



## Editorial

# **EATAW2019: Selected papers from the 10th Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, July, 2019**

The 10th EATAW conference was held in Gothenburg on 2-4 July, 2019. The theme of the conference was *Academic writing at intersections: Interdisciplinarity, genre hybridization, multilingualism, digitalization, and interculturality*. The conference offered multiple presentation formats, including research papers, teaching practice papers, symposia, posters and roundtable discussion. When sending out the call for papers to follow up the conference, we wanted to try to keep this breadth by opening up for several contribution formats, inviting research papers, teaching practice papers and posters. Now that we publish the results of this call, we are pleased to conclude that the representation is broad in terms of themes as well as formats.

The breadth of the current issue is also apparent in the geographical spread of the contributors, much in line with the tradition of the EATAW conference. The conference opens up spaces for discussions of local and regional concerns as well as generic perspectives on writing. Some topics tend to surface at different points in time in our respective contexts, and the EATAW community contributes to enhancing and advancing the local as well as generic knowledge of these topics. We believe that this combination of the local and the generic is an interesting characteristic of the EATAW conference, because it brings in new members at an early stage as active participants at the same time as generic topics are set in a new light and possibly given an additional facet.

Examples of local concerns presented in the current issue are Malone et al.'s article on steps towards developing a disciplinary writing community within a social science department at a UK university, Shapiro's teaching practice paper on addressing inclusion in a US college, and Kasparkova and Rosolová's poster on the development of academic writing support for doctoral students in the Czech Republic. In terms of contributions to generic topics in the field, the issue addresses, for instance, the teaching of audience awareness (Schmidt; But), feedback (Börjeson & Carlsson; Christensen & Hobel; Wiederkehr & von Rohr) and stylistic analysis (Givens). There are also several contributions that allude to topics that are and have been heavily debated in the field, such as the concept of digital natives (Bickford; Hort; Staley et al.), translingualism (Edlich; Bennett) and writing for publication in English (Broido & Rubin).

The current issue also highlights the role of the conference in contributing to collaboration across borders, often involving multiple universities and partners. The collaborations are often used to discover potential synergies across institutions, as shown for instance in the work by Girgensohn et al. and Fogarty in the current issue. These types of projects have the potential to adapt solutions to local conditions that would have been difficult to discover without the collaboration.

Given that the current issue contains research articles, teaching practice papers and posters, the extent and character of the data used varies considerably. One of the main strengths of this

variation is that both research and practice-based observations can be brought into discussions of academic writing beyond the conference. At the same time, we note that the great majority of papers draw on similar methods and analytical procedures. In the interest of the development of EATAW, we therefore encourage participants to adapt, employ and share additional methodological frameworks and, in this way, expand methodological competence and versatility in the organisation.

The contributions of the issue are organised on the basis of article format. However, in this editorial, we present the articles according to the six main themes of the conference (as outlined in the conference call for papers). The themes that shaped the conference are hence preserved in this editorial, and the description is intended to support the organisation based on article format.

## Digital Genres in Academic Writing

A great deal of the work on this special issue has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This editorial is not the forum for discussing the effects of the pandemic on the teaching of academic writing, but the experiences of students and staff will have lasting and significant effects on teaching in higher education, including the teaching of academic writing. Discussions on digital genres and digital teaching certainly appear in a different light than they did when the process of this special issue started. It therefore feels pertinent to be able to present studies aligning with digital genres and aspects of teaching academic writing digitally. This section presents work belonging to the EATAW2019 themes of *Digital genres in academic settings* and *The hybridization of writing genres*.

One genre that has increased quite dramatically during 2020 is video tutorials, and **Staley et al.** demonstrate students' use and evaluation of video tutorials developed to support students' academic writing. The presentation includes statistics on what parts of the tutorials the students accessed, for how long the students viewed the video clips and at what points during the course the tutorials were accessed. The study also contains student evaluations of the tutorials and comparisons between students from different years of study. The results of the study indicate, among other things, that students try to locate central content from the beginning and therefore often skip the introductions to the tutorials and that the length of the video tutorial may not be as decisive a factor as previous research has suggested.

**Bickford** addresses the hybridisation of genres in her teaching practice paper on digital storytelling. Digital stories often involve multiple elements, such as disciplinary content, student narratives and photos. Bickford discusses challenges of the format for both students and teachers on the basis of two classes: a non-fiction storytelling class and a research writing class. The paper ends with advice on best practice, and the author concludes that students' digital proficiency can easily be overestimated and that it is therefore important to give students sufficient time to develop content alongside digital competence.

**Hort** examines the application of digital tools in her study of students' use of word processors in their composition of degree papers. Data was collected by means of screen recordings during the students' writing processes. Hort shows that students tend to use only a single word processor in their composition processes and argues that there is a need for unpacking digital writing processes to illustrate how multiple tools can be used in such processes.

## Academic Writing as Intercultural Communication: Inclusion, Identity and Multilingualism

Two of the expanded themes of the EATAW2019 conference were *Academic writing as intercultural communication* and *Academic writing and identity*. Articles representing these themes are here described in a merged section as several papers combine issues of inclusion, identity and multilingualism. The connection is in several cases quite clear and in some cases

more indirect. For instance, there is a connection to identity in several of the papers about students using English as an additional language in their academic writing. Similarly, there is a connection to interculturality and inclusion in papers describing courses and support structures aiming at facilitating students' integration into unknown educational settings or writing cultures. Hence, the section is broad, partly as a consequence of the fact that different perspectives of a theme are highlighted and activated in different ways depending on context. Inclusion, for instance, need not generate the same types of questions in an L1 as in an L2 context.

Two contributions that clearly integrate issues of identity and inclusion are the teaching practice papers on translanguaging by **Edlich** and **Bennett**. The papers illustrate that translanguaging is a contentious issue and also that perspectives and outcomes may be affected and driven by institutional, departmental, course-specific and individual concerns. In a German context, Edlich examines the development of a writing course that aims to integrate a multilingual translation methodology on professional genres. The initiative is partly the result of decisions at management level to steer the work of the writing centre towards *Mehrsprachigkeit* or multilingualism. The idea of the course is to move away from a monolingual focus in courses on professional writing and instead apply a multilingual approach. The course design has not been implemented yet but illustrates how teachers are influenced to reflect on and adjust their practice with a multilingual perspective in mind. Bennett, in a US context, takes a different approach to translanguaging by listing possible positions that colleagues can adopt in relation to translanguaging in different roles in our discipline. The positions – traditionalist, allied enthusiast and active advocate – describe postures taken in the current debate around multilingualism and translanguaging. Bennett advocates that an allied enthusiast position is preferable and argues the importance of such a position also from a student perspective.

**Shapiro** employs some of the literature used by both Edlich and Bennett, but her focus is not translanguaging but rather inclusivity and social inclusion in higher education. She uses her own classroom experience and student voices from her classes to identify four areas that may foster social inclusion – building community, inviting lived experience, preparing students for discomfort and talking openly about equity - and also presents writing tasks that may support inclusion. The teaching practice paper argues that writing staff and writing pedagogy may have special roles to play in fostering inclusion.

**Dyche and Antwi-Cooper's** poster also pertains to the topic of inclusion, but their approach and concerns are different. The authors respond to an external quality assurance review which suggested that a generic approach to academic literacy could be disadvantageous to students' overall academic development. Dyche and Antwi-Cooper hence compare a general academic literacies course with a faculty-specific academic literacies course in terms of their correlations with students' overall study results. The results show that it cannot be concluded that the generic academic literacies course is more strongly correlated with students' academic failure than the faculty-specific course is.

**Macdonald and Schneider** examine writer identity by means of a theoretical framework developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). The framework views identity as emerging and shaped in interaction. Central to the approach are five principles in the analysis of identity. Macdonald and Schneider use the framework and highlight nuances that can be gained from applying the five categories. They then use two sample interviews to illustrate the application of the framework. The participants interviewed are doctoral students who do not have English as their first language. The student conversations are used to exemplify how student comments can be connected with various principles and to argue that shifts in the conversations illustrate complexity in identities. The authors argue that the model applied reduces the risk of arriving at one-dimensional interpretations of identity.

**Broido and Rubin** connect with the topic of writing for publication in a strongly English-focused publication landscape. The authors are particularly interested in the publication processes of novice scholars for whom English is an additional language. The study is interview-based, and the analysis illustrates gains and challenges that the participants experience from plurilingual publication processes. The authors call for new ways of guiding academics to publication in order to address inequalities in power that the strong focus on publishing in English may render.

Like Broido and Rubin, **Kasparkova and Rosolová** address the issue of writing for publication. The authors are based in the Czech Republic, and they describe a lack of systematic academic writing support at the great majority of universities in the country. Publishing in international journals has been shown to be challenging for Czech doctoral students, and high drop-out rates can partially be connected to writing and publishing. The authors have therefore developed academic writing support for doctoral students based on a needs analysis, and they present several measures in their poster.

Also **Mattson et al.** examine doctoral students' writing. In an interview-based study, they investigate the development of writing groups among doctoral students who have previously attended a writing retreat. The results show that participants have changed their writing practices as a consequence of participating in a writing group. For instance, many of the participants schedule and prioritise writing differently than they previously did. The findings also indicate that participants are more self-confident with respect to writing and more inclined to identify themselves as researchers who write. On the basis of their results, the authors question whether enough attention is given to writing in many departments, as several of their participants indicate that this is not the case.

The three final contributions presented as part of this theme describe courses and organisations designed to facilitate students' integration into new contexts and cultures. They also draw on how students experience these contexts. **Bohlmann's** teaching practice paper is situated in an English-as-L1 context and demonstrates ways of integrating international students into this educational context and culture. The paper highlights the role of the university's Effective Learning Advisors (ELAs). The complexity of the role is illustrated by the fact that the work of the advisors involves giving advice on generic academic writing conventions as well as integrating students from a wide range of subjects and nationalities into discipline-specific writing conventions. The role of the ELAs is argued to be crucial for many international students' transition into the UK higher education system. Bohlmann concludes, however, that basing the transition solely on ELAs may be too narrow an approach and that academic staff in general need to be better prepared for supporting international students' integration.

**Sjöberg-Hawke's** teaching practice paper outlines an elective course primarily developed for students at basic to intermediate levels of English in order to prepare them for further studies at a university of technology in Sweden. The paper highlights the written part of the course and describes how the recurrent use of summary writing is employed to gradually improve various aspects of academic writing, not only basic written proficiency but also, for instance, coherence and organisation of content. The recurrent use of the same genre gives multiple opportunities for peer and teacher feedback and also makes it possible to gradually re-focus the feedback as students' knowledge increases. Positive student feedback indicates that they find the approach effective.

**Givens** draws on experiences from working at an English-medium instruction university in Lithuania in her teaching practice paper. Students at the university attend a first-year composition course extending over two semesters. The paper focuses on an exercise in which students perform a stylistic analysis of their own written English. The exercise aims at making the students more reflective of their own writing and stylistic differences and also to support them in gaining ownership of and confidence when writing in a foreign language.

## Writing Development and Disciplinary Learning

This section builds on the conference theme of *Writing development and disciplinary learning* and collects contributions on the writing development of discipline-specific genres, writing to support the learning of disciplinary content and the organisation of writing support that spans many faculties. Several subjects are represented in the section, for instance engineering, social science and intercultural pedagogy. The majority of contributions highlight activities or practices supporting students' writing processes, such as writing retreats and peer and teacher feedback.

These activities are important for the teaching and learning of genre conventions, but also for the gradual development of discipline-specific content knowledge.

**Börjeson and Carlsson** demonstrate the development and fine-tuning of feedback practices at a university of science and engineering. The feedback activities are set within disciplinary content courses, and the communication and feedback activities are hence integrated or embedded into these courses. The feedback activities vary between large lecture classes to classes with several groups of students involved. One of the guiding principles of all activities is to make students engage with the feedback. The feedback may generate discussions of disciplinary content as well as writing conventions. The paper primarily exemplifies how some of the negotiation of feedback happens with larger groups rather than with individual students or single groups. With appropriate designs, regular classes can be used to stimulate students' engagement with feedback.

**Malone et al.** account for parts of a project on embedding or integrating academic literacies into disciplinary work. According to the authors, the embedded approach is still quite unusual in the UK higher education system. The article first turns to similar initiatives developed in other higher education settings and then describes the development of several writing activities to promote an academic literacies community within a social science department. The authors point out that the development is still in an early stage, but the results indicate positive development in terms of student satisfaction, student engagement and, perhaps particularly, staff collaboration.

**Riedner et al.** demonstrate the value of staff collaboration in their poster on the development of a writing curriculum in physics. Collaborative practices between physicists and writing specialists are described as central to the success of the development work. The project involves multiple strategies to socialise students into disciplinary writing and make them effective disciplinary communicators. The actions taken have had measurable effects on students' results, and these results have generated interest among other faculty and disciplines for making writing a more central tenet of their curricula.

**Christensen and Hobel** examine feedback from graduate students to undergraduate students in four different disciplines. The graduate students have been trained to become writing tutors supporting the undergraduates. The training guided the graduate students towards a discipline-specific understanding of academic writing. The results reveal that most of the feedback concerns content, structure and lower-order concerns, such as punctuation and spelling, but the feedback was delivered from a discipline-specific rather than a generalist point of view. Less feedback is given at the levels of the writing process and self-regulation, and the authors indicate that neither student experience nor the training seem to have been enough to make students comment extensively at these levels.

**Wiederkehr and von Rohr** exemplify formative feedback practices in a course for students of Energy and Environmental Technology. The feedback illustrated is feedback from teachers to students. The focus of the teaching practice paper is on scaffolding students' writing of an unfamiliar genre (management summaries). This genre plays an important role in students' training of writing for a professional audience and in developing their understanding of genre differences.

The last two articles of this theme do not work directly with disciplinary writing and learning, but the studies are concerned with work across faculties and address the overall organisation of writing support. **Fogarty** has used data from a COST initiative (COST Action 15221 – [www.werelate.eu](http://www.werelate.eu)) and examines how support for writing, research, teaching and learning is organised at various institutions across Europe. The author demonstrates both existing structures and structures that participants would like to see at their institutions. The author argues for a blended, centralised support hub based on a learning-centred writing centre model as an effective organisational structure for this type of support.

**Girgensohn et al.'s** article is based on collaboration between three European writing centres. The study sets out from an organisational perspective on writing centres and uses Girgensohn's



(2018) model of institutional work in writing centres to compare how the three writing centres align with the model. The authors conclude that Girgensohn's model was useful for the comparisons between the three centres, but also note that contextual circumstances may make it difficult to transfer ideas from one centre to the next. Emphasis may be placed differently depending on local priorities, but the model can be used to offer writing centre directors an overview of central tasks. The authors praise the action research agenda of the project as it facilitated adaptations of the generic model to specific local conditions.

### **Academic Writing Across and Beyond Disciplinary Audiences**

Two teaching practice papers in the final section of this editorial exemplify and reflect on approaches to teaching audience awareness. **But** addresses challenges that arise when students enter a new discipline at master's level. The disciplinary context is history, and in But's context it is quite common that both students who have and have not studied history at lower levels study the subject at master's level. In the author's experience, students coming from other disciplines struggle with adjusting to history genres, and the mix of students becomes a source of frustration for students who have previously studied history. In an attempt to address both challenges, But redesigned an academic writing course at master's level. The results show that students coming from non-history subjects improved their results at the same time as the results of students with a history background were maintained.

**Schmidt** reflects on experiences of teaching audience awareness in her paper. The reflection is primarily based on a less successful generic academic writing course open for students from different years. The students had different experiences of writing academically. In the course, a summary was used as an obligatory assignment, and while many students expressed their appreciation of the assignment, many also found it difficult and confusing. The students struggled with understanding the source text, and the extent of this problem had not been foreseen by Schmidt. She ends with a reflection on her own development in the teaching of audience awareness and an advocacy of training audience awareness in discipline-specific writing contexts with support from disciplinary specialists.

To close the editorial, we would like to thank people who have been involved in the process of this special issue. We are thinking specifically of all the anonymous reviewers and *JoAW*'s editorial team. Just as we highlighted the valuable role of EATAW at the beginning of this editorial, we would like to emphasise the importance of *JoAW*, which via its conference special issues serves as an excellent channel in which presenters at the conference can publish their work. One person in the EATAW team deserves special praise in connection with this issue, and that is George Ttoouli, who has been exemplary in his editorial work throughout the process and who has been extremely precise and diligent in the final stages of the process.

Andreas Eriksson  
*Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden*

Magnus Gustafsson  
*Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden*

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