

PERSONAL INTERESTS AS INCENTIVE TO PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Towards a writing pedagogy for Dutch Higher Vocational Education

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the Dutch higher vocational education (HVE) context for writing education, in order to find specific design criteria for a writing pedagogy. We analyzed relevant documents and interviewed lecturers to get a picture of the *ideological, formal* and *perceived curriculum*.

Based on the frameworks of Ivanič and Klafki, we discovered a conflict between a competence-based learning approach associated with a *social practices discourse* and a transfer of knowledge model associated with a *genre discourse*. We also found an imbalance in the two key characteristics of HVE schools: the focus is on an orientation towards professional practice, but less attention is paid to vertical mobility and emancipation. A third result is the lack of attention in writing education for the *present life significance* for the students, and the *exemplary significance* of the writing assignments.

We found that our lecturers prefer a more motivating and activating writing approach, and tentatively experiment with creative writing techniques. However, they lack professional self-confidence and support by their study programmes.

Specific design criteria for Dutch HVE writing pedagogy should reconcile conflicting writing discourses, and explicitly address matters of significance in writing assignments.

Keywords: writing pedagogy, professional writing, personal writing, discourses of learning to write, competence-based learning

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is 1986. I am the coach of a group of Dutch adults who are learning to read and write. A young woman writes her homework in her diary specifically purchased for this. But in the next lesson it appeared she had not done her homework. "I forgot!" Why didn't she check her diary? "Because I can remember to do it!", she defends herself.

It is 2011. I am a lecturer in writing at a Dutch university of applied languages. At home, my students wrote their first text: a letter to an actual organization, expressing sincere surprise or irritation. When I read one of these texts, I immediately realized that one of the students, instead of writing from an authentic emotion, made things up. "But it is an assignment!", he defends himself. Are lecturers in writing doomed to teach writing as an empty ritual?

This paper reports on an study as part of a larger research project aiming at the development of a pedagogy for teaching writing in the context of higher vocational education at universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands (henceforth HVE). In this study, we investigate the specific Dutch context of HVE writing education, in search for specific design criteria for a writing pedagogy, in addition to criteria that can be derived from general international literature (Graham & Perin 2007; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2011).

The first author is the initiator and principal researcher of the research team. The problem statement in section 2 expands on her experiences as a lecturer in writing at one of the main HVE schools in the Netherlands.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Lecturers in writing at HVE schools face a clear goal-oriented task: they are expected to teach their students to write texts that fit the domain of a specific profession. Yet, this simple task presents some tantalizing questions.

At the start of my career as a lecturer in writing, I used methods that are popular in HVE. These methods focus on teaching text genres that fit the professional context of HVE students, and offer models and procedures for structuring texts of specific genres, checklists with questions that help to analyze briefing, audience, and context. They typically give writing advice such as: *Attract the attention of the reader* and *Avoid a negative tone of voice*. My students became irritated by this advice: *"Yeah, right! I know what to do, but how, I've no idea!"* Their reaction stimulated me to look for a more satisfying way to enhance their writing skills other than a transfer of knowledge.

But there was another problem: even if my students succeeded in writing a well-structured text with the aid of advice, models, and procedures, often the result did not really seem appropriate to the context intended. The books did not offer exercises to fine-tune content, structure, and tone of their message to the intended situation. Finally, with these books, I was unable to help my students dis-

cover that writing could be an instrument to express things that are meaningful to them and communicate about it.

I recognized this third problem from a different educational context: 25 years ago I taught literacy courses to illiterate Dutch adults. They were intensely aware of the fact that writing was the key to valuable participation in society, but at the same time they considered writing as an obligatory task required by society, or even as an almost sacral activity. For me, the similarity between my illiterate students and my HVE students was striking. They both showed a paradoxical combination of attitude and activity: on the one hand they really wanted to learn how to write to attain a firmer place in society or to improve their future prospects, on the other hand, in their writing lessons they acted as if they were alienated from the significance language could have for them.

I started to regard this indifference as curious, since during breaks between classes these same students spoke animatedly about their new clothes, their sadness about a demented grandfather, their concern about politics, and they texted to friends and shared pictures on their phones. Is it possible to carry over this genuine interest in each other from the school cafeteria to the classroom itself? Would the acknowledgment of their natural need to communicate not only stimulate them to write about things that are relevant for them right now, as well as reinforce their initial authentic interest in becoming a professional in the fields they want to enter? And would not this approach make my role as a lecturer of writing an interesting one, challenging me to endorse the intrinsic meaning writing already had in the personal lives of my students and broaden it to professional significance?

From email correspondence with several other HVE lecturers of writing, I learned that they had similar questions. One lecturer described how she became irritated by advice to improve a text that did not help her students recognize their mistakes, let alone improve them: "My comments on their first texts were detailed. The texts they rewrote, are deplorable. How difficult can it be to follow the instructions? 'Why don't you read, you dummy', I think." Another lecturer criticized the teaching methods: "Handbooks on writing tend to issue eternal laws, bookish decrees like *Do not use passive sentences and Address the reader directly*. This kind of prescriptive educational material destroys all feeling for register, tone, and style. A writing course may just as well depart from work written by students, and try to elaborate by actively looking for alternatives." A third colleague considered such an active approach a possibility for change: "The more important the texts are for the students themselves, the more accurate they become, and the more eager they are for feedback. This seems like an open door, but it is something we may try to exploit in our teaching" (personal communication).

In an informal preliminary investigation I interviewed eight HVE lecturers, selected for their interest in new approaches to writing education. They all expressed they felt isolated in their profession, forced to make decisions under time pressure, not exactly knowing how and why they were teaching what they were teaching.

From training sessions I gave to lecturers of writing, I learned that they lack a platform to increase their knowledge and share their experiences. In popular Dutch journals such as *Levende Talen* and *Neder-L*, the pedagogy of writing in HVE is hardly a discussion topic. Current literature on writing education does not seem to answer the urgent questions of Dutch HVE lecturers. Many studies on writing pedagogy are focused on lower grades, and specific studies in the context of higher education do not seem to fit the Dutch HVE context. More specifically, HVE bachelor programs are required to meet ten generic HVE competences described in the final requirements of these programs (Commissie Accreditatie Hoger Onderwijs, 2006). *Social communicative competence* is one of them. This competence has been described for five HVE domains (Van der Pool, Van Wijk & Van Dongen, 2010), but a coherent pedagogy aimed at developing such a competence is still lacking.

Based on my own lessons, I developed a first step towards an approach to professional writing in HVE to satisfy the need of HVE lecturers for writing exercises (Claessens, 2008, 2011). In training sessions for HVE lecturers in writing, all participants showed their interest in this approach.

So all in all, this problem statement ends on a positive note: there may be a gap in Dutch HVE writing education, there may be a real need among HVE lecturers, there seems to be a promising rough concept for a specific HVE writing pedagogy. This deserves further investigation.

3. PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the research project we aim to develop a writing pedagogy for the specific Dutch HVE context. Obviously, this pedagogy will be based on insights from general research on writing pedagogy, especially in the context of higher education. However, as we saw above, Dutch HVE lecturers seem to have concerns that are not solved by standard writing pedagogy. So what is this specific context? This is what we will try to establish on the present study.

In order to gain more insight in the specific Dutch HVE context of writing education, we studied the official Dutch documents on the policy and educational level of the curriculum. In addition, we interviewed three HVE writing lecturers, in order to understand how their writing pedagogy is embodied in their daily practice. We analysed both sources with the intention to derive specific design criteria for a Dutch HVE writing pedagogy, in addition to more general criteria.

Therefore, our research question is threefold: What are the additional design criteria for a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy, (a) from an ideological curriculum perspective, (b) from a formal curriculum perspective, and (c) from a perceived curriculum perspective?

From the problem analysis above, the following provisional design criteria for such a pedagogy can be derived. Apart from being based on (international) research on writing education in general, a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy should:

- 1) adhere to the specific Dutch HVE requirements as formulated in the documents on the policy level and educational level;
- 2) meet the lecturers' concerns by providing them with an explicit description of its principles;
- 3) consist of motivating and activating methods in line with a competence-based learning approach (aiming at the required social communicative competence).

In this paper we focus on the characteristics of the Dutch HVE context. In particular, we address the following sub questions:

- 1) What type of writing pedagogy do HVE lecturers use, according to their official documents, and according to their own accounts?
- 2) What aspirations do these lecturers have with their writing pedagogy, and how do they cope with demands and problems they face in the HVE context?
- 3) What conclusions and design criteria can we develop for a specific HVE writing pedagogy based on the answers to questions 1 and 2?

In the next section, we will briefly introduce the theoretical framework we used to identify the type of writing pedagogy for the three courses. In section 5, the research method is discussed. Section 6 contains a description of the results of our study, and in section 7, we will reflect on the significance of our case studies for our further study.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ivanič's framework for the characterization of the *discourses of writing and learning to write* (Ivanič, 2004) serves as the main instrument for our data analysis. In addition, we used Klafki's *Didaktik Analysis* (Klafki, 2000) for the analysis of the justification of the intended and applied approaches of teaching and learning, since this is not the aim of Ivanič's framework. In this sense, both sources are complementary. While Ivanič focuses on beliefs on writing (and learning to write), Klafki concentrates on the significance for the learner.

4.1 *Ivanič's discourses of writing and learning to write*

Ivanič (2004) developed a framework in which she identifies six discourses of writing and learning to write. This framework allows for analyzing data from policy and educational documents to discern beliefs about writing and learning to write as well as practices of teaching and assessment of writing associated with these beliefs. Ivanič emphasizes that these discourses can be instantiated relatively homogeneously as well as in various combinations. Each discourse refers to a specific view of language, ranging from a narrow perspective mainly focusing on text, the linguistic substance of language, to a more comprehensive view about textual aspects "as embedded within, and inseparable from, mental and social aspects" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 220-221). Ivanič compares these views of language to the layers of an onion, thus expressing how views on textual aspects of language are embedded

in their mental and social aspects (Ivanič, 2004, p. 222). She proposes that this multi-layered view of language not only has to function as an instrument to present and distinguish discourses, but could also be seen as “a basis for imagining a holistic, comprehensive writing pedagogy” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 241). In figure 1 the six discourses on writing and learning to write are presented schematically. The six horizontal rows represent the discourses Ivanič distinguishes. The six columns represent different sets of assumptions underpinning the practices of each discourse.

With Ivanič’s typology of discourses, we are able to identify the beliefs of policy makers and lecturers about writing education. Understanding these beliefs will help us develop a specific HVE writing pedagogy.

<i>Discourses</i>	<i>Layer in the comprehensive view of language</i>	<i>Beliefs about writing</i>	<i>Beliefs about learning to write</i>	<i>Approaches to the teaching of writing</i>	<i>Assessment criteria</i>
1. A SKILLS DISCOURSE	THE WRITTEN TEXT	Writing consists of applying knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns to construct a text.	Learning to write involves learning sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns.	SKILLS APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> ▲ 'phonics'	accuracy
2. A CREATIVITY DISCOURSE	▲ THE MENTAL PROCESSES OF WRITING ▼ THE WRITING EVENT	Writing is the product of the author's creativity.	You learn to write by writing on topics which interest you.	■ CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION <i>Implicit teaching</i> ■ 'whole language' ■ 'language experience'	interesting content and style
3. A PROCESS DISCOURSE		Writing consists of composing processes in the writer's mind, and their practical realization.	Learning to write includes both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text.	■ THE PROCESS APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	?
4. A GENRE DISCOURSE		Writing is a set of text-types, shaped by social context.	Learning to write involves learning the characteristics of different types of writing which serve specific purposes in specific contexts.	■ THE GENRE APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	appropriacy
5. A SOCIAL PRACTICES DISCOURSE		Writing is purpose-driven communication in a social context.	You learn to write by writing in real-life contexts, with real purposes for writing.	■ FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> ■ PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION <i>Implicit teaching</i> ▼ 'communicative language teaching'; see LEARNERS AS ETHNOGRAPHERS <i>Learning from research</i>	effectiveness for purpose
6. A SOCIOPOLITICAL DISCOURSE	THE SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF WRITING	Writing is a sociopolitically constructed practice, has consequences for identity, and is open to contestation and change.	Learning to write includes understanding why different types of writing are the way they are, and taking a position among alternatives.	CRITICAL LITERACY <i>Explicit teaching</i> 'Critical Language Awareness'	social responsibility?

Figure 1. Discourses of writing and learning to write (adapted from Ivanič, 2004, p. 225).

4.2 Klafki's Didaktik Analysis

Klafki (e.g. Klafki, 2000) formulates five basic questions (*Fünf Grundfragen*) on education (cf. Van de Ven, 2002) relating to five aspects of the meaning of the educational content for its learners:

- Exemplary significance (Exemplarität): how does the educational content serve the learner as an example of the phenomenon that is subject of study?
- Present life significance (Gegenwartsbedeutung): what does the educational content mean for the present life of the learner?
- Future life significance (Zukunftsbedeutung): what does the educational content mean for the future life of the learner?
- Structure (Struktur): how is the educational content structured?
- Accessibility (Zugänglichkeit): in what way is the educational content accessible and interesting for the learner?

We use these questions because they explicitly designate the normative and performative elements of education. Where Ivanič helps us identify the beliefs of documents and lecturers in writing discourses, Klafki's significance questions may shed more light on the beliefs about the significance of learning to write, and to what extent they correspond with the HVE key characteristics. In this context, Klafki's first three questions seem most relevant.

4.3 Curriculum typology

To characterize the ideas about a writing pedagogy in the broader context of the HVE curriculum, we followed the curriculum typology from Goodlad, Klein and Tye (1979), distinguishing an *ideological curriculum*, as described in e.g., theoretical documents, a *formal curriculum* laid down in official documents, a *perceived curriculum* as practiced by the writing lecturers, an actual *operational curriculum*, and an *experiential curriculum* experienced by the students. Our aim in this preliminary research was to understand what kind of aspirations lecturers held and what kind of demands and problems they experienced in an HVE context. We concentrated on the ideological, formal, and perceived curricula, and not on their actual performance in the operational curriculum.

5. RESEARCH METHOD

Our research method was ethnographic, with an open-ended research design. In their introduction to ethnographic principles and practice, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe this social research approach as follows: "The task is to investigate some aspects of the lives of the people who are being studied, and this includes finding out how these people view the situations they face, how they regard one another, and also how they see themselves" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

This exploratory orientation enabled us to examine current HVE writing courses through the eyes of the HVE writing lecturers as well as in their broader context. We tried to get a picture of the dynamics of their daily practices by interviewing HVE lecturers about their professional beliefs and concerns: what do they consider problematic and what do they strive for? Additionally, documents are regarded as part of the social settings that are investigated in ethnographic research. They may provide information about a broader context, particularly key figures or organizations influencing the beliefs of the lecturers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Taking the view that organizations represent themselves collectively to themselves and to others through the construction of documents (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011), we first analyzed policy documents of the Dutch HVE Council.

Next, we interviewed three specific Dutch HVE writing lecturers to study the perceived curriculum. We will refer to them with the pseudonyms Roos, Marieke and Céline. They were selected on the basis of their strong engagement with HVE writing education. Each was involved in the development of a specific writing courses, which they taught at three different Dutch HVE schools, during the academic year of 2011-2012.

Roos (1972) is a lecturer in Communication Skills in the HVE bachelor program of Business Economics on an HVE school in a large Dutch city. In addition to her teaching, she was a member of the curriculum committee. She (co)wrote most of the documents for this course as well as the method of writing published by a national publisher. Roos holds a master's degree in Dutch Language and Literature. She also works as a copywriter.

Marieke (1969) is a lecturer in Communication Skills in the HVE bachelor program in Climate & Management (before 2011: Climate & Environment) at an HVE school in another large Dutch city. She developed the course and wrote the relevant documents. Marieke holds a bachelor's degree in Built Environment.

Céline (1953) is a lecturer in Business Communication in the HVE bachelor program in Management, Economics and Law at an HVE school in a medium large Dutch city of regional importance. Until recently she was a member of the research group Human Communication Development at this school. She (co)wrote the documents for this course. Céline holds a master's degree in Dutch Language and Literature.

The lecturers themselves chose specific writing courses as vital examples of their current educational practice. They chose the following courses:

- Roos: Writing for Economists
- Marieke: Reporting Techniques
- Céline: Professional Communication Skills

We used the relevant documents for each course to get a picture of the intended curriculum.

5.1 Data collection

First we chose to study the policy document *Dedicated to Quality* (HVE council, 2009), which describes the preferred quality of all HVE study programs. As such, this is the leading document for all Dutch HVE schools. This document is taken to represent the ideological curriculum.

For each course chosen, we collected relevant documents on two levels: first, we took a document describing the study program profile in general. This document pertains to the ideological curriculum as well as to the formal curriculum. It tries to connect the national policy to the specific HVE school context, and the context of this specific writing course. Second, we chose documents on a more practical level: writing methods (handbooks, tailored by national known publishers), course manuals, teacher guides and student guides. These are taken to represent the formal curriculum. Course 3 did not use a specific separate writing method, but only an elaborate Student and Teacher Guide. We studied that with an eye on all levels of the curriculum.

Specifically, we chose the following documents:

- The national policy document *Dedicated to Quality*, which we will refer to as DTQ;
- The profiling documents of the three courses, which we will refer to as Profile 1 to 3:
 - The Study Program Profile of Business Economics
 - The Professional & Competence Profile of Climate and Management
 - The Proposal for a body of knowledge & skills of a communicative competence of Business Administration
- The separate writing methods of the first two courses, which we will refer to as Method 1 and 2:
 - *Communicatie in het bedrijfsleven* (Communication for Business) (Couwelaar, Schat & Van Stratum, 2011)
 - *Rapportagetechniek* (Reporting Techniques: writing for readers with lack of time) (Elling, Andeweg, De Jong & Swankhuisen, 2011)
- The following specific guides for each course; we will refer to the guides per course as Guide T1, S1, P2, S2 and ST3:
 - The separate Teacher's Guide and Student Guide for course 1;
 - The Project Guide and Student Guide for course 2;
 - The Student & Teacher's Guide for course 3, in which an account of its method is incorporated

In addition to these written documents, we used the transcript of the six semi-structured interviews (each lecturer was interviewed twice, during 90 minutes), to gain more insight into the perceived curriculum as expressed by our three HVE lecturers.

We analyzed documents and accounts using the framework of Ivanič and three of Klafki's basic questions (Grundfragen). In addition to this data course triangula-

tion, we practiced triangulation between researchers. The principal researcher and one other member of the research team characterized the statements by Ivanič and answered Klakfi's questions, and together they arrived at a consensus interpretation. The other research team members participated in comparing, discussing, and sometimes reformulating the interpretations.

6. RESULTS

In this section we describe the results of our ethnographic data analysis. We will discuss our findings with respect to the three types of curriculum.

6.1 *Results for the ideological curriculum*

A leading document in the ideological curriculum for the HVE schools in the Netherlands is the policy document Dedicated to Quality of the HVE council (2009), henceforth referred to as DTQ. This guideline of 30 pages describes the aspired standard of quality for all HVE study programs. Since DTQ is a policy document about HVE in general, we did not expect it to contain detailed assertions about writing education. However, we did expect statements on learning, and the significance of writing.

According to DTQ, the two key characteristics of Dutch HVE are:

- 1) It should be orientated to professional practice
- 2) It should support "the role of the HVE schools in vertical mobility, in the emancipation of groups within society and the enormous increase in the level of education of our working population" (DTQ, p. 5)

Confusing in the latter phrase is the comma between the two concepts. Is emancipation a synonym for vertical mobility? Or does it refer to a broader concept, incorporating self-transformation by consciousness raising, an activity that Paulo Freire, advocate of critical pedagogy, places at the heart of language education? As Freire puts it: "Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words and syllables - lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe - but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context" (Freire, 1973, p. 48).

Fortunately, DTQ provides other statements that clarify the meaning of vertical mobility and emancipation. It appears that these concepts are related to a century of tradition in HVE, focusing on the "necessity of educating more people to a higher level" (DTQ, p. 5) in order to make it possible for young people with limited financial means to receive a higher vocational education. Since many new entrants have substantial deficiencies, DTQ remarks: "It is of considerable importance that first-year students have a sound knowledge of Dutch, English and arithmetic/mathematics" (DTQ, p. 14). These statements underline the significance of language for achievement of vertical mobility in the sphere of study success and success in entering high-level professional practice. Still, like the statements before,

they do not provide a decisive definition of emancipation, nor do they explain what role language should play in the accomplishment of the second HVE key characteristic.

These beliefs can be characterized in terms of Klafki's significance questions. In this light, they can be seen as corresponding to the future life significance, since according to DTQ, education is related to a future professional practice. DTQ does not address the question of present life significance, and references to the exemplary significance of learning and learning to write are unclear, and even contradictory: should students mainly learn to apply certain linguistic rules correctly, as in a skills discourse in terms of Ivanič, or should they also investigate the literacy practices of professional contexts they would like to participate in, as in a social practices discourse? DTQ suggests both, but this would be problematic.

The educational role of language in HVE is most importantly presented in *DTQ* as a trilemma, a need to address three matters at the same time:

- 1) the increased complexity of professional practice that requires higher quality in the bachelor's programs;
- 2) the quality of new students, which is a problem because of greater diversity among them (differences in prior education, Dutch language proficiency and cultural background);
- 3) the challenge to provide for an "increase in the probability of completing their studies successfully" (DTQ, p. 13).

In response to this, language proficiency is regarded as an important goal, since "for all high-level professional practice precision is required" (DTQ, p. 14). The document signals a danger "that misunderstandings due to the imprecise use of language may have serious consequences" and "various types of conceptual thought and systematization are necessary to contribute to innovation in one's own professional practice" (DTQ, p. 14). Language is considered "a key and necessary condition for this" (DTQ, p. 14).

DTQ's beliefs on learning in general are expressed in the following quotation: "Competence-based education is an important innovation in higher education, but the introduction of it was sometimes accompanied by an undervaluing of knowledge" (DTQ, p. 10). In this concept of a competence-based education, the aim is to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes, "consistent with the education of professional practitioners at the start of their careers" (DTQ, p.10).

Because of this competence-based learning approach, the formal curriculum as expressed in *DTQ* can be interpreted according to Ivanič's framework the purposeful communication type of a social practices discourse (cf. figure 1): writers must be involved in purposeful, situated activities which require writing in order to fulfil goals, and which are subject to "all the socio-political factors which affect real-life writing" (Ivanič, 2004, p.236).

Since DTQ regards language proficiency as a condition for high-level professional practice, this indicates another type of a social practices discourse, the learners as ethnographers type. In this approach learners are encouraged to become eth-

nographers of the literacy practice for particular contexts in which they wish to participate. Ivanič typifies the learning to write approach of the purposeful communication type of the social practices discourse as an 'implicit way of learning', and that of the learners as ethnographers type as 'learning by research'. It should be noted that Ivanič refers to learning here, so this is not necessarily about teaching. However, we presume a relation between implicit learning and a competence-based approach, since they both emphasize an explorative type of activity performed by students themselves.

Although an emphasis on a social practices discourse in DTQ seems dominant, some statements can be interpreted as indications of a genre discourse and even a skills discourse. The emphasis on professional practice may be seen as a genre discourse in which linguistic features of text types are specified, for example, according to their intention (recounting, describing, instructing, etc.), and the formality and certainty of the situation. Students should learn to focus on the appropriate use of professional genres, depending on the intended purpose. DTQ also clearly expresses a skills discourse in the emphasis on "a sound knowledge of Dutch" and a reduction of "considerable deficiencies" (DTQ, p. 14). A skills discourse focuses on an explicit and prescriptive way of teaching rules of spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Again, it should be noted that the latter two discourses in a way conflict with the competence-based learning approach DTQ advocates. More specifically, Ivanič describes the learning approaches associated with a genre discourse and skills discourse as an 'explicit way of teaching', implying that learning always contains some form of teaching. This entails a transfer of knowledge model in which a 'knowing' lecturer tries to transmit knowledge to an 'unknowing' student. In a social practice discourse, especially with purposeful education, teaching is implicit.

The beliefs we find on the national policy level are reflected in the three policy documents on our three courses. They all start from a competence-based learning approach, indicating a social practice discourse in the framework of Ivanič, which is associated with implicit learning.

Profile 1 regards writing as an aspect of social-communicative acting, one of the ten generic competences of the HVE Economics domain (SPP, p. 28). Poor communication abilities, according to Profile 1, can influence other competences, such as being professional, cooperative, and customer-oriented (Profile 1, p.36). A communicative competence should be developed while performing professional tasks (Profile 1, p. 12). Three components of a communicative competence are distinguished:

- 1) Accessibility, referring to the use of correct spelling and grammar, logical structure, and reader focused professional language,
- 2) Sensitivity, emphasizing the importance of effective networking
- 3) Ability to persuade, stressing the relevance and consistency of arguments (SPP, p. 35).

Profile 2 sketches communicative competence as one of the study program competences in more global terms: “The graduated HVE Bachelor CLE is able to communicate with specialists and non-specialists about challenges in the field of climate and environment” (Profile 2, p. 3).

Profile 3 is based on a national description of competences for the HVE-domain Business Administration. Far more detailed than the other two profiles, it describes a communicative competence in four aspects:

- 1) textual craftsmanship (e.g., containing correct and polished use of language, effective and efficient planning of the writing process, basic knowledge of arguing techniques),
- 2) professional genres,
- 3) strategic communicating,
- 4) giving and receiving feedback.

The statements about language education in Profile 1 and 2 are similar to those in the national document DTQ. They indicate several, even conflicting discourses on writing.

With its focus on the professional practice, Profile 1 suggests some kind of a social practices discourse (Ivanič, 2004): writers must be involved in purposeful, situated activities in which writing requires students to meet goals, and learn in real-life or simulated contexts, with an emphasis on the adequate fulfilment of a goal specified by some authority (e.g., an employer). In contrast, Profile 1 gives ‘accessibility’ as the first aspect of a communicative competence, paying attention to logical structure and publicly focused professional language, which fits a genre discourse, with its focus on the appropriate use of professional genres. Grammar and spelling are mentioned as the first features for this accessibility, so a skills discourse that focuses on the explicit and prescriptive teaching of linguistic rules is also possible. This is even stressed in the importance of language proficiency in a context of problems of the new type of students: “To bring these new students to a qualitative higher level demands extra attention for proficiency of the Dutch language during the study” (Profile 1, p. 8).

If we indeed characterize Profile 1 as combination of a genre discourse and a skills discourse, the conflict between the learning approach and learning to write approach, which was already apparent in the national document DTQ, is confirmed: according to Ivanič, in a genre discourse students get unambiguous instructions to learn the linguistic characteristics of text genres, “in order to be able to reproduce them appropriately to serve specific purposes in specific contexts” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 233). This explicit way of teaching is not in correspondence with a competence-based approach, where students are stimulated to discover the effects of the genres themselves.

The statements about writing in Profile 3 mostly tend to a genre discourse: it is claimed that knowledge and proficiency of professional genres are important. However, in this course indications of a functional approach of a social practices discourse are also present. There is some attention to strategic communication

that goes beyond a mere mastery of genres: "A starting professional must be able to make strategic choices based on his organizational and communicative purposes in a specific communicative context" (Profile 3, p. 165). Apparently, students have to know the communication models, be proficient in analyzing the purpose and reader of the texts, and be able to play with the layers in a communication process.

In line with the competence-based approach of writing education of course 3, an implicit way of learning would be expected, in which students as the master of their own learning process are stimulated to elaborate a strategic, contextual writing consciousness. However, despite the attention to strategy and context in Profile 3, the document rather advocates an explicit way of teaching. The 'body of knowledge' turns out to be an extensive list of facts and skills students should acquire. This supports a genre discourse, in which it is important to appropriately reproduce a genre according to its purpose and context, or a functional approach of a social practices discourse, in which the emphasis is on adequate fulfilment of a social goal "specified by someone in authority" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 235). So, while in course 3 specialists in communication consciously attempt to develop a learning to write approach that is competence-based, when it comes down to actual writing courses, they enter into a discourse of language education based on a transfer of knowledge model.

Like DTQ, all three Profiles unambiguously reflect an orientation towards professional practice, one of the two key HVE characteristics. This holds to a much lesser extent for the second HVE key characteristic, emancipation and vertical mobility. In Profile 1, communicative competence is seen as one of the four critical factors to success for every student that starts at an HVE school (Profile 1, p. 29). It is identified as a problem that new students have very heterogeneous levels because of different socio-cultural backgrounds and language proficiency. This calls for extra attention to (Dutch) language proficiency, since written and oral reports are of great importance for acceptance of reported and presented (financial) information (Profile 1, p. 8).

These statements suggest that language proficiency may be necessary for vertical mobility, which is formulated as deficits that should be removed. There is no mention of the role that language proficiency can play for students in a personal or broader social sense. Profiles 1 and 3 do not refer to vertical mobility or emancipation at all.

With respect to Klafki's basic questions, the documents of all three study programs show the same focus (or constricted vision) on the future life significance as in DTQ. None of the documents suggests a present life significance of language education come forward. Like DTQ, these documents do not have a consistent exemplary significance for writing education.

So, on the level of the ideological curriculum, we perceive a discrepancy between statements clearly expressing a social practices discourse, and assertions that can only be seen in a genre discourse or skills discourse. Since these discourses are incompatible when it comes down to teaching, problems are to be expected.

6.2 Results on the formal curriculum

The student guides and the teacher guides from all three courses are based on the profiling documents, which in turn reflect the policy document on a national level. As a result, the formal curriculum of all courses show a competence-based approach to begin with. This is first and foremost apparent in the student and teacher guides, which serve to link the national policy beliefs to the local courses. The writing methods of course 1 and 2 are not written by the study programs. The first one works from a competence-based approach. The second one does not (claim to) work from this approach.

A conflicting social practices discourse

In all courses, the hidden conflict between the social practices discourse and genre discourse, already apparent in the ideological curriculum, is confirmed and even elaborated. In all profiling documents, a strong orientation towards professional practice becomes apparent. This is compatible with a social practices discourse, but none of the courses show indications of the learners as ethnographers type of this discourse. Method 1 for example completely lacks exercises in which students critically investigate the literacy practices they would like to participate in. Instead, Method 1 leans to the functional approaches type, in which it is important to deliver an adequate text as defined by authority in the intended literacy practice (Ivanič, 2004): "In this chapter you focused on written communication and the writing of neat business letters" (Method 1, p. 17). This suggests that in a professional situation uniform writing conventions are known and supported by all members, and differences of interests do not exist.

A functional type of a social practices discourse is also suggested in Guide P2, where acquiring the communicative competence of reporting as a professional task is learned by doing it in the context of a specific project. However, this suggestion is again contradicted by the strict weekly planning of the learning process, in which students are not free to determine and acquire their own goals, but must fulfil specified writing tasks. This regime rather favors a genre discourse.

Guide ST3 defines a writing competence monitor (Guide ST3, p. 12), an instrument for students to measure their communicative competence at the start and the end of the course. At first glance this seems to fit an explorative, implicit way of learning. However, results of the measurement are strongly preconceived: on a five-point rating scale students assess eight aspects of their writing competence (attitude, planning, formulating, structuring, layout, revising, cooperating, ability to learn). Although the purpose seems to be for the students to find out about their own way of writing, the instrument really checks to see if the established beliefs about good writing are indeed followed by students. This can be derived from formulations in the document such as: 'Student is able to handle deadlines,' 'take readers seriously,' 'think before structuring a text' (Guide ST3, p. 12), which all indicate requirements students must meet.

Indications of a genre discourse

In their elaboration of the emphasis on profession practice, all three courses show clear indications of a genre discourse, combined with an explicit way of teaching. Text genres are often a central topic, presented as uniform and independent of a particular context: "Below you find the specific elements of a report" (Method 1, p. 290). Students should learn to write a text genre by following advices presented in the sequence of the text parts: "Write the introduction and the final section of the order confirmation in the next situation" (Method 1, p. 82).

Writing is seen as a recurrent process of evaluating and revising text: "During the writing process you may discover that the main question wasn't precise enough or that the index has to be revised. Therefore, writing is a cyclical process" (Method 2, p. 22). Students are guided with detailed instructions on how to structure specific types of reports, using a question scheme for developing and answering main questions, background questions and key questions. Method 2 presents writing for professional practice as a strategic activity, with a strong focus on the purpose of the report and reasoning from the (often varied) needs of the readers.

Guide ST3 contains structured plans with questions to provide students with writing indications: "Prepare the acquisition interview by emphasizing: - what does the client organization look like? - who is he: his role and person? - what are his needs, wishes, and demands? - what is the expected result of the interview from his point of view and yours?" (Guide ST3, p. 17). There are lists with good and bad ways to cooperate, writer types and feedback assessment blanks, and writing advice (spelling, phrasing, and style). Other lists contain general characteristics of writing activities, definitions of well written communication, and the elements of communicative competence that should be acquired based on these characteristics.

Traces of a creativity discourse

Although the genre discourse is dominant in most formal curricula, two of them take many exercises from a different writing approach, (Claessens, 2008), which can be characterized as a combination of a social practices discourse and a creativity discourse. Typical for a creativity discourse is the belief that people learn to write when they get the opportunity to write on topics that are inspiring and relevant to them (Ivanič, 2004). In the exercises in GuideS1, students are stimulated to experiment with different ways of business writing as well as personal writing. They are told to exaggerate or intentionally make mistakes in professional as well as personal letters and together scrutinize the effects. In other exercises they are stimulated to explore, express, and sharpen their thoughts about subjects that matter to them, for example, their first weeks in their new school. Likewise, in *Guide S2*, students are trained in free writing and in giving feedback, in choosing a subject for their projects.

The combination of two discourses reveals an ambiguous learning approach: a creativity discourse is a strong example of Ivanič's 'implicit learning,' whereas a genre discourse uses 'explicit teaching,' (Ivanič, 2004) as we saw in the focus on text structures and theory in Method 1, which is contrasted with a competence-based learning approach.

A closer look at Guide T1 suggests that this creative discourse is in reality a form of genre discourse. Students may become stimulated to experiment in writing, but this mainly serves as support for an explicit teaching approach to make it easier to write a text on the basis of guidelines. For example, Guide T1 recommends the lecturers to give students the chance to struggle with exercises: "Don't come too quickly with advice or correct answers" (Guide T1:, p. 17), thus emphasizing that there are rules to be learned. The aim of the so-called 'writing process game' (Guide T1, p. 8) is to show students how experienced writers handle the writing process. Students get strips of paper, each with a step of the writing process, and have to sort them in the correct order. All of these quotations point to a normative approach. This is also the case in Guide S2, where the elements of the genre provide the norm for the products students have to write and comment on.

So in conclusion, in the formal curriculum the conflict between a social practices discourse and a genre discourse becomes even more apparent. Some courses show traces of an intention to find a way out in a creative discourse, thus employing a more implicit teaching approach, but they do not succeed in implementing this approach.

Significance of writing and learning to write

In terms of Klafki's basic questions, the formal curricula of all courses focus on a future life significance, meaning professional practice. This is akin to the ideological curriculum and the HVE key characteristic orientation to professional practice. All courses refer to professional practice, and provide exercises that reflect real-life examples of writing in this context.

In addition to this focus, in all courses some attention is paid to some kind of present life significance. In Guide S1 for example, this can be derived from the function of writing as an exercise for internship reports: "What you learn in this exercise about writing skills you can employ in writing assessments during your further study" (Guide S1, p. 2), although 'further study' may require a different kind of motivation from students than exercises that are directly meaningful to them.

A present life significance is also visible in Guide S1 exercises for students to express meaningful thoughts and experiences and reflect on them to discover that writing can be meaningful in their present lives. Although it is not mentioned explicitly in Guide S1, this can be seen as following the HVE key characteristic of vertical mobility and emancipation.

Guide S2's use of exercises in free writing, in which students can explore their thoughts, can be seen along the same lines. When this kind of writing is used more often in the documents, such attention may function as a motor for vertical mobili-

ty and emancipation in the sense of self-transformation. However, in Guide S2, the exercises are chiefly meant to help students to master the genre rules.

The writing competence monitor of Guide ST3 also seems to relate to a present life significance. It appears to offer the students insights in their present day lives. In reality, however, it is merely an assessment instrument. As a consequence, the document hardly addresses the HVE key characteristic of vertical mobility and emancipation.

As a consequence of the combination of several discourses, the exemplary significance of all writing course must be confusing to the students, as they may think that writing just means giving words to thoughts, which can be learned by writing a great deal. On the other hand, this learning by experimenting can be thwarted by the transfer of advice, which is also practiced in the course. Is writing a meaningful activity of finding and expressing thoughts, or is it just the application of writing advice and genre rules?

6.3 Results on the perceived curriculum

The case of Roos

In the two interviews with Roos, the writing lecturer of this course, she expresses her struggle implementing a competence-based approach of learning that motivates students to write and focus on professional practice, while feeling supported by a reliable, consistent writing approach. This gives rise to frustration. In the meantime, she likes to experiment with writing techniques.

Roos' search for a better writing course is to a large extent also an organizational struggle. Until recently, students in her study program only wrote reports collectively, embedded in larger projects on economics themes. This led to a discussion amongst the colleagues: "So finally we decided, as a compromise, to unlink it, meaning that in writing classes students wrote different reports than they did in their economics projects." However, this intervention conflicts with the preferred idea of subject integration of economics and writing.

This exemplifies the problems of a social practices discourse in practice, trying to regard texts and the processes of composing them as "inextricable from the whole complex social interaction which makes up the communicative event in which they are situated" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 234). When developing the curriculum, Roos had to battle with economics lecturers and managers for recognition of communication skills as a subject: each interpreted the Study Programme Profile in his own interest: "The point of course is that we all interpret the document differently. I read it and say: "Look! We have to pay attention to writing skills." But they argue: "No! Look! It only says we have to pay attention to the professional tasks."

Roos feels that her membership on the curriculum committee gave her a sense of ownership of her profession as a writing lecturer, and it made her more self-confident in relation to her management and economics lecturers. The end of this membership makes her uncertain and a bit scared: "Right now they are filling in the

tasks for next year ... and I don't even know if communication skills will remain a subject."

When Roos reflects on her own method of writing (Method 1) and her Guide T1, a certain scepticism about a genre discourse resonates: "In fact, I don't like to work with a book of my own." Ironically: "Look here: Determine the audience and purpose. To be done with five questions: Start thinking and write your letter after that ... I think I have already become more attached to the atmosphere you get when students write more about their own experiences." Roos concludes that defining the audience and purpose does not have to be done explicitly beforehand: "If you concentrate well on what you want to say, then you have your purpose, right?"

In spite of her frustration, Roos finds some satisfaction in experimenting with approaches from a creativity discourse as an alternative to an explicit approach to teaching: "It is a great relief for me to feel that I'm able to regulate my energy in a better way during a lesson (...). The students are at work (...). Before, I had a lot of handouts and exercises to copy and distribute. And I was acting like this, you know..." She imitates herself, gesturing wildly while explaining theory to her students.

The case of Marieke

In the way Marieke talks about her writing lessons, we again recognize the ambiguous discourse we observed in the didactic documents of her writing course. At first she seems convinced that it is genre discourse: "A report is a professional product. We chose it because we find it important that students know how they should write it." Marieke focuses more on the genre criteria of a report described in the method than on the demands of professional practice: "This is their first study subject, the first project, the first year, I just kept it limited. They just have to be able to write a report with these criteria and this assessment." Nevertheless, she doubts whether students will learn to write a report using only the genre criteria: "On the other hand ... when they really want to learn something, they have to write a substantial text. A report with only blank facts, but well done according to the layout criteria, that's rubbish. So, this is a bit of a dilemma."

Marieke also describes the difficulty of achieving relevant writing exercises based on the learning approach from the course method: "For me, it was boring to teach, and students didn't like it. I explained the rules for reporting about the introduction, strategy, etc. Students said they already knew all of it. But they didn't practice it." She emphasizes the relevance from the students' perspective: "If it is important for the students, they will do it very well, but it isn't important enough. Or at least, they don't feel it like that."

She is critical about the approach she uses: "Well yes, it worked. But only because I let them turn in their homework. It worked because of the discipline. Pressure, so to say." Despite her scepticism about a genre approach, Marieke seems to be more familiar with it, so she tends to fall back on the approach that drains her

energy less: "It is very easy to just give a few comments... which in fact is a power play on my part."

Aware of the pros and cons of a genre approach, Marieke tries to find a meaningful alternative. She is especially interested in different ways of giving feedback on her students' texts: "I spend a lot of time on it, and in fact, I don't see that it is effective. It's me who's doing all the work, a bit the classical way."

She recently started some experiments using creative exercises in feedback in which students have to comment on their own texts and those of others, thus practicing a reader-oriented way of writing (Claessens, 2008). When doing this, however, she constantly wonders how to make sure that students understand that these exercises aren't just 'nice' but also helpful in learning to write texts for professional contexts? "I fully support the idea behind it, but I find it difficult because I don't want my students to leave the classroom thinking What weird exercises we just did!"

In her position as a member of the core team, Marieke was involved in the development of the curriculum for a completely new study program. As a writing lecturer she may be hesitant, as a pioneer in the development of a study program she becomes a self-confident developer: "We are the only study program so we bent it to our will." She shows a clear idea about the content of the program: "You decide to do things because you consider them important and because you just know from the professional practice what is needed. From there, you decide which competence these things belong to."

The case of Céline

As one of the co-authors of the extensive STG, Céline would be expected to know exactly what to do in her course, namely, to work according to a genre discourse as a functional approach to a social practices discourse. Yet, she expresses some difficulties: "I'm looking for ideas, didactic ideas, didactic advice to know what to do when you have a group of 30 students in front of you." Although supported by a well-considered elaboration of communicative competence and an extensive method of writing, she does not know how to use her experience as a writing lecturer in this course: "In my education as a lecturer I learned to plan a lesson, to work in parts, alternating from theory to exercises and an evaluation going back to theory (...). In that way, it is not the lecturer who is constantly busy, but the students who are working (...). They are motivated to write or do what you want them to do because they learn something from it."

Céline believes that peer feedback is a way to motivate and activate students. Together, students look at a text written by one of them, comparing its starting point and the result. The way she talks about the purpose of feedback clearly reflects a genre discourse and a functional approach to a social practices discourse: the professional practice is the norm which stipulates the appropriateness of a text and thus what students should be conscious of: "You don't just write a text and send it to the organization. Students should realize that it is a contextual process."

Her focus is on future professional practice: “I work in the field of Business Management Studies. Here, writing skills are very important. All these students are going to play a key role in an organization (...). And they realize it, they are being told immediately.”

Referring to the latest reports from her own research group Human Communication Development, Céline wonders if the content of the STG still represents actual professional practice: “In organizations people don’t report (...). At the most, they write short notes of one page with some advice and points of interest (...). Our students have to write bulky reports with a justification of the research, of the results, of everything, blah, blah, blah ... Maybe we maintain in our lessons what in the real business world has already been out of practice for a long time. It wouldn’t surprise me.”

Like the other two writing lecturers, Céline is also interested in creative writing techniques: “I would like to practice this creativity, a freer way of writing, to allow students to experience how to write more easily and how wonderful it can be to write. The fun! That doesn’t get a lot of attention, because, well, you have to focus on your curriculum as well.”

Yet, the pressure from her study program makes that Céline does not know how to find a way to experiment with other discourses: “At this moment, I notice that it becomes more and more important to have clear assessment criteria and to know what you are assessing.”

Although Céline has some fellow lecturers with whom she discusses her writing course, there is not much interaction about the actual pedagogy: “We talk about the assessments we have to make. And what genre we definitely want in a project and how we’re going to combine it with economics and law and, well, whatever! We hardly speak about writing pedagogy.”

Although somewhat hesitant, Céline seems motivated to try and explore new ways of teaching: “That would be a huge change. But you know, don’t ask me if I want to. Of course I would say yes!” Having said that, immediately she feels the pressure from her study program: “At this moment, I notice that it becomes more and more important to have clear assessment criteria and to know what you are assessing.” Changes also pull her away from her comfort zone: “It is scary to let that go, even for a bit (...). And again, I also think that I should do more on it.”

Céline has some fellow lecturers with whom she discusses her writing course, but there is not much interaction about the actual pedagogy: “We talk about the assessments we have to make. And what genre we definitely want in a project and how we’re going to combine it with economics and law and, well, whatever! We hardly speak about writing pedagogy.”

Summary

In the interviews with the three lecturers, the picture that already emerged from the ideological and formal curriculum, is becoming even sharper. All three lecturers express their feelings of frustration, trying to implement a competence based

learning approach (viz. a functional approach of a social practices discourse) in a context of conflicting demands from the ideological and formal curriculum, organizational problems, and students who are either unmotivated or unable to perceive the intentions of the actual writing assignments.

Both Roos and Céline articulated organizational problems: battling with their colleagues in trying to establish a firm position for their writing courses in the curriculum. This makes it all the more harder for the lecturers to develop writing assignments that are integrated in the curriculum as a whole. A leading position in the team helps, but only leads to compromises.

All three lecturers describe the difficulties when trying to implement their writing courses in the actual context of their classroom. They try to find a way out through a kind of creativity discourse, which gives them some satisfaction, but on the one hand they find it difficult to explain to the students, and on the other hand, it conflicts with the assessment criteria, as Céline clearly remarks.

In terms of Klafki's basic questions, we also see a clear picture: as the ideological curriculum and the formal curriculum only address the future life significance, and to a large extent ignore the present life significance or the exemplary significance, the lecturers feel urged by the students' inactivity and lack of interest to address the present life significance in their writing exercises, and they have troubles in showing how these exercises are real examples of the phenomena they are trying to teach (exemplary significance). The result is dissatisfaction on both sides.

7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of our research was to answer our main research question: What are the additional design criteria for a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy, (a) from an ideological curriculum perspective (b) from a formal curriculum perspective, and (c) from a perceived curriculum perspective?

To answer this, we posed three sub-questions:

- 1) What type of writing pedagogy do HVE lecturers use, according to their official documents, and according to their own accounts?

Ivanič's framework helped us show that in general the three lecturers use a hybrid form of a genre discourse (with vague traces of a skills discourse), containing a few elements that refer to a creativity discourse and a social practices discourse. This seems to be the result of an inherent contradiction in actual HVE writing education: in the policy documents and profiling documents, a competence-based implicit learning approach to writing is advocated, whereas the writing pedagogy reflected in these documents mainly shows a writing discourse of explicit teaching based on a transfer of knowledge model. Specific references to writing pedagogy are of course absent in the policy documents, but in profiling documents and course methods, this conflict clearly emerges. At the performance level, the lecturers are trying to find a way out of this conflict by eclectically applying elements of a *crea-*

tivity discourse, but this is frustrated by the context (study program, colleagues, students).

This result is in line with a suggestion by Ivanič, that most teachers are likely to follow an eclectic approach, because actual texts and events are not homogeneous but can draw on several discourses, “in complex animation with one another” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 226).

In terms of Klafki’s basic questions, a conflict seems to arise from the imbalance in the attention paid to the two HVE key characteristics in the Dutch context: professional practice on the one hand, and vertical mobility and emancipation on the other hand. On all levels, the emphasis is on professional practice, whereas vertical mobility and emancipation are left implicit. As a result, the actual courses mostly contain exercises focusing on a future life significance, failing to address present life significance. Lecturers are looking for alternative ways to enhance the present life significance for their students, again by applying creative writing assignment. In doing so, they are struggling with the exemplary significance, in that they find it hard to convince them of the meaningfulness of their writing assignments.

- 2) What aspirations do these lecturers have with their writing pedagogy, and how do they cope with demands and problems they face in the HVE context?

Although it may not succeed, we regard the aspirations of the lecturers to achieve a writing pedagogy that is more motivating than a genre discourse as an attempt to create a writing pedagogy that is indeed consistent. All three writing lecturers report on the difficulties that arise when they cannot help their students understand the significance of writing to their present school practice and future professional practice.

They are also hesitant to position themselves as writing lecturers among colleagues and management. If they are not endorsed by clear beliefs about an HVE writing pedagogy supported by HVE policy, management, and colleagues, the lack of professional self-confidence makes it difficult to resist pedagogic and organizational demands. In an interview research with Scandinavian L1 teachers, Elf and Kaspersen (2012) concluded that all these teachers are confronted with different and sometimes conflicting expectations and demands, but also that they could cope better with these constraints with a more elaborated conceptual framework.

- 3) What conclusions and design criteria can we develop for a specific HVE writing pedagogy based on the answers to questions 1 and 2?

We started out with some provisional design criteria for such a pedagogy. Apart from being based on (international) research on writing education in general, a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy should:

- 1) adhere to the specific Dutch HVE requirements as formulated in the documents on the policy level and educational level
- 2) meet the lecturers’ concerns by providing them with an explicit description of its principles

3) consist of motivating and activating methods in line with a competence-based learning approach (aiming at the required social communicative competence). With respect to the first principle, the problem seems to arise from the conflict arising from the two key HVE characteristics: professional practice on the one hand and vertical mobility and emancipation on the other hand. A specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy should pay attention to both.

The second principle comes down to the clear choice for a purposeful communication approach of a social practices discourse, and explicit references to not only the future life significance, but also the present life significance. In addition, it should be made clear how the writing assignments in the courses exemplify real life writing.

The third principle seems to be served best by applying elements from a creativity discourse into the pedagogy. This is what seems to appeal most to the lecturers, and in their view has the most potential for activating their students.

So, we may reformulate our additional design criteria for a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy as follows. Apart from being based on (international) research on writing education in general, a specific Dutch HVE writing pedagogy should:

- 1) address both professional practice and vertical mobility and emancipation;
- 2) be based on a purposeful communication approach of a social practices discourse;
- 3) Address both the future life significance and the present life significance;
- 4) Make clear how its writing assignments exemplify real life writing (*exemplary significance*);
- 5) Apply creative writing assignments to motivate and activate students.

In subsequent work, we will develop and empirically scrutinize such a writing pedagogy, with the focus on personal interests as incentive to professional writing.

In conclusion, the question may be raised to what extent our findings are relevant in a broader perspective. As we restricted ourselves to the specific Dutch HVE context, and within this context only interviewed three writing lecturers, we are likely to have found very specific results. However, there are some considerations that modify this picture.

First, the conflict arising from the two key Dutch HVE characteristics most certainly affects writing education in a broad Dutch HVE context. Not only our three lecturers, but all writing lecturers in this context are likely to experience the same problems in their teaching practice: the conflict emerges on the level of the ideological curriculum, and it is clearly visible in the formal curriculum.

Second, inasmuch as it is a general characteristic of higher vocational education that it focuses on professional practice while trying to meet more social or societal demands, the same conflict is likely to arise in this general context.

Third, we restricted ourselves to three lecturers, who had an unusually high involvement with writing pedagogy, since they co-designed their own courses. This surely makes the lecturers less representative for all Dutch HVE writing lecturers.

However, their special characteristics enable them to articulate the problems they experienced much better. Since they are used to reflect on their writing pedagogy, they have given it much more thought than their colleagues, who are likely to have the same concerns. So we may safely assume that the initial concerns of our three lecturers are the same as the ones from the others, and the frustrations in finding their way out are likely to be the same as the ones the others will experience when they are trying to solve their problems.

Since our aim is to develop a new writing pedagogy for the specific Dutch HVE context, we may expect that writing lecturers in general will have the same needs, and the same difficulties in implementing new methods.

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