Why this text?
How does this text tick all the boxes?

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Action Research
Using the Assessment Rubric as a Teaching Tool
Action Research

Integrates action, research and reflection
Background

University English Entry Course (UEEC)

10 week intensive, high stakes

Problem

Underachievement in academic writing tasks

Aim

With reference to Assessment for Learning principles, improve upon the formative elements of summative assessment tasks
Will use of the assessment rubric as an explicit teaching tool in the classroom lead to improved understanding of each criterion?

Will this understanding lead to better outcomes in academic writing tasks?
Action

UNSWIL EAP writing assessment rubric

• language unpacked for accessibility

• series of reflective lessons designed
  - targeting each component
  - individual and peer review workshops
### UNSWIL-EAP Writing assessment criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Task Response</th>
<th>Organisation &amp; Cohesion</th>
<th>Lexical Range &amp; Accuracy</th>
<th>Grammatical Range &amp; Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Outstanding in every aspect</td>
<td><em>Appropriate to genre</em></td>
<td><em>Good range of vocabulary / spelling / register</em></td>
<td><em>Outstanding in every aspect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Full and thorough response completion</td>
<td><em>Definitely</em> sophisticated range of cohesive devices deployed effectively including theme and rheme</td>
<td><em>Accurately</em></td>
<td><em>Sophisticated range of grammatical structures accurately applied</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fully developed response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Complex structures used accurately &amp; effectively</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>All content relevant and well supported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Few if any language errors evident</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ideas always coherent and well supported</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Clear evidence of in-depth exploration and analysis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Successful task completion</td>
<td><em>Appropriate to genre</em></td>
<td><em>Good range of grammar structures accurately applied</em></td>
<td><em>More complex structures are usually effective – nominalisation and reduced relative clauses</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well developed response</td>
<td>*Purpose of each section very clear and unambiguous – <em>strong topic sentences</em></td>
<td><em>Rare inaccurate vocabulary but does not detract from response</em></td>
<td><em>Some minor errors may be evident but do not greatly detract from response</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Minimal gaps or inconsistencies which do not impede communication</td>
<td>*Uses a range of cohesive devices with little if any overuse – <em>theme and rheme evidence</em></td>
<td><em>Register appropriate</em></td>
<td><em>Punctuation is appropriate and error free</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>All content relevant and well supported</td>
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<td>Ideas always coherent and well supported</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Satisfactory task completion</td>
<td><em>Text organisational features adequately applied with some minor inconsistencies</em></td>
<td><em>Sufficient range of grammar structures for the task usually applied accurately with only minor inconsistencies evident</em></td>
<td><em>Uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms successfully – nominalisation and reduced relative clauses are avoided</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addresses all parts of the task although some ideas may be underdeveloped or inaccurate</td>
<td><em>Response generally well organised and appropriate to genre with only minor gaps or inconsistencies – rarely impedes communication</em></td>
<td><em>Provides a central topic within each paragraph and a logical progression within a section organised appropriately</em></td>
<td><em>Encourages the use of relative clauses</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presents, develops and connects main ideas in a coherent manner</td>
<td><em>Purpose of sections clear and unambiguous – central idea is revealed</em></td>
<td><em>Uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms successfully – nominalisation and reduced relative clauses are avoided</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Minor gaps in logic may be present</td>
<td><em>Evidence of analysis presents a central topic within each paragraph and a logical progression within a section organised appropriately</em></td>
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<td>Rarely impedes communication</td>
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<td><em>Evidence of analysis present or depth may be limited – attempts to evaluate assertions and discuss implications</em></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Partially satisfactory task completion</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory task completion</td>
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**Text organisational features applied successfully with minimal inconsistency**

High level of cohesion between and within sections of the response with only minimal gaps or inconsistencies

- **Appropriate to genre**
- **Purpose of each section very clear and unambiguous – strong topic sentences**
- **Uses a range of cohesive devices with little if any overuse – theme and rheme evident**
- **Paraphrasing is accurate and suitable**

**Text organisational features adequately applied with some minor inconsistencies**

- **Response generally well organised and appropriate to genre with only minor gaps or inconsistencies – rarely impedes communication**
- **Purpose of sections clear and unambiguous – central idea is revealed**
- **Evidence of analysis presents a central topic within each paragraph and a logical progression within a section organised appropriately**
- **Addresses all parts of the task although some ideas may be underdeveloped or inaccurate**
- **Presents, develops and connects main ideas in a coherent manner**
- **Minor gaps in logic may be present**
- **Rarely impedes communication**
- **Evidence of analysis present or depth may be limited – attempts to evaluate assertions and discuss implications**

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**Unsatisfactory task completion**

- **Responses do not address the task or address it in an inappropriate manner**
- **Evidence of analysis is absent or depth may be limited – attempts to evaluate assertions and discuss implications are rare**
- **Minimal gaps or inconsistencies which do not impede communication**
- **All content relevant and well supported**
- **Ideas always coherent and well supported**
- **Clear evidence of in-depth exploration and analysis**
Data Collection

• Retrospective verbal protocol
• Student interviews
• Analysis of student writing and assessment results
• Summative questionnaire
Results

- Student comments
- Grades

Reflections

- Are we providing best practice with our academic writing approach?
- What implications does this have for UNSWIL syllabus design?
Students’ Voices

“(the) assessment criteria (is) difficult theory but because we have time to analyse it, understand it, apply it, practice it, get feedback and see improvement, it’s interesting.”

“So when I know what you expect to see in my writing, I feel more confident to write.”

“Before, when I didn’t know the assessment criteria, I didn’t answer the question that the task required me to very well.”

“I will use the rubric to guide me to build...to make my answer.”
“Helped me use academic language.” (4)

“The AC is too general, we need specific examples, both of academic and non-academic texts.” (4)

“The AC is hard to follow (2) hard to apply to my writing (2) hard to understand the difference between the bands.” (2)

“More time and repetition analysing the AC.” (3)

“Peer analysis followed by consultation with teacher really useful.” (1)
References


