



## Conference abstracts

**Monday, 28 June 2010**

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### Keynote 1

**The value of local research for sustaining writing development in higher education: the case of 'academic literacies'**

***Dr Theresa Lillis with Sally Baker, Lynn Coleman, Dr Lucy Rai and Jackie Tuck, The Open University, UK***

Research on writing in higher education in the UK is a relatively recent phenomenon yet is growing in different ways, including via the traditional academic research routes of doctoral studies and nationally funded research projects, as well as more action-interventionist and pedagogic oriented initiatives. The aim of this presentation will be to give an overview of the types of research on academic writing which have been carried out in the UK context over the past 10 years and to focus in particular on one specific research frame – 'academic literacies'. I will tease out the key methodological, epistemological and ideological principles reflected in 'academic literacies', (drawing on Lillis and Scott, 2007) in order to explore what this particular framework offers to writing researchers and teachers in our efforts to contribute to a higher education premised upon values of diversity and inclusion.

A theme threading through the presentation will be the importance of the local in research which seeks to sustain writing development in higher education and I will raise the following questions: how important is it to develop a 'local' research base on writing? how can locally generated research contribute to making sense of locally generated 'problems' and understandings? how does locally based research (e.g. at the level of the UK) connect with research and scholarship from other local contexts, and vice versa? how does focusing on the local key us into global practices?

The presentation will include reflections from scholars on their reasons for engaging in the more traditional research route – PhD research – in the UK and the value they see in academic literacies research for sustaining their particular research and design interests.

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## **Paper 0007**

### **Teaching the thesis statement in UK academic writing classes**

**Alex Baratta, University of Manchester, UK**

#### **Abstract**

The thesis statement (or 'argument' as it is generally referred to in the UK), though often just a single sentence in length, is arguably one of the most important components of an academic essay. Students enrolled in composition classes are taught the importance of establishing a main point within their thesis statements, very often consisting of a personal stance on the subject of their essay. Based on the author's experience of teaching undergraduates in the United Kingdom since 2003, however, it is suggested that the implications for teaching the thesis statement within UK universities are quite different. Analysis of students' essays within the Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) programme, part of the School of Education at The University of Manchester, reveals that thesis statements in this specific context are often different from those within US composition classes and academic essays in general. With few exceptions, analysis of students' essays reveals that thesis statements are, from the US perspective, quite broad and lacking a specific point, in direct contrast with the principles taught in classes such as Freshman Composition. Moreover, it is also the case that the offering of the student's main point is generally confined to the conclusion, thereby representing a more 'circular' rhetorical pattern to essays, as opposed to the more linear approach expected within essays in the US. This has implications for the teaching of academic writing in the UK, which, while not having a nationally prescribed writing class, nonetheless has growing numbers of writing classes and writing centres. Therefore, while Ivanic (1998:75) states that Freshman Composition is becoming the basis for the theory and research of academic writing lecturers in the United Kingdom, it needs to be considered that there are certain aspects which might not 'translate' directly.

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## **Paper 0015**

### **The writing consultation: developing sustainable writing behaviour**

**Rowena Murray, University of Strathclyde, UK**

#### **Abstract**

The writing consultation (Murray *et al.*, 2008) was developed to help academics address the challenge of prioritising writing over other academic roles (Murray and Newton, 2008). It consists of a one-to-one motivational interview between pairs of academics, focusing on their writing goals, barriers they face in achieving them and strategies they will adopt for overcoming them. We evaluated the writing consultation in a study funded by the Nuffield Foundation. We interviewed twelve academics who used the writing consultation for eight weeks and asked them to assess its impact. To analyse interview transcripts we used the four constructs on which the writing consultation is based – stages of change, decisional balance, goal setting and social support.

Participants reported change in writing behaviour leading to prioritising writing. Setting goals and achieving them felt good, and they 'lost that constant feeling of low grade failure'. A significant change was realising the importance of timetabling writing in academic diaries: 'The things that normally go in my diary are teaching classes and that's legitimate, hard and fast, whereas softer things like writing get edged out'. Participants found the writing consultation 'highly motivating'. The decisional balance was also reported to be motivational: 'It crystallised my thinking about writing'; 'it strengthened my values and beliefs about writing'.

Participants said they would continue to use the writing consultation. They said it would be useful to establish regular mutual peer support. Several suggested one writing consultation per term would take care of their writing needs.

This study confirms that academics' writing can be sustained by peer support (Lee and Boud, 2003), shows a way to overcome the limitations of informal peer support (Hislop *et al.*, 2008) and suggests that structured support based on principles of behaviour change is a mode of sustainable writing development.

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## Paper 0020

### **Becoming a successful NNES scientific writer: perceptions of novice and more experienced researchers**

**Tom Armstrong, University of Zurich/ETH Language Center, Zurich, Switzerland and Institute of Education, London, UK**

#### **Abstract**

International scientific publication is dominated by high-impact Anglophone journals that account for around 90% of frequently-cited information. The dominance of these journals results in an increasing pressure on multilingual scholars to publish in English. Statistically, non-native English-speaking (NNES) scientists are said to have greater problems publishing in these journals than their native English-speaking (NES) counterparts, and many novice NNES researchers certainly feel that weaknesses in their English writing skills put them at a disadvantage. Failure to publish in these journals has implications both for individual scientists' future careers and for the global dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Despite the importance of the topic, there has been little 'bottom-up' research focusing on the perceptions and experiences of NNES scientific writers trying to achieve success in scientific publication. Notable studies of NNES scientific writers writing for publication include: Gosden, 1996; Flowerdew, 2000; Li, 2006; Lillis and Curry, 2006; Flowerdew and Li, 2007. However, none of these studies focuses on German-speaking researchers or the differences between the perceptions of novice and more experienced writers engaged in this process.

In order to construct a picture of the problems facing German-speaking researchers trying to publish in English, a link to an online questionnaire about the writing and feedback process was emailed to 163 researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland. Follow-up interviews were conducted with a representative sample of four novice and four more-experienced researchers. The questionnaire and interviews revealed some important differences in how each group conceptualised the writing process and the importance attached to feedback from different sources in becoming a more successful L2 scientific writer. The novices tended to have a 'product-focused view' of scientific writing. They relied on 'expert' feedback from their supervisors and perceived their main problems as being purely linguistic or structural. The more-experienced writers, by contrast, had a wider 'process-oriented view' of scientific writing. They saw writing a scientific article as more of a social process involving negotiation with supervisors, co-authors, other peers, and reviewers. They were more aware of writing for a particular discourse community, perceived their main difficulties as being related to this issue, and acknowledged the greater role of peer feedback in this process. Both novices and more-experienced writers agreed that the writing and feedback process generated important insights, clarified ambiguity, and was itself a form of knowledge building. The findings have some implications for teachers of scientific writing.

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## **Paper 0022**

### **Student-produced library research paper genre in the accounting and finance: one genre label but different requirements and expectations**

**Awad Alhassan, University of Essex, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Literature of academic writing within the genre theory and English for academic purposes (EAP) seems to show that student academic writing is less researched compared to the research conducted on expert writing. Research article (RA) genre of expert writing is the most common genre that has been heavily researched in the literature (e.g., Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2000).

Student writing in business studies seems to be particularly scarce though this area of study attracts more than 20% of international students in both UK and USA (Davis, 1998; HESA, 2007). Moreover, there also seem to be less qualitative socio-contextual studies that investigate the factors underlying the production of student written academic genres in this area of study. There are of course studies that attempted to classify and label the academic genres business students produce in the academy (e.g. Canseco and Byrd, 1989; Cooper and Bikowski, 2007). These studies, using course syllabuses and the lecturers' handouts on writing assignments as main sources of data, only classified the student writing into broader labels such as library research papers, article reviews, business reports, etc. While, through such survey methodologies, these studies provided us with an important taxonomy of the typical type of writing students are asked to produce in universities, but they did not seem to show us what, for instance, requirements and expectations held by the genre evaluators the successful writing of the library research paper genre should meet. So, we seem to have a gap in research that goes beyond the mere labelling of the student-produced academic genres in university contexts to the investigation of the various socio-contextual factors that underlie the production of these genres. In this paper I will report results of a qualitative interview study of student academic writing in a Master's level programme of accounting and finance in a UK university. Three compulsory courses under the accounting and finance programme were the focus of the investigation. Discourse-based semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same teachers of the courses. Results of data analysis showed that the type of writing assigned on this discipline of business is library research paper type which confirmed the classification in the literature. However, the rhetorical, requirements and expectations towards the successful production of this paper significantly varied across the courses and among the faculty in the discipline. Pedagogical implications and insights for the EAP were presented.

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Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) The central source for the collection and dissemination of statistics about the publicly funded higher education institutions in UK. It provides information on all higher education students in UK by the level, mode and the subject of study.

Available from: [www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/dataTables/studentsAndQualifiers/download/subject0607.xls](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/dataTables/studentsAndQualifiers/download/subject0607.xls) (accessed 5 August 2008).

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## **Paper 0027**

### **Sustaining a writing practice in art school dissertations**

**Howard Riley, Mary Davies, Swansea Metropolitan University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Many students in the UK art schools find the production of a written dissertation - a requirement for honours classification - both difficult and stressful. The paper presents research evidence confirming that a high proportion of art students are dyslexic, and that many non-dyslexic art students display a visual cognitive style, and/or visual/kinesthetic learning strategies. It is argued that these factors should not in any way preclude such students from achieving an honours degree, rather, that the requirement for a dissertation be broadened to include submissions which are structured in accordance with the student's cognitive strengths.

The methods of data gathering and analysis are described, including questionnaires designed to elicit students' preferred learning strategies, and the Cognitive Style Analysis software package devised by Richard Riding, recently amended by Elizabeth Peterson.

The paper goes on to describe and evaluate alternative strategies, concerning both writing exercises and visual organisational tools, devised to help students structure complex arguments through combinations of writing, images and other relevant media.

The paper is illustrated with student case studies.

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## **Workshop 0028**

### **Engaging subject academics in academic writing support**

**Lisa Clughen, Nottingham Trent University, UK; Michelle Reid, Nottingham Trent University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

To make any form of writing support sustainable it needs to have buy-in, engagement, and advocacy from subject academics. Stressing the link between writing and thinking, many literacy theorists have argued that, to write appropriately in higher education, students need to know how to think in the discipline, how to approach their sources and then how to present their thought to others in discipline-appropriate ways (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006; Haggis, 2006; Cooper and Patton, 2004, pp.1-24; Bean, 2001; Taylor *et al.*, 1988). Writing, in other words, is bound up with localised issues of epistemology, writing and research practices and discourse. If students are to develop their writing, then, they will need support with such disciplinary matters and it is disciplinary experts who are best placed to do this (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006; Mitchell and Evison, 2006). However, subject academics are not always aware of the processes involved in making their tacit knowledge explicit to students, or feel they lack the

practical experience of teaching academic writing (Blake and Pates, 2009). In contrast, many learning developers have expertise in teaching academic writing, but feel they lack the disciplinary understanding necessary for writing (Blake and Pates, 2009). Thus, partnerships between learning developers and subject academics are particularly beneficial to students. Nevertheless, the partnership approach to writing development can work in many ways and present a variety of challenges to participants, particularly in arousing initial interest and in making such projects sustainable in the medium and long term. This workshop intends to address these benefits and challenges, encouraging participants to share best practice, strategies, and possible solutions to problems.

The workshop will begin with brief presentations from two different perspectives:

- Lisa Clughen will talk from the dual position of being a subject lecturer and an academic support co-ordinator about Project LISA (Learning in Specialised Areas), a project that aimed to find out more about disciplinary writing contexts in the Arts and Humanities at NTU
- Dr Michelle Reid will discuss how working as part of the LearnHigher CETL has enabled her to reach out to more subject academics and engage them in learning development research. She worked on a project using report writing resources as a way of enticing subject academics to give time for interviews, discussion and evaluation; using one research activity to get multiple outcomes.

These projects will act as the start points for group discussion, moving into activities that encourage participants to consider various short, medium, and long term scenarios on the themes of: Unpicking subject writing conventions; attracting and working with academics; sustaining interest in academic writing support in an overloaded curriculum; managing staff expectations; the burdens on time and resources; and the need to measure effects of interventions. The possible solutions and ways of addressing these concerns will be shared with the whole workshop.

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## **Paper 0029**

### **Uncovering academic writing: enhancing the undergraduate student learning experience in archaeology**

**Steven Thurlow, Monash University, Australia**

#### **Abstract**

This paper presents a partnership for learning undertaken to assist students in a first year elective unit in archaeology within the School of Geography and Environmental Science at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. This collaboration took place between the subject lecturer, learning skills adviser and a librarian to assist students in their approach to the major essay for the subject. A holistic, process-based approach was taken to the essay task with the two one-hour classes based around the theme 'Five Essential Steps to Essay Writing.'

The partnership was initiated by the academic coordinating the first year subject 'World Prehistory' (AIA1000). He approached the learning skills area within the library for help after disappointing results in the first written assignment indicated that students were having significant problems in both their academic writing and approaches to research. In particular, it appeared many learners were having difficulty 'making the jump' from essay writing at high school to university level.

As stated, two classes were arranged around the steps involved in the creation of a short academic essay. While the first class focused on understanding the essay question and building research skills, the following class was more concerned with planning, structuring and writing the essay. One initiative of particular interest to conference participants was the work undertaken with examples of effective and ineffective sample essays to illustrate the school's in-house assessment criteria. This saw the students 'marking' ineffective essays in pairs during class to both raise awareness of what their markers wished to see in written work and to also improve their abilities in the area of peer correction.

The presentation will include an evaluation of the lesson's success from the perspective of the learning skills adviser, the subject lecturer, the librarian and the learners themselves. It will highlight this as an effective method to team-teach both academic writing and research skills to first-year Arts students in addition to a way of improving discourse conventions in the specific genres required of archaeological writing.

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## **Paper 0031**

### **Tracking the development of source use within plagiarism education at postgraduate level: the experiences of international students in UK higher education**

**Mary Davis, Oxford Brookes University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Plagiarism remains high on the agenda for those teaching academic writing. An enormous amount of research has been undertaken in the last decade on the factors behind plagiarism, how to deter it, and how to respond to it (Carroll and Appleton, 2007). For international students in the UK, there are particular problems: Research indicates that they may be more likely to plagiarise (Bennett, 2005) and more likely to be caught (Hayes and Introna, 2006). Their needs for specific instruction and direct feedback on plagiarism have been established (Hyland, 2001), but few studies so far have attempted to track the development of their learning about sources within plagiarism education over a long period.

This study, as a PhD research project, aims to fill that gap by gathering written assignments by 11 international students from Asia, North Africa and the Middle East on a year-long pre-master's course and their subsequent year as postgraduate students at a university in the south of England. Data was gathered in the form of five assignments over the two-year period, with first and final drafts of two pieces of coursework on the pre-Master's course, and a further two pieces of coursework and final dissertations in the second year on the postgraduate course, totalling 77 assignments. Interviews of 30 minutes with

participants were made at the end of each semester in the period, to gather student perspectives on source use. Questionnaires were also completed at the end of each semester. Results indicate that stages of development of source use within plagiarism education can be perceived, with some general trends in progression from a basic level to some sophistication. All participants began with a different perception of plagiarism, and little or no understanding of plagiarism and academic conventions in UK higher education. This gradually changed as they gained more confidence in their ability to avoid plagiarism in a UK higher education context, and developed strategies such as frequent use of citation and renouncing quotations, while many continued to experience difficulty with paraphrasing due to lack of vocabulary. Using the results, the researcher created a model to chart five stages of development of source use, which can be used to inform the teaching of source use at pre-master's and master's level. The implication of the study is that far more attention needs to be given to effective teaching of source use to international students within stages of development.

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## Paper 0035

### Overcoming fear and resistance: supporting student writing in formal exam settings

*Debbie Holley; Martin Agombar, London Metropolitan University, UK*

#### Abstract

##### Overview

Using an action research methodology (cf Norton, 2009), a problem identified in class with student approaches to writing in their formal examination is explored through the development of a new multi-media tool. Our approach was to find out from the students (via video interview and questionnaire) their exact difficulties; to develop selected scaffolded learning activities to be accessible anytime, anyplace (Holley *et al.*, 2010); and to evaluate the effectiveness of the tool. The final project aim was to develop a sustainable resource that could be repurposed and reused across different disciplines areas.

##### Background

It is widely asserted that assessment has a 'backwash' effect that shapes students' engagement with a course (e.g. Biggs, 1999). Research suggests that students are driven by assessment, therefore students pay far more attention to tasks that get assessed. Students learn what they think they will be tested on, and most teaching staff are partially aware of this relationship (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 1989; Biggs, 1999; Rust, 2002). However, little has been done to explore student reluctance to prepare themselves for the writing needed in what many perceive as the stressful environment of examinations.

##### Method

Student attitudes to examinations were collected by questionnaire; feedback on an early prototype of the online tool was gathered during a workshop on exam writing. Student interviews fed into the design stages, and final evaluation will be gathered via an online discussion board and tracking data; from extracts of student exam writing and the development of mini-cases studies. The reusability and sustainability of the tool is already evident from preliminary evaluation.

##### Results and Preliminary Evaluation

Initial exam marks indicate that the usual distribution curve pattern has changed with the polarisation of student grades – those that engaged with the materials have done well (grades in the 60-88% bracket); those that didn't engage underachieved (under 40% ). What is also of interest is the usual 'clustering' of marks at 50-60% is absent for this student cohort.

## Evaluation

Findings suggest that students who worked with the new online tool report increased confidence and performance. Extracts from exam scripts and student attitudes to 'the exam' will form part of the evaluation, and (with permission) a selection of 'mini' student case studies will be discussed. However, for others, exam stress and nerves combined with poor preparation once again led to disappointing performance, suggesting that further embedding of writing is needed within the curriculum (cf Wingate, 2010).

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## Paper 0036

### Embedded writing practice

**Halina Harvey, Gill Byrne, University of Huddersfield, UK**

#### Abstract

Where students do not see a direct connection between academic skills teaching and their assessment they find it difficult to perceive its benefit. In our experience when academic and writing skills have been delivered as a 'bolt-on', student engagement has been limited. Indeed such provision has received criticism as students find it difficult to see the relevance to their learning (Wingate, 2006). In addition, this lack of engagement with academic and writing skills teaching has resulted in limited directed writing practice.

The literature has suggested that there is a positive developmental relationship between writing and thinking and learning. Regular writing practice 'promotes thinking, learning and communication' (Bjork *et al.*, 2003, p.9). The benefits of reflective thinking and writing in relation to skills development are also well documented in the literature (Moon, 1999; King, 2002). Indeed, the skill of reflection is highlighted with in the UK QAA benchmarking statement for postgraduate students (QAA, 2007).

As members of University of Huddersfield, business school academic teaching team, academic skills tutors are better able to develop working relationships with subject tutors enabling collaborative projects, greater awareness of the subject curriculum, accessible, timely and embedded provision.

This paper will describe and evaluate an embedded model which was developed using new media in the form of a blogging tool in order to encourage a culture of critical and reflective writing, across post-graduate courses in the business school. It will suggest that regular writing is essential in the development of skills and learning, especially amongst international student cohorts. Illustrative examples will detail the use of blogs to support students in weekly writing tasks, encouraging both regular writing practice and reflection on themselves as developing learners.

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## Paper 0037

### **A lot of students write badly... but we don't know why: an investigation into the perceptions, beliefs and experience of academic teaching staff regarding student writing problems in one institutional context**

**Richard Bailey, Teesside University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Since the mid nineties much of the impetus for student writing research in higher education has been generated by 'academic literacies approach' (Street and Lea, 1997; Lea and Street, 1998). Lea (2007) enumerated a range of 'successes' and 'failures' of this research field and called for a reinvigoration of research with greater attention paid to wider institutional contexts and a more critically ethnographic stance in research. This paper takes the position that if stimulating debate about the desirability of student writing pedagogy in the curriculum and critically exploring practices linked to student learning, writing and assessment underpin the research endeavour, then it is important to engage with the concerns of academic staff and investigate attitudes and beliefs at the micro-cultural level of teaching and practice.

The research that will be reported on here was part of a doctoral study during which data collection spanned two years. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of academic teaching staff as part of an institutional case-study research strategy, realised through a critical ethnographic-style inquiry. Respondents came from traditional humanities, applied and 'hybrid' disciplines in social and applied sciences; and 'emergent' or 'practice-based' disciplines (cf. Baynham, 2000). In total 48 academic staff were interviewed providing scope and depth to the data. The purpose was, firstly, to explore academic staff perceptions and beliefs about student writing and assessment practices in the curriculum and in their teaching. Secondly, and consistent with an ethnographic style approach to research, to investigate the lived reality of teaching staff in the current context of higher education in this regard. The analysis and discussion to be presented are, therefore, grounded in the views and experiences of teaching staff. The findings and their implications for student writing research and debates about pedagogical practice can be the focus of open discussion.

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## Paper 0040

### Writing in health and social care: the role of research

**Caroline Coffin, Jim Donohue, The Open University, UK**

#### Abstract

This paper reports on a research project *Writing in Health and Social Care: genres, practices and pedagogies* which was conducted in 2008-2010 at The Open University, UK. The ultimate aim of the project was to support health and social care faculty in developing strategies to aid the writing development of foundation level students who enter the university with minimal academic qualifications.

The focus of the research was to:

- investigate what written genres students are required to produce by the course assignment tasks in the foundation level course, *An introduction to health and social care*
- investigate which among these are key genres for inducting students into the specialised disciplinary discourses in which they are required to relate professional practice to academic theories and concepts
- identify patterns in clause level constructions (and, where possible, conduct interviews with students) in order to investigate meaning-making practices regarded as problematic by disciplinary academics.

The main theoretical principles and method of analysis underpinning the study derive from the Systemic Functional Linguistics genre framework (Martin and Rose, 2008) in which genres are conceived as staged, goal oriented social processes. The framework was applied to a selection of high, middle and low-scoring assignments written by students.

Acknowledging the importance and complexities of context in any investigation of academic writing (Lillis, 2008) we also collected various types of contextual data. These included student guidance notes, tutor guidance notes from the academic team responsible for the course design, tutor feedback on student assignments, and focus group discussion data in which faculty academics discussed (among other matters) the pedagogic purposes of health and social care and their views on the role and nature of writing within the academic context, as well as its relationship to professional practice.

Drawing on the results of the analysis of both sets of data we have been able to make a number of recommendations informing both:

- a) faculty members' reflections on the learning and writing purposes of assessment tasks and
- b) a Writing Development Pathway currently being designed to support student writing in an ongoing sustainable manner.

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## Paper 0045

### Teaching writing collaboratively in the faculty of law at the University of the Western Cape

*Sherran Clarence, University of the Western Cape, South Africa*

#### Abstract

This paper engages the debate over the role of a writing centre in teaching and learning support structures in a university, and more specifically, in assisting with the writing support and structure for a specialized discipline. A related question is whether this support is best provided by a writing centre, or an alternative teaching and learning support unit such as an academic development unit, or even discipline-based teaching and learning specialists.

Drawing on the findings from research into a collaborative teaching project between the writing centre at UWC and the teaching staff in two first year law modules, the case is made that a writing centre can work collaboratively with university teachers to create more writing intensive curricula. Further, this is shown by working in a way consistent with the principle that reading, critical thinking and writing are specific literacy acts that must be learned, practiced and performed in a disciplinary space, as opposed to an extra-disciplinary like a writing centre or academic literacy module. Nevertheless, by supporting teachers in re-examining their course outcomes, materials and assessments, and changing the 'technocratic' attitude to writing towards one that sees it as a participatory and interactive vehicle for learning, it is shown how a writing centre can build discipline-specific and substantive writing culture and practices that both empowers academics and enables capable, critical and engaged graduates.

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## Paper 0051

### Academic literacy and the challenge of demographic change: the response of one Canadian university.

*Ishbel Galloway, Simon Fraser University, Canada*

#### Abstract

In a relatively short time, Vancouver has become one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Currently 40% of its population is foreign-born and this figure is expected to rise to 65% by 2025. Obviously this has put enormous pressure on public education, where ESL is inadequately funded.

As institutions, universities are often slow to adapt to such change, and, since the early '90s, as the Vancouver student population has become increasingly diverse, the prevailing academic response has been: 'If they don't speak English, don't let them in.' However 'the contemporary student-as-customer culture of the academy' (Strachan, 2008) means that seats must be filled, but minimum IELTS and TOEFL scores that allow international and immigrant students to enter means they are only nominally equipped to cope with the demands of tertiary education in English. This is only one consequence of what has been called the global 'massification' of higher education (Altbach, 2008).

Vancouver's Simon Fraser University regularly ranks in the top three of Canada's comprehensive universities. Recognizing the significant decline in the academic literacy of its student population, in the last few years Simon Fraser has adopted a number of intervention strategies. These include introducing intensive EAP preparation programs, partnering with a private college that provides transition programs for international students who want to attend SFU but are not yet admissible, and instituting new writing support as well as writing-intensive courses across the curriculum. This presentation will describe these initiatives and consider their likelihood of success.

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## Paper 0066

### Exploring professional writing in social work through text-oriented team ethnography

*Lucy Rai, Theresa Lillis, The Open University, UK*

#### Abstract

Many students in higher education are involved in courses with a professional orientation. In such courses students are often required to produce conventional essayist literacy texts alongside more explicitly hybridized texts, such as reflective writing (Rai, 2006). The extent to which such writing practices map on to the demands of professional practice is an area warranting examination due to the centrality of writing to professional social work practice. This presentation will report on a study setting out to explore the following question in specific relation to social work education and professional practice: How well does social work training in higher education prepare graduates for the challenges of writing in professional social work practice? This involves a further key empirical: What writing do social workers do in their work on a daily basis and how does such writing - conceptualised as text types, identities and values-map on to the writing carried out in higher education courses.

In order to explore these questions a small scale 'text-oriented team ethnography' - drawing on key principles from research in academic literacies - was carried out (Lea and Stierer, 2000; Lillis, 2001). The broad aim of this study was to begin to unpack the specific writing demands made of social work professionals and to gain a genuine insight into the daily writing practices of very busy professional lives. The team ethnographic approach in particular has given the research team a unique glimpse into the complexity and significance of professional writing practices. It involved the researchers working with five recently qualified social workers as co-researchers over a nine month period of time. Data collected includes 20 days of diaries kept by co-researchers recording the range, type and amount of writing carried out in their daily working lives; approximately 200 anonymised texts produced in practice collected by co researchers; four group discussions involving researchers and co-researchers conducted using telephone conferencing (transcribed) during the period of journal and text collection; individual interviews with the co-researchers about their writing practices and experiences; three day face to face workshops; teaching and assessment materials from The Open University BA Social Work .

The presentation will use data extracts to illustrate and discuss the following themes:

- The impact of ICT systems on professional autonomy in writing, including the restrictions placed on 'free writing' by the use of electronic proformas
- The range and variation in style, form and procedures surrounding texts within and between social work settings and teams.

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## Workshop 0067

### Establishing and maintaining successful writing groups for research students

**Claire Aitchison, University of Western Sydney, Australia; Sarah Haas, Aston University, UK**

#### Abstract

As universities seek to respond to new pressures and expectations on students for greater writing output during research candidature, there has been a growing interest in the use of writers' groups as one mechanism for the support of student writing. An emergent body of research has shown the benefits for students, supervisors and institutions (Aitchison, 2009; Cuthbert, Spark and Burke, 2009). Participation in writers' groups can not only increase academic output (Murray, 2008), but can also provide valuable input and community for novice writers, who often do not know how to approach academic writing (Mullen, 2001) or often feel isolated in their writing (Aitchison, 2003; Chihota, 2008).

In this hands-on workshop, the presenters share their experiences of running writers' groups for research students from a range of disciplines and within different institutional settings over the last eight years.

This workshop draws on theory, research and practice to present a detailed and well-rounded account of what makes for successful writing groups for masters and doctoral research candidates in higher education. The presenters outline a variety of writing group models; elaborate on ways to establish, administer and maintain groups; and workshop different approaches to the facilitation of learning about, doing and responding to writing.

The practical component of the workshop will engage participants in a variety of activities that we have found useful for the facilitation of critical thinking and writing, for the development of scholarly review practices, and for fostering communities of scholarly research writers. Participants should be prepared to write, review and talk together about their writing in various small group activities. There will also be opportunities to explore the challenges and difficulties that can sometimes sabotage writing groups.

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## Paper 0069

### Playing with gender: using techniques from creative writing to embody academic knowledges

Lisa Clughen, Kevin Flint, Nottingham Trent University, UK

#### Abstract

In recent years, literacy theorists, especially those writing from an academic literacies perspective, have stressed the relationship between writing and subjectivity (Hunt and Simpson, 2006). Scholars have argued that, as writing is a medium through which the subject establishes and mediates her/his subject relationship with the world, the self is heavily implicated in the writing process. Supporting writing therefore involves creating spaces that would usefully bring body and mind together in recognition of the embodied beings in the learning process. As a result, critics have variously argued that we should address the affective as well as cognitive aspects of writing (Mitchell forthcoming), or, situating writing in the mouth (Elbow, 2008), have argued for the use of talk to foster writing in a way that would also address issues of subjectivity (Lillis, 2006).

This workshop will welcome participants into such a space and invite them to take part in a session that was run in a writers' group attached to a final year module in gender and sexuality in the English subject area at NTU. Under consideration is the idea that identities, such as gender identity, are social constructions that, in Judith Butler's terms, are constituted performatively (Butler, 1990). The cognitive density of Butler's writing often represents a challenge to the students, its difficult discourse sometimes provoking feelings of fear, confusion or even alienation. The session has been conceived as a dialogical approach to accessing such troubling academic knowledges. Its pedagogy draws on psychotherapeutic approaches to writing, such as those of Phyllis Creme and Celia Hunt (2002) who advocate play as a mediating device for the subject-object relations involved in the writing process, and on ideas from those who turn to creative writing techniques to address affective and subjective issues involved with writing (Hunt and Sampson, 2006).

Following the aforementioned activities, we plan to open philosophical reflection upon the significance of such playful approaches to the creation of identity through the play of 'presence and absence' through writing (Derrida, 2001, p.369). We will draw here on Jacques Derrida's (1973) 'Différance' to explore such subjective issues involved in reading and writing, being guided here by listening to the interplay of subject - subject in Luce Irigaray's (2002; 2008) text that might unfold in the workshop.

For this session, all you need is some imagination, a willingness to play, oh, and a shoe. Yes. bring a shoe with you. It can be anybody's shoe...

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## Paper 0078

### Investigating international students' writing experiences in a postgraduate degree

Oxana Poverjuc, Warwick University, UK

#### Abstract

It has been accepted that 'the hallmark of success for any student at university is mastery of academic writing' (Jones, 1999, p.37). The studies on disciplinary writing (e.g. Prior, 1991; Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1995; Riazi, 1997; Lea and Street, 1998) suggested that student writing occurs in a complex context, where such factors as tutors' values and goals, the structure of the class, academic practices and individual characteristics that students bring to the learning process appear to have a considerable impact on their writing.

The current study explored five international students' writing experiences enrolled on a Taught masters course at Warwick Institute of Education. The research prioritised case study approach 'to portray 'what it is like' to be a masters student taking a course in education, to catch the close-up reality of completing written assignments and to present 'thick description' of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation' (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.254). The study adopted academic literacies as a framework for understanding the complexity of writing practices that students engaged with as part of their academic degree in British academia. This approach encompassed such factors as institutional practices (e.g. presentations, discussions, tutorials), tutors' perspectives, and individual characteristics.

The results showed that learning to write disciplinary-based assignments was an active and interactional process encompassing not only writing and reading but also a range of institutional activities and social interactions that occurred among the novice and more expert members of the discourse community. Findings showed that there were a number of academic practices provided by the institution and the masters programme to enable taught masters students to learn the new academic writing conventions. The provision for the academic writing came in a range of forms from pre-sessional and in-sessional courses, session on academic writing, to different types of feedback, tutorials, guidelines and assessment criteria. It has been shown that academic practices had an impact on how students defined and approached disciplinary-based writing tasks, and how they communicated with other members of the discourse community. Overall, students were positive about this support. However, findings suggested that different academic practices and activities enhanced or compromised the ways in which particular students understood the writing conventions ultimately impacting on their academic performance. Factors like appropriate timing of tutorials, type of instruction, type of language tutors deployed when providing feedback, students' interactive abilities and comprehension skills and availability of tutors influenced on how students completed their writing tasks.

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## Paper 0082

### University sector writing development: contextualizing classroom practices within institutional and the wider social environments

**Nancy Susan Keranen, Gicela Cuatlapantzi, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico**

#### Abstract

Investigation into classroom phenomena is often the starting point for understanding literacy issues. However, there is a certain point when this type of inquiry is insufficient in terms of helping to fully conceptualize the complex issues surrounding what happens in the classroom. At this point, researchers must attempt to contextualize the phenomena within the wider pedagogical and social milieus in which they exist. Although writing research in Latin America is a relatively new venture, it follows the wider trend towards contextualization in writing research. This trend which started in Mexico with a focus on cognitive writing processes, surveys on teachers and students' perceptions in specific contexts was complemented by studies on social and institutional practices.

In line with this overall trend to see writing practices as part of a larger ecology, this project involves a three phase investigation of literacy practices and processes associated with pre-service English language teachers situated in the modern languages department of a public research university in México.

The three study phases examine departmental literacy issues from the following perspectives:

- Institutional expectations (via curriculum plans - from historical and current perspectives) and academic staff/curriculum designers (interviews)
- how interpretation of departmental and institutional factors are carried out, i.e. the correspondence between classroom literacy expectations and students' processes (literacy development), (interviews with academic staff and students)
- the wider social context that goes beyond the institutional context, i.e. literacy requirements/expectations (interviews with potential employers).

Results of the study so far have indicated a number of issues:

- that official literacy requirements are open to a wide variety of interpretations
- writing expectations vary depending on the discipline area and the individual teacher/student
- students may not be fully prepared to deal with professional type discourses which are generally carried out in Spanish.

Implications of the findings will be presented in the conference paper.

This project is funded by the Secretaría de Educación Pública PROMEP 2009-2010. Literacy Education for Pre-Service Teachers: A Cuerpo Academico Research Agenda. Convenio PROMEP/103.5/09/4213.

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## Paper 0086

### Developing a writing center within an academic health science center: changing to sustain

**Tom G. Smith, Jennie Ariail, Shannon Richards-Slaughter, Lisa Kerr, Medical University of South Carolina, USA**

#### Abstract

In US health care professional education, writing occupies a peripheral position across nearly all programs. In medical and health science education, only the field of narrative medicine, with its touted capacity to promote reflective practice, is a locus of efforts to teach and analyze writing. In fact, only a limited number of efforts to teach and develop academic/scientific writing skills have been reported in professional and health education settings. In the US, Academic Health Science Centers (AHSCs) have not taught disciplinary writing skills to their biomedical scientists, doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, and allied professionals.

However, research has established that discipline-specific writing is only amenable to mastery in context. In fact, disciplinary writing is a cognitive challenge precisely because it is community-specific socialized behavior. Writing-to-learn activities are rare within health care programs' dimly lit and powerpoint-driven lectures, student assessment occurs through multiple choice tests, and discipline-specific writing skills are not taught.

Into this context 15 years ago, a Writing Center (WC) was at first established for one purpose: To assure that personal statements composed as part of residency applications by graduating medical students would be written 'correctly'. This WC's role within a free-standing AHSC - the only such WC in the US - has expanded incrementally, now housing five full-time faculty members. Sustained efforts to teach students, educate health professional faculty, and highlight writing's import for all professions have altered the institutional climate. The various health care programs now include conscious writing-to-learn activities, expanded assessment that includes the use of writing as well as multiple choice tests, and explicit instruction in disciplinary writing. WC faculty have developed three courses—healthcare literature, films of healthcare, and creative writing—to link their position with narrative medicine, the sole area of writing and rhetoric that health science education scholarship has investigated deeply. The WC also established an editing service staffed independently but co-existing with pedagogical efforts.

In addition to describing such context-driven adaptations, the presentation includes results of a writing attitudes survey completed by the AHSC faculty and results of an evaluation tool completed by approximately 25% (n≈450) of WC clients over 18 months. Ultimately, these results and a survey of current directions in health professional education present an opportunity to expand writing instruction within health professional programs. However, to sustain the program, WC faculty have debated and refined ethical positions and pedagogical approaches that are the norm in more traditional academic settings.

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## **Paper 0097**

### **Engaging students in legal writing**

**Mary Deane, Steve Foster, Coventry University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Students too frequently drop out of undergraduate law programmes, and at some institutions a substantial proportion of students either withdraw at level 1 or fail to progress to the second year. As writing is a key part of assessment for law students, engaging with the culture and conventions of legal writing is essential to academic success (Foster, 2009). In order to improve attrition rates at level 1, a writing specialist and a legal specialist collaborated to review and revise a first year course called law study. Based on their analysis of students' writing and past students' performance, they introduced targeted, explicit instruction in writing for legal purposes in the form of early feedback and peer review opportunities (O'Donovan *et al.*, 2008). They also trialled the use of annotated sample papers to help students engage with the culture and conventions of legal writing at university. Their goal was to develop students' confidence and competence in legal writing within the constraints of large-group teaching.

This presentation identifies key challenges of planning, executing, and evaluating discipline-based teaching interventions, including time management, resourcing, and communication. It shares the strategies and resources developed by the presenters, and reflects upon the wider implications for the theory and practice of 'Writing in the Disciplines' (WiD). For instance, the presentation examines the role of discipline-based writing development in universities, and argues that WiD initiatives have a relatively unexploited potential to enhance students' learning experiences. This presentation will particularly appeal to colleagues who are exploring ways of improving retention at level 1 or investigating ways of supporting new university students who are unfamiliar with legal writing.

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## **Paper 0100**

### **From 'errors of style' to ethnopoetics and ghost texts**

**Mary Scott, Institute of Education, London, UK**

#### **Abstract**

The primary purpose of this presentation is to make 'errors of style' in student writing a theoretical and pedagogic issue in university classrooms where many of the students are placed in the institutional category: 'international student'. This purpose derives from a small-scale research project involving teachers' written comments on the pre-submission drafts of 'international' masters degree students' assignments and dissertation chapters in the social sciences. In their marginal responses to the students' drafts the teachers comment on what they perceive as 'errors of style', using phrases such as: 'too informal' or 'clumsy sentence', while advising the adoption of a 'more distanced' or 'academic' style.

I argue that such comments disregard the presence in the texts of the 'international student' as a social-individual who has been, and is being, ideologically and emotionally shaped (see Appadurai, 2004) within the wider context of national and international histories and interconnections. Seeking a term that can transform errors of style in a way that can accommodate such a perspective, I select 'ethnopoetics'. I argue, as Blommaert (2006) does in his Hymes-derived but extended application of the term, that 'ethnopoetics' is applicable to writing in which different cultural systems of meaning-making meet. In developing this argument I seek to show how an ethnopoetic focus can include what the teachers' comments on style do not; viz, the ghost texts of otherness in the students' texts, but 'otherness' in its ideological tensions and complexities and not as 'error'. I also trace in ethnopoetic fashion how such ghost texts gain substance from oral or literary/aesthetic resources that disrupt conventional academic language patterns.

Finally I argue that we, the teachers in English-dominant classrooms, might serve the interests of 'international' (and in fact all) students well by attributing an ethnopoetic (i.e. cultural) otherness to the conventions of academic style that we often take for granted. National and international histories of power and influence could then come into view, so opening up 'style' in academic writing to discussion and debate in the classroom.

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**Tuesday, 29 June 2010**

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**Paper 0010**

**Possibilities and challenges of integrating professional writing practice into a financial accounting course**

**Lisa Powell, Nishani Singh, University of Adelaide, Australia**

**Abstract**

Traditionally, accounting education has emphasised the development of technical and theoretical aspects of the discipline to the detriment of a broader set of graduate attributes surrounding communication. Professional writing skills, including writing essays and reports, referencing, research skills, integrating, synthesising and critically analysing information from a range of sources, developing and structuring an argument, are essential to graduate skill development and required by employers (Kavanagh and Drennan, 2008). The development of such skills at the university level is a constant challenge.

One way of developing the professional writing skills of accounting students is to integrate the teaching and learning of these skills within the content, delivery and assessment of a course. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the integration of a professional writing program into a core second year course of the Bachelor of Commerce degree at an Australian University and to determine the effect on, or students' perceived changes in, their learning and application of these skills.

The participants of the study were students enrolled in a core second year accounting course. The key features of the integrated professional writing program were workshops, assignments and surveys. Learning opportunities and activities were scaffolded to allow students to progressively acquire skills ranging from basic to advanced (Wood, Bruner *et al.*, 1976).

The workshops and assessment tasks involved structuring and developing a written argument, using appropriate referencing techniques and avoiding plagiarism. The assessment focussed on a technical accounting issue. Students were surveyed before the workshops to establish their prior learning in respect of professional writing skills. They were surveyed again after attending the workshops and completing the assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the integrated program.

The evaluation of the integrated professional writing program into the accounting course highlighted several benefits and some challenges. The most striking benefit was an improvement in students' essay-writing skills including appropriate referencing and how to avoid plagiarism. The challenge was convincing students of the relevance of professional writing skills to the course and to their future careers.

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## **Paper 0011**

### **Conversations across the curriculum**

**Georgia Rhoades, Dennis J. Bohr, Appalachian State University, USA**

#### **Abstract**

To establish a sustainable culture for teaching writing, our Writing Across the Curriculum Program fosters a Freirean university dialogue about pedagogy. Previously, our structure for providing writing instruction depended on two required courses taught largely by non-tenure track faculty in composition and additional courses in all disciplines, with no faculty development or communication between composition and the disciplines.

In creating a sustainable program, WAC instituted a vertical writing model requiring writing experience in each year, the first two courses in composition and the other two in the disciplines (WID). We revised the second course into a WAC course, creating an intersection between composition and the disciplines, and we required each program in the university to design a writing-in-the-discipline course for the third year and a capstone with writing.

To support this structure, WAC instituted continuing faculty development workshops and end-of-semester events with scholars in the field (Nancy Sommers, Nick Carbone, and John Zubizarretta this year), creating opportunities for composition faculty to discuss pedagogy with WID faculty. We invite five WID consultants each year to provide information about writing in their fields and learn about process writing pedagogy, this year from math, health, leisure and exercise science, geography, psychology and music; last year with social science, biology, chemistry, history and theatre. Currently we are reading Bean's *Engaging Ideas*.

To support WID faculty, the WAC Program employs five consultants from composition, who coordinate faculty development for composition and offer mentoring and classroom support to all WID faculty in the university. We conduct continuing research and discussion of WAC scholarship as well as interviews with WID faculty. The strength of the program is the intersection between faculty with expertise in teaching writing who cannot have comprehensive experience in the disciplines and the WID faculty, who have expertise in their fields but perhaps not in writing instruction. Using Freirean principles of dialogue, we base our faculty development activities on the need of each group to learn from and support each other. We also sponsor conversations with writing teachers in community colleges and high school and community literacy outreach.

Because the majority of the faculty in composition are non-tenure track, WAC actively supports the improvement of workplace conditions, inviting Eileen Schell, an advocate of NTTs, to campus and lobbying for benefits, full-time employment, and voting rights, as we believe that students and faculty benefit from a more stable and humane workplace.

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## Paper 0016

### Learning about attribution practices in the discipline: an academic literacies approach?

**Anna Magyar, University of East Anglia, UK**

#### Abstract

This paper presents a suite of interactive online tutorials which have been developed to help students avoid plagiarising unintentionally. Using discipline specific student assignments they aim to:

- a) make explicit some of the assumptions underpinning our plagiarism rules
- b) build student confidence in participating in disciplinary conversations
- c) raise awareness of academic discourse as argument and differing perspectives
- d) illustrate and provide structured practice in integrating the work of others in their assignments
- e) offer contained writing activities with immediate feedback to develop student understanding of attribution.

These tutorials draw on research which sought to increase our understanding about the experiences and perceptions of international masters students as they negotiate the demands and expectations of UK higher education.

In many higher education courses in the UK the ability to write extended academic prose is central to assessment and therefore to student success. One aspect of academic writing which students struggle with is incorporating the work and ideas of others using appropriate attribution conventions. Advice on plagiarism often consists of discussions around what is or is not plagiarising while advice on attribution has tended to focus on referencing. Yet research shows that attention to the technicalities of referencing does not help students in working out when and what to reference (Chanock, 2008; Magyar, 2009; McGowan, 2006). The tutorials showcased here are intended to contribute to plagiarism awareness, with the aim of supporting the success and progression of all students, but particularly international and widening participation students who may be less familiar with (UK) academic attribution conventions. It also supports the efforts of lecturers to give meaningful feedback to students regarding attribution and referencing.

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## Paper 0018

### Coming to writing: developing the confidence to transgress academic boundaries

**Helen Bowstead, University of Plymouth, UK**

#### Abstract

*'...the gap between the familiar 'we' and an exotic 'they' is a major obstacle to meaningful understanding of the Other, an obstacle that can only be overcome through some form of participation in the world of the other'*

(Geertz, 1988 cited in Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, p.14)

This paper traces the relationship that developed over a period of two years between two women, one whose role was to provide university students with 'study skills' support and the other who was one of the many students who accessed that 'service'. In trying to resist the modernist research paradigm, which denies the personal, demonises the partial and denigrates the emotional, this piece explores the ways in which collaborative writing, can be liberating, empowering, and help transcend the traditional roles of the 'researcher' and the 'researched', academic and non-academic. By working closely with 'Gill'

as she battled to learn the 'language of the academy', by becoming part of her world through our friendship, by sharing my writing with her as she shared hers with me, and by making room for Gill's voice to respond to mine, an intellectual space has opened in which I have wandered freely. Inspired by the writings of Elizabeth St. Pierre and Laurel Richardson, I have found the courage to 'transgress' and 'play' with the 'rules' of academic writing and to produce a text that celebrates passion and creativity and in doing so provides a more open mode of representation. (Richardson, 1994). My hope is that it forms a response (but in no way an answer) to the question that most troubles those of us working and studying and working in higher education; 'what is academic writing?'

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## Paper 0019

### The role of spoken discourse in undergraduate writing pedagogy: a case study examination of the dynamics of recontextualisation and academic literacy in undergraduate cultural and queer studies

David McInnes, University of Western Sydney, Australia

#### Abstract

This paper reports on a project that explored and attempted to enhance the role of spoken discourse in writing pedagogy in undergraduate cultural and queer studies. The project involved the documentation, analysis and enhancement of several key pedagogic devices within undergraduate cultural and queer studies units at a large Australian university, including spoken lecture discourse, tutorial interactive discourse, reading guides, assessment specification and support documentation, writing workshops and students' completed assessment tasks (following Christie, 2000; 2002). The analysis was geared to articulating connections between spoken and written modes and the role each does or could play in the development of students' capacities in using discipline-specific academic literacies.

This paper reports on one aspect of the analysis and findings from the project, identifying and exemplifying the key linguistic process of recontextualisation (Fairclough, 1992; 2004; Halliday, 1989; 2003; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday and Hasan, 1989) whereby, in one direction, less abstract knowledge about texts and social practices is reformulated into and through more abstract post-structuralist knowledge formations and, in the other direction, abstract knowledge is transformed into more everyday discourse, with directional realizations of recontextualisation being directly linked to pedagogical purpose in episodes of teaching-learning. This linguistic process enables knowledge formulation and reformulation and is required for the exercise of the discipline-specific literacy of post-structuralist informed cultural and queer studies, and is demanded of students in written assessment tasks. The project revealed how the process of recontextualisation is enacted and thereby modeled and coached in spoken modes of educational exchange – lectures, tutorials and writing workshops. The paper outlines the processes of recontextualisation in and across educational modes and genres in one undergraduate queer studies unit. The paper will conclude by offering some suggestions about the scope the description and analysis provides for integrated, advanced level academic literacy pedagogy (Northedge 2003a and b; Bernstein 1990; 1996; 2000; Woodward-Kron, 2004; Johns, 1997).

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## **Paper 0023**

### ***What do they know of English, who only English know?***

**Lewis Elton, University of Gloucestershire, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Any knowledge of another language enriches one's knowledge of one's own. The monoglotism of the English is not new, see e.g. Mowbray, in King Richard II (on being banished to France): '*The language I have learned these forty years, my native English, now I must forego*', but that does not make it more respectable. For an expression of the opposite view by Eva Ehrenberg (see Elton and Timms, 2009).

I will concentrate on the following aspects, relating to standard English:

- concepts that exist in English but not in German
- concepts that exist in German but not in English
- concepts that exist in both English and German, but not with the same meaning
- issues of translation between English and German
- how they may relate to the differences in grammar
- time permitting, I would also like to refer to similar issues arising in translations of St. John, chapter 1, verse 1.

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## Paper 0025

### An exploration of subject tutor practice surrounding student writing in UK higher education

Jackie Tuck, The Open University, UK

#### Abstract

Academic literacies research has recognised that the '*lived experience of teaching and learning - from both student and tutor perspectives - is central to understanding student writing*' (Ivanič and Lea, 2006, p.7). The focus has often been on students as they negotiate the complex writing hurdles of their academic journey (e.g. Lillis, 2001; Mann, 2008). As Lillis and Scott (2007, p.17) have noted, however, there have been 'dynamic developments in terms of the object of study' in the field, including a shift of focus towards institutional practices. The aim here is to explore everyday practices surrounding student writing from the perspective of 'ordinary' subject academics themselves (rather than from that of students, writing developers or subject specialists who take a particular interest in writing), and to bring an 'academic literacies' lens to bear on a relatively hidden aspect of their work.

This paper draws on a two-year study of fourteen subject academics' work around undergraduate student writing within a range of disciplines, in six diverse UK higher education institutions. The key questions the study aims to address are:

- What are the practices of UK higher education subject tutors around student writing, seen in their institutional contexts?
- How do their practices around student writing reflect issues of power, status, visibility and identity within higher education?
- How do their practices around student writing intersect with wider debates about the nature of higher education in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The study involves multiple data sources: Interviews, observations and texts. In this paper I will use data extracts to discuss emerging themes from the study:

- the ways in which subject tutors' practices around student writing and written assessment are powerfully shaped - and sometimes compromised - by their institutional contexts
- the role of identity, and of a sense of 'ownership' and 'engagement', in shaping subject tutor practice around writing the ways in which some academics carve out small spaces within their contexts in which to engage meaningfully with students around writing, resulting in contrasting practice within individuals' work, and by implication over their students' degree trajectory
- the ways in which subject academics' apparent understandings of academic writing inform their choices around work with student writers.

Finally, I will explore the implications of my findings for those interested in bringing about sustainable writing development within subject teaching in UK universities.

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## Paper 0026

### Negotiating different approaches to knowledge through interdisciplinary exchange: the way forward for sustainable writing development

Angela Ardington, University of Sydney, Australia

#### Abstract

This paper examines a variety of embedded collaborative writing development programs at the University of Sydney between the learning centre and the disciplines of engineering, architecture and visual arts. These disciplinary communities, which represent science and creativity, are positioned as opposed in mainstream discourses (Becher, 1981; Davidson, 2004). Rather than perpetuate the polarised dichotomy between creativity versus academic rigour, this paper argues that the exploration of a variety of cross-disciplinary approaches to knowledge/inquiry could offer exciting possibilities for all those involved the teaching and learning experience. 'Writing' has come to represent the more realistic variety of communications across the curriculum: The oral, spatial, electronic - the visual and multimodal (Kress, 2003).

An examination of the epistemological perspectives (theoretical approaches, assumptions and methodologies) pursued across these discourse communities reveals how text, which can include images, integrated weblinks, podcasts, videoclips, is shaped by disciplinary expectations and practices (Becher and Trowler, 2001; Hyland, 2009). While learning takes place within the academy, we are preparing students for a range of professional contexts where they will be required to communicate with a variety of recipients, using a variety of media.

Applying these understandings to influential theories of academic discourse (Swales, 2004; Lea and Street, 1998; Ravelli and Starfield, 2008) will enable the design of more relevant programs and learning environments that address and reflect the requirements of the academy and professional contexts beyond. Research questions include: What disciplinary agendas are operating? How are disciplinary values expressed, e.g. conflicting/shared? How can we optimise these values to contribute towards richer learning experiences? There are significant challenges, e.g. individual and [entrenched/historical] disciplinary preferences, values and contentions, but innovative approaches to writing development that foster cross-faculty communicative practice through the sharing of expertise and attend more to the permeability of current disciplinary boundaries (engineering, architecture and visual arts), have the potential to provide useful insights and lead to more sustainable learning outcomes (Wenger, 1998; Davies and Devlin, 2007). Implications for existing pedagogy suggest that future collaborations that integrate a variety of learning approaches to knowledge, i.e. problem solving, experimental techniques, and interpretive, contextualised critical thinking will generate new understandings. Writing can be a challenge for many of us, but as experts in academic literacies, we need to learn from each other to unlock the potential, such as permitting the description of a continuum in writing practices spanning traditional disciplinary boundaries, challenging current epistemologically-driven practices which reinforce discrete disciplinary cultural identities.

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## **Paper 0030**

### **Re-using words is not plagiarism: establishing the role of recurrent academic phrases in postgraduate writing**

**Mary Davis, Oxford Brookes University, UK, John Morley, University of Manchester, UK**

#### **Abstract**

It has been long established that the words we use are shared (Bakhtin, 1986), and that much of the language we use is recurrent rather than original (Sinclair, 1987); however, with the current global pre-occupation with plagiarism, any re-use of words in academic writing can be a cause for concern. Most attention to plagiarism appears to be paid at the word, rather than the idea level (Angéilil-Carter, 2000), and the text-matching software Turnitin, widely used for checking assignments, encourages further focus on the re-use of words from other authors, particularly in the case of international students (Davis, 2007). However, in this context of plagiarism, the position of common re-usable phrases suitable for academic writing (such as 'research has shown that') needs to be discussed. In this study, a group of international pre-master's students learnt and practised phrases from Academic Phrasebank (Morley, 2005) within an academic writing module; six months later, on their postgraduate courses, a representative group were interviewed and encouraged to reflect on the role of re-usable phrases in their writing. The respondents were able to distinguish clearly between their re-use of phrases and any possible plagiarism, basically in seeing the difference between phrases they put together themselves with their own ideas, and phrases that contain a specific idea from other authors. They were also able to examine whether their use of phrases was in any way original. Follow-up research included interviews with experts in phraseology, some of whom did see a danger of plagiarism in teaching the use of these phrases; the high number of matches made by Turnitin reports to these phrases may also suggest a problem. However, the researchers of this study would like to argue that using common phrases is an empowering tool, allowing international and home students to engage in the language of their academic discourse community. It should therefore not be confused with plagiarism, and instead should be viewed as a strategy for good practice. The findings of this study have implications for an emergent theory on the teaching of re-usable phrases in the context of avoiding plagiarism, as a way to provide useful and sustainable tools for students to apply to the challenges of writing at postgraduate level.

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## **Paper 0034**

### **Dynamic assessment of academic writing in open and distance learning**

**Prithvi Shrestha, The Open University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

This paper reports on a study implementing a new pedagogic approach, broadly known as Dynamic Assessment (DA), in academic writing and writing assessment in open and distance learning (ODL). DA is an '*approach to understanding individual differences and their implications for instruction ... [that] embeds intervention within the assessment procedure*' (Lidz and Gindis, 2003, p.99). DA is based on Vygotsky's notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in sociocultural theory of learning. Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as 'the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (p.86). According to him, it is more important to know what a learner may be able to do in the future rather than what they can do at present. By working in the learner's ZPD, it is, thus, possible to find out their both actual and potential abilities. DA is grounded in this notion of assessment as a process rather than a product.

Although DA has been widely researched in general education and face-to-face learning, it has not been explored in ODL. As a response, this study sought to investigate the overarching question, how DA procedures impact on student learning, in relation to academic writing in ODL.

The data were collected from two students on an academic literacy course for business studies. The data consisted of these two students' written assessment texts, their interaction with the tutor-assessor (which focused on the students' zone of potential development (ZPD)) and semi-structured interviews with them. The collected data were qualitatively analysed. The assessment texts were analysed in terms of Macro-Themes and Hyper-Themes by employing the genre approach developed by Martin and his colleagues (e.g. Christie and Martin, 1997).

The findings suggest that DA procedures help to identify the areas that the students need the most support (managing the information flow in the analysis text in this study) and offer individualised support through tutor mediation which targets the learners' ZPDs. Also, this study has indicated that the enrichment materials/ sessions devised on the basis of the DA sessions were effective in enhancing the learners' cognitive and linguistic knowledge required for a case study analysis text. This study is of relevance to academic writing tutors, assessment specialists and policy makers.

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## **Paper 0038**

### **On second life as a virtual environment for teaching academic writing**

**Alma Whitfield, Liverpool Hope University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Over the last two decades, advances in information and communication technology have led to unprecedented use of Web technologies in revising the way we teach and structuring our learning environments (Khine and Fisher, 2003). Second life is one such newly developed web technology. Second life is an immersive online digital environment, where people can meet to chat, interact, play, study and work using avatars. Unlike previous immersive environments, second life objects can be easily integrated with web applications and can be flexibly rendered on low-specification desktop computers. This makes second life an enviable platform for education, web-based learning, flash simulations and virtual collaboration (Heiphetz and Woodill, 2009; Ryan, 2009). Reports show that an

increasing number of users, particularly young students, access second life. A large, active education community is thriving in second life (Lim, 2006). The Open University and universities in Harvard, Texas State, and Stanford in the US as well as Lancaster University in the UK are just a few of the many universities that have set up virtual campuses where students can meet, attend classes, and create content together.

While there are a number of research efforts towards the use of second life for educational purposes, most of these works tend to focus on other fields of learning rather than academic writing. Studies such as (Brabazon, 2007) observe that students embrace academic writing with far less enthusiasm than ever before - a development that is highly detrimental to learning and pedagogy. In this research paper, we argue that if students are exposed to academic writing and referencing using emerging interactive and innovative multimedia technologies, such as second life, they will exhibit greater interest in the subject and will eventually perform better or as well as they do in other subject areas. This paper reports our preliminary investigation and presents a conceptual framework for applying second life as an interactive environment for teaching academic writing to students at the undergraduate, diploma and pre-university levels. Our approach is to codify existing academic and reference materials in the area of computer science using online databases and electronic archives, in a way that will enable interactive access to them by students learning academic writing on second life.

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## Paper 0043

### Writing beyond the university: writing as a link between the university and the workplace

**Juliet Thondhlana, Julio Gimenez, The University of Nottingham, UK**

#### Abstract

Academic literacies have been identified to play a central role in higher education (e.g. Lea and Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001). Reading and writing are integral parts of the activities university students are asked to do both as processes for acquiring new knowledge (e.g. coursework, formative assessments) and as products for showing what they have learnt (e.g. summative assessments). This is clearly indicative of the roles and the value of academic literacies at university. But how much of this holds true for workplace activities? Although previous research has identified some of the skills that are transferred to the workplace (e.g. Belfiore *et al.*, 2004; Schneider and Andre, 2006), we still know very little about the place of academic literacies in the workplace: How much managers and human resources departments value the academic literacies of university graduates. By the same token, little is known about how much of what is valued of academic literacies in the workplace is reflected in the learning and teaching agenda of universities.

This presentation reports on an on-going study that examines the link between academic and workplace literacy skills in health sciences, politics and international relations, and biosciences. Following an ethnographic approach, the project explores the views, opinions, experiences and writing practices of a

group of six managers and of a group of six recent University of Nottingham graduates working in these fields.

Preliminary results suggest that knowledge of workplace genres and writing conventions is not enough for graduates to feel competent in workplace writing. Together with knowledge of genre conventions, both managers and recent graduates have mentioned that graduates need to also develop research skills to be able to find information they will then need to write reports, for example, analytical skills to be able to select relevant information they can then evaluate for summary writing, collaborative writing to be able to offer and receive intellectual stimulus and emotional support, feedback seeking and management strategies so that they can request and act upon feedback on their writing that colleagues and line-managers can offer.

The presentation will examine these results and explore ways in which they can inform the design of pedagogical interventions and teaching materials to support graduates in making an efficient transition as writers from the academy to the workplace.

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### Paper 0044

#### Contextualising generic online academic literacy support: towards an open resource for student writers and their teachers

**Robin Goodfellow, Marianne Puxley, The Open University, UK, Pat Strauss, UT University, New Zealand**

#### Abstract

Learners in higher education need to learn to write according to genre requirements of their subjects and discipline areas. Subject-based teachers, however, often do not have time nor the expertise to support writing development. Universities have addressed this problem by providing workshops, or courses on generic 'academic literacy'. Learners across a range of subjects are expected to acquire transferable writing skills which they can then apply to writing in their own subject.

The use of online materials has been seen as a way of providing such support more economically than can be done by face-to-face teaching. Online materials may be provided by the university, and restricted to institutional users, e.g. the Open University's 'Skills for OU Study' resources, or downloaded free from the internet, e.g. the 'Online Writing Lab' at Purdue University; or the academic writing sites at the University of Melbourne and the Finnish Virtual University.

However, academic writing as a set of generic skills that may be transferred across subject areas is a contested notion. James (2009), for example, found that students had little success in applying generic concepts to their own practice. Other research (North, 2005; Wingate and Dreiss, 2009) supports the view that difference between disciplines undermines the viability of generic approaches to writing. A discipline-specific approach to teaching writing is essential at one level, but to produce discipline-specific online writing support for all learners across the curriculum would not be economical.

The Contextualising Online Writing Support (COWS) project explores ways of making online generic writing resources more relevant to teaching and learning in disciplinary contexts. The project also seeks to promote open-access writing support resources, in line with principles developed through the global Open Content Initiative (OECD, 2007). Based on a survey of OU masters in education tutors' perceptions of learners' writing problems (Puxley, 2008), an online resource has been developed that provides links to both closed (OU Study skills) and open (free on the internet) materials. The links are indexed to writing needs identified by the tutors in the survey. A small pilot study has been carried out,

focused on the use of the resource by two tutors advising 12 distance learners how to target efforts to develop their writing, based on the evidence of an assignment. The pilot investigated the tutors' perceptions of the usability and usefulness of the resource, and their ideas for its development.

This paper will discuss issues raised in the design and development of the COWS resource, and some of the findings of the pilot study.

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## Symposium 0047

### Supporting students' academic writing in the transition to higher education

**James Elander, University of Derby, UK; Imose Itua, Alma Whitfield, David Walters, Liverpool Hope University, UK**

#### Abstract

This symposium presents initiatives in three disciplines that focus on academic writing in the transition to higher education, all conducted as part of Flying Start, a 2-year NTFS-funded project ([www.hope.ac.uk/flyingstart](http://www.hope.ac.uk/flyingstart)).

In the first paper, *Context-specific writing solutions for first year undergraduates*, Imose Itua presents findings from a participatory action research project exploring first year undergraduate students' and tutors' perceptions of barriers to successful academic writing, and ways that those barriers could be removed. The paper also presents recommendations for good practice that are informed by the study findings, which will inform the development of a bespoke questionnaire measure to assess the wider scale of barriers to students' academic writing development, and assess the acceptability of the proposed solutions to those barriers.

In the second paper, *Further education to higher education study: Transitions in music*, David Walters addresses the difficulties encountered by students with more practically-oriented backgrounds in the study of music. This paper presents findings from a comparative analysis of grade descriptors and assessment criteria for written assignments in music at A level, BTEC and degree level, and findings from a questionnaire survey of epistemological beliefs and expectations about written work in degree-level study of music, among prospective (pre-university) music degree students attending three different further education colleges. The comparative analysis identified certain key differences in the nature, design and expectations about written assignments in music between further education and higher education, and highlighted areas of uncertainty about the defining characteristics of 'undergraduate level' written work in music. The discussion of implications focuses on areas of commonality and contrast between the comparative analysis of grade descriptors/assessment criteria and the questionnaire survey.

In the third paper, *Interactive multimedia-based environments for teaching academic writing and referencing*, Alma Whitfield describes preliminary findings from an ongoing project to develop novel ways of organising and storing learning resources for computer science students on academic writing and referencing. Students exposed to academic writing and referencing using emerging innovative technologies would be expected to exhibit greater interest in the subject and perform better or as well as

they do in other subject areas. The project explores the use of an interactive environment for teaching academic writing to students at undergraduate, diploma and pre-university levels, and involves codifying existing academic writing and referencing materials using online databases and electronic archives, in a way that will enable interactive access by students.

The symposium concludes with an open discussion among presenters and audience, chaired by James Elander, about the applicability of the three initiatives in different contexts and subject areas, and the most promising ways forward for initiatives across the further education and higher education sectors to improve student writing in the transition to university.

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## **Paper 0048**

### **Alpha and Omega: supporting dissertation writing from beginning to end**

**Sara Eaglesfield, Roger Dalrymple, Buckinghamshire New University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

In the field of student writing in higher education, the experience of writing a dissertation or extended essay is distinctive. Student perceptions of the task vary and the process of writing such a dissertation is often regarded as involving additional skills and competencies from other modes of undergraduate writing. Moreover, certain disciplines arguably require different processes of preparation and support.

Accordingly, the process of dissertation-writing requires differentiated guidance and specific support. The authors illustrate this by the case-study of a visual and material culture dissertation undertaken by second-year undergraduates at Buckinghamshire New University who are supported by the lead author in a structured programme of academic writing development.

Applying Bandura's (1977; 1997) theory of self-efficacy in conjunction with Gardner's (1983; 1993) concept of multiple intelligences a number of different resources and media have been developed. These techniques have been used successfully to decode an increasingly complex system of symbolic entities within the dissertation domain. Student evaluation of the materials has been very positive with considerable and sustained interest across the complete range of ability.

The authors will provide a reflective account of their practice, showcasing some elements of the materials developed in support of student writing for the dissertation and will evaluate the findings of their research into students' perceptions and experiences of writing dissertations.

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## **Paper 0049**

### **Crossing the great divide: integrating writing in the disciplines**

**Suzanne Hudd, Robert Smart, Quinnipiac University, USA**

#### **Abstract**

The development of WAC programming at colleges across the United States is founded on the idea that writing is not a 'single, generalizable skill' (Russell, 1989, p.260), but rather, that the practice of writing is developed throughout one's lifetime and across a wide range of genres. There have been many innovations in WAC in an effort to make writing instruction pervasive and responsive to evolving institutional priorities, e.g. assessment, technology and changing student demographics (McLeod *et al.*, 1989). Despite these ongoing adaptations in WAC programming, however, writing instruction has remained largely separate from, rather than integral to, the core instructional goals in many majors (Russell, 1992). Similarly, the terms WID, and 'WIC' (writing in the course) (Thaiss, 1989) suggest to us

a perpetual isolation of writing as a unique disciplinary skill; an additional requirement that is often perceived as burdensome to faculty in the disciplines, or even worse, as unnecessary given the predominant perception that writing skills are mastered in introductory composition.

Here, we propose a new framework for WID training: a model that is founded on the principle of integrating writing with other forms of learning that occurs in the disciplines. In conjunction with a three-year, \$250,000 grant awarded by the Davis Foundation, we have begun work with disciplinary faculty on an approach to WID that considers writing as merely one form of expertise that students must develop and refine during the course of their education, concurrent with the mastery of other disciplinary skills. Our approach is founded on the belief that disciplinary writing development can only occur concurrent with the evolution of disciplinary thinking skills as the student progresses through the major. And so, we treat the forms of disciplinary writing as less important than the thinking that is inherent within these forms. Our presentation will demonstrate one strategy for working with faculty in the disciplines to first, understand how student disciplinary expertise evolves in general ways as the student moves through the major. We then describe strategies for helping disciplinary faculty to situate written work within their major in such a way it is integral, rather than ancillary to, the achievement of broader goals for learning and the development of expertise within the major.

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## Paper 0050

### Turnitin said it wasn't happy: can the regulatory discourse of plagiarism detection operate as a change artefact for writing development?

*Claire Penketh, Chris Beaumont, Edge Hill University, UK*

#### Abstract

Aims to promote developmental models for writing often aim to counteract the effects of the structural organisation of learning and assessment in higher education (Catt and Gregory, 2006). There are recognised habits and routines of practice that emerge for tutors and students from the ways that writing is framed predominantly as a vehicle for assessment. The development of early drafts is a significant skill in enhancing writing practice. In a discussion of concepts of error in relation to student writing, Bean (2001) suggests that some students may submit first or only draft writing for assessment. The introduction of plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) for student and tutor use may offer opportunities to support writing development via the submission of early drafts and dialogic tutorials (Davis, 2007). An aim for this project was to harness 'plagiarism detection' software with its potential as a 'change artefact' (Miettinen and Virkkunen, 2005), providing opportunities for a departure from the habits of practice by creating an additional incentive for early submission and re-drafting.

This paper is based on a qualitative enquiry designed to explore perceptions and experiences of the introduction of Turnitin to a group of tutors and students from within one department. Data gathered via a discursive space in the form of a focus group (Parker and Tritter, 2006) was supplemented by a group interview and questionnaire. Student and tutor voices are drawn on here to explore the ways in which both groups interpreted the use of such software.

The suitability of plagiarism detection software as a tool to promote writing development will be discussed in light of the findings from this inquiry. It is useful to be mindful of the tensions that may emerge when attempting to make use of the 'dominant discourse' of academic malpractice for the

purposes of writing development particularly where writing development seeks to promote confident writers. The paper concludes with a discussion of the potential for disempowerment for student and tutor when both are subject to the regulatory 'voice' of Turnitin.

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## Paper 0052

### What makes EFL postgraduates choose academic writing as a research area?

**Ramona Tang, National Institute of Education, Singapore**

#### Abstract

Much has been written about the challenges that EFL students face when it comes to academic writing (e.g. Casanave, 2004; Li, 2006; Pecorari, 2006). To my mind, therefore, it takes quite a special disposition for an EFL postgraduate to not only view academic writing as the means by which he/she is assessed and the means by which his/her ideas are conveyed to a wider community, but to also see academic writing as itself an object worthy of study.

The participants in my study are several scholars from China who are pursuing their postgraduate degrees in an English-medium university in Singapore. These scholars have all chosen academic writing or some aspect of academic literacy as their area of research for their MA dissertations or final reports, or their PhD dissertations. Through surveys and interviews, I explore the reasons which led them to choose this field of research, and get them to reflect on what they feel they are able to contribute to the international academic literacies community by virtue of their backgrounds and their familiarity with the Chinese EFL context.

I argue that, quite apart from focusing on the problems faced by EFL academic writers, it is also important for academic literacies theorists and EAP practitioners to recognise the ways in which EFL postgraduate researchers of academic writing are able to make a positive contribution to our understanding of academic literacy practices in general as well as our understanding of the very particular academic literacy needs of our other EFL students in higher education.

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## **Paper 0054**

### **Research into practice: a model for sustainable writing development**

**Suganthi John, Els Van Geyte, University of Birmingham, UK**

#### **Abstract**

At the University of Birmingham, we have a large number of international students enrolled on postgraduate programmes in the humanities and social sciences. Every year the English for international students unit conducts a thesis writing course which aims to help students structure and write their dissertations or theses. Traditionally, our materials have been mostly centred on empirical research typically found in the social sciences. In recent years, we have noticed that there has been an increase in the number of students coming from fields where the method of research is typically non-empirical (theology, divinity and law, to name a few). There has also been an increase in the number of students who are enrolled on programmes which are interdisciplinary in nature.

In response to the changing student community, we set up a working group to reconsider the content of our writing materials. Academic writing has been the focus of quite intense research in the last decade (Flowerdew, 2002; Hewings, 2001; Hyland, 2009; Lillis, 2001; Mitchell and Andrew, 2000 to name a few). EAP, in particular, has received much attention (specific books in the field being Hyland, 2006; and Jordan, 1997). In order to ensure that our teaching reflects the current thinking and writing practices within the different fields represented by our students, the group wanted to bring our practice alongside current research.

This paper presents our experience by relating the challenges we faced in defining the different subject areas, conducting and collating research and translating these into workable materials for the students. To support this discussion, we present some data to show how we revised our thesis materials using research. Our paper will also show how our materials have been designed to help our students become independent writers, and thus to allow them to sustain their own writing development.

We believe that in order to ensure that we meet our students' needs, teaching practice needs to reflect the valuable work done in research fields. We propose that a good approach to sustaining writing development within our institutions is to allow for research to influence our teaching of writing.

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## **Paper 0056**

### **Employing words: transferring academic writing skills to the job market**

**Emily Alder, Edinburgh Napier University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

In recent years, research literature and pedagogical discourse have emphasised the challenges faced by students as they become successful learners (Boud, 1995; Christie *et al.*, 2008). Much of this research focuses on the methods used to support students' development of their writing skills, including learning the conventions of academic writing, learning the language of their discipline, and accurate referencing. This work is unified by its emphasis on successful writing within university contexts, such as exams and written assessments.

However, as academic learning advisers, we are also remitted to develop students' employability skills. It is often possible to connect the skills of writing for an academic audience with those of writing for the real world, especially with written communication requirements in the workplace and for successful job applications. In doing so, however, we elide two skills that may not necessarily be directly transferable (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009), overlooking a gap in students' employability skills development around their ability to acquire the sorts of writing skills that will help them to secure jobs (rather than 70% in essays).

With an emphasis on CVs, online applications, and interview techniques, Edinburgh Napier's careers service had not previously addressed writing skills in this context, while the academic advisers' services tended to focus on academic skills for educational success. A collaborative pilot workshop for a wider participation student group was designed, specifically for turning students' academic writing skills into an employability skill for effective written job applications and to challenge the assumption that academic writing skills are directly transferable to workplace contexts. Before and after the workshop, the pilot evaluated students' perceptions of, and confidence in, their ability to write 'employing words'.

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## Paper 0059

### Layering methods to analyse the relationship between language use and attainment among Open University undergraduate students

*Maria Leedham, Lina Adinolfi, Elizabeth Erling, The Open University, UK*

#### Abstract

It is increasingly recognised that assessed writing at undergraduate level is a 'high stakes' activity... If there are 'problems' in writing, then the student is likely to fail' (Lillis and Scott, 2007: p.9). However, there has been relatively little work on the correlation between undergraduate students' writing and their academic attainment. This paper reports on a project which employs a layering of research methods to investigate the relationship between the written language and the academic attainment of Open University undergraduate students on a health and social care course.

The initial research process (Erling, 2009) investigated students' writing from courses in three different disciplines. This involved a combination of ethnographic investigation and textual analysis, the latter by means of the Measuring the Academic Skills of University Students (MASUS) procedure, a tool developed to explore the nature of academic writing in the 1990s at the University of Sydney's Language Centre (Bonnano and Jones, 1997). The results of the MASUS textual analysis indicated that students' use of language correlated with their attainment. The analysis also generated descriptions of some of the features of highly valued academic style.

In this paper, we report on a subsequent investigation involving a corpus-based linguistic analysis of the lexical chunks used in students' writing in one of the three disciplines (health and social care). We will compare this with an intuitive analysis of the chunks used in the same data (Adinolfi, forthcoming); this dual procedure for identifying lexical chunks in written corpora follows Leedham (2010). Preliminary analysis of the data suggests that students make more use of longer contiguous chunks as they proceed through the course.

The final stage in this research will be to compare students' use of academic-writing-related chunks, as measured by corpus tools and intuition, against the original MASUS assessments of proficiency to see how far they align. By layering methods in this way, we hope to gain deeper insights into the prestige features of academic language, while developing a range of tools to identify student texts which are not (re-) producing this valued style. The ethnographic data collected in the early stages of the project might

then contribute to an understanding of why some students are more successful at producing the type of language that is valued by assessors within a particular discipline.

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## Paper 0063

### Towards well written assignments and sustainable competencies

**Bente Kristiansen, Signe Skov, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**

#### Abstract

Teaching academic writing as a skill might result in more well written assignments. But more sustainable writing development in the sense of being able to write in other genres than specific assignments requires amongst other things being able to reflect analytically and critically on academic knowledge production.

We will present a teaching experiment in the field of writing in the disciplines and discuss to which extent the didactic activities involved can be seen as improving sustainable writing development. Based on the notion of 'academic literacies' (Lea and Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001) we see writing as a crucial part of the production of academic knowledge. Our notion of 'sustainable writing development' includes two kinds of awareness:

1. on the way a specific discipline validates knowledge
2. on the text as part of a specific communicative situation. In this WID-experiment we try to incorporate both.

In cooperation with teachers of a specific course in art history, we are integrating writing-to-learn activities in a course for first year students. The project is theoretically informed by the concept of 'academic literacies' (Lea and Street, 2004; Lea, 2004; Lillis, 2006), and by a concept of writing competencies (Berg, 2009) and finally by the idea of writing as a tool for learning (Vygotsky, 2004; Dysthe and Akylina, 2006). The purpose of this project is to explore how didactic tools as 'writing to learn activities' can facilitate the improvement of academic literacies and writing competencies.

We incorporate three writing to learn activities:

- Short 'writing-to think' exercises (Dysthe and Akylina, 2006) mostly related to understanding key concepts in the discipline, for instance definitions, theoretical points, methods etc.
- Short pieces of 'presentation-writing' (Dysthe and Akylina, 2006) leading up to the final assignment for the course
- Feedback-processes in which the students give feedback on the basis of discipline specific criteria.

We will present the specific exercises and questions given to the students and shortly explain the theoretical background for these activities. At the time of the conference only the teaching experiment will be finished, not the evaluation. However, we will discuss the preliminary findings: a) the kind of barriers these activities meet from teachers, from students and from institutional settings  
b) the didactic potentials in these writing to learn activities shown so far - in accordance with developing well written assignments and sustainable competencies.

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## Paper 0065

### Teaching essay writing as a disciplinary practice

**Swantje Lahm, Nadja Sennewald, University of Bielefeld, Germany**

#### Abstract

Writing instruction used to have no explicit place in the German university system. Writing was seen as a general skill that should be acquired at elementary and secondary school. In the reform process over the past ten years this mindset towards writing instruction has changed. Now it is well accepted that writing should be taught and learned at university. So far process-oriented, cross-disciplinary workshops have been central in teaching academic writing. One of the obstacles in teaching writing as a disciplinary practice though is a 'didactical gap'. The process oriented approach with its focus on the strategies of individual writers tends to highlight generic writing skills but runs short in explicating the specifics of writing in the disciplines.

Therefore we aimed to develop a method which links product and process oriented approaches in order to teach writing as a disciplinary practice. In an experimental seminar we worked with students on writing essays. Instead of 'just' teaching conventions and criteria for good essay writing we tried to disclose the disciplinary practices that lie 'behind' the genre (specific ways of reading and thinking about literature). The seminar took place in a team-teaching cooperation between a discipline (German Studies), a writing centre (Schreiblabor Bielefeld) and a research project (LiKom), which aims at identifying and improving students' academic literacy. While a professor was teaching about 'German family novels', the writing specialists were teaching the same students how to write essays in constant reference to the disciplinary topic of family novels.

Together with the students we deconstructed examples of essay writing and explored the criteria which define 'good' essays. In the following units we focused on these criteria and practised them separately. The students uncovered the secrets of textual structure and the different textual moves became more manageable for them. We suggest that our approach to analyze disciplinary characteristics of a text genre and to teach them specifically in a seminar situation can be transferred to other disciplines as well.

In our presentation we would like to discuss the methods we developed and the results we got - which include not only the students' essays, but also their feedback in written form. Additionally the students had several opportunities to evaluate their own writing skills with questionnaires we developed.

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## Paper 0068

### By writers for writers: a collaboratively constructed model of the writing process

**Sarah Haas, Aston University, UK**

#### Abstract

It is believed that understanding one's writing process will help writers take control of that process, rather than be immobilised by it (Elbow and Belanoff, 2003). One method that has been used to help novice writers develop this understanding is to present them with a model of the writing process. A criticism of writing process models, however, is that they are exportable, and useable to writers in differing contexts (Kent, 1999). Further to this criticism, most models of the writing process are designed by experts on writing, rather than by student-writers themselves. Thus, they might not prove as useful in promoting student understanding as hoped.

This presentation will discuss how one international, mixed-gender group of MA students found the available models of the writing process unsatisfactory: The models simply did not resonate as being understandable, useable representations of their individual writing processes. In response to the lack of a satisfactory model, this group of six students, along with one researcher, collaboratively constructed their own model of the writing process.

Data collected were audio-recordings of writers' group meetings (transcribed), members' reflective journals, questionnaires and interviews (transcribed). All data were examined, and excerpts containing information about the process of students' writing were culled. All verbs and lexical signals were extracted. The verbs were categorized, and then using the lexical signals, the researcher compiled a model that reflected the data. This model was presented to the students, and adjusted until all agreed that it satisfactorily represented their writing processes.

Results indicated that the development and use of the writing process model helped the student writers understand their own writing processes better, and helped them take control of the writing process. Specifically, the awareness of their writing process helped the writers move on in the process when they found themselves 'stuck.' The model was also used by the students to establish a common language for talking about writing, and to help them understand and articulate their in-process feedback needs.

Although this model has since resonated with, and been found to be useful by other writers, (faculty members as well as students), it is intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. Thus, it is presented not as a set formula to be taken as-is and imposed, but rather as a starting point from which groups or individual writers can discover, develop and use their own representations of their writing processes.

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## Workshop 0070

### Rising to the challenges of academic writing: a collaborative approach to developing international students' skills at Masters level.

**Marion Bowman, University of Bradford, UK, Anna Seabourne, University of Leeds, UK**

#### Abstract

Producing written academic assignments of an acceptable quality is one of the most demanding tasks faced by all students at university. For many international students, academic writing is associated with high levels of frustration. Whilst their test scores evidence the prerequisite level of English, international students embarking on masters courses face particular challenges as they negotiate the unfamiliar approaches, differing expectations, and perplexing discourses of study at this level. Their previous educational experiences may have left them ill-equipped to cope with the transition to postgraduate study at university in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, research shows that a positive learning experience in the first four to six weeks of study is central to student achievement and retention.

This workshop will take a closer look at some of the challenges which confront students and those who have a responsibility to ensure they have the potential to succeed academically through sharing a case study of embedded skills support for international students at the start of two masters courses in nanotechnology and bioscience at the University of Leeds. A model of targeted writing support was introduced, founded on close collaboration between staff from a centralised skills unit, subject based academics and faculty team librarians.

The workshop will offer participants the opportunity to engage with some of the targeted activities designed to support students in analysing, researching, reading and writing as they worked towards their first formative writing assignment. In addition, the results of initial student feedback on the programme will serve as a stimulus for discussion, leading to an exchange of ideas on how to enhance the learning experience of international students as they develop their academic writing skills.

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## Paper 0074

### Developing scientific writers: writing retreats and writers' groups for PhD students in the natural sciences

**Sarah Haas, Aston University, UK, Camilla Osterberg-Rump, Sofie Kobayashi, Copenhagen University, Denmark**

#### Abstract

The number of PhD candidates is increasing in Europe, and along with it, the demand for better pedagogic practices for PhD education (Sörlin *et al.*, 2006). One of the areas needing attention is writing instruction (Mullen, 2001). Research suggests that writing retreats and writers' groups are effective ways to improve the writing, and educational experience, of postgraduate students (Aitchison, 2003; Aitchison, 2009; Badley, 2008; Chihota, 2008; Murray, 2008; Murray and Newton, 2009).

This presentation will discuss an evaluation-in-progress of a 'writer development' course for postgraduate students in the natural sciences at a large European university. The course has three components:

1. a workshop session for supervisors
2. two 3-day writing retreats for students, spaced roughly three months apart
3. student-led writers' groups, meeting fortnightly in between the retreats.

With the purpose of establishing a 'common language' (Murray, 2005), between supervisors and students, supervisors are briefed on the content of the students' writers' retreat. The retreat itself is loosely modeled after Murray's (2009) 'structured retreat'. In these retreats, however, self-directed writing time is alternated with input sessions from the retreat facilitator, and group discussions. The topics of input sessions and discussions include: writing process, feedback techniques, time management, and goal-setting strategies. The purpose of the retreats are to not only provide students with tools to help them develop themselves as writers, but also to provide time and space to get to know each other, and establish their 'community of practice,' which is intended to continue after the retreats, in the forms of writers' groups. Although suggestions for writers' group procedures are given at the retreat, the groups are un-supervised, leaving it up to the students to organize themselves, and use the groups as they see fit.

The evaluation of the course is an 'illuminative' one (Parlett, 1981) aiming to evaluate the course from multi-perspectives (students, supervisors, institution, facilitators) using multiple data sources (questionnaires, interviews, audio-recordings, reflective journals). As this is a work-in-progress, conclusions have not yet been drawn. However, initial data is positive. Student reactions such as 'I got more done in an hour here than I got done all week in my office' and 'It's so nice to know that there are others in the same boat. I feel so much less alone now' are encouraging. Should this intervention prove to be as successful as hoped, it might be a framework that could be adopted/adapted by other institutions.

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## Paper 0075

### Promoting multilingual writers' self-efficacy using Web 2.0

**Maria Jerskey, LaGuardia CC/CUNY, USA**

#### Abstract

This paper focuses on addressing a persistent dilemma for compositionists by introducing Web 2.0 participatory platforms to improve student writers' social cognitive frameworks: An ongoing dilemma for college language-literacy teachers who teach student writers falling within the complexly heterogeneous category of multilingual writers (i.e. generation 1.5, international students, new immigrants, etc.) has us on the one hand preparing students to pass standardized, college, and/or departmental writing assessments while somehow, on the other, we cultivate a writing environment in which students' confidence as writers can grow. Traditionally labeled ESL (English as a second language) and more recently ELL (English language learners), these students have been placed (and often misplaced) in remedial, non-credit bearing courses. The imperative to pass assessments often supersedes the imperative to develop as writers triggering mechanisms that lead to low-achievement and apathy (e.g., Harklau, 2000; Harklau *et al.*, 1999; Nero, 2005).

Access to 'Web 2.0' platforms (i.e. blogs, wikis, e-mail, e-portfolios, twitter, social networks, etc.) provides environments and opportunities for promoting writing success and can powerfully impact students' identities as writers—their writing self-efficacy. Web 2.0 allows student writers to experience writing for and to an audience of real readers within and beyond the classroom (Yancey, 2009). Indeed, Web 2.0 has catalyzed a global, textual treasure trove of code-switching, multilingual writing, and a shuttling back and forth between discourse and linguistic communities advancing multilingual, multimodal writing (e.g. Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Bloch, 2007; Canagarajah, 2006; Hawisher *et al.*, 2006; Lam, 2006; You, 2008).

The concept of self-efficacy, a component of a larger social cognitive theoretical framework (Bandura, 1986; 1997), has been adapted to promote and measure K-12 writing success (Pajares, 2003), yet little research has focused on college writers and virtually none has focused specifically on college writers who are also English language learners. Social cognitive theory 'analyzes human functioning as socially interdependent, richly contextualized, and conditionally orchestrated within the dynamics of various societal subsystems and their complex interplay' (Bandura, 2001). As such a 'societal subsystem,' Web 2.0 provides a compelling 'laboratory' to both study and promote writers' self-efficacy.

My ongoing research looks at multilingual writers' participation in Web 2.0 participatory platforms to explore the effect on their writing self-efficacy beliefs in order to better understand how teachers might tap into the inherent strengths that a community of heterogeneously diverse writers brings to the college ESL/ELL writing classroom. This paper describes the research thus far.

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## Paper 0077

### The praxis of academic literacies: some examples from higher education

**Peter Thomas, Middlesex University, UK, Julio Gimenez, University of Nottingham, UK**

#### Abstract

This presentation reports on an on-going study which aims to develop practical applications of an academic literacies (AcLit) approach, especially in relation to academic writing, in the context of widening participation in a new university in the UK. It stems from a need for usable pedagogy to complement and inform the theoretical considerations given to the development of academic writing (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lea, 2004; Lea and Street, 1998; Lillis and Turner, 2001). This interrelation of theory and practice is closely connected with what Freire (1996) refers to as praxis, a central element in his route to freedom for the oppressed.

Within a framework that proposes responsible, systematic and sustained change, the study focuses on three theoretical principles of academic literacies: criticality, accessibility, and visibility. Within the framework of the study, criticality refers not only to the stance students need to adopt towards discourses and texts but to their understanding of the roles they play in the academic world that surrounds them and the multiplicity of factors intervening in producing and consuming texts. Accessibility refers to students having the tools (linguistic and otherwise) that will allow them to access academic discourses of all kinds as well as being able to analyse, understand and critique the tensions, contradictions, fears and hopes in these discourses. Visibility relates to empowering students to find ways of becoming less peripheral, having their voices as writers heard and their writer authority respected in the processes of knowledge telling, transformation and creation.

The presentation will focus on examples of activities we propose, results achieved using these activities and recommendations (for improvement). The examples will be taken from two types of provision made at Middlesex University through English Language and Learning Support (ELLS); provision which is embedded within degree programmes (examples will be taken from activities with nursing, midwifery and art and design); and provision which is non-embedded, or open to all comers, as part of a programme of booster courses. The results, or observations on the effectiveness of these interventions

will be based on qualitative feedback gathered before, during and after the activities, from students, ELLS lecturers, and from relevant degree teaching staff. The recommendations will address how responsible, systematic and sustainable these interventions were and will extend to comment on the effectiveness of the AcLit approach, as applied here.

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## Workshop 0080

### Creating sustainable student writing spaces

**Sarah Johnson, Nottingham Trent University, UK, Sandra Sinfield, Tom Burns, Debbie Holley, London Metropolitan University, UK**

#### Abstract

This workshop will consider how embedding writing development within the curriculum can create regular opportunities for writing activities to reinforce disciplinary learning, whilst also providing sustained opportunities for students to practise writing within the discipline.

Academic literacies research (Lea and Street, 1998) argues for a move away from the teaching of study skills in discrete groups. It is suggested that an integrated framework of teaching skills and content within the discipline is the most effective teaching strategy for raising attainment. However, lecturers, often driven by internal and external targets, inspections and quality assurance may simply see students as being unable to write, and thus send them to learning development for a quick fix! Perhaps it is not that students cannot write, but that they require: space to 'write to learn'; greater opportunities for writing; opportunities to write little and often and the chance to discover that writing gets easier with practice.

What time-poor lecturers need then is not further research in this area. Perhaps we need to convert theory into practical activities which are sustainable because they enable students to gain greater understanding of key concepts and course related material whilst being given opportunities to practise discipline-specific writing. In their research, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) suggest that students benefit from being given opportunities to:

- Practise writing in the discipline
- Reflect on their writing and other aspects of their learning
- Reflect on feedback from their lecturers.

This workshop then is designed to be a practical, hands-on session providing opportunities for engaging with short, interactive and sustainable writing activities which require little extra time or effort on the part of the lecturer, but provide maximum gain in terms of engagement and development of students' writing in the discipline.

There will be opportunities for sharing our resources, for sharing ones that you bring with you, and for discussing ways of adapting them within learning development and/or disciplinary practice.

Participants will leave the session with a customisable writing workshop session that is successful with both staff and students; with resources from many different contexts; disciplines and institutions; and

with feedback on activities and resources that they themselves have developed and used in student writing spaces.

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## Workshop 0081

### Teaching reader-friendliness in academic writing: an interactive workshop

**Eszter Timár, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary**

#### Abstract

Although readers appreciate papers that they can understand in the shortest possible time, we often see that even well-established scholars concentrate on their own message and ignore the reader. One of the academic writing instructor's tasks is to help students shift from their writer-centred to a more reader-centred way of writing.

Swales and Feak's widely used textbook establishes in its introductory unit that '[a]cademic writing is a product of many considerations: Audience, purpose, organization, style, flow and presentation,' but in subsequent units analyses various texts types and genres, not always referring back to these criteria.

In this workshop, I will define and use 'reader-friendliness' as the umbrella that brings Swales's concepts together and explains why there are certain 'moves' in such genres as introductions, abstracts, conclusions, why we use headings and subheadings, Hyland's various forms of metadiscourse, why we hedge, why paragraphs, non-verbal information and references are organized in particular ways, etc. For pedagogical purposes, we are going to look at a short peer-reviewed paper from the point of reader-friendliness, proceeding from the macro-structure to the more micro-level elements of writing. We are going to ask about the purpose of the piece and audience expectations concerning each feature, pointing out the reader-friendly (or occasionally unfriendly) elements in it. For example, when studying paragraphs, we will examine the typical position of the topic sentence and its function. Generally, we are likely to find it in the initial position, with simpler vocabulary than the rest of the paragraph, quite frequently taking the form of a question and/or connecting the new idea to the previous part. Why? Because this is how the reader understands the paragraph with the least effort.

It is hoped that the workshop will contribute to the effective teaching of reader-friendliness: The word will no longer be a cliché but rather a true guiding principle of academic writing courses.

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## Paper 0085

### From personal to academic writing: an in-progress study

Rachel Segev-Miller, Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts, Israel

#### Abstract

Research of academic writing has for over two decades now pointed to the significance of writing to promote learning and critical literacy. Studies investigating the effects of academic and personal writing have indicated that the quality of papers written in personal writing was higher especially in terms of interpretation and elaboration (see: Segev-Miller, 2005 for a review).

However, these studies focused on the products of learning - papers written by students in fulfillment of course requirements. Very few studies have investigated the differences between the cognitive processes underlying the performance of academic and personal writing tasks. McCrindle and Christensen (1995) found from the subjects' responses to a questionnaire that personal writing significantly promoted the use of more sophisticated cognitive strategies (e.g. organization) and metacognitive strategies (assessment and regulation of learning).

Segev-Miller (2005) found that personal writing in a process log, documenting the writing of an authentic academic paper, facilitated the subjects' use of the intertextual processing strategies of selection, connection and organization of information from multiple sources. However, the major effect of conducting the process log was to promote the subjects' use of metacognitive strategies, particularly the strategies of self-assessment and self-regulation, which are crucial for significant learning to take place. Personal writing also provided students with opportunities to examine their development as learners.

The subjects were 24 graduates majoring in one of three languages (Hebrew, Arabic, or English) and taking part in the researcher's course on 'Current issues in first and second language acquisition' in the M.Ed. Program in Language Education at a college of education in Tel Aviv. The subjects were required:

- (1) to conduct a course journal, in which they discussed by means of personal writing both their class-notes and learning from their performance of weekly tasks
- (2) to each read an article in English and present a summary of it in Hebrew in class
- (3) to submit a paper, in which they synthesized by means of academic writing all the summaries of these articles.

The researcher is now in the process of evaluating the papers and analyzing the course journals for the purpose of identifying and quantifying the strategies used by the subjects (see: Segev-Miller, 2004 for the evaluation criteria and the analysis method, respectively). Next, she will calculate the correlations between these, as well as other variables discussed by the subjects, such as time on task.

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## Paper 0088

### Encouraging undergraduates' academic writing development in e-learning contexts that students access independently or in subject-based groups

Trevor Day, Linda Humphreys, Bridgette J. Duncombe, University of Bath, UK

#### Abstract

E-learning approaches, from instructional to collaborative and contested, currently support academic writing development in a wide variety of contexts (e.g. Goodfellow, 2005; Peretz, 2005; Brown *et al.*, 2008). This paper is an early stage report on progress in developing a suite of five e-learning modules on aspects of critical reading and writing at a research-intensive, science and engineering-strong university. At this university, non-remedial academic writing development is supported by subject teaching staff, Royal Literary Fund fellows, the English language centre and through information skills courses run by the library. The current project seeks to complement the existing provision by providing undergraduates with guidance through e-learning modules that engage the students in learning tasks that can be completed independently (in a largely instructional systems design manner; Mayes and de Freitas, 2004) or under the guidance of teaching staff in subject disciplines (in more cognitive-constructivist and social-constructivist ways; *ibid*). Strengths of the e-learning project include collaboration between staff from widely different backgrounds, including a professional writer and academic writing facilitator, a faculty librarian, and a teaching fellow. In addition, detailed feedback on each module's learning efficacy and ease-of-use is being gathered systematically from students both during the module's development and after its launch. In designing the e-modules, the researchers and developers have been driven by pedagogical imperatives (Mayes and de Freitas, 2004; Beetham and Sharpe, 2007; Biggs and Tang, 2007; Race, 2007) rather than wishing to be led or overly constrained by perceived limitations of on-line technologies. Among the challenges have been how to design on-line activities that facilitate deep learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976; Biggs, 1987) and how to create experiences that are relevant to students from a variety of disciplines. The paper will consider the extent to which such aspirations have been met.

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## Paper 0089

### What factors influence students' writing development in higher education? A case study of master students' own perceptions

Art Gry Heggli, University of Bergen, Norway

#### Abstract

Several longitudinal studies of writing development have yielded knowledge about how students in higher education develop as writers (i.e. Herrington and Curtis, 2000; Stanford Study, 2008). This paper reports on the first phase of a multidisciplinary study in progress of master students' perceptions of what afforded and constrained their development over four years at university.

Our theoretical framework is based on sociocultural perspectives, focusing on writing as a dialogical and interactional process dependent on cultural settings (Nystrand, 2006; Prior, 2006). Our methodological approach is writer oriented and we investigate how student writers' own reflections on their practices, experiences and products can add to our knowledge about conditions for writing development in higher education. How do students themselves articulate their experience as learners in academic literacy?

The context of the reported study is a master of education programme at a major Norwegian university, where we have collected students' writing assignments and texts throughout their 3-year bachelor + year one of their 2-year masters.

The aim is threefold:

1. Gain knowledge about how students themselves have experienced their development as writers and what they see as crucial external and personal factors
2. Try out a methodological approach to the study of writing development in higher education to be used in other sites (a major focus in this paper)
3. Create a knowledge base for improvement of the 'writing environment' in different contexts.

Our case study approach combines individual and group interviews with close reading of students' written texts, as well as methods to gain insight into study design and feedback practices. Student interviews are conducted in two steps:

- 1) A group interview (four students) to map the background and overall experiences of the students (i.e. their understanding of writing competence, development issues, genres, criteria, study design elements, peer and teacher feedback)
- 2) Individual interviews based on 'stimulated recall'. As a preparation students are given a sample collection of their own written texts from the 4-year period. These interviews focus on each student's oral narrative about their writing development and reflections about what factors had been important at different stages. Students' texts here function as a shared object between student and researcher and the time lapse offers opportunities for analytical distance and reflexivity.

The paper will present findings and particularly discuss to what extent students' close encounter with their own writing in retrospect combined with dialogue can bring forward new and useful insights.

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## **Paper 0091**

### **Embedding writing instruction into subject teaching: how to convince subject teachers?**

**Ursula Wingate, King's College London, UK**

As part of a funded project, a writing intervention was carried out in a first-year undergraduate module at King's College London. Five instructional methods, including explicit teaching of argumentation and formative feedback, were embedded into the regular subject teaching. The effectiveness of this approach was assessed in various ways: student and teacher perceptions were elicited by questionnaires and interviews, and student progress was identified through the analysis of texts produced throughout the term. Particular attention was paid to the extent to which subject content could be covered despite the fact that some classroom time was devoted to academic writing. The evaluation results showed that the embedded approach is successful in terms of student engagement and progress, and that it can lead to more effective ways of structuring and presenting subject content.

A major aim of the project was to disseminate and promote embedded writing instruction to academic staff across the institution. The intervention methods and evaluation results were therefore presented in workshops across King's nine faculties. Participants' comments and major discussion points were recorded, and the participants also were asked to state their perceptions of the embedded approach in the evaluation questionnaire handed out at the end of the workshops.

In this paper, the intervention and its evaluation will be presented first. Then, our dissemination strategies will be described; these include co-operating with key staff in schools and departments, presenting convincing snapshots and results from the intervention, and equipping participants with advice and materials that enable them to embed writing instruction into their teaching. Finally, the participants' reactions and responses will be discussed. The reluctance of subject teachers to engage with student writing has been repeatedly mentioned in the literature (e.g. Jacobs, 2005; North, 2005); however, preliminary findings from this project suggest that this reluctance may be caused less by negative attitudes towards writing support, than by the lack of resources and the professional development needed for teaching writing.

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## **Paper 0093**

### **Devising writing support strategies: a faculty based model**

**Wendy Smeets, Julian Brasington, Sarra Powell, Liverpool Hope University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

This presentation aims to give an overview of the strategy employed at Liverpool Hope University to support academic writing across the institution as well as discussing feedback received on the work done whilst following this approach.

In response to a perceived decline in writing standards, UK higher education post 1990 has witnessed a substantial growth in learning development units. Amongst the staple activities of such units are the writing workshop and the writing tutorial. This outsourcing of writing development from departments to centralised units is based on the conceptualisation of writing as an abstract 'skill' (what Lea and Street term the skills model) and serves to divorce writing and meaning from the context out of which they emerge. In this model, students are expected to enter university already competent in 'academic' discourse, and those students who are found to be 'ill-prepared' are then pathologised. Whilst itself having run a tutorial programme since 2006, and being also a central unit, the Writing Centre at Liverpool Hope University, supported by the Write Now CETL, has sought to challenge this impoverished understanding of what it means to write, and to relocate writing within the disciplines and thus within the curriculum.

At Liverpool Hope University, a faculty-based model was adopted in which there is one contact person for each faculty. These contacts were different writing specialists who have a certain subject-specific expertise and who serve as a first port of call for faculty staff. The writing specialists also actively promote the work of the writing centre by liaising with departmental staff and attending faculty meetings. One of the services offered to faculties, in addition to one-off workshops and individual tutorials, was a writing component design initiative. This initiative allowed faculty and writing centre staff to design writing materials for their students based on the core teaching materials. Any collaboration between the faculties and the writing centre was not necessarily carried out by the contact person but rather by the most suitable person in the writing team. Feedback on this faculty-based approach will be shared in the hope of contributing to the debate of whether to pursue centralised or discipline-based writing support.

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#### **Paper 0094**

##### **Writing seven days a week: sustaining a writing program for postgraduate students**

**Roslyn Petelin, University of Queensland, Australia**

#### **Abstract**

The postgraduate program in writing, editing, and publishing at the University of Queensland was initiated in 2001 to address the dearth of excellent, 'work-ready' wordsmiths and the desire of many students to gain a postgraduate qualification and a career as a wordsmith in the writing, editing, and publishing industries. Predicated on a holistic approach to publishing in the 'new' media of the 21st century, the program encompasses writing and editing in academic, corporate, creative, journalistic, and literary genres within a strongly vocational yet intellectually rich, challenging, rigorous, and technologically sophisticated context.

Since its initial intake, the program has gained much momentum. Its sustained success is reflected in excellent employment outcomes: Graduates have been hired by prestigious international institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the British Standards Institution and the Southbank Centre in London, as well as by many Australian private and public organisations at state and federal levels.

The ability to write effectively is fundamental to success in the academy and in the professions. Writing is at the heart of disciplinary thinking and at the heart of the contemporary knowledge economy, an economy that is service-oriented and in which writing is ubiquitous, global, and lifelong.

The sustained success of the program is due to its combination of 'authenticity', in the sense of close connection to actual current practice in the writing, editing, and publishing industries, and insistence on academic rigour based on the extensive professional and pedagogical experience of its staff. Passionate commitment to this ideal is evident in the program, which blends face-to-face teaching with extremely active blackboard sites and a wiki.

The paper analyses the contents of the discussion board that was the recipient of 1,273 posts from 20 students (plus the instructor) in a writing about the arts course in a recent semester and surveys the students who participated in that class by considering the factors identified by Dysthe (2002) as contributing to high levels of interaction and the characteristics of authentic activities identified by Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves (2003).

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#### **Paper 0098**

## **Making room for writing and reflection**

**Pat Hill, Cath Ellis, University of Huddersfield, UK**

### **Abstract**

This paper addresses the themes of 'the place of writing development within institutions' and 'pedagogical practices that aim to enhance students' learning experience'. It illustrates how the devolved system of having academic skills tutors (ASTs) attached to specific schools at one university has encouraged collaboration with academic staff to improve course design. It details how a combination of new technology and team-teaching in one compulsory second year module for students of English has allowed time for reflection and non-assessed writing which enhances their understanding of academic practice and transferable skills.

Although acknowledging the measurable student benefits in one-to-one tutorials offered by their provision, ASTs at the University of Huddersfield also acknowledge that unlimited expansion of one-to-one writing development is not sustainable and that embedding learning development within the curriculum is a positive strategy (Haggis, 2006; Wingate, 2006). Although their remit includes academic, information literacy and employability skills, writing is a major focus, and an important part of the role is the promotion of opportunities for 'diversification of writing practices' (Mitchell and Evison, 2006) which enable students to engage with writing as a process rather than as an end product.

Introduction to critical and cultural theory (ICCT) has been identified as a 'bottleneck' module which reaches the majority of second year students in the programme. This is crucial as an important part of the initiative is to encourage students to apply holistically what they learn in this module. One of the frequent reasons which subject tutors give for not embedding learning development within modules is lack of time. Making podcasts of the lectures for this module has freed up space in the programme that is then used to deliver workshops at appropriate times. These workshops are team taught by the subject tutor and the AST and students are encouraged to write and self evaluate in relation to given criteria. Part of the assessment for the module is also a reflective learning journal. This paper explores the advantages of collaboration and ways in which writing can be used in a supportive environment to enhance learning.

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## **Paper 0101**

### **Showing the workings: letting students see how we write**

**Christine Sinclair, University of Strathclyde, UK**

### **Abstract**

During one-to-one writing consultations, students sometimes reveal unrealistic assumptions about how academics themselves write. First-year students express surprise whenever I use a much-edited messy draft of my own work to demonstrate how easy it is to drift from the point. They don't expect someone who has written books to have problems with writing. A 'stuck' postgraduate student admitted to feeling better when I shared an entry from my journal that showed I had recently been going through a similar anguish to hers. Incidents such as these have contributed to a desire to expose the process of writing as it happens, rather than simply relying on exemplars of good writing to inspire students.

Over the past 12 years, I have kept journals and blogs recording my experiences as a student. In that time, I have been engaged in a range of writing tasks across several academic disciplines at various levels and using a range of media. I am now reviewing these records to trace the development of pieces of student writing: the stages of production and meaning-making, the inevitable barriers and limitations, the steps that take the writer through their changes in conceptual understanding, the breakthroughs,

and all the associated emotions. My intention is to make available to students those aspects of writing that are not traditionally discussed in classrooms.

In my own work with students, I highlight the fact that they are involved in a conversation or dialogue with experts in their chosen field, even if they may feel that their contributions are tiny. This hints at the Bakhtinian provenance of my theoretical perspective - though I do draw on an eclectic range of writers to explore the subject more pragmatically than theoretically at this stage. This is an exploratory phase: ultimately I would hope to take a more rigorous approach to identify whether or not it is useful to show the workings of a piece of writing instead of leaving students to believe that it springs fully-formed from an academic mind.

I argue that the time is right for such a study, as the potential of technology to expose traces of students' and other writers' engagement with textual practices may lead to insights or confusion (probably both). It could be that the asynchronous nature of some online writing practices both illuminates and promotes thinking. I hope that showing some of my own workings in writing will stimulate a thoughtful discussion.

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## **Paper 0102**

### **Sustainability of a writing centre in a third-level institution where political, financial and pedagogical factors are often at variance**

*Lawrence Cleary, Ide O'Sullivan, University of Limerick, Ireland*

#### **Abstract**

The writing centre at the University of Limerick, (UL) Ireland, has undergone a number of transformations in its short three-year history. Initially receiving a small amount of core funding to exercise its possibilities at UL, more substantial Strategic Innovation Funds (SIF) were secured by the university for a larger, two-year regional remit. Having received a one-year extension, in June 2009, at the end of its SIF contract, the writing centre has returned to its original core focus without abandoning, at least in spirit, the regional connections it had made during its first two years. However, future funding remains a nagging question.

Additionally, despite striving toward organisational sustainability - maximising the efficient use of all resources, including staff - the writing centre has nonetheless often succumbed to the pressures of political expedience, the prevailing winds of our seemingly capricious funding remit, and the limitations of working in a context where writing expertise is difficult to tap and where a writing culture is in its developmental infancy.

Needless to say, sustainability works on a number of levels. This paper evaluates the contribution to sustainability of two writing centre modules: Peer-tutoring in academic writing - a non-credit-bearing, writing centre funded, module designed to both improve student writing, while simultaneously preparing some of the better writers to work as peer tutors in the writing centre-and academic literacies 1 and 2 - two credit-bearing, largely core-funded modules, introducing first-year students in seven degree programmes to social practices commonly exercised in their particular academic disciplines. The evaluation for sustainability will rely on data from staff and student responses to writing centre evaluation questionnaires and from data gleaned from student response to Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Student Evaluation of Teachers (SET) questionnaires. Both are anonymous responses that ask students and staff to evaluate the benefit of the modules based on how well the modules facilitate student learning and the achievement of stated learning goals. Staff perception of improvement of student writing compared with writing done by first-year students in previous years will be regarded as having some value.

Finally, this paper will look at the results of the various surveys, making recommendations for change where appropriate. The paper will also evaluate the degree to which the module advocates for the sustainability of the writing centre and for similar writing centre initiatives. In addition to the survey results, the evaluations will account for often conflicting, sometimes compromising, political, financial and pedagogical pressures.

**References** - Data from Writing Centre/CTL surveys

## **Paper 0103**

## Do bioscience undergraduates find value in using creative writing techniques?

Charlotte Hosie, University of Chester, UK

### Abstract

The lack of effective writing skills shown by undergraduate science students has been widely reported. Arguably, this lack may arise, in part, from simple lack of practice. Students have fewer and fewer opportunities to practice writing (Cottrell, 2001; Lea and Stierer, 2000; personal observation and Hosie, unpublished data). The benefits of formal writing practice have been identified by creative writing disciplines over many years (e.g. Singleton and Luckhurst, 2000; Anderson and Neale, 2009), yet the use of such techniques in the sciences remains unexplored. A project investigating creativity development is currently being conducted with a group of final-year undergraduate bioscience learners. As part of this, 'freewriting' techniques (e.g. Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000) are being used in seminars: A subject-specific prompt is given and students write for a set period, without stopping to correct/edit. Two questionnaires are being used to measure the perceived value for these learners of practising this technique for both their subject-specific learning on the module and their assessment preparations. The first questionnaire was designed to provide a baseline of response after two sessions, to be compared with the responses at the end of the module (second questionnaire - May 2010).

During these sessions many students have shown clear interest in writing practice. Return rate for the first questionnaire was around 50% (N=33). Preliminary analysis shows students found the sessions helpful: 63% respondents 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' that the 'use of writing techniques had helped with their assessment preparation so far'; 21% were 'uncertain'; 12% 'disagreed/strongly disagreed'. When asked whether writing techniques had helped with 'overall learning so far on the module', 55% 'agreed/strongly agreed'; 42% were 'uncertain' and only 9% 'disagreed/strongly disagreed'. This was rather surprising as they had only done one or two sessions. Results from both questionnaires will be fully reported.

This work is a small-scale exploration of whether creative writing techniques may be valuably integrated into bioscience teaching. Sessions required very little tutor preparation/effort and were easily inserted into the usual teaching schedule. Clearly there is an appetite amongst students for practising their writing, particularly when activities relate to their subject material and assessment. This research suggests there is the potential for relatively small input from tutors to make a large difference to students' perceptions of their learning and writing skills development.

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## **Paper 0109**

### **UMEX (understanding the masters experience through writing: texts, contexts and practices)**

**Anne McGee, Colleen McKenna, University College London, UK**

#### **Abstract**

In 2009 we embarked on a research and development project whose outcomes, we hoped, would underpin masters student writing for assessment. Our experience suggested that this central component of masters study remained largely unsupported at both institutional and departmental level, despite significant growth in this sector of the student population. We were aware of the concerns of some tutors about knowing how to support students from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Equally, we had often been approached by masters students unhappy with the results achieved in their assessed papers. It seemed to us, therefore, that an ethnographic investigation of writing for the masters degree was merited and timely and the UMEX (understanding the masters experience through writing: texts, contexts and practices) project was established.

We locate this research within academic literacies frameworks. We initially worked with tutors and students in two departments in different faculties. At the outset of our work with them, course leaders invited all their masters students to participate. In return we offered individual writing support throughout the year. We had anticipated that students who were less sure of their writing would contact us to be part of the project and this would justify tutors' comments about the difficulties facing some masters students. Perhaps surprisingly, the students who have come forward so far resist a 'deficit' approach and are more alert to the notion of writing as social practice (as described by Lea and Street (2000) and others). This is not to suggest that others do not experience difficulty in writing, but that the contested space of masters writing for those who have volunteered so far may be different from what had been suggested.

An essential feature of our research is an ethnographic study of the masters year (in the UK), largely from the student perspective, and in this presentation we will consider our early findings. Following a description of the UMEX project, we will consider the writing challenges and highlights articulated by masters students. We will look at these accounts alongside the writing expectations of students made by their departments. Using data from interviews as well as drawing on texts produced by students and tutors, we will explore the contested space of masters writing. Finally, we will show how we are applying this research to practice by describing the writing development materials that we are co-creating for different disciplines. This talk will address all three conference themes.

#### **Reference**

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## **Paper 0110**

### **Engaging academic writers: an approach to writing development in a tutorial context**

**Corinne Boz, University of Cambridge, UK**

#### **Abstract**

In a research-intensive university, where provision for student writing development is entrusted to 31 different colleges, the transkills project at the University of Cambridge aims to provide discipline-specific training and resources for both tutors and students in academic writing practice. Drawing upon academic literacies research, as well as evidence from surveys of both first year students and tutors at the university, the project addresses issues highlighted by both cohorts as affecting first year students in transition to undergraduate study, including perceived level of preparedness, explicitness of learning and teaching practices and effective feedback.

Rather than surveying students and producing resources to support their perceived needs, the project has taken the route of facilitating academic writing workshops with tutors in the disciplines and incorporating these discussions of disciplinary practices into the student resources. The process,

therefore, facilitates staff development activity and the production of online resources for staff in addition to the production of resources for students.

This presentation will explore the strategies used to engage tutors in creating and participating in discipline-specific academic writing workshops. It will also provide an overview of the structure and format of the workshops before discussing the most significant outcomes and implications of the process. Particular focus will be placed upon the ways in which the development activity has been embedded within specific disciplinary contexts in order to facilitate sustainable engagement with academic writing practices for both tutors and students.

The presentation will also focus on theoretical issues which have emerged from the engagement process, in particular the significance of explicit discussions surrounding academic identities and academic writer identities. Significantly, this study presents an overview of a strategic application of an academic literacies approach to writing (see Lillis and Scott, 2007) ensuring that the epistemological and theoretical stance is applied to 'institutions as they are currently configured' (Lillis and Scott 2007, p.17). However, issues emerging from the process may suggest a re-interpretation of our understanding of academic literacies in this context.

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## Paper 0112

### The function of a 'back stage' space in developing disciplinary identity

**Nancy Lea Eik-Nes, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway**

#### Abstract

Students in higher education are challenged by the expectation that they, through their writing, can demonstrate their knowledge of and in their discipline. How are students to live up to such expectations? In spite of an increasing number of writing courses and writing centers provided for students, the problems seen by educators persist: Students' writing continues to be described as inadequate, immature parroting of disciplinary texts.

Various authors have taken up the process of students' development as authors in their disciplines (e.g. Donahue; Dressen-Hammouda; Ivanic; Lillis) and have indicated that such development is a long process that Dressen-Hammouda describes as 'disciplinary becoming'. It is the development of a disciplinary identity that takes place as students resolve the tension between their own resources, values, practices, and the resources, values and practices of their target disciplines. One of the problems in resolving the tension, however, is that much of the knowledge about the resources, values and practices is tacit knowledge.

This paper presents two studies of a practice that may facilitate students' development of their disciplinary identities: the practice of writing 'e-logs' as part of a writing course. E-logs are e-mails that students submit weekly throughout a semester. In the first study, doctoral students in engineering were required to write a minimum of 8 e-logs as part of a scientific writing course. The teacher responded briefly to each log, but did not correct or assess any of the log texts. Analysis of the logs showed how students used the logs to reflect upon, for example, their progress, their roles, the values they may or may not share with other members of their target disciplines. Students used the logs as a 'back stage' space (see Goffman) – a space where they could let off steam, rehearse their new roles and discuss how they viewed those roles without being evaluated or penalized for having more questions than answers. This was a space for identifying and working through both explicit and tacit knowledge in the students' disciplines.

A similar study of undergraduate students writing e-logs as part of an academic writing course in the humanities revealed similar results, indicating the value of back stage spaces in facilitating students' work in their disciplinary becoming.

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## Paper 0116

### **Sustainable writing development in a multilingual environment: time for a hybrid vehicle in the disciplines**

**Emily Purser, University of Wollongong, Australia**

#### **Abstract**

With the widening of participation in higher education, and globalised educational marketing, comes great diversification of learning needs and general perception of a language 'problem'. Most teaching academics are confronted by the number of students who struggle with the demands of academic literacy; many also by the number of non English-speaking background (NESB) students who struggle to comprehend the language of instruction at every level.

This paper discusses a project to address learning needs at an Australian university, where 30% of the overall student population (up to 100% in many masters-by-coursework programs) are NESB. To most international students, everything about the environment they are immersed in seems new and strange, and every level of academic language presents a learning challenge - from the logic and organisation of expected forms of communication, to their lexico-grammatical and phonological/graphical levels of expression. When most students in a particular academic context are too linguistically challenged to follow lectures and readings, let alone avoid plagiarism, the problem is no longer individual, but environmental. Usual practice in teaching academic disciplines simply assumes students' language proficiency, and expects strugglers to find literacy supplements outside the curriculum. Or, increasingly, literacy experts are invited into subjects to take responsibility for limited aspects of language communications. But in extreme circumstances, generic, supplementary and add-on approaches to learning development are inadequate, and business-as-usual teaching of disciplines unsustainable. The project discussed responds to the challenge of academic literacy development by re-designing the disciplinary learning environments where linguistic challenges are experienced. It is developing 'hybrid vehicles' to drive core subjects delivered to international students in several disciplines. Taking a 'content and language Integrated learning' design approach, and enabling collaboration between teachers of disciplines and of academic language, it aims to support the learning of disciplinary concepts from a language development perspective. It is becoming mainstream to see solutions to global scale environmental problems as necessarily involving everyone. The struggle that so many tertiary students experience with academic discourse is recognised as a threat to the quality of higher education, and the evaluation criteria of Australia's external auditing agency now include questions about the management of students' need to develop language proficiency during the course of their studies. Curriculum development with a focus on the role of language in learning is a constructive way to meet the challenges of academic literacy development, and produce pedagogy that effectively addresses students' learning needs.

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## Paper 0117

### **Building communities of practice: writing groups and the research student experience**

**Melanie Petch, De Montfort University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

'Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger et al., 2002).

The writing group for research students was launched at De Montfort University in November 2009. The group was established to offer research students from all disciplines an informal network from which to exchange ideas on the practice of writing at doctoral level. Over the past four months, the group has endeavoured to create a safe, uncensored space where students can share their concerns about the mechanics of writing – a space, also, that instils a sense of community and encourages students to see beyond the isolation and monotony often involved in writing a sustained piece of scholarly work. Although not an entirely novel term, Wenger's definition of 'communities of practice' is used here to illustrate a pedagogical approach to writing development that is governed by the learning needs and experiences of research students. Foregrounding these important learning experiences further, Rachel Parker (2009) identifies the positive effects of writing groups on doctoral students as being a sense of 'shared experience, confidence building, reduced isolation and solitude, improved networks, empathy and a lack of hierarchy in the learning experience.' Alongside Parker's convincing rationale, writing groups can also be seen to offer a sustainable and good-value approach to writing development in higher education. Apart from administrative duties, the selection of pertinent learning materials, and gentle facilitation, the exciting potential of the communities of practice approach is that it is entirely upheld and indeed directed by the students themselves.

This paper offers an insight into some of the challenges faced in terms of the development and implementation of the writing group for research students. It also evaluates how students perceive the value of the writing group especially in relation to their own writing activity. Namely, it will consider whether the writing group has increased the output of students' writing; the quality of their writing; and also whether it has empowered them to become confident and scholarly writers and readers of their own work as well as the work of their peers.

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### **Paper 0118**

#### **Student voice, intermediary genres, and social bookmarking**

*Florence Dujardin, Kirstie Edwards, Sheffield Hallam University, UK*

#### **Abstract**

Research on social bookmarking suggests students find such media useful to engage with and manage academic literature. Diigo (or 'Digest of Internet Information, Groups and Other stuff') may be of most interest in higher education settings as it offers threaded commentary, highlighting and annotations in addition to bookmark-sharing. Diigo was introduced in a master's course delivered entirely online, to explore whether it could help students write a literature review, and also enhance awareness of, and debate around, academic literacies.

This paper will report on this pilot, with a specific focus on an intermediary genre: the notes and thoughts that students develop about their readings, as preliminary to essay writing. For e-learners, such material is usually private, but social bookmarking creates a potential for informal discussions similar to those taking place among campus-based students. Students were encouraged to use Diigo to support their appropriation of disciplinary knowledge, and also to see it as a space where they could discuss processes and issues with peers and the module tutor. The aim was to enable them to develop a personal stance and increased 'criticality' towards their readings.

An action research methodology was adopted, using a range of online methods. A questionnaire was used to identify students' familiarity with social bookmarking and social media in general; this was important because all students were mature learners, and it is unclear what skills these 'digital immigrants' had. Interviews helped capture students' reactions to the addition of social media to their course, and their views on the possible benefit of using social bookmarking when handling academic literature.

At the time of writing this abstract, only preliminary findings can be put forward. A number of practical points emerged about incorporating social media in learning, namely: the need to pilot with volunteers, to support students in an exploratory phase before social media is used in earnest, and to offer guidance in navigating a learning ecology going beyond the traditional VLE. It is hoped that this small-scale study will offer an insight into mature learners' views to social media (the literature focuses mostly on the younger 'digital natives'), both as a learning tool and as a tool increasingly used in professional settings. It is also hoped that the paper will contribute to debates about social media in higher education, and how they could be used to create a dialogue with students about the contested nature of academic literacies.

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## Paper 0124

### Reflection through recording

**Babs Anderson, Naomi McLeod, Kathleen Orlandi, Liverpool Hope University, UK**

This paper examines how the use of a reflective learning journal supports undergraduate students' writing. A Write Now funded project (October 2009 - July 2010) focused on how students used a learning journal to record their progress in a problem-based learning course in the third and final year of an undergraduate programme in early childhood studies. Here the students were placed in teams, given a specific professional role and a central problem, which they were to analyse and produce a range of solutions to enable a range of support measures to be implemented.

The students were encouraged to use journal entries to record their ideas as to how to resolve the issues presented in the given 'problem' but also to use these to assess and evaluate how their group discussions supported them in their identification of their course of action, how they used others' ideas as a springboard for their own thinking and how the feedback of others within their group might influence them and cause a change of opinion or decision. The use of written reflection was encouraged by tutors so as to build a coherent sense of managing experiential learning in order to support the students' written and oral assessments.

Individual interviews were carried out with the students at the conclusion of the course in order to determine their perspectives on how the process of using the reflective learning journals had supported their learning. Students were also asked to self-rate themselves as to how they saw themselves as learners, ranging from content seekers to autonomous reflective researchers. The team of five tutors also engaged in a reflective activity, considering their responses to the students' articulation of their experiences.

This paper outlines how the students use of a reflective learning journal impacts on their understanding of the process that is problem-based learning. It highlights the need for a sound understanding of reflective practice by tutors and students together with a considered approach to how students' reflection on their thinking with the sensitive use of feedback from peers can support the development of critical analysis, both at a written and oral level. It also identifies a common rationale for not using the reflective journals, and explores conditions on which these may be overcome.

## **Keynote 2**

### **The Changing Nature of Writing: Findings from the Stanford Longitudinal Study**

***Professor Andrea A. Lunsford, Stanford University, California, USA***

The Stanford Study of Writing followed a random sample of 189 students from their first day on campus through their graduation and one year beyond (in a number of cases, we are still in touch some three years after the close of data collection). During the five years of the Study (2001-2006), we asked students to submit all of their in-class writing and as much of their out-of-class writing as they wished to an electronic database, which now holds nearly 15,000 pieces of student writing. In addition, we surveyed the entire group once or twice a year and held extensive interviews with a sub-group of 36 students. While we are still coding data, we have preliminary findings that speak to changes in writing itself—its scope, definition, and nature—as well as to changes in student attitudes toward writing, in student ideas about the role of writing in their lives, and in their concepts of textual ownership.

**Wednesday, 30 June 2010**

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**Paper 0012**

**Learning doctoral writing: pain and pleasure**

**Claire Aitchison, Janice Catterall, Pauline Ross, University of Western Sydney, Australia**

**Abstract**

The competitive global market for graduates and expectations of greater research accountability, require researchers to be competent writers of high-quality theses and publications during, as well as after, doctoral candidature. Institutions, supervisors and research students themselves are responding to these changing requirements - and yet we still know relatively little about how students actually learn these advanced academic literacies.

This paper reports on research into the writing experiences of higher degree research students and their supervisors in a large health and science-based faculty in a major metropolitan Australian university. The research draws on survey and interview data with supervisors and students highlighting the different perspectives of these two groups and their experiences of teaching and learning advanced research writing skills. This account explores the tensions that supervisors and students experience over roles and identity as played out in the production of the thesis and related texts. In particular we report on the less commonly acknowledged affective aspects, exploring how particular pedagogical practices can work to make writing the site of significant emotional angst as students struggle to become certain kinds of disciplinary scholars.

The paper concludes with an overview, drawn from a variety of countries, of pedagogical innovations for the development of doctoral writing for publication during candidature.

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**Paper 0017**

**Traditional peer-tutoring models: are they appropriate for all ESL students?**

**Maria Eleftheriou, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates**

**Abstract**

The writing centre occupies a unique position in education. In North America, most colleges, universities and high schools today provide writing centres to assist English native speakers or those who are pursuing English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs.

The philosophical approach of writing centres has always been based on a student-centred or a Socratic model (North, 1984). This inductive approach assumes the students have the resources to answer their own questions, solve their own problems, and learn through self-discovery. Studies have shown this type of collaborative approach to be beneficial to students, but most of this research has focused on native speakers of English and ESL students in a North American context. ESL students who receive writing centre assistance are often not familiar with the rhetoric of English or with the type of active learning and discussion typically promoted in these tutorials and may require a different type of assistance with their writing than is typically given in North American writing centre tutorials (Powers, 1993; Thonus, 2002, Williams and Severino, 2004).

A qualitative study is currently being conducted on ESL writing centre tutorial practices at a writing centre in the Middle-East. In this paper, I will discuss the types of writing tutorial strategies that are successful with ESL clientele in the context of a Middle-Eastern university writing centre where the language of instruction is English. The study may provide a better understanding of the types of strategies that are effective with ESL students in different writing centre contexts and may help provide improved writing assistance to students in the region and in international writing centres.

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## **Paper 0032**

### **Students' attitudes towards their writer identities in the last year of A-levels and the transition from school to university**

**Sally Baker, The Open University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

It has been argued that students are ill-equipped to deal with the rigorous standards expected of them in higher education (Lightfoot, 2006) and that, in this time of economic uncertainty and unprecedented competition for university places, the transition from school to university represents an important 'crossing point' for students. Student's writing provides a platform for exploring this crossing point as a contested social space because writing, when conceptualised as social practice, is a rich and complex product and process that communicates the varied nature of students' learning experiences and sense of identities within the limits imposed by curricular and institutional demands.

This project is situated in the sociocultural model of literacy research and uses an academic literacies approach to provide an epistemological lens on the writing process which places the writer at the heart of the inquiry, which Lillis and Scott assert allows the researcher to move away from a purely textual analysis and explore the array of issues that affect student academic writing. These include 'the impact of power relations on student writing; the contested nature of academic writing convention; [and] the centrality of identity...' (2007, p.12).

This presentation will introduce the research design and preliminary findings of an ethnographic-style project which is following a group of British students' from their last year of A' levels to their first year of undergraduate study. This research aims to explore the different practices that constitute 'writing for the curriculum' at both levels and the associated assessment strategies; and students' attitudes towards their writing as well as their feelings about the impact the transition has on them individually. The question at the heart of this inquiry is to what extent the transition affects the students' 'writer identities'.

Furthermore, I will provide a discussion of the themes that have emerged from the data so far, in terms of how students perceive their writer identities and how these fit alongside their thoughts about starting university. These themes include: Competition, reliance on/rejection of feedback and the need for personal interest. It will use vignettes from selected interviews with the students, collected from the first phase of data collection, to illuminate the discussion.

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## Paper 0039

### **At first I didn't know what they wanted, I was going in blind: students' experiences of pedagogic practices designed to illuminate the 'rules of engagement' in assignment writing**

**Kay Sambell, Catherine Montgomery, Northumbria University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

This paper will focus on a pedagogic development project that explores students' experiences of assessment workshops designed to help them to make effective transitions to assignment-writing in higher education. By encouraging students to work collaboratively and formatively on exemplars (brief examples of student writing about threshold concepts in the discipline), the project seeks to support students in adapting to the conventions and (often tacit) 'rules of engagement' of university study.

The exemplars workshops are integrated into classroom activities and embedded in appropriate subject-knowledge. The aim is to support student writing by seeking to open up staff-student dialogue about assessment, writing and learning practices. First, the workshops are designed to help students understand what tutors are looking for when they assess student writing (Handley *et al.*, 2007). This is particularly challenging, given that writing for assessment is a highly contextualised social practice which depends crucially on the outlook of the course and the academics who designed it (Bloxham, 2009; Orr, 2007). Second, the workshops seek to develop students' capacities for evaluating their own work, with a view to supporting 'sustainable assessment practices' or 'learning for the longer term' (Boud and Falchicov, 2006). In this way the project builds on previous work (see, for instance, Rust, O'Donovan and Price, 2005; Bloxham and West, 2007; Falchicov, 2005) which has focused on devising methods of engaging students as active participants in, rather than victims of, the assessment process.

The paper will describe the workshops and present the findings from interviews with student participants, highlighting key themes and issues which might help inform practice development.

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## Workshop 0060

### Ecologies of writing programs: a heuristic for building sustainability

Amy Kimme Hea, Anne-Marie Hall, Ashley Holmes, Faith Kurtyka, University of Arizona, USA

#### Abstract

Sustainable writing programs are ones that draw upon local strengths while simultaneously engaging in transnational relationship building. The University of Arizona writing program serves 12,000 students each year, offering a range of first-year, upper-division, technology-enhanced, distance education, and even newly created off-site campus writing courses (both regionally and internationally). In our workshop we will offer participants analytical strategies to assess their own programmatic strengths as a means to develop responsive 21<sup>st</sup> century curricula that attend to diverse student populations (in terms of race, geography, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, family structure, socioeconomic levels, and familiarity with technology and new media). Mindful of democratization of knowledge and the idea of globalized education - concepts that are becoming commonplaces in academic circles and in our own research agendas - we understand that as administrators and literacy experts in higher education contexts, we must work together to strategically develop sustainable programs.

This workshop will critically examine several practices employed by the University of Arizona to broaden our conception and deployment of best practices and the ways in which those practices cross regional, technological, and cultural borders. To this end, we will offer a heuristic for building sustainable writing programs and discuss the ways this heuristic analysis has influenced our program. We will draw from multiple theories including new literacy studies and its idea that literacy and multimodality are situated in particular social and cultural contexts (J.P. Gee; B. Street, New London Group), contemporary theories that stress situated knowledge (C. Bazerman; G. Myers; D. Haraway), notions of discourses and how they are socially and culturally formed, sustained, circulated and ultimately determined to be normal or not (M. Bakhtin; P. Bourdieu; M. Foucault). Using our heuristic as a platform and incorporating examples of our own research in visual and spatial rhetorics and comparative pedagogies, we will spend the majority of the workshop working with participants to generate ideas among teachers and scholars. Our workshop will culminate with all participants sharing their ideas and creating a network of sustainable practices that relate to their specific needs and contexts. To maintain our commitment to sustainable writing programs and the ongoing dialogue we hope to foster in our workshop, we will share materials and participant responses on a Ning site entitled *Sustainable Writing Programs* (see [www.sustainable-wpa.ning.com](http://www.sustainable-wpa.ning.com)).

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## Paper 0062

### Writing for success: mentoring as a pedagogical tool - a cross-institutional study

Jane Andrews, Robin Clark, Aston University, UK

#### Abstract

The prominent position given to academic writing across contemporary academia is reflected in the substantive literature and debate devoted to the subject over the past 30 years. However, the massification of higher education, manifested by a shift from elite to mass education, has brought the issue into the public arena, with much debate focusing on the need for 'modern-day' students to be taught how to write academically (Bjork *et al.*, 2003; Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006). Indeed, Russell (2003) argued that academic writing has become a global 'problem' in Higher Education because it sits between two contradictory pressures (p.V). On one end of the university 'experience' increasing numbers of students, many from non-traditional backgrounds, enter higher education bringing with them a range of communication abilities. At the other end, many graduates leave university to work in specialised industries where employers expect them to have high level writing skills (Ashton, 2007; Russell, 2003; Torrence *et al.*, 1999).

By drawing attention to the issues around peer mentoring within an academic writing setting in three different higher education Institutions, this paper makes an important contribution to current debates. Based upon a critical analysis of the emergent findings of an empirical study into the role of peer writing mentors in promoting student transition to higher education, the paper adopts an academic literacies approach to discuss the role of writing mentoring in promoting transition and retention by developing students' academic writing. Attention is drawn to the manner in which student expectations of writing mentoring actually align with mentoring practices - particularly in terms of the writing process and critical thinking. Other issues such as the approachability of writing mentors, the practicalities of accessing writing mentoring and the wider learning environment are also discussed.

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## Paper 0072

### It's a lonely walk: investigating the PhD writers' experience

Gillian Fergie, Suzanne Beeke, Colleen McKenna, Phyllis Crème, University College London, UK

#### Abstract

For many PhD students, the challenge of writing their thesis is undertaken without a great deal of guidance. While supervisors provide insight into crucial subject debates and advice on research design, they do not always provide a space in which to discuss and engage with issues of reading and writing, the awareness of which is important in the development of academic identity (Ivanic, 1998; Kamler and Thomson, 2006). One student remarked on her experience of doing a PhD, 'you're on your own and it requires a great deal of diligence and discipline and it's a lonely walk.'

This presentation explores the experiences of five students at University College London (UCL) who took part in a writing module entitled 'Developing a Literature Review' in 2008/9. The module was part of the taught curriculum for students pursuing a professional doctorate in speech and language therapy. The focus of the module was reading and writing for the PhD, with the specific goal of producing a literature review. Module topics included both theoretical and practical approaches to writing at postgraduate level and addressed discipline-related issues. The sessions were approached, by both the

module facilitator and the students, as an informal space where reading and writing were prioritised; discussions were open and often student-led and learning was often peer-based.

This research is situated within an academic literacies framework (Lea and Street, 1998) and took a broadly ethnographic approach: interviews and a focus group were conducted and a range of texts produced by participants were collected. Three key themes to emerge from the data were related to the development of the students' confidence as writers and more generally as researchers. These were:

- Space - the value of having a defined space for writing, providing a new focus for learning in a less formal environment
- Academic identity - the development of the students' academic identity through writing and gaining confidence as writers
- Peer learning - the importance of discussion with peers in developing writing and academic identity.

The students' descriptions of their experience suggest they valued the space created by the module and were keen to utilise it as an opportunity for learning. As a result the module is now more widely available to students within UCL.

Our presentation will explore the key themes described above, and discuss implications for the enhancement of students' learning experiences, and the place of writing development within institutions.

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## Paper 0073

### The art of persuasion in academic writing

**Martin Sedgley, University of Bradford, UK**

#### Abstract

Neville (2009) notes in his observations on the '*beautiful art*' of writing that '*... our essay need not just be a dull, utilitarian thing but rather a means of persuasion*' (p.136). This conference paper describes an approach I take to enliven undergraduates' experience of producing academic assignments by applying Aristotle's model of rhetoric to modern-day writing (Rapp, 2010). As the effective learning advisor at University of Bradford School of Management, I teach a 10-credit Level 2 module, 'writing for business and academic purposes'. In these classes, we consider how the rhetorical principles of logos, ethos and pathos may be harnessed by the students to build convincing argument and so persuade their tutors that the work merits high grades.

This can provide new insights for the students into the reasons for evaluating others' relevant ideas, synthesising these effectively and referencing them appropriately in their own written assignments. Students consistently report that these two skills of critical analysis and referencing present the greatest challenges to their successful adaptation to higher education academic expectations (Northedge, 2003; Shahabudin, 2009). Critical analysis in particular seems to represent a 'quantum jump' in their understanding, or what Meyer and Land (2003, p.1) have termed a 'threshold concept' of learning. The paper explains how students use Aristotle's model in practical class exercises to analyse past students' academic work, as well as their own. These can enable them to understand more deeply the academic criteria that tutors are applying to assessment, by learning to empathise more closely with the tutor's position – something that can otherwise be very difficult for them (Bloxham and West, 2007; Lillis and Turner, 2001; Norton *et al.*, 1996). The paper also refers to varied class resources such as recordings of contemporary orators and their skilful use of rhetoric.

The paper explores how class discussions around the ubiquity of persuasion can allow opportunities to consider different epistemological positions concerning such concepts as truth and objectivity. In a

recent class, for example, we considered the notion that even a science such as economics involves rhetoric and persuasion (McCloskey, 2010). Such discussions can help to explore the place for the student's own voice in relation to derived ideas from other sources – often another source of bafflement for many students.

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## Paper 0096

### Scenario pedagogy: a participative multimodal teaching-learning approach for enhanced communicative practice

**Terri Grant, University of Cape Town, South Africa**

#### Abstract

The characteristics of contemporary classrooms mean that there is often less time to achieve more. This situation calls for imaginative approaches to teaching practice that transcend traditional assumptions. New approaches are necessary too if the dynamic links among student literacy, vocational preparedness, organisations (such as the university or workplace), global issues like environmental management and digital technology proliferation, and curriculum, are to be better understood.

Scenario pedagogy (SP) is a multimodal approach to teaching that responds to the social and pedagogical demands set out above. It goes beyond a functional, language-based genre approach to teaching specific business or academic genres within an embedded scenario happening in real-time. This experiential, collaborative and context-rich teaching model foregrounds the importance of purpose and target audience and aims to heighten the possibility of enhancing professional communication practices.

The SP approach has been used successfully over a number of years to teach academic and professional journal article writing to computer science students, using an ICT scenario as the significant backdrop to teaching. This paper describes a more recent professional communication intervention for business and accounting students.

Key theoretical concepts include multimodal social semiotics, new literacy studies (NLS) and multiliteracies which intersects across a range of disciplines relating mainly to communication, applied linguistics and education.

In the current application of SP students investigate aspects of the particular institutional scenario of the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) sustainability and environmental management practices, and present the results of their research in the form of a written investigation report and oral report to various internal and external stakeholders. Classroom time is used primarily to provide background to the institutional scenario with input from institutional experts, and for students to display draft results of research in a scaffolded manner, moving from conceptual planning using mind-maps, to linear topic outlines, to team presentations and the final report.

Scenario pedagogy aims to motivate learning and meaning-making on multiple planes in its apprenticeship-like use of a real-world situation in students' own institutional settings. Students' perceptions in previous research are that they increase the range of learning in terms of, for example, building research and interviewing skills; being motivated by interest in the real-world content as well as the sense of doing a 'real' investigation. Students report a raised awareness of firstly environmental issues and secondly of institutional issues, stating their appreciation of the complexity of the university where they did not appreciate this previously.

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## **Paper 0099**

### **Issues in providing writing support for doctoral theses: lessons from the arts**

**Erik Borg, Coventry University, UK**

#### **Abstract**

The doctoral thesis has an odd status as a textual type or genre. On the one hand, it is widely perceived outside and within academia as a unified text type; on the other, it is so strongly discipline-specific that Thompson (2005, p.311) questioned whether it was useful to talk of the PhD thesis as a genre. He suggested that theses vary to such an extent that describing a 'single prototypical exponent' is impossible.

This presentation will discuss why the PhD thesis both is and isn't a genre, and the implications for writing support of this contradictory situation. Using data from a study of doctoral students in fine art practice and design, the presentation will explain why this mixed nature makes the thesis difficult to teach and write, both for emerging disciplines, such as those that are practice-based, and for new forms of the doctorate, such as those that are interdisciplinary or demonstrate contextualised knowledge creation (Mode 2 knowledge; Gibbons *et al.*, 1994).

This presentation will clarify these sometimes-conflicting conceptualisations for those providing writing support for doctoral candidates or supervisors.

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## **Paper 0106**

### **Supporting writing in transition: should sustainability be a goal?**

**Kelly Peake, Sally Mitchell, Queen Mary, University of London, UK**

#### **Abstract**

Whilst the primary focus of our work in the Queen Mary thinking writing team has been on writing within the academic curriculum of our university, over recent years we have become increasingly interested in understanding the experiences of students within the pre-university sector, and in contributing to easing the transition into university level writing. Our vehicle for doing this has been a small widening participation project (funded by Aimhigher and in collaboration with The Write Now CETL at London Metropolitan University), enabling us to offer academic literacy courses and workshops to sixth form and further education students.

Now in our second year we have honed and narrowed our focus, helping students develop methods to critically analyse their own writing at word, sentence and paragraph level, and taking as a theoretical basis a language awareness approach (van Lier, 1995; Bolitho *et al.*, 2003) and an academic literacies orientation (Lillis, 2006). We have run our 'focus on writing' session both as a course at Queen Mary, and as half-day workshops with follow-up writing tutorials in a range of East London schools. The sessions were targeted this year at year 12 students in arts, humanities and social sciences and employed a group of university student writing mentors.

Although rewarding, the project has made high demands on participants and developers in terms of time, logistics and cost, and also in terms of developing intellectual focus. We are now at a point of having to decide whether, and if so how, to continue this strand of work.

In this presentation, we will briefly describe the processes, successes and challenges of the project to date, drawing on data from students, teachers, writing mentors and our own evaluation. Against this background, we will explore meanings of sustainability in such a multi-contextual project, and question not only whether – and how – this type of work might be sustainable, but also whether sustainability is a desirable goal for this type of writing development.

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## Paper 0107

### Sustainable support for third year student dissertations in the discipline of BA English language studies

**Marion Colledge, Stephen Jones, London Metropolitan University, UK**

#### Abstract

Third-year students of BA English language studies undertake a year-long research project module where they produce a literature review and a small piece of practical research culminating in a dissertation of 9000 words. The BA degree attracts more than 50% of non-traditional entrants, including many students with English as their second language. Throughout the degree, beginning in the first year, staff approach writing support from within the discipline (Hyland, 2004).

We carried out action research last year among students starting this research project. We undertook a pre-module survey to determine students' prior experience of research and their feelings before beginning their projects. Some experienced considerable anxiety at the idea of producing a 9,000 word dissertation (cf Lillis, 2003). Our analyses of previous student dissertations showed that many students faced challenges structuring their literature reviews and that many did not initially see the applicability of some of the relevant literature to their particular thesis situations. We followed this up eclectically with sustainable support: frontloading more of the tuition rather than giving so many tutorials (cf. Cullen, 2006), rendering the module a more collaborative affair, producing support and link materials on the university intranet and encouraging students to use a mind-mapping software (Mind Genius). We can therefore claim that this is sustainable support. This paper describes these innovations, some of which have now been evaluated, some of which are ongoing. Given that most undergraduate courses must cater for students with varied learning styles embarking upon 3<sup>rd</sup> Year undergraduate dissertations, this paper should be of interest to many tutors.

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## Paper 0114

### The authorial presence of learner-writers in their master theses: caught between centripetal and centrifugal forces?

*Ingrid Stock, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway*

#### Abstract

Developing independence and one's own voice are fundamental learning objectives in higher education. Especially master students have to demonstrate their independence, involvement and assessment ability when writing their master thesis. Knowledge about academic writing is often implicit and tacit knowledge, appropriated through the socialisation in the culture of the discipline (Hoel, 2008, p.83; Lea and Street, 2000, p.40). Not only experienced students, but also teachers and examiners have problems describing concretely what 'independence' and 'own voice' look like in an academic text.

Motivated by the research from Lillis and Ivanic on student writing and identity, the focus of this study is on the development of the learner-writer's voice in the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces. Writing a master thesis is a complex process: Master students are required to display their knowledge drawing on established conventions, academic ways of constructing knowledge and approved theories in the field. At the same time, students are supposed to demonstrate their independence and develop their own authoritative voice in writing their master thesis.

My research is based on the work of Bakhtin and his terms 'centripetal and centrifugal forces'. While centripetal forces as conventions and norms in the field might serve for centralization and unification in academic writing, centrifugal forces might ensure variation and diversity, and contribute to heteroglossia - to 'newer ways to mean' (Bakhtin, 1981).

My study investigates the introduction and theory chapters of master theses in the field of applied linguistics. The focus is primarily on the written text (searching for the author behind the words with my research questions as guideline), but includes also sociocultural aspects influencing the writing process as revealed in a group interview.

The study shows that master students are in the 'process of becoming' (Wenger, 1998), and the fact that the master thesis will be assessed positions the writer as a student rather than as a recognized contributor to the field. In their writing, students try to balance on what Ivanic (1995) calls the 'fine line' between demonstrating authority and overstepping the limits of their authority. This study demonstrates how the learner-writers sometimes 'do school' by writing in an 'assignment-genre', while at other times they take on the role of an author in their discipline.

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## **Optional workshop**

### **Using free online tools to support writing development**

**Lynn Reynolds and Martin Agombar, Write Now CETL, London Metropolitan University, UK**

A whistle-stop tour of freely available online tools that support writing development for all, from research and composition to collaboration and communication. The workshop will provide a foundation for independent exploration of the tools throughout the conference, and further guidance will be available at the in-house cyber-station.

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