

Let' s analyse what you' ve just agreed on:
Writing analytically
at A2 level

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Outline of the Presentation

- An overview of student profiles at University of Fribourg and the A2 level course
- Needs analysis for academic writing component
- Choice of content
- The writing task: rationale and template
- Conclusion: Applying the template to this presentation

Context

- University of Fribourg, (Switzerland`s Bilingual University):
 - Non-English-medium bilingual or trilingual studies
 - Some English-medium master programmes
 - Bachelor, master, doctoral studies
- Multilingual learners with extensive FLL experience
(Schaller-Schwaner, 2015)
- B1+ reading skills
- 12-week 90-minute sessions per semester

Post-Autumn Semester Needs Analysis for Writing Component

- Often rhetorical functions (e.g., cause-effect) and paraphrasing skills practiced fragmentally
- Agree-disagree argumentative essays mostly leading to hasty opinion formation (e.g., “In conclusion, I agree with the writer because I appreciate a positive outlook on life”)
- Lack of sustained content

QUESTION: How to incorporate them into one writing task type to be practiced each week, giving way to a more informed final essay?

Need for tailor-made materials

“There seems to be a materials vacuum.”

Edward de Chazal, 2015

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Describe a problematic situation and paraphrase an argument about the problem.
2. Acknowledge the different perspectives involved.
3. Analyze and evaluate a proposed solution.
4. Write one argument-analysis essay.
5. Apply academically appropriate language to accomplish academic tasks described above.
6. Discuss the topics in Units 6-10 in *Global Pre-Intermediate English Series* (Macmillan 2010)

Theme-Based Syllabus

An overarching theme: “Happiness”

“Sustained content” (Pally, 2000): Each unit’s topic is discussed within the framework of the broad topic “happiness,” creating the schemata for the final essay.

Regular practice of formulating “Research Questions”

Sample start-off for the unit on “Home”: Students produce their own questions at the issue inspired by visuals (e.g., To what extent is an extensive family happier than a nuclear family?)



Spring Semester Weekly Tasks:

Balancing the content and the language

- 1) Writing an analysis of a brief argument on the topic of the unit using a template which incorporates useful academic writing conventions and language:

In paragraph 1 paraphrase the argument,

In paragraph 2 suggest other causes of the problem

In paragraph 3 suggest other effects of the proposed course of action

In paragraph 4 propose ways to better validate the argument using second conditional clauses

Adapted from Official Guide for GMAT Verbal Review 2016

- 2) Process writing: the analysis of one aspect of the broad topic “happiness,” leading to the final essay

Analysis of a concept

<i>Focus</i>	Positive	Negative	From the viewpoint of (an academic discipline)
Characteristics/ qualities/ features			
Causes/ reasons			
Effects/ implications			

Sample argument for Global Pre-Intermediate Unit 6

Discuss to what extent the argument is valid.

In one study, researchers asked people in different parts of a country “How satisfied are you with your life?” People in parts of the country with nicer weather said they were more contented with their lives than those from a city with bad weather. Therefore, people suffering from depression should move to a country with a hot climate.

Analysis of an argument: Template for assignment completion

You will be using these steps for each analysis of an argument writing task:

1. Your first reaction:

Keep on writing for about 5 minutes on how you feel about the argument presented.

2. Analysis and evaluation of the argument:

Using the steps provided, break down the argument into parts and then question each (*See the handout page 1*).

3. Your written analysis:

Use the template provided to compose your own analysis of the argument (*See the handout page 2*).

Sample analysis of an argument for Unit 10: New technologies

Discuss how well reasoned you find the student`s argument.

As attendance is becoming more and more compelling an issue, Northern Arizona University is installing electronic scanners outside some large lecture halls in order to track student attendance.

Accordingly, students must flash their ID cards near a scanner, wait for the green light, and then they are checked off on an attendance report. It's an effort to boost attendance, which school officials say affect a student's GPA. However, some students aren't happy about the project. "I don't see why we need to be told what to do anymore," said one student, who created a Facebook page and organized a rally against the plan. "I feel like it's a move toward that -- treating us as though we were juveniles."

Taken from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129482104>, September 2015

Different Text Types: Analytical questions, pacing the way to *the analysis of an argument* writing task

(1) Fun is a rare jewel! Nevertheless, somewhere along the line people got the modern idea that fun was there for the asking, that people deserved fun, that we had to have a lot of fun every day. "Was it fun?" became the question that overshadowed all other questions, good questions like: "Was it moral? Was it kind? Was it honest? Was it beneficial?" and, my favorite, "Was it selfless?" Thanks to fun worship, everything was supposed to be fun from work to education, from family outings to funerals, from special occasions to disasters. If it wasn't fun, then, we were going to make it fun, or else! Golly gee, what is the matter with us? (....)

1. Which idea would the writer agree?

- a) Fun is a privilege of the people on TV.
- b) Fun and values are compatible.
- c) Fun has priority to everything else.
- d) Fun has to be avoided.

Taken from *Offline Readings II: Academic Reading Skills* by Konyali & Tolungüç

Revision of the vocabulary related to the week`s narrow topic through weekly sentence-level paraphrasing exercises:

Each exercise-set incorporates the previous set and leads into the other.

Sample weekly paraphrasing exercise 1:

(The week`s focus is concession linkers and the topic “technology”)

“Although it is convenient in comparison to shopping in a high street, the biggest disadvantage of shopping on the Internet is that human contact is missing.”

The writer claims that despite.....of human contact

Sample weekly paraphrasing exercise 2:

(The week`s focus is linkers to express reasons, and the previous week`s concession linkers are recycled. The topic is “time.”)

“Although we can process information more efficiently these days, this efficiency causes a sense of urgency and robs us of our happiness because it leads to lack of time to relax.”

The writer argues that despite.....due to.....

Rationale behind the materials

Academic Convention:

- Insight is the goal.
- Analysis is the method (Rosenwasser and Stephen, 2012)
- Deconstructing and re-constructing a text facilitates critical analysis of the content (Hammond and Macken-Horarik, 2012:529).
- Reading is an interactive process (Ellis, 2003).

Content:

- Theme-based (Brinton et al, 1989): sustained content, creating schemata to move from while serving as a tool for practising the academic conventions and language (Stoller, 2003)

Language:

- Basic academic skills and topic-related collocations of lexical items recycled within an academic context transferrable across disciplines (Alexander, Argent & Spencer, 2008)

Anticipated issues

Basic language problems (speaking/grammatical and lexical accuracy/ spelling/punctuation) are likely to remain, but an awareness of those errors may be raised through one-on-one tutorial hours, during which each learner receives a written check-list for their particular basic mistakes for future reference.

Applying the template to this presentation

- *Problematic Situation:* Academic writing skills practiced fragmentally
- *Proposed course of action:* To implement a task incorporating all the targeted academic skills
- *Claim:* The task fosters a more contextualized and recycled use of the basic academic language
- *Support:* Analysis of autumn semester students' sample writings and the ensuing reasoning supported by acknowledged EAP authorities

Strengthening *the assumption* that the learners will be committed:

To state the obvious,

Involve the students to raise their commitment levels:

- Explain the course plan at the beginning of the modules
- Elicit answers as to how they can benefit from such an approach
- Request regular feedback from students

The problems that the proposal may lead to:

The chief objection to CBI

Students taught by CBI develop low L2 proficiency and high content material proficiency, lacking communicative competence (Swain 1996).

Discussion

Other questionable assumptions?

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