TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

All roads lead to Rome – The Texts, the Writers or the Discourse Communities in Focus – Same Goals, Different Pedagogies and Organisational Forms for the Teaching of Academic Writing in European Higher Education.

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Abstract. The introductory chapter gives an overview of and provides background for the implementation of the array of European writing programs and pedagogies represented in this volume. The development of teaching academic writing in Europe is compared to the development seen in the US where the teaching of writing is further integrated into the educational institutions. The chapter discusses the striking diversity in the European program designs as well as the approaches to teaching and tutoring academic writing in the light of the shared background and also shared inspirational sources from the US in Europe. The integration with the disciplines is depicted as a prominent issue for the still quite small European writing programs and writing centres – a theme which is discussed in many chapters. The introduction lastly concludes that while the expertise in teaching academic writing is now established in Europe, deeper integration between the disciplines and the writing programs/writing centres (in the US known as WID and WAC-programs) has yet to be developed.

Keywords: Development of writing program design in Europe, Models for teaching writing in Europe, Teaching academic writing in Europe, Writing in the disciplines in Europe, and Writing pedagogy in Europe.

1   AUDIENCE: STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING

If you are a student of (the teaching of) academic writing, what are the current peda-gogical and content discussions of what should be taught students about writing in higher education (HE), and how?

If you teach writing in higher education or if you plan to set up a writing pro-gram or just a course on academic writing, *how* should you do it? What models have higher education teachers of academic writing in Europe adopted, transformed, or invented to suit the needs of their particular circumstances? What theories and methods underlie the existing facilities and programs and the teaching of academic writing offered here?

If you are a study administrator in higher education, *why* should your institution have a writing program or a writing centre and how could it be designed and imple-mented, based on the existing European experiences?

The questions mentioned above are at the core of this first European anthology in English on teaching academic writing in higher education. In this volume, we fea-ture concrete pedagogies, samples of actual teaching, of papers and student writer case stories – *the texts and the writers* – and the writing projects where these peda-gogies are housed – *the contexts*. Teaching methodology and the organisational frameworks of academic writing are intertwined: the pedagogy depends on the wider social context, the characteristics of the students being taught, the staffing and the resources available, as well as on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings fore grounded by those who teach.

2   PURPOSE AND USABILITY

We hope the present volume will be useful as a source of inspiration to present and future teachers of teaching academic writing in and outside of Europe[1], and to stu-dents writing about and entering the practice of teaching academic writing – an emerging and expanding field. You will find that the chapters offer a wide spectrum of concrete suggestions for teaching and curriculum design, for working directly with texts, for cooperating with subject teachers and for project implementation, as well as a list of references with a wealth of European as well as American resources. Students new to the field may start here. The first part of the book *Text and Writer* is equally useful for teachers of academic writing and for any other discipline. Many teaching and feedback strategies and reflections are just as applicable to classroom teaching in the disciplines, it is not solely activities for special designated teachers of writing.

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[1] *A European forum for the exchange of teaching and organizational models for higher edu-cation writing programs was formed in Bochum, 1999: EATAW (European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, http://www.hum.ku.dk/eataw) a contact-organization for teachers of academic writing. The editors of the present anthology are past and present mem-bers of the board of EATAW.*

We hope to inspire writing project planners and a wider audience of those working with pedagogy in higher education, of which writing pedagogy is or should be a central part.

And we hope to further our communication and exchange especially with American academic writing teachers and writing program administrators, who have influenced the European writing projects greatly with their expertise.

3   CONTRIBUTORS OF THIS VOLUME

The contributors are pioneers in setting up some of the first writing courses, writing centres and writing projects in Higher Education in their native countries: Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. They share their experience and present their instructional and organisational models. No facility described in this book is older than 10 years; all are small in terms of positions available (1 – 10 full/part-time employees) – but not necessarily small in outreach. Not all have a permanent status. They come from a range of academic disciplines: Mother-tongue language studies, literature, pedagogy, psychology, rhetoric, and medicine. All have a long history of teaching and tutoring academic writing in universities and other higher education institutions. The contributions foreground very different aspects of what the writers perceive as main student difficulties and main pedagogic targets in the teaching of academic writing: Epistemological, motivational, social, cognitive, linguistic, aesthetic, emotional.

Most European writing projects are not accompanied by research positions, but as this volume testifies, the teaching of academic writing in the represented facilities is certainly research-based teaching, in the sense of research of the practice and theory of teaching academic writing.

4   INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTERS

4.1 Part One: Text and Writer

Part one *Text and Writer* centres on the texts and genres -- the essays, papers and theses – written in higher education, and on the challenges the writers face. The chapters focus on the teaching and tutoring pedagogies in use to help create better texts and writers. In this part of the book, the reader may find concrete advice as well as theoretical and methodological underpinnings for some of the current European work in the teaching of academic writing. The sequence of the articles follows the course of studying in higher education in order to place an emphasis on beginning and finishing studies.

It is no coincidence that writing programs often address first-year students and thesis-writers foremost. Many chapters reflect the work with these two rather different groups of writers. In the context of the demand for writing courses when entering and finishing university, two gaps appear as needed to be bridged: one between high-school level and higher education, and the gap between higher education and working life and continuing education. The first three chapters address the writing difficulties of beginning writers in a higher education context new to them, and on

introductory courses to academic writing. The remaining chapters in Part One focus on general writing classes, individual tutoring and feedback strategies, and subject-teacher-oriented activities, across and within disciplines. This part features a number of concrete descriptions of how academic writing is being taught, and it may be of equal interest to teachers of the disciplines in higher education and to academic writing teachers.

Chapter 1
Otto Kruse outlines some typical problems that university students face when they start to work on their first writing assignments without being taught to understand the differences between writing at the high school level and the university level. The writing skills required will be discussed as something to be taught at the university, not in high school, as they are inherently connected to the traditions, forms of thinking, modes of communication, and research methods of the academic world itself.

Chapter 2
Lennart Björk discusses the rationale of an introductory writing course for first-term students at the Department of English, Gothenburg University. In this course, a distinction is made between text types and genres. The first part of the course focuses on three basic expository text types: causal analysis, problem solving, and argumentation. Students work with model texts and produce their own texts within a process-oriented model. The term is finished by a genre – *i.e.,* discipline-specific-paper in literary studies.

Chapter 3
Stella Büker introduces the concept of the 'PunktUm' project at University of Bielefeld, which assists international students in academic writing. Based on the major L2 writing research findings, she develops a scheme that categorises the students' individual problems. A practical example from a consultation sequence demonstrates how extra-curricular writing assistance can respond to the individual writing difficulties effectively. Büker argues for a combined programme of individual tutoring and workshops.

Chapter 4
Lotte Rienecker and Peter Stray Jörgensen describe how they use genre specific excerpts from student's texts as model examples in across the disciplines large class teaching. The pedagogical purpose of having students comment on model examples is to have students internalise an understanding of the features and qualities of the overarching academic genre, the research paper. The large class teaching meets the needs and constraints of the mass universities on the teaching of writing.

Chapter 5
Signe Hegelund and Christian Kock propose that students' problems with genre and task definition in academic writing may be helped with an adaptation of Toulmin's

argumentation model. They suggest that student should be encouraged to apply the model as an assessment criterion and, at the same time, as a heuristic tool during text work. This involves a 'macroscopic' or 'top-down' approach to the evolving draft, not a 'microscopic' analysis of individual passages. The paper suggests a number of appropriate class activities.

Chapter 6
Mary Scott and Kelly Coate's primary aim is to highlight an aspect of feedback, the relation between teacher and student, as realized in samples of written response from a postgraduate college within the Federal University of London. They regard this kind of feedback as especially important in view of the increasing number of students with a widening diversity of past learning experience and of assumptions regarding the roles of teachers and students. They suggest that examples of feedback such as examined in this paper should form the substance not only of seminars with students but also of staff development sessions.

Chapter 7
Lotte Rienecker and Peter Stray Jörgensen describe two traditions of writing which are evident in European HE writing: The continental (topic-oriented) and the Anglo-American (problem-oriented) tradition – and their corresponding writing pedagogies. The authors describe and discuss the problems that arise for students writing in a continental tradition, when writing in the mass university with its very high student-teacher ratio. Suggestions are made for tutoring and teaching academic writing to students writing in the continental discourse communities.

Chapter 8
Kirsti Lonka describes a process-writing course with PhD. candidates from a medical school in Finland. The approach of the course combines cognitive strategies with generative writing and shared revision. The aim of the intervention is to reveal and then revise practices and ideas of writing that usually remain tacit. Lonka points out how to put writing theories into action within the participants' own writing practices.

4.2 Part Two: Teaching Academic Writing in Context

Part two moves from the text-writer-teacher level to the larger contexts of the historical background behind the need for writing instruction:
- The organization of the writing centre/program
- The implementation within the mother institution
- Different models of integrating the teaching of writing
- Cooperation between academic writing teachers and subject teachers.
In this part, those who set up, finance, work in, maintain or cooperate with writing facilities will find inspiration. Here, we learn about different models of European writing programs and the institutional framework and perspectives.