

## DEVELOPING ACADEMIC WRITING IN INTERCULTURAL UNIVERSITY SETTINGS: KEY FEATURES, EFFICIENCY AND CHALLENGES

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**Abstract.** *The paper introduces the course book materials for developing students' humanities intercultural competence in the process of academic writing teaching, describes the task examples from the text book; it proves the efficiency and challenges of such a course introduced at Sevastopol State University, Sevastopol, Crimea.*

**Key words:** *EAP, ESP, EFL, the course book materials, contents, developing of intercultural competence, writing strategies, specialist of humanities, pedagogical institution of humanities*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Living together. How does the world change over the years? How can I communicate so others will understand? How are we interconnected? Today's learners have to navigate the world of work, study, and travel among people of diverse language backgrounds and unfamiliar cultures. Language and intercultural communication skills are considered to be basic skills in our globalizing world. So cultural awareness is also a crucial 21st century skill. Being aware of other cultures and how they influence what people say, do or write is a key factor of critical literacy.

Nowadays, the concept English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has been the major driver for the changes in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program at Sevastopol State University (SSU), Pedagogical Institution of Humanities (PIH), which is one of the institutions of the SSU. Some successful steps have been made in our university towards incorporating academic writing into general *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) courses.

Former Sevastopol Municipal University for Humanities (SMUH), which was a regional scientific and educational complex, carried out trainings for future specialists on educational levels Bachelor and Specialist in 3 different areas: pedagogy, psychology, philology. At present, the main fields and activities of the Sevastopol State University (SSU), Pedagogical Institution of Humanities (PIH), are multifaceted and include educational, methodological and scientific activities, as well as international cooperation. Our university offers academic programs at all levels including undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate ones. The University has always put the importance of shaping intercultural communication with a global extension of education at the forefront and support conducting various international educational and scientific programs.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The language teaching profession's interest in cross-cultural communication has increased during the past few decades. According to Kramsch (1995), this development is due to political, educational, and ideological factors (Kramsch, 1995). Further exploration of this aspect may be found in many sources. Intercultural communication has been described by a number of language educators, including Chen, Guo-Ming & Starosta, William J. (2005), Stella Ting-Tomey (1999), Cooper, P. J., Calloway-Thomas, C., & Simonds, C. J. (2007), William B. Gudykunst (2003), Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta (2005) (Samoylenko, 2013).

The primary characteristics of intercultural communication are summarized by James Neuliep. He provides a clear contextual circular model for examining communication within cultural, micro-cultural, environmental, socio-relational, perceptual contexts, and verbal and nonverbal codes, applies the model to the development and maintenance of intercultural relationships, the management of intercultural conflict, intercultural management, intercultural adaptation, culture shock, and intercultural competence (Klopf, D. W. 2007)

Our research describes an attempt to shift the accent to academic writing in an English language (EL) textbook for students. The purpose is to show how general EL course can be taught alongside English academic writing, the place of academic writing in the whole system of textbook materials and show how other tasks contribute to understanding academic writing conventions and developing academic writing skills (Samoylenko, 2013).

The development of English academic writing courses in the universities is a new tendency. The courses are designed to prepare students for careers as international professionals by focusing on the cultural factors that influence communication in international/intercultural relations as well as the rules that proscribe and prescribe behavior. The students being asked to publish during their graduate studies, in many cases, especially in the sciences, the need for writing in English for international journals became apparent.

Yakhontova T. V. (2003) states that it is generally known that English is now the world language of various spheres of life. To learn how to efficiently write in English means to get excellent opportunities of expressing one's thoughts and ideas in this dominant language and of becoming able to communicate with colleagues and friends throughout the world. *The teachers of universities* interested in introducing and teaching writing courses can receive appropriate training during interactive workshops, long-distance courses and summer schools; they can be offered syllabi of writing courses for their institutions, various printed materials and more specific help and advice either in person or via the Internet. In all these activities, the emphasis is on the training of effective approaches to writing suitably for the educational and cultural context.

Currently there are many different programs throughout the country. There are MA writing programs, PhD programs in various disciplines, and the addition of a writing component to reading comprehension courses, which are required at the undergraduate level. However, there are no real standards, no common goals. Most writing instructors come from other fields and have had little training in the teaching of academic writing (Yakhontova T. V., 2003).

The Master first year syllabus has the following main features: it places project work at the centre of the learning; it equips the trainees with the full range of skills necessary for writing the graduation paper; it completes the preparation of the trainees to function

as autonomous language learners in their future education and careers; it caters for the needs of both future practitioners and researchers.

The Master first syllabus strives to enable the trainees to approach the most relevant processes of social development, signification and identity formation of the foreign culture(s), so that by communicating about them, they can learn about and compare these processes with what they know of their own, and possibly other, culture(s).

By the end of Master Year 2, trainees will be able to: read a wide range of written materials, including manuals, specialised articles and literary writing, and evaluate them critically for further use in their teaching and research work; make presentations using appropriate register devices and logical structure, highlighting significant points; produce different types of academic writing, including articles, complex reports, summaries, reviews and reports on professional issues, project proposals and research papers; make independent and effective use of all available reference resources and sources to complete their course, research and project papers; acquire trans-cultural values as a result of cross-cultural comparison of different languages and cultures.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH COURSE

We present the course “Teaching Professionalism and Intercultural Communication”, an advanced course for Master students with a strong language background. The course is based on lecturing, reading materials and practical classes. Its objective is to teach the students how to use their knowledge of teaching foreign languages in a professional environment abroad and adapt to intercultural environments at foreign universities.

The course topics are: Education (teaching) Professions and Ethics; Study Opportunities (education abroad, international students in the USA, Europe, international exams, international teaching education); Research Opportunities (teaching research, teaching writing and citations, teaching resource databases, reviews and bibliography, publications); career opportunities (teaching jobs and internships, teachers’ professional associations, applications, statements of purpose, resumes); Opportunities for International Cooperation (globalization of the teaching profession, teachers’ conferences and workshops).

The course emphasizes culture and explores how culture both influences and reflects communication dynamics. Culture is understood to incorporate regional background, values, world views and associated thought processes; religion, gender, age, status, and social perception; language, and nonverbal communication, among other elements. Students are expected to demonstrate a critical and informed awareness of cultural content, identity, and relational/procedural issues in their country through class presentations, discussions, and a long paper.

The rationale for the course is that, in the current environment, cross-cultural (or intercultural) communication is inevitable. Without an understanding of the cultural communication imperatives, it is very difficult, if not impossible in some cases, to understand, work with, manage, or influence individuals from another culture. The course involves some theory and proven models, but primarily focuses on practical applications and case studies. We explore how to communicate effectively in a multicultural environment, and how to manage and resolve cross-cultural conflicts.

There are seven course objectives:

1. Understanding the role of communication in culture.
2. Recognizing cultural variability.
3. Familiarizing students with the communication norms, rituals and prescribed/proscribed behaviours of other cultures.
4. Learning about the major barriers to intercultural communication, adjustment to other cultures, and culture shock.
5. Learning how differences in intercultural communication manifest themselves in different professional settings.
6. How culture influences perception and thus the organization of the psyche.
7. Increasing sensitivity to our own cultural background and its impact on how the students communicate, work and interact with people from other cultures.

Students read material, attend classes, complete assignments, and participate in class discussions and cases. Students demonstrate their understanding of cross-cultural communication through a presentation, a final exam and a final paper. Students or teams report on specific articles or topics. The final paper is an intercultural communication study of a selected region, country, or culture.

### 3.1. Tasks and activities

The activities in the workshops help the students develop themselves as participants of international programs or as international students, and an improvement in the quality of their overall writing was also perceived by the participants themselves.

#### 3.1.1. The activities in the workshops

There are some tasks from the text book:

**1) Topic:** *Teacher Professional Development: It's Not an Event, It's a Process.*

**Task 1.** Watch video about the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) program and finish the sentences:

1. The Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) is a test of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It focuses on different teaching \_\_\_\_\_.
3. TKT aims to test candidates' knowledge of concepts related to language, language use and the background to and practice of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. TKT aims to provide an easily accessible test about teaching English to speakers of other languages, which is prepared and delivered to international standards, and could be used by candidates to access further training and enhance \_\_\_\_\_.
5. TKT is for pre-service teachers and for experienced teachers, for teachers of primary, secondary and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This flexible and accessible award will help the teachers to understand: different methodologies for teaching; the 'language of teaching'; the ways in which resources can be used; the key aspects of lesson planning; \_\_\_\_\_.
7. There is no Pass/Fail. Every candidate receives \_\_\_\_\_.
8. TKT has \_\_\_\_\_ . Each module consists of a test of \_\_\_\_\_, lasting 80 minutes, which requires you to select the correct answer and mark this \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answers: professional knowledge for English language teachers, teaching methods, lesson planning, resources and classroom management, language teaching and learning; career opportunities, adult learners, classroom management methods for different needs, receives a certificate for each module taken, three core module, 80 objective questions, a computerised answer sheet.*

**Task 2.** Choose the appropriate rules for writing applications.

APPLICATION Does AND Don'ts

Does	Don'ts

1. Submit application materials by the deadlines!
2. Contact the university without using your full name. An email with just a first name, a nickname or no name does not allow a university to check your records and find out if your application has arrived.
3. Ask for basic information easily found on a school's website.
4. Make sure the data provided on all university forms is identical. When names and addresses are translated into roman letters, make sure they are spelled the same way consistently. Students should always use their full name and all information should match that given when taking standardized tests.
5. Get foreign language documents translated into English and certified. Submit both the original document and the certified English translation with your application.
6. Include all your activities - sports, clubs, volunteer opportunities, employment, etc.
7. Briefly explain any award that is not intuitive. How is an admissions counselor supposed to know what 'Recipient of the EFA Award' means?
8. Send copies of every award or certificate you have received. Your accomplishments should be noted in the application. A list of awards is better than many sheets of paper.
9. Spell the institution's name wrong. Is it college or University? If adapting the same essay to different schools, don't forget to change the name of the institution each time.
10. Plagiarize or use someone else's language. It is easy to tell when the feel of the one essay varies from the others. Do, however, have an English teacher/counselor review your applications essay(s) for grammatical errors.
11. Write that you think admissions committee wants to hear. Do choose a personal subject and write passionately and honestly. Consider writing about your failures as well as your successes. Be concise.
12. Repeat the information included in other parts of the application. Use the essay to tell the admission committee something they already know about you. Don't use the essay as a second resume.
13. Find out when the universities you are applying to require you to submit financial documents and Affidavit of Support - so they can send you an [-20 in a timely manner to schedule your F-1 student visa application at the US consulate.
14. Assume you qualify for scholarships from every school. Each university in the US has different policies regarding scholarships for international applicants. Find out the policy of a school before you apply so you know what you might be eligible for.

**Task 3.** Writing. There are 2 parts of the statement of purpose.

a) *Fill in the gaps.*

**Statement of purpose (example)**

1. applied to
2. looking for
3. using methods
4. surprises
5. the group work
6. 'spectacles with pink glasses'
7. ability to teach
8. gained a lot of self-confidence
9. Courses of Foreign Languages
10. connected with
11. many opportunities

I was born in a small town where weren't \_\_\_\_\_not for the study neither for the work. Pedagogical and technical institutes located there didn't attract me because they didn't offer the major that I dreamed for. I \_\_\_\_\_one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Ukraine and was admitted to the department of French & English philology and teaching.

I studied theory of teaching, translation and large pool of other things that I believed necessary \_\_\_\_\_of my future students (their attention was considered, of course). But when I had the first practical training at secondary school, I understood that I had been wearing \_\_\_\_\_. Nobody was interested in French literature and though the pupils tried to seem attentive, some of them were doing mathematics or physics home tasks, some of them writing \_\_\_\_\_, all others were drawing or sleeping with open eyes. The following days brought other unpleasant \_\_\_\_\_: I discovered that pupils never read the literature that they should. When we had a lesson \_\_\_\_\_the novel of famous French author A. De Saint-Exuperi *The Human Planet*, one guy composed his own story about\_\_\_\_\_, with Human beings on the Earth. I felt the total disappointment with my knowledge of pedagogy and \_\_\_\_\_.

With this feeling I started my work at \_\_\_\_\_after graduation. I followed general directions that I had received at the University, however my students left my group one by one, and at the end of the term I had 9 students remaining of the group of 27. I understood that \_\_\_\_\_developed 20 years ago I never could be a qualified and respected teacher. I started \_\_\_\_\_interesting information, which sometimes wasn't even included in our study plans, and for other types of\_\_\_\_\_. I encouraged students' ability to create and imagine that \_\_\_\_\_at my first lesson at secondary school. My students soon accustomed to role-plays, discussions and compositions, and things became more patient,\_\_\_\_\_.

b) *Put the parts of the text in correct order.*

- 1) The second problem is a lack of good study materials. Instead of developing the students' ability to create and to support their opinion, the handbooks published long ago require them to work automatically at given texts and exercises. There is an urgent need to develop new handbooks and other types of study materials.

- 2) I feel myself very happy to live in the time when the limits for the initiative and opportunities are expanding. I'm enthusiastic and optimistic about teaching but it also depends on the global state of education. Ukrainian education that was usually controlled and supported by the State wouldn't be able to survive in the capitalism-oriented country. I look forward for changes in education, and because I'm very goal-oriented and persistent I'm eager to contribute to it.
- 3) I saw also some very important objectives that should be changed. First of them is the general approach to a concept of teaching. The obsolete methods of teaching don't take into consideration the mental ability of different students. The program of study is usually specified for the average student and doesn't intend to disclose the intellectual potential of the best ones. It doesn't meet the needs of our time when the main goal of education is to discover bright and energetic personalities.
- 4) That is why I decided to study in the field of Education Administration in the US. The variety of educational institutions represented in your country, ancient democratic traditions and your experience in the administration of education will be extremely useful not only for me but also for the development of the education in my country.
- 5) My experience has changed my perception of teaching as a career. I understood the key-point of teaching: this is a constantly changing field and though there could be a general approach, it also depends on personality of a teacher.

*c) Write your own statement of purpose.*

### *3.1.2. Using films and videos for developing intercultural competence*

Films are a great medium to use to facilitate intercultural learning. English is a global language spoken by people from many countries and cultural backgrounds. There is a wide variety of films with intercultural themes.

#### **Topic: Culture.**

1. *Watch the video films devoted to culture and discuss the questions.*  
(<http://moviesegmentstoassessgrammargoes.blogspot.com/search/label/tips>)(*Samoilenko, 2013*)

#### **A. Discuss the following questions in pairs.**

1. What are the major features of your culture? How would you describe the people in your country?
2. Imagine a foreigner is coming to visit you. What special advice would you give him/her so that he does not face any serious cultural misunderstanding?
4. What was the most different culture you have ever had contact with? How different was it?
5. What are some common mistakes foreigners make when they visit your country? Come up with examples.

**B. Now watch the segment** from the movie **Anna and the King**. Then make a list of all the cultural differences Anna experienced. She is an English teacher visiting Siam, which is now Thailand. Write at least **6 different items**.

**C. Now watch the three segments** from the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Repeat the process in exercise B.

1. The first segment shows the **Greek fiancée** meeting her American parents-in-law for the first time
2. The second segment shows the **American fiancé** visiting her fiancée's Greek family for the first time.
3. The third segment shows **the American and Greek family** getting together for a dinner party.

**D. Class discussion:**

1. How do you compare the American and Greek family to your own family? Which of the families are closest to your own family when we consider behaviour and culture? Explain it.
2. How would your family feel if they were invited for the Greek dinner party? What about the American party?
3. How would they feel if they were invited to a party in your house?

**E. Watch the movie segment from** the movie *The Joy Luck Club*. **Make a list of 5 cultural mistakes** the American man made during his first dinner party with his fiancée's Chinese family.

Due to globalization, presentations in English are becoming more and more common in academic and professional life, which makes it necessary for students to develop their presentation skills. For the final stage of the project, students should be introduced to the features of a good presentation, including how to begin and end, include and refer to visuals, and use signposting, which is informing the audience about the main points you will cover and then referring to those points during the presentation. (Online presentations can be watched at: [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com). This website features accomplished and often famous speakers who talk about a variety of topics such as culture, science, business, and global issues.)

*3.1.3. Developing reading skills for teaching culture*

**Read the example of *Seven Ways to Annoy the Scots* and write *Seven Ways to Annoy the Russians*.**

The major goal of the activity *is to help* increase the participants' understanding of the relation between their own culture and other cultures. The activities employed here encourage recognition, comparison and evaluation of cultural facts (images, symbols) as well as perceptions of culture-specific meanings of words, phrases, proverbs, superstitions, jokes/wisecracks, etc.

*Task:* Think of seven ways to annoy a Russian (what irritates me as a Russian in the attitude of others, and as in-group discussion, i.e. what irritates us as a nation in the attitude of others).

*Example: Seven Ways to Annoy the Scots*

**SEVEN WAYS TO ANNOY A SCOT**

1. **Use England instead of Britain, or English instead of British.** There are actually four parts to the United Kingdom. England is one of them rather than all of them. If you don't believe this, have a look at a map.



2. **Use British instead of Scottish.** This one's a bit sophisticated. The trick is, when a Scot or a Scottish team actually manages to win any sort of international competition, you describe it as a great British victory. If they lose you call it another defeat for Scotland. (If you do this regularly enough, people will probably think you work for the BBC.)
3. **Use Scotch to refer to the people.** Scotch is fine for whisky, terriers and various types of food, but the human inhabitants prefer to be known as Scottish or Scots.
4. **Pretend never to have heard of Robert Burns.** If you really haven't heard of Robert Burns, conceal your ignorance.
5. **Say it would be better if the UK had one football team instead of four.** You can get even more of a reaction if you say, "...if there was only one English team". See above.
6. **Talk about men wearing skirts.** Skirts, whether made of tartan or not, are generally worn by women. The much more substantial garment, constructed of 6 or 8 metres of woven wool and worn by men, is known as a kilt. If you really want to raise the temperature, you could add that you think men in kilts look effeminate.
7. **Imitate the local accent.** Roll your /r/ and use a very close /u/. Sprinkle your conversation with stage-Scottish expressions like "Och aye the noo", and "Hoots, mon". This works particularly well if you normally speak with a standard BBC English accent.  
*from "Focus on Britain" by David Maule*

### *Teaching culture*

#### TIPS FOR TEACHING CULTURE

##### INTRODUCTION

##### TIP

1. Show how cultures may value the same thing differently
2. Understand the meaning of language in context
3. Surround students with stimulus from the target culture
4. Build awareness of social identity and roles
5. Understand the functions of non-verbal behaviour
6. Investigate how teacher and learner expectations vary across cultures
7. Examine your own cultural style
8. Introduce concepts of social responsibility, ethics, and human rights

##### ACTIVITY

- Cultural values clarification activity
- Critical incidents
- A picture is worth a thousand words
- Role play
- Stop or go?
- Establish classroom behavior norms
- Cultural style questionnaire
- Thinking peace, doing peace

#### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

##### **Activity 1: Cultural values clarification activity**

*Directions:* Look at the values on each side of the chart. Which value is most important to you? Circle the number that most closely represents your point of view.

(Adapted from Gardenswartz, L. & Rowe, A. (1994, p. 58). *The managing diversity survival guide: A complete collection of checklists, activities, and tips*. Chicago: Irwin Professional Publishing).

**Activity 2: Critical incidents: Understanding language in context**

*Directions:* Form small groups. Read the two incidents on the next page. Think about the different cultural backgrounds of the participants. Discuss each story. What do you think happened? Why? How could the misunderstanding have been prevented?

**Critical Incident 1**

Dr. Charlotte Denk, a new teacher at a U.S. college, was teaching different techniques for writing introductions to an ESL writing class. After reviewing seven techniques, the professor asked the class for examples of each technique. Sangram, a student from India, raised his hand and called out “Ma’am” to get the professor’s attention. Miguel, a student from Ecuador, excitedly yelled “Teacher, teacher!” in an attempt to be recognized. Erman from Turkey called out “Miss” to be noticed, and Rafael from El Salvador used “Miss Charlotte.” Dr. Denk was surprised by the many different forms of address that her students were using.

**Critical Incident 2**

On her way to class, Antonella, an Italian student studying in the United States, ran into Professor Manetta, her art professor. She had become friendly with him since, as an art major, she had recently exhibited some of her work at his studio in New York. Eager to discuss some of her newest paintings but late for class, Professor Manetta said, “We should talk more over lunch one day.” A week went by and Antonella had still not heard from him. He did not follow up on his invitation, and she was uncertain as to what she might have done wrong.

**Activity 7: Cultural style questionnaire****Directions:**

Read the description of these cultural competencies on the screen and circle the number on the chart that shows how well you think this trait describes you. If you think it describes you well, circle 5. If you think you don’t have the trait at all, circle.

Trait	Rating....	Not at all	Occasionally	A lot
Cultural self-awareness	1	2	3	4 5
Cultural awareness of others	1	2	3	4 5
Cultural sensitivity	1	2	3	4 5
Cross-cultural communication skills	1	2	3	4 5
Tolerance for ambiguity	1	2	3	4 5
Flexibility	1	2	3	4 5
Open-mindedness	1	2	3	4 5
Humility	1	2	3	4 5
Empathy	1	2	3	4 5
An outgoing personality	1	2	3	4 5
Self-awareness	1	2	3	4 5

Adapted from Peterson, B. (2004). *Cultural intelligence: A guide to working with people from other cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc. (pp. 161–166).

### 3.1.4. Writing strategies

Our classroom environments are the centres of writing. The university students took part in the international writing Olympics. This creative writing contest is a great way to encourage university students [years 1-4] to use English in a funny, interesting, cross-cultural way. Writing is judged on creativity of ideas more than perfection of mechanics.

For students, getting involved in this project would mean, at the most basic level, holding a “Writing Hour” event, in which all interested students attend and write their answers to an interesting prompt within a sixty-minute time period. Different prompts are provided for each age level. National winners are forwarded to international competition.

To help local students to prepare for this event in advance, we also have creative writing lesson plans and sample prompts available. These creative questions are great for class or club discussions: What would you do if you were invisible? What would a cloud say if it could talk? What would you do if you never had to sleep again?

The role of the teacher is to find interested students, help students practice writing creatively (in class or outside of class), locate a room where students will have one hour to write on the given topic during the event, gather a group of adults to judge the submissions, present certificate (and/or small gift) to participating students, pass on the winner’s submission to coordinator.

Here are the examples of the lesson plans.

#### **Lesson 1: How to write a paragraph**

Objective: Students will be able to write clear, coherent paragraphs.

**What is a paragraph:** A paragraph is a group of sentences about one main idea. This main idea is the **topic** and the first sentence of a paragraph is called a **topic sentence**.

**Rules of paragraph writing:**

1. Start with a clear topic sentence.
2. Begin each sentence with a capital letter.
3. End each sentence with a period.
4. Do not start each new sentence on a new line.
5. Each paragraph should have at least three sentences.
6. Make sure all sentences relate to the topic sentence.
7. Edit to make sure you don’t have run-ons (this may be another lesson all together).

**Practice writing paragraphs:** Give the students a topic to write a paragraph on, something using the new or recent vocabulary. When they are finished, have them read those aloud and peer edit.

#### **Lesson 2: How to write an essay**

Objective: Students will know the format of a basic five-paragraph essay and will be able to use this format when writing their own English essays.

**Parts of an Essay**

- 1) Introduction: First Paragraph
  - a. This is where you introduce your topic and lay out your argument or thesis statement.
- 2) Body: Three Paragraphs
  - b. Each paragraph provides a different piece of information or argument that supports their thesis.
- 3) Conclusion: Final paragraph
  - c. Restate your argument and sum up your conclusions.

**Lesson 3: Text Organizers.**

Objective: Students will be able to use text organizers to make their ideas flow throughout the essay.

Text Organizers:

- a. Sequencing: First (of all), secondly, next, then, after that,
- b. Summing up: in conclusion, to sum up, finally,
- c. Giving opinions: personally, in my opinion, in my view, to my mind, I think that.

Translate these words and practice the new vocabulary.

For homework have the students edit their previous essays adding in appropriate text organizers.

**Lesson 4: Creative writing**

Objective: Students will be able to think creatively about different writing prompts.

1. Begin by writing a creative writing prompt on the board. These could be similar to the prompts used (but not the same ones) for the contest.
2. Give the students a set time to write about the prompt.
3. When time is up have the students trade essays with a partner. Each person should read their partner's essay and pose three questions about their essay pertaining to what is unclear, unpersuasive or unconvincing.
4. For homework, have the student rewrite their essay.

This can be done many times.

*Alternative:* Bring in a box of random objects. Have the students reach in and choose two. Then have students write a story in which these two objects are the main characters.

*Daily Activity:* Have the students begin a journal. Each day write a prompt on the board. Give the students ten minutes to write on the prompt.

Prompt Ideas:

**University 1:** -What are all the different things you can use a paperclip for?

-What would you do if you woke up tomorrow in Australia?

-If you could have any job you wanted what would it be and why?

**University 2:** -Waterfalls actually talk. What do they say?

-What is love?

-How would you describe the people of your country?

**University 3:** -Would you rather be 5 years older or younger than you are now? Why?

-How is tradition important?

-How does your life perspective change after you learn a second language?

**University 4:** -What would you do at night if you no longer had to sleep?

-What would the world be like if all coffee and tea disappeared forever?

-If you had to keep a very boring job what would you do to make your life more interesting?

We take part in different international conferences. Teachers from different cultures and of different ages are given a chance to talk, exchange information and develop personal and professional networking. They share the activities and kinds of writing and invite the teachers to participate in throughout the workshops. Together they examine how these multiple opportunities use writing as a way of learning and as a way to demonstrate learning.

We present the booklet with writing exercises that include lesson plans for: personal response papers, creative writing exercises, writing workshops, class presentation ideas, collaborative writing activities and writing through revision (a student's sample).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

As there were no courses in academic writing, PhD advisors were expected to teach their students how to write in English, how to publish, and how to enter the international scientific community.

Didactics materials, which were used for developing intercultural competence of students of humanities, were designed in accordance with principles, substantial for intercultural communication in a professional environment and were components on the basis of which the successive developing intercultural competence was carried out.

Preliminary results of introducing the new program are presented. It is necessary to discuss some considerations as to the prospects of teaching academic writing, which are potentially applicable to similar intercultural and educational situations.

For this reason there is a necessity of implementation in the system of pedagogical education the special integrated courses and development of the educational literature which would combine achievements of philosophical, psychology-pedagogical, linguistic cultural disciplines for improving the preparation of students for intercultural communication.

The main goal of the future projects is to improve the present system of education of the residents and students by creating a Master program in "Foreign Languages and Intercultural communication teaching", revising relevant curricula, existing relevant modules of teaching courses and approximating them to the European educational standards, developing and implementing training and retraining programs.

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