

Review of “Developing Writers in Higher Education”

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Title	: Developing Writers in Higher Education
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Instructors and researchers of an academic writing course in higher education often experience discouragement when they find their teaching falling short of their expectations even though a number of endeavors they invest in the teaching practices and research works. As a writing teacher for higher education, I feel disappointed when I am not able to present more beneficial support than the motivation to write using appropriate vocabularies, making grammatical sentences consisted of a compound or complex ones, organizing ideas of writing or paragraphs, constructing coherence essays and so on. After ineffective attempts at aiding higher education students significantly enhance their writing, I began to review the nature of writing and facets other than the language competencies comprising what academic activities the teachers are necessary to carry out, how the students' academic writing practices are applied during their writing process, who are involved in the process of writing and how long the writing academic activities take place. I have figured out solutions to some questions in the book entitled “Developing Writers in Higher Education”. In this five-section book, Anne Ruggles Gere describes a comprehensive longitudinal study about the topic concerning how students in higher education keep practicing their academic writing process and their writing follows various developmental paths.

It can be seen in this monograph a systematic divide of theoretical thinking and empirical studies (between Section 1 and Section 5). This multi-year study involved 169 student writers, who produced 322 surveys, 131 interviews, 94 portfolios, and 2,406 total pieces of writing. Given the large amount of data collected across five years, this was a highly collaborative project requiring many hands, and various configurations of researchers discuss in Anne Gere's office week after week and year after year to plan and discuss. Gere intends to cast some light in more deeply understanding how writers in higher education develop, analyzing new awareness of the complexity of writing development, examining its many forms and variations, and studying the multiple methods that can illuminate various aspects of it. To this end, the author clarifies relevant studies and concepts such as audience awareness, approaches, genres, language focus, and style through an extensive literature review and examines the correlation between students' writing practices and instructors' involvement in different contexts and for different purposes. In doing so, Gere places the learners (writers) at the heart of the writing process and draws on their writing activities as central factors in the writing practices of higher education. In this sense, the author upholds that writing development takes time and it is necessary to be traced the varied and irregular paths learners take as they move smoothly through one writing challenge and stumble on another. This view contrasts with some other researchers focusing on writing development which is attached more to the writers themselves than to the texts they produce.

The book is divided into five main sections, each dealing with essential issues within this multilayered discipline. The First Section addresses rhetorical knowledge and the concept that writing is both social and rhetorical. Emily Wilson and Justine Post concern about analyzing the effect and action in student interactions with instructor feedback. Benjamin Keating, moreover, examines peer review and authority in students' undergraduate writing. The Second Section describes chapters on students' approaches to the conflation of disciplinary expertise in the study investigated by both Lizzie Hutton and Gail Gibson. Still in this section, Ryan McCarty investigates writing development and the “types of writing” or genres described by students. Another Section elaborates chapters that focus on language, demonstrating how attention to sentence-level features illuminates entire texts. Laura L. Aull explores a corpus study of epistemic stance across levels, disciplines, and genres. Zak Lancaster tracks students' developing conceptions of voice and style in writing. The next section discusses the idea that writers never reach a state of complete mastery; they always have more to learn. Anna V. Knutson carries out a case study of resourcefulness and resilience. Furthermore, Naomi Silver studies student's conceptions of writing and self-perceptions of multimodal compositional development. Finally, Section Five reviews two sites of writerly development, the transition from high school to first-year writing and the transition from college to new writing environments. Sarah Swofford identifies the influence of high school in undergraduate writing development and Anne Ruggles Gere elaborates on writing beyond the university.

Through a well-organized manuscript and a highly readable style, Gere does not simply discuss the main theoretical concept of writing activities literature. Instead, she provides the readers with evidence-based on the empirical studies, synthesizes the existing references, reinterprets the implications of the data presented in the light of pedagogical research findings, and analyses

contributions of the investigations for further either theoretical or practical areas. For this reason, the target audience may range from undergraduate and postgraduate students, student teachers who wish to look into basic writing practices to the teacher of higher education, in-service writing teachers, and researchers. It may also verify to be valuable for writing learners who wish to find out about the process of writing approach and develop their own strategies.

However, it should be noted that research perspectives on writing for higher education learners explored mainly focus on the motivation and the writing products from the point of view of the writing instructors and the current trends on writing development research in the face of the increasing numbers of higher education writers are perhaps overlooked. Throughout the book, there are numerous references to undergraduate writers' audience awareness and feedback from instructors/ peers, genres awareness, voice and style in writing, self-perceptions of multimodal writing development, which might be true in some cases. Nonetheless, little attention is given to the fact that effective writing development, as opposed to mastery, might be one of the chief objectives of enhancing writers in the context of higher education, many of whom might already write more than one or two text genres by the time they begin studying in the college levels. Hence, the strategies that might be relevant to these kinds of writers will differ from those of the learners explained in the book.

In any case, this book proposes informative empirical studies and relevant theoretical points of view of writing development, critical analysis of numerous research studies, qualitative and quantitative evidence, hands-on approaches to the teaching of writing and learning written texts in a pedagogical style. Thus, it is worthy to say that Gere has created a valuable contribution to this complex area of knowledge and that her work will undoubtedly show to be beneficial to a wide range of readers.

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