SHAPING DISCIPLINARY DISCOURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL: A TWO-WAY COLLABORATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

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We work in university, high school, and teacher training courses in different disciplines (applied linguistics and didactics of biology) in Argentina. We share an interest in the discursive and epistemic singularity of school writing within the framework of various subjects, and in that regard, we both acknowledge—and worry about—the rare, specific instances in which they are taught. We are motivated by our intention to prompt teachers' and students' reflection on the fact that writing stimulates thinking, generates and fosters learning, and has inherent features that must be mastered before participating in any classroom discussion and training.

It is against this backdrop that the School Writing Program[1] was formulated as a subject compulsorily taken in the school where the program was implemented,[2] although it has not been formally introduced into the high school curriculum nationwide. It is taught by a writing teacher and articulated with various curriculum subjects on a rotating basis throughout each school year. Students read and write based on relevant epistemological frameworks, themes, corpora, reading assignments, and linguistic dimensions that are agreed upon by the writing teacher and the subject teacher. This proposal is unprecedented in Argentine high schools' curricula, which are compartmentalized into areas, except for a few pilot or short-term projects. Besides, some recent interesting proposals have focused alternatively on the linguistic specificity of school writing practices (Desinano; Di Stefano, Rizzi, and Axeruld) or on their epistemological specificity (Carlino), but they do not elaborate sufficiently on the articulation of both aspects.

The proposal to create a specific setting for writing-in-the-disciplines was welcomed enthusiastically by officials and colleagues when it was outlined in 2011, and gradually extended to the school curriculum in 2013 to become a required course taught to first graders (12-13-year-olds), second graders (13-14-year-

olds), and fourth graders (15-16-year-olds). Likewise, students gradually overcame their initial distrust of a writing-oriented subject that articulates various areas.

Usually, educators claim that this type of project is too time-consuming and thus prevents teachers from covering their syllabi, but it is equally true that an unconnected heap of knowledge and the completion of syllabi do not guarantee students' understanding, applicability, and transferability of this knowledge. Completed syllabi, but inert knowledge? We do not think that is acceptable.

Some educators also frequently assert that subject teachers do not know how to teach the special features of writing, but this is no less true than the fact that language teachers do not know the special features of writing vis-à-vis school subjects. It follows that collaborative work is the most viable alternative in order to incorporate writing into each subject. The program described below is intended to show a possible path to solve these concerns.

TEACHING WRITING IN SCHOOL

There is consensus about the need for students to know and identify the meanings of natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Thus, students should be able to master their "languages" so that the gap between them and their teachers will narrow, and the communication between them will become more fluent.

It should be pointed out that, for the most part, subject teachers need appropriate and specific linguistic and didactic tools to perform explicit and productive work with their students' reading and writing practices. That is, training in the didactics of writing-in-the-disciplines is necessary to identify the dimensions of language involved in the production of written material, to use a meta-language to direct the work, and to structure the development processes of the more complex writing practices. In line with this, language teachers need training and specialization in the various conceptual frameworks and rhetorical styles of the specific disciplinary cultures. As a result, the exchange and the symmetrical two-way collaboration between writing teachers and subject teachers serve as the starting point for a comprehensive approach to reading and writing.

School and academic reading and writing practices at the different levels and in the different subjects are new practices that must be taught, explored, and exercised (Carlino; Kelly and Bazerman; Rivard and Straw). Put another way, they are not natural skills or skills acquired only during elementary education.

Teaching the specificity of school writing and the specificity of disciplinary discourse are two closely related aspects. In other words, some relevant aspects of school writing are inextricably related to the rhetorical and epistemological

specificities of certain fields, while other fields can be generalized, to a lesser or greater degree, in school writing. Partnerships among secondary and university educators are important to improve student learning. The contents and competences addressed by the School Writing Program explore these two dimensions, as explained later on.

Besides, teaching contents *through* language and teaching *about* language are two sides of the same coin. While reading and writing enable one to gain disciplinary knowledge, it should not be overlooked that disciplinary knowledge is written and negotiated in the classroom from certain specific linguistic practices and dimensions, which must be taught and learned (Rose and Martin 18). We believe that the power of writing as an epistemic practice is associated with its power as a rhetorical practice.

Determining the importance of the reading and writing work in all school subjects falls within the scope of the need to deal with the *hidden curriculum* (Jackson). In particular, students have a given cultural capital (Bourdieu; Ezcurra) that comprises cognitive skills (analyzing, summarizing, relating, judging, and applying information), critical academic habits (using the dictionary, making a documentary search, taking notes, reading graphs and charts, synthesizing information, using information and communication technology tools), metacognitive and self-regulatory skills (monitoring learning, identifying weaknesses and strengths of their own learning, spotting and fixing mistakes, and organizing time), and information, concepts, and thinking frameworks. Within these components of cultural capital, discipline writing practices play a key role. Unless students develop literacy practices by reflecting upon and explicitly exercising the articulation between linguistic and epistemic dimensions under certain guidelines, too much reliance will be placed on the competences acquired by them in their cultural and family settings, i.e., on their cultural capital.

A WRITING PROGRAM FOR THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The School Writing Program might be thought of as a special setting of biology, civics, or math—or any other subject—where written communicative competence is exercised, or as a subject of reading and writing that borrows contents, epistemic practices, and materials from other subjects of the same school grade. In fact, it is a combination of both.

Although the program has its own space in the curriculum, it is articulated reciprocally with other subjects according to negotiated dynamics that depend on the participating teachers of secondary levels. It is a subject that does not revolve around reading and writing exercises isolated from the students' curriculum-related needs and specificities, nor is it limited to surmounting the reading

and writing difficulties not dealt with by traditional subjects.

Also, one of the goals of the program is to agree on collaborative didactic interventions with teachers from different areas and subjects. This aspect centers on the articulation between reading and writing practices and the rhetorical and epistemic specificity of the various areas of the school curriculum. On top of that, this articulation implies a true process of interdisciplinary teacher training. In this way, collaborative work between writing teachers and subject teachers starts a two-way original training process for the school dynamics, where the fragmentation of teacher training, subjects, and teacher practice is currently the norm. This cross-institutional training and collaboration among educators is especially enriching, because it originated at the actual teaching site, so it makes full sense to all participants.

From the students' point of view, the program affords an opportunity to further their school writing practices by addressing specific needs arising from their subjects, to become meta-linguistically aware, and to acquire an operating meta-language that enables them to revise and improve their written work on their own, and to recognize the role of reading and writing as fundamental practices for their performance in the specific school subjects. This work is not intended only for a higher degree of adaptation to school literacy practices, but also for the development of a fundamental strategy to better learn the contents of the subject syllabi.

From the subject teachers' standpoint, the program is an opportunity to reflect upon, modify, and state expressly the role of literacy practices in their subjects through the development of specific tools and goals in cooperation with the writing teachers. In addition, writing teachers can boost their work with written language in school by incorporating materials and knowledge from other areas.

The design of the program comprises its own space in the curriculum through a weekly, eighty-minute class within the regular school schedule that is like any other required subject. It is taught by a writing teacher that works in coordination with teachers of different subjects. Every trimester, the writing course is articulated with a different subject and teacher. In its first year (2011), the program was implemented in fourth grade (15-16-year-old students), and writing teachers worked with history, biology, and physics teachers. In its second year (2012), the program was extended to first-grade courses (12-13-year-old students) and included math, civics, and geography teachers. In its third year (2013), second-grade courses (13-14-year-old students) were added and some courses and teachers remained on the program (math and geography), while others joined the program (biology). Therefore, a high school freshman would participate in the program for three years. The program intends to be introduced into every grade of the school curriculum, because each stage has needs and goals

related to literacy practices that must be recognized and institutionalized by the school.

Every trimester, students work on reading material, speech genres, authors, theoretical contents and frameworks, and communicative needs of a subject that they are taking simultaneously. If this proposal surprises teachers and officials alike, it also comes as a surprise to students: A subject that is history, but it's not history? Why is my writing on biology evaluated if I'm not being taught biology? Why are teachers of different subjects teaching the same topic? Part of the challenge posed to the teacher in charge of the course is to transform students' representations of the organization, teaching, learning, and evaluation of the curriculum, areas, and subjects, by showing them the epistemic value of writing.

The collaboration with each subject teacher cannot be reduced to only one trimester in a given year or a span of several years. The plan is designed to last about two years, and then rotate to new teachers. Thus, an attempt is made to largely impact the teaching community. Collaborative work is assumed to be a training process that requires a minimum period to mature and settle. Afterwards, when participants develop independent strategies to teach writing, the work with disciplinary rhetorical practices must go necessarily from the writing classroom to writing in the classroom. This means that the collaboration is no longer needed. The rotating nature of the program is one of its most remarkable strengths: it enables interested teachers to participate, sparks others' curiosity, allows dissatisfied teachers to leave the program in an orderly fashion, and permits those who are not so sure about participating to wait for the right time to join in.

However, as the Writing Program aims to tackle specific communication challenges within the content subjects and engage teachers into a training process, the decision on which teachers continue, join, or leave the program is not only personal, but also, and essentially, institutional. Most teachers in the school did volunteer to participate, and there is actually a waiting list of teachers willing to take part in the program. Some of these teachers only teach at the secondary level, while others simultaneously teach at postsecondary and university levels, and most of them usually engage in all kinds of educational projects. On the whole, participating teachers are open to new, exciting educational scenarios, so gathering colleagues' interest has never been an issue. After three years running, the impact of the program on students' literacies as perceived by teachers has definitely reinforced that initial interest.

In addition, the flexible nature of the curricula organization in Argentina leaves room for this kind of reform program and allows for bottom-up changes. Secondary teachers in Argentina are, in general, free to choose or even design their own coursebooks. They can usually include what they consider relevant contents for their specific students and their academic, institutional, and socio-

cultural context. This means that innovative, enthusiastic institutions can foster different kinds of projects and programs on their own without being constrained by school districts' policies. As a matter of fact, many districts' reports and syllabi do encourage writing across the curriculum initiatives (Ministerio de Educación), although this does not necessarily imply the implementation of actual writing programs.

COLLABORATING TO TEACH, EVALUATE, AND INNOVATE

The negotiated collaboration dynamics are a key feature of the program. This collaboration is neither isolated nor focused on the beginning of the school year. On the contrary, writing teachers and subject teachers must, to a lesser or greater degree, negotiate throughout the collaboration period. This creates a setting for educational projects and innovation that, despite the extra effort required, proves very encouraging for its participants. Before the beginning of the collaboration period, participating teachers define several aspects, such as the disciplinary texts to be used, the evaluation criteria to be followed, and mainly, the reading and writing practices and dimensions that will be addressed. These practices and dimensions are directly related to the aspects proper to the reading and writing practices of the subject, the discipline, and the school. During the trimester, teachers are in contact with one another over the phone, by email, and in person to discuss the development and implementation of the activities planned, apart from any new initiatives. At the end of the trimester, teachers meet to evaluate the implementation of the collaboration, agree on the students' final grades, and plan any changes to the following year's collaboration.

The common grade is also awarded jointly by the writing teacher and the subject teacher at the end of the trimester; every student's homework, coursework, and exam grades in both areas are compared, and a final, common grade is agreed on. This innovative feature derives from the need for students to commit themselves to take part in a demanding, complex subject, which nonetheless is not part of the curriculum, strictly speaking. Yet, it has a less expected effect: it helps consolidate the proposal with the students because of the ties between epistemic frameworks and writing practices, one of the premises of the program, and translate into an aspect as significant as the trimester grade.

Also open to intense negotiation is the evaluation method. The most conventional method of evaluation is an exam integrating reading and writing skills that tests the topics dealt with throughout the trimester in practice. Albeit integrating topics and texts of the specific subject, this exam is graded by the writing teacher and is considered to belong to the writing course. Furthermore, written assignments and participation in classroom discussions and activities through-

out the trimester are also assessed. Another method of evaluation involves incorporating reading and writing dimensions into exams explicitly, and homework assignments of the subject articulated with the program. In this case, the subject teacher, the writing teacher, or both, grade the students' written work, and a final grade is awarded in light of the students' literacy practices.

The subject is not part of the mandatory contents of the school curriculum, at least for the time being. The introduction of this device into the school schedule like any other subject enables administrators, faculty, students and parents to envision that, in the future and upon making any modification suggested by experience, it may become a curricular subject in high school.

WHAT TO WRITE IN SCHOOL

A didactic proposal to teach and learn to write must primarily define the specific writing aspects to be explored in the classroom, and how they will be explored. It becomes necessary to determine the language and writing theory to be used, the aspects of such theory selected for teaching, and how they will be taught. This represents one of the biggest challenges presented by the School Writing Program, because language deeply influences us in our capacity as social subjects in that it plays an essential role in the construction of our identities.

Language in general and writing in particular are usually regarded as a single skill that cannot be segmented into specific and differentiated practices, dimensions, and resources. Further, writing is often related exclusively to important but insufficient aspects, such as spelling rules or correctness criteria applied regardless of use, and its varying degrees of adequacy. Similarly, language tends to be considered a natural object that may be addressed alternatively by one or another linguistic theory without any consequence.

But this is not the case at all. There are cognitive, formalist, functionalist, and pragmatic linguistic theories, among others, and each results in language and writing configurations that are very different from one another. School and academic writing cannot be taught with a linguistic conception arising from common sense or with outdated grammars, or dictionaries that disregard the scientific advances of the past decades. This does not mean that subject teachers must be experts in linguistics before explicitly incorporating reading and writing, but they do need to receive some training on these subjects and on collaborative projects. In addition, teachers can take advantage of students' conceptions of language and writing to enhance classroom work.

The aspects addressed in the School Writing Program fall into five broad dimensions: basic literacy competences; cognitive and linguistic meta-competences; school speech genres; information and communication technologies (ICTs);

and rules. These dimensions are explored below, pointing out some specific matters taken up with 15- and 16-year-old students.

The general methodology that relates the aspects tackled in class focuses on the *transformation* of texts according to detailed guidelines that draw distinctions between the various dimensions. Accordingly, students must syntactically rearrange an excerpt without modifying the meaning or the lexicon, adapt the lexicon to different readerships, change the punctuation of a paragraph to make it clearer, reorganize the position and articulation of an authoritative quote in a reading report, or enlarge the space between paragraphs without modifying the space between lines, among many other possible transformations. In turn, this methodology explores ludic aspects, such as the generation of mockery, and uses non-academic communicative practices familiar to students, like a detailed analysis of non-school unwritten speech genres. Students follow a basic series of steps: first, they (individually, in pairs, or the entire class) read and deconstruct others' texts (materials of the area, other students' texts); then, they (individually and in pairs) do their own writing based on previously discussed issues; finally, they read and rewrite those texts, and the process starts again. Providing settings to rewrite texts is remarkably enriching, because it reinforces the representation of writing as a complex rhetorical process by stages and with multiple dimensions. At the same time, students have an opportunity to devise strategies to deconstruct, rephrase, and adapt their own and others' written work. In sum, texts are not only written, but also summarized, evaluated, reinforced, mocked, quoted, etc., because mature writing is, in reality, permanent rewriting where texts and contents are adapted and modified. (Alvarado 47)

BASIC LITERACY COMPETENCES

The program intends for students to develop basic literacy competences applicable to all school writing practices, but that can also become more specific in each subject. These general linguistic competencies include: explaining, describing, narrating, organizing paragraphs, summarizing, quoting, adapting, expressly stating, depersonalizing, nominalizing, rephrasing, hedging, boosting, etc. To a lesser or greater degree, these aspects should be covered by practically every school and academic writing course, although the particular features of the respective disciplines may require prioritizing certain writing practices over others. For example, even though any scientific discipline must quote previous sources, and the strategies and rules to quote and use a bibliography vary from discipline to discipline.

To illustrate our point, we will refer to the work on hedging and boosting articulated with history. In the introduction and conclusion of a research article

published in a scientific journal and used as required reading in the subject, the authors identify resources to hedge and boost. These resources are crucial in scientific-academic discourse, not least in the humanities, such as history (Hyland 57-58), because new contributions must be fitted into the body of knowledge already accepted by the community and, at the same time, must not constitute a threat to that community (hedging). With that in mind, those contributions must be put forward with enough commitment and conviction to be taken into account (boosting). That is, the degree of certainty and accuracy of the assertions does not only depend on how sure we are of those assertions, but also on a correlation of forces in the socially situated production of discourses (Myers). This double articulation that embraces the key assertions in scientific-academic discourse is also relevant when a student presents and defends his positions before an expert teacher. Thus, the work with hedges and boosters triggers the discussion about the socio-historically specific ways of negotiating and validating scientific knowledge between writers and readers. Aside from that, the different parts of the genre are related to the precedence of hedging (in the introduction) or boosting (in the conclusion). The excerpts analyzed are rephrased afterwards by incorporating excessive hedges and boosters to mock the original text. These games enable students to reflect on the features that make a school text adequate or inadequate, and also promote students' creativity and interest.

COGNITIVE AND LINGUISTIC META-COMPETENCES

The development and consolidation of cognitive and linguistic meta-competences might help students adopt a critical attitude towards their own and others' reading and writing practices and acquire an analysis meta-language. This dimension enables them to attain a theoretical and reflexive balance in a predominantly practical pedagogical approach to writing. Meta-competences make exercises more meaningful, prompt discussions about and the rearrangement of prior conceptions of the development of writing competences, as well as enable students to become more autonomous and to gain critical insights as far as their writing is concerned. Additionally, meta-competences can help foster students' involvement in the subject and increase their interest. Their reading and writing backgrounds are reflected upon; mistakes in their written work and in others' are spotted and corrected; the functional varieties of language are analyzed in view of political, geographical, social, and situational dimensions; the mass media discourse (nationwide newspapers) is deconstructed; paragraphs are read and annotated; and the subjective and objective dimensions of scientific-academic discourse are discussed among students and teachers.

With respect to the latter aspect, in articulation with physics, the alleged-

ly objective and impersonal nature of scientific-academic discourse is discussed analyzing some depersonalization strategies on which that construction is based (García Negroni), including: nominalization (which eliminates the participants' roles), metonymy (where an inanimate element, like "the book" or "the theory," is an agent), passive voice (which might eliminate the agent), non-finite verb forms (which provide no morphological information on person and number), and the first person plural (which conceals the individuality of a single speaker). Students work with biographical texts of a key author read in physics (Stephen Hawking) and play at depersonalizing them, thus showing the artificiality of the mechanism.

The articulation with biology introduces language functional varieties associated with contextual factors: national languages (geographical and political variations: Argentina's language, Spain's language), sociolects (social variations according to the speakers' age, ethnic group, profession, sex, etc.; teenagers' language, lawyers' language), genres and registers (cultural and situational variations), and idiolects (individual variations). Videos from series, movies, and TV programs are used to recognize varieties, and dichotomies are discussed that may arouse students' intense interest, such as correct/adequate and homogeneity/heterogeneity. This reflection enables students to elaborate on the explanatory sequence in biology (Revel Chion), described as a key feature in the discourse of that field. The exercises entail rewriting a biology explanation in a specific social language (and a specific situational context).

SCHOOL SPEECH GENRES

The program deals with school speech genres that are closely related to the respective disciplines and relevant to the students' particular writing practices: a comprehensive history exam; an explanation of a topic in biology; a newspaper editorial; and a reading report in physics. The genres selected are practiced and requested in reading and writing assignments in the subjects articulated with the program. This reinforces the collaborative dynamics and makes coursework meaningful.

The work on speech genres is carried out according to three sets of features used to describe them (Bakhtin). First, their circulation: typical speaker(s), recipient(s), and situational and social contexts. Second, their socio-discursive goals: the purpose and social role of the genres. Third, their textualization: the issues addressed and the typical grammatical and lexical resources presented by the genres, as well as their structures.

The articulation with history is aimed at deconstructing, in detail, the comprehensive exam genre, which students write for the first time during this period

based on real samples from previous years. They identify their readers' expectations and goals, and some typical features of its textualization. The tasks requested in the assignments are thoroughly analyzed: the aspects that must be mandatorily included in the answer, the aspects that are taken for granted but must be accounted for anyway, the key words of the assignment that must be used in the answer, and how much time will be used in each answer. Because teachers usually request narrative, explanatory, and descriptive texts, they are distinguished from one another and described. The writing activity is the preparation of the tasks of a comprehensive history exam based on a source text in which students act as the teacher. The degree of difficulty and explicitness of the assignment is proportionately adjusted.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) influence every contemporary school writing practice, and accordingly, it is our intention to include them in the program. The objective is to make more extensive use of practices familiar to and used by students in school and university, other than for social or recreational purposes. Students discuss strategies to assess the adequacy, relevance, and usefulness of online sources found on Google in school; specify the features of an email account for sending school homework; and explore the use of the word processor to do school writing.

In connection with this aspect, one class focuses on a discussion of format. Students pursue at least three goals: exploring IT tools with which students are not fully familiar (such as paragraph breaks), placing emphasis on important aspects (like justifying a text), and proposing formal features (e.g., font type and size) to practice adapting texts to them. It is a practical approach through the use of netbooks in class, as students must turn a text without a given format into one with the format required.

RULES

Although it is reductionist to consider rules to be the fundamental aspect taught by school in reference to writing, they permeate school education and, for that reason, the program emphasizes and systematizes them. The program also deals with punctuation and accentuation. Instead of going over innumerable rules, teachers employ a mainly practical approach, exploring and practicing useful general principles and rewriting texts with mistakes. The primary goal is to underscore the importance of monitoring one's own accentuation and punctuation. Also, teachers examine quotation rules, because they are new to most

students and proper to academic and school discourse. In class, they analyze relevant general data, namely author, title, and date, as well as the specific rules for some disciplines.

EVALUATING TO IMPROVE

The School Writing Program has already been consolidated after having been implemented and adjusted in three grades of the curriculum (first, second, and fourth), including the preparation of the first didactic materials in the form of booklets, with the school officials' permanent support, and the participation of more subject teachers.

In the classroom, students first focused on the (in)validity and (in)viability of the course during its first year of implementation, but afterwards they were concerned with specific and useful issues, such as the aspects to be practiced and the subjects with which to articulate the program. In fact, an anonymous survey of students conducted at the end of the 2012 school year revealed that 80% found the program useful to a lesser or greater extent, and 42% found it quite or extremely useful. The importance of this information lies in the fact that it is the students' subjective, anonymous insight regarding an unprecedented demanding course. The survey also showed high heterogeneity on the issues that students had found most and least useful. This means that, through their opinions, they showed that their perceptions on their writing strengths and weaknesses are wholly dissimilar.

In respect to grades, about half of the students earned similar grades in the participating subject and in the writing course. This general tendency is interesting, because it shows that, broadly speaking, the articulation between the Writing Program and the subjects translates into a relatively high degree of consistency of the students' performance in the areas articulated. From the rest of the students, about half attained a higher grade in the writing course, and therefore raised their subject final grades and, conversely, those who received a lower grade in the writing course consequently had lower final subject grades.

The program made a substantial impact on students' literacy practices, bringing back and consolidating previous rhetorical practices and, above all, incorporating, developing, and making explicit new rhetorical competences.

Furthermore, the program was embraced readily by participating teachers, which was evidenced in the year-end self-assessments and in the teachers' workshops, which actually led to the collective decision for teachers to continue participating. Apart from that, the program made a profound impact on participating teachers' reading and writing didactic practices. The physics teacher made the reading report assignments more complex, modified them, and expressly

requested that the answers indicate the strategies to quote, depersonalize, and argue that were practiced in the Writing Program, which were then assessed. The history teacher incorporated exam feedback based on collective rephrasing exercises.

For writing teachers, permanent collaboration with teachers of the other subjects enabled them to understand some specific features of the discipline's discourse, such as the importance of distinguishing social groups and their conflicting interests in the explanations of the history class.

We believe there are five reasons why other schools might implement their own School Writing Programs: (1) Argentine high schools usually have teachers eager to innovate in their practices and officials looking forward to implementing policies that systematize the ties between the curriculum and the occasional or isolated precedents that address school writing; (2) this program responds to education agencies' demands, both because it works on the reading and writing of discipline-specific texts and contents, and because it counters problems repeatedly diagnosed by general tests on school literacy competences; (3) this program has solid theoretical and empirical foundations arising from updated literature on the issue, because the program is a critical adaptation of the Writing Across the Curriculum proposal, combining discipline-specific competences and courses with competences and courses related to school reading and writing needs; (4) the logistic design of the program makes it intrinsically elastic, which enables schools to adjust it to various institutional and teaching frameworks; and (5) the program gives leeway to experiment and to discover the needs to be addressed.

CONCLUSIONS

The School Writing Program seems to be making a huge impact on students' literacy practices, on their perceptions and acceptance of the initiative, and on participating teachers' didactic practices. The differentiated ludic work performed, under certain guidelines, on dimensions and aspects proper to writing assists in the training of writers that plan and monitor their work, rewrite and modify their drafts, and use speech genres and resources adequate for their purposes and readerships. Thus, the program explicitly incorporates into the school curriculum a set of communicative competences that are essential, but are generally invisible or unsystematically taught; at the same time, students learn these competences in conjunction with diverse subjects and areas. The School Writing Program, thanks to its collaborative and rotating design, intends to put the work on these competences on the institutional and didactic agenda. The ultimate goal is for these competences to be incorporated into the various sub-

jects' syllabi and taught by the subject teachers that participated in this training initiative or in other similar ones. Hence, the program is intended to produce effects on teachers' training so that it will not only improve their practice, but it will also lead them to apply this proposal to other teaching settings with their colleagues.

Learning school literacy practices is not a moral "duty" of students or an element we believe indispensable for an ideal school. Rather, it is what teachers, institutions, and curricula actually expect and assess of students. Said another way, students who do not succeed or who are unable to communicate through the literacy practices expected are unlikely to finish high school or to satisfactorily do so. This is because the irregular or incomplete management of the reading and writing practices of school and the curriculum disciplines limits students' access to the subjects' forms of reasoning, and bars them from joining a learning community that requires recognizable communicative competences.

NOTES

1. This device was discussed in prior research (Navarro; Navarro and Revel Chion).

2. The project described in this book was implemented in Colegio de la Ciudad, a private school located in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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