

# Academic Writing 2

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# Acknowledgement

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## Focus of the presentation

- Audience
- Voice
- Key features of good academic writing
- Some major problems that arise in academic writing
- Plagiarism
- Referencing

## Audience

In writing, you must be aware of the readers of your work – your audience.

- Who are they?
- What is your purpose for writing for your audience(s)?
- How can you explain your ideas to them effectively?

Academic writing attempts to be accurate and objective in communicating with an audience



Voice

## The role of 'voice' in academic writing

Your voice...

- structures your work
- introduces new points
- presents and support arguments
- allows you to show confidence
- allows you to show relationships
- shows the strength of your claim
- allows you to evaluate statements

## Developing one's voice

Mulvaney and Jolliffe (2005) describe 'voice' as 'that elusive, ever-present stamp of "self" on a text'.

It is a combination of a writer's

- personality,
- perspective,
- purpose,
- previous knowledge about his/her topic, and
- tone

## Developing one's voice

“Gradually a balance must occur in order to develop a genuine academic voice. It must be a combination of established knowledge in a field and personal analysis and response to that knowledge...it must be highly informed opinion that reflects internalization of the facts, theories, and questions in a given field and then evidences personal interpretation of them. Interpretation must be based upon connections that you begin to make between experience in your own personal sphere and the academic sphere you are encountering.”

*Mulvaney and Jolliffe ( 2005)*



## Developing one's voice

- Gather facts and evidence from a variety of sources
- Combine these facts and ideas in your own way, using your own words
- Your own words allow you to put your stamp on what you're writing



VOICE

# Developing one's voice

- A gradual process of trial and error
- Experience
  - the more you write, the more you learn to write and the more you learn
  - write as often and as much as possible
- Confidence
  - experiment with strategies for improving writing
  - developing competence leads to building confidence
  - engage in the process of writing

## Connecting with different voices

- Mulvaney and Jolliffe, 2005, referencing Belenky et al 1986:
- ‘ “connected knowledge” – takes place when a personal authoritative voice has been formed. ..by not only making connections but by actually “constructing” knowledge in your *own* voice. This newly “constructed” knowledge is very aware of the other “voices” and ideas within the field you’re exploring, and yet is truly your own.’

## Can you detect the 'voices'?

People make allowances for the age of the child with whom they are talking. Mothers talk differently to 2-year-olds compared with 10-year-olds (Snow, 1972a). Even 4-year-old children talk differently to 2 year-olds compared with how they talk to adults or other 4-year-olds (Shatz and Gelman, 1973). It seems unlikely that these differentiated speech patterns are innately determined. Snow (1972a) compared the speech patterns of a mother talking to a child with her speech patterns when she only pretended to be talking to a child. The woman's speech when the child was absent was simpler than it would have been if addressed to an adult, but when the child was present, it was simpler still. Clearly, then, feedback from children is important. (Martin et al, 2007:420)

*(Gillett et al, 2009, pp 202)*

## The role of 'voice' in academic writing

### Other voices...

- may be used to provide specific information
- must be acknowledged

# Voice

Paste the following link into your browser and explore further:

[https://services.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/471298/Voice\\_in\\_Academic\\_Writing\\_Update\\_051112.pdf](https://services.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/471298/Voice_in_Academic_Writing_Update_051112.pdf)

## Key features of academic writing

- Formal vocabulary and conventions of writing
- Impersonal style  
(However, the presence of the author his/her 'voice', is evident)
- Long, complex sentences
- Use of references

# Formality

- Formal language
  - Avoidance of :colloquial expressions  
contractions
- Somewhat subdued
  - Not given to 'literariness' and 'drama'
- Adheres to established conventions e.g.
  - Focus on objectivity
  - Meticulous citing of sources of data or views
  - Language, mechanics etc.
- Foregrounding of ideas and de-emphasizing of people and emotions
- *Non excessive* use of reference to the author in the first person [ 'I' and 'we' ]



## Detachment and objectivity

- Dispassionate
  - present pros and cons of one's position as well as evidence to support that position
  - acknowledge and treat with inconvenient data rather than suppressing it
  - avoid overenthusiastic and uncritical statements

## Detachment and objectivity

A cautious and tentative tone

e.g. “This seems to suggest that ...”

vs

A categorical tone

e.g. “Undoubtedly....”

## Rigour and Clarity in academic writing

- Specify meanings of terms
- Avoid language (e.g through puns and metaphors) which can convey multiple meanings or which may be interpreted in different ways by different readers
- Avoid 'elastic' words e.g. 'many', 'quite a few'
- The judicious use of pictures and charts may enhance clarity

# Narration and description in academic writing

- Narration and description in academic writing serve *factual* and *functional* purposes
- The objective is to provide a clear factual picture as a forerunner to analysis
- Narration
  - e.g in experiments - to provide a background to a study;  
how a study was conducted
- Description
  - e.g instruments used (such as a questionnaire);  
in a review of literature to describe existing knowledge;  
the structure of something;  
as an extended definition

## Analysis : the staple of academic writing

Key processes:

- Evaluate ideas
- Assume a position
- Develop reasons and examples
- Organize material logically

*(Rogers and Rhymer, 1995 in Monippally & Pawar, 2010)*

## Conventions of language

Observe the correct or appropriate use of

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Sentence Structure



# Problems to avoid in academic writing

## How Many Issues Do You See Here?

Continued changing contexts affect teacher effectiveness, positively and negatively. More demands by the public, supervisors and administration require they spend more non-contact time planning and preparing lessons while demonstrating technological competence. Different intelligences require differentiated instruction. Teachers' salaries have been increased but disproportionate to the duties asked.



...and here?

Goodlad (1984), in researching factors impacting on teacher success over a thirty-year period summarised his finding by saying 'very little really changed'. )(Hargreaves (1994) found that demands on teachers multiplied relentlessly, what he calls 'intensification'. Consequently, teacher efficacy diminished in direct proportion to these increases.

## Stick to the theme of your paragraph

Research suggests there is no one definition of a good teacher, nor simple answers as to what constitutes good teacher efficacy. Borich (2000) says that a century ago, good teachers were role models, good citizens, parents and employees, and were expected to demonstrate integrity, industry, generosity and amiability. Has it changed? In class, educators must be organized, disciplined, committed and respectful. Psychological characteristics of good teachers have been identified, including extroverted personality, positive mental attitude, pedagogical aptitude and willingness to learn from personal and group experience. These are deemed crucial for effective educators in contemporary environments.

## Causation & not sticking to theme

- Borich believes the best measure of teacher efficacy is the performance of the students being taught. Gardener and Hatch (1989) propose that teachers with positive expectations who clearly state them to their learners reap the rewards of success with them. I tested this theory with a class of low achievers for the last academic year, and saw great success.
- They earned significantly higher grades because they believed they could. Their overall interaction with each other also improved. Gardener and Hatch also believe educators who plan lessons for learners of varied levels, multiple intelligences and who use differentiated instruction in their instructional plans receive higher degrees of positive feedback and engagement from them

# Transitions Between Paragraphs

Psychological characteristics of good teachers have been identified, including extroverted personality, positive mental attitude, pedagogical aptitude and willingness to learn from personal and group experience. These are deemed crucial for effective educators in contemporary environments.

You need to establish some kind of connection between the paragraphs. Is one a continuation of the argument of the other? Is it a reversal of ideas??

Teachers need to be reflective practitioners who always question themselves and improve personal and professional competencies.

## Useful Transition Words & Phrases

- Additionally
- Furthermore
- As I mentioned earlier
- The evidence so far...
- First, second,.....
- The views presented so far...
- Unlike.....
- In a similar vein.....

## Elaboration

Teachers need to be reflective practitioners who always question themselves and improve personal and professional competencies. This need for teacher reflection is supported in Cook and Bastick's (2007) study of teacher effectiveness. **(Needs elaboration)** Educators who integrate feedback from classroom practises and adjust instructional strategies to address shortcomings augment their efficacy (Norton, 1997).

## Is there a Problem Here?

- Christenson, Rounds and Franklin (1992) found that students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds where obedience and conformity are emphasised, learn differently than those from higher SES backgrounds where self-directed learning is encouraged. Gamoran (1992) theorised home and family also affect learning. I can attest that teachers recognising this and using it to inform their lesson planning achieve more success. Novick (2002) believed successful teachers communicate

effectively by manipulating Elias and Clubby's (1998) B.E.S.T approach. They use Body posture, Eye contact, Skipping the wrong words and positive Tone of voice to bring ideas across more successfully.

## What is the Problem Here?

As a young teacher, I spent much of the first year creating my philosophy of teaching. Evans (1997) found that newly trained teachers observe what older teachers do in their workplace and often discard concepts learnt in training because they are deemed inefficient. I use educational theories to inform my practice often and my efficacy in the classroom has improved. After researching educational theories such as Erikson's crises of school years (Borich, 2000), I related to my charges on a more functional level because I better comprehended their developmental processes. My disciplinary approach to them when they engaged in delinquency changed. Quiet but firm tone of voice and dialogue usually brought better results than quoting regulations on behaviour from the school manual. The success of this tactic was reflected in the higher level of classroom control I had subsequently.



# What is Working Well Here?

However, contrary to the findings of Tschannen (year?), experiences over time can easily foster changes in teachers' efficacy beliefs. One such experience is mastery experiences as these are the most powerful source of self-efficacy (Bandura as cited in Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p. 3). It is through the experiences of success or the perception of successful performances that teachers' sense of efficacy is increased, contributing to the expectations of future successes.

- Additionally, underlying the issue of teacher efficacy

beliefs, there are many contexts that affect or aid in the changes of beliefs over time. It is stated that teacher efficacy is context specific. Teachers experience changes in efficacy under different circumstances (Ross et al., as cited in Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000, p. 482). These findings argue that teachers may feel more or less efficacious even from one period to the next.

## Here is a Catalogue

The classroom of today is filled with myriad of different learning styles and abilities. Howard Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences" theory has made many educators aware of the complexities of learning styles that exist. Tomlinson (2000, p. 2) points out that "in differentiated classrooms, teachers begin where students are, not the front of a curriculum guide. They accept and build upon the premise that learners differ in important ways". Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy (2008, p. 6) points out that "many students do not fit the mold of the 'typical' student".

## Another longer catalogue

What is the nature of an educated person? Jerry (2004) succinctly phrases it as one who is “able to understand the similarities and differences among people and to develop the capacities to bring different people together to solve problems, whether in the workplace, one’s community, or internationally”. This definition complements The Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education “white paper” action plan policy 1993 – 2003 which also clearly states that **its goals are to “produce the kind of Caribbean person that would be conversant with the demands of the twenty-first century...emotionally secure, have a strong work ethic, have a respect for human life, be environmentally aware, be responsible and accountable to family and community, entrepreneurial and capable of creative thought.”**

## Continuation of the Paragraph

In essence both quotations allude to the holistic student and teachers are in the opportunistic positions to do just that. Jensen (2009, p. 70) mentions that Maslow asserts that “students cannot be expected to function at a high academic level when their basic needs – for food, shelter, medical care, safety, family and friendships, for example – are unmet.”

## What Claim is Being Made Here?

Ailments stemming from technology overuse include back-pains, eyestrain, poor posture, obesity, desensitising and apathy. They threaten to remove the primary goal for which teaching is essential – to produce healthier, civic minded citizens who can live more productive, fulfilling lives.

What is the claim & what is the evidence?

Education is supposed to equip students to make better life choices, by allowing them to examine the potential consequences of actions and so make more informed choices after critically examining all possible options. Teachers realise this and have incorporated elements in their lessons to ensure students are aware of the dangers and attempt to reduce them.

## What's the Claim? What's the Evidence?

School educators and administrators at times fail to consistently intervene in seeking ways to advance the fortunes of disadvantaged students. There is often no structured response to treating with children who may be coming from an environment that inhibits them from obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to handle the school's formal and hidden curriculum.

## Strengthen this Argument

Bandura (1997) wrote that teachers who are efficacious believe difficult students are teachable with effort and they can overcome negative community influences. The reality remains that the sheer number and scope of external stimuli which impact upon teacher efficacy at times appear to be stifling, and only the teacher's perception of these factors and how they are addressed determine whether outcomes are positive or negative.



## What do You Like About This Structure?

At the same time, the conflict theorists tell us that status tends to be inherited rather than transcended and, as a result, one's class can dictate one's destiny (DeMarrais and Le Compte, 1999 pp. 11 - 12). However, this is where the role of the ethical teacher comes in. If a teacher is driven by morals then in having a desire for the students to achieve academic success, the teacher incorporates caring into his teaching..

## How **cAN** We continue this Idea?

- Educators often underestimate the tremendous influence they can have in the life of a student, with the ability to set the child on a course to success or failure.

This is the  
continuation.  
What Do You  
Think?

It is my experience that while some teachers do seek to inculcate positive values when dealing with disadvantaged students, it does not happen often enough. **“Motivation is learned rather than being inherent in students”** (Jones & Jones, 1998). **Therefore, the teacher must make the student** more willing to put in the effort to learn, and to structure teaching so that it is easier for them to learn.

## Relevance

To what extent does what you read in journals apply to what you experience in the classroom?

If it is divergent, say so.

What about  
controversies  
in the  
literature?

Often, scholars disagree about concepts, causes, variables, and other matters. This can be very confusing if you don't know the field very well.

## Handling controversies in your writing

A useful approach to handling controversies is to:

1. Summarise the main areas of contention.
2. Provide a reasoned choice of one point of view.
3. Maintain that reasoned perspective throughout the essay.

## A word on Definitions

The same principle of  
reasoned choice  
applies when you are  
faced with multiple  
definitions of a  
concept.

# Style

Check the following link for pointers on developing your style

- <https://slc.berkeley.edu/nine-basic-ways-improve-your-style-academic-writing>





Plagiarism

## Our Focus

- Defining plagiarism
- Examples of plagiarism
- How to avoid it.
- Turn It In
- Mistakes to avoid in your writing
- Making an argument

## Defining Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas and attempting to pass them off as one's own without acknowledging the true source.

## Some types of Plagiarism

- Cutting/copying and pasting Internet-based materials without acknowledging the author.
- Quoting from books and other printed media without referencing.
- Reproducing entire sections of a work
- Paraphrasing without references.

## How Much Plagiarism is Plagiarism?

- Snippets of text, such as quotations, accumulate into a **grand theft** over time.
- One or two unreferenced citations suggest unfamiliarity with APA style, intellectual laziness, or perhaps haste.
- Many unreferenced citations indicate either (a) sloppy editing work or (b) intention to deceive.

What  
plagiarism  
looks like

Following is a range of examples

## Inadequate skills on the part of the writer

Various home experiences have an influence on children's behaviour. Children from dysfunctional families face enormous adjustment problems at school. There are four aspects of dysfunctional families - self concept, attention deprivation, love deprivation and excessive control that contribute to discipline problems and which schools have no control over.

## Grand Theft

Early readers have been described from toddler age as "paper and pencil" kids, "obsessed with letters", preferring to play with books, alphabet cards, reading readiness workbooks, and so forth instead of engaging in gross-motor or fantasy play. They have also been shown to be superior to nonearly readers in sound blending, letter naming, letter-naming time, and backward digit span. In addition, early readers are above average in verbal skills, particularly in verbal fluency, in auditory memory for sounds in sequence, and in tasks involving completion in a language context.



## “Forgetting” the author!

Early readers have been described from toddler age as "paper and pencil" kids ( Durkin, 1966), "obsessed with letters" (Salzer. 1984), preferring to play with books, alphabet cards, reading readiness workbooks, and so forth instead of engaging in gross-motor or fantasy play ( Price, 1976; Thomas. 1984; Tobin & Pikulski, 1988). Early readers are superior to nonearly readers in sound blending letter naming, letter-naming time, and backward digit span. In addition, early readers are above average in verbal skills, particularly in verbal fluency in auditory memory for sounds in sequence, and in tasks involving completion in a language context.

This is the  
original!

Early readers have been described from toddler age as "paper and pencil" kids ( Durkin, 1966), "obsessed with letters" ( Salzer, 1984). preferring to play with books, alphabet cards, reading readiness workbooks, and so forth instead of engaging in gross-motor or fantasy play ( Price, 1976; Thomas, 1984; Tobin & Pikulski, 1988). They have also been shown to be superior to nonearly readers in sound blending ( Evans & Smith, 1976), letter naming ( Thomas, 1981), letter-naming time, and backward digit span ( Jackson & Myers, 1982). In addition, early readers are above average in verbal skills ( Thomas, 1984, Thomas, 1981), particularly in verbal fluency ( Stroebe & Evans, 1988). in auditory memory for sounds in sequence, and in tasks involving completion in a language context ( Clark, 1976).

# Cut and paste genius

An extremely effective approach to assessment and intervention is the “tiered” approach, which sequentially increases the intensity of instructional interventions (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). It promotes and facilitates early identification of students who are at risk, and therefore prevents learning difficulties. In addition, this approach ensures adequate interventions for students exhibiting persistent learning difficulties (Vaughn et al., 2003). For best outcomes, it should begin in Kindergarten, as students who are at risk can be identified early and provided with the appropriate intensity of instruction to prevent later persistent difficulties (Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003). The use of the “tiered” approach in the early years has been shown to dramatically reduce the number of students in the later grades who would meet criteria for learning disabilities (O’Connor, 2000; Vaughn et al.). The first tier consists of sound classroom instruction, based on successful practice for all students. Assessment in this tier is classroom-based and involves the teacher monitoring the progress of the class and flagging any at-risk students. The classroom and individual learning profiles described in this report would be useful tools for the teacher to use to monitor student progress, plan differentiated instructional strategies, and identify at-risk learners. The second tier requires teachers to identify students who have failed to progress satisfactorily in tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 involves more intensive instruction (individually or in small groups) in addition to the tier 1 programming. This level of instruction may include other members of the school staff (e.g., special education teacher, teacher’s assistants). The third tier is for students who do not respond to instructional efforts in tiers 1 and 2. These students may need to be referred for more extensive psycho-educational assessment. This type of assessment information, coupled with classroom observations and teacher assessment of the students’ previous responses to intervention strategies, can then be used to guide more specialized instruction.

## Avoiding plagiarism

- **Give credit** where it is due.
- **Summarize** information from others' research or quote it to:
  - Explain a situation
  - Support a position
- **Elaborate** upon your ideas and your argument using what you have read

## Guiding principle

- Let what you read be evidence.
- Don't let it be your argument.

# Plagiarism

Here are some helpful sites. You can search the internet for more.

- <https://www.scribbr.com/plagiarism/5-common-types-plagiarism/>
- <https://www.enago.com/academy/role-editor-combating-plagiarism-esl-authors/>

The final  
product

Use what you read to support  
your ideas and your argument.

Don't make an argument by  
stringing other people's  
"findings" into paragraphs.

The final  
product

A good essay will present your  
perspective and your findings  
in your voice.

It will not be your retailing of  
other people's positions.



## A Final Word

You can “write academically” if you follow some basic conventions.

Read examples of good essays in the library if you still lack confidence.



# Referencing

Refer to and correctly use the APA style guide for all your formal academic assignments



## Some online resources

- <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/strategies-essay-writing>
-