

D Session Abstracts

D1. International changes in large-scale writing assessments: Approaches for studying the effects of global, economic and institutional forces

Although there have been some international surveys of writing performance over the last 30 years, little qualitative research has been done to compare academic writing practices among different education systems.

This is a striking omission in a world in which 'globalization' of education markets has led to greater migration by students across borders (including at the school to college transition), the advent of universities having campuses in different countries, and increasing international movement of teaching and research staff.

Writing, it seems, is pulled two ways. It is still heavily implicated in curricular systems, usually national ones; at the same time, students and teachers are increasingly aware of what goes on 'over there' in other systems, and some have to learn how to write for different national audiences. Globalizing market pressures are bringing the traditional isolation of systems into question. This session discusses methodologies for studying written assessment across institutional and national boundaries.

The machine in the garden: Economic and global pressures to homogenize machine and human writing assessment

Les Perelman

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

perelman@mit.edu

Globalization has accelerated the pressure to create standard, large-scale writing assessments. Yet at the same time, the economic costs of large-scale grading by humans have become more and more prohibitive. Rather than try to find technological solutions to make human grading less expensive, the trend has become to replace human graders by machine, thereby eliminating most of the marginal cost involved in essay scoring. Moreover, instances employing technology to enable human grading of essays appear to produce results that are strikingly similar to those of machine grading. This presentation will focus on the assumptions concerning reliability and validity as well as the conscious and unconscious economic forces that have resulted in human graders being trained to be as reductive as machines. The presentations will also discuss the economic forces that will push for the global proliferation of machine grading. Most of the for-profit testing companies are already subsidiaries of multi-national corporations. Moreover, the acquisition and development of machine reading algorithms are treated as large capital expenditures that need to be amortized by world-wide distribution and use.

The politics of assessment: Comparability and difference

Anne Herrington

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

anneh@english.umass.edu

To understand and intervene in the forces calling for uniformity in assessment practices and criteria, we need a multi-pronged research methodology that considers not only micro-level issues of reliability and validity, but also local programmatic/institutional factors and broader national and global discourses and forces. I will develop this argument using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) as a case study, drawing on critical discourse analysis and analysis of decision-making at UMass Amherst where our General Education Council is being asked to consider adopting CLA for assessment of learning outcomes. Some are advocating a locally based assessment instead. The critical discourse analysis will focus on key words (comparability, bench-marking, value-added) in documents from the Spellings Commission and higher education organizations that are promoting CLA as well as the CLA website at the Council for Aid to Education. CLA is developed by the RAND Corporation and marketed by CAE, until recently a unit of RAND.

D2. Second language writing processes

Writing in L1 and L2: A closer look at the relationship between cognitive activities and text quality

Daphne van Weijen

Utrecht University

Daphne.vanWeijen@let.uu.nl

Huub van den Bergh

Utrecht University

University of Amsterdam

huub.vandenbergh@let.uu.nl

Gert Rijlaarsdam

University of Amsterdam

G.C.W.Rijlaarsdam@uva.nl

Ted Sanders

Utrecht University

Ted.Sanders@let.uu.nl

Text quality varies considerably, both between and within writers. In L1 these differences can be explained to some extent by the orchestration of the underlying cognitive

processes. If a writer generates only a few ideas on a certain topic, or generates fewer ideas for one text than another, text quality is negatively affected. Furthermore, the moment at which an activity is carried out is also important; generating is positively related to text quality at the start of the writing process, whereas the reverse is true for revising.

The quality of texts writers produce in L2 is clearly less than that of their L1 texts, although substantial differences in quality still appear, between and within writers (between tasks). However little is known about the temporal distribution of cognitive activities during L2 writing. Perhaps these differences in quality can be explained by differences in the temporal distribution of cognitive activities during the writing process, just as in L1.

In this study 20 subjects wrote 4 texts each in L1 (Dutch) and 4 in L2 (English) under think-aloud conditions, in a counter-balanced design. Results indicate that process characteristics vary greatly between and within writers and that the temporal distribution of these activities over the writing process fluctuates as well. Generating ideas for example occurs mainly in the beginning and middle of the writing process, whereas formulating occurs mainly in the middle of the writing process. However, there appear to be large differences both between writers and tasks. In L1, the correlation with text quality varies during task execution (and also depends of course on the specific cognitive activity). The magnitude of the correlation changes due to task as well, although the general shape of the curve remains the same. The correlation between process characteristics and text quality in L2 is currently being analyzed.

The use of the first language in written composing processes in SL in a language contact context

Oriol Guasch

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

oriol.guasch@uab.cat

To produce written compositions in languages less known than one's own has some specific features. Among them we should emphasize the use of the first language in the composing process in other languages (Cumming, 1990; Silva, 1993; Qi, 1998).

The research presented was realized in one of the schools of the industrial belt zone of Barcelona (Spain), a capital of a region (Catalunya) with two official languages –Catalan and Spanish– and a sociolinguistic situation of language contact. The written composing activity in Catalan was carried out by 11-12 years old schoolchildren, whose family language was Spanish and who attended an immersion program in Catalan language.

The main aim of the study was to observe “code switching” between Spanish and Catalan in the processes of collaboratively composing a fiction story in two groups of pupils: one formed by 3 pupils whose family language was Spanish, and the other one with two Spanish pupils and one Catalan pupil.

The hypotheses were the following: a) that the linguistically mixed group would have a different linguistic behaviour comparing with the linguistically homogeneous group, b) that the “code switching” would occur according to two principles: 1) the sociolinguistic norms that regulate the language use in the general framework within which the activity is developed, and 2) the requirements coming out of the information/content processing and its linguistic formulation in the composing operations.

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis, beyond the partial confirmation of the hypotheses, allowed advancing in the characterization of group interaction in the process of written composition, and contributed to clarify the function of the first language in the processes of using and learning additional languages.

D3. Diversity research and teaching for change

Kathryn Ortiz
University of Arizona, Tucson
kortiz@email.arizona.edu

Vivette Milson-Whyte
University of Arizona, Tucson

Katia Mello Vieira
University of Arizona, Tucson

Aja Y. Martinez
University of Arizona, Tucson

This panel will address how transnational writing research can augment curriculum, instruction, and research in varied writing traditions. To challenge paradigms that exclude difference in home culture, language, class, race and so on, the panelists will draw from their research completed and in progress in Brazil, Jamaica, and the borderlands of the American Southwest.

Their presentations constitute responses to calls for international comparisons of writing, teaching, and writing research. One such call appears in the 1996 CCCC’s Braddock award-winning essay “Importing Composition: Teaching and Researching Academic Writing beyond North America.” In it, the authors point to ways that academic writing is intertwined with culture, and urge readers to join a discussion about assumptions in composition studies in North America and writing realities in parallel disciplines on other continents.

In engaging with such calls, the panelists advocate for a discussion about assumptions in US composition teaching and research in relation not only to other countries' writing traditions but also to transnational communities within the US.

Vivette Milson-Whyte will share the research experience and preliminary findings of a study conducted to determine ways in which academic writing has been understood and taught in different periods in Jamaica and compare salient aspects of US composition teaching.

Katia Mello Vieira will reflect on the setbacks and conceptual problems faced while conducting research on teaching the narrative essay in Brazilian and American First-Year Composition.

Aja Y. Martinez will investigate the purpose, necessity, and effectiveness of a Native American First Year Composition course that has been offered at The University of Arizona for twenty years.

Kathryn Ortiz will present preliminary research on how a University of Arizona pilot of a First-Year Composition course designed to empower English-speaking Latinos in the US will help this population persist towards degrees in higher education.

D4. Alternate writing modalities and literate communities

Analyzing Genentech's quarterly earnings reports as multimodal compositions

Carl Whithaus
University of California, Davis
cwhithaus@gmail.com

Researchers in many fields have noted the impact of information technology on writing and literacy practices. Gunther Kress, James Paul Gee, and others in the New London Group have analyzed the increasing use of multimodal works in school-based literacy practices, and researchers in technical communication have documented many on the ways in which advances in IT and multimodal communication have altered collaborative workplace writing practices. This research project examines how one genre of corporate writing—the quarterly report to investors—has become increasingly multimodal in the period 2002-2007. By analyzing four quarterly reports (from the 3rd quarters in 02, 04, 06 and 07) from the biotech firm, Genentech, I trace the increasingly multimodal presentation of corporate information to investors and the public.

These quarterly earnings reports are fascinating examples not only because of their development as multimodal texts over time but also because they are examples of a genre that is read by investors around the globe. Genentech's quarterly reports are reviewed in Japan, Singapore, the EU and the US. Understanding the increased use of multimodal elements in the web-based delivery of these earnings reports requires not only an analysis

of the reports themselves but also their complex multinational reception. This project, then, will (1) present a quick overview of these four Genentech reports as collaborative, multimodal compositions, (2) trace the outline of their receptions in Japan, Singapore, the EU and the US, and (3) ask how reading these samples of corporate writing might help us refine our emerging notions of about multimodal literacies and writing.

D5. Readers becoming writers: Fan fiction and online communities

Claudia Rebaza

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

rebaza@uiuc.edu

In online writing communities writing is not only the medium of exchange but also the focus of interaction. In fan fiction groups, participants analyze and debate media texts in story form. Fan fiction expands or rewrites stories accessed through television, books, or other media. These new repurposed stories are shared and responded to by others engaged in the same activity. As these acts repeat themselves daily, the entire process of internalizing, modifying and reframing storylines takes on the aspect of an ongoing group performance. Researching such a group involves becoming one of the performers in order to understand the motivation of story writing and to identify the application of norms. Fan fiction writing groups include not only the individual performance of self, but also performance in the fan fiction texts themselves, which hew more closely to plays than literature. Additionally the performance of gender in communities that are overwhelmingly female affects both texts and interaction. An ethnographic researcher in this environment is challenged not only to position self as both insider and outsider, but also to incorporate the role of “researcher” as yet another level of performance.

This dissertation combined the use of ethnography, surveys and interviews to gather data and used social identity theory as a framework for interpreting observations and discussion. Studies of writing groups as well as online communities of practice are relevant to the field of Library and Information Science due to their focus on the creation of texts, the generation and communication of localized knowledge, and the interaction of social structures and technology. This particular study’s focus on the amateur creation, dissemination and interpretation of primary and secondary texts provides insight into reader-response, the process of communal leisure writing, and the boundaries of private and public self in online environments.

D6. Writing as public practice

The Status of Writing

Deborah Brandt

University of Wisconsin-Madison
dlbrandt@wisc.edu

This presentation explores the rising value of writing to economic and social ways of life in this country and suggests how this development opens a new chapter in the history of mass literacy. Where mass reading developed under the aegis of church and state, mass writing had its origins in commerce and trade, giving it an uneasy status within the "moral order" of dominant literacy ideology. However, economic and technological changes over the last 60 years are now making writing the mass skill of consequence, bringing into prominence what had been a minor strand in literacy's history, one that is now mixing, often unarticulated, in the literacy experiences of individuals as well as broader cultural practices. For the first time, the potential for what could only be called mass authorship is in place, bringing radically different values and sponsoring agents to the forefront and upending traditional relationships between reading and writing.

This presentation shines a light on literacy's emergent minor strand by examining work history accounts of two American men, both born in the mid-20th century. Their careers (one as an academic librarian and the other as a history teacher turned financial manager) began squarely in the moral order of a mass reading literacy but over time turned dramatically to writing. An analysis of their accounts will reveal their growing reliance on writing for productivity, the shifting relationship between reading and writing in their daily habits, and the relationship between changes in their literacy and changes in their professions. The analysis will link these individuals' writing literacy to a long tradition of commercial sponsorship for writing, showing that what is new now is not so much a market mentality for writing but the level of its infiltration into the literate experiences and organizational practices of more and more people. Implications for the status of literacy going forward will be considered.

Writing and research in the new public, performative paradigm: The problem of tracking transformation

Linda Flower
Carnegie Mellon University
lf54@andrew.cmu.edu

Tracking transformation, as change, growth, or development, is central to writing research and teaching. But the nature of the change we seek to observe has varied with our paradigm. For example, early work in cognitive rhetoric focused on individual changes from novice to expert and growth in meta-knowledge and control. The social paradigm argued for an alternative focus on the features and development of discourses to which individuals would become (unconsciously or by choice) acculturated.

Some work, influenced by activity theory and social-cognitive research, has explicitly tried to bridge the gap between individual and social processes. This integrated understanding is even more central to a paradigm now emerging in rhetoric and composition. Drawing on work from rhetoric, deliberative democracy, activity analysis,

cultural studies, and even performance theory, this new public paradigm is showing up in the educational projects of community literacy, environmental rhetoric, and other forms of socially engaged pedagogy. This emerging paradigm sees writing as not merely social but as a public literate act, guided by personal and political intentions in a context where outcomes, not just texts, matter. One problem for educators is how to track the personal growth and transformation of writers in conjunction with the public and transformative potential of their writing.

This paper will draw on a decade of studies in community literacy (where college students must interact with urban communities as well as institutional sponsors), first to argue for the importance of focusing on the *personal and public outcomes* of such writing. And secondly, to respond to the considerable challenge this could pose, by asking: how does an educator move from a theory-guided support for literate action, to an equally theory-guided account of outcomes in these public, fluidly structured contexts? What might a methodological toolkit for tracking transformational outcomes contain? Finally, I will consider a set of formal and informal techniques developed in our own work that defined and tried to track outcomes in terms of 1) students' insight, meta-cognitive awareness, and their actual transfer of thinking strategies and attitudes to real-life situations, 2) the nature and complexity of the knowledge constructed in these performative literate activities, and 3) transformations in the networks of circulation, norms of discourse, and relationships created by the counterpublic rhetoric of community literacy.

D7. Redefining Community Literacy Borders

Unfinished business

Rhea Estelle Lathan
Michigan State University

In this presentation I will discuss my historical analysis of the South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Education Program, a community-based literacy project, in an attempt to explore how contemporary literacy issues in African-American Communities are linked to the grassroots literacy activities of the Civil Rights Movement. I will also discuss how I plan to expand this project to include the descendants of those who participated in the South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Education Program.

Researching family literacy histories

Julie Lindquist
Michigan State University

Bump Halbritter
Michigan State University

drbump@msu.edu

In this presentation, we will discuss the LiteracyCorps project as

- A multi-part methodological model to trace and document the digitally literate lives of college students. We will collect personal literacy narratives from first-year college students to help us identify, critique, and improve literacy instruction practices that promise access and socio-economic mobility for working-class students in Michigan.
 - A multi-mediated collection model designed to facilitate literacy research across and within generational, educational, and technological borders. The data will help us offer a rich illustration of multiliteracies and the communities that rely on them.
 - A documentary project designed for distribution to various sites of literacy instruction. We plan to capture our oral history data in both video and audio, for use not only as data, but as material for documentary productions. We also plan to have students who participate in the project take the cameras to research important sites of literacy (both human and geographical) from their histories. The resulting archive will provide a rich context for the documentary and additional research, and a base archive to which other projects can add content, enabling longitudinal study of the literate lives of students, their families, and their home communities.
-

D8. Researching transfer of writing across situation, time, medium, and genre

Chair:

Erin Krampetz
Escuela Nueva International
krampetz@gmail.com

Presenters:

Anis Bawarshi
University of Washington
bawarshi@u.washington.edu

Kirsten Benson
University of Tennessee
kbenson@utk.edu

Bill Doyle
University of Tennessee
wdoyle1@utk.edu

Jenn Fishman
University of Tennessee

jfishman@utk.edu

Stacey Pigg
Michigan State University
piggstac@msu.edu

Mary Jo Reiff
University of Tennessee
mreiff@utk.edu

With the ongoing development of university-wide writing programs and the continued growth of WAC and WID comes an increased need for research into how FYC responds to entering students' abilities and matriculated students' needs. In his proposal for a “R/Evolutionary” writing program and curriculum, David Smit identifies “transferability” as a primary consideration, concentrating on related factors of instructional focus (what is taught), genre (what students write), and context (the numerous situations in which students write).

This roundtable brings together faculty and graduate student co-researchers from four interconnected studies undertaken recently at two different public research universities. The studies include two cross-institutional inquiries into college students' transfer of prior genre knowledge into FYC; a two-year investigation into FYC students' transfer of rhetorical knowledge across academic writing situations and media; and a survey-based study of how students perceive the transferability of FYC research skills. In a structured, three-part conversation, researchers will offer a comparative analysis of their research findings, and they will reflect on their research practices, addressing in particular questions about effective study design and effective strategies for collaboration between faculty and students and between colleagues at different institutions.

- Part I (20-minutes) will focus on the collective conclusions researchers draw from interlocking studies of first- and second-year students' transfer of genre, rhetorical, and research knowledge across mediums, assignments, and writing situations.
- During part II (20 minutes), speakers will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their studies' designs, interview and survey protocols, and strategies for working with undergraduate research participants.
- In part III (15 minutes), speakers will address the logistics of both cross-institutional and faculty-student research collaborations, paying special attention to graduate pedagogy and graduate education in Rhetoric/Composition more broadly.

The remaining 20 minutes will be open to a discussion with the audience facilitated by the panel chair.

D9. New schools, new curricula: Literacy advances in basic international education

Chair and Respondent:

Denise Sauerteig
Escuela Nueva International
dsauerteig@eninternational.org

Speakers:
Erin Krampetz
Escuela Nueva International
krampetz@eninternational.org

Sandra Staklis
Escuela Nueva International
sstaklis@gmail.com

David Suarez
University of Southern California
dsuarez@sppd.usc.edu

Clare Hanbury
Escuela Nueva International
clare.hanbury@zen.co.uk

Johnny Lin
Brown University
lin.johnny@gmail.com

Respondent:
Karen Boyd
Escuela Nueva International
kboyd@eninternational.org

Most research about curriculum development and literacy instruction is framed within and for formal schooling even while conventional education regularly fails young learners whose needs are not accommodated by mainstream school calendars or pedagogical approaches. Within the last 30 years, however, educators in both developed and developing countries have worked together to establish successful alternatives to basic literacy education. Through ongoing collaborative efforts, schools are gradually being transformed both locally and systemically in terms of access, content, delivery, and assessment.

This multi-disciplinary roundtable examines the efforts and experiences of three educators from an international education organization affiliated with the World Bank,

UNICEF, and recently given a Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. Based in Latin America and active in 14 countries across the globe, these teacher-researcher-entrepreneurs are working across disciplinary boundaries and national borders to establish effective community-based education for millions of children worldwide. Speaking from 35 years of collective experience, the participants in this structured conversation will discuss the original circumstances and motives for their work; the learning model they have helped to develop and disseminate; and their recent efforts to adapt their curriculum to meet literacy challenges in international education.

Erin Krampetz, an education practitioner trained in rhetoric and composition, will describe alternative curricula and methodologies in international education. David Suarez, a professor of non-profit management, will describe global trends in citizenship education and concrete ways educators can advocate for social change in challenging situations, as in countries with histories of human rights violations. Clare Hanbury, a curriculum specialist for developing countries, will discuss efforts to make educational materials and literacy tools relevant across cultures and contexts. Johnny Lin, curriculum consultant in education for emergency situations, will describe the process of literacy development for refugee children and others outside of the traditional classroom environment. Sandra Staklis, Research Director for Escuela Nueva International, will give examples of how to make educational research tangible and actionable by publicizing students projects, supporting teachers' action research, and promoting a research agenda for citizenship education.

D10. National research traditions in international contexts

Chair: Yully C. Nieves, *U.C. Santa Barbara*

Mapping genre researches in Brazil: an exploratory study

Antonia Dilamar Araújo
Universidade Estadual do Ceará (UECE), Brazil
dilamar@gmail.com

The last decade has produced significant research on writing and genre worldwide. The great majority of studies on genres have revealed the generic nature of texts, by means of description and explanation of language use. Several theoretical models (Halliday and Hasan, Swales and Bhatia) have also been devised for analysis that function as tool for genre descriptions and help scholars understand how the texts are shaped, constructed and modified to meet the needs of academic community. In Brazil, genre analyses have been established as an important area of study of situated linguistic behavior, especially in academic contexts. Despite the scholars' growing interest on the topic of genre from different perspectives, there is a lack of investigation that offers us a view of the extension and nature of the studies. This presentation has the aim to discuss the outcomes of an exploratory research conducted in Brazil to figure out a) what genres have been studied by researchers, b) what theoretical framework underlies these studies and c) what

methodology of investigation has been adopted for analysis. The data have been collected from a corpus constituted by theses and dissertations written by graduate students from linguistics and applied linguistics programs as well as research articles published in scholarly journals and books on genre across a 26 years span, from 1980-2006. Although this research is still in progress, preliminary results have revealed that most of the studies focus on written academic genres from a descriptive point of view rather than instructional and that the preferred theoretical framework by scholars are socio-interactionism (Bakhtin) and sociorhetorical (Miller, Swales, Bazerman and Bhatia). It is hoped that the results may depict how the knowledge production on genres is carried out in Brazil, besides helping to redirect future investigations on genres not yet explored.

Writing Studies: Definition(s) and Issues / La rédactologie: définition(s) et enjeux

Céline Beaudet

Université de Sherbrooke

Celine.Beaudet@Usherbrooke.ca

In March 2007, the Canadian Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Rhetoric and Writing held a joint France-Québec seminar (in French) on the following theme *Writing Studies: Definition(s) and Issues* [La rédactologie : définition(s) et enjeux]. Participants from France were Denis Alamargot, Université de Poitiers, Michel Fayol, Université de Clermont-Ferrand, Bertrand Labasse, Université de Lyon, Maryse Souchard, Université de Nantes; from Québec were Céline Beaudet, Karine Collette, Jean-Herman Guay and Nathalie Watteyne, Université de Sherbrooke; Éric Kavanagh, Université Laval; Odette Gagnon, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi.

Each invited participant had been asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What research do you do on writing, texts, documents, the context of communication, the reader, and the social impact of texts? How does this research contribute to defining the field of research for writing studies?
2. What analytical approaches and methodologies do you apply when researching these various issues?
3. What are the key terms associated with your research and what definitions do you propose?

This proposed presentation will report briefly on the results of the three-day interdisciplinary research-based seminar in terms of progress made in defining research priorities in the field of writing studies among the French speaking community. The presentation will then describe the undertaking of two plans of action: a survey among French-speaking professional writers in Québec to inquire about their tasks, skills and knowledge-base and then the outlining of a multidisciplinary graduate program in advanced writing in the workplace.

Modern "Writingology" in China

Huijun Chen

China University of Geosciences (Beijing)
chenhuijun2000@sina.com

Much work on writing studies in China before 1980s has been published and spread in English in the United States. However, it seems that few American researchers know well about recent progress of research on writing in China after 1980s. This paper aims to inform people of the most recent progress of writing studies in China since 1980s. Historical and social background information is provided for better understanding about each stage of the history. Debates and reforms in the process of the development are presented. Important ideas or discussions of the most influential works or authors are cited or discussed. Domains or issues that need further research are suggested in the end.

D11. Professional writing and the university

Re-linguaging: Professional writing across languages and cultures

Penny Kinnear
University of Toronto at Mississauga, Canada
pkinnear@utm.utoronto.ca

Increasingly, our world(s) and our students' world(s) are mediated through more than one language and culture. Working from a sociocultural and activity theory base, I report on the analysis of the stimulated re-call interviews of several bi-lingual professional writing students from the course, Re-linguaging: Writing Across Languages and Cultures. I use the term languaging from Swain (2007) to describe writers' first attempts to transform an experience from memory to written narrative. I have added the term "re-linguaging" to describe the process of taking something that has been written (or told) before in English or another language. I feel the term re-language encompasses more than "revision" or "translation", instead it captures the potential transformations of the writing and the experience for the writer.

Professional writing students employ a sophisticated peer editing process that produces multiple revisions, often heated discussions, and a unique opportunity to witness the writing process. Students confronted issues of linguistic and writing competency as they decided how, how much, when and if to include the original language of an experience, cultural "information" and multiple narrative voices. They struggled to avoid stereotypes, to make the unfamiliar familiar enough without violating the integrity of the language and the culture of the incident(s). Often, they found the process demanded a recognition and, sometimes, a re-configuration of identity(ies).

Students needed permission to use their linguistic and cultural resources. With that permission came a change of identity. The student began to see herself as something more than an English-speaking student at an English institution. While the student still produces work in English, the conception, background, context and even some content are no longer limited to one language, one culture or one identity. This is not a ground-

breaking discovery, but it is one that educational institutions and the people within them have resisted.

Responding to accreditation pressure: An assessment structure to evaluate business student writing

Scott Warnock
Drexel University
sjwarnock@drexel.edu

Frank Linnehan
Drexel University
linnehf@drexel.edu

In response to the requirements of its accrediting body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the business school of a large, private urban university identified four learning goals to assess and improve student learning; one goal was “writing skills.” Basically, the business school must devise methods for ongoing assessment of student performance as well as assessments of curricular and instructional interventions aimed at improving performance.

To achieve its “writing skills” goal, the business school initiated a collaboration with the university’s writing program, and the two entities developed a novel methodology for a broad, longitudinal assessment of the writing of business school undergraduates. Using a Web-based writing rubric tool, the business school piloted this methodology successfully in summer 2006. In streamlined fashion, nine evaluators, five from English and four with an industry/business background completed 88 assessments of 50 reports written by business students. The reports were assessed on nine criteria: ethics, gross mistakes, purpose/main point, document design, organization, audience, evidence, sentence style, and correctness/grammar.

The summer pilot revealed a number of statistically significant factors about the writing of these students, including that the reports were generally judged weakest in terms of evidence, sentence style, and correctness/grammar. Perhaps more interestingly, the pilot showed a sharp disparity between evaluators from English and those from business/industry: the English evaluators rated the reports higher in nearly every category.

This speaker will present the data from this summer pilot as well as providing updates based on the full-fledged assessment of 300 reports that will take place in summer 2007. In addition, the presentation will describe in detail the assessment structure that has been developed, as it may offer a promising, reproducible method of helping writing researchers in the interdisciplinary writing collaborations that are being encouraged by the increased emphasis on accreditation.

A case study of writing in a particular subject at a Chilean University: Issues and challenges

Mónica Tapia Ladino

Universidad Católica de la Ssma. Concepción, Chile

mtapia@ucsc.cl

In the university context, writing is a common practice to assess abilities and content of a particular subject. However in our national universities the formal support given to the development of this ability is not enough.

This work aims at sharing an experience in the area of writing for specific purposes. To carry out this research we worked with one academic of the Business and Administration Faculty who was teaching the subject *Human Resources* and accepted to participate in this study . The main task of the subject mentioned above is the production of a written report which introduces and analyzes an enterprise.

The first task of this research was to study the strategy used, by the academic, to produce written reports in previous courses. Then, the training sessions were designed and implemented to help her to guide systematically her students in the process of producing the report. The training sessions were focused on the concept of writing as a process and based on the gender theory. 32 students participated in this course, which was taught during the second semester 2006. They worked in 13 groups and presented 2 drafts before the final version of the report.

The analysis of the reports and the experience recounted by the teacher allow us to note that the quality of these reports didn't improve in a significant way; therefore the effort in guiding the process of writing was not proportional to the final product. As a conclusion, it seems that the systematic guidance provided in the context of this subject was a complex factor for the students' previous knowledge or ideas on the task of writing. The lack of experience in the preparation and checking of the texts together with the high cognitive demand, like the critical analysis of an enterprise, explain the results of this case study. The challenge is to make use of this and other case studies to design a formal framework in our university, to support our students' pieces of writing considering the influences of social and cultural contexts.

D12. Sharing research

Researching across borders – the “interdisciplinary web portal: Text production and writing research”

Eva-Maria Jakobs

Institute of Linguistics and Communication Science, Germany

e.m.jakobs@tk.rwth-aachen.de

Matthias Knopp

Institute of Linguistics and Communication Science, Germany

knopp@tk.rwth-aachen.de

Text production and writing are highly interdisciplinary and diversified fields of research, especially in regard to the different traditions in Europe and the U.S.A. Depending on the discipline (e.g. linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, or literature) research interests, empirical methods, and theoretical models vary. So far, it is difficult to get an overview of research findings or to find coherences and differences between different approaches (e.g. different prospects on different (varying) theoretical models of writing (processes)). This difficulty is among other things due to a problem of lacking accessibility. Especially the research of German speaking scientists is widely spread in books, which are hardly accessible. The printed articles are rarely published in (electronic) periodicals. In addition, instruments for the recognition of content-wise or methodical coherences are lacking as well as an overview survey of the enormous heterogeneous research field.

The presentation introduces the project “Interdisciplinary Web Portal: Text Production and Writing Research”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Its idea is to build and establish an interdisciplinary research portal for text production and writing research (based on the open-access approach). The project aims at linking the widely spread research findings by using on the one hand different instruments like search engines which are topic-, author- or discipline-related and benefit on the other hand from visualization tools like semantic networks and mind maps.

The web portal intends to enhance the functional and spanning dialogue among researchers, raise the visibility and accessibility of research results. It offers the potential for an information-node about models, methods, and (current) developments. The portal supports networking between researchers of different disciplines and connects existing initiatives in this field. The presentation focuses on questions of knowledge management for different purposes and community building/empowering via electronic media.

The visibility of writing: An analysis of the academic poster

Angela Paiva Dionisio

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – Brazil

angela_dionisio@uol.com.br

In the last 15 years, initiation into scientific investigation has increasingly become an integral part of undergraduate academic courses in Brazil. Our young students are becoming involved in scientific research through a nationally funded program called PIBIC (Program for Initiation in Scientific Research). Professors are encouraged to elaborate small research projects within their own ongoing research which could then be

carried out by one or two students during a period of one year. The students then present their results in a specific congress called CONIC (Congress of Initiation in Scientific Research). The academic poster has become a part of a set of genres that undergraduates are required to produce as part of their academic activities. Within the frame that organizes the student writer's life as an undergraduate, the genre poster is that which permits the delivery for the community beyond the university, of what the student produces in a given area of research. The students can present the results of their research as either an oral communication or an academic poster. In both cases, these genres need to be taught, and someone needs to assume this responsibility. But who? The Portuguese professor? The research professor? Both? One thing is for sure: young researchers need to learn how to prepare their presentation. As researcher and professor of Portuguese, as well as judge of poster presentations I have noted that students have not yet learned this genre. In order to understand more systematically what students need to learn, I framed this corpus of research. The research is comprised of posters taken from a few academic fields including math, science, history, medicine and languages. These posters were presented at the 2006 CONIC. The posters used were donated by students and their advisers whose identities will remain anonymous. The original format was a banner, however, for this analyze I have chosen to use the PDF version. In order to understand the steps taken in preparing the posters I'll interview a number of students and their advisers. The analysis will be divided as follows: (i) motivations behinds the choice of making a poster as opposed to an oral presentation; (ii) steps leading up to the design of the poster; (iii) whether the advisor was involved and if so, what type of involvement he/she had in the process and (iv) whether the students consulted any books, papers, on the subject "how to prepare a poster?".

Writing research across disciplinary borders: 'Chalk talk' as the principle genre of teaching university mathematics

Natasha Artemeva
Carleton University

Janna Fox
Carleton University
natasha_artemeva@carleton.ca

This presentation draws on an integrated theoretical framework derived from Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), Activity Theory (AT), and theories of situated learning (Artemeva, 2006) in considering the written genre of 'chalk talk' as it is used by university professors of mathematics. In the past ten years or so, much attention has been paid to the discourse of mathematics (see Kieran, Forman, & Sfard, 2001). The discourse of mathematics education has been studied from such theoretical viewpoints as, for example, Hallidayan social semiotics (e.g., Morgan, 2006; Ferrari, 2004; Pimm, 1987) and the sociocultural perspective (e.g., Cole, 1996; Lerman, 2001; Saxe, 1991). Even though recent research into the discourse of mathematics education (e.g., Lerman, 2001; Ongstad, 2006) has

introduced into its theoretical repertoire notions developed by Bakhtin (1981), Engeström (1987), Vygotsky (1978), and Lave and Wenger (1991; Lave, 1988; Wenger, 1998), there has been little if any research that would apply RGS as a theoretical framework, or combine RGS with AT and the situated learning perspective. Specifically, there seem to be few studies of the professor's genre system (Bazerman, 1994) in an undergraduate university mathematics classroom. Using a case study approach involving three professors and multiple sites, this study investigated the role of the genre of 'chalk talk' in the genre system of a mathematics classroom. This presentation discusses the role of 'chalk talk' as the principal mediating tool in the activity of teaching mathematics at university and proposes directions for future RGS research into the genres of mathematics education.

D13. Past, present, and future of scholarly writing

Why German students must write (and how): Tracing the roots of German writing pedagogy back to Humboldt's reform of higher education in Prussia: A historical reconstruction

Otto Kruse

Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

kro@zhwin.ch

Two innovations in 1812 make the year a fascinating one for the study of writing. Both resulted from the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt and his group of reformers, and both influenced the teaching of writing far beyond the borders of Germany. One of them was the opening of the first research seminars, to be held at the newly founded Berlin University, which, for the first time, made the writing of research papers a core activity of student learning. The other, no less influential but attracting much less attention, was the creation of a uniform school leaving examination procedure, called the *Abitur* or *Matura*, which required no less than eight essays to be written. This contribution will focus on the second development.

The *Abitur* was introduced by the Humboldt group to ensure the high quality of university studies through the rigorous selection of students. Only student performance, not the status of parents, should be the criterion for admission. Alongside oral examinations, the procedure required essays to be written in Greek, Latin, French, German, mathematics and the sciences. The *Abitur* thus became not only the first systematic entrance examination for higher education but must also be seen as one of the first attempts at assessing student performance by writing. To this day, the *Abitur* is a requirement for admission to university and guarantees access to all university study programs.

The essays required, called the *Aufsatz* in German, were new to German schools at that time (only interpretations and translations in Latin and Greek were common) and led to the development of a new educational genre which, until today, varies between argumentative, narrative and interpretative modes. The *Aufsatz* is best characterized as an artificial “think-text”, displaying reflective and interpretative skills with little reference to acquired knowledge and no reference to existing discourses.

I will show that both innovations –seminar writing and *Aufsatz* pedagogy – resulted in writing practices that have persisted largely unquestioned until today. Both have to be seen as the result of a similar teaching philosophy which views students as independent learners and critical thinkers. I will track the development of *Aufsatz* pedagogy from its beginnings to the present and hope to demonstrate how beneficial historical research is for a deeper understanding of present literacy practices.

Anti-realism for academic writing and the dimension of self-monitoring

Magnus Gustafsson
Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden
magusta@chalmers.se

Andreas Eriksson
Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden
aeriks@chalmers.se

Cross-disciplinary courses in academic writing for PhD students at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, are informed by Swales’ CARS model and the belief that enhanced genre awareness will promote more effective writing. Despite the EFL-context, language proficiency is not a major component in the courses which focus instead on understanding one’s specific community. Discussing levels of representation in research processes through analyzing research articles from their respective fields awakens writers to their essentially anti-realist writing. This insight tends to improve writing. The second element that greatly enhances writing is the emphasis on promoting effective and reflective peer work.

The presentation is informed by two objectives. On the one hand, I explore the degree to which the anti-realist stance promotes understanding genre mechanics and improves writing. On the other hand, I try to observe how learning style and self-monitoring characteristics correlate with peer response ability as well as adaptability in relation to a community. The two objectives overlap in that much genre pedagogy assumes a high ability to adjust to a communicative community, which in turn implies different levels of representation.

The research students’ self-monitoring levels are identified through a simple questionnaire at the beginning of each course and their writing development through peer

work is recorded and observed. The writing entails five assignments related to research article writing and each assignment consists of four components – first version, peer response, second version and an evaluative reflective comment. Preliminary findings suggest that high-self monitors are indeed faster in reaching a level of understanding that makes their writing and peer work effective and that low-self-monitors need some direct guidance toward the anti-realist for effective writing and peer work.

Scientific argumentation in distributed systems of publication

Karen Lunsford
U. C. Santa Barbara
klunsford@writing.ucsb.edu

As recent initiatives attest, disciplinary and professional norms for scientific publication are rapidly changing. In the European Union and neighboring countries, the Open Access movement has been seeking to enable public access to peer-reviewed articles; in the U.S., a similar impulse has been codified in the proposed Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA). Similarly, granting agencies have been mandating that procedures for sharing research data (often in shared repositories) must be included in grant proposals. For scientists worldwide, therefore, a 'publication' may involve far more than a research article published in an established journal. Rather, a publication may include information presented in a wide variety of technologies more or less connected together in a distributed system--technologies such as an official journal archive, plus a preprint archive, plus a postprint institutional repository, plus a blog, plus a centralized modeling database, and so on. As yet, however, little research has been done on how scientists are negotiating such distributed systems of publication, and particularly how they use them to convey scientific arguments.

This presentation reports on case studies of scientists in different fields (primarily areas of nanoscience) and in different countries (primarily the U.S. and Norway) and their articulations of how they argue within distributed systems of publication. The studies combine discourse-based and text-based interviews with rhetorical analyses of the scientists' recent projects. In examining these topics, these case studies analyze the current processes that are redefining what it means to do scientific research, and what it means to report and record it.

D14. The high school/college border: Findings and provocations from year one of the University of Denver longitudinal study of undergraduate writing

Doug Hesse, *University of Denver*
Eliana Schonberg, *University of Denver*
Jennifer Campbell, *University of Denver*

Richard Colby, *University of Denver*
Rebekah Shultz Colby, *University of Denver*

Room: University Center Lobero Room

D15. Developing “writing-enriched degrees” at a large research institution

Pamela Flash
University of Minnesota
flash@umn.edu

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch
University of Minnesota
lkbreuch@umn.edu

Maggie Van Norman
University of Minnesota
Vann0104@umn.edu

Elizabeth M Kalbfleisch
University of Minnesota
Kalb0023@umn.edu

This panel addresses varying aspects of a campus-wide “Baccalaureate Writing Initiative” announced in 2005 at the University of Minnesota to “ensure that the teaching of writing is embedded into and woven throughout the undergraduate experience.” From this initiative, University writing specialists developed a program to intentionally infuse writing and writing instruction into every undergraduate major such that all undergraduate degrees are “writing-enriched.” Speakers on this panel will discuss funded projects and research resulting from this university-wide initiative.

Pamela Flash (Writing Across the Curriculum Director, University of Minnesota) will discuss planning and implementation of a “Writing-Enriched Curriculum” (WEC) program, which received nearly one million dollars in funding from the Bush Foundation. The purpose of the WEC program is to work consultatively with departmental faculty in order to develop and sustain “Undergraduate Writing Plans,” plans that characterize effective writing in specific majors, integrate writing comprehensive writing instruction into curricula, and suggest means for both supporting instructors and assessing student writing.

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch (Associate Professor, Writing Studies, University of Minnesota) will discuss assessment of the WEC program, including the development of the research team, design of data instruments (survey/interview questions and collection of student essays), data management, and external evaluation. Insights about enhancing the research design will be shared.

Maggie Van Norman (Ph.D. candidate, Writing Studies, University of Minnesota) will share preliminary results from the first five participating departments in the WEC program, including survey results from faculty, students, and industrial affiliates. Sample Writing Plans from participating departments will be shared.

Elizabeth Kalbfleisch (Ph.D. student, Writing Studies, University of Minnesota) will discuss results from a different funded project at the university. In helping to revise a writing-intensive senior-level microbiology course, “Principles of Virology,” this speaker attempted to bridge a “form/content” split. Findings from this project inform implementation planning for the WEC project and will prove meaningful to those integrating writing in scientific disciplines.

Together, these panelists demonstrate ground-level efforts to reform undergraduate writing instruction at this large research institution from a check-the-box “writing-intensive” approach to a more intentional curricular revision.