

## WRITING RESPONSIBLY

L. ZHUK, PhD in Philology,  
O. ILIENKO, PhD in Philology  
*O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy* in Kharkiv

Our intention in writing this paper is to share our experience in assisting PhD Degree students with their academic and scientific writing in English, i.e. the way we promote learners' confidence in writing, as they are required to submit their papers for publication in international journals or books of abstracts. Besides, it is emphasized what steps are necessary, how many types of scientific writing students should be taught to fulfil this this final goal.

As we are keeping in mind the necessity of submitting students' papers for publication, they are taught to state clearly the purpose of their research in their articles as well as to review and acknowledge the works of other researchers in the field (mention what has been done before in relation to their topic) using propounded phrases like much has been studied about...; several investigations have explored the issue of ...before citing those studies. As W. L. Belcher notices, "when we fail to acknowledge the scholarly conversation regarding relevant literature, the editor may conclude we have not been reading the latest scholarship, a faux pas in research and writing" [4]. Besides, it is necessary to explain how the theory the students selected relates to their topic [3]. Then, the students should indicate why their research is so timely, and again we present them examples or cliché to use, e.g., "No studies have looked at ..."; or "Over the past ten years, several studies have focused on ... (and cite those studies) while neglecting the issue of ...".

The PhD Degree students learn how to list the technical terms they will use in their paper; how to write definitions of these terms, and decide at which point in the paper each term should be defined.

They are informed that it is obligatory to list the background information that will help make their paper clearer and more interesting. This should include the existing state of knowledge on the topic they have chosen, and what the scientists hope their experiments will prove; to list the information about the significance of the experiment that they will put at the end of their paper. They are warned to mention:

- whether the experiments were successful or not;
- whether the results had been expected;
- what further experiments will be necessary;
- what practical applications the research may have to the lives of non-scientists.

With a limited subject in hand, they are next to compose a sentence to serve as the controlling idea for their research. This sentence is often called the thesis statement – a sentence that states what they believe their research will prove. A thesis statement is usually a single sentence that contains two main elements: a

limited subject plus a specific feeling or attitude toward that subject. Even though their original thesis statement may change as they do more research, it will guide them and make their research more productive.

The thesis statement also serves as a personal guide to help them focus on their subject throughout the research.

The students are also provided with organizational patterns of the paper and research report, with the components of these genres as they can differ depending on the field of investigation.

It has been identified that writing **abstract** that appears to be a brief summary, and, as a rule, presents an overview of an article or a report, is difficult for students' writing. That is why, guidelines and practical tasks have been developed that cover the two units. Students are informed that many journals publish abstracts of all the articles in an issue. Therefore, if they are looking for information on a particular subject, an abstract can help them determine whether the article is worth reading in its entirety. In addition, many collections of abstracts are available in databases that they can search using keywords. In any case, the students are asked to write an abstract of a paper or a project following the guidelines and different samples. We have come to the conclusion that it is much easier to teach constructing abstracts after gaining skills in writing summaries and doing paraphrasing.

Firstly, the students are given the task to produce different text types of the scientific discourse. The students are provided with comprehensive learning resources, e.g. textbooks containing recommendations on writing with style and writing research reports, papers, abstract, summary, and paraphrasing, for instance [1, 63–117]. The textbooks present a detailed look at the writing process and provide strategies for all steps in the development of writing. Detailed definitions, examples, explanations and guides of these types of writing are propounded and they are followed by practical exercises.

Despite the fact that PhD degree students are taught the essence of the scientific discourse and acknowledge its main characteristics, they grow familiar with special verbs used to transfer knowledge, verbs for verification and conclusions, phraseological phrases in scientific discourse, plural of some nouns from Greek and Latin as they are formed in the original language [1]. They become aware of choosing the right word due to the style of their writing.

Each unit contains not only theoretical material but also practical exercises to help write responsibly and correctly. For example, the Unit Summary presents the following exercises:

- \* Study the sample Summary of the given text. Analyze it, compare the words used in the text and the words in the summary. Does the author use synonyms?

- \* Write summaries of the following reading selections using the guidelines given above.

The Unit Paraphrase:

\* In conversation, we often paraphrase information instead of just repeating it. Look at this example:

- All in all it sounds like a rewarding job.

- Yes, I really find it very satisfying.

\* How would you “soften” the following utterances? Use the following tips – reminders and criticism can be “softened” by phrases such as...:

\* Write paraphrase – expanding or amplifying the following texts to make them clearer;

\* Make a special effort to clarify the meaning of a prophetic piece of writing – poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Include your interpretation of...;

\* Clarify the meaning of some proverbs, including your interpretation.

It is particularly good and useful for clarifying the meaning of a difficult or symbolic piece of writing (poems, proverbs, and documents). Because it often includes the students’ own interpretation and sometimes it is even longer than the original.

The students should follow the guidelines for writing a paraphrase and summary as well as an extensive collection of writing models, and have practice doing the exercises, for example:

\* Summarize each idea in the passage in a clear statement.

\* Expand or amplify the text to make it clearer, but be sure to maintain the meaning and tone of the original text.

\* Write your paraphrase, using your own words to restate the author’s ideas.

\* Your version of the author’s views should be as easy to read as the original – maybe easier.

The students know the difference between paraphrase and summary. Besides, they take into account that similar to a paraphrase, a summary is a restatement of a written passage. A summary is a capsule version of the passage / text / reading selection. Unlike a paraphrase, however, a summary is shorter than the original passage – usually about one third as long. A paragraph can often be summarized in a single sentence. Correspondingly, a three- or four-paragraph passage can usually be summarized in a single paragraph. The teacher emphasizes the fact that the ability to paraphrase is a powerful tool to avoid **plagiarism** – this topic is also worked out thoroughly in the classroom.

A summary is a condensed version of someone else’s work. A good summary concentrates on the factual information contained in the original document and does not contain personal opinions or evaluations [1, 73]. At the university, students are often asked to write summaries of books, book chapters, and lectures; consequently, note taking and summarizing are critical study techniques. Summarizing forces students to think carefully about the ideas and concepts in any body of information. When writing summaries, they call on their ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate information. Therefore, they develop all the important thinking skills of the XXI century. Developing their summarizing skills will prime the students for success at university and beyond.

Much attention is paid to Editing and Proofreading. From our perspective, the following tasks are very helpful:

- \* Examine your sentences for variety:

Vary the length: Are any sentences too long and rambling? Are there too many short, choppy sentences?

Vary the beginnings: Do too many sentences begin with the same pronoun or article (There, It, etc.)?

- \* Word choice: Replace any words or phrases that may be awkward or confusing. Substitute overused words and phrases (clichés) with words and expressions that are specific, vivid, and colorful.

- \* Check your writing for the appropriate level of diction: In most cases, academic writing should meet the standards of formal diction.

- \* Check your writing for spelling errors using these tips as a guide: Use the spell checker on your computer. (It will not, however, catch all of the spelling errors).

- \* Read your writing backward to help you focus on each word.

- \* Circle each spelling you are unsure of.

- \* For help, consult the list of commonly misspelled words.

- \* Read the text below about predicting the future. In each sentence, except the first one, there are wrong words, correct them.

- \* Read this short text about an aspect of problem-solving. In most sentences, there is one extra word, which does not fit, cross it.

The steps in preparing to write a summary are almost the same as those in preparing to write a paraphrase. Once the PhD degree students have a clear understanding of the passage, however, we teach them not to re-express it sentence by sentence, as they do in writing a paraphrase. Instead, they select only the main idea and the most important supporting ideas from the original passage. The topic sentence of the summary paragraph should express the main idea of the passage. The rest of the summary paragraph should present the most important supporting ideas from the passage. The details of the passage should not be included in the summary.

Whenever the students plan and write a summary, they remember that an entire summary should be written in their own words. However, it should express only the ideas and the points of view expressed in the original passage. Many of the summaries that the students write will have an objective, academic tone. Students are asked to vary the sentence length as too many short sentences can make writing seem choppy and juvenile and too many long sentences can make the reader lose interest. Students should follow the guidelines, for instance:

- \* Most writing continues for more than one paragraph. A new paragraph indicates a new idea, a new step, or a new aspect of the topic.

- \* A paragraph of sentences that all begin in the same way or with the same kind of information can sound monotonous. Vary the beginnings of the sentences within a paragraph.

- \* Capture the whole in just a few words.

- \* Summarize the general idea.
- \* Omit details.
- \* Cite the source of the summary.

In addition to the guidelines, the students are given useful expressions for the beginning, the main body and the conclusion of their summaries and paraphrases, for example:

Beginning

The title of the passage is ...

The author of the passage is ...

The main idea of it is ...

The passage: deals with / concerns on ... / focuses on ...

The author: accuses / alleges / blames / criticizes / describes / explains emphasizes / stresses / underlines / points out / sheds light on ...

Conclusion

Let's summarize briefly what we have looked at / In conclusion, / to conclude, etc.

It is a fundamental rule that articles submitted to academic journals are to contribute something new to the field. All publications seek new ideas and new ways of thinking about old ideas. "Tell the reader what is unique about your perspective, principles, methods, or techniques. What is different about your work? What will readers find out that they did not already know, or how will it make them think differently about something with which they are familiar? How does the article contribute in important ways to our knowledge?" [2, 26].

Summarizing, we articulate once again for the students to be aware that writing well is a complex intellectual task. It requires considerable creativity and risk-taking. In other words, good writers have the courage to follow unplanned, imaginative impulses. On the other side, successful writing also demands tough-minded discipline. It requires one to work in a steady, thoughtful way. Primarily and mainly, writing is an extremely worthwhile experience!

### References

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