

Academic Writing in English Large Class

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(Received on October 3, 2014)

Abstract

Internationalization requires Japanese doctors to master the English Language as a means of communication. Kawasaki Medical College addresses a new language program to meet the demands of current medical society. This program was launched to cultivate three different linguistic skills: reading, writing, and communication. We have implemented this program since 2011. I will explain the cultivation of writing skills in detail.

Key words: Internationalization, Japanese doctors, Writing skills

Introduction

Two years have passed since I and Mai Hamed began to teach reading and writing skills in large English classes at Kawasaki Medical School. I have acquired important skills from her, particularly in the field of writing. This encouraged me to ask her to introduce her academic writing strategies. Japanese students spent so many hours studying writing in their high school days, but the result is quite meager. What is the reason why they cannot have productive results after their struggle? That may lie in the lack of logical strategies for cultivating writing skills in Japanese English Education. Mai Hamed insists on the importance of logical structure of English and teaches students logic-oriented, academic writing in her lectures. Then my students come to write excellent English passages and essays little by

little now. I believe she will give us a view of innovative writing skills in this paper.

I - Importance of Academic Writing to university students

This section is concerned with academic writing, which is a specific type of writing with its own rules and conventions. Unlike informal letters, notes and personal journals, academic writing is not modelled on everyday speech, but has a particular *language style*. Academics write in full grammatical sentences and express ideas in a concise and clear way. They concentrate on relating concepts or main ideas to each other rather than describing things in particular detail.

One of the most important aspects of successful written assignments at university is *analysing questions*, or the ability to understand

what the assignment question asks you to do. This applies to all assessment tasks, but particularly to academic writing tasks such as *essay writing* and *report writing*. Each of these writing tasks follows particular rules, but *paragraph structure* is important to all of them, as clearly structured paragraphs can help students develop clear arguments and descriptions.

II- Aims of the programme:

The programme aims to:

- enable students to write well-structured four paragraph discursive essays following conventions of academic writing
- improve communication skills, with emphasis on written skills, in English;
- ensure students can complete academic writing assignments.
- enable students to express their opinions knowledgeably through writing.
- enhance critical and analytical thinking;
- enable students to carry out research and write academic essays in their chosen degree area;
- select appropriate paragraph structures to develop the essay including compare & contrast, cause & effect and argumentative structures.
- maintain academic honesty & avoid plagiarism

III- Writing Content:

Content	analyse essay questions for meaning generate & plan four paragraph discursive essays
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	write a well-developed introduction with a thesis statement & controlling ideas write well- structured body paragraphs with topic & supporting sentences write a well-structured concluding paragraph proof-read & edit writing for accuracy & meaning
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IV- Type of Writing according to year of study:

Type of Writing following Conventions of Academic Writing	Year of Study
Paragraph Writing: Different types of Paragraphs	Year 1
Essay Writing: Compare and Contrast Essays	Year 2
Essay Writing: Cause and Effect Essays	Year 3
Essay Writing: Argumentative Essays	Year 4

V- Stages of the Programme:

- 1 - Diagnostic Stage
- 2 - Preparation Stage (Activities and worksheets)
- 3 - Writing Process
- 4 - Feedback Stage

5.1- Diagnostic Stage:

In general terms, a diagnostic essay is intended to identify strengths and weaknesses in student writing early in the

course of a semester so that instructors get an insight into the type of curriculum, feedback, exercises, etc., they will need to provide to students holistically and individually.

A diagnostic essay usually consists of a prompt (or prompts) aimed to elicit meaningful writing from the student in a limited amount of time.

Students are given anywhere from 20 minutes to 50 minutes to respond to the prompt.

By employing a diagnostic essay, the instructor will have the opportunity to examine student writing and consider what constitutes quality student writing as well as to identify students who may be experiencing challenges with their writing. Ideally, the diagnostic essay will serve as a catalyst for student writing, address assessment of writing strengths and weaknesses, and express the pedagogical practices the instructor believes will nurture and enhance student writing.

Considerations for Employing a Diagnostic Essay:

- 1) Provide a prompt that will elicit meaningful responses from students.
- 2) Provide students (2-3) prompts from which to choose.
- 3) Provide students with prompts that might segue into the first paper or papers assigned later on in the semester.
- 4) Accompany prompts with brief, succinct guidelines/expectations so that students may obtain a clearer understanding of what is expected of them.
- 5) Provide time at the end of the timed-writing (5-10 minutes) for students to reflect in writing on their diagnostic essays, the

choices they made, what they might do differently, what they would do to improve their essays if given more time, etc.

5.2 Preparation Stage (Activities and Worksheets):

Prewriting exercises provide key words, meaning, and structure to essay writing before students write their first draft, and may help them overcome "writers block."

These exercises can help students

- **Focus intellectually**
and clear distractions while opening their mind to ideas within the essay subject
- **Narrow and define topics for their essays**
and begin the process of translating essays into their own words.
- **Develop logical or architectural structure to topics they have identified.**
This provides a visual and verbal document for reaction, review, discussion, and/or further development in their rough draft. However, these exercises are dynamic or subject to change in the actual writing process as they understand, develop, and build their argument.
- **Provide a context for "essay management"**
to further define the topic, set timelines, identify gaps in information, etc.
- **Introduce important concepts and terms like :**
 - Thesis statement
 - Topic sentences
 - Supporting sentences
- **Introduce the basics of Academic writ-**

ing and the mechanics of writing.

5.3 Writing Process:

Steps in the Writing Process:

1. **Pre-writing:** This is the planning phase of the writing process, when students brainstorm, research, gather and outline ideas, often using diagrams for mapping out their thoughts. Audience and purpose should be considered at this point, and a working thesis statement needs to be started.
2. **Drafting:** Students create their initial essay by writing down all their ideas in an organized way to convey a particular idea or present an argument. Audience and purpose need to be finalized.
3. **Revising:** Students review, modify, and reorganize their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by making the tone, style, and content appropriate for the intended audience. The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft.
4. **Editing:** At this point in the writing process, students proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity.
5. **Publishing:** In this last step of the writing process, the final writing is shared with the group. Sharing can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and with the help of computers, it can even be printed or published online.

In this stage students are required to do the following:

- analyse essay questions and prompts for meaning

- generate & plan four paragraph discursive essays
- write a well -developed introduction with a thesis statement & controlling ideas
- write well- structured body paragraphs with topic & supporting sentences
- write a well-structured concluding paragraph
- proof-read & edit writing for accuracy & meaning

5.4 Feedback Stage:

Generic Feedback: Samples of students' writing are displayed on the projector (with no names) and corrected.

A list of common mistakes and errors is shared with students so that they would try to avoid them.

Individual Feedback: students receive individual feedback through individual conferencing. Mistakes and errors are indicated to students and they are encouraged to work on correcting them through suggesting extra useful exercises and websites.

Areas of feedback:

Content/ideas feedback	Error corrections
focuses on "what students write". These comments evaluate the student's ability to write a focused paper with support and a logical development of ideas.	emphasizes " how students write". Much like proof-reading the focus is on writing mechanics like spelling and grammar.

VI- Future Suggestions and Plans:

- Enable students to write **Reports** following the conventions of Academic Writing.
- Enable students to write **Research papers** following the conventions of Academic Writing.
- Enable students to **Evaluate sources** and choose reliable sources.
- Enable students to use **in text citation, paraphrasing and summarising** in order to maintain Academic honesty and avoid plagiarism.
- Enable students to use **References, Works-cited or Bibliographies**.