

Demonstration

of an innovative **software tool**

(currently undergoing development)

to help develop skill and confidence in

Academic Writing in English

The Academic Writing in English (AWE) project promises to be an unparalleled reference tool and source of advice. Learners will be able to find advice on problems in writing ‘correct’ (appropriate) English for their assignments. Teachers will be able to print out short items of carefully crafted advice to pass on to their students. All this will be on-line.

A skeleton (the first draft of articles with headwords from **A (abbreviations)** to **Z (zoo)**) already exists in word-processed form. These articles are now being transferred to an on-line searchable database. That process has been under its experimental way for some 6 months (the writing has been 6 years so far). It is now time to demonstrate the project. The aims of the demonstration are to:

- ‘sell’ the project;
- begin to make it available to the wider academic world;
- invite comment and criticism;
- offer the chance to become involved in this most exciting venture.

So far, only some of the articles have been transcribed into the on-line form, although the work may be further advanced by the time of the Conference. The demonstration will be necessarily limited; but the potential should be clearly visible.

AWE will give guidance on usage in academic writing to students in UK education, predominantly at University levels, in a highly searchable form. It will thus remove some of the problems that modern students find in seeking help – especially in printed books, whose searchability is limited by their essentially linear organisation. It can be difficult for a student who’s been told that she uses “hanging participles” to find advice from section 3 (“unattached”, ‘misrelated’, or ‘dangling’ participles”) of an article on **participles**.¹

¹ "participles" *Pocket Fowler's Modern English Usage*. Ed. Robert Allen. Oxford University Press, 1999. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Hull University. 22 January 2007 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t30.e2799>