

IGA – Academic and Project Writing

IGA Semester Course

INTRODUCTION

Course Structure and Seminar Information:

- 12 week Autumn semester course, 1x 90 minute seminar per week
- Starts 21st February – 23rd May (**no lesson 7th March and 18th April**)
- ***Mondays – 8.00 – 9.30 a m***
- The style is informal, so interaction, participation, questions at all times are welcome.
- Seminar notes that we will follow and work through will be posted on MS Teams before each class. Please have the seminar notes with you for each seminar.
- The seminars will be held at the same time / date as scheduled on MS Teams. I have created a team for the meetings, we can also share / edit common documents as needed.

Goals of the Course:

- To increase your knowledge and skills in general academic writing
- To increase your knowledge and skills in research proposal writing
- To improve your knowledge on how to structure your academic writing
- To practice writing, reviewing and correcting written academic work
- Increase awareness of using formal and academic language
- To become aware of different writing styles and where they may be appropriate
- To develop the skills of writing effective academic sentences and paragraphs
- Practice speaking and discussion in English in an academic setting

Homework / Assignments

- One of the course aims is to encourage practice of academic writing in English throughout the course.
- There will likely be written homework tasks to complete after most, or all seminars.
- We will review and peer review this written work to discuss where improvements can be made.
- There will be a final assignment to submit - a 1 – 2000 word piece of academic writing. This may be any topic or piece of writing that would be useful for you to have feedback on.

Attendance and Participation

- Attendance at all seminars is strongly encouraged and there is a minimum attendance / homework completion level that allows completion of this course.
- The course will be more effective if there is active contribution (including of writing / written homework etc) and participation from everybody.

Student Introduction

- Students to briefly introduce themselves - name, faculty, topic of research, stage of research / study, experience with academic writing, proposal submission, what they would like to gain from the course.

ACADEMIC WRITING

1. How can we define academic writing?

* Read the text below and think about: what type of academic writing it is, the language, the style, who is likely to read it, etc:

* Why are some words underlined?

* Why are some words in Italics?

* Why are different parts of the text highlighted in different colours?

MicroRNAs (miRNAs), class of small, non-coding RNA molecules represent important regulators of gene expression. Recent reports have implicated their role in the cell specification process acting as “fine-tuners” to ensure the precise gene expression at the specific stage of cell differentiation. Here we used *retinal organoids* differentiated from human *pluripotent stem cells* (hPSCs) as a model to closely investigate the role of sensory organ-specific and evolutionary conserved *miR-183/96/182* cluster. Using miRNA tough decoy approach, we inhibited the *miR-183/96/182* cluster in hPSCs. Inhibition of the *miRNA cluster* resulted in an increased expansion of *neuroepithelium* leading to abnormal “bulged” neural retina in organoids, associated with upregulation of neural-specific and retinal-specific genes. Importantly, we identified *PAX6*, a well-known essential gene in *neuroectoderm* specification, as a target of the *miR-183/96/182* cluster members. Taken together, the *miR-183/96/182* cluster not only represents an important regulator of *PAX6* expression, but it also plays a crucial role in *retinal tissue morphogenesis*.

Who does the writing and who reads academic texts?

Name some different forms of academic writing? What forms of academic writing have you had experience with?

What is the writing about and why is it done?

2. Features of academic writing

* Discuss the examples below in the context of academic writing. Which ones do you think are suitable for academic writing, and why?

Formal language:

- Others prefer more natural types of training and their workouts are all endurance based. What gives? The aim of the article is to answer this question with scientific data....
- The benefits of such a program are clearly evident in the results, as the training group demonstrated markedly superior cardiovascular fitness when compared to the control group.
- We can see that cardio is good for our health. But is it any good for improving how strong we are, or does it worsen our efforts?

Precision

- This result agrees with another study in which the GLS in DMD patients decreased by 0.34% per year compared to the controls.
- The study results clearly demonstrate that the GLS in DMD patients went down by about ½ a percent each year, compared to the controls.

Complexity:

- Consequent to the appreciation in the exchange value of Sterling against other currencies, necessary fiscal measures were introduced by the government in order to reduce the likelihood of an import-led consumer spending surge.
- As the value of Sterling increased compared to other currencies, the government was forced to take tax measures to head off a rapid increase in consumer spending spurred on by cheaper imports.

Objective:

- In our study we aimed to investigate the relationship between sleep deprivation, and driving performance. However, when we analysed the data we discovered that further questions....
- Following this, 1000 subjects from the wider population of Chicago were recruited and then randomized into the two experimental groups.
- We will discuss the results and further evaluate the study findings and limitations in the following sections, however it is clear from our investigation that we will need to re-evaluate the study design...

* Discuss what is meant by the following terms, in relation to academic writing?

Planning and organisation:

Responsibility:

Explicit:

Accuracy:

Hedging:

Some other features of academic writing to consider: You should be technically correct, original and compelling, have a clear topic when starting the research, use the best sources, avoid plagiarism, take notes, be persuasive, write drafts, use quotes, citations and paraphrasing, use specific format, perfect your final draft.

(Adapted from UEFAP.com).

3. Style – there are a lot of different styles of writing..

* Examine the following texts and identify any significant features. What kind of text does the extract come from and how does the language differ among the texts?

TEXT 1

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with:

"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

TEXT 2

The aim is to develop transferable communication skills in English through an interactive learning infrastructure. It will link academic and non-academic worlds, provide opportunities for training and retraining and reflect the needs of practice.

The programme objectives will be achieved by setting up and running virtual transnational (between Wales, Czech Republic, Spain, Bosnia and Turkey) and transversal (between academic and professional) study circles:

- by developing training and learning materials for academic and professional purposes;
- by making effective use of advanced technological resources for authentic communication tasks (videoconferencing, internet);
- by creating an internationally accessible virtual learning environment (through development and use of an open subject village web site and by matching the academic outcomes with the needs of prospective employees.

It will also create opportunities for further training and retraining in transnational communication for professionals, in practicing essential and desirable skills in interviews, providing space for the development of equal opportunities communication.

This project makes an original contribution to intercultural communication in English language teaching and also to national vocational training by introducing advanced technology that brings together people from professional working environments and the academic world. Effective use of advanced technology and acquisition of necessary skills can open doors to a united Europe and reduce obstacles to communication and cooperation in terms of geographical distance and work.

TEXT 3

Stem cells trial for MS patients

Jane McSaley

A new treatment for multiple sclerosis (MS) is being pioneered near Bristol. Six patients at Frenchay Hospital are being injected with their own stem cells in the hope that they will repair damage to the brain.

Approximately 60,000 people in the UK suffer from MS, an incurable disease of the nervous system.

Prof Neil Scolding, of the Institute of Clinical Neurosciences, said: "We know stem cells are attracted into the brain, into these areas of damage."

He added that he hoped the stem cells would "help those areas to stop getting worse" and "repair damage".

'Lot of hope'

Liz Allison, an MS patient taking part in the trial, said: "I'm hoping there will be some improvement."

BBC health correspondent Matthew Hill said: "We've already seen stem cells used on cardiac patients but this is the first time a reputable organisation has tried it out on MS patients.

"There is a lot of hope riding on these trials but it is very early days yet."

He added that it was likely to be several months before any conclusions could be drawn regarding the treatment.

TEXT 4

This paper examines interaction in written text through the interplay between the notions of text averral and attribution (Sinclair, 1988). Text averral is evidenced in the unmarked parts of the text, where the utterances are assumed to be attributed to the author. Attribution, the counterpart of text averral, is the marked case where the sources of authority are clearly signalled.

It is hoped that this study will add to our knowledge about the characteristics of different types of text, and illuminate the way for students who find themselves lost amidst the echoes of the multiple voices they hear within the same text.

Text averral and attribution are basic notions for the organization of interaction in written text. The assumption is made that the author of a non-fictional artefact (Sinclair, 1986) avers every statement in his or her text so long as he/she does not attribute these statements to another source - whether that source is other or self. Averral is manifested in various ways in the text - negatively, through absence of attribution, and positively, through commenting, evaluating or metastructuring of the discourse. Attribution, on the other hand, is signalled in the text by a number of devices of which reporting is an obvious one.

Homework Task:

* *Find and examine a short piece of your own academic writing (introduction, abstract, part of a discussion etc).*

* *Mark examples of academic or subject specific vocabulary, make a note of the style of the writing etc.*

* *Cut and paste your text / comments in to the HW 1 document in the files area of MS Teams.*

**** Please aim to do this by next Sunday 6pm at latest, as I want to choose some examples of the texts to discuss as a group the next day.**