

The Importance of Essay Writing on Student Development  
in the Professional and Personal Spheres

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The demand for competent writers is more prevalent today than ever. Regardless of course study, the need to write proficiently extends beyond the university and into every student's future professional and private life. Essay writing, in particular, is a medium with which many grammatical, organizational and analytical skills may be learned and practiced. In order to understand why university students must be able to perform this task, the need for strong essay writing abilities in the professional and personal capacities are assessed. This paper draws a correlation between accurately evaluating confidence in written skill and the relevance of using essays as a learning tool for individual growth.

Today's professional world relies on the ability to communicate. Whether it be through email, scholarly articles or countless report styles relevant in the workplace, a common expectation of every employee is the ability to comprehensively form a written argument. Regardless, it seems that the number of students that can currently write to par with expectations is less than ideal. As Simkin, Crews, and Groves (2012) argues, universities produce many students with "inferior writing skills" due to the emphasis on "expediency" and the common case where insufficient weight is placed upon improvement (p. 83).

Furthermore, the impacts of lacking something as useful as written proficiency are far reaching. In fact, such a phenomena is only exacerbated in industry as the need for new-hires with competency in written skills grows and the amount of suitable candidates available remains unsatisfactory. This, in turn, creates a knowledge vacuum in which recent graduates are at a disadvantage due to the fact they lack the needed skills that employers require.

The discrepancy between employer expectation and student performance may often occur because of the latter's inflated belief when coupled with actual writing skills. Understanding one's deficiencies in essay writing, and writing at large, is crucial to improving and ensuring that faith in written skill is not poorly placed. Simkin et. al.'s (2012) study details the tendency to overestimate writing abilities and suggests that despite students feeling they were "average" or better at writing, they significantly underperformed in assessments (p. 92). Due to the fundamental need for comprehensively educated students, it is important that an emphasis be placed on improving during the years of university learning and before entering the workforce.

Additionally, essay writing requires a holistic approach and the conscious use of one's faculties. Intelligent examination of facts is essential to solving any question proposed by an essay topic. This skillset, the ability to formulate a well-informed conclusion and communicate it, may be applied to a broader scope than just the literary. Self-efficacy, which a study performed by Prat-Sala and Redford (2012) describes as "the belief people have in their capabilities to perform a determinate task" has been correlated with actual performance (p. 9). Should someone devote effort to improving themselves in just one field like writing, then this sense of self-efficacy grows naturally—as opposed to the faulty beliefs about skill discussed earlier. With diligence, it is possible that actual ability can align with that of the perceived. Development in this regard gives a student a better sense of self and agency to perform more confidently with the kind of know-how which can only be earned through practice.

In all, students only benefit from continued essay practice. Learning the processes involved in creating a strong essay improves their writing and prepares them and their work to be scrutinized by a professional community. Similarly, refining essay skills effectively enhances

confidence and creates a more accurate individual awareness of aptitude critical for workplace success and self-respect. If students wish to grow both their confidence in their abilities, then the only path is through practice. Many people believe they can write well but when forced to convey their message they falter. Hence, having students refine their essay skills allows them to strive for more and realize their potential.

## References

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