Designing & managing an online, personalised research writing course for postgraduates

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BALEAP Conference. 8 April 2021

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Rationale

Research article writing for PhD students

Independent, personalized, continuous learning

Class = added value

Multidisciplinary groups

Credit-bearing

Course format: what & how

Independent learning tasks

Materials

E-coursebook

Theory → Tasks

- Article sections
- Coherence/clarity/conciseness
- Writing & publication process

Activities

Working on own writing

Exploring research article & disciplinary conventions

Independent learning tools

Sample task: working on own writing

Crafting clear sentences: managing length

Examine circa 300 words of continuous text from your (draft) article. It can be from any section, except the abstract.

a) Paste the longest sentence here:

b) How many words does this sentence contain?

c) Would you say this sentence is much longer than your 'average' sentence length, much shorter, or typical of the length of your sentences?

d) Do you recognize any of the issues presented above? If so, what are the issues and reflect on their probable cause(s) (e.g. your first language, education, writing culture, discipline, insufficient revision).

Online classes

Teacher uses completed tasks to

- illustrate key theory points

- create writing revision activities

Sample class use of task output

Crafting clear sentences: managing length

What causes (excessively) long sentences?

'Trying to do **too many things** at the same time with one sentence'

'Insufficient **revision**'

'It's a **habit** actually'

L1
- 'This might be due to the fact that I am not a native English speaker.'
- 'In French, we use to write much longer sentences.'
- 'In Spanish, the idea is not usually presented directly but with a lot of "turns".'
- 'In Italian we use long sentences and sub sentences between commas.'

Discipline
- 'Legal writing typically consists of longer sentences.'
- 'Engineers are not consciously taught how to write.'

Bold the verb phrases and 'linking' words. Where could the sentences be broken up?

1) To reach a compromise between the accuracy of the solution and the acceptable computation burden, high fidelity models in conjunction with model reduction techniques are probably a more superior option, because high fidelity models are capable of capturing more physical aspects, thus able to support more precise analysis or be applied to a broader range of situations.

2) Accuracy extraction requires the extracted model to match or exceed the accuracy of the target model on the test dataset, while fidelity extraction requires the extracted model not only to achieve the same accuracy as the target model on the test dataset but also to replicate the errors of the target model.

Writing

Promoting regular writing (Devlin & Radloff, 2014; Sword, 2017)

Research article

Fortnightly submission

Log for reflection

Peer review

Explain value of peer review (Cho & MacArthur, 2010)

Self-selected, multidisciplinary groups

Unsupervised meetings

Strict procedural guidelines & template

Peer review report

Consultations

Text submission with questions

45 min, optional

Course evaluation

30 student surveys (all participants)

Instructor reflection
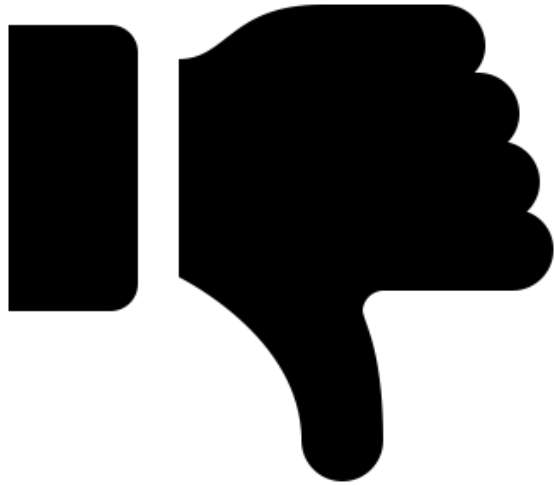
Flexibility appreciated

Preferred writing alone

Working at own pace on ILTs

Personalisation important

Consultations useful

Multi-discipline peer review positively reviewed

Time issues – when to write, no time for consultation

Low consultation uptake

Clarity of and managing deadlines

Would prefer theory f2f

Writing log negatively reviewed, poorly performed

Current revisions

No writing log -> in-text reflection

Fewer deadlines

Mandatory consultations

Our questions…

Personalisation is important to Ss and Ts

- How to make this less time-consuming?

Time for and concentration on writing were difficult

- How to implement a distraction-free environment for writing when not in the classroom?

The five-fold approach is complex

- What are the best ways to communicate/illustrate the multiple elements and make sure everyone stays on track?

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