CHAPTER 40.

SECTION ESSAY: ACADEMIC LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

By Gerd Bräuer
University of Education, Freiburg (Germany)

This section essay provides an overview of the landscape of academic writing centers, writing programs, and writing initiatives in the German-speaking countries (Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland). The author sheds light onto some of the major motivations—on both individual and institutional levels—for the emergence of writing support in higher education and uncovers several tendencies in writing center work that seem to trigger institutional change with regard to writing. Peer learning, one of the major features of US-writing pedagogy, seems to have become a vital concept also in the German-speaking countries. Peer learning, especially as part of writing center work, is functioning as a strong catalyst for sustainable institutional and curricular development, leading not only to a change of individual writing practices but also to a redefining of the role of writing and maybe even to alternative writing cultures within institutions of higher learning.

The territory of the German-speaking countries I will be talking about in this section essay is about the same size as California.[1] It is the area that I traveled a lot over the past decade in order to participate in projects, conferences, and workshops. You can take a comfortable night train from the writing center at the University of Education in Zurich (Switzerland), in the south-western area of this geographic territory, to the writing center at the Europe University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder in Germany (not to be confused with the well-known airport hub Frankfurt/Main), located near the border to Poland, in the north-eastern corner of this international conglomerate of writing centers, writing programs, and other bold initiatives to support academic writing and writers in higher education.

I say bold here to indicate that this work has involved struggle against many obstacles at least since 1993, when the first European university writing center

began its work in Bielefeld (Germany). Even in 2001, when I helped to set up the first writing center in European teacher education in Freiburg (Germany), I had to handle opinions among teaching faculty like the one that I received one day by email: "Dear colleague, it is wonderful to see what you do for our weakest students, but—please, please! —don't make this college look like a gathering place for fools. Many of our students CAN write and do it quite well and, therefore, don't need your support. All the others I'd rather see leave this university the sooner the better!"

Of course, all these students can write—some better than others—but everybody needs feedback and the challenge to revise. Luckily, opinions like the one just mentioned didn't hinder people in their efforts to progress to the present, where we find ourselves working in 39 writing centers across Austria (1), Germany (32), Liechtenstein (1) and Switzerland (5), collaborating closely in local networks, such as the one in Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany); in national forums, such as "Forum Schreiben" (http://www.forum-schreiben.eu) in Switzerland; and within international organizations, first and foremost the European Association of the Teachers of Academic Writing (EATAW, established in 1999) and the European Writing Centers Association (EWCA, since 2003). Several of the most active members of this German-speaking community have served on the boards of these large professional organizations.

These close collaborations resulted in international projects and initiatives such as "Scriptorium" (http://www.scriptorium-project.org), a professional development program for literacy student-teachers and in-service teachers; the foundation of a bilingual (German/English) scientific journal, *Zeitschrift Schreiben* (http://www.zeitschrift-schreiben.eu); a yearly conference for student peer-tutors (including its own journal on tutoring writing, JoSCH , journal.der.schreibberatung@googlemail.com); and the development of an extensive research data basis (http://www.ipts.rwth-aachen.de/) that connects professionals internationally outside the German-speaking area (see also Niederau and Jakobs in this book). The scientific publications that resulted from this collaboration have grown substantially since the 1980s, and most of them can be found in the database just mentioned. The most recent collaborative text that circled for months among several writing centers, stirring up fruitful internal and external discussion, focused on the declaration of quality standards for the training of peer tutors. The topic of this collaboration— peer tutoring—isn't a surprise when considering that the short history of this academic literacy movement in the German-speaking area was largely spurred by writing centers and peer learning concepts.

PEER LEARNING FOSTERED BY WRITING CENTERS AS A KEY CONCEPT FOR THE ACADEMIC LITERACY SUPPORT MOVEMENT

When I started a training program for peer writing tutors in 2002 at the Freiburg Writing Center (Germany), my main goal was to convince the participants about the process character of writing and, as a pedagogical consequence, the need to teach process writing in order to give students a chance to grow as writers—instead of drilling them in applying knowledge about text genres to successful written discourse (Bräuer, 2002). To better achieve my intention, I constructed the course around my own beliefs, materials, and methods, asking the students simply to follow the program by answering my questions and working on my tasks. I simply didn't know it any better at that time.

In the same year (2002), I participated in a workshop organized by the Bielefeld University Writing Lab with Paula Gillespie (Gillespie & Lerner, 2000) and Harvey Kail (Kail & Trimbur, 2000), two well-known experts on peer tutoring. Peer tutoring stands in the tradition of Kenneth Bruffee's approach to collaborative learning (1984), with peer learning—learning from and with each other (Boud et al., 2001) —in the center of attention. The peer learning concept and the research on peer-assisted mentoring and tutoring approaches (Falchikov & Blythman, 2000; O'Donnell & King, 1999; Topping & Ehly, 2001) heavily influenced US-based writing center development.

The lesson I learned at the Bielefeld Writing Lab workshop with Kail and Gillespie was fundamental with regard to the Socratic teaching method I originally applied to my training program for peer writing tutors that I just mentioned above: based on Bruffee's work and concepts developed out of it, such as community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and community of learners (Rogoff, 1994), I changed the focus of the training by applying peer learning strategies and thus opportunities for the students to discuss their own beliefs, experience, and knowledge in order to collaboratively develop methods and materials for the tutoring of writers and writing. The result was a radical conceptual change of the training program toward social constructivist learning, with peer interaction in person and on the web (in blogs, forums, and wikis) at the core—with me as facilitator and organizer on the sidelines. In other words: I gave up the role of one pretending to have all the answers on this very personal quest toward becoming a peer writing tutor. When I look at what many of the graduates of my training program do today as professionals in the field of academic literacy and beyond, I perceive a substantial and sustainable

impact of the concept of peer learning on the development of writing centers, writing programs, and initiatives across the German-speaking area.

Not surprisingly, I see many of these colleagues engaged in redefining the role of writing in higher education in the German-speaking area being involved in writing centers as a place with a specific potential for fostering peer learning as a mode of academic literacy development across colleges and universities. At least in the German-speaking countries, writing centers, in my view, efficiently suggest and implement alternative ways of learning and instruction because they are extra-curricular. Other than a teaching faculty, they are in daily contact with students through one-on-one tutoring, workshops, seminars and self-learning materials.

If writing centers make their work transparent toward the teaching faculty, they can have a silent but nevertheless powerful and long-lasting impact on teaching practices (see also Bräuer & Girgensohn in this book). The writing lab at Bielefeld University (Bielefeld), with its powerful connections to the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Center for Student Advising and Counseling, the Career Center, and an initiative named "Toward a new culture of studying and teaching," is in my view the most impressive example in the German-speaking area of writing centers' innovation toward institutional change.

In the following sections of the essay, I will sketch current tendencies in the development of academic literacy that show peer learning, as part of writing center work, as a catalyst for sustainable institutional and curricular development that can lead not only to a change of individual writing practices, but also to a change in the role of writing—and maybe even to alternative writing cultures within institutions. Let me first briefly define what I mean by "change."

DEFINING A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

Curricular development and institutional development often go hand in hand (e.g., Altrichter et al., 2007), but they are certainly not automatic steps. While curricular development focuses primarily on change in individual classroom practice, institutional development concerns changing larger structures far beyond the individual classroom. Sometimes, the quantity and quality of change in individual teaching can spur change in the overall culture of learning and instruction and, therefore, trigger institutional change. In this bottom-up development, the changes made on an individual level will be "codified" by the institution's administration. The individual change becomes part of the official documents of the institution and, as such, sustainable: the development that

has happened cannot be eliminated just because the agenda of the people in power in an institution may change in the future.

The other main scenario in the interplay between curricular and institutional development is top-down: it starts with an incentive on the administrative level, often triggered by outside experts who combine research and professional practice. Supported by a concept for change and a steering group, the institution's administration asks members of the teaching faculty to apply (or further develop) the suggested documents and measures of change.

How are these scenarios relevant to the integration of academic literacy measures in institutions of higher education? For the European context, I envision a unique potential for writing centers to pick up on grassroots initiatives or initiate change on the individual level of instruction, to further analyze the needs of individual faculty and learners, and to contextualize these with the appropriate research findings. This process facilitates a proposal to be made to the administration to consider long-term and sustainable change either on a larger curricular level (e.g., for a department or discipline) or for cross-institutional measures. Let me illustrate the two strategies for change with an example from the integration of university-wide portfolio systems at the University of Education in Freiburg (bottom-up) and at the Technical University of Darmstadt (top-down), both located in Germany.

Portfolio work in Freiburg as a grassroots initiative of the two institutes of education and languages has a history of almost 10 years. From the beginning, the Freiburg writing center supported this initiative with research on writing as reflective practice, faculty training, workshops for students, and peer tutoring. Based on the rich experience from this facilitation process, in 2008 the writing center presented a concept to the university administration for the implementation of a campus-wide e-portfolio system that would engage students in reflective practice throughout college training and beyond, and provide a conceptual backbone for instruction that switched, as part of the so-called Bologna process, to a modularized and competence-based approach. A first step in acknowledging this "bottom-up" portfolio concept is being made by adapting exam guidelines of individual degree programs that were recently set up in German Studies and German as a Foreign/Second Language.

At the TU Darmstadt, the procedure followed a somewhat reversed track, "top-down": Due to existing institutional structures, embodied by a so-called "dual mode strategy" (blended learning) (Ballweg et al., 2011, p. 190), an existing portfolio on e-learning competencies at the university and long-term portfolio practice in the teaching profession in the state of Hessen (Germany), the university administration assigned a steering committee to develop and assess a competency portfolio that would be kept throughout the entire college career, include the above-mentioned portfolio on e-learning, and prepare students for

using the portfolio in the profession. In order to put this project into practice, faculty will be supported to design appropriate task arrangements and to use the e-portfolio web application "Mahara." The steering committee hopes not only to implement portfolio work into individual classrooms but also to initiate sustainable institutional change by defining and applying an alternative role of writing in teacher training, here especially in the format of "writing to learn" through reflective practice.

In both Freiburg and Darmstadt, tendencies in institutional development can be witnessed that Altrichter (2012) calls "intentional and systematic," "directed on long-term and structured development," by which "mediation between heterogeneous goals and expectations" is being practiced slowly but intensely, to build change in the overall culture of learning and instruction, where the concept of peer learning as part of writing center work can be a powerful change agent.

LITERACY MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE:

How can institutional change be carried out in a planned, efficient way? Curricular and institutional change are both pressing and central needs in today's academy in order to deal in a productive way with the growing challenges of "multiliteracies," which originate in a "multiplicity of communication channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity" (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996, p. 60). The existence of multiliteracies indicates the need of managing the interplay of these different literacies among the three stakeholders of higher education: the individual learner, the educational institution (including teaching faculty and administration), and the profession(s). In order to be able to manage literacy—which Cazden et al. (1996) understand as the ability to read, write, and distribute information beyond language—we have to be aware of the existing flow of information within defined structures of an institution and beyond, especially among the stakeholders with regard to a certain phenomenon of change (e.g., the implementation of portfolios). In more specific terms: in order to be successful in the development of academic literacy in higher education, we need to know how to optimize the way people deal with information, form and formulate intentions, and comprehend, process, and fulfill the intentions of others.

The main task for literacy managers, who I see as change agents in the discourse among the stakeholders mentioned above, would therefore be two-fold: to construct and strengthen synergy, understood as the collaboration of people and their ideas, structures, methods, and materials; to deconstruct and therefore

reduce dysergy, understood as the collision of people and their ideas, structures, methods, and materials. This negotiating role can be played out much better by extra-curricular entities such as the writing center than by structures that are part of the institutional hierarchy and the ongoing power struggle within this hierarchy.

Again, what is needed in today's academy more than ever is the negotiation of a multiplicity of discourses in which individual learners, institutions of education, and the professions are engaged with literacy managers. I personally envision writing center people as most well-prepared for this role: to juggle the potential, demands, and challenges of the different literacies such as computer literacy, digital literacy, multimodal literacy, visual literacy, and critical literacy, in order to solve problems with efficient handling of information through individuals within the larger framework of their institution.

Literacy managers perform a complex range of tasks: (1) analyze the current state of both handling information in general and text production, distribution, and reception, including visual, audio, spatial, and behavioral aspects of forms of representation of meaning, within their home institution and beyond; (2) assess the quality of the latter processes and try to determine a price tag for any loss of information and/or understanding of texts in order to quantify the urgency of change; (3) identify the current needs of the main stakeholders with regard to in-house communication and the flow of information beyond; (4) develop concepts and prototypes for optimizing the management of literacies within the organization, (5) test and assess procedures, methods, materials, and training programs in order to further develop and successfully implement them; and (6) initiate necessary structural change within the institution and facilitate steering groups in this matter.

The following list of current tendencies in an academic literacy environment in the process of dramatic change will show concrete areas of work for literacy managers either positioned in the writing center or collaborating with the writing center as a true powerhouse for institutional change: redefining the role of writing and writers in the academy, especially, as can also be seen below, through different forms of peer learning.

TENDENCIES IN INSTITUTIONALIZED SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC WRITERS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING AREA

TENDENCY 1: FACE-TO-FACE FACILITATION OF WRITERS

Supporting academic writers through one-on-one interaction is probably the most striking achievement of this very young writing pedagogy movement in

German-speaking higher education. It is no surprise that the two possibilities of face-to-face writing support, peer tutoring and faculty mentoring (coaching), are sometimes still seen as conflicting alternatives. In the late 1990s, the number of institutions favoring faculty-based writing consultations was much higher than the number focusing on peer-based feedback. I see two reasons for this: (1) Aside from the Freiburg Writing Center (Bräuer, 2002), there was no other concept for training peer writing tutors in practice in the German-speaking area. (2) Interest in developing training programs was quite low because academic writing was still seen mostly as a set of rules provided and guarded by the academy.

Today, the number of institutions seeking ways to set up peer-based writing support is growing rapidly, and a discussion of standards for writing tutor training has begun among the most active writing centers. Some universities (e.g., Bielefeld and Bochum) already offer systematic training for teaching faculty in key aspects of process writing so that process-based and learner-based writing tasks will incorporate regular feedback of different kinds. With regard to support for faculty in writing pedagogy, the work by John Bean (1996, 2011) has become very influential in the German-speaking area.

Tendency 2: Online Tutoring

Asynchronous forms of tutoring writing have developed rapidly in recent years, with integration of e-learning platforms in higher education. While writing centers offer e-mail support for academic writers, though often limited to specific aspects of text production, the teaching faculty started to make use of peer-based asynchronous tutoring in discipline-specific forums on e-learning platforms.

Tendency 3: Extra-curricular Workshops

Many university writing centers have developed over the past few years extra-curricular workshops in which students participate voluntarily. The focus of these workshops is either on the introduction to academic writing or on specific aspects of the writing process in individual academic genres. Increasingly, university disciplines organize their own discipline-specific workshops and, sometimes, make them mandatory for students. This is especially the case with new genres (e.g., e-portfolio) or skills and tools (e.g., use of digital devices for academic literacy) in order to secure more comprehensive learning and instruction. As a consequence, at some universities, individual disciplines start their own writing centers, to provide a joint roof for and more structure to the different support initiatives. The most striking example of this initiative, in my view, is the writing center in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Göttingen (Germany).

Tendency 4: Required Writing Courses

At a growing number of universities, beginning students are required to take part in either (1) an introductory writing course or (2) a cluster of lectures and workshops, or (3) an autonomous writing group and/or collaborative writing project. A successful example of the first format is the course designed, scientifically assessed, and finally implemented by Helmut Gruber (Gruber, Huemer, & Rheindorf, et al., 2009) and his team at the University of Vienna (see also Gruber's chapter in this book). A unique version of the second format is the design of introductory clusters for academic writing at the Health Education Department and the Department of Applied Linguistics, both at Zurich University of Applied Sciences Winterthur (see also Otto Kruse in this book). A role model for the third format is Katrin Girgensohn's concept of autonomous writing groups at the European University Viadrina (see also my interview with Katrin Girgensohn in this book).

Mandatory "writing-intensive" courses for advanced students are still rare (see Hirsch and Paoli; Thaiss and Goodman in this book for US variations on this theme). There are two possible explanations: (a) within universities many faculty members and administrators view writing as a given skill which shall not require extra instruction during university studies; (b) among the teaching faculty there is a lack of knowledge about what writing pedagogy implies. Therefore, generic online courses, such as the one developed by Guillaume Schiltz (2006), called COLAC, have been implemented in advanced courses at the Universities of Basel and Zurich and in other places in Swiss higher education.

With regard to lack of writing pedagogy expertise among the teaching faculty, more and more local writing centers offer training in how to teach process writing and use writing task arrangements that offer alternative ways of text production based on the individual needs of different writer types (Schindler, 2011). Although most colleges and universities are not yet willing whole-heartedly to invest in structures of "writing-across-the-curriculum" (WAC) and/or "writing-in-the-disciplines" (WID), many colleagues are now eager to plan their seminars and lectures around task arrangements that define and make use of writing as a mode of learning and specific rhetoric tools for successful participation in discipline-specific discourse. (Bräuer & Schindler, 2011)

Tendency 5: Writing Groups

Anne R. Gere (1987) defines writing groups as a communities of learners temporarily established, more or less voluntarily, and based on similar learning

needs and goals of the participants. Interaction is organized through a set of agreements that are either preset by a facilitator (often representing an educational institution) or negotiated and agreed upon by the members of the writing group. Writing groups in a more structured format, guided by a workshop leader/facilitator, are an important element of the so-called Reform Pedagogy developed since the 1920s especially in alternative educational settings in the German-speaking area of Europe (e.g., Freinet pedagogy). Under the term "Schreibwerkstatt," the concept of guided group work in process writing saw a renaissance in the 1980s and is an integrated conceptual aspect of today's writing centers throughout the educational pyramid.

Based on this precedent, Katrin Girgensohn (2007) developed and thoroughly assessed a concept for autonomous writing groups in higher education, which forms one of the main pillars of the writing center at the Europe University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder (Germany, http://www.europa-uni.de/de/campus/hilfen/schreibzentrum/index.html). Girgensohn merits recognition for strengthening the self-dependent aspect of the original writing group approach of the Reform Pedagogy by maintaining the potential of peer learning and collaboration (Bruffee, 1984) and the pedagogical power of learner communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Meanwhile, Girgensohn's concept has been adopted by several German-speaking universities (see also my interview with Katrin Girgensohn in this book)

Tendency 6: Support of Other Study Skills

Universities not only started to realize the importance of facilitating writing and writers but also the development of other key competences of academic work, e.g., reading, e-learning, digital text production, language learning, learning to learn, plus competences to safeguard success in entering the profession (e.g., writing of proposals and applications). Competences that directly influence the quality of academic writing have been central aims not only of writing centers but also of academic skills centers or language centers. The latter institution sometimes emerges from an existing writing center, as it may be the case in the near future at the University of Education in Berne (Switzerland), or out of original plans to pursue a writing center, as seen at the University of Freiburg (Germany). Which format the institution supporting writing and writers finally adopts often depends on long-term strategic decisions and goals, as can be witnessed at the Language Center of the Technical University of Darmstadt, where research and development of concepts of multilingualism clearly dominate the way academic writers are being supported within the "SchreibCenter" and the Online Writing Lab (http://www.owl.tu-darmstadt.de).

TENDENCY 7: WRITING PROJECTS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

This tendency is currently most often seen within teacher colleges and universities of education, where the goal of so-called "double literacy" is at stake: both mastering one's own academic writing process and knowing how to support writing development and text production of others. Projects that, on the one hand, meet an immediate need of the external partner, but also provide an opportunity for the university (students and faculty) to develop academic knowledge and professional skills, have been proven very useful. In addition to meeting a current need of the external partner (e.g., secondary school), they also provide incentive to ponder possibilities of sustainable development in at least two directions: to perpetuate a well-designed and assessed project and to gain new theoretical insights. A very powerful example for this tendency can be seen at http://www.ph-freiburg.de/schreibzentrum ("Laufende Projekte") under the rubric of "Zeitung in der Schule," where, together with a regional newspaper, projects in journalistic writing are being offered to local high schools. Results of this project also feed into another project (see "Internet-Zeitung"), a multilingual online newsletter for which students write about their experiences in dealing with different cultures and languages. Both projects provide excellent material for research on journalistic writing as a tool for discursive mobility (Monroe, 2002) and (pre-)academic writing. They also provide concrete incentive for bridging the gap between writing in high schools and at the university and for the training of peer writing tutors at the university writing center and at the writing centers of the participating high schools (Bräuer, 2003, 2006).

The largest initiative in the collaboration between colleges/universities and secondary schools so far in the German-speaking area is "Scriptorium" (Bräuer, 2009, Scriptorium, 2010). This network of about 50 online training courses for in-service teachers in literacy, partially provided in French, English, Italian, Finnish, Danish, Dutch, Spanish, and German, is a powerful way to find out the needs of international writing/reading support in and beyond the German-speaking area. International collaborators of this network—teaching faculty in primary, secondary, and/or higher education—share research findings and their rich experience in learning and instruction.

TENDENCY 8: SELF-LEARNING MATERIAL

Self-learning material presented to writers either in print or digital form often provides deep insight into the accomplishments of an institutional structure geared toward facilitating writing and writers. In a number of writing cen-

ters (e.g., see websites of writing centers in Bielefeld, Bochum, Frankfurt/Oder, Freiburg) self-learning material is being developed collaboratively by members of each writing center team. This procedure helps to shape not only the understanding of the individual writing tutors but also the mission of the institutional entity. When self-learning material becomes used and assessed purposefully, it provides valuable information for further developing tutoring strategies and the overall format of the writing center.

There is also an effort to move toward online writing labs (OWLs) in German-speaking higher education, which perform as a website with a carefully developed structure that leaves no single self-learning document without clearly defined didactical purpose and reference to other material. OWLs can be an efficient way of facilitating large numbers of students and/or students from different campuses, as seen at the University of Education of Northwestern Switzerland (http://www.schreiben.zentrumlesen.ch). This OWL works as a point of reference for both students and faculty; the didactical connection between the two sets of self-learning materials is carefully constructed. Ideally, using the student materials will be encouraged in class and as part of class-based tasks designed by the teaching faculty.

TENDENCY 9: WEB 2.0 TOOLS FOR TEXT PRODUCTION

A very special tendency can be seen in the use of WebQuests, an HTML structure which provides a compact framework for digital writing/learning arrangements. The writing center at the University of Education Freiburg (Bräuer & Schindler, 2011; SchreibQuest, 2010) and the University of Flensburg (Trepkau, 2010) (both located in Germany) provide insight into the pedagogical possibilities of focusing and contextualizing self-learning material online. Another web 2.0 tool, wikis, have developed growing impact in academic text production and, therefore, receives more and more attention within the teaching of academic writing, e.g., at the German universities in Greifswald (Endres 2010), and Dortmund (Beißwenger & Storrer 2010), as well as at the Swiss universities in Luzern and Rapperswil (Frischherz & Verhein 2010).

TENDENCY 10: WRITING CENTERS TAKING ON
THE ROLE OF LITERACY MANAGERS

Assessing one's own conceptual development and daily practice with regard to literacy management has been a key issue of the writing center movement in higher education in the German-speaking area since the late 1990s. This can be seen in the following key publications on different issues of literacy manage-

ment: Bräuer (1998), Björk, Bräuer, Rienecker, and Stray Jörgensen (2003), Abraham, Kupfer-Schreiner, and Maiwald, (2005), Kruse, Berger, and Ulmi (2006), Berning, Keßler, and Koch (2006), Doleschal and Gruber (2007), Frank, Haacke, and Lahm (2007), Jakobs, Lehnen, and Schindler (2010) and Bräuer and Schindler (2011). Due to this intense practice-based research, writing centers in specific, but also writing programs and other literacy initiatives, have a significant impact on certain aspects of institutional development. A few examples of this impact can be found in this book (see chapters by Otto Kruse, Helmut Gruber, Daniel Perrin, Ursula Doleschal) that either enhanced WAC and/or WID structures or the development of tutoring writing and writers. At the Technical University of Darmstadt, the work of writing center people, such as Sandra Ballweg, sparked a project for developing an e-portfolio concept to further enhance learning, instruction, and assessment procedures throughout the university (Ballweg, Scholz, Richter, & Bruder, 2011).

Tendency 11: Writing Research

Also based on reflective practice carried out by writing centers as literacy managers, a broad range of research topics has emerged during the past decade. Some of the most recent research fields that are directly related to facilitating writing and writers include online/digital writing, the effectiveness of peer-tutoring of writing, procedural details of literacy management, aspects of L2-text production, influence of culture and domain on writing and writers, writer types and pedagogical consequences, and reflective practice (learning journal, e-portfolio). Nevertheless, direct collaboration between the writing center and writing researchers in combined research-development projects is still rare.

CONCLUSION

My concluding thoughts adhere to the central concern of literacy management under the circumstances and ways people both deal and interact with information and with others in the processing of information. I base this conclusion on the assumption that the academy aims for a better understanding of both theory and practice. The academy, embedded in research methodology, observes and describes reality, raises and answers questions to achieve new insights that are being used further in this continuing interplay of theory and practice. For the development of academic literacy in institutions of higher education in the German-speaking countries, I see the following two somewhat contradicting tendencies.

STUCK IN A TRADITIONAL ROLE OF WRITING

The role of writing within the academy in the German-speaking area has been affected by the long-lived spirit of the Early Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which views the writer as a medium through which inspiration speaks in a strong voice leading to an immediate result: a text with a clear message to its readers. This basic understanding of writing can still be witnessed in many different facets of the German-speaking academy—in some respects starker than ever, at least in places where the Bologna Reform has been misunderstood as "streamlining" what in the past was considered "individualized" learning through trial and error over too many semesters of college. This influence is true especially when the modularization of competency-based instruction now leads not only to a reduction in the number of individual writing tasks, but even to the elimination of entire task arrangements that, in the past, helped to shape academic literacy even if only through trial and error. Optional learning arrangements of the past, including short seminar papers and study group discussions, including summaries and commentaries eventually leading to an extensive end-of semester paper, are now often being replaced by large lecture classes with written exams as the only form of comprehensive writing—and even that expedience is eliminated when the test is conceptualized as multiple-choice.

In such a constellation, the institution will not see any incentive in the near future to change the role of writing into a learning tool that needs to be acquired through formal instruction and through different, individualized practices in the daily classroom. To see institutions act alternatively probably requires their sudden realization—a wakeup call—of the shrinking quality in learning and instructional outcomes based on the written exams and the final thesis. Unfortunately, since written exams often do not unveil contextualized understanding of the learner, and the final thesis in many universities of the German-speaking area does not count substantially in the final grade, I doubt that some institutions will, for now, even bother looking at the quality of academic literacy.

THE ALTERNATIVE: LESS-STRUCTURED LEARNING
THAT FULFILLS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The other tendency which can be witnessed since the Bologna reform started to unfold in German-speaking higher education is pointing in quite a different direction. With the support of mostly extra-curricular initiatives such as centers for writing, language, or academic skills, a growing number of students engage in a more informal, less-structured learning that feeds their real individual needs. As authentic, self-responsive learners, they decide whether they

participate in an extra-curricular activity or not. This role has been experienced by many students recently as refreshing and stimulating, especially in contrast with the role they are supposed to play in a rigidly planned course of study in modularized BA and MA programs. This is a broad claim. However, one simple result from the Freiburg Writing Center underlines this value: the number of participants in writing workshops has doubled since the implementation of a modularized curriculum. Many of them, when being asked why they participate, express motives like those of the student quoted here:

> In this workshop I can pick up competences unavailable in seminars and lectures but that are actually needed in order to make full use of the instruction. I also like the idea that these workshops are being offered several times during the semester so that I can participate whenever I need them (and even come back if necessary).

Part of this second tendency is also the recognition from the teaching faculty that they actually need students with basic academic literacy skills from early on in their college careers in order to apply the modularized curriculum approach successfully. As a result, faculty either develop their own methods of writing instruction—often in some form of peer learning—in order to support their own teaching, or they make conscious use of the extra-curricular offerings provided by the institution, such as writing workshops and peer tutoring.

Another form of realization from the teaching faculty perspective is that the student's performance shown in an exam is a limited example of this person's learning effort and success. Here, portfolios have started to be used at least as a complementary form of evaluation, often including peer assessment.

There is a specific tendency coming from institutions of teacher training and the effort that can be witnessed there with regard to strengthening "double literacy" —the ability to write well and to facilitate others (peers and pupils in primary and secondary schools) to write well. This focus on double literacy has begun to show concrete results on the institutional level (e.g., portfolios as an officially recognized form of assessment) and in intensified collaboration with primary and secondary schools in the field of literacy development, often through peer learning and peer tutoring.

To conclude, it can be said that, even though a thorough realization and practical application of the procedural nature of writing has not yet taken place in higher education throughout the German-speaking region, the pressing needs stemming from the Bologna Reform make people—students and teaching faculty alike—act in a way that finally supports process writing and the long-term

development of academic writers. It appears that, by means of extra-curricular activities, incentives are being placed that could lead, in the near future, not only to curricular change but also to a different culture of writing at the center of a different culture of learning and instruction. With a new generation of writers, informed and trained through writing programs and writing centers in secondary education, these tendencies will, hopefully, be strengthened and shaped further. As already witnessed in part during the massive student protest in 2010 throughout Austria, Germany and Switzerland, these students are going to demand places, structures, and resources in the academy to further develop writing competence as a necessary basis for success at the university and in their future professional careers. These students seem ready to take action, not least in the form of peer learning through writing that could again become a catalyst for institutional change in the future.

NOTE

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