paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effective use of either APA or MLA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>style documentation in research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session Two: Developing Analytical Writing through Building Critical Thinking Skills and Positive Mindsets

This unit emphasizes analytical thinking skills and positive mindsets in academic writing that are necessary for success in academic and daily life. In this unit students will achieve the following learning goals by performing the accompanying tasks.

Table 2: Session Two—Workshop Learning Objectives and Expected Performance Tasks

The following table lists the tasks that students need to perform in order to achieve the learning objectives on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Expected Performance Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>▪ Write and explain a short critical analysis based on personal experience or prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acquire a working understanding of what critical thinking is and recognize some of the benefits and barriers related to critical thinking</td>
<td>▪ Assess own current understanding of critical thinking by identifying barriers to critical thinking and identifying areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyzing Text/Situation</strong></td>
<td>▪ Identify, plan and write texts, informed by research, for various purposes and audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acquire skills to analyse and evaluate a situation or text and make logical decisions based on their analysis, through their writing, reading, and research</td>
<td>▪ Use secondary information sources from texts to understand how they influence the presentation of ideas, issues, and themes in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Able to support ideas or positions, illustrate alternative perspectives and provide additional information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
<td>Expected Performance Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Valid Judgement</strong></td>
<td>- Able to analyse texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues and provide evidence to support their analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create texts for various purposes that are informed by research e.g., arguments, supporting ideas or positions, illustrate alternative perspectives and provide relevant information</td>
<td>- Shape ideas and concepts and present arguments with coherence and clarity and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anticipate and counter arguments with proper supporting ideas</td>
<td>- Write the thesis statement correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Critically evaluate sources for credibility, bias, quality of evidence and quality of reasoning Provide constructive feedback to peers on work in progress by working with a partner or as a group e.g., make a personal response to peers’ ideas, express opinions about an event, make specific suggestions for improvement with confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learn the eight essential habits of mind for success in college writing:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition</td>
<td>- Describe the eight essential habits of mind for success in college writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assess own current habits of mind and identify areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Apply the eight habits of mind in your academic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
<td>Expected Performance Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ <strong>Create texts for various purposes</strong> that are informed by research e.g., argument, supporting ideas or positions</td>
<td>▪ Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts to suit purpose, readers, situation and how it can be achieved by providing relevant information and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrate with alternative perspectives and provide relevant information</td>
<td>▪ Actively participate in learning sessions by contributing ideas and opinions on an ongoing assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ <strong>Know the difference</strong> between topic and thesis statement</td>
<td>▪ Able to explain the difference between topic and thesis statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Work collaboratively, brainstorm critically, identify and improve the assigned essay</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Identify and define a problem in thesis statement and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Anticipate and counter arguments with proper supporting ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Activities

Each workshop begins with a brief introduction, followed by a presentation of its content and the expected outcomes. This is achieved by using Microsoft Power Point slides which present more detailed issues addressed in the learning unit. The workshop topics, activities and estimated duration of the units is summarized below.

Session One: Enhancing Academic Writing Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Estimated time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction/Icebreaker</td>
<td>▪ Ice breaker activities</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and cultural challenges while studying abroad</td>
<td>▪ Short video on challenges while studying abroad</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the writing process: 12 steps in academic writing</td>
<td>▪ Lesson and discussion</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical knowledge</td>
<td>▪ Brainstorm on the function of each writing sample</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics in academic writing</td>
<td>▪ Video show on avoiding plagiarism</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Discussion on the consequences of plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations in academic writing</td>
<td>▪ Lesson on different types of citation styles:</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Estimated time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Modern Language Association (MLA)</td>
<td>- American Psychological Association (APA),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Discussion: Steps in the use of citations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Citation writing and paraphrasing activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic writing assignment</td>
<td>▪ Individual activity: writing academic paper</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Peers’ writing assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Brainstorming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>▪ Discussion- Learning debrief</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Two: Developing Analytical Writing through Building Critical Thinking and Positive Mindsets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Estimated time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction/Icebreaker</td>
<td>▪ Icebreaker activities&lt;br&gt; ▪ Recap of previous session&lt;br&gt; ▪ Dissemination of Assignment 1 feedback&lt;br&gt; ▪ Discussion</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to critical thinking</td>
<td>▪ Self-reflection: short critical analysis&lt;br&gt; ▪ Group discussion&lt;br&gt; ▪ Explaining the meaning of critical thinking and the challenges that hinder the application of this skill</td>
<td>75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The eight good habits of mind for success in college writing and daily life.</td>
<td>▪ Teaching and discussion&lt;br&gt; ▪ Plotting the eight good habits vs. personal habits&lt;br&gt; ▪ Group discussion</td>
<td>80 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link between critical thinking and academic writing</td>
<td>▪ Using samples of academic assignments, instructor will brainstorm and discuss the expectations for each assignment&lt;br&gt; ▪ Guided reading assignments</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Delivery and Methodology

Learning activities in this workshop focus on a blended learning approach. This includes a mixture of audio-visual presentations, interactive discussions between instructor and small group work based on a variety of materials and exercises and followed by online learning activities after the workshop. Students are also required to complete three pieces of writing during the workshop session and one take home writing assignment. They are encouraged to proofread and peer-proofread their writing based on the checklist provided during the workshop. The marked written assignments will be returned during the second session. A collective feedback will be given during the first part of this session. In addition, students are given suggestions for a self-study plan. A range of questions is included to encourage the students to reflect and apply specific skills.
**Suggestion for Further Development**

The workshop has been created to develop students’ academic writing along with structural approaches to thinking and writing. However, students may not be able to effectively develop writing and critical thinking skills within such a short time frame. Because developing these skills requires a longer period of time, resources such as online reading, practice exercises and activities, and books are recommended for self-directed learning. This will ensure students develop their skills over the long term in a consistent and practical way.
THE WORKSHOP

Section One: Enhancing Academic Writing Workshop

Workshop Description:
This interactive six-hour workshop aims to increase the effectiveness of L2 academic writing skills and to develop their confidence as writers. This is done by using a blended learning approach that will develop their ability to write for an academic audience clearly and effectively. The ethics of scholarly work and avoiding plagiarism are also included in this unit. Lectures, discussions, brain-storming, reflection, and peer feedback will augment these learning opportunities.

Activity Plan
1. Laying out the objectives and expectations
   - Conduct an icebreaker
   - Give students five minutes to write four or five of their learning goals for academic writing. After they have written these, ask the group to share their answers.
   - Highlight and discuss the learning goals and why they are important for success in tertiary education.

Teaching material: Refer to slide #2
2. **Life Abroad- Challenges**

- **Activity 1**
  - Watch a video clip on challenges while studying abroad
  - In groups of five, ask students to identify three problems and solutions mentioned by each speaker in the video.
  - Ask each group to share discussion outcomes.

- Instructor summarizes and explains those views to the class.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slide # 3.

**Video clip link:** Challenges While Studying Abroad by University of Southampton/UKCISA, 2008-2012.

http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk/the_language_challenge.html

3. **Introduction to Academic Writing**

- **Activity 2: Identifying Writing Challenges**
  - Discuss the challenges faced by L2 learners.
  - Compare research evidence vis-à-vis students’ learning goals and their current experiences.
  - Encourage students to share their writing challenges.

- Introduce the 12 step writing process. Refer to slides #6-8.

- Explain the importance of maintaining a systematic record for data storage and retrieval while conducting research work.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slides # 4-8.

**Handout:** The Writing Process Handout and Bibliography Worksheet
4. **Rhetorical Knowledge**

- Students learn the rhetorical functions of academic writing. This is achieved by using examples from academia.

- **Activity 3: Genres and their function**
  - Ask students to identify a variety of contexts or genres, e.g., personal narratives, descriptive essays, response papers, and analytical writings.

- **Activity 4: The process of writing assignments in your home country and abroad**
  - Ask the students to find out, and compare their writing assignments with those from a university in another country, e.g., the United Kingdom (UK).
  - Use three questions in slide #14 for this purpose.
  - Present the UK writing assignment experience and then discuss students’ writing experience in their home country.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slides # 9-15.

5. **Ethics in Writing**

- Watch a short video clip on “Ethics in Writing”.

- Ask students for their views on plagiarism. Check students’ understanding and make its consequences clear.

- Discuss effective techniques used in paraphrase writing.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slides # 17-18.
**Video clip link**: Avoiding Plagiarism by Learning Commons, Queen’s University, Kingston Canada

[http://library.queensu.ca/qlc/video/Avoiding_Plagiarism/Avoiding_Plagiarism.html](http://library.queensu.ca/qlc/video/Avoiding_Plagiarism/Avoiding_Plagiarism.html)

6. **Citation of Reference Books and Manuscripts**

- Introduce students to different types of citation styles: American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), and Chicago Manual of Style.

- Briefly explain the American Psychological Association (APA) style, i.e., what is APA, who uses this style and expectations surrounding its use.

- Use the bibliography worksheet and APA Publication manual and lead students through the citation process.

- **Activity 5: Citation Exercise**
  
  - Ask students to write citations based on slide # 22.
  
  - Show students the answers in slides #23 and 24.

**Teaching material**: Refer to slides # 18 – 24.

**Handout**: Bibliography worksheet handout.
7. Writing the Academic Statement

- Conclude and revisit all the topics covered in the unit.

**Activity 6: Writing an Academic Article**

- Conduct an academic writing assignment by administering a Writing Task 1 sample from International English Language Testing System (IELTS).
- Show the sample answer for the assignment. Ask the class to fill in the blanks for the model answer.
- Get students to work in pairs. Ask them to read their fellow students’ written work and give feedback based on what they have learned.

- Conclude the course by taking questions from students.

- Distribute the writing assignments.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slide # 25

**Handout:** Writing Pack 1 and Writing Pack 2. Students are required to submit them within a week via e-mail.

**Workshop Resources**

Materials distributed to students include the Workshop Teaching Aids—Power Point Slides for Session 1, Collection of Resources—Websites, Online Activities and Recommended Books List (see Appendix A and B).
THE WORKSHOP

Section Two: Developing Analytical Writing Skills through Building Critical Thinking and Positive Mindsets

Workshop Description:
This interactive six-hour workshop will emphasize the development of L2 analytical writing skills by building critical thinking skills and developing positive mindsets. The holistic blended learning approach will enable the students to develop critical thinking skills, make thoughtful decisions, and present their own voices through their writing. Lectures, discussions, brainstorming, reflection, and peer feedback will enhance their thinking skills and mindset.

Activity Plan
1. Laying Out the Session Objectives and Expectations
   - Conduct a revisit session on the previous workshop.
   - Ask students to share their academic writing experiences and feedback on Assignment 1.
   - Provide feedback on the previous writing assignments.
   - Discuss the course objectives and the requisites for success in tertiary education.

Teaching material: Refer to slide #2.
2. **Short Critical Analysis**

- **Activity 1**
  - Ask students to write a short but critical essay on the following question:

    *What are your views toward what it means to live abroad? What specific matters do you have to pay attention to in order to be a successful undergraduate studying abroad?*

  - This ten minute task is assigned at the beginning to assess students’ critical thinking about their personal experience. Students will review their experience at the end of the workshop to gauge changes in their thinking as a result of the learning process.

  - Ask a few students to voluntarily share their write-up.

  - The instructor summarizes and reflects upon students’ responses.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slide # 3.

3. **Introduction to Critical Thinking**

- Introduce the components of success in the academic sphere and discuss some of the common barriers to critical thinking. In this part of the workshop, students will be introduced to the eight good habits of mind for success in college writing and daily life.
• **Activity 2**
  - In order to enable students to assimilate new concepts and knowledge, ask them to map the eight good habits of mind in opposition to their current practices or habits.
  - Within the assigned groups, ask students to discuss their mapping.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slides 3-11.

### 4. Link Between Critical Thinking and Academic Writing

- Explain and discuss the link between critical thinking and academic writing.

- Guide students through the given assignment. This is done by carefully and critically reading the assignment. At the same time, the instructor emphasizes the importance of using probing questions in academic writing.

Some of the possible questions are as follows:

- How do you critically analyse and evaluate the type of critical thinking being used? Is it by making comparisons, problem-solving, describing cause and effect or by using the evaluating method?

- What is the lecturer looking for in a critical piece of writing?

- If you want to say something that is new or unusual, or which your lecturer may disagree with, how do you make sure you have extra evidence and support?

- How do you provide an argument that supports your claims?
- How do you link what you are saying to the overall field of the discipline?
- Why is this essay topic worth writing about? What makes it particularly significant?

**Teaching material:** Refer to slide # 13.

**Handout:** Reading Assignment Pack 1.

5. **Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing: Critical and Reflective Writing**

- Ask student to work on the subject of the rhetorical functions.
- Explain and give examples of critical and reflective writing.
- **Activity 3**
  - Using the guided critical thinking checklist in slide #15, stimulate student thinking by connecting course concepts with the subject area.
  - Ask students to apply the guided critical thinking strategies in their response to the question: “Discuss possible solutions to enhance financial literacy in Malaysia?”
  - Encourage students to make argumentative ideas or views. Student thinking will be further reinforced by assessing an example of their written submissions.

**Teaching material:** Refer to slide # 15 to 18.

**Handout:** Reading Assignment Pack 2.
6. Application of Critical Thinking Skills in Writing: Writing a Five Minute Paper

- **Activity 4**
  - In the first section of the course wrap-up, ask the students to reflect and make a free writing journal entry on “What is currently puzzling you?”
  - Encourage students to voluntarily share their written papers with the class.
  - Ask the students to recall and compare their writing at the start of the course and after the course (now). Ask them to assess how their thinking has changed after the course.

- Ask students to identify an action plan on how they can improve their critical thinking skills related to the eight habits of mind.

**Workshop Resources**

Materials distributed to students include the Workshop Teaching Aids—Power Point Slides for Session 2, Collection of Resources—Websites, Online Activities and Recommended Books List (see Appendix C and D).
Chapter Four

Learning Reflection

I believe strongly in continuous reflection and evaluation in the learning process. The dissemination of learning will not be effective unless I critically reflect on my project. The literature review has revealed that L2 students pursuing their studies in tertiary education will be constantly challenged in the domain of academic language. Certainly, this journey is more demanding in unfamiliar environments and in new learning areas. The situation is doubly challenging when students are unable to find sufficient support within the institution. On a personal note, my journey to complete this M.Ed. program was fraught with difficulties, but rewarding and rich with new learning experiences. My first term in university abroad was like going back to square one, especially in dealing with academic writing. I had to unlearn and relearn new things. At that time, I felt like I was running against the clock.

Some noticeable challenges encountered were derived from developing my critical thinking, putting my voice down on paper, and switching my thinking from my native language to that in English. Citing references and paraphrasing were also areas that were challenging for me. Overall, this challenge had a profound impact on my learning journey as an L2 student in higher education. I began to understand myself better, learned to identify academic expectations and by trial and error learned where and when to seek help. Having a supportive supervisor, peers, the Writing Centre, and the International Student Centre were crucial to my education and my mental development. In my
situation, I was delighted to have a supportive supervisor and mentor who understood my predicament and guided me throughout the challenging journey.

Today, I understand that writing is a “process”. It is a process of drafting, refining, rewriting, and rewriting again, until I feel confident and know that I have achieved the desired result. There are no shortcuts in producing a sound paper, especially for L2 students. However, with hard work and a great deal of determination, and proper techniques of writing, I believe that students can improve their writing and thinking skills and thus excel in their studies.

As I write my last word for my final project, I am glad to know that the Malaysian government has committed to promote the use of English in schools. By 2016, the government will implement its proposal to make it compulsory for SPM examination candidates to take and to pass the language. Hopefully this proposal will improve the English language proficiency of its citizen.
References

Ahmad Mazli Muhammad. (2007). The effectiveness of an academic reading course in A

Ahmad, R. H. (1998). Educational development and reformation in Malaysia: Past,

118-136.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority. (2012). *The Australian
Curriculum: English*. 10(3).


Routledge.

Second Language Writing, 10*, 1–2.

constructed texts: The initiation of a graduate student into a writing research
community. In C. Bazerman & J. Paradis (Eds.), *Textual dynamics of the


Appendix A

Teaching Aids: Power Point Slides for Session 1—“Enhancing Academic Writing Workshop”

This section contains slides for session one of the workshop. The instructor may change and customize the content based on the participants’ unique experience and activities.
Creating Success in Academic Writing:  
From Secondary to Higher Education 
Enhancing Academic Writing Workshop 
Session 1

Learning Goals

1. **Know** the meaning of **academic**—**writing** and its importance to academic success;

2. **Develop rhetorical knowledge** — the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts; and learn and have the opportunity to practice in academic writing.

3. **Learn the writing processes** — multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research-The 12 step writing process.

4. **Learn about knowledge conventions** — the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of research writing.
Slide 3

Challenges While Studying Abroad

What are the possible academic and cultural challenges for students studying abroad?


Activity: In groups of five, identify three problems and solutions mentioned by each speaker.

Slide 4

Definition of Academic Writing

“Academic language refers to the disciplinary registers that students encounter in secondary years, and using academic language for advanced proficiency in complex language across subject areas”.

(Schleppegrell & O’Hallaron, 2011, p.3)
Academic Writing Challenges (An Empirical Research Evidence)

➢ **Unaware of the writing processes**
   Understanding essay or assignment requirements, planning, paraphrasing, and organizing the essay and the proofreading process.

➢ **Lack of confidence in thought processes** or student voice; the ability to communicate their understanding and synthesize their knowledge using critical thinking skills.

➢ **Unfamiliarity with the nature of academic writing** elements - disciplinary genres, referencing, and writing expectations.

---

**Where do I start?**

What is the process of writing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Skill Needed</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read the question or review and understand what you are required to do. Think about the subject, the purpose and the audience.</td>
<td>✓ Thinking academically</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Think about what you know about the subject. Record your thoughts.</td>
<td>✓ Brainstorming</td>
<td>Diagrams or notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Go to the library and find relevant books or articles.</td>
<td>✓ Library/research skills</td>
<td>Reading list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Find the books on your reading list - if you have one - and study them.</td>
<td>✓ Reading skills: skimming and scanning</td>
<td>List of materials studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Make notes on these books and articles. Record full bibliographical details of the materials you use.</td>
<td>✓ Reading in detail, selecting and noting ✓ Taking notes, paraphrasing/summarising</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
### Where do I start?

#### What is the Process of writing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Skill Needed</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Organise your piece of work.</td>
<td>✓ Planning organisation</td>
<td>Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Type or write your first draft.</td>
<td>✓ Writing from notes</td>
<td>First draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Synthesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Writing paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Typing/word-processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Discuss your first draft informally with friends, other members of your class, and your lecturer if possible.</td>
<td>✓ Speaking skills</td>
<td>List of revisions/changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Listening skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Discussion skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Revise your first draft, bearing in mind any comments that were made in your discussions. Go back to the first draft if necessary; produce your second draft.</td>
<td>✓ Use of dictionaries and reference books</td>
<td>Second draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Introduction &amp; conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Quoting/writing a list of references</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)

### Where do I start?

#### What is the process of writing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Skill Needed</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Proofread your draft.</td>
<td>✓ Checking for spelling, mistakes checking, punctuation, and grammar</td>
<td>Writing with edited changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Checking vocabulary use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Checking style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Checking organisation, references etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Checking for plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Produce an edited typed version.</td>
<td>✓ Typing/word-processing</td>
<td>Final piece of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Writing title/contents page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>✓ Final check</td>
<td>Submit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing

Definition:
“The art of speaking or writing effectively; It is the study of principles and rules of composition formulated by critics of Ancient times”.


It involves:

- writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion.
- effective use of speech.

Examples of text and language:

**Descriptive**
- Describing objects, locations, structures & directions
- Reporting & narrating
- Defining
- Writing instructions

**Critical**
- Arguing & discussing
- Evaluating other points of view
- Comparing & contrasting: similarities & differences
- Expressing degrees of certainty
- Expressing reasons & explanations/cause and effect
- Providing support
- Drawing conclusions
- Recommendations

**Reflective**
- Writing reflectively
The liver is the largest organ in the body. It weighs a little more than three pounds in an adult. It is wedge-shaped and is situated under the diaphragm, mostly on the left side of the body, where it is protected by the lower ribs. Somewhat like an intricate chemical factory, the liver takes the particles of glucose (which come from digested starches and sugars) and changes them into another kind of carbohydrate called glycogen, which it then stores. When the body needs sugar, the liver turns the glycogen into glucose again and sends it to the bodily tissues through the bloodstream.

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/31/science/flu-that-leapt-from-birds-to-seals-is-studied-for-human-threat.html?_r=1&ref=science
Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing

Examples of Text and Language: Defining

1. **Average**
   A number that is calculated to summarise a group of numbers. The most commonly used average is the mean, the sum of the numbers divided by however many numbers there are in the group. The median is the middle value in a group of numbers ranked in order of size. The mode is the number that occurs most often in a group of numbers. Take the following group of numbers: 1, 2, 2, 9, 12, 13, 17
   - The mean is \(\frac{56}{7}=8\),
   - The median is 9,
   - The mode is 2

2. **Economics**
   The “dismal science”, according to Thomas Carlyle, a 19th-century Scottish writer, has been described in many ways, few of them flattering. The most concise, non-abusive, definition is the study of how society uses its scarce resources.

Source: [http://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z](http://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z)

---

Understanding Assignment Writing (abroad versus home country)

**Activity**
In this activity you are going to find out what assignment writing might possibly look like in universities in the UK by thinking about assignment writing in your home country first and then comparing them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True about my assignment in my home country</th>
<th>Not true about my assignment in my home country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes have to work with other students on group assignments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always need to include a reference list at the end of my written assignments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to show critical analysis in the assignments I write.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Recap - Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>UK Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I sometimes have to work with other students on group assignments.        | • Collaborative assignments are occasionally set by tutors in the UK. These may involve several stages and include a joint report produced by all group members or an oral presentation.  
|                                                                           | • Working on group assignments can help students develop important collaborative skills and learn how to produce and organise more complex pieces of work together.  
|                                                                           | • These are skills which are also important in professional life.                                     |
| I always need to include a reference list at the end of my written assignments. | • It is essential to include a reference list (or sometimes a bibliography) at the end of an assignment if you have referred to any source material (ideas or arguments from books or journal articles).  
|                                                                           | • This should provide full details of all the source material you have used to write the assignment. |
| I need to show critical analysis in the assignments I write.               | • Being able to demonstrate skills in critical analysis is important in all university courses in the UK.  
|                                                                           | • Students studying science subjects will need to analyse data and the results of experiments to produce findings and draw conclusions.  
|                                                                           | • Students studying arts-based subjects will need to refer to and critically evaluate research conducted by others as well as provide their own thoughts and opinions about academic questions.  
|                                                                           | • They will then need to refer to research to support the point they wish to argue.                   |

Modern Languages, at the University of Southampton (2008-2012). Retrieved from:  
http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk/understanding_course_assignments.html

Lunch break
Ethics in Academic Writing

Paraphrasing Tips

- Have you tried changing a few words to synonyms? This is not enough, you need to make your own sentences.

- Have you included exact sequences of words from the original? Be sure to use quotation marks if you use a direct quote.

- Re-write again and again to make your own sentences.

- It is important to make sure you retain the meaning of the original as you are required to present the author’s work accurately.
Citations in Academic Writing

Three types of citations:

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Chicago Manual of Style

What is APA Style?

- It is the organization of written communication that indicates the source of the facts, ideas, and materials.
- In APA it indicates the following:
  - the organization of content
  - writing style
  - citing references
  - how to prepare a manuscript for publication in certain disciplines
Uses of APA

It describes rules for the preparation of academic writing for writers and students in:

- Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology, Economics, and Criminology
- Business
- Nursing

Mixed References Exercise

Write a list of references for an essay from the information given below.

i. Someone named Andy Gillett wrote this web page, which is very useful, and he worked at the University of Hertfordshire. It was published on May 6th this year. The title is: Using English for Academic purposes. The URL is http://www.uefap.com/ and I copied some information from it for this exercise on Sunday November 7th at 11.00 at night.

ii. This was published in 1991 in Oxford and is a book by Professor John Sinclair. The title of the book is: Corpus, concordance and collocation and the publisher was Oxford University Press.

iii. This small book is called: Learning Purpose and Language Use. It was written by Henry George Widdowson and published in 1983. Like all his books it was published in Oxford by Oxford University Press.

iv. An article in the journal: Applied Linguistics. It was written in 1985 by E Bialystock and M Sharwood-Smith. The title of the article is: Inter language is not a state of mind: An evaluation of the construct for second-language acquisition. It was published in volume 6 and it is from page 101 to page 117.

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v. An article in the journal of Applied Linguistics. It was written in 1985 by E Bialystock and M Sharwood-Smith. The title of the article is: Inter language is not a state of mind: An evaluation of the construct for second-language acquisition. It was published in volume 6 and it is from page 101 to page 117.

Academic writing exercise

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

*Machine translation (MT) is slower and less accurate than human translation and there is no immediate or predictable likelihood of machines taking over this role from humans.*

Do you agree or disagree?

Write at least 250 words.
## Appendix B

### Section One Workshop Resources

### The 12 Step Academic Writing Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read the question and understand what you are required to do. Think about the subject, the purpose, and the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Think about what you know about the subject. Record your ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Go to the library and find relevant books or articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Find the books on your reading list, if you have one, and study them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Make notes on these books and articles. Record full bibliographical details of the materials you use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Organise your piece of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Type or write your first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Discuss your first draft informally with friends, other members of your class, and your lecturer if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Revise your first draft, bearing in mind any comments that were made in your discussions. Go back to the first draft if necessary. Produce your second draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Proofread your draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Produce a final typed version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Review the document a final time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: [http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
Key highlights in writing a bibliography.

1. Make a list to keep track of ALL books, journals, magazines, and websites you have read.
2. Create a workable record of your data. You may use the bibliography for record keeping or RefWorks.
3. Write down, photocopy, or printout the following information for each source you find.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article/Topic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Author: |
| 1st Author: |
| Firstname: | Middlename: | Lastname: |
| 2nd Author: |
| Firstname: | Middlename: | Lastname: |
| 3rd Author: |
| Firstname: | Middlename: | Lastname: |
| Write here for more than three authors: |

| Book/Journal |
| Place published (for book) | Publisher (for book) | Editor (if applicable) |
| Edition (if applicable) | Volume number: | Page number: | DOI Number |

| Website |
| The URL address (website only) | Date of Access: |
Writing Practice Pack

This pack consists of two assignment packs: 1) activity during the course, and 2) assignment packs to be given to students to write at home.

Writing Pack 1

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

*Machine translation (MT) is slower and less accurate than human translation and there is no immediate or predictable likelihood of machines taking over this role from humans.*

Do you agree or disagree?

Write at least 250 words.
Read the following sample answer.

Complete the answer by filling the gaps with a word or phrase from the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>on the contrary</th>
<th>for instance</th>
<th>especially</th>
<th>because</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for these reasons</td>
<td>in order to</td>
<td>it is true</td>
<td>of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>it seems to me</td>
<td>for example</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is true that there have been great advances in technology over the last forty years. ................................ the use of mobile phones and e-mail communication are common these days. ................................machines that translates from one language to another are still in their early stages.

......................................................... that a machine could never do as well as a human, ................................ when it comes to interpreting what people are saying .............................................. Machines can translate statements such as “Where is the bank?” but even simple statements are not always straightforward ............................................. the meaning depends on more than just words. .......................the word “bank” has a number of different meanings in English. How does a translating machine know which meaning to take?

......................................................... understand what people are saying, you need to take into account the relationship between the speakers and their situation. A machine cannot tell the difference between the English expression “Look out!” meaning “Be careful!” and “Look out” meaning “Put your head out of the window”. You need a human being to interpret the situation.
with written language, it is difficult for a machine to know how to translate accurately. We rarely translate every word, we try to take into consideration how the idea would be expressed in the other language. This is hard to do.

I feel that it is most unlikely that machines will take the place of humans in the fields of translating and interpreting. If machines ever learn to think, perhaps then they will be in a position to take on this role.

Source: © IELTS Exam Preparation 2007, IELTS Sample section in http://www.ielts-exam.net
You should use the 12 step academic writing process for this task.

Promoting financial prudence as an essential skill from an early age is important.

Discuss your views and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples from research evidence and cite the sources using the correct APA citation format. Write at least 1000 words. Submit your work one week after the end of the course to your instructor via e-mail.
**Academic Writing Assessment Tool**

The IELTS Writing Task 2 Rubrics will be a useful assessment tool when assessing students’ written work for this course. It is an assessment tool that clearly indicates marking criteria for academic writing tasks. This tool can be printed out and given to students during the course. This tool will be helpful to provide students with clear explanations that help to guide them towards their final goal.

**IELTS Task 2 Writing Band Descriptors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Task Response</th>
<th>Coherence and Cohesion</th>
<th>Lexical Resource</th>
<th>Grammatical Range and Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9    | • fully addresses all parts of the task  
      • presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended, and supported ideas | • uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention  
      • skilfully manages paragraphing | • uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; minor errors occur only as “slips” | • uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; minor errors occur only as “slips” |
| 8    | • sufficiently addresses all parts of the task  
      • presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas | • sequences information and ideas logically  
      • manages all aspects of cohesion well  
      • uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately | • uses a wide range of vocabulary  
      • fluently and flexibly conveys precise meanings  
      • skilfully uses uncommon lexical items; there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and allocation  
      • produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation | • uses a wide range of structures  
      • the majority of sentences are error-free  
      • makes only occasional errors or inaccuracies |
| 7    | • addresses all parts of the task  
      • presents a clear position throughout the response  
      • presents, extends | • logically organizes information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout  
      • uses a range of | • uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision  
      • uses less | • uses a variety of complex structures  
      • produces frequent error-free sentences  
      • has good control of grammar and |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Task Response</th>
<th>Coherence and Cohesion</th>
<th>Lexical Resource</th>
<th>Grammatical Range and Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6    | • addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others  
      • presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive  
      • presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear | • arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression  
      • uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical  
      • may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately  
      • uses paragraphing, but not always logically | • uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task  
      • attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy  
      • makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication | • uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms  
      • makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce meaning |
| 5    | • addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places  
      • expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions | • presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression  
      • makes inadequate, inaccurate, or over-use of | • uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task  
      • may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty | • uses only a limited range of structures  
      • attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences  
      • may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Task Response</th>
<th>Coherence and Cohesion</th>
<th>Lexical Resource</th>
<th>Grammatical Range and Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate</td>
<td>• presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response</td>
<td>• uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task</td>
<td>• uses only a very limited range of structures and rarely uses subordinate clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• presents a position but this is unclear</td>
<td>• uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive</td>
<td>• has limited control of word formation and/or spelling;</td>
<td>• some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant, or not well supported</td>
<td>• may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• does not adequately address any part of the task</td>
<td>• does not organise ideas logically</td>
<td>• uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling</td>
<td>• attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• does not express a clear position</td>
<td>• may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas</td>
<td>• errors may severely distort the message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant</td>
<td>• errors may</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• barely responds to the task</td>
<td>• has very little control of organizational features</td>
<td>• uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no</td>
<td>• cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• does not express a position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>Task Response</td>
<td>Coherence and Cohesion</td>
<td>Lexical Resource</td>
<td>Grammatical Range and Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development</td>
<td>• fails to communicate any message</td>
<td>• can only use a few isolated words</td>
<td>• cannot use sentence forms at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>• does not attend</td>
<td>• does not attempt the task in any way</td>
<td>• writes a totally memorised response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Suggested Online Learning for Academic Writing Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Interactive Learning</th>
<th>Handouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Writing in English (AWE)</strong></td>
<td>It contains online handouts and exercises on three main topic areas: cohesion, punctuation, and style. Although the site already contains a wide range of resources, work is still in progress.</td>
<td><a href="http://sana.tkk.fi/awe/index.html">http://sana.tkk.fi/awe/index.html</a></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Learning Online Website</strong></td>
<td>Contains a variety of activities developed specifically for writing classes and writing-intensive classes offered online or in multiple modes.</td>
<td><a href="http://wordsworth2.net/activelearning/">http://wordsworth2.net/activelearning/</a></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bogazici University Online Writing Lab (BUOWL)</strong></td>
<td>A resource and practice book students can consult when they need information on writing when they are working on their own. BUOWL is not a replacement for classes or teachers, but rather a supplement to class work</td>
<td><a href="http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/">http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/</a></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare for success.com</strong></td>
<td><em>Prepare for Success</em> is an interactive web learning tool for international students who are getting ready to go to the UK for further or higher education. An activity-based learning resource to help you find out about different aspects of academic life in the UK and the skills needed for effective study</td>
<td><a href="http://www.preparforsuccess.org.uk/">http://www.preparforsuccess.org.uk/</a></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purdue University OWL</strong></td>
<td>One of the most comprehensive with online handouts about writing.</td>
<td><a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/</a></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>Interactive Learning</td>
<td>Handouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of North Carolina Writing Centre</td>
<td>An online resource available to everyone; it offers interactive learning within a variety of topics.</td>
<td><a href="http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/">http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/</a></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Writing Centre @The University of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>Great resources and complete academic writing handbook</td>
<td><a href="http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CoordConj.html">http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CoordConj.html</a></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using English for Academic Purposes.com</td>
<td>A good site for students in higher education to learn English</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm">http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm</a></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReadWriteThink.org</td>
<td>An online tool for students to learn to take notes, build reading skills and improve research writing competency.</td>
<td><a href="http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=722&amp;title=">http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=722&amp;title=</a></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommended Handbooks and Textbooks for Academic Writing


Canada: Broadview Press.


Appendix C

Teaching Aids – Power Point Slides for Section 2 - “Developing Analytical Writing Skills through Building Critical Thinking and Positive Mindset Workshops”

This section contains slides for Session one of the workshop. The instructor may change and customize the content based on the students’ unique experience and activities.
Creating Success in Academic Writing: From Secondary to Higher Education

“Developing Analytical Writing Skills Through Building Critical Thinking and Positive Mindsets” (Session 2)

Learning Goals

- **Develop Critical Thinking** – the ability to analyze a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research.

- Learn the **eight essential habits of mind for success** in college writing.

- Learn to **write texts for various audiences and purposes** that are informed by research, e.g., support ideas or positions, illustrate alternative perspectives, and provide additional information.

- Student will also learn and have the opportunity to practice key rhetorical concepts that relate to critical thinking such as argument.
Activity 1

Write your response on the following question:

*What are your current views toward what it means to live abroad? What specific things do you have to attain and work on in order to live a successful life as an undergraduate student studying abroad?*

What is critical thinking?

It is a “cognitive activity” that involves a complex process of deliberation which involves a wide range of skills and attitudes such as:

- Identifying other’s positions;
- Evaluating the evidence;
- Weighing opposing arguments and evidence fairly;
- Recognizing techniques used to make certain positions;
- Drawing conclusions based on sound evidence and sensible assumptions; and
- Presenting a point of view in a structured, clear, and well-reasoned way that convinces others.

(Cottrell 2005, p. 2).
Slide 5

**Thinking Barrier: The Iceberg Model of Culture**

- Ways of life
- Laws and customs
- Institutions
- Methods
- Techniques
- Rituals
- Language
- Norms
- Roles
- Ideologies
- Beliefs
- Philosophy
- Values
- Attitudes
- Desires
- Assumptions
- Expectations


Slide 6

**Critical Thinking**

- Find out where the best evidence lies for the subject you are discussing;
- Evaluate the strength of the evidence to support different arguments;
- Come to an interim conclusion about where the available evidence appears to lead;
- Construct a line of reasoning to fast track your audience through the evidence and lead them towards your conclusion;
- Select the best examples; and
- Provide evidence to illustrate your arguments.
Habits of Mind - Ways of Approaching Learning

- Openness
- Flexibility
- Curiosity
- Engagement
- Creativity
- Persistence
- Responsibility
- Metacognition

Ways of Approaching Learning

Habits of Mind: Ways of Approaching Learning (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habits</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Engagement**<br>(A sense of investment and involvement in learning) | • Make connections between our own ideas and those of others;  
• Find new meanings or build existing meanings as a result of new connections; and  
• Act upon new knowledge that you have discovered. |
| **Creativity**<br>(The ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas) | • Take risks by exploring questions, topics, and ideas that are new;  
• Use new methods to investigate questions, topics, and ideas  
• Represent what you have learned in a variety of ways; and  
• Evaluate the effects or consequences of your choices. |
| **Persistence**<br>(Ability to sustain interest in, and attention to, short and long term projects) | • A commitment to exploring in writing, a topic, idea, or demanding task;  
• Grapple with challenging ideas, texts, processes or projects;  
• Follow through, over time, to complete tasks, processes, or projects;  
• Take advantage of peers, instructors, and writing centre opportunities to improve and refine your work. |
### Habits of Mind: Ways of Approaching Learning (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habits</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Responsibility**<br>(Ability to take ownership of one's actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others) | • Know your role as scholars and your learning;  
• Engage and incorporate the ideas of others, giving credit to those ideas by using appropriate citations. |
| **Flexibility**<br>(the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands) | • Approach writing assignments in multiple ways—depending on the tasks and the writer's purpose and audience;  
• Recognize the conventions: formal vs. non-formal (rules of content, organization, style, the evidence, citation, and mechanics; this depends on discipline and the context. |

### Habits of Mind: Ways of Approaching Learning (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habits</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Metacognition**<br>(Ability to reflect on one's own thinking, as well as individual and cultural processes and systems used to structure knowledge) | • examine processes used to think and write in a variety of disciplines and contexts;  
• reflect on the texts that you have produced in a variety of contexts;  
• connect choices you have made in texts to audiences and purposes for which texts are intended; and  
• use what you learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects. |
Habits of Mind: Ways of Approaching Learning

1. Reflect on the eight essential habits.
2. Working on your own, give yourself a score out of the list. Answer these questions:
   a. Which traits do you use to think critically?
   b. Which traits should you use to think critically
   c. You are likely to think critically if you are ______
3. Later, work in a group of three, to discuss your choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habits</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Desire to know about the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>A sense of investment and involvement in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>The ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas</td>
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<td>Persistence</td>
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<td>Metacognition</td>
<td>Ability to reflect on one’s own thinking, as well as individual and cultural processes and systems, used to structure knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lunch Break
How does Critical Thinking Link to Academic Writing?

First, read the set assignment carefully, then consider the following questions:

a. Work out the critical thinking strategies that will be involved: comparing, problem solving, looking for cause and effect, evaluating?

b. What is the instructor looking for in a critical piece of writing?

c. If you want to state an idea that is new or controversial, be sure to provide sufficient evidence and support.

d. Be sure that all stated ideas are backed up by evidence and references.

e. Link what you are saying to the overall field of the discipline.

f. Think about why this essay topic is worth writing about. What makes it particularly significant?

g. Look at both sides of an argument.

Notes retrieved from http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/learning/critical#writing

Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing
(Revisit from previous workshop)

Examples of text and language:

- Descriptive
  - Describing objects, locations, structure & direction
  - Reporting & narrating
  - Defining
  - Writing instruction

- Critical
  - Arguing & discussing
  - Evaluating other points of view
  - Comparing & contrasting: similarities & differences
  - Expressing degrees of certainty
  - Expressing reasons & explanations/cause and effect
  - Providing support
  - Drawing conclusion
  - Recommendations

- Reflective
  - Writing reflectively
Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing

Examples of text and language: Arguing and discussing

Most of the time at college or university, you will be asked to write different kinds of texts. The type of writing will vary depending on the subject matter.

**Example:**
Discuss possible solutions to enhance financial literacy in Malaysia.

What would be your answer?

1. Define
2. Give examples
3. Explain why
4. Support your explanation with evidence
5. Describe a solution
6. Describe advantages and disadvantages
7. Choose
8. Explain why

Activity 3 - Assessment of Writing Sample

You will be assigned to a group to analyze the academic argument on the following topic:

International sports events such as the Olympics and the Football World Cup are just an excuse for nationalism and advertising.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples from your knowledge and experience.

1. Read through both the sample answers and note down how many different points the writer has included.
2. Compare the sample answers, and based on that, try to think about:
   - Examples of international sports events
   - People’s opinion of them in your country
   - Examples of nationalism
   - Examples of commercialisation and advertising
   - Positive aspects of such competitions

Answer #1

Nowadays, international sports events are becoming increasingly popular around the world and often have massive global viewing figures. Although many people enjoy these competitions, there are concerns that the events are often over-commercialised and are simply a platform for selling things. There are also real concerns that they encourage nationalism, but do these problems outweigh their overall value?

Many people would agree that a lot of events do seem over-commercial, especially when they see the masses of corporate sponsors at such events, which often include seemingly unhealthy brands such as Coca-cola and MacDonald’s. They also feel that corporate sponsors force out real fans by buying up all the tickets at very high prices.

It’s also true that some events can be very nationalistic. The Chinese government, for example, is trying to use the coming Olympics to demonstrate its progress and power. And in football competitions, there is often the problem of hooliganism, with groups of fans intentionally setting out to fight supporters from other countries.

However, it would be a mistake to overlook the positive sides of such events. For one thing, young people can be very inspired by the positive role models they see, for example the French footballer Zinedine Zidane. And in Taiwan, the national baseball team’s success gives people a sense of national pride. These events can also provide a platform for people from all over the world to meet and celebrate something they all enjoy.

In conclusion, I think it would be a shame to do away with international sporting events, as they can inspire people and be very enjoyable. However, it is down to the organisers and governments to curb the uglier side of these events, otherwise they will eventually turn people off them.

Answer #2

Nowadays, there are many international sports events. But are international sports events such as the Olympics and the Football World Cup just an excuse for nationalism and advertising? In this essay I will discuss the extent to which I agree or disagree.

Many people say international sports events are too commercial. They say that because they are too commercial, they can make many problems. These problems can only be solved when they become less commercial. This is an incontrovertible truth.

People also complain that they are nationalistic. Nationalism generates other problems. This is true all over the world. Nationalism can make people hate the events.

However, are nationalism and commercialisation so bad? Some people say they have some benefits. Without these two things, the events would be very different. People say this would be quite boring.

In conclusion, many events do have nationalism and, furthermore, commercialisation. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to this. The best thing we can do is pursue a middle course.
Learning Recap - Building a Five Minute Paper

1. Let’s pause and reflect upon what you have learned so far.

2. On a piece of paper, free-write for 5 minutes on the topic, “What is currently puzzling you?”

3. Later, you may voluntarily share your paper.

Conclusion

1. Let’s review what you wrote written before the session.

2. Now, assess where you are now, compared to where you were before. How you can improve your critical thinking skills related to the eight habits of minds?

3. Share your experience with your peers.
Appendix D

Section 2 Workshop Resources

Reading Assignment Pack

This pack consists of two activities that are designed to develop students’ analytical skills in their academic writing. The IELTS Task 2 was chosen for this purpose. Activities will take a step-by-step approach to guide students’ thinking while completing Pack 1. They will practice learned skills in Pack 2.

Reading Pack 1-IELTS Writing Tips: Task 2

In academic writing or a discussion essay, you need to give an opinion, a point of view, or solve a problem. You must also present and justify your opinions in an organized essay.

We will work on an example of the IELTS writing tips Task 2 for this purpose.

“As English is now the world language and an essential skill in business, English language instruction should begin in kindergarten”.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Present your ideas and opinions with examples where necessary.

Record your ideas in about 250 words.

Steps in Dealing with the Task

Step 1: Question Analysis

First, let’s analyse the question. Think about the keywords and clarify what they mean.

World language: is English the world language? If so, what gives it this status? How is it used globally? Are there any alternatives to global languages?
**Essential:** does everyone really need to speak English? Are there jobs where it is not necessary? Can all prominent people in society speak it well?

**Kindergarten:** is this the best time to start? What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting to learn English this early?

**Step 2: Brainstorming**

Now, decide whether you are for the opinion (you agree that English should be taught in kindergarten) or against the opinion (you disagree) and make notes about your ideas. Often it is a good idea to explore both sides of the argument. Also, try to think of real-life examples that prove your point.

Read through the following notes. Are they for or against the idea?

1. Other languages are more widely spoken than English.
2. English is regarded as the international business language.
3. Many multinationals use English as their corporate language.
4. Other languages are also used in business.
5. Foreign executives in China are being required to learn Chinese.
6. English is used in higher education, even in non-English speaking countries.
7. Learning English in Kindergarten could help students become bi-lingual.
8. Languages represent culture and should be preserved.
9. Young children haven’t fully mastered their first language and will be very confused.
10. Young children are very receptive to new languages.

**Answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For 2, 3, 6, 7, 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Step 3: Planning**

Now that you have some ideas you can plan the layout of your essay. Think about what you want the main point of each paragraph to be. With this type of question a very straightforward paragraph plan is as follows. Useful language is in italics.

1: **Introduction**

Explain the background of the issue

*In recent years; Nowadays; Over the past twenty years...*

2: **For**

Arguments in favour of introducing English instruction in kindergarten (one or two paragraphs)

*Some people think; They say; It’s true that...*

3: **Against**

Arguments against doing this (one or two paragraphs)

*On the other hand; Other people would argue; One example of this is...*

4: **Conclusion**

Your own personal opinion based on all the arguments

*Overall; Having looked at both sides; In conclusion ...*

**Step 4: Writing**

The following essay is a response to the task, but the paragraphs are mixed-up. Can you put them in the correct order?

(Notice the opening phrases that are used to link the ideas together)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>It's true that</em> English is very important in international business, and many multinational companies use English as their corporate language. It is also very important in terms of educational opportunities, with many universities now teaching courses in English, even in non-English speaking countries, not to mention the information and entertainment available from global media such as Hollywood movies and the Internet. Many people feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that teaching children English from a young age gives children the opportunity to become bi-lingual which would provide them with many advantages in the future. Pre-school children are also obviously very receptive to new language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><strong>However, the real issue is</strong> whether children of kindergarten age are mentally ready to start learning a foreign language. It stands to reason that a child who has not mastered their mother tongue will be very confused by exposure to a second unrelated form of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><strong>Having looked at both sides of this issue</strong>, it seems clear that, although English is very important, educators need to think carefully about the child’s overall development when deciding when to introduce English into the curriculum. Doing this too early could result in children being proficient in neither language, and there are also issues of cultural identity that need to be considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td><strong>Nowadays</strong>, many people regard English as the main world language and it is certainly true that it is a very important tool for communication between people from different countries. Because of this, many kindergartens now offer English language instruction to children as young as three years old, but is this really the best age to start learning a foreign language?</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td><strong>On the other hand</strong>, some people might argue that it is a mistake for a child’s education to focus exclusively on English, particularly as there are other languages, such as Chinese and Spanish, that are more widely spoken. In an increasingly multi-cultural world other languages have a role to play. For example this week it has been reported that all new foreign executives in China will be required to pass a Chinese proficiency exam. Others would also argue that language represents culture, and that by putting too much emphasis on one language, we risk diluting other languages and cultures.</td>
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</table>

| Answers | 1: D  2: A  3: E  4: B  5: C |

Reading Assignment Pack 2- Assessment of writing sample

Activity 3- Assessment of argument's writing sample

You will be assigned to a group to analyze the academic argument on the following topic:

International sports events such as the Olympics and the Football World Cup are just an excuse for nationalism and advertising.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples from your knowledge and experience.

1. Read through both the sample answers and note down how many different points the writer has included.

2. Try to compare the sample answers and based on that, try to think about:
   - Examples of international sports events
   - People’s opinion of them in your country
   - Examples of nationalism
   - Examples of commercialisation and advertising
   - Positive aspects of such competitions

Sample Answer 1

Nowadays, international sports events are becoming increasingly popular around the world and often have massive global viewing figures. Although many people enjoy these competitions, there are concerns that the events are often over-commercialised and are simply a platform for selling things. There are also real concerns that they encourage nationalism, but do these problems outweigh their overall value?

Many people would agree that a lot of events do seem over-commercialised, especially when they see the masses of corporate sponsors at such events, which often include seemingly unhealthy brands such as Coca-cola and MacDonald’s. They also feel that corporate sponsors force out real fans by buying up all the tickets at very high prices.

It’s also true that some events can be very nationalistic. The Chinese government, for example, is trying to use the coming Olympics to demonstrate its progress and power. And in football competitions, there is often the problem of hooliganism, with groups of fans intentionally setting out to fight supporters from other countries.

However, it would be a mistake to overlook the positive sides of such events. For one thing, young people can be very inspired by the positive role models they see, for example, the French footballer, Zinedine Zidane. And in Taiwan, the national baseball team’s success gives people a sense of national pride. These events can also provide a platform for people from all over the world to meet and celebrate something they all enjoy.

In conclusion, I think it would be a shame to do away with international sporting events, as they can inspire people and be very enjoyable. However, it is down to the organisers and governments to curb the uglier side of these events, otherwise they will eventually turn people off them.
Sample Answer 2

Nowadays, there are many international sports events. But are international sports events such as the Olympics and the Football World Cup just an excuse for nationalism and advertising? In this essay I will discuss the extent to which I agree or disagree.

Many people say international sports events are too commercialised. They say that because they are too commercialised, they can make many problems. These problems can only be solved when they become less commercialised. This is an incontrovertible truth.

People also complain that they are nationalistic. Nationalism generates other problems. This is true all over the world. Nationalism can make people hate the events.

However, are nationalism and commercialisation so bad? Some people say they have some benefits. Without these two things, the events would be very different. People say this would be quite boring.

In conclusion, many events do have nationalism and, furthermore, commercialisation. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to this. The best thing we can do is to pursue a middle course.

Critical Thinking Assessment Tool  
(The Washington State University Critical Thinking Rubrics)

I found this framework a useful tool for evaluating critical thinking. Instructors or students may use this basic framework as a guide to assess this skill. You may edit or modify the scoring to create your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Master</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Identifies and summarizes the problem/question at issue (and/or the source’s position). | • Does not identify and summarize the problem, is confused, or identifies a different and inappropriate problem.  
• Does not identify or is confused by the issue, or represents the issue inaccurately. | • Identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem, and identifies them clearly, addressing their relationships to each other.  
• Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue. |
<p>| Identifies and presents the student’s own hypothesis, perspective, and position as it is important to the analysis of the issue | • Addresses a single source or view of the argument and fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own. Fails to establish other critical distinctions. | • Identifies appropriately, one’s own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources |
| Identifies and considers other salient perspectives and positions that are important to the analysis | • Deals only with a single perspective and fails to discuss other possible perspectives, especially those salient to the issue. | • Addresses perspectives noted previously, and additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information. |
| Identifies and assesses the key assumptions. | • Does not surface the assumptions and ethical issues that underlie the issue, or does so superficially. | • Identifies and questions the validity of the assumptions and addresses the ethical dimensions that underlie the issue. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Master</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Identifies and assesses the quality of **supporting data/evidence** and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue. | • Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth, or denies evidence without adequate justification. Confuses associations and correlations with cause and effect.  
• Does not distinguish between fact, opinion, and value judgments. | • Examines the evidence and source of evidence; questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness.  
• Observes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences.  
• Clearly distinguishes between facts, opinions, and acknowledges value judgments. |
| Identifies and considers the influence of the **context** on the issue. | • Discusses the problem only in egocentric or socio centric terms.  
• Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts-cultural, political, etc. | • Analyses the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of the audience. Considers other pertinent contexts. |
| Identifies and assesses **conclusions, implications and consequences**. | • Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences of the issue or the key relationships between the other elements of the problem, such as context, implications, assumptions, or data and evidence. | • Identifies and discusses conclusions, implications, and consequences considering context, assumptions, data, and evidence.  
• Objectively reflects upon their own assertions. |


Suggested Online Critical Thinking Interactive Activities


**Suggested Critical Thinking Books**


