

# Does teaching to write eclipse writing to learn?.

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# Does teaching to write eclipse writing to learn in *WPW*?

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# WRITING PROGRAMS WORLDWIDE

PROFILES OF ACADEMIC  
WRITING IN MANY PLACES

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[http://wac.colostate.edu/  
books/wpww/](http://wac.colostate.edu/books/wpww/)

# Aim and plan

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- Thoughts through recurrent reading of chapters.
- My lenses
- Salient ideas along the book.

# My standpoints (lenses)

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- Writing as a mode of
  - learning
  - communication
  - participation
  - belonging

# Salient / recurrent ideas

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- Usual problems and challenges
- Common attitudes and conceptions
- Similar initiatives of teaching writing.
  
- Tension between teaching to write and writing to learn

# Challenge: personal commitment / institutional support

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- Individual commitment of faculty members (“sacrifice, passion, devotion”) / sustainability of the initiative (Narvaéz 154; Turner & Kearns 133; Dan 142)
- Teachers on their own (De Micheli & Iglesia 35)
- Interdisciplinary institutional program finally approved after the third attempt by interested teachers (Moyano & Natale 25)

# Challenge: personal commitment / institutional support

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- To be considered relevant, writing initiatives should be supported by the institution *and* the faculty across the disciplines (Deane & Ganobcsik-Williams; Pollet 100; García-Arroyo y Quintana 333)
- Interdisciplinary working force (Graves & Graves 117)
- Team-teaching for writing in the disciplines (Gonano & Nelson 52; Pollet 100; Purser 62)
- Initiatives that did not last: they rose and fell with the individuals driving them (García-Arroyo & Quintana 336; Gonano & Nelson; Stassen & Jansen 293)



# Conceptions

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- Writing initiatives are not theoretically neutral: they represent particular ways of thinking about language, writing, learning and teaching (Purser 60)

# Conceptions

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## □ Writing

- Channel of communication / heuristic means of knowledge crafting (Hirsch y Paoli 441)
- Invariable / variable along different social situations (Solé, Teberosky y Castelló 366; Purser 59; Carlino 489)

## □ Learning of writing

- Once in a life, in the first years of compulsory education (Solé, Teberosky y Castelló 366)

# Conceptions

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- Teaching of writing
  - One action / simultaneous multiple initiatives needed (Deane y Ganobcsik 189)
  - Occasional / recursive (Gonano y Nelson 45; Turner y Kearns 133)
  - Remedial / inclusive (Gonano y Nelson 44)
  - Introductory course to train students for the future / Substantive help to take part in actual writing practices which have meaning at present (Zuckerman et al. 282; Motta-Roth 112; Artemeva et al., 2009)

# Concepciones

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- Teaching of writing
  - Embedded in the disciplines / confined to the margins through *ad hoc* services (Gonano & Nelson 44; Purser 57)
  - Centered on texts / language practices (McConlogue, Mitchell & Peake 204)
  - Specialized teachers / interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers
    - Teacher development, co-teaching and curriculum development (Dan 143; McConlogue, Mitchell y Peake 204; Purser 56)

# Tension between teaching to write and writing to learn

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- Writing as a textual product / as an intellectual process (Carter, Miller & Penrose, 1998)
- Improving student writing / students learning of a discipline through writing (Russell, 2013)
- Writing as a means of communication / as a means of engaging students with the problems of a discipline (De Micheli & Iglesia<sup>38</sup>; McConlogue, Mitchell & Peak 205)

# International survey (N=350 from 54 countries)

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- Reasons for interest in student writing by teachers and administrators
  - Deficits in student writing proficiency (30%)
  - Pressures: proficiency exams, expectations of employers (10%)
  - Need to prepare students for publication in their fields (5%)
  - Value of writing as a tool of learning in the disciplines (Thaiss 17)

# Writing as an object of instruction *but not as a learning tool*

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“Language professors put emphasis on writing because writing is regarded as one of the language skills for their students, but they do not really conceptualize writing as a tool to enhance learning and critical thinking [...] Professors in other disciplines employ writing assignments as evaluation tools and consider them as “by-products” of their courses, not as “writing to learn”. This lack of association of writing with learning is not a rejection of the concept, but simply evidence that WAC has not been introduced into China yet.” (Dan 144)

# Writing as an object of instruction *but not as a learning tool*

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“The Language and Learning team is collaborating with the faculties of [different disciplines] to embed language and learning development within targeted units. [...] They position writing, not only as a core skill required to satisfactorily complete assessment tasks, but over the longer term as a key graduate attribute.” (Gonano & Nelson 52)



# Writing as a learning tool *and* an object of instruction

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“Our approach does not assume particular models of writing nor measure success in terms of the “written product”. [...] *Thinking Writing* [...] centres on the development of writing as a pedagogical tool and outcome within the mainstream of disciplinary teaching and learning across the institution. [...] Its aim [is] to assist academic departments with their educational work (designing modules [...], enhancing student learning) specifically through the lens of writing.” (McConlogue, Mitchell & Peak 203)

# Writing as a learning tool *and* an object of instruction

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“We view learners as actively constructing their understanding of disciplinary concepts and articulating these through writing; it is through writing (at least in a UK context) that students can begin to participate in the discourse community of their academic discipline.” (McConlogue, Mitchell & Peak 205)

# Writing as a learning tool *and* an object of instruction

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- “Writing to learn biology in the framework of a didactic-curricular change in the first year program at an argentine university”.
- “There are several obstacles that make it difficult for individual learning to occur in large classes. On the one hand, few students dare to express their ideas before their classmates. In addition, oral communication allows for little time to reflect on what is heard and said.” (De Micheli & Iglesia 38)

# Conclusion

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- Usual challenge: personal / institutional support
- Common attitudes and conceptions about writing, and learning and teaching to write
- Tension between teaching to write and writing to learn

# Does teaching to write eclipses writing to learn in *WPW*?

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