English Writing Challenges of First-Year Students: 
A Case Study of a University in the Eastern Cape

Writing is a productive skill, which means that the emphasis is on the output. The fact that most students in South Africa learn English as a second language (L2) presents challenges concerning English writing proficiency, because writing is different from speaking since it utilises higher-order cognitive skills. The study analysed 184 students’ scripts showing different forms of students’ writing, such as, reports, creative writing assignments, language tests, business correspondence, research papers, answering open-ended questions on extracts and the like. A qualitative method was used to explore and describe challenges encountered by students in English writing by collecting students’ scripts to identify problem areas where interventions needed to be applied. Purposive sampling was employed for the study as the focus was specifically on first-year university students registered for different modules, but all taking Communication (English), which is a compulsory module. Various theories such as the writing process, error analysis and proficiency theory were explored in order to understand the processes that underpin academic writing. The hypothesis is that mother-tongue linguistic features will pose challenges as they are embedded in the students’ cognitive language skills, and they will therefore interfere in English writing since the students’ mother tongue and English have different linguistic rules. Possible solutions for the many and varied challenges are the application of different processes that include different pedagogical methodologies. Error analysis played a crucial role in the study since it has a bearing on students who speak English as a second language because it investigates errors which are systematic and which result from language interference (this can manifest in intralingual and/or interlingual interference). In order to address these challenges, facilitators must employ pedagogical strategies that will encompass different teaching methods and different assessment methods that will link language exercises to other forms of writing such that there is a correlation between different aspects of language skills.

Keywords: English writing challenges, language interference, error analysis, teaching methods, assessment methods, language skills

Introduction

English writing at tertiary level is a very important skill because students’ academic performance is graded mainly on their written work. However, studies conducted on first-year written work show that there are gaps in this literacy because the assumption is that students who enrol at university have the required level of writing proficiency to cope with the demands of academic discourse. This assumption makes lecturers overlook the fact that most school leavers who enter South African universities are not adequately prepared for higher education studies. At high school, writing is viewed mainly as a tool for
the practice and reinforcement of grammatical and lexical patterns, however at university; the emphasis is on academic writing, which is a skill that requires critical thinking and argumentation.

Of the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing, writing is the one that will most likely be used to determine whether students will progress to the next level/year. For this reason, it is crucial that students acquire writing proficiency, especially students who study English as a second language, because they are prone to encounter challenges in this discourse. Richard et al. (in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) have explored proficiency, defining it as the degree of understanding that one employs when engaging with language. Academic English writing proficiency denotes having the knowledge and skills within the form and function of the written language, which then enables students to engage themselves in whatever form is presented, thereby enabling them to fully demonstrate their content knowledge.

At the selected institution of the study population in the Eastern Cape, there is a writing centre where students are equipped with basic writing skills. However, writing centres generally focus on supporting students in the correct application of grammar, which is the case at this campus, but the writing centre does not delve into the writing process, which constitutes far more than the knowledge of grammar. A proficient writer is able to write appropriately and efficiently, therefore students need to apply the correct discourse in order to attain writing proficiency. Myles (2002) when stating that ‘writing skills must be practised and learned through experience’ allude to the importance of writing. This emphasises the importance of the writing process, which encompasses various phases that students have to go through before they are able to self-edit their work.

Studies on writing challenges have been conducted both in South Africa and abroad. Because of challenges observed in students’ comprehension of English, Heinemann and Horne (2003) conducted a study on the level of understanding of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The aim was to specifically address challenges in teaching English in South Africa. Interestingly, many books have been published on second language English teaching, but according to Heinemann and Horne, ‘they did not cover language issues in South Africa’ (Heinemann & Horn, 2003: x). Consequently, these researchers co-authored a book aimed specifically at addressing issues encountered by first-year tertiary students in South Africa.

Academic writing is an area that has piqued researchers’ interest in recent years in South Africa, and as a result, studies in writing have been conducted at various universities. However, no study has been conducted on writing at this historically black university in the Eastern Cape. A sample of studies on first-year students undertaken at different institutions include Kruger’s (2011) study which measured the writing progress made by first-year students at North-West University (Vaal Triangle campus). Mkonto’s (2015) investigation of first-year students’ expectations of academic integration at the University of the Western Cape, and Chili’s (2016) study which focused on students’ writing success to measure the impact of the Academic Development Programme at Rhodes
University are some examples of studies conducted in this discipline. Studies conducted abroad have also investigated first-year students’ writing. Crusan (2002) examined first-year writing placement assessment at Ohio University and found that students struggled with writing coherent discourse. Jordan (1997) studied English language problems of overseas students in higher education in the United Kingdom and concluded that writing challenges resulted in academic and career constraints for students, meaning that students who do not have this discourse will struggle in their studies and this might affect their future career endeavours. Abedi (2010) also examined students’ writing performance in order to highlight the need to have a programme that would address first-year students’ writing challenges. He acknowledged that research on first-year students’ writing performance was lacking. However, although findings from studies have indicated challenges in writing proficiency, there are no measures to address the highlighted production challenges. Some writing challenges are general and they can be addressed through available writing models, other challenges are encountered in a particular group (for example, mother-tongue interference, poor teaching, lack of exposure to the language, etc.). This study will therefore address interventions that will curb students’ writing challenges and also highlight what has influenced these and what can be done to alleviate problems in English academic writing. Failure to address these challenges mean that challenges will persist unabated and will hinder progress for current and future students as English is the language that is used as the language of learning and teaching in many institutions of higher learning.

Being fluent in English or in any other language enables interlocutors to use the language to persuade, to convert and to compel; this is because ‘language is one of the rudimentary means of fostering relations among people’ (Magaba, 2019: 2). However, writing transcends these succinct traits of verbal communication since it requires a more complex communication skill, which is attained through practice, which is pivotal in academic writing. Technological advancements have opened new avenues for millions of people to engage with the written form through emails, blogs, social media, texting and the like. When using technology, users apply their knowledge of literacy to encode and decode messages. However, these forums do not necessarily follow the standard English writing format; therefore, knowledge of these formats will not assist students in academic writing as its format differs markedly from the other writing genres. Students must be reminded that writing is distance-bound, therefore the written text must be methodical so that it conveys the writer’s intended meaning where the correct inference will be drawn to avoid misinterpretation or communication breakdown. Written texts must satisfy three components, namely, the writer, the message and the receiver. This means that writing needs a careful plan and an explicit end product. In order for students to be proficient writers, they need to demonstrate good structure and fluency.

When they start their university studies, students are expected to have acquired a reasonable level of English proficiency to help them cope with
academic writing discourse. This places great strain on first-year students because they are expected to be able to read tasks individually and display a high level of reading ability, which will enable them to write well-structured and fluent academic assignments. Lack of good academic writing skills can lead to a high failure rate, which in turn is likely to lead to a high dropout rate and loss of government subsidy by the university. Academic literacy programmes must address these concerns to help first-year students to cope with the transition from Grade 12 to tertiary education.

Background and context to the study

In South Africa, English is the LOLT in many schools. Most learners in these schools have a home language that is not English (Balfour, 1999). According to Crosser and Nell (2013), the fact that English is a second language for most learners can negatively influence their academic achievements, particularly in higher education. If students lack competence in the LOLT, they will feel restricted, which will ultimately make them feel inadequate. Maxwell and Meiser (2001) concur with this when positing that students who encounter challenges at tertiary institutions as a result of poor language skill, will not succeed, thus adding to the high level of drop-outs. English proficiency therefore becomes imperative because students need to be able to read and write proficiently in order to attain success in their studies. Banjo and Bisong (1985) emphasise the importance of mastering the LOLT when they infer that students will only be fully able to understand the subject content if they understand the LOLT. Language competence is important, as it is a prescript for language proficiency, hence it is important that students’ writing must be analysed at first-year level to ensure that they acquire the requisite proficiency in the writing skill. Lack of this prerequisite will culminate in poor productive skill, which will negatively affect students’ success in their academic work, as they will struggle with the subject content in different learning areas and they will ultimately fail to reach their academic and career potential.

Lack of exposure to English earlier on in life and outside of school hinders progress and ultimately has a negative impact on language proficiency later on in the learners’ school life. It is imperative for English learners to be introduced to the language as early as possible so that by the time they leave school at the end of grade 12; they can speak, read and write English well and are ready for tertiary education. Magaba (2019) concurs, stating that it is paramount to pave the way for everyone to access opportunities through a fair and just educational system. This means that earlier exposure to the language will assist in addressing overt and covert challenges in the LOLT.

Contrary to the general assumption, it is a fallacy to believe that being able to speak English fluently automatically makes one a good writer because writing is more cognitively demanding than speaking. In essence, this means that writing is a skill that needs to be taught. This is apparent in the writing
process; which includes planning that manifests in an opening framework in
the form of key words relating to the topic (taxonomy), drafting (writing down
information relating to the content) and revising (checking the sequence of
events or arguments, substituting words that will make the topic more
interesting or stronger). The final step in the writing process is editing
(meaning, checking grammar, spelling and whether the meaning intended is
written in a methodical and explicit manner to avoid ambiguity).

Good academic writing focuses not just on grammar, but also on the
content and style of writing. Previous studies on academic writing have
focused on the root causes of students’ lack of writing proficiency, but have not
suggested strategies that can be employed to deal with these challenges. Hinkel
(2006) posits that proficiency in writing requires explicit pedagogy in grammar
and lexis. Grammar is a term used by linguists to refer to both the structure of
words and their arrangements in sentences (Stork & Widdonson, 1974). Other
than the basic requirement for grammar to follow a particular sequence, for
example, subject-verb concord, the text must have meaning (Bell, 1981).
Knowledge of grammar plays an important role in any language, particularly in
the construction of written work where the writer must follow the underlying
rules governing language use (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Detaba, 2013; Mbau
& Muhsin, 2014). Research has shown that teaching grammar and lexis
overtly does not enable students to write coherently (Odlin, 1989). In order for
students to achieve writing proficiency, they need to be taken through the
writing process from the moment they start preparing themselves to do a
writing task until they eventually produce the final product.

Wingate (2015) contradicts earlier studies and argues that academic
literacy is more than what it is generally perceived to be. Many studies have
indicated that it is mostly students who are second language learners who
struggle with academic writing discourse. However, Wingate is of the view
that challenges in writing happen across the board and they are not just
challenges experienced by students from underprivileged backgrounds or
second language learners. She is of the view that problems in literacy
transcends race, and that is why these challenges are encountered globally.
Wingate (2015), like Corder (1967), Cummings (1984), and Hakuta and Lee
(2010), deviates from the perceived norm as cited by Kruger (2006; 2009) and
Rees (2008) that being fluent in a language automatically makes one a good
writer.

Problem statement

Problems that are commonly experienced by first-year university students
have piqued researchers’ interest nationally and globally (Myles, 2002; Jordan,
1997; Mkonto, 2015, Kruger, 2011). In order to support students to be better
equipped to engage with academic writing, studies conducted highlight areas of
concern and make recommendations on measures that can be taken to address
these challenges.
Aim of the study

To highlight areas of concern in academic writing for first-year university students.

Research questions

1. What problems do first-year university students encounter in academic writing?
2. What are the causes of academic writing challenges?
3. Which writing trends do first-year university students commonly use?
4. How does academic writing affect students’ performance?
5. Which measures can be taken to address challenges in academic writing?

Research objectives

1. To find out what problems do first-year university students commonly encounter in academic writing.
2. To determine the causes of challenges in academic writing.
3. To explore writing trends of first-year students.
4. To analyse the impact of academic writing on students’ performance.
5. To provide recommendations that will help resolve some of the issues causing challenges in academic writing.

Research design and methodology

Research design may be exploratory, experimental, descriptive, etc. and each design underpins research methodology through a myriad of forms. The research design applied in this study is exploratory and descriptive as the researcher wants to uncover the underlying reasons that contribute to challenges in academic writing and analyse students’ written work under different forms, namely, reports, business correspondence, language tests, etc. The exploratory design focuses on the trends in relation to the writing style and use of vocabulary, while the descriptive design manifests in analysing students’ written materials and giving an account of any area that poses a challenge in academic writing.

The study used the qualitative method as the bedrock for exploring students’ traits that impede them from attaining writing proficiency. The qualitative method has been chosen because it focuses on inductive reasoning, which analyses patterns and observations of the sampled population to enable
the researcher to reach conclusions, which can be applied to broader
generalisations. The information was obtained from students during
unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and the submission of scripts,
as these provided insights into the problem and uncovered underlying trends in
academic writing. The writing output of 184 students in four different
departments was collected and analysed for similarities and differences.
Writing challenges are cross-curricula; hence, purposive sampling of first-year
students was employed to gauge the level of writing challenges in different
departments. The researcher was also involved in the study as an observer, took
notes, and recorded events, which assisted in analysing the data (Creswell,
2009). Students’ scripts were collected and analysed over a semester so that a
varied sample could be collected to address the contentious issue that
knowledge of grammar is the answer to writing challenges. An array of
students’ scripts collected included: answers to open-ended texts, unprepared
creative writing tasks, writing and responding to business correspondence,
summarising extracts and notes, writing reports, and the like. All written scripts
made available were analysed by the researcher. The students were given
feedback on the tasks completed after the lecturer graded their scripts and the
students had to do corrections. The researcher explored the correlation between
the graded task and the corrections not only to check whether there was any
progression/understanding of not just the content, but also to ascertain whether
the writing discourse was applied when correcting mistakes and errors. The
overall writing style was also noted. Follow-up tasks were used to determine
whether the suggested correction forms would be applied in other tasks to show
broader understanding of concepts such as content and academic writing.
Glasgow and Farrell (2007), who emphasised the importance of viewing
students’ writing as a process that needs to be nurtured through different
stages, have alluded to this. A number of studies have explored the importance
of the writing process to highlight the pivotal role that students need to embark
on in order to be proficient writers. In essence, checking students’ corrections
of previously analysed texts is crucial because it will indicate whether there are
embedded trends in the students’ writing style.

The researcher incorporated an ethnographic design informed by the
qualitative method where the researcher observed participants in their natural
setting (the interaction was conducted in the university lecture halls and tutorial
sessions). Data was then compiled from the point of view of the participants
during unstructured interviews and during focus group discussions where
active interaction took place between students. The researcher played the role
of observer to avoid influencing opinions or stifling the atmosphere. Primary
data was mainly collected on a continuous basis over the semester whenever
there were written tasks. These were collected from different settings and then
analysed.
Data collection

Methods of data collection:
 collecting students’ scripts (this was done in every writing session regardless of the format of the writing, which could be a character sketch, a business plan, answers to open-ended questions, essays, etc.)
 observations (to check the level of support given and/or engagement with the task in both individual and paired/group written tasks)
 unstructured interviews (to address issues as and when they arise using open-ended questions to gain clarity)
 focus group discussions (to obtain a general perspective from a number of students)

The researcher continually collected data from students’ written work and conducted unstructured interviews to get the students’ opinions on the written work covered in each lesson. The collection of data happened at the end of each writing lesson. First-year lecturers were also interviewed to obtain their views on what they thought were the writing challenges experienced by first-year students. Using different data collection methods allowed the researcher to implement triangulation to ensure research validity. As the students were involved in the writing process, they made corrections at each phase of the process. Scripts where students wrote corrections were also collected to gauge whether changes were implemented in accordance with academic writing. Data collected was used in the design of the suggested writing model.

Focus group discussion

A group of first-year students discussed their experiences of academic writing across the curricula. The discussion touched on some of the areas that had been raised in a different group the previous year where students were asked to write their expectations of university before they enrolled and experiences at university towards the end of their first year. The students were made aware that the papers collected would not be graded and they were asked to be as frank as possible as their contributions might highlight areas of teaching and learning that needed to be reviewed and possibly amended. These are some of the general comments and concerns from some of the focus group members:

• My English is generally poor, but writing poses a greater challenge than speaking as there are rules to adhere to for formal writing.
• I have no problems with writing prepared pieces; the problem arises when I have to write information on a new topic.
• What I see as contributing to some of our problems is that we were mostly taught in our home language, so being at university and expected to write good English is a problem.
I don’t have problems with speaking English, but I find writing quite challenging, especially at university. My mother suggested that I should read more to improve as she thought that my poor performance was that I was not applying myself fully. My lecturer advised me to take notes in class, go through them later, and then summarise them so that I can get used to the writing discourse.

There are certain ways that I have always applied in my writing, and because they were hardly ever corrected, it is hard for me to change how I write and this style of writing isn’t helping me with serious pieces of writing like business correspondence.

If we were given the rubric for our written tasks like reports and research, that will help us do better because we will use it to streamline our work, so without such information, we often end up performing poorly.

I think my academic performance would improve if I were taught in my home language because English is posing problems for me, especially when it comes to writing. If we had a choice, some of us would write in our mother tongue because it will be easier to demonstrate our knowledge of content in the different modules.

Writing in a language that you’re not even fluent in speaking is bound to be challenging. My written work is often written in simple sentences, regardless of the task/s because I struggle to formulate sentences using complex and compound sentences. If I attempt to incorporate longer and better-structured sentences, I end up making too many mistakes and errors because I am not sure of the correct format.

My writing has improved since I started university because the writing style that I have learned in my English Communication class has made me more conscious of how I should write.

I don’t think my challenges at university are just language-based. I am generally not an academically strong student, so I can’t blame English as the source of my poor performance.

For me, speaking English is not a problem, so it would help if some modules would be assessed through oral presentations like those that we do in some of our Communication tasks.

Our performance might improve if the marked scripts from all our lecturers had specific guidelines on how we should correct our work and not just a cross or a question mark. This will improve our writing and we will get better marks.

According to me, most of us would greatly improve our English writing if all our lecturers encouraged us to write in this formal style of writing, but since most of them don’t enforce this, then we concentrate on applying correct writing skills only in our English Communication tasks.

Group work or paired written tasks would help us improve so that when we do individual academic written tasks later, we would at least have had practice.
• We are used to the kind of English writing that we use in social media where the form of writing is different. This creates problems for us because we must now unlearn some of our writing styles since they do not conform to academic writing style.
• Remedial support would help students who struggle with writing good English, but this should be part of the lessons throughout the curriculum. There is no academic writing support that we are aware of outside of what is covered in the Communication class.
• Continuous short assessments in formal English writing will help most students to improve their writing skills.
• Students would benefit if individual writing was stressed and encouraged in high school because in high school, we mostly worked on previous question papers as a class to prepare us for exams. We were not fully prepared for academic writing and that is why some of us are struggling in our studies now.
• The students who struggle with English academic writing must be offered extra support since without this support, they are unlikely to do well or even pass. This will have a negative impact on them because most students here are on NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme), and if a student fails, they will lose part of their funding or the affected students might not even get funding at all.
• English is our second language, therefore, expressing subject knowledge in writing persuasive, exploratory, narrative and creative pieces of writing is challenging for most of us.
• Students would generally do better if lecturers would be considerate when setting students’ assessments. Assessments should be conducted using different formats, because they are currently based mostly on testing knowledge through writing. For examinations, it is just writing, this is unfair because not all students are good at expressing their knowledge in writing.
• Continuous assessments must have a higher percentage than examinations (60/40 or even 70/30) because examinations are stressful, so students are unlikely to demonstrate good writing skills under enormous pressure where they are expected to not only demonstrate their subject knowledge, but also must do so in the allocated period.

Data analysis

Data analysis of students’ writing became an on-going process as the study covered a number of lessons over a semester. After each writing session, students’ work was collected for analysis. The research methodology applied in this study incorporated an ethnographic method, which means that data collection and data analysis were concurrent.
Data collection and analysis table of written work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Method of collection</th>
<th>Method of data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing proficiency</td>
<td>Students’ scripts.</td>
<td>Is there a general flow (coherency) and appropriate link of arguments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error analysis</td>
<td>Individual students exposed to a standardised text.</td>
<td>Checking for mother-tongue interference/interlanguage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cognitive theory of writing</td>
<td>Written scripts such as an essay, a text or answers to open-ended questions.</td>
<td>Checking students’ scripts to see if there is negotiated interaction with interlocutors (Is the intended meaning clear?).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

In general, unstructured interviews conducted with first-year university students support the view that there are writing challenges that they are encountering and they are hoping for a solution to these challenges. In addition to this, students’ scripts analysed also show that there are challenges in academic writing. Suggested recommendations will help solve some of these challenges.

Analysis of students’ writing highlighted challenges in the following areas:

- The students’ focus was primarily on content, hence writing proficiency remains a challenge.
- Poor application of punctuation, which leads to run-on sentences, and/or changing the intended meaning altogether.
- Rote learning; students tend to regurgitate memorised subject content information, but cannot engage with the text/information in a critical manner.
- Literal translation from the mother tongue to the language of learning and teaching.
- Poor language use at different levels (morphology – at the word level and incorrect use at the syntactical level – sentence level).
- Use of informal language in formal writing tasks; this is because students struggle to differentiate between the two.
- Poor spelling, which might cause confusion (especially concerning homonyms, which are words that have the same pronunciation, but have different meanings, e.g. – flower/flour, fore/four, seen/scene, etc.).
- Poor transition from one section to the next. This leads to a lack of clarity in controlling ideas/arguments.
- Poor vocabulary, which prevents students from conveying the intended meaning; this results in challenges when they are required to use more appropriate diction.
Poor usage of different sentence structures to demonstrate good academic writing (simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, etc.)

Unsatisfactory engagement with the topic using own words to demonstrate comprehension. This was especially common when answering questions based on an extract, as some students ‘copied’ answers directly from the text word for word.

Substandard organisation – this leads to incoherency as there is no consistency.

Areas highlighting that there is potential for improvement:

- Students’ satisfactory performance when answering questions that required short answers.
- Satisfactory performance when writing information that the students have written before, although engaging with any section that was unfamiliar proved a bit challenging, even within the same text.
- Students performed well when correcting mistakes and errors shortly after being taken through the process for the written task/s.
- There was improved performance when writing was reassessed, because not only did the content improve, but the phrasing of statements improved as well.
- Improvement was noticed when students were given more time to draft their pieces of work and then submitting them for guidelines before writing a final draft.

Conclusion

Most first-year students struggle with their academic work mainly because of the language issue, but particularly because of poor writing skills. Although the majority of students are articulate in English, this does not necessarily imply that they can cope with the writing discourse. Lecturers must take cognisance of such challenges and communicate with the writing centre so that appropriate measures can be put in place to support students in academic writing. In most cases, writing centres operate as separate entities covering a syllabus that does not contribute to the academic development of students who use this service. In essence, writing centres do students a disservice, as there is no synergy between writing centres and improvement of students’ writing skills. The same issues became apparent at the university where the study was conducted as content covered by the writing centre and information imparted in lecture halls are not harmonised. The focus at the writing centre is mainly on grammar (and study skills), whereas academic writing requires skills that go way beyond knowledge of grammar. If emphasis on the knowledge of grammar were coupled with a format that assisted students to become proficient writers, this would lead to significant progress in students’ writing skills. In addition, the content and style of writing resulting from a discourse that encompasses
rigorous engagement with the writing task through phases should include among other things:

1. A planning template (focusing on: the audience, the intention, taxonomies, the tone, genre, writing style, the mood, etc.).
2. Drafting (the background to the topic, ideas on explaining the message the student is writing to promote, supplying reasons for applying the tone and the mood, displaying how the different subsections are co-related).
3. Revising (clarifying any ambiguity, checking for relevance and correcting diction)
4. Editing (correcting grammar and spelling, checking for the consistency and coherency of the writer’s point/s on the issue, etc.).

Based on the findings of the study, a good starting point for tackling students’ writing challenges is a writing model, which can be used to assist students in their writing practice. The writing task would determine whether the focus should be on the writing style, the writer’s voice, taxonomies and the like.

Recommendation

The writing centre should cover areas that students struggle with, as indicated by lecturers, and the two parties must review this at the end of every semester in order to determine whether the process is yielding positive results for students or not. If there are any unforeseen challenges surfacing before the scheduled meeting, either of the two parties must intercede to prevent students from falling through the cracks, as this is pivotal for students’ success.
Limitations of the study

Students might not be forthcoming with information pertaining to all the areas of concern during unstructured interviews. Some lecturers tend to view an exercise where students’ challenges are highlighted as an area of weakness in the way they conduct lessons and they might not be open to the process.

Ethical issues

No students were singled out as having problems in writing, hence all the students’ writing covering different formats was analysed to gauge the students’ levels. No students were named or identified in anyway as the purpose of the study was solely to highlight problem areas and suggest solutions to help students cope with critical writing analysis in higher education.

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