Trevor Day's Top Ten Tips for Academic Writing

1. Using Trevor Day's **IPACE model**, if you are writing an important communication, be aware of:

Identity. Who are you in writing this communication? In our working lives we normally have more than one identity, and this may shift when we move from writing one type of communication to another.
Purpose(s). What are your purposes in writing the document? This includes the purposes for your reader, and your own purposes (motives).
Audience. Who is your readership? Who is the primary audience? (those people who you definitely want to read the communication) Is there a secondary audience? (those people who you would like to read the communication)
Code. Once you are clear on identity, purpose(s) and audience(s) for your communication, code concerns the structure, format and writing style that will shape your communication. **Structure** relates to the nature of the beginning, middle and end of a communication. **Format** is the overall design and medium of the communication e.g. poster, brochure, webpage, letter, research paper, essay, dissertation, audio script, and so on. **Style of writing** relates to how formal or informal, how technical, your viewpoint, and so on.
Experience. The knowledge and abilities you bring to creating the communication. This includes the **content** of the communication and the **process** of creating it.

In addition, you will need to use the appropriate **form of argumentation (including rhetoric and use of evidence and reasoning)** for your academic discipline.

Using **IPACE** helps make your writing more effective, and reduces wasted time. Read Trevor Day's book *Success in Academic Writing* (Palgrave Macmillan) for more detail about IPACE and argumentation.

2. **Be inspired** by examples of the type of communication you want to write. If you decide to break with convention, do so knowingly.

3. The writing process includes: **planning, researching, reading and note-taking** (everything that comes before composing); **composing** (going beyond notes and plans to anything from bullet points or short phrases to full sentences and paragraphs); and **reviewing and editing** (checking your work and crafting it to improve it). Plan your writing around these stages in the process.

4. A **paragraph** contains one idea or a closely related set of ideas. The overall content of a paragraph is often captured in the first or last sentence of a paragraph e.g. *Rapscallion (2015) offers evidence that well-constructed writing assignments stimulate critical thinking amongst science undergraduates*.

5. **Punctuation**. Apostrophes, colons and semi-colons are among the three most misused forms of punctuation. Visit http://www.reading-writing-results.com/ and download *Using Apostrophes*. For other kinds of punctuation visit https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/punctuation.

6. **Active or passive?** The **passive voice** is used to emphasize the recipient of the action of a verb rather than the person or thing that is performing the action e.g. *The data were analysed*. In academic writing, the passive voice is used to convey objectivity, but tends to make for rather dry prose. The **active voice** highlights the person or thing that is performing the action e.g. *Day and Knight (2011) discovered ...* In academic writing, the active voice emphasizes action and can bring vitality to your writing.

7. **Reading and checking**. It is usually easier to read by reflected light (e.g. light bouncing off paper) than transmitted light (such as that emitted from a screen). If you are writing something important, it is usually better to print a draft, mark up changes on paper, edit the communication on screen, and then print and check again.

8. **Final checks**. Before completing an important piece of work, print it off and read it out loud. Doing so you may well discover awkward sentences, poor grammar, or missing punctuation that you might never have discovered otherwise.

9. **Software power**. Use the power of your wordprocessing software (spelling, grammar and punctuation checks, dictionary and thesaurus functions) to help check your work, but do not rely on them. Be critical. Use the 'readability' function of your software to check that your writing is pitched at the right level.

10. **Keep it simple**. Use as few words as possible to say what you mean.