Tutorial Letter 201/1/2018

Developing Information Skills

INS1502

Semesters 1

Department of Information Science

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains important information about your module.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this tutorial letter you receive general feedback on what was required in Assignment 01 and 02 of Semester I as well as some general information about the INS1502 examination.

2 ASSIGNMENT 01

Assignment 01 consisted of twenty-five multiple choice questions (MCQs) that were marked online. I do not repeat the questions here, but only provide answers and references to study material. Please read the corresponding prescribed book sections as well.

Remember that you always have to include the Unique Number when submitting an assignment, especially with MCQs.

Not all answers are necessary clear-cut, but needs insight and interpretation of the study material.

Question 1

Answer 3. See study guide unit 1.

Question 2

Answer 3. See prescribed book p. 72.

Question 3

Answer 1. See prescribed book chapter 12; study guide unit 9.

Question 4

Answer 2. See prescribed book p. 175.

Question 5

Answer 4. See study guide p. 44.

Question 6

Answer 2. See study guide par. 4.4.

Question 7

Answer 2. See study guide unit 7.

Question 8

Answer 3. See study guide unit 3.

Question 9

Answer 2. See study guide unit 2.

Question 10

Answer 2. See study guide p. 28.

Question 11

Answer 3. See study guide unit 4.

Question 12

Answer 1. See study guide p. 27.

Question 13

Answer 1. See study guide p. 46.

Question 14

Answer 4. See prescribed book p. 67.

Question 15

Answer 3. See prescribed book p. 56.

Question 16

Answer 2. See study guide p. 28.

Question 17

Answer 4. See prescribed book p. 27.

Question 18

Answer 3. See prescribed book p. 58.

Question 19

Answer 1. See study guide p. 32.

Question 20

Answer 3. Check World Wide Web for the answer.

Question 21

Answer 1. See prescribed book p. 107.

Question 22

Answer 4. See study guide unit 9.

Question 23

Answer 2. See study guide unit 6.

Question 24

Answer 3. See study guide unit 2.

Question 25

Answer 3. See study guide unit 2.

3 ASSIGNMENT 02

Assignment 02 reads as follows:

Assignment instruction: Compile a *work plan* for the following essay topic:

"*And yet, in the context of globalisation, English is now being reconstructed as a culturally-neutral lingua franca, a universal means of communication desired and appropriated by all users*." (Kayman 2007[1]).

Write an essay on English as a language of global communication in the information society, and discuss why you agree or disagree with the statement by Kayman (2007).

3.1 Comments on interpretation

The assignment clearly states that you must compile a **work plan** based on the given essay topic. Do not write an essay.

Students have difficulty in understanding this. A work plan is essential in the preparation of essay writing. It provides a map or blueprint for the final product, which in this case is an essay. In an academic environment you cannot start writing an essay before you have analysed the topic and planned around that topic. You have to find relevant information sources, read the sources, decide on headings and sub-headings and make notes. You have to refine all of this and only then you might be ready to write the final product.

When you are interpreting a topic it is important to look at the keywords and the action words (or verbs), which indicate what you are required to do. In this case you have to analyse twice:

e.g. Compile a **work plan** for the following essay topic:

[1] Kayman, MA. 2007. The state of English as a global language: communicating culture. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236032000140131

This clearly says you have to **compile a work plan. Secondly** the following topic is provided:

> *Write an essay on English as a language of global communication in the information society, and discuss why you agree or disagree with the statement by Kayman (2007).*

There are two main keywords or concepts: *English (as a language of global communication)* and *information society.* The term *information society* can be seen as a qualifier and as a secondary keyword concept.

The verbs for the topic are *write* and *discuss*.

You must understand the meanings of the keywords. In order to do that, you have to define the keywords. You had to include two definitions for **one** of the keywords as indicated under the guidelines on p 19-20 of Tutorial Letter 101.

You must outline the topic in such a way that the reader will get a better understanding of the important aspects, but will also be able to debate it.

The sources which you use for this task (e.g. the study guide, prescribed book, other resources like web sites, books and articles found in the library) will provide you with many ideas on the key topics. These sources must be acknowledged as

- text references in the text, and in a
- *List of sources* at the end.

Based on your reading you must then decide which aspects are relevant to the topic. Your work plan will indicate your perspective, since you will have headings and sub-headings that relate to your interpretation of the topic.

3.2 Work plan

Students at university level need to **plan** before they can write an academic essay. That is exactly what a work plan is – it is a tool to prepare for an academic essay. One cannot just start writing; one has to analyse the topic, find relevant information, start reading the information and make notes, decide on an outline (headings and sub-headings) and more. Read your study guide and prescribed book carefully.

The answers to this question indicated that many students had problems drawing up a work plan. I am not going to take you through the process step-by-step as this is covered in the study guide. Refer to study unit 2 for background on your work plan. The study guide also refers you to the prescribed book where necessary. Once you read this you will understand that units 3 to 9 are also relevant. Follow the GUIDELINES provided in *Tutorial Letter 101.*

Since you will be expected to do many of these academic activities throughout your academic career, it is very important that you learn to do them correctly. You must also keep in mind that there is more than one method to compile a work plan.

If you **wrote an essay you would have received 0%** for the assignment. You were asked to hand in a work plan covering the assignment topic as stated above.

Phase 1: Planning

In order to do this you need to identify the keywords, verbs, audience and form.

For example:

Keywords:	English (as a global language of communication) information society
Verb:	write; discuss
Form:	work plan (or academic essay)
Audience:	lecturer (or markers)

You should also try and reflect on what you know about the topic and write down any ideas you may have. At this point you must start thinking of headings and sub-headings for the body of your planned essay. Some questions you may ask for example are:

- Why is this topic an issue?
- What is global communication?
- What are the requirements of the "information society?"
- How does this affect education?
- What is the function and role of language in globalisation?
- What is the difference between a List of Sources and text references?
- How will this module help me with my studies?

These thoughts should be included as part of your work plan. They will later guide you when finding information and writing the essay. Thoughts will differ from person to person.

You first need to see which sources of information you have in the immediate vicinity, for example, your study guide, prescribed book, dictionary etc. Items, such as popular magazines, should not be included because they are unlikely to be helpful in an academic essay. If you do mention items such as these in your work plan, then you must indicate why you feel they would be useful.

After surveying what is available in your immediate environment, you then need to consider what other resources are available, for example, a library or the internet. However, if you list these resources in your work plan, I expect to see evidence that you have been to the library to look for sources or done a search on the internet. Photocopies of retrieved information, web sites or citations should indicate which additional sources were consulted.

Phase 2: Retrieving

A good starting point for this assignment topic may be study unit 1 in the study guide and the first section in the prescribed book.

If you consulted a library or the internet you should indicate how you found suitable sources in the library or sites on the Internet. In other words you need to **describe your search strategy.**

You should also indicate how you located the information in your study guide and prescribed book, if any. For example, did you use the table of contents or index?

You should first read through the information to decide whether or not it is relevant. At this point you should be expanding your work plan to include additional headings and brief notes. For example, when you first started you may have had just a few general headings. Now that you have done some reading you should be in a position to start expanding on those general headings.

At this point it is essential that you list sources under your headings giving a clear indication that you have read through the material and have found out **where** relevant information for the topic is to be found.

Phase 3: Organisation

You now begin evaluating the information both for accuracy and relevancy. If you have decided that certain information is not relevant, evidence of this should be given in your work plan. For example, cross out headings that you now feel are irrelevant.

In this case you have to agree or disagree with the statement. Your answer must not be emotional; you must substantiate your choice with academic sources.

When you synthesise information you group sections and points together so that your final essay forms a coherent whole. Examples of this in a work plan would be arrows to show that blocks of information belong together or that certain blocks should be placed elsewhere.

Once you have done the evaluation and synthesis you are now ready to submit your work plan that should contain all the evidence of the work you have done.

3.3 Overview

Study unit 2 introduces you to information tasks and work plans. Study units 3 to 7 show you how to find information. Study unit 8 covers the organisation of information and finally study unit 9 discusses reference techniques. All the steps you learn about in these study units and the accompanying chapters in the prescribed book are relevant for this assignment.

Your work plan for the topic of this assignment should look something like the example of a plan on pages 9-11 in study unit 1, but it must of course cover the correct topic. Your headings and sub-headings for this assignment in particular will naturally be different from those used in the figures in the study guide and prescribed book. Your plan will relate specifically to the topic of the assignment.

Your plan will be a blueprint or a framework of how you would answer this question, and include **all** the work that you would have done **before** actually writing and submitting the essay. We expect to see evidence that you have analysed the topic, read up on it, selected relevant information, evaluated your sources and made notes on the topic. In fact we expect to see evidence that you have worked through all the steps in the typology, *except for the last two steps* of writing and appraising the final essay.

3.4 Example of a work plan

You will find an example of a work plan on pages 9-11 of your study guide. Students who copied this plan and handed it in would have received 0%.

As already mentioned there is more than one method to compile a work plan. A work plan can take different forms and can be compiled in different formats. It is therefore important that you find the format that best works for you.

3.5 Definitions, Introduction and Conclusion

Definitions

When you now actually write your own definition(s) as required, try to ensure that all of the important points will be included in your definition. Read the section on definitions in your prescribed book on pages 185-188.

Introduction

Although you were not required to write an introduction for this assignment, I will discuss it as most students might like to have guidance on this. The writing of an introduction is covered in your prescribed book on pages 239-241. Your introduction should lead your reader into the subject and point him/her in a specific direction. The introduction should contain a focus statement. This statement should contain the central idea that will be developed in the essay. Introductions may differ because of the way you have interpreted the topic. There is no one correct way to write an introduction, although the topic must be addressed.

Conclusion

Indicate that you will include a conclusion. The conclusion should never include new information. It must always bring all the facts together. Here you will normally say something like: “In this essay it was shown that …” The conclusion very much mirrors the introduction in the sense that the introduction indicates what you are planning to discuss and what you hope to arrive at, while the conclusion indicates that you actually have discussed it and that you were correct or incorrect in the outcome of the investigation. It is a summary of your discussion. The writing of conclusions is covered in your prescribed book on pages 241-242.

3.6 References

Bibliography / List of sources consulted

There are some differences between a bibliography and a list of sources consulted. When you compile a list of sources, you will only include those sources which you have actually cited in the text of your essay. However, a bibliography can also include sources which you consulted, but not necessarily cited. *On undergraduate level preferably use a list of sources consulted.*

The title of a **book** is in italics (in a handwritten manuscript it would have been underlined) but the titles of the **journal articles** are not in italics. The **journal titles** are in italics. Normal English rules apply to the use of capital letters in the titles of both the book and the journal articles.

The list must be in alphabetical order.

Internet articles are also listed in the bibliography/list of sources. These are arranged in alphabetical order together with the books. They are NOT listed separately.

Study unit 9 in your study guide and chapter 12 in you prescribed book carefully.

Citations in your text

Apart from a bibliography/list of sources always ensure that you acknowledge your sources in your discussion by correctly citing your references in the text. Refer to the *INKALLE/302/4/2018* tutorial letter and chapter 12 of your prescribed book for guidance on how to cite a reference.

Also read paragraph 9.3 in your study guide and the corresponding paragraphs in the prescribed book.

READ THE COMMENTS IN YOUR MARK SHEET CAREFULLY – This indicates clearly and in detail what was expected of you.

4 EXAMINATION

Read the Preface in the Study Guide.

The Examination section should confirm the date with you during the semester. You can also check the date on *myUnisa*. There is one examination paper for INS1502. It is two hours long. The examination will consist of multiple choice questions, and short questions. You must obtain a minimum of 50% to pass.

Section A and Section B are both compulsory. Section A consists of 30 multiple-choice questions counting 2 marks each and will earn you 60%. Section B of the paper (40% of the marks) consists of short questions based on the subject matter covered.

You will not be required to compile a work plan, as there simply is not enough time to do so. You might **for example,** be required to compile a table of contents for an essay, write an introduction for the topic given to you in the examination (which will not necessarily be the same as the assignment topic), write notes on a work plan and write definitions.

You will be required to write notes on various given topics.

The examination is based on:

- the study guide (including all the exercises in the study units)
- relevant sections in the prescribed book as indicated.

It is definitely not possible to pass the examination well by studying only the study guide.

5 CONCLUSION

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best with your studies. I hope the contents of this module will be of use to you in your future studies and throughout your academic career. Please remember that if you have any comments or queries about the module you are most welcome to contact me via e-mail or make an appointment.

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