

## Awareness of Academic Writing among Hearing Impaired Students

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the teaching of academic writing to hearing impaired (Deaf) students. The study assesses awareness of academic writing by students and covers 135 students at the Division for the Hearing Impaired at Tsukuba College of Technology.

The study shows that;

1. the interest and motivation of hearing impaired students in academic writing is very high
2. students are aware of their inability, but cannot recognize where they experience problems.

**Key Words:** academic writing, hearing impaired, higher education, student' awareness

### Introduction

How to develop the academic writing skills of hearing impaired students attending higher education institutions is an important issue. However, until now most research has focused on improving writing skills in primary and secondary education with very little research in higher education. This paper addresses the teaching of academic writing at the Division for the Hearing Impaired at Tsukuba College of Technology (TCT).

TCT was the national college of higher education catering for hearing impaired students, and became Tsukuba University of Technology in October, 2005. Since the college was established in 1987, many highly qualified technical students have graduated and become well established in society.

### Methods

The survey using questionnaire was done in June, 2005. The subjects were 135 students at TCT.

First year:	51 students
Second year:	49 students
Third year:	35 students

The study assesses awareness of academic writing by students. Aspects of the study examine the students' interest in academic writing and their motivation to improve their own academic writing skills. A number of areas also investigate what students find most difficult.

### Survey Results (Fig.1) & Discussion I

Tutorials on the writing of thesis papers are;

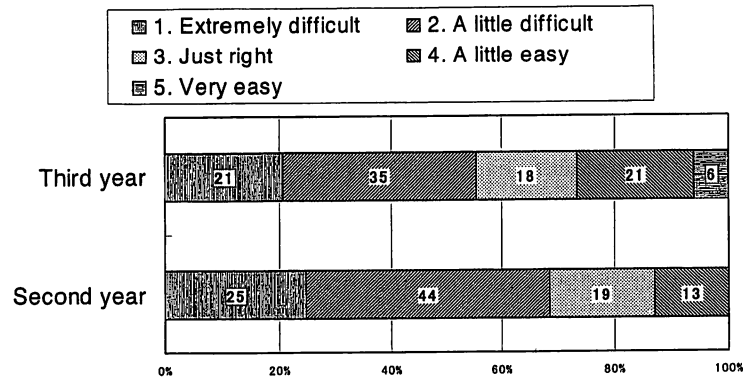


Fig. 1 Difficulty of Tuition in Academic Writing

This question was not given to the first year students as they had not studied “Academic Writing” prior to the time of the survey.

On responses with answers “1.”, “2.”, and “3.”, the difference between the second and the third year was small. However, when examining responses with answers “4. A little easy” and “5. Very easy”, more responses were from third year students than second year students. It could be supposed that students become to feel a greater necessity (for training in writing) as studies in their major subject progress. The format and terminology of thesis papers are considered essential for university students.

### Survey Results (Fig.2) & Discussion II

Tutorials on the writing of thesis papers are;

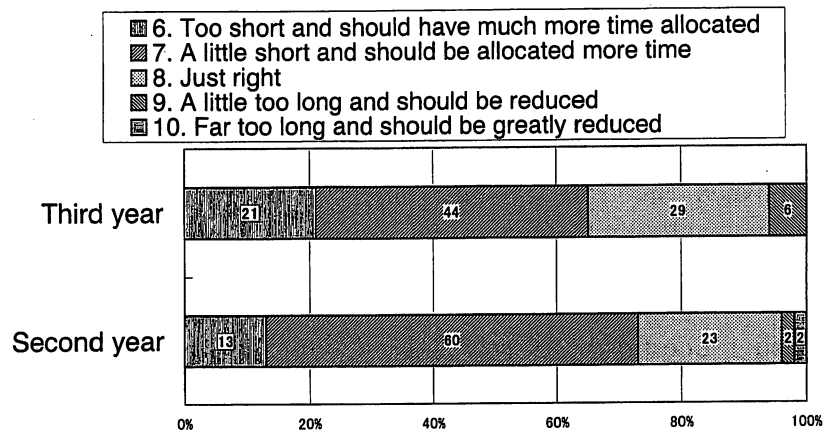


Fig. 2 Adequacy of Tuition in Academic Writing

This question was not given to the first year students as they had not studied “Academic Writing” prior to the time of the survey.

The answer “A little too long and should be reduced” and “Far too long and

should be greatly reduced” for the time allocated represented very few responses among both second and third year students. When adding the responses with the answers, tutorials “should be allocated more time” and “allocated much more time”, it is apparent that many students are very conscious of the importance of Academic Writing and indicates a high motivation for improving writing skills.

**Survey Results (Fig.3) & DiscussionIII**

As a college graduate, after becoming a full member of society, your logical writing skills will;

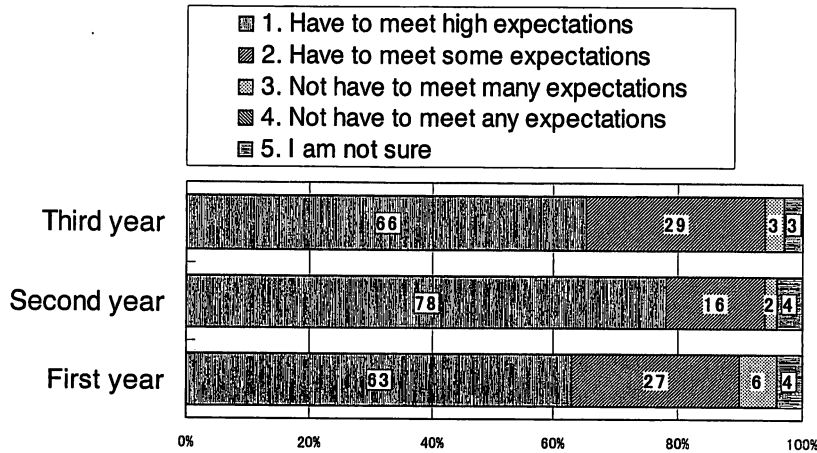


Fig. 3 Students’ Awareness of the Expectations on their Skills

In every student year, the responses were predominately answers “1.” and “2.”, demonstrating an awareness of the “High expectations of society”. This is directly related to the height of motivation indicated in sections II and IV.

**Survey Results (Fig.4) & DiscussionIV**

For improving Logical Writing Skills (Objective Reasoning), I would;

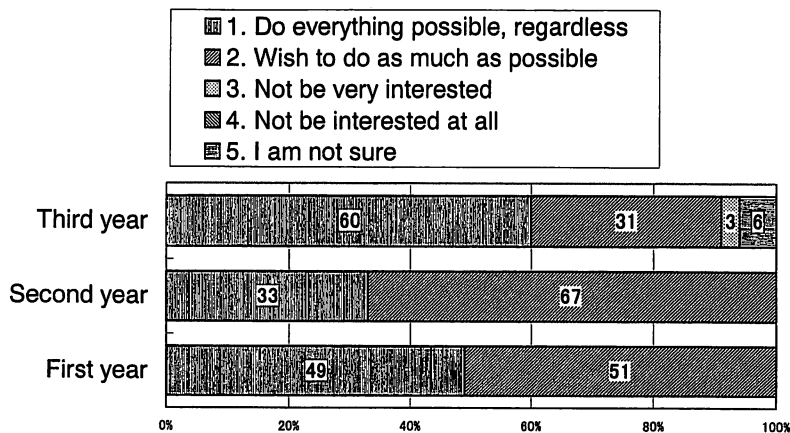


Fig. 4 Attitude Toward Improving Logical Writing Skills

In every student year, the responses were predominately answers “1.” and “2.”, showing interest in improving “Academic Writing” to be very high. Among first year students, the number of responses for answer “1.” is almost as many as for answer “2.”. Among second year students, responses come to a ratio of “1:2”, responses for answer “1.” decreasing a little. On the contrary, among third year students, responses were in a ration of “2:1”. The reason for the reverse between second and third year students is to be investigated in further surveys.

### Survey Results (Fig.5) & Discussion V

How essential do you consider the comprehension of tables and graphs for your education in your major subject to progress?

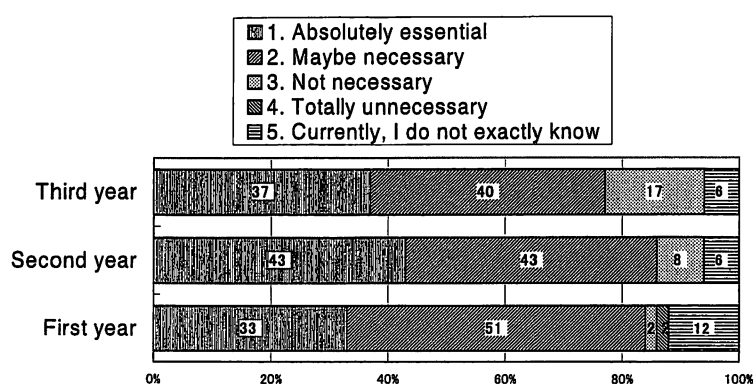


Fig. 5 Necessity for Comprehension of Tables and Graphs

Of first year students more than 10% answered “5. Currently, I do not exactly know”. The survey was conducted nine weeks after entering TCT. Therefore, this response is thought to be related to the lack of study experience in a major subject at TCT. On the other hand, 43% of second year students answered “1. Absolutely essential”. They seem to be aware of the necessity for skills to read tables and graphs, through the study of their major subject at TCT. Among third year students, however, the awareness of the necessity was not so high. More third year students than second year students answered “3. Not necessary”. It is difficult to interpret this response at the moment. I would like to add more research.

### Survey Results (Fig.6) & Discussion VI

What do you consider to be necessary to improve your logical writing skills? Choose all the answers applicable to you.

Write the numbers, from 1-10 in V above, of the items you practice yourself. Choose all the answers applicable to you.

Students select multiple answers. The average number of items per student, for first year students, is 5.1, second year, 4.7, third year, 5.0 showing almost no difference between each year. Many students consider answers “2.”, “1.” and “9.” to be necessary for improving their writing skills. However, from the teacher’s perspective,

TCT students should focus more on “3.,” “6.” and “10.”. On this point, it can be said that students do not clearly comprehend the source of their problem.

Of the items listed in VI, the number of the items practiced by first and second year students were about half. In particular, among third year students, the number of the items stopped at a low of 1.6 for about one third of 5.1.

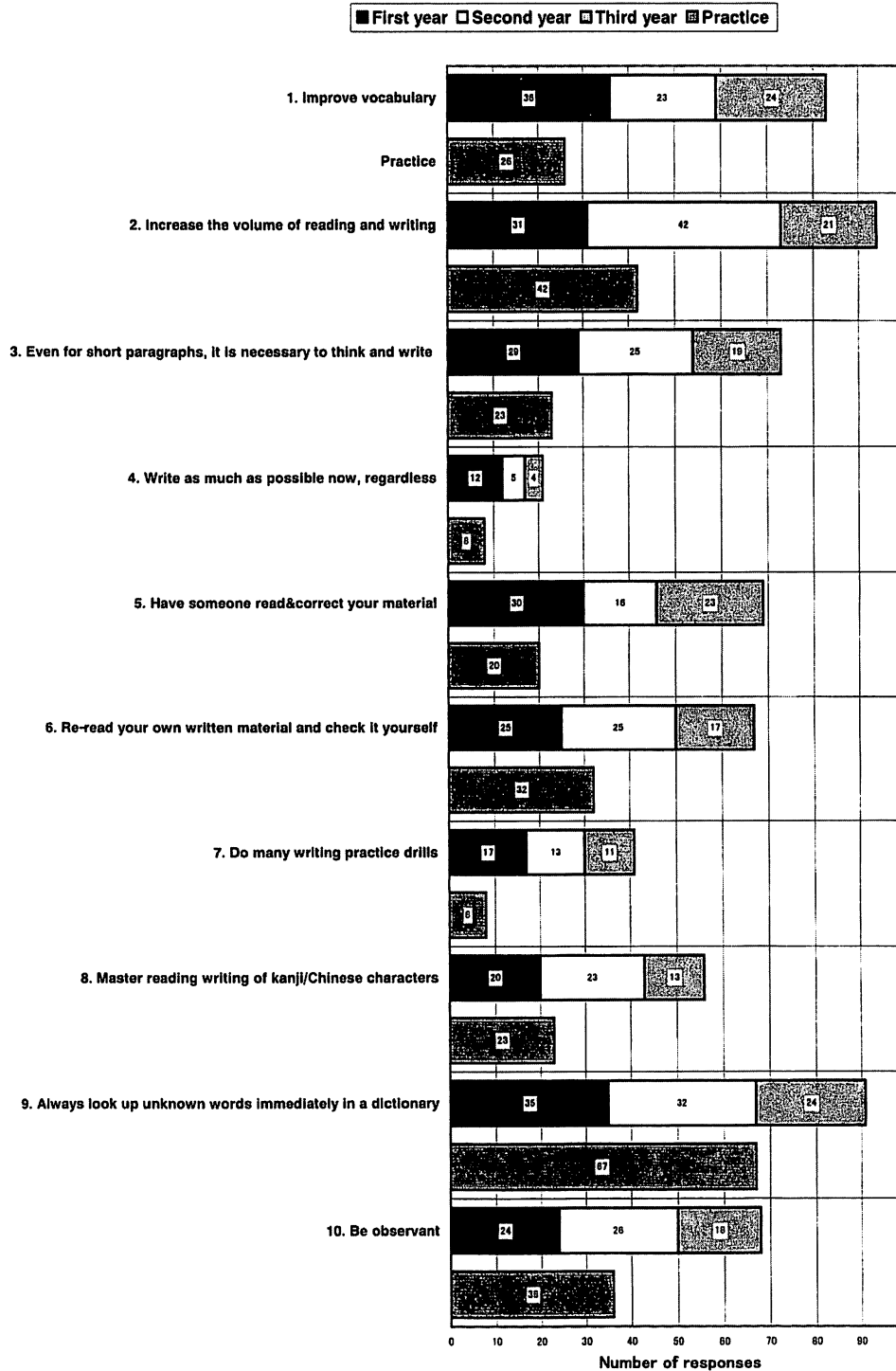


Fig. 6 Student’s Awareness and Practice of Fundamental Skills for Logical Writing

## **Conclusion**

The study shows that;

1. the interest and motivation of hearing impaired students in academic writing is very high
2. students are aware of their inability, but cannot recognize where they experience problems.

From this study a practical education program (curriculum) was developed and adopted at TCT. Further intensive research is necessary to develop an education program(curriculum) to nurture greater motivation and interest in academic writing among students.