§ Introduction. Teaching Writing, Understanding How It Works and Evolves, Across Borders

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In February 2014, some 1200 researchers from 60 countries assembled in Paris for the third edition of the conference *Writing Research Across Borders*. Its wide-ranging contributions offered a vast perspective on the current state of research in the field of writing. This book is the fruit of that congress. It does not claim to document the rich diversity of the gathering, however: how could it possibly reproduce, with only about thirty chapters, the content of more than 500 presentations and some 100 symposiums? Notwithstanding this, it aims to highlight the key questions which are drawing the particular attention of researchers today.

This compilation includes contributions from researchers who work in very different contexts. We chose this approach partly to point out the diversity among the angles of attack used in the study of how writing works and how to make it an effective topic of instruction. But we also chose it to underscore convergences beyond boundaries.

Most of us think first, of course, of national borders, because the contributions come from countries far from each other. But the borders which interest us most of all are epistemological and linguistic in nature. The epistemological borders arise from the fact that writing is a complex and polymorphic organism which resists holistic undertakings that claim to represent all of its facets. For this reason, we must resolve not to settle for a piecemeal grasp, nor to apply the methodological filter of any one approach in particular. Thus the subject "writing" studied by anthropology or paleography has neither the same contours nor the same characteristics exhibited by the same subject in linguistics, literature or psychology. The borders are also linguistic in nature, because what constitutes the unity of a learned community are not merely the subjects that it adopts or the concepts that it mobilizes. Rather, that unity also derives from its *archives*, to use Foucault's term, because the language employed in the community is constitutive of its archives, the shared history

which establishes it and structures it. That's why research on writing can have somewhat different emphases depending on whether English or French is the working language of the intellectual sphere whence it originates—and why we chose to present the contributions in the print edition of this collection in their original language as a reflection of the epistemological context in which the research results reported by these contributions were produced. For this digital version, however, we have presented all the articles in English for accessibility.

The objective of this collection is not to present a panoptic vision of research on writing, but rather to create a dialogue among its different facets, whose theoretical and methodological choices differ. That dialogue is possible because this research is unified by a single purpose, explicitly expressed in some chapters, left unspoken in others: it is all aimed at developing our understanding of writing in order to enable more effective learning and more competent usage. These chapters range therefore along a line extending from the unabashed expression of a pedagogical concern to the pure analysis of how writing and texts work. In order to illustrate the full breadth of that range, this work is laid out in three parts, the first two of which share the subject of writers: primary and secondary school-aged students in the first section and then adults—students or professionals—in the second. The third part considers writing from a linguistic and cognitive perspective.

This division into three parts, however, serves only to point out the vast centers of interest common among the chapters grouped therein, while finer threads interconnect the chapters irrespective of their grouping. In fact, most of the chapters resonate with one or more of the other chapters, or even with the collection a whole, thereby contributing to an overall picture. Here I will mention just a few of the threads that link the chapters to each other and sketch a cartographic outline by focusing particular attention on the convergent themes.

The influence of context on writing as taught and practiced is an area of common interest to all of the contributions. The topic is examined explicitly in chapters which, from different points of departure, illustrate the connection between the institutional, cultural and epistemological conditions of writing instruction and show that those conditions configure the practices. The contribution by Arthur Applebee, "What Shapes School Work? Examining Influences on School Writing Tasks over Time in U.S. Secondary Schools," turns our attention to the institutional context. The chapter describes the evolution of tasks assigned to secondary school students in the USA from the 1979-1980 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. It shows how tests condition scholastic writing practices, reducing them to minimal

forms, and this despite advancements in didactic reflection. In "Les ancrages culturels de l'écriture des étudiants chinois à l'université: culture d'apprentissage et traditions académiques," ("Chinese students writing in university: Learning culture and academic traditions"), Agnès Pernet-Liu treats the contradictory cultural influences to which Chinese students are subjected when learning French. She reveals how these students are torn between the traditions conveyed by the culture, school, and coded writing of China on the one hand and by the influences of western university-style rhetoric and the international scientific community on the other. Both contributions analyze the epistemological aspects of context. In "intellectual orientations of studies of higher education writing in Latin America," the point of departure for Charles Bazerman and his colleagues, Natalia Avila, Ana Valéria Bork, Francini Poliseli-Corrêa, Vera Lúcia Cristovão, Mónica Tapia Ladino, Elizabeth Narváez, is the development of writing instruction measures in Latin America—measures they welcome for their vitality. The authors examine the heterogeneity of those measures, which they attribute to several factors: the dispersion of the structures in which this instruction takes place, and above all the absence of shared theoretical benchmarks and of a common editorial base. The question of unity and diversity is also treated in the chapter by Olga Dysthe, Frøydis Hertzberg, Ellen Krogh, Birgitta Norberg Brorsson, "Writing in the content areas—a Scandinavian perspective combining macro, meso, and micro levels," in which they show not only the importance of Scandinavian tradition relative to writing but also the diversity of its operationalization in instructional programs and practices with regard to writing in the scholastic disciplines.

Examination of writing in the disciplines lies at the core of the chapters by Charles Bazerman and Olga Dysthe and constitutes a key element of the collection. These questions apply equally to schools and universities. Together they point up not only the stakes but also the difficulties arising from the linkage between the different types of learning. Angela Kohnen, Wendy Saul and Nancy R. Singer, in "Where's the science? Developing writing criteria for secondary science Classrooms," present a research program designed to help secondary school teachers coordinate science instruction and training in texts specific to that field by introducing students to scientific journalism. They analyze the process which begins with the establishment of criteria for the scientific article by specialists to its imperfect implementation in the classroom. The chapter by Annie Camenish and Serge Petit, "Écrire en mathématiques: Le rôle des écrits intermédiaires," ("Writing in mathematics: The role of intermediate texts"), examines the difficulties that students experience in reading problem descriptions where the factual elements are not organized

in chronological order. To help the students process those statements, they propose to have the students rewrite them using a system of symbols, thereby establishing an explicit chronology. The chapter by Carolina Roni and Paula Carlino, "Writing for reading in science classes. The teacher's actions," compares two reading-writing systems in high school biology courses that incorporate the projection of a documentary film. Their analysis shows that when the formal presentation of the subject matter by the teacher precedes the research that the students are to perform, it discourages them from reading and writing to complement their understanding of the documents provided. In "Learning specialists working with faculty to embed development of academic literacies in discipline subjects," Kate Chanock demonstrates the important role of specialists in academic literacies when training students in academic writing. She also discusses the challenges of collaborating with disciplinary specialists, however, and nonetheless favors classroom instruction over competing online instruction programs.

The effect of digital media described by Kate Chanock has fueled debate: as if in response to her arguments, several chapters emphasize either the interactivity between learners and trainers that those media enable or the kinds of development that they are apt to foster among learners. In "Commenting with Camtasia: A descriptive study of the affordances and constraints of peer-to-peer screencast feedback," for example, Mary Lourdes Silva explores the way students use audiovisual feedback provided by their peers in order to determine whether they successfully seize the information for the purpose of improving low or high level elements and take advantage of training designed to help them process the information received. In "Apports du tutorat en ligne pour la production écrite dans un dispositif de télécollaboration" ("Contributions of online tutoring for written production in a telecollaborative system"), Catherine Muller analyzes how subjects learning a foreign language and their tutors—advanced students themselves—interact while editing a blog, wherein they play complementary roles, and then goes on to examine the effects on these two types of writers. Patricia Richard-Principalli, Georges Ferone and Catherine Delarue-Breton, in "L'écriture dans les forums de discussion entre genre premier et genre second" ("Writing in discussion forums: Between primary genre and secondary genre"), show that the forums in which students interact with their trainers can favor the process of secondarization by means of which the objects treated become objects of knowledge. The authors also draw a distinction between two profiles of learners according to whether that secondarization process is more or less successful. Two chapters, one by Roxane Joannidès and Marie-Claude Penloup and one by Cristina Marín Aliagas, offer a fresh perspective on the heretofore negative influence ascribed to

digital media, which some claim alters the writing of adolescents. The first, entitled "La littéracie numérique et l'orthographe dans les écrits adolescents: Des contacts conflictuels entre variétés de l'écrit?" ("Digital literacy and spelling in teenagers' writing: Possible conflicts among written varieties?"), studies spelling changes in middle school students by comparing two bodies of text collected fifteen years apart. It shows that segmentation problems are growing worse but that the practice of electronic writing has not caused the significant degradations generally attributed to it. The second, entitled "Schooled literacy in teenagers' online writing," takes a look at the Facebook profiles and blogs of adolescents, examining how the writers' personalities are constructed in a hybrid space between one that imparts culturally valuable literacy and one steeped in vernacular usages. And finally, in "Écrire avec le Web social: Quel type de sites pour quel étayage?" ("Writing and social media: Which website types for which scaffolding?"), François Mangenot provides a system for classifying websites and examines how they are best suited in the context of teaching French as a foreign language.

Questions relative to writing in a foreign language, highly present in the chapters dealing with digital media, are also the subject of chapters which examine the activity of writing and editing practices specifically associated with the use of a language other than the writer's native tongue. Maarit Mutta, in "Pausal behavior in the writing processes of foreign and native language writers: The importance of defining the individual pause length," compares the behaviors of Finnish-speaking and French-speaking writers. Based on a chronometric study and stimulated recall verbalization, she shows that members of the former group pause for longer periods in L2, revealing a lower level of confidence, and demonstrate more varied behavior in L1, while members of the latter group are more stable but exhibit significant differences from individual to individual.

The difference between L1 and L2 is considered from another perspective by Ivana Mirović and Vesna Bogdanović, who compare the discursive characteristics of scientific articles in Serbian and English in "Use of metadiscourse in research articles written in L1 and L2 by the same authors." Having demonstrated that English turns more to metadiscourse, they draw conclusions about this in regard to training. Maria Lim Falk and Per Holmberg, in "Paths to academic writing in a globalized world. A longitudinal study of Content and Language Integrated Learning in upper secondary school in Sweden," compare maternal-language academic texts written by high school students, only some of whom receive bilingual English-Swedish instruction. The authors show that bilingual instruction has little effect on the academic dimension of the texts written in the mother tongue, but that mastery of the

lexical components and mastery of the epistemic and rhetorical aspects are interdependent. As for Olga Anokhina, in "Multilingual writers and metalinguistic awareness: Can we use manuscripts as a basis for a typology of scriptural practices?" she looks at the practices of writers who make use of multiple languages. Applying genetic criticism methods, she uses manuscripts to establish a topology of usages by authors in several different languages during the production of their text.

Scriptural practice is also examined by considering the units treated during the writing process. Different approaches can be used here: psychologists want to determine which units are in play for each type of cognitive processing; education specialists want to find which types of unit can serve as a hook for the pedagogical process; linguists want to identify how the writer goes about organizing the units in order to form "text." Two chapters focus on the cognitive dimensions of the language activity. The one by Markus Damian and Qingqing Qu, "Syllables as representational units in English handwritten production?" reports on research designed to verify if the syllabic structure plays a role in the preparation and execution of the graphic act, as some studies of French and Spanish suggest. The authors conclude that in languages where the syllabic border is less clear, as in English, syllabic structure has little effect on written production. In "Informative differences: An argument for a comparative approach to written and spoken language research," Ariel Cohen-Golberg also examines syllables to support his thesis, the aim of which is to establish the theoretical and methodological foundations of a comparison between behaviors in written and oral production. He follows two lines of questioning, one dealing with the comparison between people with and without severely impaired hearing, and the other dealing with the grammatical calculations in the two modes of production. Among education specialists and linguists, the small units are viewed in their relation to the larger units. In her chapter, "Rééducation de l'orthographe lexicale auprès du scripteur présentant une dysorthographie" ("Rehabilitation of lexical orthography in writers with dysorthographia"), Nathalie Chapleau considers morphological units. She examines the effects of teaching morphology in dysorthographic students who were trained to identify suffixes, the meanings of which were explained to them, as a means of facilitating recuperation from memory during writing. Claudine Garcia-Debanc and Myriam Bras, in "Vers une cartographie des compétences de cohésion et de cohérence textuelle dans une tâche-problème de production écrite réalisée par des élèves de 9 à 12 ans" ("Mapping coherence and cohesion skills in written texts produced by 9- to 12-year-old French-speaking learners: Indicators of proficiency and progress"), consider the linguistic tokens used by students to resolve prob-

lems of anaphora and to ensure the temporal cohesion and coherence of a text, with the aim of providing the elements of a semi-automated analysis. Punctuation is the subject of two chapters. Dolores Amira Dávalos Esparza, in "The incidence of speech modalizers on children's reflections about the use of expressive punctuation," shows that primary school children use clues of a semantic or declaratory nature in the statements to be punctuated in order to choose the signs that seem suitable to them. In "Ajout après le point et hiérarchisation de l'énoncé: une tendance de l'écriture contemporaine" ("Additions after the full stop and hierarchical sentence organization: A new trend in contemporary writing"), Bernard Combettes and Annie Kuyumcuyan describe a phenomenon that characterizes contemporary writing, the continuation of the sentence after the full stop. They offer a typology of semantico-syntactic relationships linking the linguistic segments on either side of the full stop and attribute the development of these constructions to the writers' search for an alternative to the complex sentence. In "L'enjeu de la rédaction professionnelle" ("The issue of professional writing in the 21st century: multidisciplinary tools for a high-level writing"), Christina Romain, Véronique Rey and Marie-Emmanuelle Pereira show that writing professional documents requires the writer to combine the manipulation and ordering of linguistic units together with the mastery of an enunciative system ensuring the establishment of a relationship with the addressee. The chapter by Louis Hay, "La critique génétique, une autre approche de l'écriture?" ("Genetic criticism: another approach to writing?"), examines questions of both methodology and semiotics. It essentially shows how genetic criticism attempts to trace the writer's path by studying the graphic traces of their mental operations, revealing the link between the material and the symbolic.

This attention to writing dynamics extends to chapters that underscore their role in the personal or social construction of individuals. Bruno Hubert, in "Écrire pour donner à voir et entendre sa compréhension du monde" ("Writing to transmit and share one's understanding of the world"), and Eduardo Calil, in "Writing, memory and association: creation processes of poems by newly literate students," examine the way a system allows primary school students to construct themselves as authors. The first treats the linkage between reading and writing and how writing offers a path for conciliation with the world through the effort of representation and comprehension that it solicits. The second describes the process of creation established by a dyad of young children who undertake to write a poem. It shows how the written record is only an imperfect re-creation of the associations underlying the ideas and the fertile terms established by the children during their oral exchanges. With regard to adults and their training, the emphasis is on the more or less

successful changes that writing provokes. In "Faire écrire pour construire des connaissances: accompagner la construction d'une posture d'apprenti-chercheur" ("Building knowledge through writing workshops: How to accompany the gradual building of an apprentice-researcher posture"), Jacqueline Lafont-Terranova and Maurice Niwese describe a widespread system used in writing seminars as an initiation to writing research papers while developing the relationship to students' writing at the same time. The assessment by Marie-Hélène Jacques is more pessimistic. In "Écriture et reconstruction identitaire au cours des transitions professionnelles. Le cas de la Validation d'Acquis de l'Expérience," ("Writing and reconstructing identity through professional transitions"), which examines the texts that people must write during the course of professional reorientation, she shows that the task rekindles initial socio-cultural inequalities.

Thus, through the chapters collected in this book, which sketch the landscape of current writing research, we can see how our knowledge about writing is still growing, and appreciate the positive effect of educational research. But, at the same time, these chapter show, by what they don't cover, wide areas that remain in the shadows. This body of work offers not only results and conclusions well worth retaining, but also paths of future inquiry well worth pursuing.