

10 EATAW as a First-Year College Composition Course

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There are three main avenues I wish to take when presenting my reflection on this collection. All three of these avenues represent, in part, the interest I maintain with our EATAW community, my main interest as an academic in the field of writing research, and my dedication to the teaching of writing in my institution.

With some degree of bias (but with a high degree of honesty, primarily acquired throughout the years being a member of the EATAW community and being an elected official on the board of EATAW) EATAW is an incredibly exciting organization and community to be part of. To get some sense why I think so, I strongly recommend you read Erin Zimmerman's chapter which drives home a much more objective account which reflects my personal bias. Erin does so by synthesizing 12 EATAW voices. A few of these voices were there right from the beginning. Other voices entered the organization a little later, such as my own. Being part of these voices, represented in Erin's article, and understanding that my voice is a relatively new voice, I am humbled that many of the founders of EATAW are still active participants in our community today, inspiring newcomers and frequent visitors who bring with them an incredible insight in the ever-growing complexity which is the teaching of academic writing and the research of academic writing in the context of Europe. Reflecting on my own development, I know that in 2009, when I first attended EATAW, I felt that I was finally in the company of people and colleagues who would make sense and simplified the teaching of writing, only to realize, that the complexity grew the deeper I dove. Neither the word simplified here nor complexity are words which have a negative connotation when it comes to what we do. The complex role of writing just is, as Machura, Melonashi et al., and Zenger and Pill highlight in their chapters. Overall, this collection represents the growing complexity of what we do and who we are. EATAW has, over the years I have participated as member of the community and as an elected representative on the board, diversified. EATAW, as have other organizations which centralize writing, has managed to build a following and a voice for those who are stranded on diverse European islands when

it comes to the teaching of writing and the research of writing. As many of you know, and as became clear in the last Keynote address of Dylan Dryer at the EATAW conference in Ostrava 2021, Europe does not have a discipline which is called writing, as they do in the US. Writing lives in many different areas where we are, and in many different languages and many different cultures. Given my own personal growth within the organization, but also as a researcher and instructor of writing, I embrace this complexity, and welcome the diversity of these messages represented in this collection.

As I highlighted earlier, three papers in this collection provide a clear demonstration of the complex environment we reside in. Machura's paper investigates superdiversity at a German University; Melonashi et al. reporting on the challenges European institutions of higher education face through the COST action, We ReLaTe; and Zenger and Pill, demonstrating how we may be able to better understand the challenges highlighted by the former studies through the lens of world-systems to better understand the connectivity between the complex structures we operate in. Superdiversity is represented by student populations, with different social economic backgrounds, and social cultural backgrounds, linguistic backgrounds operating in different disciplines. Many of us work in these environments. I applaud Machura for placing superdiversity central in her work, primarily, knowing full well, that investigating any group of students results in these diversities to be factors we should be taking into consideration when drawing our inferences. As Zimmerman highlights through her conversations with EATAW voices, Europe does not have a unified approach to teaching and learning writing as they do in the US. Most countries in Europe do not have anything which closely resembles first year composition courses. As a result, it is a huge challenge for all of us. There is no common denominator we can fall back on. As such, superdiversity is what we have, and will continue to create.

Melonashi et al.'s chapter on the incredible work COST action We ReLaTe undertook to better understand what kind of institutional support models there are in European institutions of higher education. Where do we place writing, teaching, learning and research? Who is responsible to teach, support or even develop these competences? And more important, who are the stakeholders, where do they come from, and when we ask stellar colleagues in these countries, where and how did they pick up on these skills? Reading through the accounts of their research, it becomes clear there has not been a winning institutional formula in the European context. This might primarily be as there does not seem to be a general standard, and from their findings, stellar scholars find their way through a more bottom up, personal network building approach. It highlights the need for European organizations and networks and projects as

essential to build and foster these skills. However, Zenger and Pill's study, reporting on the conversations had with scholars in higher education institutions, describes the scholars' understandings of academic writing in their institutions and how this operates across institutional boundaries. As in Melonashi et al.'s study, there is evidence of networked bottom-up perspectives, but Zenger and Pill also conclude that there are also scholars who do not present these perspectives. It should be noted, however, that these perspectives were not in the European context. From the perspective of EATAW, complexity and diversity is part of our responsibility to support and bring scholars together not only once every two years during our conference but continuously as a community.

Teaching writing is a passion of mine, and surely for many of you who are reading this collection. This is what brought me to EATAW and will keep me engaged with EATAW. The previously mentioned papers have demonstrated the complexities, but the following three papers highlight why EATAW is so important when it comes to navigating these complexities as instructors of writing, specifically in our context. Castelló's study, for me as an instructor of writing for doctoral students, emphasizes that the teaching of writing is not (only) about teaching writing, but it is about approaching writing through personal discovery and raising awareness. This may well be attributed to the fact that, again, in the European context, there are no writing and composition courses which all students take at the beginning of their higher education journey. As a result, students have to go through the journey of understanding themselves as a writer, who they are writing for, and how that is achieved in the text. The time students find out, is when they are confronted with a writing assignment. Doctoral students end up in the deep end, where writing is their prime outlet for research results. We know this, but how many of our colleagues at our institutions know this? How many times do we need to convince others that writing is not about language alone, and writing is about becoming a writer? Castelló's studies are instrumental for those working with doctoral students and in research intensive programs.

Evident also in Ankersborg and Pogner's research, teaching writing is not always about teaching writing. In their study, they investigated the role of supervision as an intervention to support and develop students writing skills. When we do not teach writing directly, what role does a pedagogical intervention such as supervision, more specifically student-centered supervision, have on students learning of writing? According to Ankersborg and Pogner, such supervision empowers students to become more much aware the writing process has in their personal development as writers. When these skills and such revelations are fostered during the early years of higher education students, the better a non-uniformed centralized first year composition course can support the diversity we

operate in. In other words, studies such as these highlight that in the European context, we may find strength in alternative ways of teaching writing. First year composition courses, as some of us long for in some of our institutions, might actually not be a beneficial pedagogical model. Given the diversities of languages, cultures, institutional contexts, etc. Our models are supported in our lack of direct teaching of writing and more in the ways we support our complexities to foster students' individual and personal awareness of what writing is and means in their contexts. For some it might live in a small cultural and linguistic context, for others, one which operates and is influenced by the global stage of writing and research, as also highlighted by Zenger and Pill.

Dengscherz' reporting of 17 case studies further highlights of situational variation in the modeling of writing processes. This paper attempts to make visible the complexities we do not see. Not to sound too repetitive, but writing contexts differ, languages, cultures, and institutional models differ. Writing process models have given us a glimpse into the complex system of writing. When agglomerating all our EATAW contributions, we see all sorts of contributions poking holes and filling holes that many of the models cannot model or have not modeled extensively yet. Which brings me to the two remaining papers in this collection, which both address the latest challenge we are all facing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how technology interrupts and adds multiple complexities to everything we do. Both Anson and Head caution us when we apply any technological tool. For many of us, in the last months, it has been a savior and a curse. It has required many of us to rethink, quickly, how we can transform everything we know and have done with technological tools which will support us in the process of teaching and supporting students in the process of learning to write. As readers of this conference collection, you are invested in the teaching of writing, and I encourage you to read Anson's and Head's work. They are challenging us to think and rethink the role technology plays in our new normal.

We're still in the middle of this crisis and in some ways, as an elected EATAW board member, I am looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead for us as an organization. The take-away message for me, and one which I share with my colleagues on the board, is that we need to broaden our scope of support to our members. After 20 years, EATAW stands for something in all our individual complex contexts. We can, perhaps, be the first-year composition course, for instructors and institutions. In other words, we are a representative voice reflected in our studies and combined knowledge. Too valuable to be shared once every two years. If one thing what the new normal has taught us, we can come together much more often. We can share our knowledge through online platforms. We do find each other's voices. We just need to make it easier and more accessible.