

PURDUE ONLINE WRITING LAB IS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO ENHANCE WRITING SKILLS

Zulfiya Akmalova

University of World Economy and Diplomacy

ABSTRACT

Students have always found writing to be challenging because it is not straightforward. It requires much effort, planning, preparation and other skills to produce a piece of writing. At tertiary education, learners are normally assigned to write essays, articles, and lengthy papers. Thus, for students it is imperative to learn how to compose a well-organized and quality paper. The author of this article recommends to use Purdue Online Writing Lab. As it offers up-to-date resources on anything about writing.

Keywords: *writing, writing lab, tertiary education, university students.*

Introduction

As a writing teacher at public university, I regularly search for resources to help my students with their academic writing. Once I was surfing the net, I encountered *Purdue Online Writing Lab*. It is a free online assistance for writing teachers, students and people who want to develop their writing. Teachers can use resources for their writing classes and instructional materials are also readily accessible. The mission of the lab is to assist writers in developing their writing skills. It can be accessed through online or on campus. Purdue team welcomes any questions, feedback from writers, instructors and students regarding the content they provide online. The resources are available on the following website: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab

Purdue OWL provides basic information on its official website. When you open the website, it shows three subtopics in order:

How to write as a graduate student – here graduate students can get information about graduate writing, different writing topics, writing genres, and how to write a thesis. The links to the information are also provided.

Creating an Annotated Bibliography – students get informed about annotated bibliography. There are tools and assignments. It leads to other topics including definitions and format to annotated bibliographies, annotated bibliography breakdown, and samples.

Writing a literature review – OWL guides students to review literature. For researchers, literature review is of utmost importance because first the topic should be reviewed from literature and then appropriate referencing is required.

Job search writing – it is huge benefit for students who need job while studying. OWL provides information on filling the application, job search letters, writing resumes, CVs and resources on how to search skilled labour job.

All these categories are beneficial tools for students, writers, teachers. It is obvious that the resources are particularly useful for students studying at universities. At tertiary education, students are often times asked to write essays, articles, and when they are finishing university, they produce a graduation paper, so this website is just for them. Interestingly, writing instructors also do not make much effort to create their own instructional materials because this website team are experts of Purdue university who update the resources on a regular basis (Purdue Writing Lab).

Apart from the above-mentioned categories, there are other beneficial topics that can be found on the menu of the website (Bobcat Advising Center) (see Figure 1):

- ✓ General Writing Instruction
- ✓ Academic Writing
- ✓ Essay Writing
- ✓ The Writing Process
- ✓ Understanding Writing Assignments
- ✓ Research and Citation Resources
- ✓ Multilingual Students: Writing in a Second Language



Figure 1. Snapshot of the website: Topics on the menu

Julie Webb (2020) talks about Purdue Online Writing Lab in her YouTube video. She says that the lab is the best writing platform and anyone can get information about writing such as cover letter, resume, MLA formatting, documentation, presentation types of formatting, etc. She admits that every time she visits this website there is always something new about writing. She highly recommends to bookmark this lab because visitors would love to come again. To get to the topics, one should go to the menu (see Figure 1). For example, if you click on “General Writing”, there appears topics such as Writing Process, Academic Writing, Common Writing Assignments, Mechanics, Grammar, Punctuation. Each topic covers subtopics. The Writing Process includes: prewriting, developing research questions, composing thesis statements, proofreading, etc.

Personal Experience

I use this website with my university students to teaching *Academic Writing* class. First, I guide my students through the website showing them the YouTube video by Julie Webb. She nicely introduces to the Writing Lab. Then, students enter the website and explore the site themselves. If they happen to have some questions, they ask me or their peers to help. My students love it very much. As they say, the resources are readily available and free of charge. Also, they find supplementary materials about the topics they are assigned. They prepare home assignments, independent tasks, and writing assignments with the assistance of this lab. As Akhmadjonov (2023) says, language learners can develop their creative and critical thinking skills when they are motivated to learn new languages. In other words, if we encourage our university students to experience new ideas, resources, and materials about writing, their thoughts of writing will shift from negative to positive.

Conclusion

I strongly recommend EFL, ESL, ESP instructors to use Purdue Writing Lab to enhance students writing. Writing skill is still considered as the most challenging for students. Most importantly, writing is a necessary and useful skill during and after academic life.

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