# What does an IELTS 6.0 student look like

# and how can we help support these students?

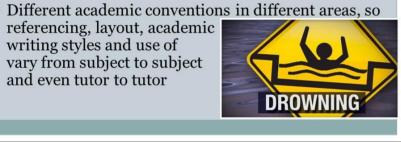
## Laura Haseley, Centre for Languages

Nowaday there are alot of fars on British mad and they have increased day to day. By the year 2000 there may be as many as 29 million whicles on British eneds in this every I Intend by examine, about the solutions of those Piretly, the people Witing in Britain need to think about themselves. If they used the bus and train instead of their car, this problem would resolve a little. Secance of this, the British Government should introduce to control car overship and use for cample, the government can bun to enter the road by can in the sameday all family from a be free for public population. Thus, the people would After that, the roads in British would be more safer Lastly, the expectance the number of cars that strengerted from another country should decrease and the prices of car should increased incase they aren't overcrowded. For example, the proces of cogarettes increaded and the consuption of objector quest Do conclusion, If these measures put into action the problem of traffic can be decreased in the

The answer is short at just over 200 words and thus loses marks for content. There are some relevant comment **arguments** but these are **not very** well developed and become **unclear** in places. The organisation of the answer is evident through the use of fairly simple connectives but there are problems for the reader in that there are many missing words and word order is often incorrect. The structures are quite **ambitious but** often faulty and vocabulary is

### Reasons why students do not understand what is required

- No previous contact with higher education so not familiar with the conventions of academic life, i.e. what an essay is, deadlines, attendance, critical thinking, time management, etc.)
- Different academic conventions in different
- referencing, layout, academic writing styles and use of vary from subject to subject and even tutor to tutor



#### The IELTS 9-band scale

Each band corresponds to a level of English competence. All parts of the test and the Overall Band Score can be reported in whole and half bands,

Band 7: Good user: has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

Band 6: Competent user: has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band 5: Modest user: has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

### Bridging the gap

One of the main reasons why students may be considered 'at risk' is that there is a **mismatch** between the level of skill, knowledge and **performance** expected at the beginning of a course and the student's current level in these areas. There is a traditional notion of what undergraduates ought to be able to do at entry, and an increasing number of **students** who, for a variety of reasons, **do not** match the expected profile.

Cottrell, 2001

The hausport has been one at the most important problem. The last Two curtaines. The problem began with the development and The growing of the edies.

Before the engly century the people timed in smal villages or town and did not have numity to To 60 par. The peopole did not worry about The time to arrive in some where.

Nowadays he situation changed . trang co. on the streets and many people need to go to any place. The numbers of car has invessed and as a sent there are mobile s: pollution, noise can accident, insufficient can park and petrole problem. In the hand people we can to go anywhere is with marel "spent holiday and amusement. Manualle Ty can is important the which must have a nother solution. It is important to to organise its using and to meet atternative The by attestive are some alternations like incluments (metro) coach, trame and bycicles In China and liba Maria vie a lit of bycicles for substitution the cars on

It would be botter to link about others defenuts knows at hourspit. In Beaut the Sovernment has talked about transport on the weeks In This country there are many rivers when it is provible to go to different places. In general they are flat rivers.

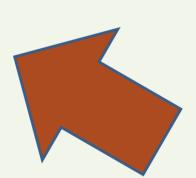
Another kind of Trampet is can that use solar unity hobality they don't have pollution problem and it is cheaper than others car. In conclusion, the tamper to a round motion in his after but its pulmon depend on new Technologies, ollun and of every and political expects.

There are quite a lot of ideas and while some of these are supported better than others, there is an **overall coherence** to the answer. The introduction is perhaps slightly long and more time could have been devoted to answering the question. The answer is fairly easy to follow and there is good punctuation. Examiner comment there is good punctuation.

Organisational devices are evident although some areas of the answer become unclear and would benefit from more accurate use of connectives. There are **some errors in the structures** but there is also evidence of the production of complex sentence forms. Grammatical errors interfere slightly with comprehension.

### Be explicit about assessments

- How much time should it take you to do the assignment?
- When should you start it?
- What is the marking criteria?
- Are there exemplars of good assignments?
- What will cause you to fail (i.e. plagiarism, and to what extent)
- Be explicit about how you mark English



## If we can do one thing, what should it be?

## Be explicit



### Be explicit about English

• Are you marking English, i.e. will a student be

marked down for poor English? unintended consequence of that = greater

risk of plagiarism or cheating

- If you are marking English, what are you marking? Do you want assignments to be proof-read?
- Do you want students to improve their English during the programme?

### Be explicit about your course expectations and learning

Many students don't understand where the information is supposed to come from, or indeed that they need to learn information and think critically, not just complete assignments.



#### What do you want from me? Explicitness unpacked



## Be explicit about non-productive skills

- What reading do they need to do? Why? When? • Can you highlight the most important pages/chapters?
- Why do they need to come to your lecture?
- How is your lecture structured?
- Can you put last year's lectures on Moodle so that the students can watch them before they come to class?
- Could you put a list of keywords for each class on Moodle before class?

### Could you ...?

- Explain to students that you mark on content, but the better a student's English is, the easier it is to see whether they understand the content.
- Give the student a guide to improving their English in your first class (see hand out).
- Tell them that you expect to see an improvement in their English as they go through the programme.

### Could you also ...?

- Work to ensure that all students have a time management session in their first week or two, where they map out their assessments and due dates and the estimated amount of work involved
- Commit to setting aside a small proportion of your departmental library budget each year that can be spent on English Language reference books for the library, so that students have the resources to upskill.

### References

Cottrell, S. (2001). Teaching study skills and supporting learning. Palgrave, Hants Cottrell, S. (1999). The study skills handbook. Palgrave,

Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. (eds) (1999). *A handbook for teaching and learning in Higher Education:* Enhancing academic practice. Kogan Page, London Ithaca Group, (2012). *Integreted support services for learners: An investigation into current thinking and* practice. Queensland VET Development Centre,

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