

TEACHER'S CORNER – OCTOBER 2016

TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING

In the United States, many students begin their university studies by taking academic writing courses, which are designed to help students develop and expand their writing skills. Courses in academic writing teach students to exercise higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information and ideas and to present unique ideas or claims based on careful research. The skills involved in academic writing make it one of the more difficult skills to master for any learner, but it is especially hard for an English language learner. Not only does academic writing involve writing in another language, but it also involves careful reading, discussion, and brainstorming in another language. Academic writing constantly requires students to push their intellectual limits.

Given how much is asked of students in academic writing classes, it is only reasonable to expect teachers to struggle with planning and designing academic writing courses. Not only must teachers have a firm grasp of rhetorical styles, writing genres, and research skills, they also must devote a significant amount of time to constant feedback and assessment.

In this month's Teacher's Corner, we examine four activities that help teachers teach academic writing. Each activity this month highlights an important aspect of academic writing that students can apply not only to writing courses, but to other subjects as well. In addition, each activity emphasizes the role of the learner in addressing and responding to his or her own writing. The first week's activity examines the role of close reading and note-taking in the writing process. Week Two focuses on an activity that supports academic vocabulary development, and the next activity considers the role of teacher-student conferences in the academic writing classroom. We finish the month sharing a simple yet effective peer-to-peer task to use for proofreading final drafts.

Below are some free resources available from American English. Take time to review these resources as you plan your writing courses. Then, use the activities described during the next four weeks to highlight and reinforce steps within the writing process.

Additional Resources

For additional information about teaching academic writing, check out these resources and many others available on the American English website:

- [Unraveling the Mystery of Academic Writing](#)
- [Using Evidence in Academic Writing: Avoiding Plagiarism](#)
- [A Paragraph-First Approach to the Teaching of Academic Writing](#)