Rezensionen

Writing and Digital Media is volume 17 of the series STUDIES IN WRITING (series editor Gert Rijlaarsdam, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands) which is the intellectual backbone of SIG WRITING, a special interest group of EARLI, the European Association of Research on Learning and Instruction.

Luuk van Waes, Marielle Leijten (both University of Antwerp, Belgium) and Christine M. Neuwirth (Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA) edited an extraordinary book because it contributes in substantial and innovative ways to the field of computers and composition. The foremost is related to the circumstance that there is not yet a distinct academic field existing in Europe that brings together scholarship, research, and teaching in both subjects focused on in this publication.

This is the case despite the fact that research on the effects of digital media on the production of texts has been going on since the early 1980s, but has always focused on individual aspects of either research or teaching. This book, consisting of contributions by American, Australian, and European scholars, is the first one within the published academic European discourse that responds with academic responsibility to the rapid intertwining of both subjects—computers and composition—and the specific needs that arise from this for research and education. In addition, compared with other publications on the subject of either cognitive or social processes in writing, this publication takes the risk in bringing both perspectives together, always looking for intersections from which advantages arise for insight on research and instruction.

The pioneering role of this book is not only true for the European context but also far beyond. This is not simply because of its international authorship but mainly due to the decision of the editors to open up the scope of the book in two directions, namely toward:

a) *digital media*, including not only computers as a traditional mode of text production but also special computer software for writers with learning disabilities (see chapter 1), speech recognition technology for young writers (see chapters 2, 3), web chat,

text messaging via cell phones (see chapter 4), Internet chat as a tool for negotiating meaning (see chapter 5), hypervideo as a method to foster literacy and content knowledge (see chapter 6);

b) *writing*, including not only the composition of texts but also the emergence of writers (*learning to write*, see chapters 1, 2, 11), the further development of students (*writing to learn*) within online educational environments (see chapters 13–15), and the shaping of experienced writers able to reflect on their practice by using specific digital devices (see chapter 12).

With this scope-broadening approach, the book unravels the interplay in composing texts that happens on different levels such as informal and formal writing, text production and speech, and the many different sources of information and channels of communication about these sources. It is through this wide scope that the book is able to make visible the complex nature of text production and the necessity of detailed research on media use and writing, and teaching methodology in order to better understand the educational and technological challenges related to constructing meaningful use of composition and computers in the classroom.

As we all know, such a successful marriage of technology and writing can be a great challenge for both researchers and instructors. The way this book is designed as a whole clearly meets the needs of university students and continuing learners looking for a better understanding of the interplay between writing and digital media in different educational settings and with different instructional goals (see sections I and II). It also assists scholars looking for ways to conduct research on writing processes and products with the help of digital media (see section III) and instructors hoping for ideas on how to meet the pedagogical needs of a rapidly changing learning and writing environment (see section IV). In the final section of this book (V), all those potential readers just mentioned are invited to discuss social and philosophical aspects at the crossroad of writing and digital media. Here they are being challenged to negotiate the individual findings of their reading so far and to link their personal learning with pressing problems and questions of the society at large.

Within the chapters themselves, the book also clearly meets the different needs of a diverse audience. Each of the 18 chapters follows an almost uniform structure of problem definition, research methodology, case study, and concluding practical implications so that readers that may be less familiar with the study of both digital media and writing will also be able to easily orientate themselves in the anthology. In addition, this clear-cut text structure helps L2-readers, who will be the bulk part of the prospective international audience of this publication.

All in all, the book, edited by van Waes, Leijten, and Neuwirth, demonstrates a well-designed interplay between scholarship, research, and teaching in two areas—Writing and Digital Media. Both seem key to a successful participation of its audience and immediate benefactors in the Information Society. For their pioneering work in bridging the gap between new fields of scholarship and traditional academic disciplines and for their courage in widening the scope of academic research toward its application in education, the editors and authors of Writing and Digital Media recently received the «Computers and Composition Distinguished Book Award of 2007» presented by Michigan Technological University. Congratulations!

Gerd Bräuer