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978-0-521-38778-1 - Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom

Edited by Barbara Kroll

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# Second Language Writing

Research insights for  
the classroom

Edited by

*Barbara Kroll*

California State University, Northridge



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## *Series editors' preface*

Since the early 1970s, the nature of written discourse as well as the writing process itself have attracted renewed interest from educational researchers, linguists, applied linguists, and teachers. In the United Kingdom, for example, researchers such as Britton observed young writers in the process of writing in order to identify the planning, decision making, and heuristics they employed. Complementary work in the United States by such researchers and educators as Emig, Murray, and Graves led to the emergence of the “process” school in writing theory and practice. This view emphasizes that writing is a recursive rather than a linear process, that writers rarely write to a preconceived plan or model, that the process of writing creates its own form and meaning, and that there is a significant degree of individual variation in the composing behaviors of both first and second language writers.

While the enthusiasm that this view of writing generated has led some of its advocates to propose yet another pedagogical orthodoxy – the process approach – much remains to be discovered about how second language writers write and learn to write, and about the kinds of writing instruction they are most likely to benefit from. It was this need that prompted the present book.

The contributors explore the major issues that have emerged from the past twenty years of research and practice, particularly in North America. These include the relationship between reading first language and second language writing, the relationship between reading and writing, approaches to feedback, the role of revision, assessment, and the role of the writing teacher. Original empirical studies are presented, and assumptions behind current practices in the teaching of writing are explored. At the same time the contributors present examples of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of second language writing and writing instruction. This important book will provide a valuable source of information for teachers, for researchers, and for those who need an informed assessment of the current status of research and practice in second language writing.

Michael H. Long  
Jack C. Richards



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## *Preface*

In 1979, while teaching at the University of Hawaii, I had my first opportunity to teach a graduate course designed to prepare future second language writing teachers. There was no question of using a text, since none were available at the time, and it was relatively easy to put together a packet of readings, as there was little published scholarship in the field to choose from. It might be fair to say that the seeds for this book project were planted then; they continued to grow as I subsequently continued to offer teacher training courses at successive institutions where I taught, always looking for and never finding the text that would provide what I hope this book now offers.

I wish to thank the contributors for working with me to create a book that reflects the vitality of second language writing research and teaching, expertly revising their chapters time and again to answer my never-ending stream of questions. I am also particularly grateful to Martha Pennington for urging me to turn my desire to see such a book into reality. I appreciate the Affirmative Action Faculty Development program at California State University, Northridge, for granting me a reduced teaching load one semester to allow for more focused attention to this project. Holly Jacobs offered invaluable advice and insightful suggestions in reading earlier drafts of the manuscript, helping me to focus on the objectives of the whole project. Joan Carson Eisterhold and Joy Reid offered graceful editorial feedback on my own contributions to this book, guiding me to eliminate both purple prose and excessive obfuscation. The able series editors, Jack C. Richards and Michael H. Long, provided welcome support and encouragement. Last, and anything but least, I thank Ruth Spielman, whose patience with my impatience merits boundless praise.

Barbara Kroll