Task 1 & Task 2: Check your understanding

Task 1: Before writing

- Everyone has to find solutions to problems in life, academia and work.
- Academia develops analytical skills to solve problems. Many assignments will involve this skill.
- The model essays provide useful language. They also provide opportunities for critical thinking.

Task 2: Before writing

SPSE stands for:

- Situation
- Problem
- Solution
- Evaluation

Task 3: Check your understanding

Task 3: Before writing

The **situation** is usually in the introduction. It is the topic of the essay and should be a paraphrase of the essay question.

The **evaluation** may be included as part of the conclusion (or before the conclusion if the essay is long). It is an important part of critical thinking, which is expected in university-level academic writing (and speaking). It shows the writer's voice.

Task 4 and Task 5: Check your understanding

Task 4: Before writing

Your own answer

Task 5: Before writing

The Problem-solution essay you read follows a **chain** structure.

Task 6: Check your understanding

Task 6: Before writing

The SPSEs in the Problem-Solution essay are:

Situation: Asian countries are the largest emitters of carbon monoxide and dioxide from both factories and vehicles

Problem 1: emissions from transportation

Solution 1: replace fossil-fuel powered transportation with greener, renewable alternatives

Problem 2: emissions from industry

Solution 2: use technology to eradicate industry-produced pollutants before they enter the atmosphere

Evaluation: Short-term losses should perhaps be considered against the value of life and the basic human right to breathe clean air

Task 7: Check your understanding

Task 7: Before writing

Examples of words and phrases to talk about problems and solutions in the essay are:

Problems	Solutions
Due to (developments/ the costs)	One solution to this problem may be to
As a result of (fewer regulations),	To achieve this
The (only) drawback (here) is that	To assist
This essay highlights how the problem of X	The first approach is
Highlighting the significance of the problem	The second (potentially effective) approach is
Not only (are gases likely responsible) but (when combined) X may account for Y	Dealing with X (in this manner) will
Another aspect (of pollution) that requires (economic) intervention	An immediate solution instead might be to
	Although such a solution arguably
	X should perhaps be considered
	This is not only a (cost-effective) solution

Task 10: Check your understanding

Task 10: Before writing

The 'cause' terms and their definitions are:

EXAMPLE: a = 2

ANSWERS: b = 3   c = 1   d = 4

a. Direct cause   2. happening or done without other factors/people

b. Contributing cause 3. to be one of the causes of something

c. Correlation   1. a connection between two things; one changes as the other does

d. Coincidence   4. two things happening at the same time by chance

Task 11: Check your understanding

Task 11: Before writing

The causes and effects in each sentence are:

    a) E,C
    b) C,E
    c) E,C
    d) C,E

   a) *Expertise (E) is a product of years of experience within a particular domain. (C)*

   b) *A number of factors (C) contributed to the development and growth of Silicon Valley (E)*

   c) *Several new policies (E) resulted from the report. (C)*

   d) *For developing nations, education (C) is frequently seen as a condition of economic development (E)*

Moore, J. (2017) Oxford Academic Vocabulary Practice, Oxford, OUP

Task 12: Check your understanding

Task 12: Before writing

Essay 2 Cause & Effect follows a **chain** structure.

Task 13 and Task 14: Check your understanding

Task 13: Before writing

==Blue highlight== = causes

Task 14: Before writing

<u>Underlined</u> = effects

More and more English-medium universities are introducing foundation-year programmes for non-native speakers of English. What are the causes of this, and what effects has the introduction of a foundation year had on students?

The concept of the foundation year was created as recently as the 1990s and has since become an increasingly popular addition to the traditional bachelor's degree structure (Smith, 2017). ==Generally created to prepare students for the rigours of academia==, the foundation year now means that many non-native students of English are required to spend a minimum of four years to complete an otherwise three-year undergraduate degree. Although there might be many reasons for the creation of foundation programmes, this paper argues that such courses have been primarily adopted for three reasons. Not only may the motivation for this be due to the fact that ==students were previously struggling to meet both the linguistic and cultural demands of their subject,== but such ==motivation may also be because university institutions realised that a fourth year of tuition would greatly increase profit margins.== As is explained in the following essay, these three factors have likely resulted in numerous effects, which have been both positive and negative for undergraduate students.

==The most pedagogically valid reason that universities may have introduced foundation year programmes is likely due to the fact that non-native students were often reported to be struggling to meet the linguistic demands of their major==. In a study of 113 universities in the USA, Smith and Wesson (2000) found that dropout rates for non-native speakers of English at English-medium universities were as high as 24%. This research stimulated subsequent studies which all found that student concerns over course comprehension were a recurrent factor for these high rates (Davidson, 2001; Lee and Lee, 2004). Indeed, Johnson (2009) argues that such linguistic demands were in fact the primary reason for most cases of non-native dropouts around the turn of the millennium. In relation to this aspect, <u>one significant effect of introducing foundation-year programmes may be that students are now better prepared for their courses and dropout rates have decreased</u>. In the same study, Johnson

(2009) reported a decrease in dropout rates of 57% after the introduction of the foundation year. Students have also since reported feeling more confident and comfortable with comprehending the concepts of their course (Jones, 2014), which perhaps indicates that extending bachelor's degree programmes by a year has had a positive effect.

Another reason for the introduction of foundation years may be due to cultural reasons. Johnson's (2009) study, in which 117,000 students completed an online survey, also found that students reported complications with understanding cultural differences, especially between Western and Eastern institutions. Such cultural considerations may include aspects such as teacher-student dynamics (Jones, 2014) or the grading methods used by Western universities - particularly those using the British grading scheme (James and Keenan, 2014). This factor seems especially likely as a common complaint of first-year tutors prior to the introduction of the foundation year was about non-native student grading expectations. Additional evidence for this can also be found in the fact that student stress rates have reportedly dropped by as much as 32% in universities which introduced foundation years (Jones, 2014), with some institutions reporting that culturally-driven student expectations have since become much less of an issue (ibid.). While this may be another positive effect of the introduction of foundation-year programmes, some studies have indicated negative outcomes as well.

One particular motivation for introducing such courses that's often overlooked in the literature may be purely financial. While the original intention may have been student-driven, Gleeson (2018) suspects that many universities which have considered introducing such courses have done so for the sake of profit margins. Following significant increases in tuition fees in countries such as the UK, a growth of up to £60,000,000 in annual profit is not uncommon for the larger British universities (Jones, 2014). While this may certainly benefit university staff, there are two negative effects which have been reported in the literature because of the overall increase in tuition fees. The first, as highlighted by Benton (2016), is that parents may want to have input into the type of course their child selects due to the increased cost of such courses if they are paying for the course. Secondly, and most importantly, students without much parental support are leaving university with considerably larger sums of debt, and this debt may be having a negative effect on alumni reports of personal wellbeing (Gleeson, 2018).

This essay has determined that three primary motivations are likely candidates for the recent popularity in introducing foundation-year programmes. The first motivation discussed is regarding the support of students in the linguistic demands of studying in a foreign language,

in which it would appear that the foundation year has had a positive effect in reducing student anxiety and dropout rates in this matter. The second motivation is likely regarding student understanding of cultural differences, and this would certainly appear to be evident in the fact that non-native students today have much more appropriate expectations of their tutors. The final aspect, however, has not had such positive results. As is commonly the case for most businesses in the 21st century, the need to increase profit margins may be driving universities to introduce more and more foundation-year programmes, which appears to not only be having a negative effect on student-parent relationships, but has also meant that students have become burdened with increasingly larger debts and financial stress. Whether or not U.K. and U.S. universities in particular will consider lowering their fees to alleviate these problems remains to be seen.   Word count: 890

References

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Task 15: Check your understanding

Task 15: Before writing

Examples of Cause and Effect phrases from Essay 2

Causes	Effects
Created to (prepare students) for (academia)	The (foundation year) has had a positive effect
Not only may the motivation for this be due to the fact that	This would certainly appear to be evident in the fact that
Motivation may also be due to	X has not had such positive results
The second motivation is likely	Which appears to not only be having a negative effect on (student-parent relationships) but has also meant that (students)
The final aspect	
The need to increase (profit margins) may be driving (universities) to introduce more and more (foundation year programmes)	One significant effect of X is Y
The most valid reason for X is Y	While this may certainly benefit X, there are two negative effects which have been reported in the literature
A common complaint of X is Y	
Another reason for X is Y	