

Analyses of Skill Development through Essay Writing on *Criterion*[®] Topics

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英作文スキル開発の分析：*Criterion*[®] 作文トピックから

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Summary

This paper analyzes essay topics in the *Criterion*[®] service, an online writing tool developed by Educational Testing Service, by categorizing them into the personal, socio-personal, or social categories and identifying what writing skills and related abilities are required in each essay topic, in order to find out how these skills and abilities are developed through writing on *Criterion*[®] essay topics. The analysis offers the following six findings: (1) there is a shift in focus from personal topics to social topics with the advancement of students' grades, as well as a shift on observational abilities from awareness of daily occurrences to that of social phenomena, (2) there is a focus on developing imaginativeness, creativity, emotional description, and perceptual description, rhetorical abilities in pre-college education, (3) abilities of explaining reasons, cause-effect analysis, and comparative analysis are focused in college-level education, which emphasizes persuasiveness in essay writing, (4) merit analysis is emphasized at college business-focused levels, (5) students are encouraged to philosophize about their life through reflections on their life experiences at the college preparatory level, and (6) students are encouraged to develop their abilities in philosophical thinking for value judgment at college levels and GRE levels. In addition, it points out the two notable characteristics of essay topics in *Criterion*[®]: the presence of essay topics designed to develop students' abilities to assert themselves to a specific target, and the presence of essay topics designed to develop leadership abilities in students.

Keywords: *Criterion*[®], writing skills, skill development, imaginativeness, persuasiveness

要 旨

本論文では、English Testing Service により開発された英語ライティング指導ツール、*Criterion*[®] で提供されているトピックを分析する。第一にトピックが個人的・社会個人的・社会的なものであるかによって分類し、第二にそれぞれのトピックがどのような作文能力とそれに関連した能力を開発しようとしているかという観点から分析する。分析の結果、(1) 学年が上がるにつれ、個人的なトピックから社会的なトピックへ、そして日常的な事柄に関する観察力から社会的な問題に関する観察力へと焦点が変わっていること、(2) 小中高校では、想像力、創造力、感情的描写力、知覚的描写力、修辭的な言語能力の発達に重きをおいていること、(3) 大学では説得力に重きをおくため、理由説明力、因果関係分析力、比較分析力に重きが置かれていること、(4) 利点分析は大学のビジネス分野で主にみられること、(5) 大学準備レベルでは人生経験について深く考えさせていること、(6) 大学・GRE レベルでは哲学的思考力を鍛えようとしていることがわかった。さらに、自分を特定の相手に対して売り込む能力やイニシアティブをとる能力を鍛えるトピックの存在にも言及する。

キーワード: *Criterion*[®]、ライティング能力、能力開発、想像力、説得力

1. Introduction

As the first few steps toward creating effective topic lists to train non-native speakers of English to write English essays logically and coherently, the previous papers analyzed essay topics in the *Criterion*[®] service, which has been developed by ETS, a prestigious educational institution. Taoka (2015) reorganized more than four hundred topics provided in the service targeted at elementary school children to college students. Some topics with categorization problems in *Criterion*[®] were recategorized more systematically to enhance the effectiveness of topic analyses. Consequently, all the topics were divided into the following six categories: (1) cause-and-effect essays, (2) compare-and-contrast essays, (3) descriptive essays, (4) narrative essays, (5) process essays, and (6) persuasive essays.

The sixth category, the persuasive type that is opinion-based, appears in all the levels from elementary through college-level education. Thus, Taoka (2016) analyzed essays of this type by further examining them based on the degree of personal to social elements, as well as other criteria, (1) a high/less degree of value judgment required, (2) the presence/absence of specific target readers, and (3) degree/non-degree questions. It is clear from these analyses that the level of topics become higher with students' grades. More specifically, in higher education, students are given a higher ratio of social topics that require a high level of value judgment and abstract philosophical thinking with no specific target readers to be persuaded.

In order to examine what writing skills are needed and how essay writing topics develop students' writing skills, this paper analyzes all the topics by identifying what writing skills and related abilities are required in each essay topic.

2. Analytical Approaches

There are mainly three approaches to analyzing topics in *Criterion*[®], two of which were fully or partially shown in the previous papers (Taoka 2015, 2016). For the sake of convenience, their brief explanations will be provided in 2.1 and 2.2, followed by the introduction of the third approach.

2.1. The Six Modes of Writing in *Criterion*[®] and their Distribution

Here are the brief definitions of the six essay topic types: (1) cause-and-effect essays explain how a thing influences another, why things happen, or what would happen as a result, (2) compare-and-contrast essays describe similarities and differences between two things, (3) descriptive essays explain what something is like and looks like, or what purpose it serves, (4) narrative essays tell fantasy stories or describe one's own life experiences, (5) process essays explain

a procedure, or instruct readers in how to do something, and (6) persuasive essays discuss the value/importance of something, or make should-or-should-not-do or good-or-bad arguments, and additionally may persuade readers to accept a certain idea or take a certain action.

The following table is the distribution of these topic types across the different grades (Taoka 2015):

grades (right) / modes of writing (below)	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	C Pre	C I G	C I BF	C II G	C II BF	TFL	Giss
cause and effect	4 12%	5 17%	3 12%	3 12%	3 10%	1 4%	2 8%	2 8%	1 3%	2 20%					6 17%	
compare and contrast	4 12%	4 13%	4 15%	3 12%	4 14%	1 4%	1 4%	1 4%	1 3%	2 20%					1 3%	
descriptive	6 18%	6 20%	4 15%	5 19%	6 21%	8 31%	8 31%	8 31%	8 26%	2 20%					7 20%	
narrative	6 18%	5 17%	5 17%	5 19%	5 17%	6 23%	8 31%	6 23%	8 26%	2 20%						
persuasive	7 21%	6 20%	6 23%	6 23%	8 28%	7 27%	7 27%	7 27%	9 29%	2 20%	41 100%	20 100%	44 100%	20 100%	21 60%	8 100%
process	6 18%	4 13%	4 15%	4 15%	3 10%	3 12%	0	2 8%	4 13%							
total	33 100%	30 100%	26 100%	26 100%	29 100%	26 100%	26 100%	26 100%	31 100%	10 100%	41 100%	20 100%	44 100%	20 100%	35 100%	8 100%

C Pre — College Preparatory
 C I G — College I General
 C I BF — College I Business-focused
 C II G — College II General
 C II BF — College II Business-focused
 TFL — TOEFL
 Giss — GRE issue

The numbers of persuasive essays in the above table clearly indicate the degree of emphasis placed on expressing one's opinions with logical and convincing explanations in all the grades. This is especially true of college and graduate level education, in which all the topics belong to the persuasive category. In the *TOEFL*[®] level, which is designed for non-native students, other modes of writing are found in its distribution.

2.2. Personal Topics and Social Topics

As was used with the persuasive-type essay in Taoka (2016), the dichotomy of personal and social topics is applied to topics of all the categories. The criterion by which they are categorized as personal or social is whether they can be discussed mainly from subjective (personal) or objective points of view (social). If topics are concerned about social benefits or problems, they are considered social, whereas if they are not relevant to social issues, they are considered personal. Essay topics that have both personal and social elements are categorized as socio-personal, the hybrid type.

grades (right) / features (below)	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	C Pre	C I G	C I BF	C II G	C II BF	TFL	Giss
P (personal)	19 58%	12 40%	7 27%	16 62%	11 38%	13 50%	14 54%	15 58%	18 58%	8 80%	1 2%	1 5%	2 5%	0	7 20%	0
SP (socio-personal)	7 21%	11 37%	13 50%	6 23%	7 24%	7 27%	5 19%	5 19%	3 10%	0	2 5%	0	2 5%	2 10%	8 23%	0
S (social)	7 21%	7 23%	6 23%	4 15%	11 38%	6 23%	7 27%	6 23%	10 32%	2 20%	38 93%	19 95%	40 91%	18 90%	20 57%	8 100%
total	33 100%	30 100%	26 100%	26 100%	29 100%	26 100%	26 100%	26 100%	31 100%	10 100%	41 100%	20 100%	44 100%	20 100%	35 100%	8 100%

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There is a marked difference in the ratio of personal, socio-personal, and social topics between pre-college education and college education. Personal topics are predominant in the former except in the 6th grade and the 8th grade categories, but they are not fewer than social topics in those categories. In the College Preparatory level, eight personal essay topics require students to describe certain events in their own life (such as frustrating experiences, changes in their attitude toward something, and failures in difficult attempts). The major characteristic of this level is the large percentage of essay topics in which students are supposed to describe their life experiences with objective analyses. In college education, social topics far outnumber the other two topic types, so that students can develop objective ways of thinking and put issues in perspective. The *TOFEL*[®] category is a hybrid type with social topics accounting for the largest percentage, followed by socio-personal and personal topics with a relatively small margin between them.

2.3. Skills and Abilities Required in *Criterion*[®] Topics

In addition to the personal/social distinction of topics, another dimension in which to analyze each topic is to identify abilities and skills required or developed in task completion. Writing a cohesive and coherent essay requires language skills as well as critical thinking abilities pointed out by Iribe (2013). There are several skills and abilities relevant to writing on essay topics given in *Criterion*[®].

(1) Imaginativeness

Imaginativeness refers to the ability to have or show new ideas. This is most obviously needed in the narrative-essay type that requires students to make fantasy stories in lower grades of education. One good example of fantasy stories from the 4th grade category has children write a story about Simon and a flying mop that he finds on the street, telling them to use their own imagination to write a story about Simon's adventures with the mop. This essay topic asks them

where they think the flying mop comes from and where Simon goes on his mop. Moreover, imaginativeness is needed to deal with social topics that require students to imagine hypothetical situations. There is an essay topic in the same 4th grade category, for example, that asks students what would happen if they or their family members suddenly stopped doing one household chore they regularly do. In addition, prediction topics, which require students to predict possible future events, requires imaginativeness to a certain degree as well as knowledge relevant to the topic, as in the essay topic that asks what you think will happen in the next century.

(2) Creativity

Creativity, which refers to the skill and ability to produce something new, is closely related to imaginativeness, but not exactly the same thing. Creating something new necessarily involves imaginativeness, but some essay topics that require imaginativeness do not always require creativity. For instance, students do not have to come up with original ideas when they deal with the topics, “what would happen if nobody did a household chore” and “what you think would happen in the next century”. In addition to producing something new, creative abilities also include finding a new way to use something that already exists, or blending any two disparate things in an innovative way to create something new. One essay topic in the 5th grade, for example, has students rewrite their favorite storybook by setting it in a different time period in history.

(3) Organizational skills

These skills generally refer to the abilities to make arrangements and preparations for something. They are needed in essays that require writers to describe the procedures to perform their plan, often found in process essays. For example, an essay in the 5th grade has children plan the perfect birthday party and write their plan step by step to make sure that nothing is left to chance. These skills are needed to write in some persuasive essays in which writers are supposed to assert themselves or their ideas. For example, you need to write a letter persuading people that you are an appropriate one-day principal by describing what you would do and why that action would be beneficial, or you need to sell your ideas for new educational TV series by describing one episode of a TV series that you plan to make. These skills are also required in problem-solving topics that have students offer solutions to problems.

(4) Cause-effect analytical skills

These refer to the abilities to analyze something in terms of what influences what and how something has changed or will change because of another, what would happen if something happens, and so on. As the name suggests, this kind of analysis is required in dealing with cause-effect essays. Some essay topics at higher levels (at college education) require cause-effect analyses of how a certain experience has affected you as well as narrative descriptions of what has happened.

(5) Comparative analytical skills

These refer to the abilities to examine more than two things in terms of similarities and differences, which are required in dealing with the compare-and-contrast essay type. Some topics in which you have to compare and contrast your likes and dislikes in both perspectives are expected to be more challenging to deal with than others. This type of logical analysis is also employed when you have to choose one among others in persuasive essay questions such as what is the most important factor in success, what is your favorite X, and which is better, A or B. This is because screening and selection processes require students to weigh the importance of possible options.

(6) Descriptive skills

These refer to the abilities to analyze something, someone, or an event in order to describe what they are like. The types of description that appear in the *Criterion*[®] service are subcategorized into three types. One type is factual descriptions, which require students to write essays from objective points of view based on factual information. Thus, this ability is required in almost all essays, except in the fantasy-story type of narrative essays. Another type is emotional descriptions, which are required in descriptive essays in which students are expected to express their feelings in a certain situation. For example, there is an essay topic in the 6th grade in which elementary school children are supposed to choose one set of clothes and explain how they feel in those clothes. Finally, perceptual descriptions are essential in explaining something in terms of perceptual senses that include taste, sight, hearing, feeling, and smell. An essay topic for 4th graders has students describe their favorite scent vividly and tell the readers about the reasons for their preference.

(7) Merit analytical skills

These refer to the abilities to analyze something in terms of advantages and disadvantages, or pros and cons, which are required in persuasive essays that have writers argue for or against something, mainly with practical considerations. This is also required in some compare-and-contrast essay topics, and choose-the-best essay topics.

(8) Categorical analytical skills

These refer to the abilities to classify things into categories that share similar characteristics without overlapping and repetitions, which are required when writers enumerate several reasons, several differences and similarities, several advantages and disadvantages, and so on. This is a prerequisite for writing on most essay topics.

(9) Philosophical analytical skills

This type of skills is required in some essay topics that need to be discussed with philosophical thinking based on intellectual maturity, and cannot be argued only with practicality analyses, or

subjective viewpoints. In fact, persuasive essays involving value judgment discussed by Taoka (2016) require this type of intellectual analysis.

(10) Rhetorical abilities

Rhetorical abilities refer purely to verbal abilities, that is, effective use of vocabulary and linguistic diversity for rhetorical purposes, all of which are categorized into two types: persuasive abilities and literal abilities. The former requires effective use of analogy and rhetoric to persuade others to accept your ideas and opinions. Writing persuasive essays with specific targets to be persuaded require these abilities. The latter requires effective use of words and phrases to conjure up vivid images of what is happening in readers' mind, as is required in fiction writing. Creative writing required in fantasy stories and vivid descriptions surely require literal abilities.

(11) Sensitivity

This ability is required for descriptive analysis (emotion and perception) because you need to feel or perceive something before you describe it. There are two kinds of sensitivities: emotional sensitivity and perceptual sensitivity. The former is required in essays to describe emotions, while the latter is required in essay topics to explain something with perceptual descriptions mentioned above.

(12) Observational abilities

Observational abilities refer to the abilities to become aware of what is happening in your daily life, community and the world. There are two kinds: awareness of social phenomenon and daily occurrences. The former, related to general knowledge, is whether you pay attention to what is happening in your school or community. This awareness is required for writing essays about social issues and the community. The latter, which is relevant to daily activities such as how to tie your shoes and how to cook a dish, is often required in process essays designed for elementary and junior high school students.

In analyzing each topic in *Criterion*[®] with the above-mentioned skills and abilities, there are two points to be considered. One is that these skills and abilities are not completely independent of one another. Just as creativity necessarily involves imaginativeness, emotional descriptive skills require emotional sensitivity. Merit analytical skills can be used in comparative analysis when you weigh the benefits of two things.

Another point is that many skills and abilities are required in dealing with one essay topic as a priori. For example, factual descriptive skills, categorical analytical skills, and linguistic abilities are required in almost all essay topics with varying emphasis depending on the topic. In addition, essay topics present several tasks for students to achieve. Some narrative essays that require students to

explain one of your life experiences ask them how the experience has influenced them (cause-effect analytical skills) and how they are different before and after the experience (comparative analytical skills). In other cases, some descriptive essays asking students what their favorite X (descriptive skills) is like further require students to answer how they feel when they have X (emotional descriptive skills).

Therefore, only skills and abilities essential for writing on each essay topic are considered to analyze skill development in this paper. Because of the space constraint, this paper focuses on the following types of skills and abilities based on the following criteria.

IMG (imaginativeness) is assigned to essay topics that require students to write fantasy stories, think about hypothetical situations or predict what will happen.

CR (creativity) is assigned to essay topics that require students to come up with new stories and ideas, innovative ways of doing things or changing something.

ORG (organizational skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to plan something, change something, or present ways to solve problems.

CE (cause-effect analytical skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to discuss what will happen because of another, or talk about the influences of something on another.

COM (comparative analytical skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to provide similarities and differences between two things, or choose one from two or more than two options.

FD (factual descriptive skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to describe a person, an object and an event. The type of descriptive skills that does not fall into emotional or perceptual descriptive skills is categorized as factual descriptive skills.

ED (emotional descriptive skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to explain how they felt, feel, or would feel in a certain situation.

PD (perceptual descriptive skills) is assigned to essay topics that require students to describe something involving five senses.

MRT (merit analytical skills) is assigned to essay topics that have students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of something.

PHI (philosophical analytical skills) is assigned to essay topics that involve value judgment.

PER (rhetorical abilities—persuasive) is assigned to persuasive essays with specific targets to be persuaded and other essays that direct students to make convincing arguments.

LIT (rhetorical abilities—literal) is assigned to essay topics that require students to give vivid descriptions of something to evoke clear images in readers' mind.

OBS (observational abilities—awareness of social phenomena) is assigned to essay topics that require students to write about problems and issues in their schools and communities.

OBD (observational abilities—awareness of daily occurrences) is assigned to process essays

that require students to write about daily matters such as cooking and giving directions.

ER (abilities in explaining reasons) is assigned to all the persuasive essays and the other types of essays about the reasons for something, whose descriptions can be based on any kinds of analysis: merit analytical skills, cause-effect analytical skills, comparative analytical skills, or philosophical analytical skills. Thus, there is occasional overlapping between this skill and the above-mentioned analytical skills.

Topics are not analyzed in terms of categorical analytical abilities (because they are applied to most essay topics), or in terms of sensitivity (because it covers the same topics as emotional and perceptual descriptive skills).

3. Findings

The following table shows the distributions of each skill in the different levels of education.

grades (right) / skills (below)	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	C Pre	C I G	C I BF	C II G	C II BF	TFL	Giss
IMG	12 36%	9 30%	10 38%	7 27%	14 48%	4 15%	5 19%	5 19%	7 23%	1 10%	1 2%	0	1 2%	3 15%	7 20%	0
CR	7 21%	3 10%	5 19%	2 7%	7 24%	2 7%	3 12%	4 15%	4 13%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ORG	1 3%	5 17%	1 4%	0	7 24%	3 12%	0	3 12%	6 19%	0	1 2%	1 5%	1 2%	3 15%	7 20%	0
CE	4 12%	7 23%	3 12%	6 20%	3 10%	1 4%	6 20%	3 12%	2 6%	5 50%	24 59%	13 65%	15 34%	6 30%	8 23%	5 63%
COM	8 24%	6 20%	9 35%	4 15%	5 17%	2 7%	4 15%	6 20%	10 32%	4 40%	27 66%	15 75%	33 75%	17 85%	18 60%	4 50%
FD	13 39%	19 63%	9 35%	9 35%	8 28%	11 42%	10 38%	14 54%	11 35%	7 70%	14 34%	2 10%	6 14%	5 25%	10 29%	2 25%
ED	2 6%	2 7%	0	0	2 7%	2 7%	2 7%	1 4%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PD	3 9%	2 7%	2 8%	4 15%	2 7%	5 19%	5 19%	1 4%	4 13%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MRT	1 3%	3 10%	0	1 4%	4 14%	2 7%	4 15%	3 12%	5 16%	1 10%	6 15%	8 40%	8 18%	4 20%	5 14%	0
PHI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4 10%	0	3 7%	0	1 3%	6 75%
PER	5 15%	4 13%	6 23%	2 7%	3 10%	6 20%	3 12%	3 12%	3 10%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LIT	1 3%	0	2 8%	4 15%	3 10%	1 4%	2 7%	2 7%	2 6%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OBS	0	0	1 4%	0	1 3%	0	0	0	1 3%	0	20 49%	2 10%	7 16%	7 35%	5 14%	3 38%
OBD	4 12%	1 3%	1 4%	2 7%	0	0	1 4%	2 7%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ER	9 27%	9 30%	8 31%	8 31%	8 28%	11 42%	10 38%	10 38%	11 35%	5 50%	41 100%	20 100%	44 100%	20 100%	30 86%	8 100%
total number of topics	33	30	26	26	29	26	26	26	31	10	41	20	44	20	35	8

C Pre — College Preparatory
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 C II G — College II General
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 TFL — TOEFL
 Giss — GRE issue

It is clear that pre-college education and college education have distinct patterns in the distributions of some skills and abilities, except College preparatory level and *TOEFL*[®], which are considered to be unique in serving as a bridge between pre-college education and college education. Unlike in college education, imaginativeness, creativity, emotional descriptive skills and perceptual descriptive skills are required in essay topics in pre-college education. In fact, there are virtually no essays that require the above skills except topics that require imaginativeness in hypothetical situations and prediction topics at college levels. This clearly indicates the importance of developing creativity and sensitivity at pre-college levels.

Despite no significant quantitative differences between pre-college and college education in terms of organizational skills, there are some variations between the two levels of education. In lower levels of education, students are required to make a plan or changes to something (such as a plan to organize a party or a change to school regulations), whereas, in higher levels, especially in business-focused college level, they are required to work out solutions to specific problems. That is, pre-college students are encouraged to take the initiative in planning, reform and decision-making rather than problem-solving.

As for cause-effect analytical skills and comparative analytical skills, college-level education has a higher percentage than pre-college education. Probably, this is due in part to a greater number of essay topics that require students to argue in terms of dichotomy (that is, A or B, or whether or not), as well as scientific cause-effect relationship.

Turning to factual descriptive skills, there is a higher percentage of essay topics that require this ability in the pre-college levels. This is because there are more topics (in fact, there is none in college-level topics) that require students to describe a person, an event, and an object.

As for rhetorical abilities (both persuasive and literal), pre-college levels have some essays that require these skills, whereas there is none in college levels. First, college students are not required to write essays with vivid descriptions that give readers clear images of something. Second, they are not given specific people to persuade in essays. These differences indicate that college students are expected to already have literal resources to make their argument convincing, while pre-college students are yet to be trained to develop their capacity for linguistic resources and familiarize themselves with an effective use of them.

Merit analytical skills are required especially at business-focused college levels, at which students are often required to argue about something based on practicality. However, there are some cases where merit analysis can be used to provide reasons for choice.

Philosophical analysis, or philosophical thinking, is required only in higher levels of education. Students are required to base their argument on wisdom and intellectual maturity in dealing with this type of essay topics, as it cannot be discussed only in terms of simple analysis of an issue based on merit or practicality, as is discussed by Taoka (2016).

There is a higher percentage of explanation of reasons at college levels. This is because college

level essays belong exclusively to the persuasive-essay type, which requires logical reasons to support one's argument.

Finally, a shift in emphasis on observational abilities from awareness of daily occurrences to that of social phenomenon is analogous to a shift in focus from personal topics to social topics with the advancement of grade. Students in pre-college education need to be knowledgeable enough to explain clearly certain processes found in their daily life such as how to cook a favorite dish or how to borrow a book from the library, whereas those in college education need to present cause-effect analyses of certain social phenomena, or predict what will happen in the future, which requires a deeper knowledge of social issues.

4. Other Notable Characteristics

There are two other significant characteristics in essay writing on *Criterion*[®] topics. One is that some persuasive topics that require students to assert themselves or their preferences to specific target readers: two in the 4th grade, two in the 5th grade, two in the 7th grade, and one in the 8th grade. This suggests that those topics are designed to develop students' ability to 'sell' themselves and assert their personal preferences logically based on their awareness of the target readers.

The other is that some essays require students to take the initiative in making a difference in something: three in the 5th grade, one in the 8th grade, one in the 9th grade, one in the 12th grade, and two in college preparatory. Moreover, persuasive essay topics for high school students are related to public interest of their schools and communities such as safe and clean environments. These topics seem designed to develop students' leadership abilities through essay writing.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzed more than 400 topics in *Criterion*[®] mainly in terms of (1) the degree of social/personal topics and (2) skill development based on analyses of skills and abilities required in each essay topics. The main findings are (1) there is a shift in focus from personal topics to social topics with the advancement of grade, as well as a shift on observational abilities from awareness of daily occurrences to that of social phenomena, (2) there is a focus on developing imaginativeness, creativity, emotional description, and perceptual description, rhetorical abilities in pre-college education, whereas (3) abilities of explaining reasons, cause-effect analysis, and comparative analysis are focused in college-level education, which emphasizes essay writing on persuasive-type topics, (4) merit analysis is emphasized at college business-focused levels, (5) students are encouraged to philosophize about their life through reflections on their life experiences in the college preparatory level, and (6) students are encouraged to develop abilities in philosophical thinking for value judgment at college and GRE levels. In addition, this paper pointed out the two notable characteristics, the presence of essay topics designed to develop students' abilities to assert themselves to their target readers, and the presence of essay topics designed to develop students'

leadership abilities.

In order to teach English writing effectively, it is essential to develop students' logical thinking abilities and other skills mentioned above. The analyses of skill development in writing on *Criterion*[®] essay topics can shed light on how to create a highly effective essay lists for non-native learners of English.

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