Catching Another Wave: WAC at the Graduate Level

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Key questions about WAC and grad writing support
The wider context of grad writing support (CGC Survey)
The contexts of our positions
What's happening at Dartmouth: needs assessment
What's happening at Chalmers: grad student support and faculty development

Our talk

What is “writing across the curriculum” at the graduate level?
  • What do we mean by “writing”?
  • What do we mean by “curriculum”?
  • How are we defining WAC?

Key Questions

What is the landscape of graduate communication support?
  • Which campus units typically offer graduate writing support?
  • What models for and approaches to graduate writing support have been developed and which seem most effective?
  • What kinds of support do graduate students and their mentors want?
  • What is the place of WAC programs in this landscape?
CGC Survey: Campus Homes of Respondents

- Writing Center, 21%
- English dept., 16%
- Graduate school, 13%
- Intensive English Program, 7%
- WAC/WID, 7%
- Linguistics Dept., 3%
- Languages Dept., 3%
- Student support center, 1%
- Other, 26%

Other Campus Homes:
- Departments: Writing Studies, Communication, Education, Speech Language Pathology and Audiology, Comparative Lit
- Offices: Office for International Students and Scholars, Research Office, Career Services
- Centers: Teaching and Learning Center, Intercultural Communication Center
- Programs: Developmental English, Test Preparation, TESOL, English for Academic Purposes, Preparing Future Faculty
- Other: Deanship of Development and Skills Enhancement, Freelance, Library

CGC Survey: Nat’l/Int’l Conferences Attended by Respondents

Other Conferences
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- American Medical Writers Association (AMWA)
- American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA)
- Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPFL)
- Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL)
- Association for Business Communication (ABC)
- Association for Writing and Writing Programs (AWWP)
- British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL)
- British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP)
- Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics (CAAL)
Other Conferences

- Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW)
- Canadian Writing Centers Association (CWCA)
- Capital Area Legal Writing Conference (CALWC)
- College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)
- Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC)
- European Writing Centers Association (EWCA)
- Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference (FemRhet)
- Higher Education Research & Development Association (HERDSA)
- IEEE Professional Communications Conference

Available models of support

- Graduate writing courses (Arunha, 2009; Delyser, 2003; Frodensen, 1995; Norris & Tardy, 2006; Fredericksen & Mangelsdorf, 2014)
- Graduate writing groups (Phillips, 2012)
- Graduate writing fellows program (Simpson, 2014)
- Graduate/enhanced writing center (Phillips, 2014)
- Dissertation boot camp (Allison, Cudey, & Nunan, 1998; Simpson, 2013)
- Faculty writing support (Geller & Eodice, 2012; Cox & Brunjes, 2012)
What types of graduate communication support is offered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing center services</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops on writing</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-credit writing courses</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit writing courses</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops on oral communication</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit courses on oral communication</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation partner program</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/dissertation bootcamp</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing tutoring outside of a writing center</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing groups (organized by a unit in the pre-matriculation classes)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing retreat</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not sure</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is the support for?

- Some are open to all; others are only for ESL/international students, 35%
- They are open to all, but targeted mainly at ESL students, 12%
- They are designed for ESL students, but open to all, 10%
- They are designed for all, available to all, 37%
- They are only for ESL/international students, 12%
- They are only for ESL/international students, 12%
- They are open to all, but targeted mainly at ESL students, 12%
- They are only for ESL/international students, 12%

Chalmers

**My Position**

- Director, Division for Language and Communication (15%)  
  - Associate professor lecturer/researcher (75%)
  - Cater for language and communication education in English and Swedish across the university from BSc to faculty.
  - Teach international PHD AW; BSc thesis writing; writing interventions in BSc and MSc; faculty AW and writing facilitation, (Fiction for engineers)

**Institution**

- Undergrads (BSc / BScEng): 2923
- Grads (MSc / MScEng): 5582
- Int' population: approx 35% - significant variation among the 40+ MSc programmes
- PhDs: 1150 (many write both a licentiate thesis and a PhD thesis)

Writing support at Chalmers (& Göteborg University)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Grad — STEM</th>
<th>PhD — &quot;STEM&quot;</th>
<th>PhD — Medicine</th>
<th>Faculty &amp; Post-doc STEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>Writing courses (first three years)</td>
<td>48-hour credit introduction course; 100-hour writing course later</td>
<td>48-hour credit introduction course; 100-hour writing course later</td>
<td>100-hour credit course for AW and WID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Workshops, elective writing / ESL/EFL/EAP courses</td>
<td>Workshops, lectures and journal clubs by department or research groups</td>
<td>Writing center (staff tutors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD — &quot;STEM&quot;</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD — Medicine</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (staff tutors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty &amp; Post-doc STEM</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (peer tutors)</td>
<td>Writing center (staff tutors)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Career services

- Career services
- Feedback on app, Materials (Strategic research support)
My Position

Lecturer, Institute for Writing and Rhetoric (50%)
Teach international FYC, WC tutor training, FYC and FYS faculty development

Tutor international grad students

Institution

Undergrad int'l population: 9% (n 380)
Grad int'l population: 30% (n 613)
  • 30% of A&S grads (n 250)
  • 35% of Tuck School of Business grads (n 209)
  • 43% of Thayer School of Engineering grads (n 113)
  • 12% of Geisel School of Medicine grads (n 51)

Int'l post-docs: n 63
Invisible permanent resident L2 population

More selective for undergraduates (10% admit rate) than for graduate students (31% admit rate)

Needs Assessment at Dartmouth

* Language and literacy backgrounds and needs assessment (Henrichsen, 1994; Oanh & Duong, 2007; Wang & Bakken, 2004, Simpson, 2103; Dadak, as cited in Cox 2010)

* Program needs assessment: campus mapping (Patton, 2011)

Needs Assessment: Survey Data

Survey of international graduate students
  • 461% (701/373) response rate
  • 7 respondents chose not participate in the research study

Survey of international post-docs
  • 63% response rate (426/7)
  • 0 respondents chose not participate in the research study

Survey of faculty who work with graduate students
  • 31% response rate (156/496)
  • 2 respondents chose not participate in the research study
Chalmers writing course (PhD)

- 12 students, 4-hour seminar/week + assignments; ~100 hours
- Not language proficiency courses as such
- General learning objectives
  - Improve, refine, polish writing skills
  - Enhancing, increasing awareness of and ability to use communicative, rhetorical, and argumentative genre specific strategies
  - Move beyond course environment, peer review, genre/system analysis
  - Five assignments in multiple versions between peers over the 8-week course
  - SPSE; Data commentary; Intro; Discussion; Abstract & Title
  - Cross-disciplinary

Chalmers introductory course (PhD)

- Perform introductory level analyses of recurring rhetorical strategies in the research articles of a specific discipline and assess the effectiveness of these strategies for a given situation or context
- Apply basic genre analysis for future writing tasks
- Self-assess areas of academic writing that require particular focus and improvement
- Provide methodologically informed, genre and writing process-oriented, reader-focused peer response inside a research group or community

GTS package at Göteborg University (School of medicine)

- Introduction to research (three weeks and two exam days)
  - Theory of Science and Introduction to Research Methodology
  - Research Ethics
  - Orientation in Medical Statistics
  - Communication of Research
  - Information Retrieval
- Half time seminar
  - The half time seminar is an open seminar where the research project, achieved results and the plan for the final years of studies is presented orally and in writing.
- PhD proficiency course
  - the university organization; the academic career
  - the dissertation at the Sahlgrenska Academy; rules, regulations, planning and procedure
  - thesis design; oral presentation; public communication
- grant application writing
- misconduct in research
Göteborg University writing course (PhD) – Learning outcomes

* Knowledge and understanding:
  Compare textual concepts in terms of genre, information structure, and visual rhetoric
* Skills and abilities:
  Conduct a close-reading of a scientific article with a focus on communicative and rhetorical components and qualities of the text and note the genre specific characteristics relevant to their own writing. Apply genre specific awareness into specific features in texts that are relevant to their own publications strategies
  Structurally and rhetorically design their research paper in an efficient way in terms of for example their choice of journal, publication type, or the relative news value of their findings
  Act as conscientious and skilled peer reviewers to colleagues in their writing environment

Chalmers Writing course (faculty) – Learning outcomes

* improve their own English written proficiency by access to and knowledge of a series of writing and grammar tools, writing pedagogies, and rhetorical perspectives on writing
* enhance the written proficiency and reading strategies of students particularly for MSc and PhD levels and theses
* promote and support the analysis of texts in terms not only of critical reading but equally importantly in terms of disciplinary and genre awareness
* provide and assess feedback on writing both from a formative and a summative point of view to a heterogeneous student body

Göteborg University writing course (PhD)

* 12 students, 4-hour seminar/week + reading: ~120 hours
* Not language proficiency courses as such
* General learning objectives
  * Improve, refine, polish writing skills
  * Enhancing, increasing awareness of and ability to use communicative, rhetorical, and argumentative genre specific strategies
  * Move beyond course environment, peer review
  * Five assignments in multiple versions between peers over the 8-week course
  * Overview; methods; Data commentary; Discussion; Intro; Abstract & Title
  * Cross-disciplinary

Chalmers writing course (faculty)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>18.5.1-00</td>
<td>18.5.1-00</td>
<td>18.5.1-00</td>
<td>18.5.1-00</td>
<td>18.5.1-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>5, 6.5-00</td>
<td>5, 6.5-00</td>
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<td>5, 6.5-00</td>
<td>5, 6.5-00</td>
<td>5, 6.5-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data commentary</td>
<td>7, 6.5-00</td>
<td>7, 6.5-00</td>
<td>7, 6.5-00</td>
<td>7, 6.5-00</td>
<td>7, 6.5-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>8, 6.5-00</td>
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<td>8, 6.5-00</td>
<td>8, 6.5-00</td>
<td>8, 6.5-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>9, 6.5-00</td>
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<td>9, 6.5-00</td>
<td>9, 6.5-00</td>
<td>9, 6.5-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract &amp; Title</td>
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<td>10, 6.5-00</td>
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<td>10, 6.5-00</td>
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Student writing

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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Student draft</td>
<td>Student draft</td>
<td>Student draft</td>
<td>Student draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
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Writing pedagogy

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>Final draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Peer</td>
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<td>Peer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final</td>
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Challenges

- Creating effective support for students in different disciplines, in types of programs, with different needs, at different points in their programs, and with different future goals.
- Figuring out the landscape of graduate writing—Absolutely!
- Convincing administration that grad students need writing support beyond tutoring (not that bad actually) but convincing supervisors that they need it and need to be involved in it.
- Figuring out the language and literacy backgrounds and needs of incoming grad students and the challenge of addressing very heterogeneous groups.
- Convincing L2 grad students that they need writing support beyond copyediting and well before they reach the thesis or thesis submission.
- What about working with post-docs and faculty?
- Striking a balance EAP <> Disciplinary discourse <> Workplace writing.

Join the Consortium on Graduate Communication!

Website: [http://gradconsortium.wordpress.com/](http://gradconsortium.wordpress.com/)

Upcoming Events:
- Colloquium organized by Nigel Caplan and hosted by Jane Freeman, March 25, 2015, University of Toronto.