Writing academically

Student 1
Practice makes perfect. Erm, writing an essay a week inevitably means that I kind of, erm, develop a certain style. Er, I think my approach to it has become professional, maybe, erm, writing an essay here has been, has evolved, because I first approach it with the a-level perspective, you know, ticking all the assessment objectives. And then, I had a lecture which basically said you’re here to experiment, you know, do not be afraid of breaking some of the rules, and that in itself was such a liberation. So, I have sort of become more wacky, but also better at it. Erm, and something which I have done more, especially this term, is secondary reading and quoting people and approaching it more as like a mini coursework essay every week in cheesy A-level terminology.

Student 2
You learn that, well, because you are addressing this to your supervisors or in the exam your examiners, they already know what the text says, so, what you end up doing is instead quickly referring. You say, erm, so I think the best example I can give is, one of our papers is politics and we have to argue for why, erm, like, industrialisation isn’t necessarily a result of democracy and instead you say, erm, well, contemporary research has shown that the correlation is far weaker, erm, or, economists such as Galbraith have argued so-and-so, and so instead, you are kind of just referring to them in passing and talking about their main ideas. But you’re mainly talking about them in terms of the themes, rather than the people who said them.

Student 3
Usually, I used to just look at the print and online resources, but I have found that looking more widely, even if I am not going to use that source, is good. It is a bit like an iceberg, you’ve done all the research underneath, even if what you produce is just the iceberg.