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SUMMARIZATION STRATEGIES IN TIMED INDEPENDENT SUMMARY WRITING OF L2 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. SUMMARIZATION AS A KEY ACADEMIC COMPETENCE

Summary writing is a key competence in academic settings as, according to Johns (1993: 277), “it is impossible to assign academic writing tasks that don’t require preliminary reading”. It constitutes part of larger assignments, where source material is integrated with the writer’s original discourse, e.g., article summaries and critiques, research papers, academic essays, literature reviews, annotated bibliographies and research proposals, and as such, it is a valuable study aid in reading to learn (Kirkland and Saunders 1991).

Summarization tasks are also often included in assessments of writing skills, due to their authenticity and proximity to real-life writing tasks (Cumming et al. 2004: 134). Summarization serves as an aid in reading and a marker of a student’s or scholar’s understanding of disciplinary content as it requires the writer to position themselves in a field of knowledge by representing the contributions of others so that they can be compared, contrasted and evaluated, and by incorporating information from a variety of sources in ways that support the writer’s own purpose or argument. As an instructional task, together with paraphrasing and quoting, it is assigned to practice integrating and

synthesizing source texts and as such, it is critical for the prevention of plagiarism (McDonough et al. 2014). It is also a core requirement for students to make the shift from consumers of research-based knowledge to creators of research-based knowledge (Hood 2008: 351).

As a skill, summarizing develops relatively late, requires cognitive maturity, and imposes a considerable cognitive load. Brown et al. (1983: 968) remark that “the ability to work recursively on information to render it as succinctly as possible requires judgement and effort, knowledge and strategies, and is therefore, late developing”. Students should not be expected to produce formal academic summaries until they have at least a high-intermediate level of proficiency (Kirkland and Saunders 1991: 108).

2. SUMMARIZATION AS AN INTEGRATIVE TASK

From the point of L2 development, because it involves both reading and writing skills, summarization is an integrative language learning task. Where reading is concerned, effective summarizing requires understanding of the key ideas in a text and an ability to distinguish among the main points and supporting details, and, at the same time, to evaluate the quality of the written outcomes (Hayes 1996 in Delaney 2008: 141). For writing, summarizing requires the writer to express the main points of a text succinctly and in their own words (Hedgcock and Ferris 2009: 185). In the course of reading, readers as writers construct models of text structure and content, enabling them to select information from the source text that they later articulate on paper through organizing, selecting, and connecting (Spivey 1990, 1997 in Delaney 2008: 141).

3. TWO TYPES OF SUMMARIZATION TASKS

A difference exists between summary as a standalone task and an integrated one. Writing a standalone summary is an independent writing task, the purpose of which is to restate all main ideas, which requires

that the writer completely understands the text and makes judgement about which details can be omitted or condensed without losing the main gist or emphasis of the original text (Kim 2001 in McDonough et al. 2014: 21). It focuses on effective reading and requires the ability to manipulate words and structures in ways that retain the meaning of the source text but replace words with synonyms and change sentence structure. It also promotes a learning-to-write approach to writing, whereby students manipulate linguistic forms and meanings without going beyond the text to improve their overall summary writing ability.

In the course of integrated summary writing, writers mine source texts for specific information, claims, ideas, opinions, etc. that are useful for supporting argumentation in their own writing. In this process of selection, it may be unnecessary to restate the entire content of a source text, and any sections of the source text that are irrelevant for the writers' purpose can be ignored (McDonough et al. 2014). Summarizing a single text, it is possible to maintain the structure of the original prose, whereas the synthesis of multiple summarized texts requires an integrating idea of how to transform information from differently structured, even contradictory texts into a new structure. Integrated summary writing serves to support the emergent novel argument. It thus requires more knowledge transformation than does making a summary of a single text. As follows from some research evidence, such summarizing is rare among L2 students (Howard et al. 2010: 187): students' use of sources is based on individual sentences rather than whole texts, and it typically involves quoting, paraphrasing, patchwriting or copying.

4. WRITERS' STRATEGIES IN SUMMARIZATION TASKS

Undergraduates are not a uniform group with regard to summary writing ability. They have been found to apply a number of strategies involving the use of source materials, ranging from quoting, exact copying, through passages with as many as one word changed (synonym substitution) (Shi 2004), patchwriting (i.e., structural or grammatical

modification of the original text) (Keck 2006), to summaries that contain only students' unique wording (Pecorari 2003; Shi 2004; Keck 2006). A number of studies, however, highlight the differences between skilled and less skilled writers in their approach to summarization tasks. These are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summarization strategies of skilled and poor writers

Skilled summary writers (L1 writers/proficient L2 writers)	Poor summary writers (less proficient L2 writers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ engage in efficient macrolevel processing of reading texts, including chunking and generalizing pieces of information into more integrated units (Yasuda 2015); ✓ make substantial revisions by changing clauses to complex noun phrases to make the original meaning more abstract (Keck 2006); ✓ use grammar metaphors, which makes their summaries more effective by enabling “the reduction, generalisation, and integration of information from the source in such a way that plagiarism is avoided” (Drury 1991: 452); ✓ possess a well-structured semantic network of words (superordinates, hyponyms, co-hyponyms) and the ability to metalinguistically manipulate these words through syntactic operations on grammatical patterns (Baba 2009); ✓ possess knowledge of a range of superordinate terms which are more important for summarizing than the knowledge of synonyms that closely match the original words (Wette 2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ experience text comprehension problems and difficulty locating the main ideas in the source texts; ✓ tend to summarize only strategic sections of texts, i.e. introductory and concluding excerpts which define and restate the key concepts (Keck 2010); ✓ tend to adopt a linear, paragraph-by-paragraph strategy, based on local textual manipulations rather than on more sophisticated whole-text-level reorganization and synthesis of ideas (Jiuliang 2014); ✓ make minimal surface revisions (synonym substitutions, deletions, reordering strategies, simple syntactic changes) (Keck 2006; Yasuda 2015) rather than more global modifications; ✓ do more copying, quoting (Shi 2004; Keck 2006) and less combining of ideas (Johns and Mayes 1990); ✓ rely on a bottom-up strategy in processing texts, preventing them from getting the big picture, and resulting in plagiarism or lack of cohesion of the final product (Keck 2006); ✓ tend to focus more on language difficulties as they plan and monitor their writing (ibid.).

The reasons underlying poor performance in summary writing include limited L2 resources for manipulating lexis and structure, especially knowledge of synonyms and a range of dependent clause structures, the inability to understand concepts expressed in L2 words, but also, according to Shi (2012: 145), lack of content knowledge which may trigger more elaborate paraphrasing.

5. SELECTED ASPECTS OF SUMMARY WRITING

Writing a summary of a text is not a simple, mechanical activity of changing words, but a rhetorical process of making meaning, re-constructing the original meaning in new ways at an appropriate level of abstraction, generalization, and technicality (Yasuda 2015: 107). Three aspects of the meaning-making process that are integral to effective summarization include:

- ideational and textual meanings – expressed through generalizing and paraphrasing of the source information (i.e., how writers change the meaning taken from the source text based on their interpretation of it);
- interpersonal meaning – rendered through reporting others' ideas (i.e., how writers report source information by incorporating their own stance and voice).

The appropriate level of abstraction and generality in academic discourse is connected with a high nominal style, including the use of complex noun phrases and, more broadly, nominalization, enabling writers to condense and synthesize ideas from different parts of the text (Marco 2000; Schleppegrell 2004). Biber's (1988) research, for instance, shows how written academic prose is characterized by features such as frequent use of abstract nouns, attributive adjectives and prepositional phrases which function to present densely packed information. Nominalization is achieved by expressing actions and events through nouns rather than verbs to render complex, dynamic phenomena as a single, static element of a clause. According to Hyland (2006: 14), "turning processes into objects in this way expresses sci-

entific perspectives that seek to show relationships between entities". It also allows writers to achieve technicality and stylistic formality expected in academic writing.

Another dimension of prose involving source integration is the use of reporting features, indicating the writer's interpretation of the original author's relationship with the text content, i.e. critique, appraisal, judgement, etc. and enabling the writer to convey this interpretation to the reader (Martin and White 2005). Reporting features allow the writer to acknowledge the original author and construe summary as a projection of another voice (Yasuda 2015).

The three above-mentioned dimensions – i.e., complex noun phrases, general nouns and reporting features – were analyzed in summaries written by undergraduate students of English Philology, which were judged as effective or ineffective to see how more and less skilled writers coped with this aspect of summary writing.

6. THE STUDY

6.1. Aims of the study

The aim of the investigation was to see if L2 undergraduates attempt to:

1. make generalizations of text content by the use of abstract (or shell) nouns, e.g., *fact, thing, message, issue, question, idea, notion, possibility, obligation, act, attempt, situation, place, area, approach* (Schmid 2000);
2. synthesize content by means of complex noun phrases in both subject and object positions (i.e., noun phrases containing *that*-clauses, relative clause, *of*-phrases with attributive adjectives, and prepositional phrases);
3. capture interpersonal meanings by using a range of reporting features: communicative process verbs (e.g., *said*), mental process verbs (e.g., *thinks, believes*), nominalization (e.g., *X rejects Y's assertion that*), adverbial adjuncts (e.g. *according to, in X's view*) (Martin and White 2005).

6.2. Context, participants and the task

The data collected for analysis comprised 40 summaries written by I Year MA programme students in the Institute of English Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków as part of their year-final Practical English Examination.

The writing task consisted in reading and summarizing the essay “Humanism and Religion” by A.C. Grayling (published in the collection *The Form of Things: Essays on Life, Ideas and Liberty in the 21st Century*, 2007: 121–124). The text was approximately 1,000 words in length and scored 39.9 (= difficult to read) on the Flesch-Kincaid readability scale. Following reading, the students were required to produce a written one-paragraph summary of the essay (app. 180–200 words). The focus was entirely on ideas without the inclusion of personal opinion, critique or recommendation. The total timing of the task was 60 minutes. Each summary was scored independently by two academic teachers, working as academic writing instructors as well as BA and MA thesis supervisors. The summaries with the highest (more than 80%, $n = 20$) and the lowest (less than 60%, $n = 20$) scores were analyzed.

6.3. Findings

6.3.1. Shell nouns

The analysis of the summaries rendered the following results.

As shown in Table 2 above, more numerous and varied shell nouns were found in the good summaries than in the poor ones. More text-based shell nouns rather than original ones were used in the poor summaries. Both good and poor summaries contained more original than text-based shell nouns but this ratio was higher for good summaries. Table 3 below demonstrates the range of shell nouns used in the two sets of summaries.

Table 2. Shell noun occurrences in the students' summaries

	Shell nouns		Shell nouns		
			original types/ tokens ¹	text-based types/ tokens	mean per summary
	TYPES (per summary)	TOKENS (per summary)			
Poor summaries (n=20)	34 (1.7)	135 (6.8)	23 (= 68%)/ 60 (= 44%)	11 (= 32%)/ 75 (= 56%)	6.8
Good summaries (n=20)	51 (2.5)	148 (7.4)	41 (= 80%)/ 89 (= 60%)	10 (= 20%)/ 59 (= 40%)	7.4

Table 3. Shell nouns used by the students in their summaries² (based on Schmid 2000)

The more skilled group	The less skilled group
FACTUAL: <i>example, aspect, difference, distinction, divergence, factor, features, fact(s)², form, point, phenomena, problem, reason, similarity</i> LINGUISTIC: <i>claim(s), conclusion, terms, thesis, criticism, discussion, dispute, definitions, opinion(s)</i> MENTAL: <i>analyses, argument, assumptions, belief, concepts, conviction, comparison, contrast, idea, notions, viewpoint, view, theory, doctrine, premise(s), misunderstanding, misconceptions, focus, principles</i> MODAL: <i>necessity, possibility</i> EVENTIVE: <i>result, effects</i> CIRCUMSTANTIAL: <i>approach, mechanism, essence, relation(ship), role, way</i>	FACTUAL: <i>examples, aspects, difference, distinction, features, <u>fact</u>, form(s), instance, issue, phenomenon, similarity, <u>thing</u></i> LINGUISTIC: <i>definitions, descriptions, explanation, question, <u>terms</u></i> MENTAL: <i><u>belief</u>, concepts, doctrine, <u>idea</u>, meaning, misconception, <u>notion</u>, perception, perspective, <u>premises</u>, <u>principle</u></i> MODAL: <i>ability, possibility</i> EVENTIVE: <i>movements</i> CIRCUMSTANTIAL: <i>juxtaposition, role, way</i>

- 1 In this study, *token* refers to each occurrence of a shell noun in the students' summaries, whereas *type* stands for distinct (unique) shell nouns. According to Nation and Meara (2010), the scope of learners' productive knowledge of L2 vocabulary, as in writing, is best represented by the number of word types used.
- 2 The original spelling of the nouns used by the students in their essays has been retained.
- 3 The underlined nouns are the ones that appeared in the original text.

6.3.2. Complex noun phrases

Most of the complex NPs found in the analyzed summaries were constructed around abstract nouns. More complex noun phrases (containing *that*-clauses, relative clauses, *of*-phrases, prepositional phrases) were found in the good summaries than the poor ones.

Table 4. Complex noun phrase occurrences in the students' summaries

	Complex noun phrases per summary	Number of items in complex noun phrases
Poor summaries (n=20)	15 (0.75)	12.7
Good summaries (n=20)	42 (2.1)	10.4

Noun phrases containing *that/which*-clauses (which could be nominalized further to achieve greater condensation) were found in both effective and ineffective summaries, with 14% and 50% of all noun phrases, respectively. The sentences below contain samples of complex noun phrases used in more effective (Set A) and less effective (Set B) summaries.

Set A⁴

- (1) *He notices the perennial human need for identity and community.*
- (2) *The code of ethical behaviour is constructed on the basis of the existing social environment and human condition in the world.*
- (3) *Humanism propagates the idea of a neutral universe and the way of thinking centred on human beings and their circumstance.*
- (4) *It assumes the existence of a supreme entity whose grace is vital for human well-being.*
- (5) *The principal belief underpinning all religions is the existence of a supernatural entity – a deity who normally requires obedience and worship on the part of the believer.*
- (6) *As opposed to religion, humanism does not entail the necessity of formulating tenets which maintain the integrity of a community.*

4 The original wording in the students' examples has been retained.

Set B

- (7) *There is also the question of service to celebrate important moments in life and satisfy the sense of belonging to a community.*
- (8) *What really matters is the fact that all humans belong to the natural universe and are obliged to obey many rules introduced by the community rather than supernatural creature which does not exist.*
- (9) *...it is based on a belief that there are 'supernatural agencies' that are important to the human good...*
- (10) *...the religion is a concept which bases on the faith and belief that we were created with the help of supernatural agencies...*
- (11) *...it would prevent the formation of meetings that could possibly substitute the religious congregations.*

As can be seen, more skilled writers used a greater variety of patterns within their noun phrases (Examples 1, 2, 5 and 6). It should also be noted that a frequent syntactic choice within the noun phrases found in the weaker summaries, as opposed to the better ones, was that of a *that*-clause, often quite detailed and specific, which, given the presence of a verb, reduced the effect of condensation and conciseness (Examples 8 and 9).

Noun phrases served a variety of purposes in the student summaries. They were used in both the more skilled and the less skilled group, for example to condense the information found in different parts of the text (e.g. adjacent paragraphs and sentences), as illustrated below:

- (12) *The author notices that both humanism and religion satisfy the human need to gather and be a part of larger community, with the difference that the former is not a doctrine and gives us greater freedom.* (the more skilled group)
- (13) *He gives examples of philosophies which should not be treated as religions.* (the less skilled group)

Noun phrases were also used to convey the overall purpose of the text or its controlling idea/thesis in the summaries opening sections:

- (14) *Efforts are made to draw a clear distinction between two mutually exclusive terms: humanism and religion.* (the more skilled group)

Further applications included signaling key ideas/content of individual paragraphs, for example:

- (15) *There is also the question of service to celebrate important moments in life and satisfy the sense of belonging to a community.* (the less skilled group)
- (16) *The only similarity between humanism and religion is that they both can satisfy aesthetic and social needs, although in different ways.* (the more skilled group)

There were also attempts at condensing messages through paraphrase involving nominalization, sometimes leading to the reduction of the original meaning, e.g.:

- (17) *...it would prevent the formation of meetings that could possibly substitute the religious congregations.* (the less skilled group)
(Original: *the formation of communities of like-minded folk, who can hold mutually supportive meetings and the like - making it a substitute for membership of a congregation of the faithful in one or another faith.*)

6.3.3. Reporting features

As regards reporting features, more of those were found in the poor summaries than in the good ones, both as unique and repeated occurrences (see Table 5). In fact, some summaries judged as effective contained one or few reporting features.

Table 6 below shows that both groups of writers used a variety of reporting features included by Martin and White (2005) in their inventory. The last category, discourse guides, which include items pertaining to the organization of information in the original text, was not part of the original categorization by Martin and White, but it featured quite prominently in the students' texts. It comprises references-

Table 5. Reporting features occurrences in the students' summaries

	Reporting features	
	TYPES ⁵ per summary	TOKENS ⁶ per summary
Poor summaries (n=20)	64 (3.2)	105 (5.25)
Good summaries (n=20)	54 (2.7)	84 (4.2)

Table 6. Reporting features used by the students (based on Martin and White 2005)

The more skilled group	The less skilled group
<p>COMMUNICATIVE: <i>argues that/attempts to prescribe/claims/contends that/criticizes the view/describes/discusses/draws a fine distinction/emphasizes/enumerates principles/explains/explicates the term/gives example(s)/highlights/indicates/justifies/notes/notices some similarities/points out that, to, why/points out the differences/posits/proves/refutes/stresses/states/suggests/underscores that/</i></p> <p>MENTAL: <i>the author believes/thinks that/is of the opinion that/sees the difference/investigates the theory/considers/perceives as invalid</i></p> <p>NOMINALIZATIONS: <i>...comes under Grayling's scrutiny</i></p> <p>ADVERBIALS: <i>according to X/according to the author</i></p> <p>DISCOURSE GUIDES: <i>X goes on to define/concludes his text/opens his essay/proceeds with/starts by emphasizing</i></p>	<p>COMMUNICATIVE: <i>aims to answer/argues/asserts/attempts to distinguish/calls for/characterizes/claims/compares/concludes/explains/explores/defines/denies/describes/discusses/emphasizes/enumerates/explains/focuses on/gives a hint/gives examples of/highlights/illustrates/introduces a question/makes a distinction/makes us aware/mentions/notices/points out/provides us with/presents/proves (that)/refers to the past/puts emphasis on/says/shows/states/tells the reader/underlines/writes</i></p> <p>MENTAL: <i>believes/holds the view/favours/finds</i></p> <p>NOMINALIZATIONS: –</p> <p>ADVERBIALS: <i>according to the author/him/the article/text, in this opinion/in his view/turning to A.C. Grayling</i></p> <p>DISCOURSE GUIDES: <i>proceeds to describe</i></p> <p>OTHER (IMPERSONAL): <i>the article/text/essay by X compares/discusses/focuses on/juxtaposes/presents/in the text X. one finds out/it is argued/it is concluded</i></p>

to the organizational structure of the text, a kind of metatext which conveys the reader's understanding of the sequencing of ideas. Without delving deeper into the more complex relationships between the original author and their ideas, or between the ideas themselves, the writer of a summary merely reports major moves in the text, most

5 Unique reporting features.

6 All reporting features.

typically paragraph by paragraph in a neutral, detached, objective manner. This may indicate a rather superficial engagement with the text content on the part of some students, but this can also be a strategic choice considering the time and word limit pressure.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

First of all, both groups of writers see the utility of abstract nouns in summarization tasks, but more skilled writers have a larger store of such nouns and can make a better use of them in the construction of complex noun phrases. More skilled summary authors also tend to rely on a larger store of abstract nouns, including ones from outside the text. The fact that student writers rely on shell nouns from the text does not have to indicate failure to paraphrase on their part, but it may show that even weaker students see the value of such words in summarization tasks and recognize them as a key characteristic of academic prose.

Secondly, both groups use relatively few complex noun phrases in their summaries, but there is a difference between the less skilled and more skilled group summaries with regard to the range and nature of complex noun phrases. High quality summaries tend to contain longer and more complex sentences, owing to, among other factors, the use of elaborate noun phrases which enable writers to synthesize content more effectively, and which contribute to a high degree of sophistication of style. The presence of complex noun phrases, however, is not always connected with greater condensation of content: a high percentage of noun phrases, especially in the poorer summaries, consisted of elaborate *that*-clauses which were quite detailed and specific, and which, because of the presence of finite verbs, prevented the writers from achieving greater condensation and abstraction of content. A great number of complex noun phrases used by the students consisted of such relative clauses which could be nominalized further for the sake of greater conciseness of expression.

Finally, the less skilled and the more skilled groups take a different approach to reporting verbs and phrases. The overuse of reporting verbs

and phrases noted in the poorer summaries may compensate for the inability to successfully deal with content transformation through generation of metalanguage. It may also work as a strategy to deal with the word limit and time pressure constraints as it allows writers to add words and create a sense of fluency. Also, as Leki (2011 cited in McDonough et al. 2014: 28) observes, overemphasizing these features in the course of instruction may result in their subsequent widespread and mechanical use by weaker writers. The fact that they are highlighted and brought to students' attention during classes, various formulaic ways of referring to sources may naturally trigger less proficient students' intention to practice and experiment with newly acquired lexical resources. More skilled writers seem to focus more on reformulations of the original content, being less preoccupied with superficial commentaries. A possible explanation for this difference in approaches between the two groups of writers may be connected to the perception of the nature of the task itself. The better writers perhaps sense that in independent summary writing of a single, relatively short text frequent references to the author's intentions, objectives and opinions may appear artificial and are less relevant than in integrated summary tasks, involving multiple texts, authors and perspectives to be synthesized and juxtaposed, and skillfully woven into the fabric of one's own argument. The weaker writers, in turn, may overuse reporting features as discourse markers to signpost shifts in the development of ideas, sometimes failing to capture the underlying connections between different segments of the source text.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

The findings of the small-scale local study reported here point to the following tentative recommendations for academic writing instruction:

- teaching abstract, general 'shell' nouns, not only synonyms to content words;
- assigning definition writing tasks, which create the need to use words in paradigmatic relations (superordinates, hyponyms, co-hyponyms), as well as the use of relative clauses.

- practising clause-noun phrase transformations, also at the sentence level, for greater density and compactness of expression;
- drawing students' attention to the evaluative stance of the original author and helping them identify what is evaluated and the resources for expressing attitude: locating expressions that carry both neutral (e.g., *says, discusses, presents*) and positive/negative alignment with the text (e.g., *argues persuasively, embraces the conception*) and teaching judicious use of such expressions in strategic places;
- teaching ways of referring to the whole source text as a text type or genre to encourage a more global perspective on the reading material to be summarized (e.g., *article/paper/discussion/thesis/book chapter*).

It is worth noting that the above implications are not equally relevant to the two different summary writing tasks. And there is a more general question the answer to which is beyond the scope of this article, namely that of the utility of independent summary writing assignments for training students in writing from sources. McDonough et al. (2014), among others, call for critical examination of suitability of independent summary writing tasks. It certainly is a useful practice in the conventions of summary writing, selective reading, paraphrasing and pattern transformation, but whether it effectively prepares writers for critical selection of relevant source material to be integrated with their own arguments is an issue open for investigation. It seems reasonable to assume that excessive focusing on models and the linguistic dimension may lead to student writers' failure to develop the ability to summarize relevant parts of multiple sources while producing larger assignments. Simply reporting ideas of others in exercises involving decontextualized passages requires skills which are different from integrating summaries of others' statements with their own writing as part of a larger argument and thus establishing some authorial presence. Seen from this angle, independent summary writing should be regarded then only as an exercise in the mechanics of summarizing and an intermediate stage in developing summarization skills because it lacks purpose and context.

Independent and integrated summary writing tasks seem to trigger diverse approaches to composing texts that are to some extent reminiscent of Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming conceptions of writing, respectively. In the former, the writer retrieves and restates ideas from some existing content; in the latter, the writer creates original content by relating to and strategically integrating other existing sources. Being able to engage with one, does not automatically lead to the other (Hirvela and Du 2013). However, as demonstrated in the present study, some student writers are in need of activities which focus on reading comprehension and text interpretation, as well as writing technicalities and conventions, like logical text structure, stylistic appropriateness, etc.; others, more academically accomplished writers, are already past that stage on entering academia and they neither need nor see much point in de-contextualized writing tasks. With present-day student populations growing increasingly diverse, with regard to their writing skills and L2 proficiency levels, especially in MA programmes, compromises in the course of writing instruction are likely to remain unavoidable.

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