

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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Effective Writing Skills Vital in 21st Century

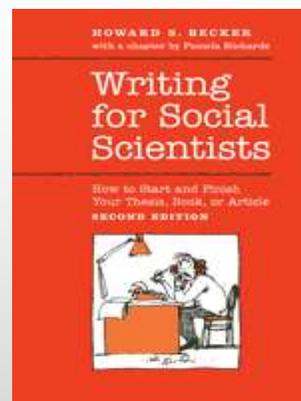
Learning to write with confidence is one of the major obstacles for all students, but especially students of humanities and social science. Everyone is inclined to think they are alone in their lack of confidence and fear. Learning to write is a process that takes time and practice.

It is being recognised more and more that universities need to give students considerable opportunities to write without fear of judgment and harsh grading. If a student's success on a module or semester depends entirely on a submission of one or two papers then what happens is the goal becomes the grade rather than the development of writing skills.

“When students write to learn they engage in a deep, reflective and meaningful way with an issue, if on the other hand they are writing merely for the grade, their writing tend to lack personality”

University students, young and mature, are well aware of the financial burden they have to bear to complete their studies and quickly realise that the grade is the means to success or failure. But the result is college professors lament the quality of undergraduate writing and a large percentage of students graduate without developing their writing skills. Employers are now seeking applicants that have experience in writing outside of university work. (Continued Pg. 2)

Recommended Reading



“Writing for Social Scientists” is an excellent guide to writing for the beginner as well as the most experienced writer. Becker an acclaimed sociologist provides lots of stories to inspire anyone who needs to write for work or study.

Universities should give students more opportunities to write in a deep, meaningful and reflective manner.

I have 20 years of experience in reading students' essays and I can tell before I reach the second paragraph whether the student is writing solely for a grade or writing to learn. When students write to learn they engage in a deep, reflective and meaningful way with an issue, if on the other hand they are writing merely for the grade, their writing tend to lack personality; they tend to leave something of themselves behind, what they write may be correct and accurate but it is clear that their writing is superficial and detached. Students are not to blame for this approach; it is the circumstances that they are experiencing which bring it about. Ultimately it is the responsibility of college faculties to change this by allowing students an opportunity to fully participate in the writing process so that

they can develop their writing skill- a skill that will enable them to thrive in all walks of life.

Participants on completion of the Diploma in Social Studies and the examination over a twelve month period will have written on more than 80 titles ranging in length from single paragraphs to 3000 words. This allows the student considerable experience in all types of writing without the fear of failure. By providing a series of manageable exercises it promotes confidence and success.

Once students develop an "I can write" mindset, they are willing and capable to take on any writing challenge.

What is The Meaning Of Life?

This question has been asked by individuals for thousands of years. People are interested in the meaning of life, in part, because human beings are aware of their mortality and the shortness of life. In the field of psychotherapy, Viktor Frankl has had a considerable impact in regard to the topic of the meaning of life. Inspired by his experience in a concentration camp during the Second World War, he concluded that even in the most dire circumstances, individuals are free to choose meaning in their life. Frankl grew up in Vienna and trained as a physician, specialising in psychiatry and neurology before he and his family were deported to concentration camps. His work with people with emotional problems led him to create a therapy called *logotherapy*, the focus of which is to facilitate one's search for meaning in life. When one cannot realize "meaning" in life, one will experience emptiness. He saw that people who had hope, tended to

have better chances than those who had lost all hope.



Viktor Frankl authored 39 books which have been published in 38 languages. Frankl held lectures at 209 universities on all 5 continents. According to the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, his work is "perhaps the most significant thinking since Freud and Adler." Frankl died in 1997 in Vienna of heart failure. His first wife, parents and other members of his family died in concentration camps.

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Students' Corner

"To have a cultural relativistic approach, means to judge a culture by its own standards



and to view the issues from their point of view. Everyone considers their own culture natural or the best, which is fine, however many use these standards to judge other cultures. This attitude of prejudice is called ethnocentrism. Globalisation makes the world smaller, we live in a society the brings people together from various backgrounds and cultures. If people would like to be successful in today's multicultural, information age, they will need to develop a culturally sensitive perspective. They do not just need to understand other cultures, but to tolerate and to respect them... We need to find the right balance to be able to tolerate a different culture but still remain critical against certain basic issues that might be violated (for example female genital mutilation). If one weighing pan on the scale is ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own way of seeing and doing represents the only true, sensible and moral way), the other one is nihilism, (the total rejection of all moral principles) then the right balance, the equilibrium is cultural relativism."

Written by Anna Botlik from Hungary who completed the Diploma in Social Studies with a First Class Award.

In Frankl's biography, Redsand writes; "Viktor Frankl had an opportunity to escape the horrors of the concentrations camps altogether. Several years before his deportation, he applied for a visa to emigrate to the United States... Viktor didn't know what to do. Looking for an answer, he walked into St Stephen's Cathedral in central Vienna. He wondered where his greater responsibility lay-in caring for his parents or in going to America so he could continue his lifework. He left an hour later without an answer. When he got home, Viktor found a piece of marble lying on the table. His father told him he had found it in the rubble of one of the synagogues near their home. Nazis had destroyed this and hundreds of other synagogues and Jewish prayers houses. A single Hebrew letter was

engraved on the marble. Viktor's father told him that the letter came from one the Ten Commandments, the only commandment to use this letter. Viktor was eager to hear which one it was, and his father told him "Honour thy father and thy mother.. Viktor felt this was the sign he was waiting for. He decided to stay with his parents in Vienna... Viktor thought he had to choose between caring for his parents and pursuing his life's work. In the end choosing to care for his parents furthered that work in ways he couldn't have imagined when he made the decision!"

Students will find a number of films on Viktor Frankl and on Logotherapy in the Student Area of the IFAE website, as well as many relevant readings.



IFAE Graduate, Benedicta Attoh wins Vodafone Sponsorship

Benedicta Attoh, has won the final place in the Vodafone World of Difference Campaign.

"If I wasn't educated I would not be where I am now" says Benedicta who completed an IFAE Diploma in Social Studies and went on to complete a Master's Degree and is considering continuing to earn a doctorate in Anthropology.

Since last September Benedicta has been a tireless and effective campaigner on behalf of impoverished girls in developing countries.

Know Your Learning Style



1. Do you prefer to study from a textbook?
2. Are your notes usually neat and numbered?
3. Do you prefer to learn from direct experience?
4. Do you make notes in the form of diagrams and mindmaps?
5. Do you like to hear the whole story before certain facts are meaningful to you?

If you answered yes to the first two questions and no to the rest, you are likely to be left hemisphere dominant. If you answered no to the first two and yes to the rest you are likely to be right hemisphere dominant. Roger Sperry won a Nobel Prize for the proof of the split brain theory. According to Dr. Sperry the two hemispheres of the brain have different, but overlapping functions. People who tend to be right brain dominant are often creative and not very organised. They also tend to have found school unhelpful as schools are most likely to reward left brain processes such as sequential, analytical and structured thinking. The right half is holistic, imaginative,

non-verbal and artistic, for example when you daydream or when you are engrossed in a piece of music your right brain functions are dominant. Left brain processors prefer a learning environment that is quiet while right brainers are more likely to like music, informal design and peer interaction while learning. Traditional classroom and work places were designed with left brain functions in mind. People who can integrate the use of both hemispheres are obviously able to adapt and use their flexibility to adjust to any situation. To solve problems in a creative way we need both hemispheres. We need both the creative and imaginative right processes as well as the logical and rational left processes. **Knowing and understanding the diversity of preferences is the first step in the mastery of learning and teaching so that every learner can reach full potential. Improving both sides of the brain, while acknowledging preferences ensures success.**

Maura O' Malley, An Inspiration To All



Maura O'Malley, born in the west of Ireland, celebrated her 90th birthday in November 2009 is currently working on her final papers for the Diploma in Social Studies. Maura was born in 1919. On finishing school she went to Domestic Science College. She is a musician and self taught on the violin.

Maura, an actress, has starred in many films and theatre productions including 'The Commitments' in 1991 and 'Father Ted'. Maura also, as a physical education teacher, played an instrumental role in its introduction in Irish schools.

Maura stated:

"I must say I have had a happy and exciting life, now I have time to write my own songs and to study Social Science it gives me great pleasure. Learning new things is very important no matter what age you are. I am very glad I am doing my study and look forward to my tutor's letter in the post."

But Maura had some sadness in her life too, her husband died at only 29 which she still recalls as "her great loss". Maura also had an unfortunate accident when a young driver made an error and Maura was injured. Because of this Maura still has some discomfort and is unable to play the fiddle now. However, this does not interfere with her indomitable spirit, she loves to spend her time reading and writing.

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Under the banner of the 2010 European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, the IFAE has launched a competition related to the Year's themes. Entries should consist of a 2000 word essay to highlight the European Year and to raise awareness of the issues related to poverty and social exclusion. The closing date for entry is November 30th. The European Year Award is open to all IFAE graduates.

Other European key events in the year include a Europe-wide art contest, major conferences on specific issues such as child poverty.

For further information see our website, www.ifae.org

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