

Critical Intersections: the 12th Biennial Conference of the
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**Scaffolding and assessing academic
writing competence: the 4-aspect
framework**

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The context

- Lack of standardised approach to academic writing scaffolding and assessment at WSU
- Academic writing is assessed in varied forms

From a Learning Guide

Criteria	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
Structure /English	<p>The writing is difficult to read or follow or not legible. If the essay fails on this criterion, it will be returned to the student for resubmission.</p> <p>Fewer than 3 scholarly papers and relevant references (cited in text)</p>	<p>Essay writing is clear, but many of the words used are redundant. More could have been said within this word limit – try to be more succinct. A conclusion was not provided.</p> <p>At least 3 scholarly papers and relevant references (cited in text)</p>	<p>Grammar and spelling errors are minimal. Easy to read. Some referencing mistakes. Needs to be more succinct. At least 6 scholarly papers and relevant references (cited in text)</p>	<p>Interesting to read, easy to follow. Very well referenced. Introduces the topic and argument well. Conclusion demonstrates how the question has been addressed. At least 8 scholarly papers and relevant references (cited in text)</p>	<p>Very professionally written, no typographical or referencing errors. Succinct and easy to read. At least 10 scholarly papers and relevant references (cited in text)</p>

From a Learning Guide

Marked aspect	components
Overall structure and presentation	Introduction, Body and conclusion Formatting Comprehensibility
Overall flow of ideas	Research question or thesis statement Flow of ideas
Description of placements	Number of placements described Extent of description
Examination of chosen topic	Relevance of essay with topic Number of placements linked to topic Relevance of references Vancouver style application
Reflection of learning	Connection with experiences Connection with future medical career

Requirements

- 2,000-2,500 words and no more
- Language: clear, simple, academic (not emotive, not colloquial except for direct quotes)
- Follow the formatting
- Proper referencing
- Adequate number of references
- ...

SFL and the articulation of aspects of academic writing

The key theoretical tenets of SFL:

(a) language is functional

(b) its function is to make meanings

(c) meanings are context-specific

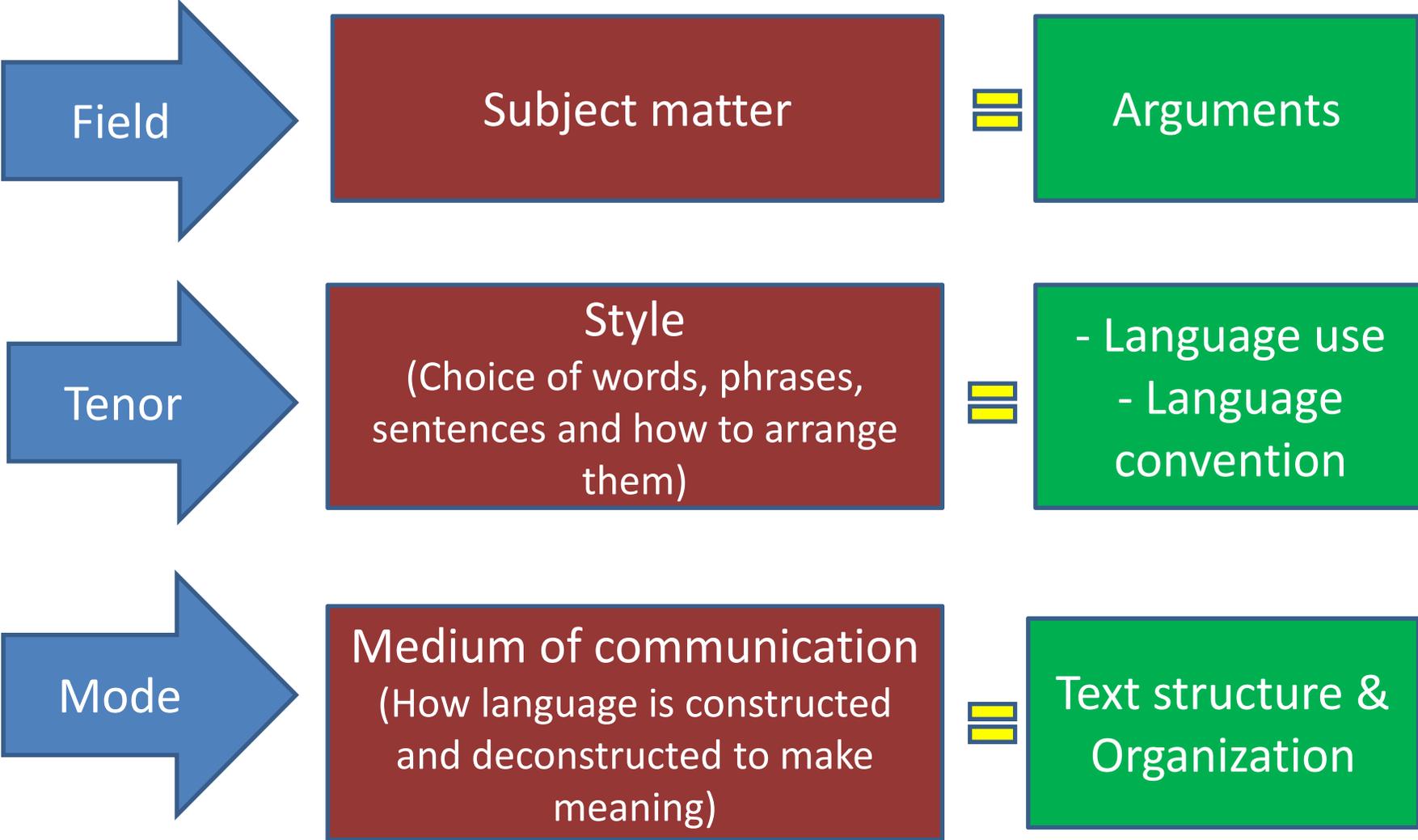
(d) the process of using language is semiotic, i.e. people make meaning by making linguistic choices

(Eggins, 2004)

SFL basics

- language, or a text, is a resource for making meaning in a particular social and cultural context.
- the construction of the text is determined by three factors - Field, Tenor and Mode.

From SFL to aspects of academic writing



The 4 aspect framework of Academic Writing

Structure and Organisation

- **Generic structure compliance:** meeting standard structure for specific types of written texts in different disciplines and showing textual coherence through Thematic Progression
- **Paragraph structure**
- **Cohesion and Coherence**

Language Use

- **Word choice:** abstract, academic, discipline-specific terms, etc...
- **Expressions:** formal, written, appropriate, etc...

Language Convention

- **Grammar**
- **Punctuation**
- **Spelling**

Referencing

- **Integrating evidence:** using relevant quotes/summarised/paraphrased texts to support arguments
- **In-text referencing:** correct format in prescribed style, matching reference list
- **Reference list:** correct format in prescribed style, matching in-text references

Integrating the framework in the marking rubric

	Unsatisfactory	Expected performance	High Performance	Excellent performance	Outstanding performance
structure & organisation	Academic Bibliography is not well structured; paragraphs do not have a clear point and structure.	Attempts to structure the bibliography, however, information in paragraphs may vary from the topic sentence.	Bibliography is mostly well constructed; paragraphs may include some information varying from the topic sentence.	Bibliography is generally well constructed with clear paragraphs.	Bibliography is consistently well constructed with clear and concise paragraphs.
language convention	Non-conventional spelling and punctuation interfere with meaning.	Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar but they do not interfere with meaning.	Occasional errors in spelling, punctuations, and grammar.	Conventional spelling, grammar and punctuation, with some minor errors.	Conventional spelling, grammar and punctuation, maybe with some typos only.
language use	Limited use of academic vocabulary and expressions.	Attempts to use academic vocabulary and expressions, though with occasional errors.	Sufficient use of academic vocabulary and expressions, may be with some errors.	Competent use of academic vocabulary and expressions, maybe with some minor errors only.	Advanced use of academic vocabulary and expressions.
8 marks	1-3	4	5.5	6	7-8
referencing	Reference formatting References not according to APA style, with frequent errors.	APA style used inconsistently, with some major errors including some key information (Author/year/title/vol no./pages) missing from the citation; the incorrect order of information in the citation, or reference list not in alphabetical order or not containing hanging indents.	Referencing mostly follows APA style, with some minor errors only. Minor errors includes the misplacement or omission of full stops, commas, capitalisation, italics, or brackets.	Referencing generally follows APA style, with minimal minor errors only.	Referencing consistently follows APA style, with no errors.
6 marks	1-2	3	4	5	6

Developing performance standards and Trial marking

- Learning advisors in different schools tried marking students' assignments using the performance standards developed from the framework
- Revising and developing users' guide to use
- Next step: publicising