

university preparation

A note about the transcripts.

This is a transcript of exactly what the speaker has said. It is important to realise that spoken language is different to written language. When we speak we often make grammatical errors. We also tend to repeat ourselves, and to use short words or sounds like "um", "er" or "ah". These sounds are called 'fillers' because they are used to fill in the gaps while we're thinking of what to say next. These sounds are perfectly normal in spoken English. You probably use similar fillers in your first language; however they may be different sounds. In this transcript you'll notice that the speaker has used some fillers and that in some places the sentences are not always grammatical. This is often because the speaker is thinking about what to say next, or changes her/his mind in the middle of a sentence.

Transcript - Ali

My name is Mohamud Ali. I, I am student in La Trobe University, and am a doing social science degree, subjects like sociology and anthropology, history etc.

What differences did you notice about university in Australia?

When I came to University, you know, in my home country we didn't have tutorial, you know, completely, tutorial classes was a new idea. I asked, many, many fellow students, you know, and I said what is the purpose of the tutorial, and they said, " Ah, it's a place where you go and discuss and something like that, you know." But I found lecture, is, you know, impersonal, you know, impersonal thing, you know. The teacher, the lecture will come and tell you whatever he wants to tell you, you know. But tutorial is the place where you can learn, you know, you can ask a question, have an opinion, you can discuss, you know, and, and, and improve yourself, you know. The tutor is there to help you.

What difficulties did you face when he started at University?

Everything was difficult, you know, getting around finding places, eh, knowing how to get help, that's the most important thing, you know, in University, academic, you know, because in, inside University there is, you know, everyone around you has the potential to help you, but, you know, to ask, if you go to library, there is people there, they have, you know, they are there to help you, but I didn't know that, you know. Also, is the way, I structure my essay, that's, that's, I never, pick up, you know, idea, a big, eh, obstacle in my life, you know, in University. So I tried to know more about, you know, how to write an academic, you know, essay, not, not normal essay, you know.

English academic writing is complete, complete different to, my, you know, my home language, because it needs, not to argue, you know, not to write your own opinion. But to have a backup, you know, you have references, you have to create, you know, the whole id..,

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the whole idea of referencing was new for me. You have to have backup, you have to have reasons. And you have to, even if you have a reason, you have to have someone supporting you, otherwise, no one would believe you will stop.

Doing an assignment is a combination of a lot of things, you know. You have to read, you know, your topic. Then, ...because every assignment has, there is the question to answer. So you have to read the topic, then, summarise what you have read. Then, have your own argument. That's, that's, you know, the big challenge, you know, because shoul...eh,... new students, because the, the time, the deadline is very short. Maybe they're taking 4, or 3 subjects, you know, to organise yourself, because you have, small space of time, so you have to organise yourself to do all these things. That's the biggest, biggest challenge, I face, you know, in my first days in University.

Advice for students

My advice, I would give to the future students, is, don't underestimate essay writing, you know, essay writing is, is, you know, it, it, doesn't, you know, come up yesterday, it, it has a evolution of Western civilisation, you know, and its what you, you are learning now, is that combination of lot of steps, you know. So, when you try to write essay, plan your essay, you know, because people who will read you, read your essay, will need to have a logical structure of your essay. You have to plan. That's, that's my, my, my, my, you know. Every time I try to write an essay without planning, I fail! Completely, I fail! Um, or the lecturer will write to me, "I don't understand your point." you know. But, every time I try to plan my essay, magically, you know, they will understand me! Like we are speaking same language, you know. That's my advice. Plan your essay, you know!