

Writing as a Learning Activity

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Is there a function for writing in the process of learning? It's important to know what aspects of writing play a part in the learning process. To what extent should educators promote and facilitate the use of writing as a learning tool among their students? Those are the types of pressing questions that the new cutting-edge book, *writing as an educational activity*, is working hard to address. Since its start in the late 1970s, evidence-based research on writing-to-learn has grown into a thriving and lucrative area of study. As well as highlighting current issues and developments, this collection's editors intend to bring out challenges and opportunities that remain for the field going forward. With these goals in mind, they've brought together specialists and research organisations from nine countries, ranging from cognitive psychology to literature to linguistics and even history education. Writing-to-learn research is a truly multidisciplinary endeavour, as evidenced by the thirteen chapters of this edited volume, which draw on various theoretical paradigms (e.g., classic cognitivism; social constructivism; situated cognition; semiotics) and employ various methodologies (e.g., grounded theory) (e.g., laboratory experiments; quasi-experimental interventions studies; design experiments; phenomenographic studies; discourse and content analysis; etc.).

A wide range of viewpoints on writing may be found, from a look at the past to the present day.

The book's opening chapters, written by Klein, Boscolo, Gelati, and Kirkpatrick, are informative and helpful. The strong text approach (Britton 1982; Emig 1977; Applebee 1984) and analytic writing view (Applebee 1984), authors use historical views to trace writing-to-origins learn's to the present day. Rather than relying on the writing process itself, modern cognitive views believe that writing's impacts are more influenced by the writer's cognitive

strategies or processes while they are engaged in it. The shift from a concentration on textual medium to cognitive processes as the major driver of writing-based learning is the first notable trend that can be observed in regard to the present volume (see Figure 1). Tynjälä, Mason, and Lonka's (2001) key work in this subject, *Writing as a Tool for Learning*, predicted the present trend of writing education. Nevertheless, several chapters in this collection give in-depth qualitative examinations of writers' cognitive processes in connection to specific writing-to-learn tasks, such as argumentation, explanation, and summarising.

Additionally, a second emphasis is placed on the mental processes associated with writing for the purpose of learning.

Throughout the book's chapters, a recurring topic is the shift from cross-curricular to disciplinary writing (Klein et al., 2014). The cognitive processing perspective and historically oriented approaches of writing to learn have one thing in common: they both consider writing to learn as a process that is impartial toward the specificities of each subject. Researchers in these traditions frequently construct and investigate writing assignments to help students better understand the material. But these scholars are more concerned with teaching students how to write on specific topic than than teaching them how to write in a variety of different writing styles from other disciplines. Research on writing-to-learn emphasises the need of teaching students the genres of writing that have evolved historically and convey the epistemological commitments that are pertinent to a particular scientific subject, a key finding in the area (Bazerman, Simon & Pieng, 2014). A number of chapters in the most recent version demonstrate this development in a paradigmatic fashion, including the following: There are three genres of history instruction: recording, explanation, and argumentation. Van Drie et al. (2014) analyse the processes of historical reasoning connected with each genre. An essential cultural practise for historians is one that students may learn through realistic writing assignments. While developing arguments is an important part of writing in history, students must also learn to utilise the "Writing in history not only requires students to develop arguments, but it also requires them to use the domain specific language and 'grammar' of history." of history in their writing. (van Drie and colleagues, 2014, pp. 98-99)

Changing from a "lonely problem solver" view of writing to one that emphasises situated and distributed cognition is the third tendency that the book highlights (Klein, 2014). For example, writing may be regarded a kind of distribution and placement since it is typically done in partnership with members from a scientific or practice-based group to adopt and replicate socially negotiated writing procedures. (Lave and Wenger, 1991). For the sake of illustration, the peer-review process may be considered as an ideal illustration of a located yet distributed activity. Intertextuality is a literary theory concept that Bazerman, Simon, and Pieng (2014) use to emphasise the situated nature of writing. According to Bazerman, Simon, and Pieng (2014), "...writers enter into and contribute to a discussion by drawing on communal resources, characterising and reformulating prior discussion, and commenting on specific statements of others" (Bazerman et al., p. 250). Examples of how reading and writing are intertwined are provided in several chapters of the book, which follows a contextual approach to learning. Consequently, the situated approach acknowledges the importance of a writer's writing context, notably the texts accessible for reading and the chances for collaboration with peers in the development of text. Using these qualities, you may learn to read, understand, and take part in the creation of meaning (Nykopp, Martunen&Laurinen, 2014). Individual authors' cognitive processes and written outcomes are supported and moulded by these individuals. Klein (2014) found that "the intricacy of the students' [written] explanations was not the consequence of sophisticated individual writing skills." following a qualitative investigation. Instead of being the product of a positive writing environment, it appeared to be the result of peer cooperation.

In addition to that, there are a number other notable features.

Given the importance of a positive learning environment and the wide variety of text sources authors frequently draw from while crafting their works, it's no wonder that several chapters focus on writing to learn from a variety of sources (e.g., Wiley et al., 2014; Mateos et al., 2014). Writing in or outside a subject is mostly dependent on prior reading of more than one book, even though the writers of these chapters do not necessarily adhere to the situated cognition approach. Several authors, including Mateos and colleagues, describe writing-to-learn as a hybrid endeavour, one in which learning takes place in tandem with reading and writing. Specifically, the chapters by Wiley et al. and Mateos as al. are notable since learning

from multiple sources has hitherto been studied largely in studies on text comprehension (for example, Anmarkrud, Brten, and Strms, 2014; Stadtler&Bromme, 2013; Wiley et al., 2014). Consequently, this study focused on two unique areas: text comprehension research and writing to learn research To help bridge this gap, Wiley et al. and Mateos et al. have each written chapters. Several writing-related cognitive theories are cited to back up their claims. Rouet, Perfetti, and Britt's document model of multiple text comprehension and Bereiter and Scardamalia's knowledge transformation model (1987) are a few of the hypotheses that have been put out in the past several decades (1999). Integrating many lines of research, the authors discover critical cognitive processes needed for integrating and synthesising data. Additionally, their research shows that students of all ages and educational levels often struggle with writing assignments like synthesising information from several sources.

An additional highlight of the book is the lengthy and painstakingly executed intervention studies aimed at supporting students in obtaining long-term knowledge and writing skills. Del Longo and Cisotto (2014) explain in detail a multi-week quasi-experimental intervention aimed at improving university students' oral and written argumentation abilities. Students were instructed to write short personal essays by Dikilitaş and Bush (2014) in order to help them build their vocabulary while learning a second language. An intervention study conducted by Gelati, Galvan and Boscolo (2014, this volume) aimed at teaching fourth-grade students key skills for writing summaries based on an in-depth analysis of the cognitive processes underpinning the production of summaries was carried out for five months. As a whole, these studies indicate how children of all ages and educational levels may be taught key writing-to-learn skills at different degrees of difficulty.

In my opinion

To stay on top of the subject, anybody interested in writing should check out Writing as a Learning Activity. In addition to exhibiting contemporary theoretical tendencies, the collection of chapters also exhibits the range and interdisciplinarity of empirical methodologies used to examine how writing could help learning. Some well-known concepts, such as Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) knowledge transforming model, are examined in depth in the chapters. There are several ideas on writing and learning that have changed and become more distinct throughout time, as well as theories that are still changing. For

example, a variety of novel theoretical views are being examined such as Perfetti's (1999) many documents model and the situated cognition approach by Perfetti, Rouet, and Britt (1999). (1999). For further information on this topic, see Klein, 2014. As a consequence, when I read the chapters, I found the theoretical assessments to be consistently advanced and the empirical studies, which were mostly qualitative, to be detailed and engaging. However theoretically sound, most of this study was purely exploratory, with no attempt made to put any theories to the test. To be able to test theories more thoroughly, I wanted to see "Stronger" study designs that may be used by researchers in psychology. There were still some unsolved questions at the end of the book, despite the fact that the book demonstrated clearly feasible and also persuasive interventions to encourage writing-to-learn. Considering that students were "prescribed" specific writing exercises in the majority of studies, I questioned if students got a grasp of the epistemic potential of writing by completing research-created assignments. Research on writing as a means of learning has thus far failed to adequately investigate how motivational components of writing influence students' ability to learn. At the same time, I feel like I've learned a lot from the book. Among the book's best lines is the following: "The relationship between writing and learning is not limited to specific writing to learn activities." There is a strong connection between writing for academic and professional purposes and learning.

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