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Editorial

The Boundary Condition of Human Interaction for Written Communication

It will come as no surprise that a writing studies journal will focus on writing. *The Journal of Academic Writing* has published articles on tools and strategies for teacher feedback, on developing genre knowledge in several different contexts, on different models and frameworks for writing development, and on writing in different areas of and languages of Europe. We have also offered a venue for EATAW-conference presenters to publish papers focusing on themes from EATAW's conferences. The scope of the journal grows out of its mission to support EATAW members and their publication objectives; it is naturally quite varied and even more so by including the teaching practice pieces discussing writing pedagogies that are so important for EATAW members.

Naturally, the content areas of the Summer issue 2024 can be included in the description above. Still, the Summer issue strikes us as somewhat different from many previous issues. Superficially, the articles, the teaching practices, and the book review cover very different topics as the issue moves from writing consultants and their work, testing AI-tools for source-based writing, fine-tuning the audience address in IMRaD-writing, advice for avoiding rejection in the publication process, and a review on a scholarly perspective on using AI at work. At depth, however, we believe the pieces in the issue are more alike than what first meets the eye.

What the pieces forefront, in an inconspicuous shared address, is the pervasive centrality and presence of writing per se and the human element in it. Perhaps we run the risk of losing sight of that core human element of any writing endeavour as we specialise in our respective areas. In writing that matters, we have a writer with a purpose and a reader to be addressed. Might we at times as we try, in vain, to keep up with the superficial efficiency of generative AI, allow the affective domain, the core rhetorical dimensions, and the integrity issues to drop off our pedagogical radars?

The five pieces in the Summer issue 2024 emphasise the human communication boundary condition for all writing. **Canton and Day** help us see a deeper level of affective understanding of student writing challenges. **Sun's** simulation of student work with AI-tools and source-based writing keeps returning to the critical assessment of the AI-product in view of the purpose and the reader. **Rakedzon and Rabkin** remind us of and integrate the rhetorical triangle into IMRaD and thus promote the human dimension in science communication. **Adom's** advice regarding ten reasons for rejection in the publication process similarly underlines the crucial human dimensions of addressing or anticipating the weaknesses editors or reviewers might home in on. **Eaton's** book review, the closing piece, discusses how Ethan Mollick's book on co-intelligence and AI provides a very useful introduction to GenAI and its use, and Eaton adds how the recurring concern with AI at work is precisely to maintain the human presence in all AI-supported communication.

The first article in the issue is written by **Canton and Day** and brings a new perspective and answer on the recurring question "who can or should be involved in writing instruction?" Writing instruction need not necessarily have to be provided by writing instructors and faculty who may see writing as a set of skills to be taught; it could be offered and supported by authors who live and breathe writing as a profession. Hence, Canton and Day describe a comparatively rare group of colleagues in writing instruction as they account for their questionnaire study of the UK

Royal Literary Fund's consultant fellows. These are professional writers who have also helped take the literacy activity of the RLF from individual consultations to workshops and masterclasses. Needless to say, there are other categories of writing instructors who provide similar services, but the RLF's consultant fellows bring an important and different added dimension to writing instruction. While writing instruction can be provided by subject lecturers, or by faculty at centres of language, centres of learning and development, or centres of communication, what the RLF consultants bring are two crucial dimensions: a holistic view of writing and, more importantly, the centrality of writing as a profession. By placing writing at the core of their professional lives, they bring an unwavering promotion of the human component in our, and students', writing lives. In this way, the article sets the scene for the remaining pieces in the issue, as they all focus on the centrality of the human relation in any piece of writing.

The second research article in the issue problematises how this human relation at the core of writing is negotiated in the face of GenAI. **Sun's** account takes on GenAI for L2/EAL writers and their use of sources. If GenAI can produce passable essays in some contexts and types of assignments, how does it fare with source-based writing and how well do various tools work? Sun simulates three likely steps in a source-based writing assignment (attribution, searching and reading, and integration). Finding good tools and effective use of the tools, she returns for all three dimensions to the recurring issue of student ability as we assess the tools as instructors. Can and will students ask the same critical questions about GenAI products? She also offers a possible positive view on that problem in that perhaps assignments produced with the help of GenAI might allow us as instructors more time to spend on the critical awareness of students and their analysis.

Much as Sun's concerns about GenAI focus on the critical human element and the students assessing the AI-product, **Rakedzon and Rabkin's** teaching practice paper also promotes the human communicative dimension, but in the context of genre-based writing instruction. While they focus on the IMRaD structure in much engineering and science writing, their emphasis on the rhetorical triangle to enhance the function of the components in an IMRaD-piece in many ways echoes the concern with extending writing beyond surface polish and aiming for deeper engagement with and adjustment to our respective audiences. They offer us what we hope will be a much appreciated teaching resource in the form of a table glossing the realisation of the rhetorical triangle for each of the sections of an IMRaD-oriented text. Rakedzon and Rabkin's teaching practice paper also exemplifies very nicely how the writing of a piece starts long before the actual writing, and that it is precisely the core human dimension that is sown early on.

The second teaching practice piece in the issue in many ways picks up from Rakedzon and Rabkin's concern with the rhetorical dimension of writing for publication. **Adom** offers an account of ten recurring reasons that novice writers meet with rejection, and some of the reasons implicitly involve the applying of the rhetorical triangle. While JoAW's readers might recognise many of these reasons and may have come across other accounts of rejection as these are popular components in courses on writing for publication, we believe this list of ten causes for rejection and the solutions for them would offer a useful resource for colleagues in the community as well as a good reminder for many of us in the pre-submission stage of any of our pieces. At the same time, many of the ten reasons also highlight the importance of collaborating with subject specialists in the various disciplines we encounter in texts. Given how central methodology, rationale, and news value are for publication, writing specialists need conversations with informed expert readers in the respective fields beyond the novice publication-writer we might be supporting in order to guide them appropriately.

The issue closes with a book review, in which **Eaton** appraises Mollick's *Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI* (Penguin, 2024). We find it appropriate that this JoAW issue, where all pieces explicitly or implicitly relate to or comment on GenAI for writing in relation to the (human) readers and writers at the centre of all texts, focuses on discussing the critical human contribution in working with GenAI for writing. Eaton presents Mollick's narrative and highlights a few of the cases Mollick uses. He finds that Mollick provides a very useful introduction for workplace use of GenAI, but also suggests that the book is less grounded in writing pedagogies and promoting rhetorics and integrity. The EATAW community may therefore find Mollick's book

a useful starting point for thinking further about the impact of writing and GenAI in the workplace for writing pedagogies.

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