

Editorial

Selected Papers from the 8th Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia, June 2015

We are pleased to present the special conference issue of the *Journal of Academic Writing*, which includes sixteen peer-reviewed papers originally presented at the 8th conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW). The conference was held at Tallinn University of Technology in Estonia in June 2015, and was attended by 270 delegates from 40 countries. It featured a programme of more than 160 presentations and three plenary talks, focusing on the theme 'Academic writing in multiple scholarly, socio-cultural, instructional and disciplinary contexts: challenges and perspectives'. We take this opportunity to thank Kärt Rummel and her team at Tallinn University of Technology for the excellent organization of the conference.

We also wish to thank the three plenary speakers for their engaging talks and workshops. The opening plenary by Ulla Connor (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, US), entitled 'Intercultural rhetoric in EAP/ESP education', provided a review of the history and development of contrastive/intercultural rhetoric drawing on her extensive research in this area spanning several decades. Drawing on a recent co-authored book with Caroline Coffin from the Open University, UK, (Coffin and Donohue 2014), Jim Donohue (Queen Mary, University of London, UK) discussed the implications of conceptualising writing in higher education using a language as social semiotic-based approach in the talk titled 'From common sense to uncommon knowledge: How language makes meaning in university study and the implications for teachers and students in diverse instructional, disciplinary and sociocultural contexts'. In her talk 'Engaging conversation(s): Findings from three multi-method studies of students and faculty on the challenges of writing across texts and contexts', Terry Myers Zawacki (George Mason University, US) addressed the challenges faced by dissertation writers and their advisers across the disciplines, drawing on data from her recent research (Rogers, Myers Zawacki, and Baker 2016). The three speakers ran very successful and well-attended workshops on topics ranging from research methods in intercultural communication studies, to implementing a language as social semiotic approach to writing development at university, and writing in English for academic publication aimed at junior scholars.

The theme of diversity of contexts for, and perspectives on, academic writing is reflected in the 17 papers in this conference issue, both in terms of the authors' national and institutional affiliations and in terms of the themes and approaches of their contributions. To highlight the range of themes represented, we divide the issue into five thematic sections:

- European writing centres: roles, practices, and experiences
- Genre-based writing instruction: issues, explorations, and adaptations
- The importance of informed practice in online environments
- Implications of our multilingual contexts: academic writing in different languages
- Resources and practical advice

European writing Centres: roles, practices, and experiences

While the first article in the section on 'European writing centres', by **Ruth Bonazza**, focuses on Germany, she presents the results of a survey of ten L2 English writing centres in German universities, focusing on their aims, organisational models, teaching approaches, staffing and funding, university partnerships and offers. We believe the survey and the findings she describes provide a relevant picture of the history, development, and pedagogical considerations of many European writing centres. The next few papers in the section, we argue, exemplify the variety and the pedagogical approaches further. **Randi Benedikte Brodersen**, **Birger Solheim**, **Pål Steiner** and **Tina Torgersen Oftedal** provide us with an approach to engage student writers in the writing centre in their writing processes and the roller coaster experience that often entails. **Leonie Kirchhoff** further exemplifies motivational dimensions of writing centre work in Europe but does so from a peer tutor perspective. She focuses on self-determination theory and motivational strategies while discussing the roles of peer tutors. We believe she, thus, offers good advice to EATAW colleagues that extends beyond individual writing centre settings.

The section on European writing centres continues with a sequence of papers that not only exemplify the variety and scope of 'writing centres' but also stress the need for integration and faculty collaboration within the target disciplines for which the student writers write. **Susanne Göpferich** discusses the central role the writing and teaching centres played in introducing an integrated mode of working to promote disciplinary literacy across the disciplines at the Justus Liebig University in Germany, at the macro, meso, and micro levels. This emphasis on the disciplinary and the integrated writing facilitation is further illustrated in the sequence by three papers. **Peter Thomas** and **Thomas Armstrong** offer us a paper that provides an example of a pedagogical approach involving freewriting to enhance learning and writing for assessment or publication as applied in two countries (UK and Switzerland), two levels (undergraduate and PhD), two languages (English and German) and two disciplines (art & design and natural sciences). **Katrin Girgensohn's** paper introduces research-based learning within linguistics and shows how integration and collaboration help promote student learning as well as writing. The fourth paper in the sequence similarly stresses target discipline integration. **Nadine Stahlberg**, **Stefan Mosler** and **Michael Schlüter** present a focused paper about actively using a writing assignment including peer response in computational fluid dynamics to promote mathematical conceptual learning. The paper also offers an excellent example of collaboration between learning or writing centres and other departments at our universities and thus shows how the multi-level conditions Göpferich outlines can be designed or achieved.

Genre-based writing instruction: issues, explorations, and adaptations

Not entirely surprisingly, genre-based writing instruction is an approach frequently employed by EATAW members. The three papers in the section offer three different stages and contexts of genre-based writing instruction. To the extent that it is possible to formulate a shared denominator for a genre pedagogy approach in Europe, it might be the need to find an appropriate balance between the new rhetoric school and the influences from an English for Specific or Academic Purposes approach in order to best promote our students' writing development and their ability to contribute to the sharing of their knowledge. Since academic literacy is also a strong related influence, there are often three components to be considered in the course designs developed by colleagues. However, the combinations and emphases will vary across our diverse multilingual and higher education contexts. Along these lines, **Simon Green** writes what is in some sense a position paper to adjust the balance in UK-based genre approaches. While genre-pedagogy informed English for Academic Purposes is justified, it might not be sufficient for disciplinary literacy and Green argues for a genre-based design to place a greater emphasis on social practice and the situated nature of writing. **Pia Helena Lappalainen** exemplifies a situation many of us recognise and address in different ways – supporting PhD students and their development toward writing for publication. Her

account of the genre-based course design with her decreasing reliance on a lexicogrammatical approach is a good example of the process of fine-tuning of writing courses that many of us engage in. The section ends with **Philip Bernard Nathan's** article containing an initial genre analysis of MBA genres, which highlights that the 'case-based assignments' are far more dynamic than colleagues might suspect. The genre description provided will offer good entry points for students, writing developers, and target discipline faculty alike, and can easily be expanded on, for example, by writing centre tutors as they collect further examples.

The importance of informed practice in online environments

Needless to say, writing course design is affected by the online dimension; but, how exactly? The importance and affordances of online learning environments are naturally of interest to EATAW colleagues and the third section and its three papers will be of particular relevance to writing course designers and tutors who experiment with or consider introducing new online learning activities. **Susan Stetson-Tiligadas** explores the wiki as a flexible environment for collaborative academic writing. She discusses how we might make the most of wikis and avoid potential risks through purposefully scaffolding tasks for participating students. In the second paper in the section, **Jill Northcott, Pauline Gillies** and **David Caulton** share their findings from the pilot phase of a large study on formative postgraduate writing in a context where such feedback has been next to impossible until they designed online writing courses integrated in the target programmes for the students. In this grounded-theory analysis, they focus on what specific elements about their feedback are the most appreciated and how students, writing tutors and target discipline tutors and their feedback work are affected by the online environment. The third and final paper in the section also looks at what might happen to writing instruction in, and as a consequence of, online environments. **Joel Bloch** accounts for the background to, and development of, three composition MOOCs delivered by three different US universities. Many observations have been made about writing MOOCs but Bloch focuses on a manageable selection: how feedback is designed, what students make of it, and what the implications are for designing what were essentially native-speaker composition MOOCs that soon became multilingual composition MOOCs in the sense that the participants' language background was one of great diversity.

Implications of our multilingual contexts: academic writing in different languages

The section on 'Implications of our multilingual contexts' contains three papers, which provide different but complementary perspectives on writing in different languages. Drawing on the concepts of third space, hybridity, funds of knowledge, intertextuality, heteroglossia and multivoicedness, **Nancy Keranen, Rocio Barbosa-Trujillo** and **Fatima Encinas-Prudencio** present a dynamic theoretical framework for examining writing for international publication in English by academics who use English as an additional language. Focusing on multilingual students in Lebanon, **Amy Zenger** discusses the differences in writing in English and Arabic from the multimodal perspective, considering writing as not only a verbal but also a visual mode. In the true spirit of multilingual academic writing, the section ends with an article written in French by **Marge Käsper**, who investigates similarities and differences in textual linearity in book reviews in the French and Estonian contexts in the last ten years.

Resources and practical advice

The last section is one we are particularly happy to introduce. One of the obvious aims of the EATAW Board is to encourage EATAW members to share materials and teaching ideas, but aside from EATAW conference conversations themselves, few other channels have been regularly used. With this issue we present a section in the journal to offer this type of venue, which we hope will be taken up by EATAW members as an opportunity for dynamic exchange. In this conference issue we look at **Dzifa Vode** and **Shawn Raisig's** workshop

design for facilitating students' integration of sources, which starts with a needs and context analysis leading to an informative account of the workshop development, and finishes with a set of useful and easily adaptable materials, including visuals and suggestions for classroom use.

In closing, we ought to point to some of the other shared denominators among the papers and the fact that they could have been combined in decidedly different ways. Northcott, Lappalainen, and Keranen, Rocio Barbosa-Trujillo and Encinas-Prudencio, for instance, share a dimension that we often find in our day-to-day contexts: writing courses and writing support are sometimes motivated primarily by the pressure on students to produce texts for assessment. While not ideal for promoting writing as a tool for learning, this is a situation that nevertheless offers an opportunity for us to help students and scholars improve their learning and writing. Similarly, while the papers in the section on multilingual contexts specifically address issues of writing in different languages, the themes of writing in multilingual settings and/or students writing in languages other than their first language or the language they speak at home runs in the background of almost all papers. This is of considerable importance since we sometimes forget the crucial work required of most EATAW colleagues in not only responding to the needs of our increasingly multilingual students but also in adapting the various frameworks and theories, often from English speaking contexts and academic traditions, to the diverse language and institutional contexts in which we find ourselves working.

The Girgensohn paper exemplifies another organising principle we could have used. Girgensohn explicitly refers to the study being representative of work in the line of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL), which is an approach we are happy to promote among EATAW members and in the journal. Similarly, Stahlberg, Mosler and Schlüter provide an excellent SOTL-piece that could equally well have been published in fora that more easily address colleagues in the target discipline. Needless to say, we are happy they chose to publish it where many EATAW members might read it and be inspired by the design and the collaboration.

Almost all the papers also direct readers to the variation and adaptation in how academic writing development for students gets organised in European higher education. While many papers in this issue refer to or draw on writing centre data, such centres are very different indeed, in some cases even within the same country. Similarly, it is not always a writing centre that is the main determining factor of writing instruction. As we can see from the contributions to this issue, EATAW members often find themselves working with overlapping ideas, approaches, and models but having to adapt them to be effective within their respective and very different structures, systems, and language contexts (cf. Gustafsson and Ganobcsik-Williams 2016). This constant work we do in using insights from one context and revising and adapting practices to that of our own multilingual and increasingly multimodal context may well be one of the day-to-day experiences to which many members can relate.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to the authors, the peer reviewers, and the copy-editors for their contribution to this issue. Our special thanks go to the Editor of JoAW, Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, who supported us throughout the editorial process.

We hope that you will enjoy this issue, and we take this opportunity to invite you to the next EATAW conference, which will be held at the Royal Holloway University in London, 19-21 June 2017, with the theme 'Academic Writing Now: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice'.

Bojana Petrić
Birkbeck, University of London, United Kingdom

Magnus Gustafsson
Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

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