

Academic English II
Final Exam
Abu Dhabi Polytechnic, Abu Dhabi

Total: **/25**

Section 1. 10 marks

Section 1 of your final exam contains two excerpts from student PhD dissertations on the topic of social media and its impact on academic/professional writing.

CLO5 Comprehend information from longer lectures on academic topics

CLO1 Scan longer texts for information

CLO2 Identify and use reliable sources of information to draw relevant evidence from sources

Read Excerpt 1 and answer questions 1 and 2.

EXCERPT 1

Title: Social Media Use: A Critical Analysis of Facebook' s Impact on Collegiate EFL Students' English Writing in Thailand

Author: Tharinee Kamnoetsin

Date of Publication: July 17, 2014

Note: EFL is an abbreviation for English as a foreign language.

Paragraph 1

Social media has been used in many arenas and for different purposes. For example, it is used in news media to provide news to audiences, or in business for advertising products or surveying customers' needs. Social media are also used in the educational setting (e.g. college learning, EFL settings). College students use three top- used social media tools: Facebook, Wikipedia and YouTube, for social engagement, direct communication, speed of feedback, and relationship building (Liu, 2012). In college learning settings social media and Facebook (a) can be used as an educational tool that instructors use to foster collaboration and discussion, boost student interaction, and enhance student engagement and build better communication skills (Eteokleous et al. 2012; Lederer, 2012); (b) can enhance communication among students and teachers (Eteokleous et al., 2012; Lederer, 2012; Mazer et al., 2007); (c) can help to reduce stress and increase satisfaction among students (Zaidieh, 2012); (d) can promote, enhance, and support the teaching and learning process (Eteokleous et al., 2012); and (e) can help prepare students network and find employment (Lederer, 2012).

Paragraph 2

In the EFL area, some researchers have suggested that social media and Facebook have advantages for English language learners (ELLs) learning at the college level. For example, they are used as an EFL pedagogical tools in blended learning environments 8 (Manan et al., 2012; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010) to (a) assist EFL college students in learning English writing (Shih, 2011), (b) make students become more comfortable and increase students' social relationships outside of the classroom (Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011), (c) enhance critical reflection and community of practice (Yang, 2009), (d) provide the potential for collaborative and cooperative learning (Shih, 2011), and (e) help students learn new vocabulary (Hiew, 2012; Kabilan et al., 2010; Omar et al., 2012; Shih, 2011; Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Yunus, Salehi & Chenzi, 2012). Considering that social media and Facebook are involved with computer use, research has found that the computer-based language learning used in EFL classrooms can help improve students' writing abilities, their uses of grammar, their uses of appropriate language, and general language abilities.

Paragraph 3

It is also positively associated with students' self-esteem, senses of achievement and improvement, and increased student motivation (Al-Jarf, 2004; Hegelheimer & Fisher, 2006; Hirvela, 2006; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer et al., 2000). Despite these positive advantages, social media and Facebook can also be a disadvantage to students in some ways; they (a) can be a distraction in the classroom and be used to trigger cyberbullying or malicious behavior on college campuses (Lederer, 2012; Yunus et al., 2012), (b) may affect students' learning outcomes and physical and mental health because they spend too much time using social media or Facebook, (c) may result in dishonest and unreliable friendships because individuals can present only a positive self-image and (d) can result in

miscommunication because the writing can be lacking in the opportunities for expression, explanation, and clarification that are found in face-to-face interactions (Zaidieh, 2012). A negative effect of social media in terms of learning English is that it may not provide a suitable environment for formal teaching and learning (Kabilan et al., 2010; Omar et al., 2012; Shih, 2011) because it creates student distraction and creates a habit of using too many short forms in writing (White, 2009; Yunus, et al., 2012). Moreover, Manan et al. (2012) pointed out that engaging with social media may also increase the usage of English of poor quality because students tend to use non-standard English when interacting with each other online. **Thus, the evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media on EFL learners' writing has been inconclusive.**

Questions 1 and 2 for Excerpt 1

1. In the conclusion of the excerpt above, the author argues that “the evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media on EFL Learners’ writing has been inconclusive” (Kamnoetsin, 2014). The word **inconclusive** means having no final result or outcome. From your reading of the article, explain in your own words, why the author reaches the conclusion that the evidence is inconclusive. (Hint: Experts have different opinions on the advantages/disadvantages of social media.) (5 points – 2.5 points for content, 2.5 points for grammar/language/structure)

2. In paragraph 1, the author gives several ways that social media can be used as a tool in educational settings. Write a short paragraph (maximum of five sentences) where you refer to one way (mentioned in the article) that social media has impacted your own educational experience. In this paragraph, you must paraphrase or quote the article above using in-text citations.

(5 points – 2.5 points for content, 2.5 points for grammar/language/structure)

Excerpt 2:

Title: The Impact of Texting and Social Media on Students' Academic Writing Skills

Author: Angela Risto

Publication Date: 2014

Excerpt 2

Paragraph 1

In the present, technology dominates student learning and communication. Many schools have cast aside their text books and decided to utilize 100% digital technology. Additionally, students are utilizing technology more than ever for personal communication (Bauerlein, 2010). A Nielson Mobile (2010) study found that students send an average of 3,339 texts per month and implement social media into their communication regime an average of nine hours each week. Another study performed by Lenhart (2012) and her colleagues at the Pew Institute found that one third of teenagers send over 100 texts each day, or more than 3,000 texts per month. Americans now utilize their cell phones for texting more than placing phone calls. It has also been found that 13 to 17 year olds send more text messages than any other age demographic (Cingel & Sundar, 2012). With the inculcation of literacy testing and the movement toward Common Core Standards, students are now required to write more often than students of previous generations.

Paragraph 2

The problem that this study addresses is the perception that students' academic writing skills are declining as a result of the utilization of texting and social media. When polled, 81% of middle school teachers and 75% of high school teachers felt that texting was negatively impacting students' academic skills. Furthermore, the poll indicated that 73% of middle school teachers and 69% of high school teachers believed that the use of social media had a negative effect on students' academic skills (Simba Information, 2012). By identifying the aspects of academic writing impacted by texting and social media, teachers will be better equipped aide students in producing high quality writing that will further their scholastic endeavors.

Paragraph 3

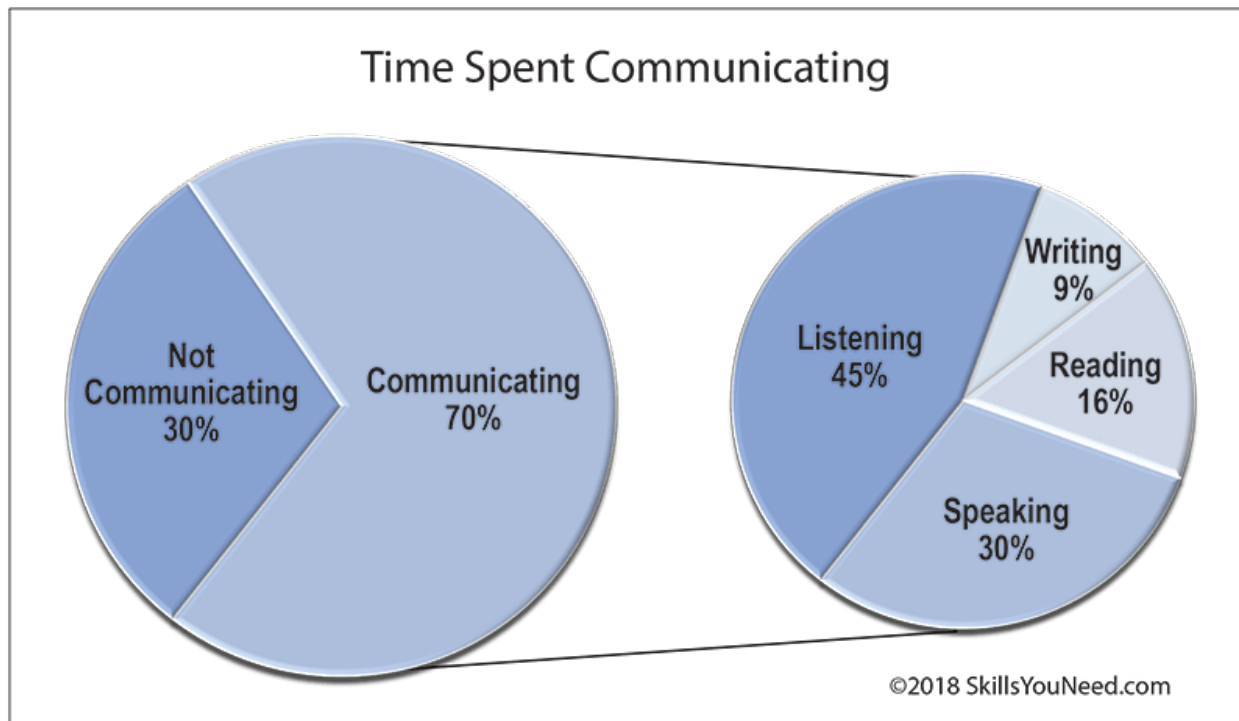
Writing skills are not only essential for student success, they are also a vital component for success in the workforce. According to Kay (2011), writing skills are number one on the list of the top five requirements that employers seeking in a job candidate. Effective communication in a written format is vital for employment according to a multitude of companies including UPS, a leader in logistics, and BAE Systems, a development company for defense systems, aerospace and security (Kay, 2011). According to a MetLife (2011) survey, 97% of executives deemed According to a MetLife (2011) survey, 97% of executives deemed PREVIEW 3 writing skills as an essential job skill. Green (2011) concurs that employers are seeking candidates with strong oral and written communication skills. The fact that students are utilizing a writing style influenced by texting and social media in their academic and professional endeavors will present obstacles both in the academic and professional world.

1. In Excerpt 2, the author states that the problem the study addresses is the negative perception regarding the influence that social media has on students' writing skills.

What evidence does the author give to establish that this is a problem that needs addressing? Summarize the evidence in your own words. (5 points – 2.5 points for content, 2.5 points for grammar/language/structure)

2. According to the author, writing skills are not just important for academics. What other reason does the author give for the importance of writing skills and why? (Answer in your own words). (5 points – 2.5 points for content, 2.5 points for grammar/language/structure)

Section 2: 5 marks



Based on the research of: *Adler, R., Rosenfeld, L. and Proctor, R. (2001)*
Interplay: the process of interpersonal communicating (8th edn), Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt.

1. Based on the chart above on the amount of time we spend communicating with others, how important do you think it is to develop your communication skills? Answer the question in 2 sentences and refer specifically to information from the chart to support your argument.

(5 points – 2.5 points for content, 2.5 points for grammar/language/structure)

SECTION 3: Essay 10 marks

CLO 3 Develop a focused oral and written arguments

CLO 4 Provide detailed support to the views expressed in text and speech

Write a 150-word essay on the following topic:

Many academics are concerned about the negative effects social media has on students' writing skills. Do you believe these academics should be as concerned? Why or why not? In your essay, refer to the two excerpts above at least twice (summarize, paraphrase, or quote).

2.5 marks --- strength of argument

5. marks --- logical progression of ideas/connections

2.5 marks --- correct summary/paraphrase/quote (structure and citation)

2.5 marks --- grammar/punctuation/language