

A Suggestion for Teenagers:

Earning Workplace Skills by Practicing Longer Forms of Writing

### Abstract

Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, and Macgill state, “teenagers' lives are filled with writing” (2008, p. 1). Lenhart et al. (2008) explain that by texting using *SNS* (social networking service) or some other electronic technologies, teenagers these days are more likely to write than when their parents were at the same age. As this study shows, writing opportunities for teenagers are increasing. However, this can be said only in the use of shorter forms of writing.

According to Smit (n.d.), students do not write well, because they do not have an opportunity to use longer forms of writing. These two contradicting statements imply that teenagers are likely to use shorter forms of writing than longer forms of writing these days. However, this does not mean that there is no necessity for teenagers to practice longer forms of writing. On the contrary, it is important for teenagers to practice the longer forms for the purpose of earning skills which are useful in many places such as the workplace. Since teenagers are students in school, they have more time to practice writing extensive essays than working adults. Therefore, this essay suggests teenagers to use more complicated forms of writing in order to enhance their workplace skills.

### A Suggestion for Teenagers:

#### Earning Workplace Skills by Practicing Longer Forms of Writing

By texting, using *SNS* (social networking service) or other electronic devices, teenagers these days are likely to write more easily than their parents were at the same age (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, and Macgill, 2008). However, students today are more capable of writing shorter essays since they are much simpler and easier to comprehend. According to Lenhart et al. (2008), 92% of teenagers have written brief essays as schoolwork while 31% have written brief stories for the use of personal enjoyment in the past year. By contrast, 93% of teenagers have submitted essays for their school while 8% of the teenagers have written essays for their personal enjoyment in the past year. These figures mean teenagers are likely to use shorter forms of writing for their personal enjoyment, and they only use longer forms of writing for their school assignments. In addition, Langer and Applebee (as cited in Smit, n.d.) reported, “two-thirds of students in Grade 8, for example, are expected to spend an hour or less on writing for homework each week, and 40% of twelfth graders report never or hardly ever been asked to write a paper of 3 pages or more” (p. 1-2). Therefore, these two

pieces of data above show that frequency for teenagers using longer forms of writing is low.

Furthermore, the phrase “longer forms of writing” in this essay means a text composed of three parts: the reason for writing; the opinion; and the support for the opinions. For example, essays, formal mail in business, newspaper articles, several blog articles, and reports are included. On the other hand, “shorter forms of writing” means texts which only include some parts of the above composition; for instance, chats or private mail sent to a person with whom you are intimate. In addition, this essay will focus on young English speakers, especially teenagers who are receiving general education.

As it is mentioned above, there are few opportunities for teenagers to use detailed writing. Specifically, teenagers only use complicated forms when they are asked to write an essay at school. However, teenagers should practice longer forms of writing more frequently, because it helps them earn skills which will be useful in the workplace.

Developing skills which are useful in the workplace is important. This is because these skills will help people succeed in the workplace. Some of those skills are “communication, organizational, computer, interpersonal, analytical, leadership, problem solving, time management, mathematical and professional skills” (para. 1) as Johnson & Wales University (JWU) (n.d.) listed in the “Top 10 Valued Workplace Skills”. Out of these

abilities, this essay will focus on two: analytical skills and communication skills. Since it assists people earning analytical and communication knowledge, teenagers should use longer forms of writing.

### **Analytical Skills**

First, analytical skills are some of the abilities which people can enhance by using longer forms of writing. According to JWU (n.d.), analytical skills include “understanding and making logical arguments” (para. 5). This means that logical thinking is closely related with analytical skills. Logical thinking helps people earn analytical skills from a number of perspectives; first of all, it allows them to grasp the connection of each subject and develop new ideas from the information. In addition, according to Strydom (n.d.), logical thinking skills help people predict the future from each cause and consequence. Since predicting the future from the current situation is the good of analyzing things, this is also an aspect which leads people earning analytical skills. Therefore, developing logical thinking will help people enhance analytical skills.

According to Trimble (2011), writers should avoid egocentrism in writing. This means that writing requires objective sources such as figures or facts to support the arguments. Moreover, as it is defined, longer forms of writing include many points such as

the reason for writing, the opinion, and the support for the opinions. Thus, since there are lots of objective sources and points included in longer forms of writing, longer forms of writing need to be organized to make the arguments clear. According to Minto (1995), logical thinking helps people categorize their ideas and make their writings compact and clear.

In other words, logical thinking is practiced while categorizing ideas.

Furthermore, logical thinking also helps people make a clear connection between points. Ling (2010) says that logical thinking is especially important for writing academic essays because knowing the connection between ideas is important. In other words, logical thinking is required in longer forms of writing when connecting information in the correct way. This means that people can develop their logical thinking by using longer forms of writing.

In order to show their accuracy for their work, people mostly required to show their basis and evidence. People need to analyze the source texts and choose the right information to use to do this. Therefore, earning analytical skills are valued in the workplace.

Thus, using longer forms of writing develop people's logical thinking, and this will also enhance their analytical skills.

### Communication Skills

Secondly, people can learn Standard English, and enhance their communication skills by using detailed forms. The phrase “Standard English” in this essay refers to English which are normally written in English text books.

Communication skills, especially using Standard English, is important in the workplace. This is because workers have responsibilities to prevent mistakes and damage to their workplace. One of the causes of mistakes in the workplace is miscommunications. This could also happen in written communication. Trimble (2011) states that people need to write with accurate spelling and grammar. This is because inaccuracy will confuse the reader and make them have incorrect information. Ali, Khan, Akunjee, and Ahfat (2006) report that lots of abbreviations used by an oculist are misunderstood by general doctors. In fact, only 16.7% of general doctors knew that the abbreviation *PVD* stands for posterior vitreous detachment. Ali, et al. (2006) conclude that these misunderstandings confuse doctors and patients. Misunderstandings in a workplace such as this might develop into a matter of life and death. Therefore, it is important to be able to use Standard English to prevent mistakes in the workplace.

In addition, since there is a wide range of people in the workplace, people need to

communicate with a common language in order to be able to communicate with everyone.

For English speakers, Standard English is one of the most common languages, which

everyone can use. Thus, communication skills, especially using Standard English are

important in the workplace, because it allows people to contact a wide range of people.

Furthermore, RMN Global Search (2013) reports “those who had not achieved director-level

positions within the 10 year span [of the study] made 2.5 times as many grammatical

mistakes” (para. 2). This means that use of Standard English is directly related to people’s

success in the workplace.

Communication skills using Standard English can be practiced by using longer forms of writing. Since it is likely to be read publicly, the use of Standard English is required in longer forms of writing. On the other hand, shorter forms of writing are likely to be read privately. In most occasions, shorter forms of writing are read by people who have close relationships with the writer. People do not need to care so much about accuracy of their language in order to read or write shorter forms of writing. This is because people can easily correct their mistakes. Also, most of these miscommunications between people who have close relationships do not relate to damage their workplace. Since most teenagers only have private connections, they are likely to use shorter forms of writing as well as informal

English. For instance, teenagers use abbreviations such as *OMG* (oh my god) or *2moro* (tomorrow). According to Wyden (2013), teenagers use abbreviations simply because they can send messages to their friends faster. As there are people who do not know the meaning of the abbreviation, miscommunication occurs frequently. Although, most of the time teenagers do not care, since miscommunications can easily be solved. However, people will not learn Standard English this way. Therefore, people need to practice longer forms of writing in order to learn Standard English.

In addition, since people need to write more when they are using longer forms of writing, there are more chances for people to make mistakes in the text. Thus, people have a higher chance to find and fix their English. This means that using longer forms of writing is a good opportunity for people to practice their English techniques and enhance their communication skills.

To conclude, communication skills using Standard English are important skills in the workplace. To earn these skills people should practice longer forms of writing. Using extensive forms of writing is valuable for people to improve writing knowledge.

### **Importance of Practicing Using Longer Forms of Writing During Teenage Years**

Analytical and communication skills are two skills that are useful in jobs, and these

two skills can be enhanced by practicing using longer forms of writing. Furthermore, people should learn and practice these skills during their teenage years. The reason for this is because it is easier for teenagers to make time for practicing complicated writing compared to adults.

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), 15 to 19 years old teenagers spend 1.42hr more per day for leisure and sports activities compared with 25 to 34 years old adults. Therefore, teenagers can use this time for practicing longer forms of writing.

However, the issue is that teenagers these days do not care about earning these skills so much. In most cases, many students do not realize the value of learning Standard English. In other words, teenagers do not think seriously about importance of using accurate formal English. “50% of teens say they sometimes use informal writing styles instead of proper capitalization and punctuation in their school assignments” and “38% say they have used text shortcuts in school work such as *LOL* [this stands for laugh out loud]”(Lenhart et al., 2008, p. 2). As mentioned before, use of abbreviations will make people misunderstand information, which may lead to mistakes. This specific problem will happen when teenagers become adults. Therefore, teenagers these days need to change their mind and use longer forms of writing for their future.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, teenagers are likely to write shorter forms of writing because it is easier for them. However, it is important for teenage English speakers to use longer forms of writing, because they can practice and earn analytical and communication skills which are useful in the workplace. It is especially important for teenagers to do this because it is easier to practice during the teenage period rather than after entering the workplace. As a result, it is necessary for teenagers speaking English to practice longer forms of writing in order to earn useful skills in the workplace and to succeed in the future.

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