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English for Academic Purposes

Study Australia Virtual Masterclass Series

Contents

- Academic writing
- Research
- Synthesising sources
- Building a paragraph



Academic writing: What is it?

- Aimed at academics
- Written as part of a broader discussion
- Designed to show that you understand the discipline
- Identifies you as an academic

Academic writing: What are its characteristics?

- **De-personalised**
 - Focusses on the concept rather than the person.
 - Generally avoids: “I, you, me, they, In my opinion” etc.
- **Specific**
 - Aims to be explicit and detailed rather than generalized.
 - Avoids general terms (nowadays, people, everywhere) and uses specific instead (since 1996, engineers, in Colombia).
- **Supported**
 - Reasons, details and explanations are given for points made.
 - Research is used to support points.

Academic writing: What does it look like?

Linguistic relativity is, in simple terms, the influence of language on thought (Trask, 2007), with language subtly shaping, or framing individual cognition. This effect can be seen in commonalities of expression by speakers of the same language (Slobin, 1996), and in the use of pre-fabricated categories (Csanyi, 1989), reflecting the cultural imperatives of the society the language is situated in, demonstrating that community's world view. Languages function as a means of encoding information to understand reality (Gyori, 2000).

- **De-personalised** - No personal pronouns, only specific nouns
- **Specific** – The correct topic specific vocabulary is used
- **Supported** - Key points are referenced

Academic writing: Why research and reference?

- To give credit to the original researchers/authors
- To make your arguments stronger by showing that empirical research has been done by others
- To show your position on the topic
- To show that you are correct in your assumptions/arguments
- To show that you have read and understood the topic
- To follow the expected conventions/rules of the style

Academic writing: The function of references

Linguistic relativity is, in simple terms, the influence of language on thought (Trask, 2007), with language subtly shaping, or framing individual cognition. This effect can be seen in commonalities of expression by speakers of the same language (Slobin, 1996), and in the use of pre-fabricated categories (Csanyi, 1989), reflecting the cultural imperatives of the society the language is situated in, demonstrating that community's world view. Languages function as a means of encoding information to understand reality (Gyori, 2000).

- Provides a definition
- Supports a general idea
- Provides an example of specific research to support your point
- Supports a theoretical point

Research: How can you start researching?

- Start with easy-to-understand sources (the internet, general publications)
- Progress to more specialised sources (industry sources and introductory text books)
- Move onto expert sources (journals, books by experts)
- Use the references from the expert sources to expand your research.

For instance, if I read the point below in a journal, I would search for the research done by Dillenbourg and Schneider in 1995 to expand my research.

Dillenbourg and Schneider (1995) make a distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning. This distinction places greater emphasis on the extent and quality . . .

Research: What to do when you find it

- Make notes
 - Include the concepts and content, and the sources (author, page, web address, title, where you found it)
- Record the references
 - make a document with the links to online sources
 - Save the PDFs in a specific file
 - Take screen shots of the sections of books you read
 - Start to compile a reference list
- Keep a logbook

Research: Organising research

- Grouping sources allows them to be used more easily.
- Consider grouping them by topic, theme, position of the writer, or by the research questions you are using
- Use the family name and year as a quick guide to keep everything organised. e.g. (Smith, 2014).
- Remember sources may fit in more than one place and can be used multiple times in a piece of academic writing
- Try grouping research by key words or by the argument or position the text takes.

Research: Grouping sources

Look at the ideas below. How would you organise them? Can you see any patterns or ideas that could go together?

- **Online learning** has many advantages for students who are “geographically restricted” (Appanna, 2008).
- “The feeling of isolation due to **online learning** can be overcome by more frequent communication to students” (Mbukusa, Kibuule & Lates, 2017).
- **Online learning** reduces the access issues of time and distance for learners (Cole, 2000)
- Students often select **online learning** due to the need for flexibility for employment, family or other responsibilities (Park, 2007).

Research: Grouped sources

Why students choose online learning

- **Online learning** has many advantages for students who are “geographically restricted” (Appanna, 2008).
- **Online learning** reduces the access issues of **time and distance** for learners (Cole, 2000)
- Students often select **online learning** due to **the need for flexibility for employment, family or other responsibilities** (Park, 2007).

A solution to a problem of online learning

- “The feeling of isolation due to **online learning** can be overcome by more frequent communication to students” (Mbukusa, Kibuule & Lates, 2017).

Synthesising Sources: integrating research into writing

- **Paraphrasing**
 - This is where what you have read is put completely into your own words
- **Integrated quotations/partial quotations**
 - This is where you use only a few words of the quote and write the rest of the sentence around it yourself.
- **Full sentence/longer quotations**
 - This is where you use a complete sentence or more without modifying it

Synthesising Sources: Paraphrasing

- **Paraphrasing**

- Read and understand the content of the original.
- Keep the relevant points for your writing - discard the rest.
- This can be done when taking notes or when writing.

For example

- For many learners, the act of moving to online classes is one of liberation, solving some of the issues of location and space as much as it does the complexities of finding time to attend set lectures and classes.
- Online learning reduces the access issues of time and distance for learners (Cole, 2010)

Red = the original source

Blue = my own words

Synthesising Sources: Using integrated quotes

- **Integrated quotations/partial quotations**

- Keep only a few words of the quote and write the rest of the sentence yourself.
- Useful when a short phrase is hard to change or you think works well to convey the meaning
- You must make sure the grammar of your sentence matches the phrase

For example

- ... online delivery can liberate students who were formerly geographically restricted with regard to where they would undertake higher education, ...
- Online learning has many advantages for students who are “geographically restricted” (Appana, 2008).

Red = the original source

Blue = my own words

Synthesising Sources: Using full quotes

- **Full sentence/longer quotations**

- Using a complete sentence or more without modifying it or integrating it.
- It is relatively uncommon
- Usually used for effect or to set the mood (before the introduction or in the conclusion)
- Only use a full quote in the body of the text if you cannot say it better or more concisely

For example

- The feeling of isolation due to online learning can be overcome by more frequent communication to students.
- “The feeling of isolation due to online learning can be overcome by more frequent communication to students” (Mbukusa, Kibuule & Lates, 2017).

Red = the original source

Blue = my own words

Synthesising Sources: Using research in writing

- *Can you identify each type of research used in the text?*
 - *Paraphrasing*
 - *Integrated quotations/partial quotations*
 - *Full sentence/longer quotations*

Hybrid instruction, or “**distributed learning**” (Dede 2006), can be a successful approach to integrating online learning into conventional higher education. Since hybrid instruction uses both face to face and online elements as part of the course, **it can increase interaction through in-person class time while still providing the convenience and the ability to learn at one’s own pace that are a part of online study** (Calloway, 2012). The increased level and variety of communication is a positive for students, particularly those who feel isolated when studying online. Research by Mbukusa, Kibuule & Lates (2017) confirms this: “**the feeling of isolation due to online learning can be overcome by more frequent communication to students**”.

Synthesising Sources: Using research in writing

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Building a Paragraph: Research as part of the writing process

- Research is there to serve/support your argument, not the other way around.
- Write/brainstorm your own ideas and organise them – then add the references – don't be led by the research.
- Paraphrasing is valuable in this way as it puts your words to the front, with referencing acting to confirm your ideas.

Building a Paragraph: Brainstorming with research

Why students choose online learning

- **Online learning** has many advantages for students are “geographically restricted” (Appanna, 2008).
- **Online learning** reduces the access issues of time and distance for learners (Cole, 2000)
- Students often select **online learning** due the need for flexibility for employment, family or other responsibilities (Park, 2007).

The research points in my own words

- Flexible – useful if you have commitments or cannot study during traditional times
- You can be located far from campus – useful if you want to study subjects not offered nearby or you want to stay in your current home

Building a Paragraph: Planning the paragraph

The research points in my own words

- Flexible – useful if you have commitments or cannot study during traditional times
- You can be located far from campus – useful if you want to study subjects not offered nearby or you want to stay in your current home
- **Main point**
 - Flexibility
- **Key aspects**
 - Time and distance
- **Explanatory points**
 - Time – family, work,
 - Distance – location of campus

Building a Paragraph: Writing the paragraph

- **Main point**
 - Flexibility
- **Key aspects**
 - Time (family, work)
 - Distance (location of campus)

The paragraph

One of the main reasons for choosing online study is the flexibility that it offers. While many students would prefer to study in conventional classrooms in the traditional way, this is not always possible, particularly for more mature learners who may have family or work commitments that prevent them from attending, or for learners located far from university. The flexibility of online courses can be attractive, as it allows study to be scheduled at a time and place that suits the learner and can be an important consideration for many learners when choosing a course. By allowing study to occur more flexibly, students who would otherwise be excluded due to circumstance can undertake university.

Building a Paragraph: Referencing the paragraph

Research

- Online learning has many advantages for students are “geographically restricted” (Appanna, 2008).
- Online learning reduces the access issues of time and distance for learners (Cole, 2000)
- Students often select online learning due the need for flexibility for employment, family or other responsibilities (Park, 2007).

The paragraph

One of the main reasons for choosing online study is the flexibility that it offers. While many students would prefer to study in conventional classrooms in the traditional way, this is not always possible, particularly for more mature learners who may have family or work commitments that prevent them from attending (Park, 2007), or for learners located far from university who are “geographically restricted” (Appanna, 2008). The flexibility of online courses can be attractive, as it allows study to be scheduled at a time and place that suits the learner (Cole, 2000) and can be an important consideration for many learners when choosing a course. By allowing study to occur more flexibly, students who would otherwise be excluded due to circumstance can undertake university.

Summary: The academic writing process

Academic writing should be:

- De-personalised
- Specific
- Supported
- Your voice

Thank you for today!

Goodluck!