
SOME ASPECTS OF TEACHING ACADEMIC ESSAY WRITING AT TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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It is focused on teaching academic essay writing to students who study English for specific purposes. Academic essay writing is considered to be an effective means of developing students' critical thinking which deals with exercising different mental activities. It is given a classification of essays and analyzed the structure of a scientific essay.

Key words: *academic writing, academic essay, kinds of essays, thinking skills.*

Торкається питань навчання академічному письму студентів, які вивчають англійську мову для спеціальних цілей. Написання есе в академічному середовищі вважається ефективним засобом розвитку критичного мислення студентів, у процесі якого виявляється різноманітна розумова діяльність, отже надається класифікація есе та проаналізовано типова структура написання наукового есе.

Ключові слова: *академічне письмо, есе, види есе, критичне мислення, навички мислення.*

“Stubborn and ardent clinging to one's opinion is the best proof of stupidity”. The saying of the French author Michel de Montaigne could be taken as a motto while teaching students to express their own opinions, explain, comment on or assess a topic of study. It was Michel de Montaigne, the French author, who created a new literary genre, the essay. The term "essay" was first used by him for short prose discussions and putting his thoughts adequately into writing. The word comes from the French word *essai*, meaning "trial," "an attempt," or "testing."

In this article I would like to focus on the importance of writing essays at technical universities which develops student critical thinking skills and ability to communicate ideas on paper.

Most scientific communication is by means of published papers in the English language, therefore, it is important for students to learn how to communicate effectively by the written word. It is necessary for students to put their thoughts in English adequately into writing and express their own point of view on any subject having studied the other opinions and points of view.

Thus, it is reasonable for technical students to be taught how to write academically and, particularly, to write a scientific essay. The ESP teacher should introduce his/her students to the classification of the academic essays, its structure and the requirements needed to write a good essay.

Teaching writing essays at NUS

In western universities, particularly in England, essays and exams are the main means used to assess or measure the academic progress of a student i.e. all their students' school or university assessment are essays. An academic essay relates to a subject studies, any academic study. Academic are all those essays which are written at school/university and topic are related.

In Ukraine the general aim of teaching English at technical universities was traditionally formulated as producing students' skills and specific English communicating competence in the sphere of reading, speaking and listening comprehension. Due to the short exposure of hours on the English language per week, 2 or 4 hours it is impossible to cover all the skills to be taught in appropriate volume.

Tarnopolsky O.B. says that it is not rationally to include as objectives compulsory English course, producing and developing skills of writing as he thinks the necessity of graduates is less than in speaking and reading. (3).

Though the recent years showed the necessity to include academic writing in the university teaching programs. At our university while teaching ESP students such a task as writing an essay on a particular topic is included in the teaching materials and tests, these are connected with the students' future specialism. Though as

practice shows most of the students do not have an idea what a scientific essay is. They used to write literary compositions at school and when given a task at university classes to write a scientific essay they just take a piece of information from the Internet, using just the only source not reading widely about his /her topic to select the best references and make their critical analysis of the chosen topic. They do not know how to mention references. Also plagiarism occurs when students fail to acknowledge the ideas they have been borrowed from the published articles. Sometimes students are not able to differentiate between academic writing and personal writing what could be seen out of their feedback essays, it is mostly summaries of the material, or some associations of the text with their own experiences. In other words "students have difficulty in sorting out opinion from fact, generalization from detail, vagueness from precision." (1) . It is needed to train students' skill in academic writing.

Requirements to write a scientific essay

In an essay a specific problem is highlighted and the possible solutions and prospects are given.

So in the frame of academic writing the size of essay could be varied and it depends on the aim of writing, if it is an essay you want your students to express their opinion it could be 250- 450 words in length, and if your students do some research , an academic essay is established as usually between 1,500 and 6,000 words in length. A scientific essay requires a definite statement of the argument ('thesis'/'proposition') in the introduction. The ideas in the body of the essay are then arranged logically to develop the argument systematically in order to prove or disprove the initial statement. Careful reference has to be made to relevant primary and secondary research to support the argument throughout. The conclusion summarizes the argument succinctly. No plagiarizing is accepted.

Developing Thinking Skills While Writing

In the field of essay writing it is incorporated a wide range of skills including clarity of thought, conceptualizing, the ability to structure and uphold a logical argument, analytical skills, sensitivity to different registers, a wide vocabulary and a good knowledge of grammar.

While writing essays students use various thinking techniques, developing intellectual skills.

Critical thinking is the disciplined mental activity involving (a)**analyzing** and appraising arguments, propositions, or data, and then (b)making **evaluations** that guide the development of beliefs and plans for taking action (2).

To help ensure that the essay responses are critical rather than personal, it needs to subject your students to the following critical thinking process:

- summary; evaluation; analysis and synthesis.

A vital skill in research and all academic endeavours is the ability **to summarise** - that is, to reduce information to its essence without losing accuracy, by subsuming elaboration and detail into broad main points. When you **evaluate** for an academic purpose, you need to clearly articulate and support your own personal response. Evaluating also encourages you to compare/contrast the thing to be thought of.

During **analysis**, students separate material or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood, distinguishing between facts and inferences. Student performances associated with analysis: or students compare and contrast things. Classify, interpret or infer.

When you **synthesize** you look for connections between ideas, this intellectual exercise requires that you create an umbrella argument, a largest argument under which several observations and perspectives might stand.

Kinds of Academic essays.

I think the following forms of essays are most relevant for technical students:

Argumentative

In this kind of essay, we not only give information but also present an argument with the PROS (supporting ideas) and CONS (opposing ideas) of an argumentative issue. We should clearly take our stand and write as if we are trying to persuade an opposing audience to adopt new beliefs or behavior. The primary objective is to persuade people to change beliefs that many of them do not want to change.

All argumentative topics have PROs and CONs. Before starting writing, it is imperative to make a list of these ideas and choose the most suitable ones among them for supporting and refuting.

Exemplification/Illustration

An exemplification essay is characterized by a generalization and relevant, representative, and believable examples including anecdotes. A writer needs to consider their subject, determine their purpose, consider their audience, decide on specific examples, and arrange all the parts together when writing an exemplification essay.

Exemplification is a mode of writing that uses examples to show, explain, or prove a point.

Comparison and Contrast

Compare and contrast is characterized by a basis for comparison, points of comparison, analogies, and either comparison by object (chunking) or by point (sequential). Comparison highlights the differences between two or more similar objects while contrasting highlights the differences between two or more objects. When writing a compare\contrast essay, writers need to determine their purpose, consider their audience, consider the basis and points of comparison, consider their thesis statement, arrange and develop the comparison, and reach a conclusion.

Cause and Effect

The defining features of a cause and effect essay are causal chains, careful language, and chronological or emphatic order. A writer using this rhetorical method must consider the subject, determine the purpose, consider the audience, think critically about different causes or consequences, consider a thesis statement, arrange the parts, consider the language, and decide on a conclusion.

Classification and division

In a classification essay, the writer organizes, or sorts, things into categories. There are three steps to remember when writing an effective classification essay: organize things into useful categories, use a single organizing principle, and give examples of things that fit into each category.

Definition

A definition essay is writing that explains what a term means. Some terms have definite, concrete meanings, such as glass, book, or tree. Terms such as honesty, honor, or love are abstract and depend more on a person's point of view.

Process essays

A process essay is an important paper type that is frequently used in assignments at colleges and universities. A process essay is created with the aim to inform the reader on how to do something. The purpose of this analysis paper type is to explain the significance of a process for the society or some group of people. The participants involved in the action are to be identified along with their roles in a process essay. Sometimes it is required to specify equipment and skills necessary for the process to be fulfilled. Depending on the science or practice, to which the process belongs, researchers consider different types of processes. If it is linked to the activities of some objective, several stages of the process are identified in essay; they are usually associated with intermediate goals. There are a number of processes you can use in your process analysis essays.

Research Essay

An original thesis is the best start you can make to get a high grade in a research essay.

Your thesis is the most critical aspect of your research essay. It not only organizes the material you are presenting, it also focuses your research efforts.

Critical essays

The word "critical" has positive as well as negative meanings. You can write a critical essay that agrees entirely with the reading. The word "critical" describes your attitude when you read the article. This attitude is best described as "detached evaluation," meaning that you weigh the coherence of the reading, the completeness of its data, and so on, before you accept or reject it.

In conclusion I would like to say that the English teacher himself or herself needs to know all the peculiarities of academic writing, have an idea of all kinds of academic essays, so then to teach their students to put their thoughts in proper academic style and express their own opinion on any academic issue and develop their thinking skills, as it is an important skill that even native English speakers need

help with. But by providing practice, your students will acquire this important writing skill, thus allowing them to express themselves efficiently.

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