NWU ®

Faculty of Humanities

School of Languages

Centre for Academic and Professional Language Practice

REPORT: Short Course in Academic Writing Skills Development

1. **BACKGROUND**

   Writing competence is of critical importance in postgraduate studies, because it often is one of very few, if not the only, communication channel(s) open between lecturer / supervisor / examiner and student, and the only real opportunity that the average student has to make an impression of fledgling academic competence, or the converse. From research it is a known fact that postgraduate students in particular struggle with (i) finding reliable, adequate and appropriate sources, (ii) processing and comprehending new information that has a reasonably sophisticated argument and abstract vocabulary and which is presented in a strategic manner, and (iii) producing clear and lucid arguments.

   It was therefore decided by the TRADE research entity in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the NWU to support Masters and/or PhD-students with their academic acculturation by focussing on the writing process in a series of workshops (four in total). These were partly funded by the WTO. The theoretical frameworks used for the design of the workshop series included: Firstly that of information gap, where the point of departure is identifying the gap in academic knowledge, seeking adequate and appropriate information to fill the gap, and producing written text in which literature and findings are presented in a confident and knowledgeable manner from a specific perspective and acknowledging the reader as part of the social dynamics of the academic text. Secondly, the CCC-model of text quality, developed by Renkema, was used extensively.

2. **OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE OF COURSE**

   Refer to course outline and core materials below.

3. **RESOURCES**

   The following materials were available on the Learning Management System and/or Dropbox:
   - All PowerPoint presentations
   - All handouts, including thematically applicable academic articles
   - All worksheets
   - Reading materials

The following human resources were available:

- Peer feedback
- Discipline expert intervention – note that one lecturer from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, appointed by TRADE, also attended the workshops; this was extremely helpful as it contributed to a hands-on approach with authentic examples if and when required.
- Writing expert intervention

4. REPORTING

The Centre for Academic and Professional Language Practice reports to Prof Wilma Viviers, WTO Chair. Pre-workshop planning sessions as well as post-workshop reviews were held to further streamline future endeavours.

5. FINANCING

The cost for the 2018 workshop (excluding refreshments, venue, etc.) was R25 000 and funded by the WTO.

6. CONCLUSION

Feedback from both students and the discipline expert indicates that students benefitted from exposure to writing support. It also contributed to closer alignment between matters dealt with during the workshop and supervisors' guidance/expectations in terms of writing. The workshop and materials will be refined further for use in 2019.

Prof. Tobie van Dyk
Dr Elsa Meihuizen
Dr Henk Louw

6 August 2018

SHORT COURSE IN ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Academic and Professional Language Practice

A word of welcome

Welcome to the short course in academic writing skills development. This course is designed to address a range of predetermined needs of a postgraduate student. We will focus in particular on the linguistic aspects of the literature review/theoretical framework of your written work. In doing so, we will guide you through the process of producing an academically acceptable draft that should adhere to the basic principles of text quality. We will not focus on content; for this you and your supervisor have to take the responsibility. By completion of this short course you should be able to apply what you have learnt and acquired to your dissertation as a whole, i.e. producing an extended piece of academic writing independently.

This short course is based on years of experience, knowledge of language and linguistics, the research process and requirements of academic departments. We make extensive use of the CCC-model of text quality, developed by Jan Renkema, as well as other sources, which we will introduce to you in class. The main source with which we work, however, is your own text, so ensure that you progress at the same pace as your class mates. This will require diligent and focused attention.

The pedagogics underlying the course are task-based and reflect the typical activities to be undertaken when writing for postgraduate purposes. In class we will provide you with the building blocks necessary to function effectively as student. You will be able to practise in a safe environment where we will make use of different strategies and approaches to facilitate your learning. In-between classes it is imperative to keep your eyes and ears open at all times and become more aware of the nature of postgraduate writing. To this end we recommend that you keep a diary so that you can share your experiences and findings as part of the in-class learning.

The short course is structured in four sessions of approximately six hours each. A complete breakdown of the contents is provided below. Note that for each session **you will be required to do some preparatory work**. After each session you will also need to do some follow-up work (this will be part of your preparation for the next session). It is also important that you, on a continuous basis, reflect upon your development – we will facilitate this by starting each session talking about your research diary.

We wish you a pleasant experience!

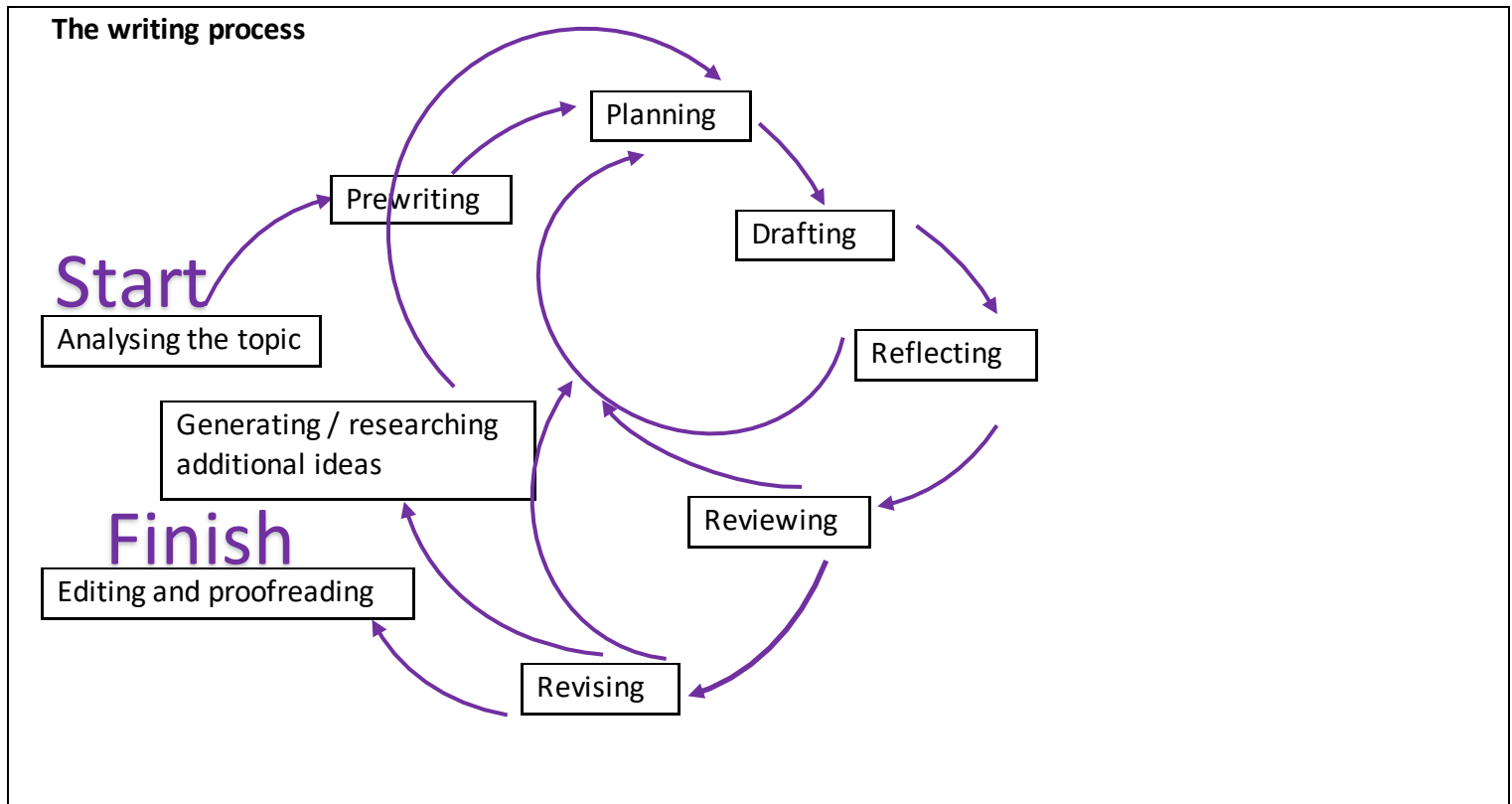*Centre for Academic and Professional Language Practice*

	CONTENTS	PRESENTERS	HOMEWORK/PREPARATION
Pre-workshop	Workshop preparation: Before coming to class you should have a good understanding of what you intend to focus your research on. You have to bring some written text along. It is also imperative that you should consider a few relevant sources in order to get the most out of the first session.	Not applicable. Discuss your work with your supervisor or an expert in the field.	**For Day 1** In consultation with your supervisor or an expert in the field, identify five core sources applicable to your idea/topic. Print the sources and bring them to class. Apart from this, you also have to bring a hard copy of your literature review / theoretical framework.

	CONTENTS	PRESENTERS	HOMEWORK/PREPARATION
Day 1	**Information seeking** 08:30-9:00 – Introduction: telling your (research) story 09:00-09:30 – Narrowing the focus: using keywords 09:30-10:00 – Practical session **10:00-10:30 – Tea** 10:30-11:30 – Library session 11:30-13:00 – Reading with a strategy **13:00-14:00 – Lunch** 14:00-15:00 – Argument structure 15:00 – Time for practise or questions	Prof. Tobie van Dyk Subject librarian: Lezelle Snyman	**For Day 2** 1. Schedule an appointment with your subject librarian (preferably in a group) and discuss the following matters with him/her: • Search strategies • Databases • Accredited journals and impact factors • Referencing, Refworks, Endnote 2. Redraft the introductory part of your literature review / theoretical framework by telling your research story in a structured manner. 3. Indicate how you intend to link the introductory part / rationale / context to your research problem.
Day 2	**Information seeking, processing and producing** 08:30-10:30 – Finding and using trustworthy information • Qualities of a literature review • Paraphrasing and quoting • Words to use for referring to authors • Finding trustworthy information	Dr Henk Louw Dr Elsa Meihuizen	**For Day 3** 1. Redraft your complete literature review / theoretical framework and ensure that you pay attention to inclusion of trustworthy information, using a formal style and correct register, and using logical connectors to establish the correct

	CONTENTS	PRESENTERS	HOMEWORK/PREPARATION
	10:30-11:00 – Tea 11:00-12:30 – Introduction to academic style and register • Characteristics of style and register in academic texts • Practical session: analysis of texts **12:30-13:30 – Lunch** 13:30-15:00 – Introduction to coherence and cohesion 15:00 – Time for practise or questions		relationships between parts of text. *Note that one indeed follows an integrated approach: these are not normally dealt with separately, but for purposes of the workshop we deal with them independently.*
Day 3	**Information processing and producing** 09:00-10:30 – Academic voice – stance and engagement **10:30-11:00 – Tea** 11:00-13:00 – Academic voice – stance and engagement (cont.) **13:00-14:00 – Lunch** 14:00-15:30 – Practical session: Peer assessment of draft literature review / theoretical framework	Dr Elsa Meihuizen Dr Henk Louw Prof. Tobie van Dyk	**For Day 4** 1. Redraft literature review / theoretical framework with specific focus on academic voice.
Day 4	**Mentoring session** 09:00-09:30 Checklist for self-editing 09:30-10:30 Peer assessment/editing (presenter facilitated) **10:30-11:00 – Tea** 11:00-13:00 Editing based on peer assessment facilitated by presenters **13:00-14:00 – Lunch** 14:00-15:30 Question and answer session	Dr Elsa Meihuizen Dr Henk Louw Prof. Tobie van Dyk	

A PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

CHEAT SHEET 1

The writing process

Start

Finish

Analysing the topic

Prewriting

Planning

Drafting

Reflecting

Generating / researching additional ideas

Reviewing

Editing and proofreading

Revising

Notes

1. Analysing

2. Prewriting

3. Planning

4. Drafting

5. Reflecting

6. Reviewing

   6.1 Revising

   6.2 Generating / researching

7. Editing

YOUR STORY AND KEYWORDS

CHEAT SHEET 2

Elements of a traditional story	Your research story
• Characters • Events • Plot (scheme / design / strategy) • Setting / context • Time	• Characters *(Who are the role players? Who/what is it about?)* • Events *(What happened, i.e. what was the reason why you wish to investigate / research this specific matter?)* • Plot (scheme / design / strategy) *(What is your strategy? Which research methods will you use? Why these? How will your present your investigation and findings? What do you wish to achieve?)* • Setting / context *(Be specific: what, where, when, why, …)* • Time *(Be specific: what, where, when, why, …)*

YOUR STORY AND KEYWORDS

CHEAT SHEET 2

In your written work, you should always be trying to ***construct sound arguments****. Unsound arguments will attract poor grades from assessors. In many cases the process of assessment involves* ***taking information and assembling, synthesising and re-arranging it into new patterns*** *that both form sound arguments and solve the problems set in assignments titles and examination questions.*

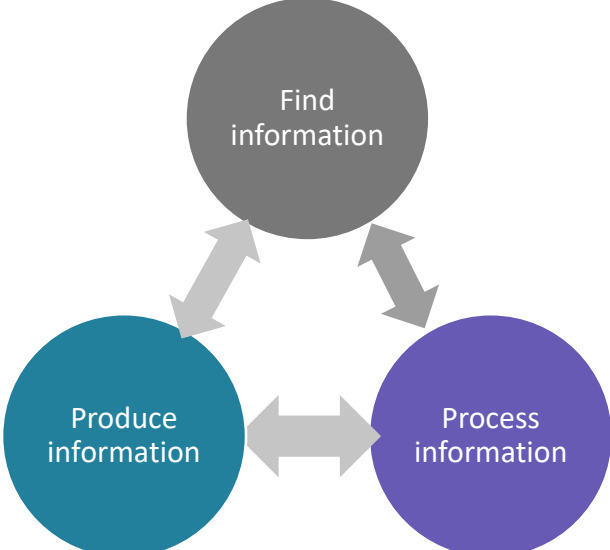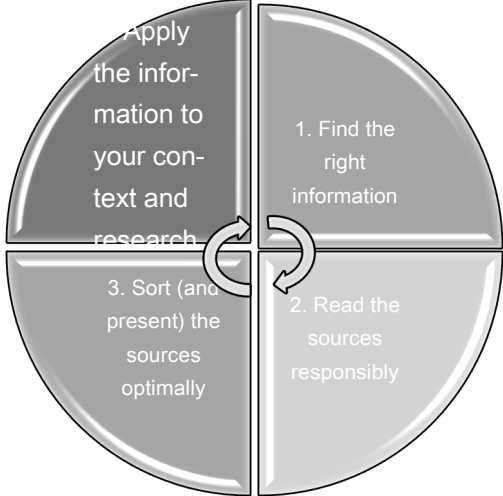## What is meant by the words in bold?

"… construct sound arguments …"

"… taking information and assembling, synthesising and re-arranging it into new patterns …"

How can you use keywords to help you construct sound arguments?

Keywords	Elements of a traditional story
Action – clearly indicate to the reader ***how*** you approach the matter at hand, e.g. by analysis, argument, description, definition, etc.	• Characters • Events
Topic – clearly indicate to the reader ***what*** the broad focus, area, or even specific subject matter is, e.g. international trade, black economic empowerment, affordability of a national health care system, etc.	• Plot (scheme / design / strategy) • Setting / context
Scope / Limitation – clearly indicate to the reader ***range, scope, limit*** of your investigation is, e.g. a specific period, a specific country / comparison of two countries, a specific theoretical framework, etc.	• Time

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHEAT SHEET 3

Information gap theory	Four steps for a literature review

A LITERATURE REVIEW SHOULD:

1. **identify actual gaps** in the accumulated knowledge base related to your field or study. (Problems or shortcomings with theories or findings.) This means you substantiate that and how your research contributes to the field of knowledge.

2. identify **relevant theories** in the field.

3. identify the "most widely **accepted empirical findings**"

4. identify the **dominant figures** (people) contributing to the field.

5. identify **research techniques** frequently used.

6. identify and refine **definitions**

7. help the researcher gain familiarity with **terminology and style.**

8. help the researcher gain familiarity with how research is **presented** in specific journals.

9. be sensitive to the **context** in which other studies were done and the context in which the researcher's own (current) study is done

10. **reduce bias** in your choice of information (i.e. be a balanced representation of the available knowledge).

Numbers 1-6 are **hard skills**. 7, 8 and 9 are **soft skills**. 10 is both a soft skill and a hard skill.

TO READ RESPONSIBLY, JUDGE:

1. RELIABILITY: start with reliable journals, avoid random websites, use the library.
2. RELEVANCE: key words, abstracts, introduction, conclusion
3. LOGIC – academic quality: argument, solid method, clear research questions, clear presentation and accurate interpretation of data

ACADEMIC DEFINITION OF PARAPHRASING:

Rewriting the essence of a piece of information into your (1) **own words**, suitable for your context, (2) adding a **reference** and bibliographical entry and then (3) **applying, interpreting or critiquing** the information.

STRATEGIES TO ORGANISE A LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Thematically
2. Historically
3. According to research method
4. According to findings
5. According to theories used
6. Comparison and contrast
7. Any combination of the above, as long as it is a structured approach.
8. **Less frequent:** alphabetically, geographically, according to main proponents

Important: integrate sources. Allow sources to have an academic discussion as if the individual articles are old professors sitting around a coffee table, giving each other speaking turns and interrupting each other now and then.

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF AN ARGUMENT

CHEAT SHEET 4

THE ARGUMENT STRUCTURE SIMPLIFIED EXAMPLE

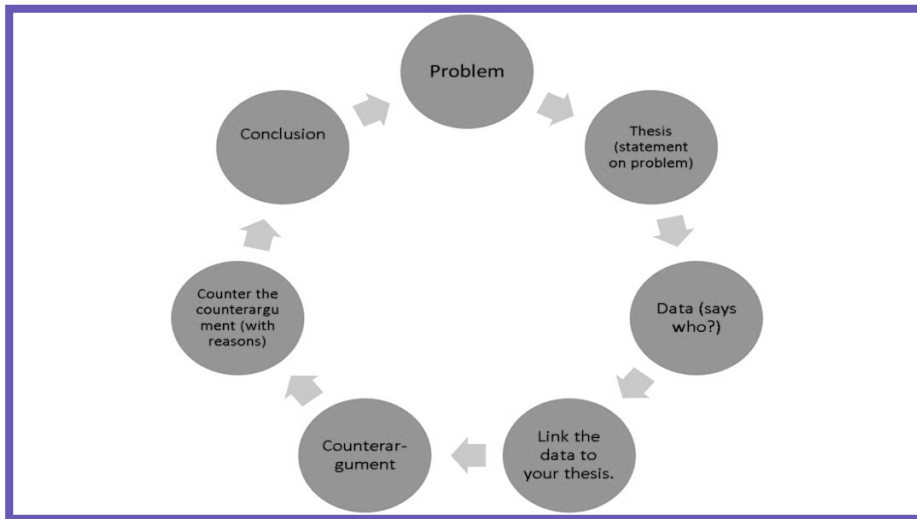| SIMPLIFIED EXAMPLE OF THE ARGUMENT STRUCTURE	
Note: Different terms exist to refer to the same basic concepts. Focus instead on the cognitive process behind the argument structure than on the terminology.	
Descriptive term	**Example**
Research Problem/Question Background and contextualisation leads to (introduces/proves the existence of the problem or question. (See checklist for qualities of introductions).	Inhalation of secondary smoke causes many deaths.
Thesis Also known as *theme*, *thesis statement* or *argument*.	Smoking in public places should be banned.
Data Also known as *proof*, *evidence* or *support*.	Inhalation of secondary smoke causes many deaths (World Health Organisation, 2003). Secondary smoke exposure mostly occurs in public places (Jenkins, 2007).
Link Also known as the *reasoning process* or *warrants*. Make the reasoning process explicit for your reader to enable them to follow your train of thought.	Since exposure to secondary smoke occurs mostly in public places, and is detrimental to public health, smoking should be banned in public places.
Counter argument	Exposure to secondary smoke is often an individual's own choice (Smith, 2006).
Refutation Countering the counter argument by refutation, qualification, or stating preconditions	Individual choice is secondary to public benefit, as illustrated by seatbelt laws (National Road Traffic Act, 1996, Act No 93) drug abuse laws (South African Narcotics Law Act 41 of 1971) and international pharmaceutical laws (see World Health Organisation, 2008).
Conclusion (See checklist for qualities of conclusions).	Since individual choice is secondary to the public benefit and seeing as secondary smoke causes many deaths, smoking in public places should be banned.

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF AN ARGUMENT

CHEAT SHEET 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARGUMENT THROUGHOUT THE TEXT

TEXT PART	ARGUMENT PART
Introduction	Problem
Introduction	Thesis
Some of it in introduction as background; however, mostly text body	Data
Body (application, discussion)	Link
Body (application, discussion)	Counterargument
Body (application, discussion)	Rebuttal
Conclusion	Conclusion

ARGUMENT STRUCTURE IN THE RESEARCH CYCLE

ARGUMENT STRUCTURE AS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS
1. What's the problem/issue?
2. Who says it's a problem?
3. So what? (Because it's a problem, my thoughts are…) (Thesis)
4. Who agrees with me? (support for your argument)
5. Who disagrees with me?
6. Why do they disagree with me?
7. Why are the disagreeable people wrong (or not right enough)? (Faults/oversights in their arguments)
8. So why am I (still) right (or even more right)?
9. SO WHAT if I'm right? (What do we do with the knowledge?) = identify ACTION

.

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF AN ARGUMENT

CHEAT SHEET 4

ROLE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW IN SPECIFIC CHAPTERS

CHAPTER	ROLE
Introduction	Identify a gap, theory, context
Literature review	Expand on the identified gap and context. Identify theories, empirical findings, definitions, methods (research techniques)
Methodology	Use to justify your chosen method.
Findings	Use as background knowledge (soft skill) to help you in presenting information.
Discussion	Use as background knowledge to help you in discussing information. Refer to previous findings to highlight similarities and differences in your findings – i.e. spotlight your contribution. Use to justify interpretations and recommendations.
Conclusion	Use other sources sparingly in your conclusion.

INTRODUCTIONS	CONCLUSIONS
1. Provide background	1. Never provide new information.
2. Raises a problem (asks a question) and makes a statement (preliminary answer – aka thesis).	2. Gives an overview (summary) of the text.
3. Gives a preview	3. Provides the final verdict on the question.
4. Links up with the conclusion	4. Provides the relevance or application of findings and may provide shortcomings (further research).
5. BONUS: Has an interesting angle.	5. Links up with the introduction.

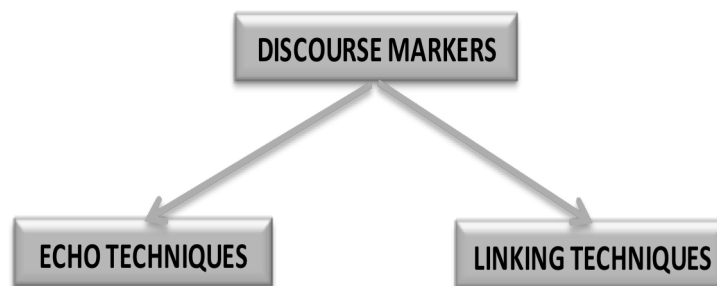| PARAGRAPHS	DISCUSSING GRAPHICS	WRITING A DEFINITION
1. One sentence should contain the essence of the whole paragraph.	1. Specify the graph.	1. Classify (general class)

2. Stick to one idea with support like:
   a. Evidence
   b. Examples
   c. Explanations
   d. Definitions
	2. Specify to the reader where to look.	2. Explain uniqueness

3. Sentences should follow logically and contain links between sentences.	3. Identify what you notice.	3. Provide example
4. The paragraph should link with the paragraph above and below it. Use cohesive devices such as words, phrases or whole sentences.	4. Explain a reason for what you see (why does it happen?)	Example: Social media is classified as digital communication media (1) which makes use of Web 2.0 technology and which is mostly free (2), for example Glogster and Facebook.
	5. Provide the implication or application of the information to your specific context.	

COHERENCE AND COHESION

CHEAT SHEET 5

COHERENCE

Coherence is the unity in a text that stems from the relationship between the underlying ideas, and the logical organisation and development of these ideas. It is often explicit in the argument structure, but also visible in subsurface elements like the choice of textual organisation. Coherence is therefore the quality of being **logical** and **consistent** in the **development** and **support** of **arguments**, the **synthesizing ideas**, and the **organising of information**.

COHESION

Cohesion is the flow and connection in a text stemming from linguistic links – words and phrases explicitly used to indicate connection. It is often referred to as discourse markers.

ECHO TECHNIQUES	LINKING TECHNIQUES: SIGNALLING RELATIONSHIP	
1. Keywords repeated 2. Synonyms 3. Antonyms 4. Word association 5. Word derivation 6. Substitution 7. Omission	**Backwards/Forward references** e.g. this/these, the abovementioned, prior, later, etc. (*see handout for specific examples of referential pronouns*)	**Relationship functions** 1. Addition 2. Proof 3. Compare/contrast 4. Exception 5. Time 6. Emphasis 7. Sequence 8. Summarise 9. Conclude 10. Cause and effect 11. Adverse positions 12. Clarification 13. Qualification 14. Intensification (*see handout for specific examples of functions*)

Note: coherence and cohesion are not only created using single words or phrases, but also by writing additional sentences or paragraphs to make clear the relationship between different sections of texts or the relationships between different knowledge structures (facts, data, theories) in texts.
Superordinate structures are also a way to create coherence. A superordinate structure is, for example, the use of collective nouns or categories. You can use *fruit*, for apples, pears, bananas etc., (specific fruits) but also *fruit* for citrus fruit, tropical fruit, melons and berries (categories or classes of fruit).

ACADEMIC WRITING STYLE AND REGISTER

CHEAT SHEET 6

1.   *UNITY*

A text communicates successfully when it forms a coherent unit. It is important to keep in mind that it is not only the choice of linguistic structures that constitutes an appropriate (academic) style, but the way in which those structures are combined to help the reader make the correct connections in, for instance, understanding the ideas and arguments we want to convey, or identifying with our point of view. In writing we therefore have to pay attention to those features of style that help to organize our discourse into a single, unified whole. In linguistic terms the unity of a text is reflected in two related text qualities known as "cohesion" and "coherence":

- **Cohesion**: The property of flow and connection in a written text that stems from connections between linguistic elements such as words in a single sentence or in successive sentences.
- **Coherence**: "Coherence" is the property of unity in a written text that stems from the relationship between its underlying ideas, and from the logical organisation and development of these ideas.

2.   *VOICE (also see "Stance, voice and engagement" in Cheat Sheet 7 below)*

The concept "voice" is generally used to refer to strategies employed by writers for expressing their personal views and authorial presence. In academic writing, however, this sense of voice is often regarded as inappropriate as readers tend to look for evidence rather than opinion and the expression of identity. All writing contains voice in the sense that we consciously or unconsciously position ourselves in relation to what we are saying. We make certain choices to represent ourselves, carve out a specific identity for ourselves and signal how aggressive, conciliatory, confident, or self-effacing we want to be. In academic writing an important aspect of assuming a convincing voice is alignment with a specific discipline. Writers typically position themselves and their work in relation to other members of their disciplinary community. They set out to negotiate a credible account of themselves and their work by claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating ideas and acknowledging alternative views, so that controlling their disciplinary voice, or level of authorized personality in a text, becomes central to building a convincing discourse.

STANCE, VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT

CHEAT SHEET 7

STANCE

A simple definition The ways in which writers explicitly intrude into the discourse to convey different kinds of judgements and signal degrees of commitment.	
Alignment	Alignment with the discipline/ sub-discipline, area(s) of concern, terminology, definitions, ways of expression, specific theories, authors (See introductions and abstracts of academic articles)
Hedging	Use of devices which withhold commitment to a proposition, allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than fact (e.g. There are several possible reasons for this./ There is a strong tendency in the market to .../ This could be an indication of ...)
Boosting	Use of devices to stress certainty, to mark authority (e.g. Of course .../We definitely have to accept that .../ it is a clear indication of ...)
Indicating attitude	The writer's expression of affective attitude (feeling) such as surprise, agreement, frustration (e.g. It is my sincere belief that .../ This is not only remarkable but also ...)
Self-mention	Use of first person pronouns (I, we, us, my, mine, our, ours) expressing the writer's position in relation to arguments, procedures, facts, reader. (e.g. our research has shown .../ I included the following .../ We argue that ...)

VOICE

Producing academic texts does not entail the presentation of facts and ideas only but also, and importantly, the use of language to acknowledge, construct, and negotiate social relationships. As academic writers, we need to establish a credible scholarly identity or "voice". One aspect of academic voice is the "stance" assumed by writers when they make linguistic choices to signal degrees of judgement, commitment and self-assertion. Academic writing is also essentially persuasive in nature and therefore we need to find strategies for constructing texts in ways that readers are likely to find credible and convincing. The term "engagement" is used to describe these strategies. In your own writing, it is important to become critically aware of your own practices of establishing voice appropriate to the conventions of your discipline.

Cheat Sheet 7: Stance, voice and engagement
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STANCE, VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT

CHEAT SHEET 7

ENGAGEMENT

A simple definition The ways in which writers intervene to actively pull readers along or position them, focusing their attention, recognizing their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants and guiding them to interpretations.	
Directives	Directing readers to parts of your text, other texts, instructing readers how to interpret an argument, or positioning them (e.g. Note/ concede/ consider/ assume that .../ This should be compared to .../If your compare the introduction of the article to ...)
Appeals to shared knowledge	Asking readers to recognise something as familiar or accepted (e.g. Obviously you will be aware of .../ As economists we know .../ Our understanding of ...)
Questions	Inviting engagement, encouraging curiosity, leading the reader to a specific point of view (e.g. Is it necessary to ...?/ What do these have in common?/ If this is the case , then .../ How can this be explained?
Personal asides	Addressing readers directly by interrupting your argument to offer comment on what has been said (e.g. Therefore – and I fully agree – taxes are necessary to .../ His theories – although often ill-conceived – have become popular with ...)

EDITING AND PROOFREADING: A CHECKLIST

CHEAT SHEET 8

This checklist is a tool for you to use before submitting text to your supervisor, or before submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination. It will give you an indication of the extent to which your work conforms to the generally accepted requirements for academic written work. The purpose with this tool, is to check the quality of your work to make sure that you hand in the best work possible in order to achieve optimum results. Before you submit, it is important to make sure that you cover all areas addressed in the checklist. Note that this is a mere checklist and not an exhaustive list of everything that needs attention – these will in any case differ from discipline to discipline, or form institution to institution.

In general	YES	NO
1. Did I read and execute the requirements of the University in terms of dissertations/theses correctly?		
2. Did I follow the recommended guidelines for the execution of the task?		
3. Did I interpret the topic of my study correctly, i.e. did I check it with my supervisor?		
4. Did I read and critically analyse all applicable sources thoroughly during the planning and drafting phases?		
5. Did I incorporate the commentary on previous versions of my written work into the latest version?		
6. Did I plan my time in such a way as to complete and submit the document on the agreed date?		

Macro structural elements	YES	NO
7. Did I remember to include the title, summary and table of contents?		
8. Is there an introductory chapter or section that provides a broad and general overview of the text to follow?		
9. Is there a concluding chapter or section that logically summarises and enhances my argument?		
10. Does each chapter of my text have an introduction?		
11. Does each chapter of my text have a conclusion?		
12. Is the body of every chapter or section divided logically into coherent sections and paragraphs?		
13. Does my assignment include the required graphics (where relevant) and the required in-text citations and reference list?		

Micro structural Elements

	YES	NO
Title		
14. Does my dissertation, or thesis, or even every chapter, include a suitable title that reflects the content of the text?		
Introduction		
15. Does my introduction include an introductory paragraph/section, and an overview paragraph?		
16. Does the introductory paragraph include a sentence in which the topic is clearly presented – thesis statement?		
17. Does the introductory paragraph include definitions of terminology where relevant?		
18. Is the introductory paragraph written in the form of a funnel structure (general to specific)?		
19. Does the overview paragraph/section present a systematic preview of all the main aspects and arguments that will be discussed?		
20. Does the overview paragraph/section mention that the assignment will end with a well-considered conclusion?		
Body		
21. Does the body of the text include headings that echo the content of the different paragraphs?		
22. Are these headings in the same sequence as presented in the overview paragraph/section?		
23. Are these headings ordered in such a way as to indicate the logical sequence of my argument?		
24. Does each new main point of my discussion start with a new paragraph?		
25. Does each paragraph/section include a main idea that is further developed in the rest of the paragraph using clear and coherent sentences?		
26. Does the end of each paragraph/section link thematically to the beginning of the next paragraph?		
27. Do I make use of supporting evidence for each of the arguments that I present? Do I motivate my arguments with the help of examples, explanations, illustrations, etc.?		
Conclusion		
28. Does my conclusion summarise the contents of the text accurately and concisely?		
29. If required, do I conclude the assignment with convincing and thought provoking inferences?		

Requirements of Academic Texts

	YES	NO
Language and Style		
30. Is my language consistently precise, coherent, objective and concise?		
31. Do I avoid the use of vague introductory sentences such as *It is interesting to note that...,* and, *It is not surprising that...?*		
32. Do I avoid dubious sentences such as *It is common knowledge that..., Everyone knows that...,* and *Everyone would agree that...?*		
33. Do I use conjunctions and pronouns (*hence, so, therefore, these, those,* etc.) correctly, so that I indicate the correct thematic relationship between my sentences?		
34. Do I make use of synonyms / antonyms / word repetition / word association / word derivation in order to echo my thematic words?		
35. Do I mainly use the third person perspective?		
36. Do I avoid any form of discriminatory language?		
37. Do I avoid the use of clichés, slang, idioms, and other informal expressions?		
38. Do I avoid the use of capital letters, underlining, bold print, and exclamation marks in order to emphasise something?		
Accountability		
Plagiarism		
39. Have I ensured that I did not commit plagiarism?		
40. Can I thus sign and attach the plagiarism declaration in good conscience?		
41. Did I submit my assignment to e.g. *Turnitin* in order to check the academic integrity of my work?		
Quotations		
42. Did I remember to use quotation marks when using the direct words of another author?		
43. Did I acknowledge, according to the prescribed referencing method, every quotation from another author in the text in the right place and in the right manner?		
44. Did I make use of ellipses (...) to indicate omissions in a quotation?		
45. Did I make use of square brackets [ ] to indicate additions to a quotation?		
46. Are all quotes of less than 40 words included directly in the text in quotation marks?		
47. Are all quotes of 40 words or more included as a separate		

	paragraph and indented without quotation marks?		
48.	Do the quotations support the argument? Do I know why I am using the idea behind a quotation?		
49.	Do I use quotations only to expand the content of my text?		
Paraphrasing			
50.	Do my paraphrases include correctly interpreted ideas as originally expressed by the author?		
51.	Did I ensure that my paraphrases are not just direct translations, but my own wording of these ideas?		
Referencing			
52.	Is my reference list complete and correct?		
53.	Do the in-text citations correspond with the sources in the reference list, and vice versa?		
54.	Is the reference list sorted alphabetically?		
55.	Is the reference list formatted according to e.g. the Harvard method? This includes punctuation and italics.		
56.	Did I use the prescribed referencing method to acknowledge any idea, theory, argument or statement by another writer in the text in the right place and manner?		
57.	Where the author's surname naturally forms part of the text, did I include the date and page numbers (where applicable) of the publication in brackets next to the name?		
58.	Do I consistently acknowledge other authors' ideas in every case?		
Graphics			
59.	Where I use another author's work, are all graphics accompanied by the required in-text citation?		
60.	Do I introduce the graphic before presenting it in the text?		
61.	Are my graphics entitled correctly and consistently?		
62.	Do I describe the data in the graphic clearly so that my reader sees the relevance of the graphic?		
63.	Is the description of the data in the graphic incorporated into the rest of my text coherently?		

Technical Presentation		
	YES	NO
Cover (Plagiarism Declaration)		
64. Does my dissertation/thesis include the prescribed cover page?		
65. Does my name and student number appear on the cover page?		
66. Is the cover page free of unnecessary graphics and decorations?		
67. Did I complete, sign, and attach the required plagiarism declaration?		
Technical Care		
68. Are the pages numbered correctly?		
69. Do the page numbers and/or sections in the table of contents articulate with the actual page numbers and/or sections?		
70. Are there open lines between paragraphs?		
71. Have I used the correct punctuation marks in the correct places?		
72. Have I used the correct font type, font size and line spacing?		
73. Did I make sure that headings are in bold with a maximum font size of 14?		
74. Are the paper margins set to a minimum of 2 cm all the way around the page?		
75. Is the text consistently justified to the left-hand margin?		

Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs

Level	Definition	Sample verbs					Sample behaviors
KNOWLEDGE	Student recalls or recognizes information, ideas, and principles in the approximate form in which they were learned.	arrange define describe duplicate	identify label list match	memorize name order outline	recognize relate recall repeat	reproduce select state	The student will define the 6 levels of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain.
COMPREHENSION	Student translates, comprehends, or interprets information based on prior learning.	explain summarize paraphrase describe illustrate classify	convert defend describe discuss distinguish estimate explain	express extend generalized give example(s) identify indicate	infer locate paraphrase predict Recognize	rewrite review select summarize translate	The student will explain the purpose of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain.
APPLICATION	Student selects, transfers, and uses data and principles to complete a problem or task with a minimum of direction.	use compute solve demonstrate apply construct	apply change choose compute demonstrate discover dramatize	employ illustrate interpret manipulate modify operate	practice predict prepare produce relate schedule	show sketch solve use write	The student will write an instructional objective for each level of Bloom's taxonomy.
ANALYSIS	Student distinguishes, classifies, and relates the assumptions, hypotheses, evidence, or structure of a statement or question	analyze categorize compare contrast separate apply	change discover choose compute demonstrate dramatize	employ illustrate interpret manipulate modify operate	practice predict prepare produce relate schedule	show sketch solve use write	The student will compare and contrast the cognitive and affective domains.
SYNTHESIS	Student originates, integrates, and combines ideas into a product, plan or proposal that is new to him or her.	create design hypothesize invent develop arrange assemble	categorize collect combine comply compose construct create	design develop devise explain formulate generate plan	prepare rearrange reconstruct relate reorganize revise	rewrite set up summarize synthesize tell write	The student will design a classification scheme for writing educational objectives that combines the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.
EVALUATION	Student appraises, assesses, or critiques on a basis of specific standards and criteria.	Judge Recommend Critique Justify Appraise Argue	Assess Attach Choose Compare Conclude Contrast	Defend Describe Discriminate Estimate Evaluate Explain	Judge Justify Interpret Relate Predict	Rate Select Summarize Support Value	The student will judge the effectiveness of writing objectives using Bloom's taxonomy.

Examples of articles used for training purposes

A framework for creating an export society in South Africa

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Abstract How do you create a strong and growing cadre of successful exporters? As will be demonstrated in this article, the current direction towards more open trading policies provides a small part of the solution, but does little to stimulate non-exporters or develop new exporters. This article proposes a framework which could help all exporters reach their maximum potential and in doing so lay the groundwork for economic growth and prosperity. To ensure that South Africa's economy reaches its fullest potential requires that the government follow up on the RDP and the DTI White Papers focus on exports with solid action. This would require a concerted effort on the part of the government to develop, manage, execute and evaluate programmes to the different needs of the firms at different stages of export development. By using the proposed framework, programmes can be created to help non-exporters to become exporters, help new exporters to become committed exporters and eliminate the barriers to achieve more export successes.

1. Introduction

No matter where one turns in the world, governments are focusing their efforts on enhancing international trade, and in particular export development amongst small and medium sized enterprises. In South Africa, the importance of increasing exports is such that it is highlighted in both the Reconstruction and Development Programme and the White Paper on Small Business Development (RDP, 1994; DTI, 1995).

The article is divided into three sections. Firstly, a framework is established

Examples of articles used for training purposes

Modelling and forecasting Australian domestic tourism

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Abstract

In this paper, we model and forecast Australian domestic tourism demand. We use a regression framework to estimate important economic relationships for domestic tourism demand. We also identify the impact of world events such as the 2000 Sydney Olympics and the 2002 Bali bombings on Australian domestic tourism. To explore the time series nature of the data, we use innovations state space models to forecast domestic tourism demand. Combining these two frameworks, we build innovations state space models with exogenous variables. These models are able to capture the time series dynamics in the data, as well as economic and other relationships. We show that these models outperform alternative approaches for short-term forecasting and also produce sensible long-term forecasts. The forecasts are compared with the official Australian government forecasts, which are found to be more optimistic than our forecasts.
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Keywords: Australia; Domestic tourism; Exponential smoothing; Forecasting; Innovations state space models