

Does Academic Writing Matter? Discoursal and Cognitive Approach to Academic Writing.

It is known that writing techniques are many and varied: free writing, letter-writing, email-writing, Time Repeated Thinking and Writing, Time Repeated Skimming and Writing, etc. . Academic Writing being traditionally considered as High – brow Writing.

It is also known that most writing is responded as a final product, as the last language skill; most writing activities come to the same thing – to the application of an ideal standard; most writing ends up by teachers' making comments that students are inaccurate, incorrect, inconsistent (the red-ink approach).

Moreover the top secret of “good writing” is known: focusing on content, not imposing interpretations on the students writing, noting strengths as well as weaknesses, not allowing the errors to distract a teacher from commenting positively on a student's attempt to produce something to the best of his/her potential, seeing writing as a three-stage process (pre-writing, writing and rewriting).

Yet, a great number of questions arise: How to organize an Academic Writing Self-study Programme? What level of proficiency in English should it match (intermediate, upper – intermediate, advanced)? What students' background should it be designed (technology, medicine, humanities)? And should it be designed to any specific background?

The mainstay of the programme is to highlight the discoursal and cognitive aspects of writing because writing is a form of problem-solving process during which any writer generates ideas, composes them according to his goals, and to the needs of his potential readers, create the writing product in a rational and relevant way. Our practice showed that one of efficient ways “to create a competent academic writer” is to structure the course ^{which} we called “Research Basics: Writing” in the following way:

- a) to demonstrate various genre representatives (notes, abstracts, papers, text-books, manuals, CVs, lectures etc.) and to emphasise their discoursal and cognitive similarities and differences;
- b) to demonstrate the main techniques which make the text coherent;
- c) to practice the main functional types of academic narrative (spatial, temporal, comparison contrast, cause-effect relationships);
- d) to practice the organization of texts (structuring, making writing interactive, analyzing titles)