

EALTA 2019
Keynote Symposium
Validity Models In Transition

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Academic Writing in University

Corpus-based studies

→ Variations across disciplines – content-related text types (modes of argument, referencing, voice ...)

e.g. Biber (2006); Nesi & Gardner (2012); Staples et al (2018); Tribble and Wingate (2013); Weigle & Friginal (2015); Wingate (2015)



Academic writing

A conundrum

A possible source of explanation for the weak-to-moderate correlation between test scores and actual academic performance.

Observable differences between the written language produced in tests and the language used in actual disciplinary writing in university, e.g.

Staples, Biber & Reppen (2018:318):

‘The linguistic patterns employed in iBT texts are not representative of the linguistic patterns employed in disciplinary texts, calling into question the basis of the extrapolation inference.’

Constructing Academic Writing

Task 2: Independent Writing Task: Tell the Truth

They read:

Read the question below. You have **30 minutes** to plan, write, and revise your essay. Typically, an effective essay will contain a minimum of 300 words.

They respond to:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

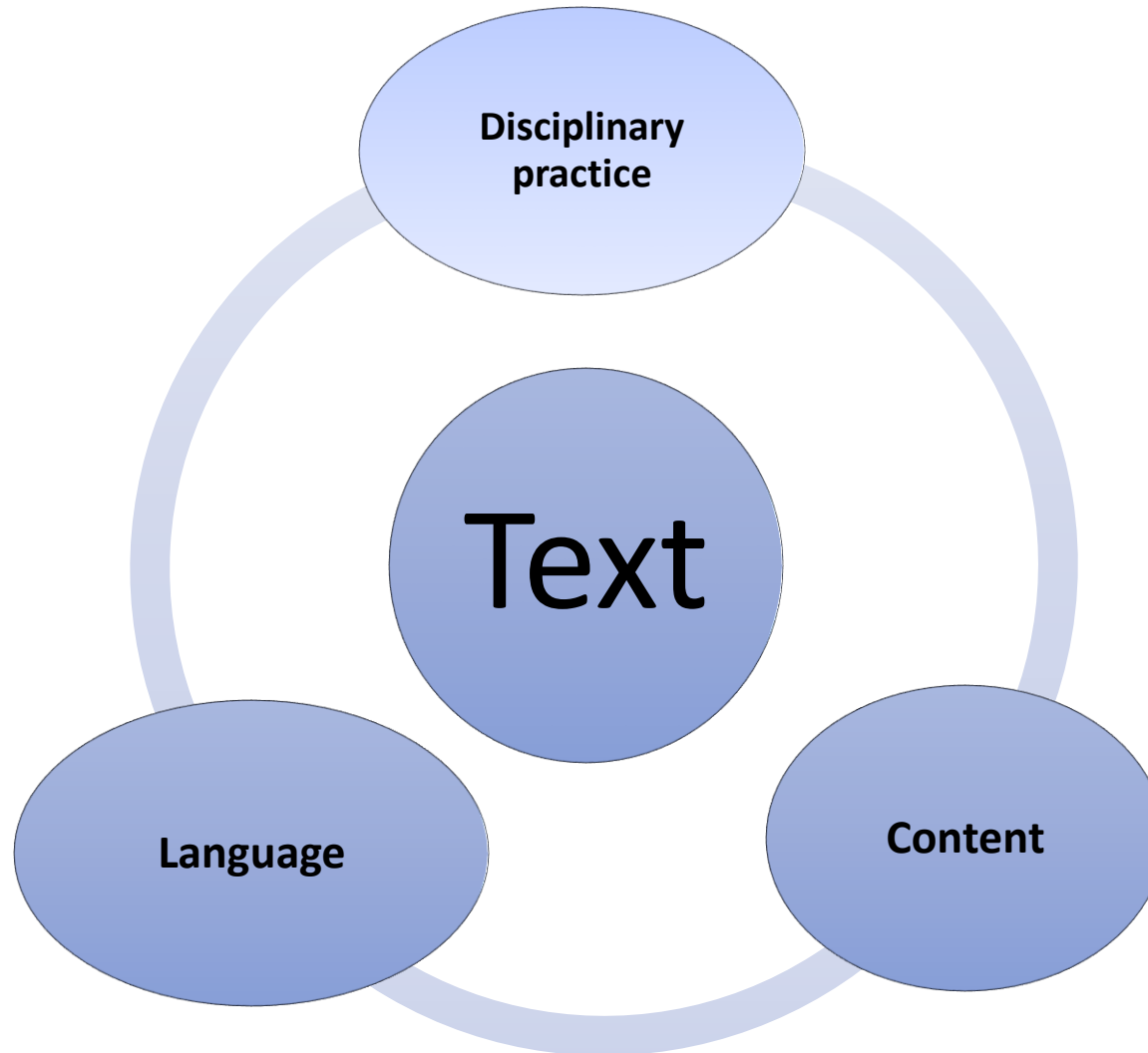
Always telling the truth is the most important consideration in any relationship.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.



Argument - focussed on formal field-independent textual features such as lexicogrammar and abstracted genre \leftrightarrow essentialism & reification

Argumentation – performance oriented \leftrightarrow empirically driven models

In actual academic writing



If there's a major discrepancy between language sampled in tests and real-life language use, what do test scores represent?

On the ground



Academic & professional communication

- purpose-, content- and meaning-driven
- situated
- contingent
- diverse, variable
- emergent
- dynamic
- localised practices - spoken and written

- Jenkins, Mauranen ... (ELF)
- Cogo, Kankaanranta ... (BELF)
- Iedema ... (contemporary work place communication)
- Kubota (Japanese company employees in China)
- Gee; Street ... (literacies studies)