

SIG Writing Newsletter

Summer 2014



Event: Conference on Writing Research and Research School 2014

SIG Writing's biennial conference is just around the corner. It will take place from August 27 to 29 in **Amsterdam** (The Netherlands). On August 25 and 26, there will be the Research School in **Utrecht** (The Netherlands).

Check out the website for the program and the various social events, the book of abstracts, and all kinds of information: <http://cowr.org>.

A survival guide has been published, containing information about the venue,

how to get there, and the public transport system: https://cowr2014.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/handout_generalinfo.pdf.

If you haven't booked your accommodation yet, please do so as soon as possible, as Amsterdam is a very popular destination for summer holidays.

SIG Writing is celebrating its 25th birthday and this occasion calls for a tribute: the COWR song contest! An anthem, a ballad, or something more hardcore? The best song will be performed at the COWR dinner party, and the winner will receive a prize (and eternal fame!). We are looking forward to receiving your con-

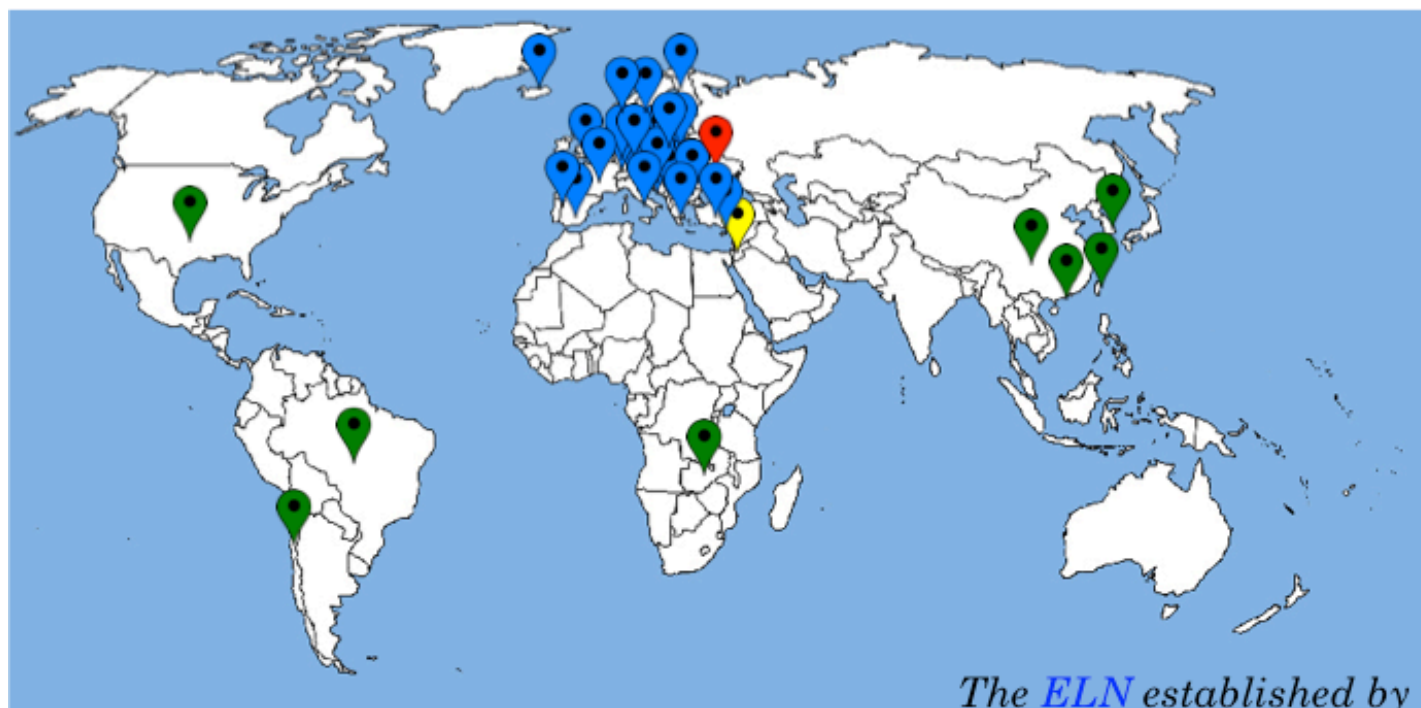
tributions at cowr2014@gmail.com.

We will also see the winners of the **Studies in Writing** competition: The photo showing the most volumes in a shelf of your home library or your university library and the application for having the complete series at your university library.

The conference is also present on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ConferenceOnWritingResearch2014) and Twitter (use the hashtag #cowr2014 or follow @cowr2014).

If you have any question, you can contact the organizers at cowr2014@gmail.com. We look forward to meeting you all!





*The ELN established by
COST Action IS1401*

COST: European Literacy Network

Recently the COST Action IS1401 **European Literacy Network (ELN)** has been approved. It starts with 80 researchers from 38 countries.

Literacy crucially depends on societal forces which can promote or hinder human development. The efficiency of this promotion is critically constrained by the availability of accurate knowledge. Knowing about literacy is contingent upon an interdisciplinary web of expertise that can produce that sort of knowledge within a reasonable timeline. Relevant networks already exist in Europe, but need to be sustained so that we can face the demands of the new digital era effectively.

Through this action, reading and writing research communities across Europe and beyond join to integrate their findings and align their research agendas so that they can:

- develop an integrated and inclusive approach to foundational literacy across Europe,
- devise a comprehensive framework of developmental aspects of literacy and education in a digital world, and
- further improve literacy technologies.

This will be valuable for promoting citizens' interdependence, participation, and innovation, which are key assets to a united and diverse Europe.

You find more information on the website: <http://www.cost.eu/>

domains_actions/isch/Actions/IS1401. See the memorandum of understanding there.

If you are interested in taking part in this action, please contact Rui Alves at ralves@fpce.up.pt and state your interest, the working group you would like to join, and three keywords describing your research.

Event: 2014 Thomas R. Watson Conference

Please join us for the 2014 Thomas R. Watson Conference, October 16 to 18, at the University of Louisville, in Louisville, KY (USA). The conference theme is **Responsivity: Defining, Cultivating, Enacting**.

The 2014 Watson Conference is devoted to exploring what it means for teachers/scholars of rhetoric and composition to be responsive to communities both within and beyond the academy.

Specifically, the 2014 Watson Conference will explore what it means to be responsive in a variety of contexts:

- in our scholarship and teaching
- in the ways we broaden and/or sustain our engagement with diverse partnerships
- in the ways we work to garner the material conditions that undergird these efforts.

In exploring these, this conference will pursue ways to articulate effective

rhetorics of responsivity and shape our field's discussions of writing and a writing citizenry.

Keynote Speakers include Jonathan Alexander, John Duffy, Jeff Grabill, Juan Guerra, Wendy Hesford, Gesa Kirsch, and Paula Matheiu; Jackie Jones Royster is moderator.

For more information, check out the website www.WatsonConference.com or email Mary P. Sheridan (MaryP.Sheridan@louisville.edu).

Project: Counseling Writing in the Classroom: A Means for Better Teaching?

The German Mercator Foundation has recently established an *Institute for the Educational Promotion of Language Abilities and German as a Second Language* (see <http://www.mercator-institut-sprachfoerderung.de>) at the University of Cologne (Germany). The institute has granted a three-year research project to Prof. Joachim Grabowski from the Leibniz University Hanover, entitled **Besser schreiben lehren durch halbstandardisierte individuelle Schreibberatung: Prüfung eines Beratungsmodells in schulischer Förder- und hochschulischer Ausbildungspraxis** (engl. 'Improving teaching writing via individual semi-standardized counseling: testing a counseling model in the practical fields of school and university

teacher training'). Within an interdisciplinary (linguistic, psychological, and didactic) approach, two main questions are pursued:

- Will an already developed counseling instrument for the advancement of writing competence in sixth grade turn out to be effective?
- Is it possible to sustainably teach the respective counseling competences already during university teacher education?

The project is based on the awareness that it needs individual guidance of pupils to support writing competence in the very heterogeneous learning groups prevalent in today's classrooms. How is it possible to offer systematic and partially automated writing instruction that reduces the load for teachers but still remains individual and considers the desiderata of writing instruction that have been empirically proven (e.g., orientation towards processes, reference to formulation, second language sensibility)? How to support the students' independent editing and reviewing skills?

The project runs in collaboration with Prof. Anne Berkemeier from language didactics at the Heidelberg University of Education (Heidelberg, Germany); involved junior researchers are Moti Brinkhaus, Marei Kotzerke, and Inga Harren. More information on the project is available (in German) at <http://www.mercator.schreibkompetenz.com>.

Project: PROTEXTS: Teaching of Texts Production in Compulsory Education

At the *Department of Education* at the University of Aveiro (Portugal), the research project **PROTEXTS: Teaching of texts production in Compulsory Education** (PTDC-CPE-CED/101009/2008) under the coordination of Luísa Álvares Pereira has finished. It was funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and by the Programme COMPETE: FCOMP-01-0124-FEDER-009134 since May 2010.

The main objective was to design, implement, and evaluate didactic devices for the teaching and learning of writing, with and without resorting to Information and Communication Technologies, applying to different textual genres, in order to obtain a set of valid proposals which

shall be amply promoted in the educative context (teaching of writing skills). The research team consisted of teachers and researchers from various disciplines. The group will keep working, joining teachers, teacher trainees, and researchers.

The research is mainly focused on Writing Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics. The main interests are teaching and learning of text production throughout the curriculum and training teachers from different fields—Portuguese, History, Sciences.

The researchers have conceived didactic devices based upon some theories related to text analysis and linguistics. These were tested within teacher training workshops which are of interest in the context of teacher training research.

The researchers' commitment is to contribute towards:

- a flexible didactic tool ("teaching sequence") focused in the notion of "textual genre," powerful enough to generate better practices in the teaching of writing, which comprises the mediation of the writing process, taking into account the relationship that one is developing with writing (at school and outside). Therefore, they foresee an epistemic approach to writing balanced with identity issues that come up in this complex process;
- the definition of criteria to analyze students' written productions from different levels, aiming at promoting progression throughout the curriculum;
- the design of teacher training devices based upon cooperation between teachers from different school grades, auto-analysis by means of self-confrontation interviews and classes recording.

They seek to promote teacher professional development without struggling with "school tasks," but, on the contrary, supporting what the teacher is supposed to do at school.

Visit the website to learn more about the didactic materials conceived thus far and have a look at the teacher training material, whose main aim is to promote self training practices, amplifying the effects of the "traditional" training: <http://protectos.web.ua.pt>.

For more information, contact Luísa Álvares Pereira at lpereira@ua.pt.

Book Series: New Editors

The Studies in Writing series (see <http://www.brill.com/>

[publications/studies-writing](http://www.brill.com/publications/studies-writing)) published by Brill, has new series editors: **Raquel Fidalgo** from the Area of Developmental and Educational Psychology of the University of León (Spain) (rfidr@unileon.es) and **Thierry Olive** from the Research Center on Cognition and Learning of the National Center for Scientific Research-CNRS (France) (thierry.olive@univ-poitiers.fr).

We thank Gert Rijlaarsdam, founding editor of the series (together with Eric Espéret) since 1994, for all the effort and work carried out through these years. His work has helped to establish the Studies in Writing series as a key reference of the writing research community around the world. The 28 volumes edited until now are a very clear reflection of it.

Several volumes, already in progress, will be published in next months. They address issues like: learning and teaching writing in digital environment, writing for professional development, writing and learning disabilities, handwriting, graduate pedagogies and research literacies, design principles of teaching effective writing, multimodality in writing and higher education, and indigenous writing and education.

Publication: Books



edited by Barbara Arfé
Julie Dockrell
Virginia Berninger

Writing Development in Children with Hearing Loss, Dyslexia, or Oral Language Problems

Implications for Assessment and Instruction

Writing is challenging for the majority of learners. For students with language problems, difficulties with written expression are considered one of the most common learning challenges. There is much to learn about the ways in which oral language skills impact on the acquisition of written language in children. **Writing Development in Children with Hearing Loss, Dyslexia, or Oral Language**

Problems (edited by Barbara Arfé, Julia Docrell, and Virginia Berninger) focuses on the nature of the writing problems experienced by children with oral language problems. Three clinical groups are considered: children with hearing loss, oral language difficulties, and dyslexia. Each contribution comes from an expert or team of experts in these three areas and in the field of language and writing. The volume provides current understandings to help guide and support practitioners and researchers alike. It provides timely information across languages and countries, enhancing our understanding of the links between oral language and written language across languages.

See also <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199827282.do>.

Stephanie Dreyfurst and Nadja Sennwald edited the book **Schreiben. Grundagentexte zur Theorie, Didaktik und Beratung** published by UTB in German. It's a guidebook covering the main aspects of writing: What are the elements of writing processes? How do writing blocks develop and what can one do about them? What do writing centers do and what are the concepts behind them? This collection offers a variety of texts about the theory, pedagogy and counseling of writing processes. Starting with still important models of writing processes (Hayes, Flower, Bereiter, Scardamalia) and statements about collaborative learning and writing center work (Bruffee, North, Clark) central texts about writing are translated into German for the first time. Additionally German experts discuss concepts like peer tutoring for writing (Bräuer, Girgensohn).

See also <http://www.utb-shop.de/shop/studienratgeber/wissenschaftliches-schreiben-1/schreiben.html>.

Publication: PhD Theses

José Ferreira completed his PhD thesis on **The Web 2.0 and Writing in the 3rd Cycle of Schooling** at the University of Aveiro (Portugal) in July 2014. His work focuses on how blogs can be effective in English language teaching/learning processes. The project seeks to understand the recurring pedagogical motivations and the dynamics underlying students' use of blogs. The main conclusions of this study show that:

- depending on pedagogical-didactic intentions, teachers use one of three categories of blogs, namely "Cardboard Blog," "Class Blog," and "Blog Project;"
- teachers resort to four practice writing skills (dissemination, request, reformulation, and sharing);
- the blog can be both a sharing and a reading and writing learning environment, as long as there is a clear definition of objectives; and
- it shall be possible to refer to "comments" as a textual genre if there is variety of content and intentionality, adaptation of its usage and a communicative purpose.

Antónia Estrela recently completed her PhD thesis **The Acquisition of Passives in European Portuguese** at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal). The thesis was supervised by Amália Mendes and João Costa.

The thesis describes the acquisition of passives in European Portuguese, specifically regarding its comprehension. Many studies reveal that this construction is acquired late in different languages, both when production and comprehension are considered.

Four pilot studies have been carried out. The first study tests the comprehension of long and short passive with actional verbs; the second and third analyze the comprehension of passives with actional and non-actional verbs; and the

fourth assesses whether children distinguish three types of passive and their different properties (eventive, resultative, and stative passives).

First, the results show that four-year-old children can understand passives with actional verbs, revealing no difference between short and long passives. Secondly, passives with non-actional verbs are problematic for children of different age groups and even active sentences with non-actional verbs are difficult. Thirdly, the analysis of the results of the fourth experimental study reveals that, at five, children do not show significant differences in the judgments of grammaticality assigned to various types of passive, with a performance at the chance level, contrarily to the performance of six-year-old children. Grammaticality contrasts are not completely understood by children, but we can already notice a statistically significant development in the recognition of the contrast between eventive and stative passives; and resultative and stative passives.

The analysis of an acquisition corpus shows that even before the age of two children produce stative passives, and before they are three years old they produce eventive and resultative passives.

You can access the thesis at <http://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/11415>.

Thanks to R. Alves, B. Arfé, A. Estrela, R. Fidalgo, J. Grabowski, B. Horner, L. Luciana, G. Rijlaarsdam, and N. Sennwald, who contributed to this edition of the newsletter.

Please send your contributions for the next edition (Fall/Winter 2014) by e-mail to the editor Cerstin Mahlow (cerstin@mahlow.ch). Please include your contribution in the mail text, do not send Word documents!

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