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**Writing Within and Beyond the Engineering University: Focus on Lifelong Learning**

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**Institutional Description:**

I am currently an Associate Professor at National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Core Engineering School, Division for Foreign Languages, Tomsk, Russia. Tomsk Polytechnic University is the oldest engineering higher school in the Asian part of Russia, which places special emphasis on advanced engineering education, creation of resource-efficient technologies, internationalization, and integration of research and academic activities. I teach postgraduate students of different engineering profiles. My current research interests include the discourse analysis of academic engineering genres, cognitive- and neurolinguistics, academic writing, second language acquisition research, linguistic landscapes, curriculum development, student support, and faculty development. Within the second language acquisition, I am actively involved in the evaluation of academic scientific writing, and positioning in graduate student writing, English language for specific and academic purposes.

**Abstract.**

This research aims to raise awareness of the underlying complexities concerning EFL student writing in the engineering universities and beyond them. The author addresses theoretical as well as practical questions regarding the literacies required of students in higher education, from the perspective of both students themselves and of their tutors. In addition, in the study the author accented attention to the question of determining the conditions for lifelong learning within and beyond the engineering university. Although the work is in its early stages, the findings so far look very exciting and could potentially have a huge effect overall conception of lifelong learning writing within and beyond the engineering university. The study assumes through a series of longitudinal interviews spanning a group of 15 EFL students’ second, fourth, six, and eights semesters at a National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, the author examines the intersection of beliefs and values about engineering education, lifelong learning, and professional writing in English, and how these beliefs and values change over time. This changing is particularly clear in students’ first year. When students enter their sophomore and third years, they grow to value writing for future professional career and lifelong learning. Moreover, the aim of the study is to get a set of requirements from workplace/Industry partners concerning their vision of writing skills necessary for their potential employees and discuss them with university staff for developing future co-programs.

**Key words:** higher engineering education, student beliefs, lifelong learning, professional writing

**Introduction**

During last decades writing and the issues connected with its teaching, fostered significant growth of interest to it in higher education all over the world. There are various of studies that have contributed to our understanding of students’ and faculty perceptions of writing (Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Driscoll, 2011); knowledge economy, skills, ability and literacy (Bazerman and Rogers 2009); working in different languages of production (Arvay, Tanko, 2004); students’ meaningful writing experiences (Geller, Eodice, & Lerner, 2016); across disciplines (Salas, 2015), critical transitions within the university (Boyd, 2016; Goldschmidt, 2014; Gorzelsky, et al.; Hayes, Ferris, & Whithaus, 2016); the ways in which cognitive issues or student dispositions influence writing behaviors (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak, 2014); involvement of ‘others’ in text production (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Lillis & Curry, 2006); transfer principles to higher education and teaching for transfer (Robertson & Taczak;Yancey, 2014; Benander & Lightner, 2005; Billing, 2007; Halpern & Hakel, 2003; Deveci, 2018) and others.

Despite the long history of studying writing there is, however, a critical need for more research on (preparing students for) writing beyond the university. A relative few scholars have looked at writing experiences beyond the university (Faigley, 2015; Hughes, Gillespie, & Kail, 2010). Because of a growing need to understand the factors that shape writing development and writing lifelong learning, we are planning to see which factors (such as values and beliefs, genre knowledge, etc.) correlated with writing growth over the engineering university curricular.

**Methods**

It is planned to start with profound analysis of theory, practice and methodology developed in the field of writing within and beyond the university, consider priorities, contexts, resources and constraints. We are going to employ mixed methods to explore multi-institutional questions about lifelong learning, and research teams will be encouraged to work with diverse populations of research participants, students, alumni and workplace/Industry partners.

**Research Questions.**

In particular, our study addresses the following research questions:

1. Which factors (such as values and beliefs, genre knowledge, etc.) correlated with writing growth over the engineering university curricular?
2. What genres are more critical for professional activity of future engineers?
3. What are the ways to improve writing skills in native and foreign language?
4. What makes writing effective in the workplace?
5. What is a writer’s lifespan defined, described, and experienced across different and changing contexts?
6. How are the future graduates developing professional identities and practices informed by writing experiences within academic contexts that give them opportunities to focus on transitions to contexts beyond the university?
7. How might universities collaborate with industry, civic organizations, and others to foster writers’ lifelong learning?

Writing beyond the University opens a space for scholars to come together to address the need to know more about writing in contexts beyond the university. This kind of writing can occur in a number of discrete or overlapping contexts, such as workplaces and civic spaces, academic contexts that focus on transitions to contexts beyond university and others.

**Tentative hypothesis, results, and/or conclusions**

According to the first results pedagogical practices and curricular experiences in native and English languages identified by students as being most helpful in developing expertise in their discipline’s writing genres. First longitudinal interviews spanning a group of 15 EFL students’ second, fourth, six, and eights semesters at a National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University showed that beliefs and values changed over time and this changing is particularly clear in students’ first year. When students enter their sophomore and third years, they grow to value writing for future professional career and lifelong learning. The next stage of the study involves longitudinal interviews of discipline staff of the university and industry partners concerning their views on teaching writing genres within and beyond university. At the final stage of the project it is planned to give suggestions for university-level and course-specific curricular change to better address professional writing, value, and the need to lifelong learning within English language courses as well as general engineering education courses.

My hypothesis is that this research producing a wide range of results, which can serve as a students’ progress in understanding themselves as lifelong learners. Engineering universities require a substantial transformation into lifelong learning institutions. The shift in educational paradigms is global, and we should to solve these issues in cooperation. There are drivers and barriers common for universities all over the world which increase or decrease motivation to engage in lifelong learning process, and provides some insights into the challenges of embedding lifelong learning in higher education. This research might be of interest to researchers of other engineering universities involved in the development of lifelong learning programs and the journal “Writing and Pedagogy”.

**Literature review**

To address the above questions, I will draw on literature from a number of areas both within and outside the field of writing studies.