

SS-2007: Technical and Business Writing

Serial No:

Final Exam

Total Time: 3 Hours

Total Marks: 135

Tuesday, 06th June, 2023

Course Instructors

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Signature of Invigilator

Student Name

Roll No.

Course Section

Student Signature

DO NOT OPEN THE QUESTION BOOK OR START UNTIL INSTRUCTED.

Instructions:

1. Attempt on question paper. Attempt all of them. Read the question carefully, understand the question, and then attempt it.
2. No additional sheet will be provided for rough work. Use the back of the last page for rough work.
3. If you need more space write on the last pages in the answer booklet and clearly mark question and part number etc.
4. After being asked to commence the exam, please verify that you have **twenty-five (25)** different printed pages including this title page. There are a total of **6** questions.
5. Use permanent ink pens only. Any part done using soft pencil will not be marked and cannot be claimed for rechecking.

	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4	Q-5	Q-6	Total
Marks Obtained							
Total Marks	40	35	15	10	25	10	135

Question 1 [40 Marks]

Question: Choose the most appropriate answer for each of the following statements and record the selected response in the table below. Any ambiguity (correction/rewriting) in the response will lead to cancellation of the recorded answer. Answers not recorded in the table will not be considered.

Note: Minus 2 for not filling in the table

Ques.	Ans.	Ques.	Ans.
1.	C	21.	D
2.	C	22.	D
3.	A	23.	A
4.	A	24.	D
5.	D	25.	C
6.	B	26.	C
7.	C	27.	B
8.	C	28.	B
9.	B	29.	C
10.	D	30.	C
11.	D	31.	A
12.	A	32.	C
13.	C	33.	D
14.	A	34.	B
15.	C	35.	B
16.	C	36.	A
17.	D	37.	B
18.	C	38.	B
19.	C	39.	B
20.	A	40.	B

1. Which among the following is not a basis for a technical report?

- A. Facts
- B. Tests
- C. Personal prejudices
- D. Experiments

2. Which audience requires the least information?

- A. Low-tech audience
- B. Lay audience
- C. High-tech audience
- D. None of these

3. Which of the following statements about reports is accurate?
 - A. Informal reports of eight or fewer pages are the most common reports in the workplace.
 - B. Writers develop reports for internal audiences only.
 - C. Business professionals rarely write reports.
 - D. All of above

4. If you want to increase your credibility when writing a business report, you should work to
 - A. provide facts and conclusions that will help decision making.
 - B. support managers' idea of the project.
 - C. draw the reader's attention to your writing style.
 - D. None of these

5. When you're writing a report, be sure to adapt to your audience by
 - A. being sensitive to their needs.
 - B. controlling your style and tone.
 - C. formatting document.
 - D. All of the above.

6. Which one is the shortest document among technical written documents?
 - A. report
 - B. abstract
 - C. email
 - D. paragraph

7. Which of the following is not a parameter of technical communication?
 - A. Ability to acquire additional information
 - B. Quality of additional information acquired
 - C. Ability to arrive at a subjective evaluation
 - D. Ability to provide worthwhile recommendations

8. What is the first question to consider when communicating with an audience?
 - A. What is your job title?
 - B. How can you use jargon effectively?
 - C. Who is your audience?
 - D. How can you avoid using acronyms?

9. How should technical concepts be approached when communicating with low-tech readers?
 - A. They do not need to be defined as low-tech readers are already familiar with them.
 - B. They should be explained in greater detail compared to high-tech readers.
 - C. They should be avoided altogether to prevent confusion.
 - D. Both B and C.

10. Why should a technical communicator be concerned about a diverse audience?
- A. To comply with legal requirements
 - B. To promote equal treatment and respect
 - C. To attract more customers and increase business profits
 - D. All of the above
11. What should be included in the introduction of an inquiry?
- A. Specific questions or topics of inquiry
 - B. Contact information
 - C. A request for a prompt response
 - D. An explanation of why the information is needed
12. Physical Barriers to communication are _____
- A. Time and distance.
 - B. Interpretation of words.
 - C. Prejudices about place.
 - D. Prejudices about race.
13. Communication noise is
- A. A receiver's response to a message.
 - B. Avenues through which messages are delivered.
 - C. Obstacles that interfere with the understanding of a message.
 - D. The circumstances under which communication takes place.
14. A report prepared in a prescribed form and presented according to an established procedure is _____ report
- A. Formal.
 - B. Informal.
 - C. Statutory.
 - D. General.
15. A _____ is also known as a 'cover letter'.
- A. Resume
 - B. Curriculum vitae
 - C. Application letter
 - D. Sales letter
16. Which of the following is not a compulsory part of a business letter?
- A. Salutation
 - B. Close
 - C. Attention line
 - D. Body

17. Which of the following indicates the correct sequence of the elements of communication in the communication process?
- A. Sender, Receiver, Channel, Message, Feedback
 - B. Receiver, Feedback, Sender, Message, Channel
 - C. Sender, Channel, Message, feedback, Receiver
 - D. Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver, Feedback
18. Classroom teaching and directors meeting are the examples of
- A. Mass communication
 - B. Intrapersonal communication
 - C. Group communication
 - D. None of these
19. Which of the following is an element of the body of a business report?
- A. Glossary
 - B. Cover letter
 - C. Recommendation
 - D. Executive summery
20. Which of the following is not an element of front matters of business report?
- A. Introduction
 - B. Cover letter
 - C. List of illustrations
 - D. Table of contents
21. _____ indicates the hierarchy of topics and their sequences.
- A. Appendix
 - B. List of references
 - C. Glossary
 - D. Table of contents
22. When writing an email, which of the following should you avoid?
- A. Using a professional tone
 - B. Including a clear subject line
 - C. Using appropriate grammar and spelling
 - D. Using excessive jargon or technical terms
23. Which of the following communication styles is characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperation?
- A. Forceful style
 - B. Passive style
 - C. Personal style
 - D. Impersonal style
-

24. Which of the following is an example of external communication?
- A. Sending an email to a coworker
 - B. Attending a team meeting
 - C. Writing a report for your manager
 - D. Communicating with a customer
25. Which of the following is an appropriate use of instant messaging in business communication?
- A. Sharing company financial information
 - B. Discussing confidential HR matters
 - C. Coordinating a quick team update
 - D. Negotiating a contract
26. Which of the following is an appropriate use of visual aids in a business presentation?
- A. Including complex charts and graphs with minimal explanation
 - B. Using excessive text to provide detailed information
 - C. Incorporating relevant images and diagrams to enhance understanding
 - D. Omitting visual aids to maintain simplicity
27. What does the acronym "BCC" stand for in email communication?
- A. Business Communication Code
 - B. Blind Carbon Copy
 - C. Basic Company Correspondence
 - D. Broad Communication Channel
28. You are a project manager and want to provide regular updates to your team members while also keeping your supervisor informed. Which email addressing option should you use? Which of the following options is the most appropriate for the email addressing in this scenario?
- A. Use "To" field for team members and "BCC" field for supervisor
 - B. Use "To" field for team members and "CC" field for supervisor
 - C. Use "BCC" field for team members and "To" field for supervisor
 - D. Use "CC" field for team members and "To" field for supervisor
29. You are a team leader and need to provide constructive feedback to a team member regarding their recent performance issue. You want to address the issue while maintaining a supportive and encouraging tone. Which of the following options demonstrates an appropriate communication tone in this scenario?
- A. "Your performance has been subpar lately. You need to improve immediately."
 - B. "I'm disappointed in your recent performance. You're letting the team down."
 - C. "I noticed some areas where you can improve. Let's discuss them and work together for better results."
 - D. "You're not meeting expectations. This needs to change immediately."

30. You are a customer service representative responding to a customer complaint. You want to convey empathy and assure the customer that their concerns are being addressed. Which among the following tones would you maintain in this scenario?
- A. Forceful
 - B. Passive
 - C. Personal
 - D. Impersonal
31. Where should the date be placed in a letter?
- A. One or two spaces below the writer's address
 - B. Two lines below the reader's address
 - C. Two spaces above the salutation
 - D. Four spaces below the complimentary close
32. What is the purpose of cover (transmittal) correspondence?
- A. To provide information, details, or answers to an inquiry
 - B. To complain about a product or service
 - C. To precede attached or enclosed documents and give an overview of the material
 - D. To confirm details of an agreement or arrangement
33. How can buffer statements be used in adjustment messages?
- A. To provide persuasive facts supporting the bad news
 - B. To establish rapport with the audience and create a pleasant tone
 - C. To compliment the reader or show appreciation
 - D. All of the above
34. What is the main benefit of instant messages in the workplace?
- A. Increased security for communication
 - B. Improved efficiency for geographically dispersed workgroups
 - C. More personal and casual communication channel than e-mail
 - D. Avoidance of long-distance telephone rates
35. Secondary research involves field observations, while primary research uses existing data.
- A. True
 - B. False
36. The practice of humanization of content disseminated on various social media platforms proves to be highly advantageous.
- A. True
 - B. False

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37. Quoting involves using the author's exact words, while paraphrasing uses your own words to restate the information. Therefore, quoting requires citing the source, while paraphrasing does not require a citation.

- A. True
- B. False

38. The length of article or document is of utmost importance while evaluating the credibility of an online source for research.

- A. True
- B. False

39. Memo is typically addressed to a low-tech or lay reader outside of your company.

- A. True
- B. False

40. If the achievements presented in the discussion section of cover letter are quantified, then there is no need to show reader's benefit. As the achievements speak for themselves.

- A. True
- B. False

Question 2 [5+30=35 Marks]

Question: Read the report carefully and write a **title** and **abstract** for this report. The abstract should accurately cover all major sections of the report, including the problem statement, methodology, findings, and conclusion.

Title of the Report: "Enhancing Academic Participation: Exploring the Impact of Online Discussions in the University of Hertfordshire Internal Bridging Programme" [5 marks]

Note: minus 2 if the institute's name is not mentioned in the title

Abstract:

INSTRUCTIONS	
Evaluation Parameters	Marks Obtained
Clarity and Conciseness <ul style="list-style-type: none">The abstract provides a clear and concise summary of the report, effectively conveying key points and objectives.	/5
Content Coverage <ul style="list-style-type: none">The abstract accurately covers the required sections of the report, including the problem statement, methodology, findings, and conclusion	/5
Organization and Structure	/5

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">The abstract follows a logical and well-structured format (one paragraph), effectively presenting information in a coherent manner.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Language and Writing Style The abstract demonstrates excellent language proficiency, employing precise terminology, proper grammar, and engaging writing style.	/5
Accuracy of Information and Conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none">The abstract accurately presents the main findings, results, and conclusions of the report, providing a reliable summary	/5
Overall Impression The abstract is highly engaging, effectively capturing the essence of the report and leaving a strong impression on the reader.	/5
Total Marks	30

Sample Abstract:

This report investigates the impact of online discussions on academic participation within the University of Hertfordshire's Internal Bridging Programme. This study focuses specifically on the use of online discussion forums as a means of fostering student engagement and enhancing their overall learning experience. The research methodology employed in this study includes a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data was gathered through surveys administered to participants, while qualitative data was obtained through focus group discussions and interviews. The study involved a sample of 100 students enrolled in the Internal Bridging Programme during the academic year of 2022-2023. Findings from the study indicate that online discussions play a crucial role in promoting academic participation among students. The analysis reveals that active participation in online discussions positively correlates with increased levels of student engagement, higher academic achievement, and a greater sense of community within the programme. Based on the findings, it is recommended to use strategies for encouraging active student participation, fostering inclusive discussions, and providing ongoing support and training for facilitators. The insights gained from this study can inform future pedagogical practices and contribute to the ongoing improvement of academic support programs in higher education institutions.

Introduction

The University of Hertfordshire Internal Bridging Programme prepares Students in Higher Education for post-graduate study at the University of Hertfordshire. To follow the programme, students usually have a first degree and the appropriate academic qualifications to enrol on a Masters degree. However, the students' English competence is inadequate for a postgraduate course so it is necessary for them to improve it. Hence they need to follow our course or a similar one elsewhere. It is a one-year course and the students take several different modules. The largest module is English for Academic Purposes. It consists of 16 hours per week of class contact in Semester A and 6 hours per week in Semester B.

The main aims of the Semester B course are to:

- improve the students' command of academic English: language structure, use and vocabulary
- consolidate their language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in academic contexts
- put to practical use appropriate academic conventions observed in British higher education
- acquire a range of transferable academic skills essential for effective study at postgraduate level
- develop learner independence.

By the end of the course they should have a knowledge and understanding of:

- relevant conventions followed in academic English (both written and oral)
- the difference between the informal and formal registers of the English language
- what is linguistically expected of an overseas postgraduate student in British higher education.

and they should be able to:

- listen to, understand and take notes in lectures
- apply a range of reading strategies and use the library appropriately
- produce a substantial piece of researched writing
- take part in discussions, seminars and tutorials
- prepare and deliver presentations
- employ a range of general and academic vocabulary.

Our objectives are defined by the needs of the students' academic courses in the following year. The main job, therefore, in preparing these courses is to investigate what our students will have to do in their academic course, work out what aspects of language - grammar, vocabulary, skills etc - they will need and then find ways to teach and assess it (Gillett, 1989).

One skill needed by postgraduate students is the ability to take part in discussions. It is generally accepted that student-student interaction, both formal and informal, is beneficial in higher education (Pica & Doughty, 1985 Topping, 1996 Tan, 2003). It has also been reported that many Students in Higher Education, especially those from Asia, find this difficult and do not participate well enough in these discussions (Jones, 1999 Leki, 2001 Basturkmen, 2002). So participation in discussions is included as one of the objectives of our course. For several years, we have included a face-to face discussions of an academic article, whereby one student introduces an academic article to the class and then leads a discussion.

With the recent introduction, though, of StudyNet, our in-house VLE, and a strong belief that any effective use of a VLE must begin with clear integration of the VLE into the course, it was decided to extend this aspect of the course to include an on-line discussion using the StudyNet group discussion facility. One reason is that much research has shown that on-line discussions produce more interaction (Dysthe, 2002). They also allow quieter students to participate and show that Students in Higher Education will participate more if they have time to think about their contributions and plan the language they want to use. It has also been reported that international students have increased motivation to use

the target language and therefore produce more language (Bump, 1990 Beauvois, 1992 Kern, 1995 Oliva & Pollastrini, 1995). Moreover, there is a more balanced participation (Kern, 1995 Sullivan & Pratt, 1996 Warschauer, 1996). Students also use a wider variety of language (Chun, 1994 Warschauer, 1996), which is syntactically and lexically more complex (Warschauer, 1996). This structured use of the VLE benefits students with a range of learning styles from a wider range of sociocultural backgrounds (Pennington, 1996). It was hoped students would find this to their advantage.

Thus there is evidence that group discussion is beneficial in education and that on-line discussions can also be valuable. However, how predominantly East Asian students would deal with an on-line discussion was an important question. Often, their view of education is that it is essentially a passive process, something that happens to them, not something they have to do for themselves, something that is mainly the job of the teacher (Jin & Cortazzi, 1993 Cortazzi & Jin, 1997 Catterick, 2004). So the purpose of the research was to investigate whether such students would undertake the task in the manner set, whether they regarded the activity as being advantageous to them and whether they would see the underlying reasons for such a task. Finally, it was useful to determine whether the students perceived learning was in fact occurring.

Methodology

The programme had about 120 students in 2003/2004, divided into 9 groups for teaching purposes. The on-line discussion took place in the first four weeks of the second semester. The educational purpose of the on-line discussion, which we did not evaluate in this study, was to help students improve their ability to read an academic article, to take part in discussions on such an article and to experience this via StudyNet. As with most of the teaching on this programme, the purpose of this is twofold: to improve students' language and study skills, and also to experience using StudyNet in preparation for their future academic lives. They were given very clear instructions about exactly what was required of them and their contribution was assessed, in order to encourage full participation.

The on-line discussion element was worth 6.25% of the coursework element of the course for the semester. All the students discussed the same article and were told they could read the article on-line, print it out or copy it to their own computers. At the end of this discussion period, the lecturers evaluated the students' contributions. The assessment consisted of a combination of the quantity of contributions to the discussion and the quality - ideas, interaction and language. In other words, students were rewarded for contributing more than the minimum, as well as using the activity as a learning tool, not simply as a bare assessment. The students were then asked about what they felt about doing this activity and what they learned from it. This was done via a questionnaire in which students were asked how they took part in the discussion, what they felt about taking part in the discussion and what they thought they learned from it. The questionnaire was given to all the students who had taken part and they were asked to complete it in class time. This was done in weeks seven and eight, three to four weeks after having completed the activity. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-two questions, divided into multiple choice and short-answer questions. The rationale behind the questionnaire was to assess the perceived worthiness of the task by the students.

The students were told that a grade would be given for their contribution to this discussion, and that a good contribution consisted of demonstrating knowledge of the article and making a relevant contribution to the discussion in appropriate English. They were instructed to make their first contribution by the end of week 2 of the semester and their second by the end of week three. Two

contributions was the bare minimum if they wanted to pass and more was expected for a good mark. Each contribution had to be four or five sentences.

The students were advised on, and given practice in class, about what a contribution consisted of. This could include, among other things:

- a question to a member of the group
- an opinion about the article
- giving further information on the subject
- agreement or disagreement with a member of their group
- reasons for their opinions
- invitations to other members of their group to contribute
- asking other people about their opinions
- supporting and encouraging other members of their group

They were told to read all the contributions from their group members, not just those from the lecturer and furthermore to respond not only to the lecturer's points, but carry on a discussion with the other members of their group as well. Appropriate language needed to be used as this was a formal academic discussion, not an e-mail to a friend. Their contributions had to be written in accurate academic English and it might therefore be useful to compose their contributions in a word-processor, check it for accuracy and then paste it into the discussion. Their mark would depend on how well they achieved this task.

Results and Discussion

The purpose was therefore to see whether or not students undertook the task, what advantages they saw to it, whether they saw the reasons for doing it and what they thought they learned from it. 112 completed questionnaires were received. The questions most relevant to the research aims will be discussed, with the hope that it will be useful for lecturers in similar circumstances.

First is the question of the extent to which students undertook the task. This was measured by looking at the number, frequency, style and length of students' contributions. Although the minimum number of contributions was two in order to achieve a pass, they were encouraged to contribute as much as possible, in order to be successful, and for their skills to be practised. The assessment period being over 4 weeks, 35% of students made one contribution a week, 23% twice a week, while 36 % of students contributed three times a week or more (Figure 1). It was certainly clear, therefore, that most students were contributing more than the minimum. It may be the case, though, that very few decided that doing any extra work for an assessment that counted such a small amount of the overall course mark was not worth the effort.

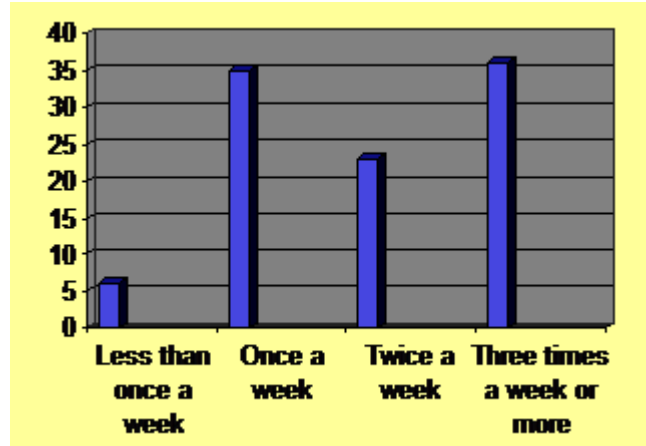


Figure 1: Frequency of contribution

Considering the style of discussion, with threads connected to single opinions or ideas, one would have expected students to have read all or most of the contributions on the list prior to adding their own point of view. Figure 2 shows that 48% of students claimed to have read more than 5 previous contributions, while 22% of those students had read more than ten. Surprisingly, though, 10% of students claimed not to have read any contributions before adding their own. It can thus be speculated that these students do not quite understand the concept of a discussion, though, but this is predicated on there being 10 contributions to actually read.

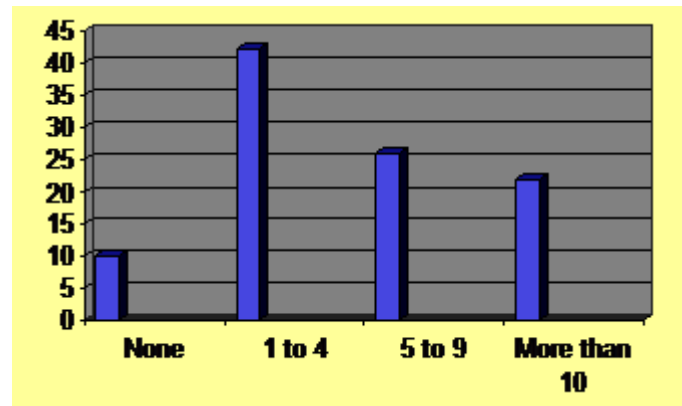


Figure 2: Contributions read prior to contributing

As regards the length of their own contributions, 42% stated they had written a paragraph, while the rest either equally wrote a few sentences or more than a paragraph. This was confirmed by the class lecturer, who monitored the contributions on a weekly basis. The students were expected to write at least a few sentences, so in this respect, it can be deemed successful.

It was felt that the level of participation would depend to some extent on whether they had enjoyed the exercise. As can be seen from Figure 3, less than 2% said they hated it. Almost 50% chose 'OK' and 29% said they had enjoyed it. It was pleasing to note that 12.5% asserted that they had enjoyed it very much.

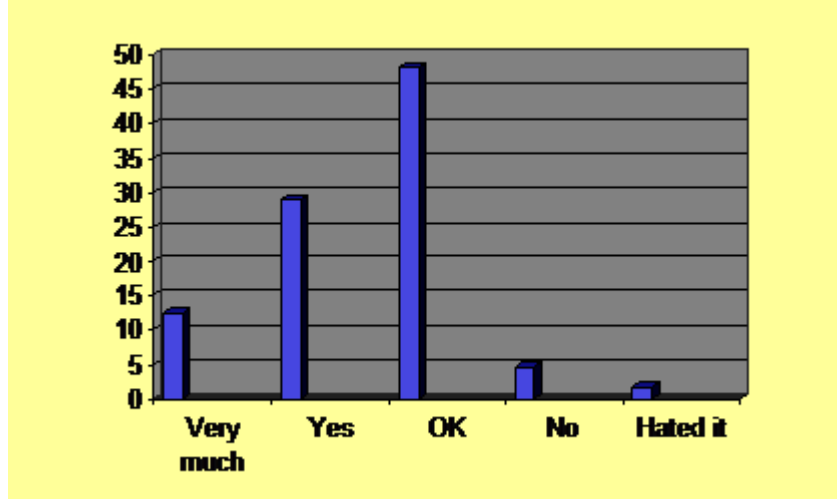


Figure 3: Degree of enjoyment

Secondly was whether or not the students found the exercise advantageous or useful. More than 50% of the students responded affirmatively (Figure 4), while only 6% of students did not find it useful. No one considered it to be a waste of time. This was crucial for us, considering this was the first attempt at this type of task and is an evaluation method which needs to be used more actively in the future, as the use of the on-line facility is playing a larger role in academic life (Browne & Jenkins, 2003).

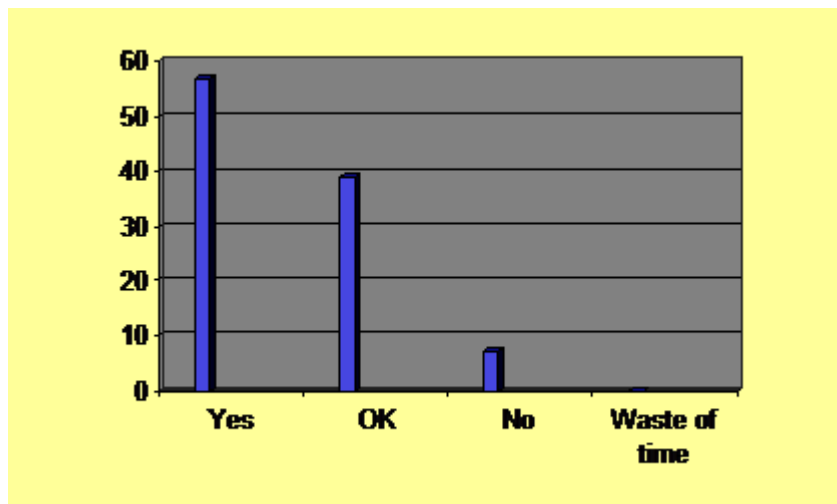


Figure 4: Relative usefulness

Thirdly, the open question of 'Why do you think we used the on-line method for discussion?' elicited numerous favourable responses. Chief among these, the students were of the opinion that it would improve their reading and writing skills. Why they believed their writing skills would improve is not quite certain, as none of their contributions were corrected. In any case, they were making use of English in a formal academic style to communicate their ideas, an essential part of learning to write. Furthermore, the act of reading others' contributions and being able to compare grammar, vocabulary and level of sophistication of an argument with ones' own writing is a key part of peer learning, which is an aspect which is greatly emphasised in second language learning (Flower & Hayes, 1981 Grabe, 2001 Vincent, 1999). In addition they felt that it would allow them to analyse ideas more clearly and to think more independently. This may be linked to the time factor involved in being able to formulate ideas

without pressure due to language ability and peer observation. This is particularly relevant to the quiet students who are often unwilling to be in focus in a class situation. They did consider that it would allow everyone more time and opportunities to discuss ideas and was particularly useful for the shy students. This is what was hoped for. Often the amount of time for discussion in class is limited, so allowing students this extra time to debate is of great importance.

Lastly we wanted to see if the students thought they had learned something from the exercise. In this case, only 5 of 112 students said no, and 3 'not really, but it was good to practise.' Thus the great majority were of the opinion that they had learned from the task. Whether the students' perception is borne out in reality was not the focus of this research but should be researched at a future date. The areas they highlighted are being able to see the grammar mistakes of others, and being able to learn from them. Here the previous comment on peer learning is reflected. They decided that their knowledge, vocabulary and discussion skills had been enriched by the task. Some also considered that the experience allowed them to share ideas better than in class, and allowed them to feel more confident to give their opinion. This is a core issue, as many Students in Higher Education, especially those from the Far East, usually have a great deal to say, but lack the confidence when surrounded by local students with whom they often have minimal actual contact. If their confidence can be initially improved in this way, one hopes it can be extended to class situations. The chance to summarise and organise ideas better was another issue mentioned. These are essential skills all students need.

Conclusion

Post-graduate international students at UK institutions of Higher Education often find difficulty dealing with seminar type discussions. An attempt was made to help students with this by utilising the group discussion facility of a university Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). However, as most of the students were from East Asia, who often consider education as essentially a passive process, it was felt necessary to investigate whether they would undertake such an activity and what the benefits were. Despite some criticisms, the students generally took part in the activity seriously and saw the usefulness of it. They were generally found to understand the purpose of the activity and felt they had learned from it. Thus, overall, when the activity was clearly seen to be related to the learning outcomes and integrated into the course, the verdict was overwhelmingly positive and the rationale understood. By taking the various points students made and adjusting the task slightly, by integrating the on-line discussion more into class work, involving the lecturers more and by thinking more about the text, we hope that the positive outcomes can be further cemented, and further areas probed and students helped to take part in seminar style discussions more confidently and competently.

Question 3 [3*5=15 Marks]

Question: Imagine that you work as a Social Media Analyst in a software house, Macrosoft and your boss has asked you to design an instructional manual of any social media application of your own choice for elderly people. Your colleagues have done most of the work, you only require writing *a set of instructional steps* for the *registration, log in and functionality* of the selected app by keeping the above-mentioned audience. Use the provided space for the answer.

Registration

Scoring Criterion:

Steps are chronologically written = 1 mark

Each step addresses one activity at a time = 1 mark

Appropriate for elderly audience = 1 mark

Use of language is appropriate for user manual (i.e. use of action verbs, acronyms or abbreviations are explained) = 1 mark

Grammatical accuracy = 1 mark

Followed the same for all three sections...

Question 4 [10 Marks]

Question: Select an appropriate visual aid (pie chart/bar chart/line chart) and visualize the following factual data with the help of selected aid in the provided space. Note that the key is to identify which among the three visual aids can do justice to the given data.

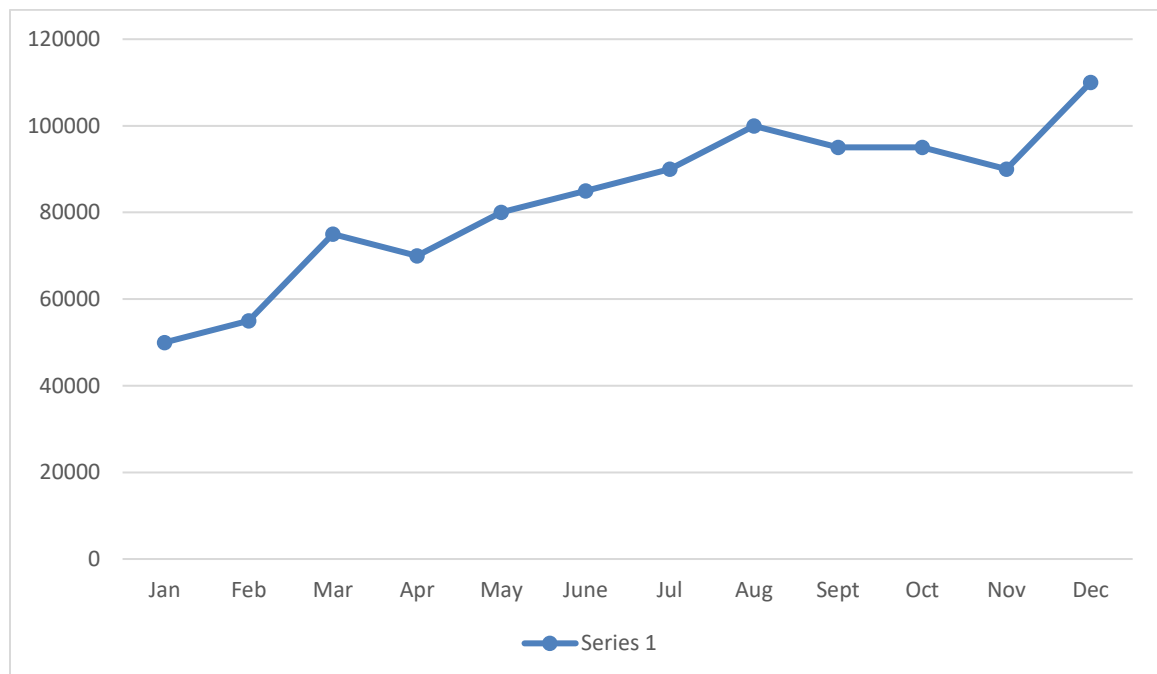
"Here is a detailed description of the sales data for a retail company over a one-year period. In January, the company achieved sales of \$50,000, which experienced a gradual increase in February to \$55,000. March witnessed a significant surge in sales, reaching \$75,000. However, in April, there was a slight decline in sales, with the total amounting to \$70,000. The following months saw a steady rise in sales, with May reaching \$80,000, June reaching \$85,000, and July reaching \$90,000. In August, the company experienced a peak in sales, totaling \$100,000. September and October showed consistent sales figures of \$95,000 and \$95,000 respectively. November experienced a slight decline to \$90,000, while December recorded the highest sales of the year at \$110,000."

Scoring criterion:

Appropriate selection of visual aid = 2 marks (As the data unfolds a trend of the sales data, LINE GRAPH is the most appropriate visual aid to use. Selection of any other visual aid would result in Zero for the selection part)

Visual aid = 8 marks

The graph aids in understanding data rather than complicating it. The X-axis clearly shows the amount from 50,000 to 110,000 with appropriate intervals, while y-axis shows the months.



Question 5 [10+15=25 Marks]

Question (a): Rewrite the given sentences to achieve conciseness while maintaining the core information. **[10 marks]**

1. Sarah, who is a close friend of mine, is currently studying at the university that is located in the city.

Sarah, my close friend, studies at the city university.

2. The meeting that took place earlier today was attended by all of the members of the team, and important decisions were made.

Everyone on the team attended the important meeting today.

3. Our department is currently in the process of conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of our internal operations and procedures.

Our department is conducting a comprehensive review of our operations.

4. The team members collaborated and worked together in a cooperative and cohesive manner to successfully complete the task.

The team collaborated to successfully complete the task.

5. The office space has been newly renovated and redesigned to provide a more comfortable and productive work environment for employees.

The office space has been renovated to provide a productive work environment.

6. The training session that is being organized by the HR department is aimed at enhancing employees' skills and improving overall performance.

The HR department is organizing a training session to enhance employees' skills.

7. The company has implemented a new software system that is designed to streamline and automate various administrative tasks and processes.

The company implemented a software system to automate administrative tasks.

8. Our team has been assigned the responsibility of developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote our new product in the market.

Our team is developing a marketing strategy for our new product.

9. The company is actively seeking qualified candidates to fill the vacant position and join our dynamic and innovative team.

The company is hiring for the vacant position.

10. The report that was submitted by the employee was meticulously prepared and included in-depth analysis and findings.

The employee's report included in-depth analysis.

Question (b): The given paragraph has errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Rewrite to avoid making any mistakes. **[15 marks]**

"In **today's**¹ professional landscape, **maintainng**² strong ethical standards is of **ut most**³ importance in the workplace. It **was**⁴ essential that employees uphold **principals**⁵ such as honesty, integrity, and respect for others. **ethical**⁶ conduct **encompass**⁷ various aspects, including fair treatment of colleagues, adherence to company policies, and responsible handling of sensitive **informetion**⁸. Moreover, ethical behavior extends beyond individual **actions**⁹ **it** also involves promoting a culture of **inclusivity**¹⁰ **diversity and** equal opportunities. By fostering **a**¹¹ environment where ethical values are **uphold**¹², organizations **could**¹³ nurture trust among employees, enhance collaboration, and bolster their reputation. Emphasizing ethical decision-making and encouraging open discussions on moral dilemmas **helps**¹⁴ individuals develop critical thinking skills and cultivate an ethical mindset that is vital for personal and professional **growth**^{15"}

1. today's
2. maintain~~ing~~
3. utmost
4. is
5. principles
6. Ethical
7. encompasses
8. information
9. actions; it
10. inclusivity, diversity, and
11. an
12. upheld
13. can
14. help
15. growth."

Question 6 [10 Marks]

Question: Use your knowledge about the course to understand the following case and answer the questions at the end.

Improving Performance in Business Services

Two years ago, the State Department of Economic Development created the Business Services Group to provide special services to out-of-state businesses that were considering relocating in the state. Another key task of the group was to help those businesses who had recently relocated get settled and operating as quickly as possible. In that two-year period, the Business Services Group put together a good record of helping more than 35 businesses move into the state efficiently.

The Business Services Group was staffed with a complement of a department manager and 5 Business Development specialists, along with some secretarial and clerical support. The job of the Business Development specialists consisted principally of contacting and working with appropriate personnel in each business to identify the kinds of information or help they needed, then making sure that the correct assistance arrived. The specialists also served as "troubleshooters" for the business whenever there were problems with the "bureaucracy." Specialists were responsible for keeping these businesses happy and efficient. As such, the specialists needed to be imaginative, persistent, and self-driven. Each specialist had a quota of contacts and services to make each month.

Charles Thompson was initially made acting supervisor of the Business Services Group after the hasty departure of the previous Department Manager. After three weeks of keeping things running, he was promoted to manager. Charles originally was hired as a specialist. Six months ago, he was transferred to another, related department to serve as assistant manager.

When Charles learned that he was moving back to the Business Services Group, he was very happy because he would be reunited with the people with whom he used to work. In fact, Charles had worked with all five of them to some degree while he was in Business Services.

John Willis, now the senior specialist, joined the Business Services Group the same day Charles did. In fact, they had come from the same department to join Business Services. Suzy Harris and Barbara Garrett became specialists shortly thereafter. For most of the time that Charles was in the Group, these four worked together easily and effectively. As the Business Services Group expanded, Tom Rollins was added. Finally, before Charles transferred, he had a chance to orient and train Melanie Bronson, who had been hired as his replacement.

As a group, these individuals represented a fairly high level of experience in the business services function. Moreover, based upon their record and reputation, they also performed very well. Charles reviewed the batch of complimentary letters sent to the Business Services Group, some of which had been signed by the governor. They worked effectively and creatively on their own with few personnel problems.

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In spite of this consistent record, though, Audrey Downs (Charles' new boss, the head of Economic Development) felt there was still room for improvement. She explained her thinking to Charles in a luncheon meeting one day, not long after Charles had been promoted to manager. By that time, Charles had seen enough of the Business Service Group's operations to agree. One of Audrey's major programs for the entire department was to institute a Service Quality Management program, and she wanted to start in the Business Services Group. Charles agreed with the idea.

Early the following Monday, Charles called the staff together for a meeting. He told them of Audrey's goal for instituting a Service Quality Management program and that they were selected to begin it. He also told them that in order to move them forward, he was going to do two things, effective immediately:

- Raise their service quotas by 20 percent
- Submit anyone who failed to meet that quota to a formal disciplinary action

The specialists left the meeting without comment, although there was a lot of mumbling in the hallways as they walked back to their desks.

Over the next week or so, Charles noticed that they seemed to avoid him and were noticeably cooler to him when he was at hand. He had to make more of an effort to get information and ideas from them, and it seemed that the tone and tenor of the offices became more tense, hostile, and somber.

After two weeks, Charles reviewed the performance records of the specialists. Sure enough, Suzy Harris had not met her quota, and as promised, Charles issued a written reprimand to her. Suzy was speechless, though clearly angered by Charles, as he reviewed the reprimand with her.

It has been two days since that meeting. Since then, Suzy has filed a grievance in the Personnel Department against Charles. John Willis put in a request for a transfer and Charles heard that Barbara is preparing to request a transfer. None of the employees in the Business Services Group now talk to him at all and simply pass along information in handwritten notes. He also has noticed how services to certain businesses have now slightly slipped.

He knows there is a major problem. As he sits at his desk at 5:00 p.m., in an empty office, waiting to make a call to one of the businesses who have complained, he wonders what went wrong and what he should do now.

Question (a) How should Charles have responded to his manager's interest in starting the Service Quality Management program? **[6 marks]**

Charles should have first clarified with the manager what her expectations were for this program, including deadlines, budget, outcomes, and learning activities. He should have reached some agreement with her about his authority to execute the program as he sees best and how they will communicate on the program's progress.

The employees in the Business Services Group are in general a medium- to high-competence group. The recommended leadership style would be a participative one. This means that Charles should meet with the Group's members and explain the situation, including all relevant background.

At this meeting, Charles should solicit their input on identifying options for improving services. This may include seeking training resources as well as providing service quality information. This first meeting would create a schedule for how the Business Services Group would plan and carry out this project. It would be possible to delegate specific assignments to each member of the Group.

Question (b) Describe the problem(s) facing Charles. [2 marks]

Charles faces a serious morale problem which will likely escalate into lowered productivity, reduced communication, increased complaints, turnover, and conflict. This morale problem rests on a resentment and distrust of Charles' management practices.

Question (c) What should Charles do to respond to the problem(s)? [2 marks]

Charles used the wrong approach in seeking to produce change among his employee group. In effect, Charles created the reason for the problem by taking a directive approach when a more participative one was needed. Therefore, Charles should call a meeting with his staff to discuss the matter.

At the meeting, Charles should indicate that he made a mistake in his approach to the goals of improved service quality. Indeed, he should reaffirm his commitment to that process. However, he should take responsibility for the problem. Assuming that there were no complications in the grievance process, it would be appropriate to rescind the formal discipline on the employee in question.

It is likely that, given the opportunity, the employees may have repressed a level of anger about things in general and about Charles in particular. At this meeting, he should encourage them to raise that anger or any concerns so that he can make any changes needed to forestall future problems.

Either at this meeting or at one held in the near future, Charles should use a more participative process for instituting the service quality management program. At that point, he could pick up on the procedures discussed in the answer to Question 1.

BEST OF LUCK 😊

