

From Awareness to Self-Regulation: Reflective Speed Writing as a Tool for Developing Academic Writers

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The Problem

- Undergraduates required to read ES1103 English for Academic Purposes may lack sufficient knowledge and experience of academic writing.
- Such inadequacy may induce anxiety or resistance to academic writing that can undermine academic performance and growth (Martinez et al., 2011; Stewart et al., 2015).
- Addressing this problem goes beyond regular writing practices and feedback.



Small Teaching Initiative

Timed reflective writing tasks guided by a question prompt (Speed Writing Activities or SWA for short)

Inquiry Question

What do students' reflections during speed writing activities reveal about their perceived confidence, competence, and self-regulation as academic writers?

Method

113 reflective submissions from three ES1103 tutorial groups in Semester 1 AY2025/26 were analysed using thematic coding via NVivo 14.

SWA Topic	No. of Submission
SWA1 (Week 2) What is your impression of academic writing? (5 mins)	45
SWA3 (Week 4) What do you find the most challenging about writing a synthesis essay and how did you overcome them? (10 mins)	22
SWA5 (Week 9) What linguistic toolkit(s) have you excelled in, and what toolkit(s) do you still find challenging to execute? (15 mins)	46

Scan for the narrative & references



Reflective Writing, Writing Self-Efficacy & Academic Writing Development

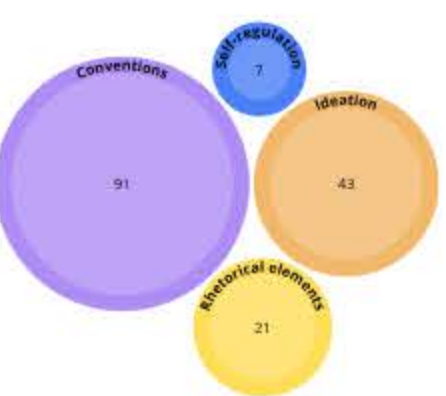
- Reflective writing can help students improve their language learning outcomes (Power, 2012).
- Students' writing self-efficacy, understood as confidence in **Ideation**, **Conventions**, and **Self-regulation** when engaged with academic writing tasks is instrumental to academic writing performance and growth (Bruning et al., 2013).
- Structured instructional practices and supportive classroom environment can enhance writing self-efficacy (Crawford et al., 2026).

Key Insights

1

Students began with high awareness of conventions but low confidence in application

Declarative knowledge



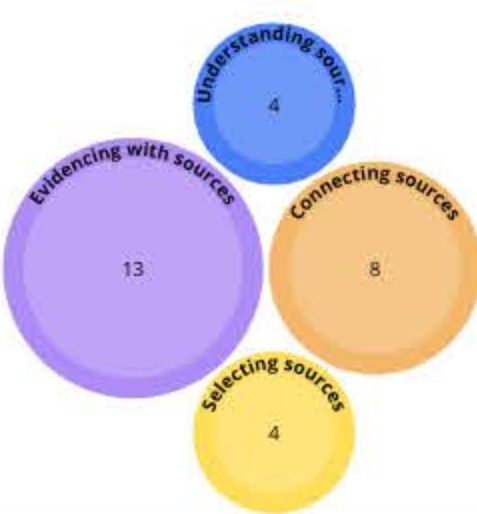
Mixed sentiments

"I find **academic writing valuable** because it trains me to think critically, organize ideas clearly, and back up arguments with credible sources. It emphasizes objectivity, which ensures that ideas are respected for their merit rather than personal bias. At times, **academic writing feels difficult** because of the formal conventions, strict citation rules, and complex vocabulary..."

2

Academic writing challenges stimulated self-regulatory thinking

Synthesis challenges

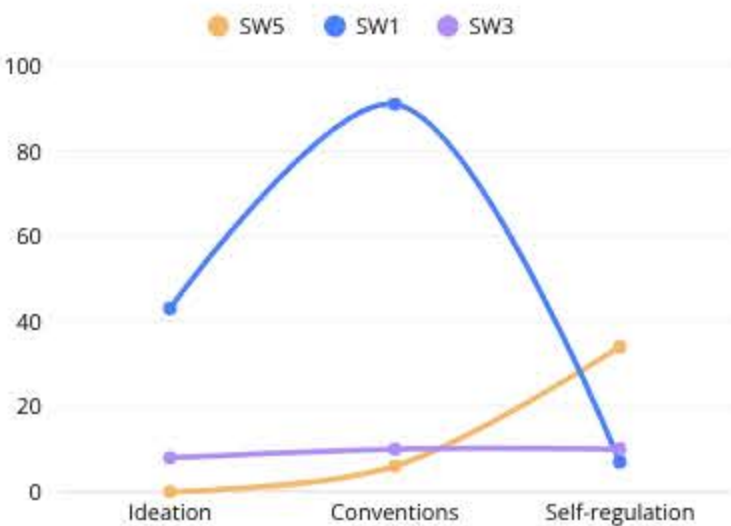


Procedural knowledge

"One of the most challenging parts of writing a synthesis essay was **organizing multiple sources into a clear argument**... To overcome this, I **created an outline** before drafting. I **highlighted key arguments from each source, grouped similar ideas together, and decided how they could either support or contrast with one another**. This helped me see the bigger picture... By **breaking the task into steps—reading, grouping, outlining, and then drafting**—I was able to turn a messy pile of sources into a coherent essay."

3

Self-regulation became increasingly visible and sophisticated over time.



Metacognitive regulation

"A linguistic toolkit I believe I excelled in is logical link. I **learnt to identify the relationships between sentences and the logical links between concepts** which has helped me piece clauses together to create complex sentences that are cohesive. However, I find textual cohesion challenging to execute... I **have been actively observing the macro and hyper themes, and macro and hyper NEW in my essays**. This has helped improve the flow of my essay and ensures that the reader can easily process the links between various sentences. Nevertheless, **in my previous essay, there were instances where I failed to apply the concepts above**. For example, I introduced an idea in one of my concluding sentences which was neither mentioned in my thesis statement nor elaborated in any of my body paragraphs. This led to the breaking down of textual cohesion within my essay."

Conclusion & Future Directions

- Reflective speed writing provided students with opportunities to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their writing development, suggesting its value as a scalable metacognitive intervention in writing-intensive courses.
- Future studies could triangulate reflections with students' assignments to examine the relationship between perceived and demonstrated writing development.