

## 2 WRITING AS THE WORLD FALLS APART: A FILIPINO PERSPECTIVE ON ACADEMIC WRITING

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### OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we focus on how Filipino university students think about and make sense of the notion of ‘good’ academic writing.<sup>1</sup> We introduce a social and historical view of the entanglements between English and academic writing in the Philippines, which have resulted in an academic writing culture that remains largely preoccupied with form and structure, and English grammatical correctness. Within this broader context, we use extracts from a group of students’ reflections on their experience of academic writing to surface the challenges and difficulties, anxieties and confusion, and triumphs in the students’ writing journey. We then map these out along certain myths about academic writing, and explore the different ways by which the students negotiate these myths vis-a-vis their expectations of ‘good’ academic writing and the actual material realities within which they accomplished their writing tasks. We found that students are very conscious of these so-called myths. While they did not necessarily challenge them, they nevertheless adjust to them or find a way around them, rationalizing their writing choices from the lens of their everyday realities, which, at that time, were mainly constrained by a complex of issues involving the lack of university infrastructure conducive to research, the mismanaged pandemic situation in the Philippines, the rampant misinformation/disinformation campaigns that plagued the just-then concluded Philippine elections, and the resulting political turmoil and breakdown

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of political institutions. Overall, our chapter shows how the students in this study were able to navigate their academic writing requirements despite having to follow standards that emerged from contexts different from theirs and while living in the midst of crises. Through this, we hope to help other students who are in a similar position realize that writing is never divorced from the social and historical contexts within which it is done, and ‘good’ academic writing is always an act of negotiation. With this view of writing, students may be better prepared to confront the social and cultural complexities underlying academic writing and become better writers in the process.

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## INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a good writer? What does it mean to be a good student of writing? Perhaps you thought about great artists, statesmen, and revolutionaries: in the Philippines, for example, everyone recognizes José Rizal, our national hero, for his writing’s challenges to Spanish rule in the late 1800’s. Maybe you thought about published poets and fiction writers on your bookshelf, whose writing you’ve encountered in the classroom. Closer to home, perhaps you thought about peers who have won awards or written for the school paper. Writing has likely played a role in your education. The pressures to get high grades, to be admitted to the college of your choice, and to graduate on time and/or with honors have likely been tied to writing in some way. Even the Eraserheads, one of the Philippines’ most beloved rock bands, sang about doing someone’s academic writing as the ultimate act of love and sacrifice: “Gagawin ko ang lahat pati ang thesis mo, huwag mo lang ipagkait ang hinahanap ko” / “I’ll do anything for you, even your thesis. Just don’t leave me hanging”. This casual reference to academic writing in Filipino pop music points to a shared cultural fact in our country: *Writing is hard, and getting it done, let alone being good at it can seem like an unsolvable puzzle.*

For students writing outside the United States, the question of “good” writing is also tangled up in history, languages, and power. In the Philippines, for example: while our country has literary and creative writing traditions in English and multiple Philippine languages, writing in standard English is often the most needed and valued asset in school, the workplace, and government. We know that English is tied to socioeconomic mobility,

and that being good at English can open doors. We also know that Filipino and the other Philippine languages are not recognized or represented as equals to English – perhaps you see the same power dynamics in your country. This chapter is not meant to argue for the inherent supremacy of English. As authors, our intent is to share the history and context behind academic writing in English in the Philippines, and why it is such a high-stakes endeavor for writers. While you may be writing from a country other than the Philippines, you may recognize similar histories and power dynamics, such as colonization and war, that also shape your context today. We will then discuss how “writing” and “language” can be thought of as two separate (yet related) concepts, and share some strategies for how non-US heritage and multilingual backgrounds can be leveraged as assets in academic writing. Our ideas are grounded by, and are in dialogue with, reflections on writing by Filipino college students at a state university in the Philippines who already completed their research writing courses and have now graduated from the university. We did this because ultimately, college students from outside the United States are our audience for this chapter, and we wanted to first understand our target audience’s assumptions and ideas before we engaged in dialogue. In addition, we believe that the writing reflections of advanced academic writers such as the Filipino college students in this chapter offer helpful and relevant insights to students who are just beginning to write academically.

### ENGLISH AND ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE PHILIPPINES: A SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL VIEW

Without an exhaustive historical and archival study, it’s difficult to say when academic writing in English, or English as a language, for that matter, first emerged in the Philippines. The American Occupation of the Philippines (1898) ushered in the creation of a public school system run almost entirely in English, administrated and operated by American teachers. However, English appeared as an academic subject in private colleges and universities prior to the Occupation. In 1868, the Ateneo Municipal de Manila (now known as the Ateneo de Manila University, or colloquially, the Ateneo) included among their roster Carmelo Polino, the university’s first English language teacher (Department of English). Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero and arguably the Ateneo’s most famous alum, also knew some English. Though his most prominent works were written in Spanish, Jose Rizal wrote some personal correspondence in English, and English is named as one of the many languages that he spoke. What these

facts show is that even before American colonization, English was already in the Philippines. However, it was primarily American colonization that spread English widely throughout the Philippines, via the American public schools.

English was a key component of American conquest of the Philippines. In the public schools, all lessons were conducted in English, and at the beginning of American colonial rule, only taught by American teachers. Using English in the public schools and establishing it in the Philippines was not a choice made by Filipinos – it was supported by American military and political rule. Using English was also a strategy of colonial management: ruling the country under a single language, rather than the multiple Philippine languages, facilitated ease of communication between American officials and Filipinos.

We, the authors, want to be clear here: there is no inherent superiority behind English, or any language, for that matter. *All languages are complex and difficult to acquire. All languages can support a range of communicative tasks.* However, in reality, languages are valued differently and differentially because of their enmeshment within complex sociohistorical and political-economic arrangements. In the Philippines, for instance, American politicians and administrators believed that English was a better language because it was a White language. William Howard Taft, the first civil governor of the Philippines, declared that “through the English language certainly, by reading its literature, by becoming aware of the history of the English race, [Filipinos] will breathe in the spirit of Anglo-Saxon individualism...”. Knowledge of English, under American colonial rule, became associated with being modern, progressive, and supportive of Western ideas – thus, English became more valued over other languages.

There is much more to say about the history of academic writing in the Philippines and other non-US countries, but that would take an entire chapter (or a book!) on its own. But an examination of that history, and knowledge of the unequal power dynamics between the US and the Philippines at the time, tells us a few things. First, academic writing in English as initially introduced to the Philippines was designed to support American ideas of good communication. Two, the pedagogical theories and practices that it was built on were primarily in use in the US and brought over to the Philippines. An approach to teaching writing that took into account Filipino history and culture, what Filipinos wanted or needed from writing, and our linguistic diversity was largely absent. And three, writing carries a lot of baggage for everyone across cultures. But our lived experiences and his-

tories as citizens of a multilingual, formerly colonized nation in the Global South also contribute to that baggage.

Why are we telling you all this? Why does this matter to you, a Filipino college student in the present time? Or why should this matter to any student of writing? Because as a student from outside North America, you may be wondering about the social and political implications of academic writing in English, and of academic writing in general. Ideas about what good academic writing is, and who good academic writers are, are shaped by history. Being aware of this history, in turn, reminds us to be critical of our current views of writing – how we do it, why we do it, and how we talk to each other about it.

### LEARNING ENGLISH VS. LEARNING TO WRITE IN ENGLISH

One of the challenges of teaching and doing academic writing as a “non-native speaker” is that it is always entangled with the teaching and learning of English. You may have experienced this in your own writing classes, where teachers and students of writing become more preoccupied with issues of grammar instead of actually talking about writing. In this situation, English grammar becomes the focal point of learning how to write: in other words, the rules need to be mastered before ‘good’ writing can be achieved. Beatriz Lorente, a sociolinguist at the University of Bern, aptly calls this “the grip of English.” It is perhaps not surprising that English takes a central position in academic writing classes because of the bilingual policy in Philippine education: English and Filipino are treated as the country’s official languages, with English as the medium of instruction in many schools. There is currently a mother-tongue based multilingual education policy in the country, but this has yet to undo the long-term effects of the bilingual policy. Added to this is the fact that so much of academic literature, even the ones written by Filipinos, is also in English, making it seem as if English, and only English, is the sensible and practical choice. Teachers, students, and parents thus desire English because of its perceived and perhaps actual value.

This is not to say that the issue of language can be taken out of writing. Language definitely plays a critical role in any writing practice. What is problematic in this case is the approach to the role of language in writing. When grammar becomes the focus, it curtails many other possible ways by which students can write and develop their writing. It sends the message that grammar is more important than being creative or imaginative, thinking critically, or putting ideas together in a way that makes sense for

readers. In addition, a focus on grammar already sets up certain groups of students for success, and other groups for failure. Some of us might feel like English is our first language and would rather compose in English than in any other language. Others may not feel confident in their English writing or speaking at all, and feel self-conscious about it. If most of the academic writing that's required in college is in English, then those who feel more comfortable using English will naturally feel more confident about writing, and about college in general. Aileen, one of the authors of this piece, and Ruanni Tupas, a sociolinguist at University College London, have argued that in a context like the Philippines, where English proficiency is tied to class, students who come from privilege have every advantage at school, while those from the margins become even more disenfranchised.

If you feel self-conscious about your English proficiency: please know that you don't need perfect command of the English language or grammar to write well. A writing process that is composed of multiple drafts rather than one perfect draft can take the pressure off your language skills. Even writers who have perfect English proficiency (if there even is such a thing) need multiple drafts to get their writing to what they want. You can (and should) build in revising for grammatical correctness as a separate task from research, writing to get all your ideas out, to follow genre conventions, and/or to organize your ideas. The task ahead for teachers and students of writing, for us, is to reframe the position of English in the process and act of writing, and to think about writing in ways that are responsive to *our* local needs and context. One way of doing this is by recognizing some myths about academic writing that circulate within a specific context and re-examining them not necessarily to reject them but to understand where they come from and possibly use them to make writing more aligned with the students' realities and challenges. In the myths that follow, we draw on recurring insights from the writing reflections of eleven Filipino students who, at that time, were writing their thesis proposals while also reflecting on academic writing. The insights are presented verbatim, and we use pseudonyms to refer to the students. The students wrote their reflections in the first semester of academic year 2022-2023 and graduated from the university at the end of the academic year.

*Myth 1: There is a universal definition of good academic writing.*

In light of our discussion above, it is clear that there is no universal definition of good academic writing, but this myth persists. In the Filipino students' responses to what they think good academic writing is, they

point to certain common characteristics. Most of them talk about how good academic writing should be “**precise**, consistent, well-structured, and well-supported” (Marie); “well-structured using clear and precise language, with strict focus on the chosen research topic to be studied” (Lena); and “supported by objective evidence or pertinent examples to achieve clearer and more reliable conclusions” (Carol). It “should also not be biased... and should not be based on misinformation” (Ish). Good academic writing “reflects the writer’s knowledge; hence, it should be informative” (Ish) and “is able to deliver its purpose either to address an issue, aid a reader’s understanding, or contribute valuable information still in a coherent, concrete manner” (Carol). If asked about what you think academic writing is, you might say the same things. There is nothing wrong if we hold these same beliefs about what makes academic writing good.

However, if we look more deeply into the students’ responses, we find that these are general features, which might suggest a certain universality of standards, but the students are also aware that there are other considerations that are more specific to their circumstances. For instance, the understanding of what ‘plain language’ is might mean differently in the context of academic writing in the Philippines because Filipino students are not native speakers of English. For Filipino students, it might be that plain language is important because it is meant to “clarify all terms used to take into consideration...second language learners (which most may not be familiar with these idioms and special terms used) and readers and to uphold inclusive knowledge” (Joan). In this case, the notion of plain language takes on another layer of meaning and is made to serve a deeper purpose. It is not simply about making writing accessible, but it is about making it accessible for Filipino students, which is an issue not only of accessibility but inclusivity as well. Similarly, the manner of conducting research to produce knowledge might take on a different sense in the Philippines where there is a lack of access to academic resources: “[r]esearch is problematic if we have no access to journals, articles, or books that could further help us do research...It is extremely beneficial to gain remote access to various scholarly works. But as UP faces budget cuts, I think they were not able to renew its license” (Ish). In a situation where academic resources are lacking, students will need help to find open-access materials and other forms of support.

In short, while the Filipino students in our study adhere to a notion of universal standards of academic writing, they also situate their writing in their own specific contexts and lived experiences and negotiate their way in the writing process. You might have the same experience where you

begin with general guidelines about a writing assignment, but then make adjustments along the way based on the challenges that you encounter. What this tells us is that academic writing, or any kind of writing for that matter, is always socially and historically contingent, and in more personal terms, always rooted in the social and temporal spaces within which you move. Whether you are conscious of it or not, your identity will manifest in the kind of topics that you choose to write about, in your manner of telling, and in the ease or difficulty with which you will accomplish your writing tasks.

*Myth 2: The best academic writing is made by, or sounds like it was made by, native English speakers, and is written in “perfect” English. Native English speakers are the standard for good academic writing.*

It is not a stretch to say that the sample writings used in English classes (e.g., books, book chapters, journal articles, periodicals, even online materials) in the Philippines generally come from Western contexts and bring with them their own rhetorical traditions and logics. The concern for plain language, as discussed in Myth 1, is an example of how students might feel alienated from the texts that they are asked to read because they are intended for an audience of native speakers of English and their own social realities. It is possible too that, while students might understand the texts, they might not understand how these things apply to what they are studying and/or writing. Or, that students do understand and begin to think that these are the best and only examples of good academic writing. After all, student writers look to sample texts for their own writing, as one of the Filipino students noted: “I realized I had the tendency to write in the same way, especially as I was echoing previous journals I read....In my experience, I try to compare and contrast my own writing style with other published articles” (Jane).

You might have experienced the same thing in your writing classes. If you examine your reading lists, chances are many of these texts are written by native speakers of English. Or if there are articles written by non-native English speakers like Filipino authors, they will still be framed as following what is perceived as Standard American English and will still be fewer in number than those materials written by native speakers. All these articles are set up as models or examples to emulate. If you look more closely at your writing guidelines and rubrics, you might also find that they uphold values and practices that do not consider local contexts of use and actual local uses of the language. For instance, Grace Saqueton, a scholar at the

University of the Philippines, has pointed out that notions of how to arrange ideas logically might be too grounded in the standards of foreign language exams like the International English Language Testing Service. If we examine our own assumptions about good academic writing, we will probably find that we do not consider these things problematic. We might think: This is how it has always been done, so we do not ask questions about it anymore. But, in fact, these practices and their assumptions should be challenged.

*Myth 3: Academic writing is primarily about incorporating current and relevant academic sources and showing that you've read them.*

This was a salient concern in the students' responses. Many of the students in our study have noted that good academic writing involves "ideas [that are] developed [and] supported by objective evidence or pertinent examples to achieve clearer and more reliable conclusions" (Carol); is "well supported by adequate evidence" (James); and "must be sustained by necessary facts and evidence to answer the questions" (Marie). But what is the purpose of incorporating current and relevant academic sources? Is it because of the ingrained idea that "the more words, the better" (Marie)? Students then include all the materials that they have read to meet the length requirement. Or does it have to do with the writer showing off their knowledge since "good academic writing reflects the writer's knowledge; hence...the writer should have done a lot of reading" (Ish). There is nothing wrong if the inclusion of academic sources helps in meeting the length requirement or in demonstrating the writer's knowledge. If your use of academic sources has helped you achieve these goals, there is no harm. However, you may want to ask yourself: What are academic sources for? What purpose do they really serve?

To account for the importance of academic sources, we have to go back to what academic writing is. Academic writing is not just about writing your own ideas about a certain topic or arguing for a particular stance; it is about putting your own ideas and arguments in conversation with those of others—other students, other authors, other scholars. When you write a paper, you allow your own ideas to be in dialogue with others who have written about the same topic or argued for or against the same position. Academic writing is a conversation, and academic sources are the different voices and stances that help you understand, develop, argue, and/or challenge the different ideas in the conversation. This is also why sources need to be current and relevant; you need to show that you have followed the

conversation. Imagine joining a conversation without any idea of what has been talked about, or with only bits and pieces of information. What you say may actually have been said already or proven to be false, or it may not be relevant at all. In short, you need to be informed for you to find your own space in and contribute something new to the conversation. In addition, when you show that you are informed, you also show your desire and commitment to be part of the conversation, and in the process establish your credibility as a member of the group.

One other consideration is that, apart from academic sources being current and relevant, the students note that these sources should also be “credible....Some sources that are available on the internet may not be used, especially when it provides biased and unproven data” (Lena). The ideas should be “backed up by facts and should not be based on misinformation” (Ish). Disinformation campaigns and fake news are important and pressing issues all over the world, and this is especially true in the Philippines. For many Filipino students who are bombarded by fake news and other kinds of disinformation campaigns every day, it is important to them that their sources have been fact-checked and come from reputable and legitimate sources. The sources must be vetted, and the writers themselves should possess “academic honesty” (Kuren). What you have to learn, then, is how to discern which writers and information sources are reliable and credible, and second, the ability to read sources critically and put them to good use in your own writing. How do you know that what you’re citing is legit or not biased? That your sources have integrity? And after having done due diligence, how do you use these sources in a way that not only captures them accurately, but also challenges and interrogates them in the context of your own study?

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? AN UNDERSTANDING OF WRITING FOR FILIPINOS, BY FILIPINOS**

After exploring these myths with us and sharing what some Filipino students know and think about writing, we hope that writing has been demystified for you. Moreover, we hope that you’re starting to see that views around writing and how best to learn it are very tied to identity: nation, race, gender, sex, class, disability, and other identities we inhabit in the past and present shape your writing. The students from our study with whom we were in dialogue spent much of their college years in the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Philippines, this meant shifting to online and remote modes for almost two and a half years. The Philippines did not open its

schools for in-person classes until late 2021. Even as late as 2023, classes in many universities, UP Diliman included, were still a hybrid of online and face-to-face modalities. For students doing research, this means not being able to go to the library and borrow research materials. The University does have online resources, but these do not include books or locally produced theses and dissertations that are undigitized and only available in the libraries. In these kinds of circumstances, **writing is certainly going to be challenging, for reasons that have nothing to do with writing itself.** Our lived and material realities also shape how we write, and this needs to be part of the conversation too.

The field of writing studies has, broadly speaking, moved away from seeing writing as a purely cognitive and individualistic process. Contemporary approaches to writing are now based on the idea that *writing* and *identity* are tied together, and that how we write, why we write, and how we talk about writing are matters of social consequence. To that end, we ask: **what is a vision and practice of writing that is based on our culture and heritage, that is also socially just and nationally progressive?**

What does it mean to be Filipino, right now? What do Filipinos deal with on a daily basis that is rooted to our historical and cultural experience? Here's an idea that encapsulates both the challenge and the reward of writing: *To write as a Filipino means navigating a constant sense of crisis and precarity due to national and institutional failures.*

Life in the Philippines is not easy. Inflation is at an all-time high. There are poor social safety nets around healthcare, transportation, home ownership, student financial aid, and financial stability. A few of our student respondents shared how these institutional failures directly affected their ability to write:

[T]he pandemic has also brought a lot of uncertainties and distress to our families. I remembered how hard it is for me to focus on my studies and write tons of papers when a lot of my families are getting sick, and my siblings were not able to go to work, hence, they were not able to earn money for our everyday necessities. Instead of scrolling through the Internet for suitable material that would back our arguments up, we were keener on finding part-time jobs that would hopefully ease the burden on our families. (James)

However, during this pandemic, doing even the first step seemed impossible since boundaries between school and home diminished, more responsibilities had to be fulfilled simultaneously, and **it felt like I was studying while the world is falling apart.** (Carol, emphasis ours)

However, when the pandemic began, the first year of distance or online learning setup made it difficult for me to properly divide my time at home between school work, household work, and rest. This has resulted in multiple occasions of procrastination and cramming. **Given everything going on in the world, it has also been difficult to focus and keep the motivation to write.** (Marie, emphasis ours)

**Writing is hard.** And it will remain hard as long as we are in an environment that makes it hard, on a material level, for students to keep sustained focus on their work. And in our classrooms, it will remain hard if we – students and teachers – aren't attentive to the ways that our approaches to writing need to serve us, and not the other way around.

It sometimes feels like writing is an inadequate, and sometimes inappropriate, response to our troubled world. And, as we have shown through various examples in this chapter, sometimes writing is *part of* the troubled world: it is connected to colonial history, class, race, global inequality, and scarcity. However, maybe writing can also be what helps us make sense of what's going on. Though it can be materially and intellectually challenging, writing can be an opportunity to sort through difficult ideas, to be in dialogue with others, and figure out what we actually think and believe in. The authors of this chapter, for example, had invigorating conversations and debates with each other about writing, Filipinoness, and the differences between writing in the U.S. and the Philippines. This project became an opportunity for two Filipinos to assert ourselves on the page, share what we know, and reflect, challenge, and reframe who we are as writers.

So, what does writing mean to *you* – as a student, as a political being, a member of a nation, a multilingual speaker, as a thinker and learner, as a human being? How are your approaches to writing informed by history, language, social position, and current social context? What ideas about writing serve you, and which ones could use an update? Though these questions are difficult and weighty, pursuing them is an opportunity to learn more about yourself as a writer.

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## TEACHER RESOURCES FOR “WRITING AS THE WORLD FALLS APART: A FILIPINO PERSPECTIVE ON ACADEMIC WRITING”

### OVERVIEW AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

From our experience as Filipino teachers of writing in a Philippine university<sup>2</sup>, we know that students enter the writing classroom with all kinds of preconceived notions about what makes ‘good’ academic writing. Many of these notions center around grammatical correctness, form and structure, levels of formality, the appropriate point-of-view, and length. Our students also carry certain ideas about topics and thesis statements, sources of information, and citation styles. There is nothing necessarily wrong or incorrect about their ideas of writing. However, we believe that students need to have a better understanding of where these ideas might be coming from, and how writing, any kind of writing, is always situated within a social and historical moment. We believe that it is important for students to realize that notions of ‘good’ academic writing, while often framed in universal or objective terms, take on specific permutations when deployed in specific contexts, and are also often shaped by larger social and cultural forces in these contexts. We believe that being aware of the complexities underlying academic writing will make students better prepared for the challenges of academic writing, and in the process, help them become better writers.

This is not to say that students are not aware of these complexities. As we have shown in our chapter, the students whose reflections on writing are featured in the chapter are very much aware of the challenges posed by so-called myths about ‘good’ academic writing. They recognized that while these myths have value, they often had to work around them or appropriate them in ways that would help them finish their writing tasks. What students need, however, is time and space to unpack these myths about writing, which is often not a priority in mainstream writing classes in the Philippines where academic writing is often treated as an activity on its own, separate from the actual lives that students live. They should also be able to process why English takes up such a central role in academic writing in the Philippines, and why their ability to write is often judged

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2. Aileen teaches academic writing in a Philippine university. Florianne is now teaching in an American university, but she used to teach academic writing in the Philippines.

based on how well they use English. In short, we believe that students need to discuss and engage these complexities in a more explicit manner, and in a way that will be helpful to their own writing.

When we conceptualized this chapter, we thought of it as a piece that would respond to these needs. Our hope is that this chapter will help Filipino students identify myths, standards, or expectations about ‘good’ academic writing and interrogate these ideals in relation to dominant paradigms in writing education in the Philippines, wider social issues, and the students’ own lives. We also hope that, in doing so, students would learn more about themselves and see themselves as agents who have control over their writing tasks. More broadly, we hope that this chapter will help in surfacing specific ways of thinking about academic writing by Filipino university students. We highlight a certain Filipino perspective not to essentialize, but in terms of how such a perspective came to light in the experience of the students as they made sense of it in their own reflections on writing. While the focus here is on Filipino students or academic writing in the Philippines, the suggested discussion points and activities may be applied in other writing contexts elsewhere.

### **PRE-READING OF THE CHAPTER**

In this series of pre-reading activities and discussion points, we would like the students to start reflecting on academic writing in a deeper and more critical manner. First, we would like to draw out their thoughts and ideas about writing. Second, we would like them to see the relationship between English and academic writing in the country. Third, we would like them to begin reflecting on their writing abilities. All three activities are meant to prepare the students for the reading of the chapter, but also, more crucially, the activities are geared towards self-reflection and self-analysis.

### **ACTIVITY 1 AND DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. Ask the students what they think makes for ‘good’ academic writing. Have them list at least five top advice/tips for ‘good’ academic writing which they have received over the course of their writing education.
2. Group students and have them share their list of top 5 advice/tips based on common responses or patterns. Ask the students to discuss what pieces of advice or tips are common in their group, and

which ones may contradict each other. Do they follow all these tips? When and how are they helpful in their writing? Are these relevant to their writing experience?

3. As a class, discuss students' responses, and create a narrowed list of 5-7 pieces of advice as a community.

The goal of this activity is to let students know that they have a lot of knowledge about writing, and that there are certain commonalities in this knowledge that can guide their knowledge in the course. This activity is also the springboard for further discussion.

## ACTIVITY 2 AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Ask the class to read "Wronging English" by Ruanni Tupas\*. In a short reflection, ask them to answer the following prompts:
  - What does 'wronging English' mean? Can you think of examples of 'wrong English' beyond the ones given in the article?
  - Have you 'wronged English'? In what ways, when, and where?
  - Does 'wronging English' have a place in academic writing in the Philippines?
  - What is the role of English in academic writing?
2. In a class discussion, explore the students' responses and highlight the social and historical entanglements between English and writing education in the country.

The assigned article for Activity 2 was written by Ruanni Tupas, and is meant to generate a discussion of the politics of English in the Philippines. We attach it here with permission from the author.

## ACTIVITY 3 AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. In an online discussion forum, ask the students to reflect on their own experience of academic writing: What do they have difficulty with? What do they find challenging? How have they responded to these challenges and difficulties? What do they find easy or enjoyable? Why?
2. Ask the students to respond to each other's responses by choosing a challenge or difficulty in writing that they have personally experienced, and talk about how they have addressed it.

The choice of an online discussion forum for this activity will allow students to see each other's perceived issues with academic writing. By talking about how they have responded to the challenges and joys of academic writing, it is hoped that students will be able to help each other and move toward building a community of writers who can learn from each other.

### DISCUSSING THE CHAPTER

The discussion will focus on the myths and the responses of the students. The students will be asked if their experience is similar or different, how they negotiated the myths or other myths not included in the chapter, how their writing and actual lives converge and affect each other, and if writing has helped them discover things about themselves as people and as Filipinos. In this discussion, the goal is not to affirm the points or observations raised in the chapter, but rather to understand the relationship between writing, language, self, and society, and build on and expand this knowledge based on what the students will bring to the discussion.

### POST-READING OF THE CHAPTER

#### ACTIVITY 1 AND DISCUSSION POINTS

The students will be asked to read some essays from *Writing Spaces* to further the conversation about the issues raised in the assigned chapter. Here are our suggested essays:

- “Workin’ Languages: Who We Are Matters in Our Writing” by Sara P. Alvarez, Amy J. Wan, & Eunjeong Lee
- “What Color Is My Voice? Academic Writing and the Myth of Standard English” by Kristin DeMint Bailey, An Ha, & Anthony J. Outlar
- “We Write Because We Care: Developing Your Writerly Identity” by Glenn Lester, Sydney Doyle, Taylor Lucas, and Alison Overcash

These essays are meant to sharpen the ideas that the students have already discussed. They are also meant to give students examples of other social and historical contexts, and how other teachers and students have navigated their writing engagements in these contexts. To provide a context for reading, we suggest framing *Writing Spaces* as a North American text addressed to students in that location.

## **ACTIVITY 2: A CULMINATING CLASS PROJECT**

Ask students to come up with a document (e.g., a chapbook, a zine, or a deck) or videos or reels to be shared on social media in which they enumerate, discuss, challenge/affirm certain myths, standards, or expectations about academic writing. It can be a top ten (10) list of best academic writing advice, a debunking of seven myths about academic writing, or a real-talk type of reel or video where students share their academic writing dos and don'ts.

This culminating activity puts together all the ideas discussed in the assigned chapter and in the teacher resources. We hope that this project will help the students take more agency not only over their own writing, but also over what they think and know about writing. The project is also geared toward building community and collaboration not only among the students but also among their cohorts and peers in the university. We also hope that the students will enjoy expressing ideas about writing multimodally and tailoring their writing and speaking skills for an audience of peers.