

REFLECTION ARTICLE

The Prism of Academic Writing: Textual Production in the Context of Teacher Professionalization

El prisma de la escritura académica: la producción textual en el contexto de la profesionalización docente

O prisma da escrita acadêmica: a produção textual no contexto da profissionalização docente

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OPEN ACCESS

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18634/sophiaj.19v.1i.1202>

Article information

Received: June 2022

Revised: July 2022

Accepted: May 2023

Published: January-June 2023

Keywords: Academic writing; Academic literacy; Writing processes; Social representations; Teacher training.

Palabras clave: Academic writing; Academic literacy; Writing processes; Social representations; Teacher training.

Palavras-chave: escrita acadêmica; alfabetização acadêmica; Processos de escrita; Representações sociais; Treinamento de professor

How to cite:

Giraldo-Gaviria, D. M. (2023). The Prism of Academic Writing: Textual Production in the Context of Teacher Professionalization. *Sophia*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.18634/sophiaj.19v.1i.1202>

Sophia-Education, volume 19 number 1. January/June 2023. English version

ABSTRACT

Academic writing has been a central theme in the professionalization of the professional body in the disciplines. This article aims to analyze why academic writing is a prism that responds to the interests of disciplinary traditions in teacher professionalization. To this end, we present some assessments in the light of three categories of analysis: 1) Academic writing practices and discursive genres: the response to the context of teacher training; 2) Social representations beyond discourses: strategies for the qualification of teachers' academic writing; and 3) Writing to systematize and disseminate: from ideas to the concretion of the academic text. From the reflections made, we consider that academic writing is relevant when it is understood as a process, which is coated with the formative interests of the teacher, the disciplinary academic tradition and literacy processes.

RESUMEN

La escritura académica ha constituido un tema central en la profesionalización del cuerpo profesoral en las disciplinas. El presente artículo de reflexión tiene por objetivo analizar por qué la escritura académica es un prisma que responde a los intereses de las tradiciones disciplinares en la profesionalización docente. Para el efecto, se presentan algunas apreciaciones a la luz de tres categorías de análisis: 1) Prácticas de escritura académica y géneros discursivos: la respuesta al contexto de formación docente; 2) Representaciones sociales más allá de los discursos: estrategias para la cualificación de la escritura académica del profesorado y 3) Escribir para sistematizar y divulgar: de las ideas a la concreción del texto académico. De las reflexiones efectuadas, consideramos que la escritura académica es relevante en el momento que se comprende como un proceso, el cual es revestido de intereses formativos del profesorado, de la tradición académica disciplinar y de procesos de Alfabetización.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Resumo

A escrita acadêmica tem sido um tema central na profissionalização do corpo docente nas disciplinas. Este artigo de reflexão visa analisar por que a escrita acadêmica é um prisma que responde aos interesses das tradições disciplinares na profissionalização docente. Para tanto, apresentam-se algumas apreciações à luz de três categorias de análise: 1) Práticas de escrita acadêmica e gêneros discursivos: a resposta ao contexto de formação docente; 2) Representações sociais para além dos discursos: estratégias para a qualificação da escrita acadêmica por professores e 3) Escrita para sistematizar e divulgar: das ideias à concretização do texto acadêmico. A partir das reflexões feitas, consideramos que a escrita acadêmica é relevante no momento em que é entendida como um processo, que é perpassado pelos interesses formativos do corpo docente, pela tradição acadêmica disciplinar e pelos processos de alfabetização.

Introduction

Academic writing is a prism that responds to the eyes of writers and readers, as well as to the purposes and study traditions of the various disciplines. It is evident that it is subject to the entanglement of relationships woven between reading and writing that surround the discursive communities of each discipline (Navarro, *et al.*, 2016; Carlino, 2017; Swales, 2019). Without a doubt, there are co-responsibilities between the teacher and the learner when it comes to producing academic texts; therefore, academic literacy is seen as an opportunity for communities to access discussions specific to fields of knowledge; this formative process depends on the active participation of all the subjects who are part of an academic culture (Bazerman, 1988; Arnoux, 2009; Carlino, 2005), in which they form their professional profile and develop discussions, debates, processes of written production and evaluation of the texts that are subsequently disseminated (Carlino, 2013).

It is also important to note that academic writing is one of the fundamental pillars of teacher training (Giraldo-Gaviria, 2023), since it dilucidates a point of encounter with the episteme, in which external intellectual property is not the only thing that matters, but the appropriation and interpretation of other voices, in other words, writing in the professional academic context requires standing on the shoulders of giants in order to understand the contexts of professional practice. Thus, academic literacy as a manager of academic enculturation (Castelló, 2014) recognizes that the processes of teaching writing are not determined by the acquisition of a written code, but by the configuration of languages close to discursive communities, which deconstruct the established, because "one does not learn to write in a vacuum, but from the field of problems inherent to a particular discipline" (Carlino, 2003, p. 4).414).

In this order of ideas, academic reading and writing are not skills that are achieved at a specific time, but which are perfected in practice (Cassany and Llach, 2017; Carlino, 2017). Therefore, they respond to the particularities of the disciplines and the contexts in which knowledge is disseminated. Without a doubt, writing reflects the interests, ideas and reflections of each academic field. Therefore, disciplines use particular discursive genres and language codes (Parodi *et al.*, 2010). Therein lies the responsibility for training suitable professionals, because their academic profile is linked to the actions developed by teachers to prepare and make students participate in the understanding and production of texts typical of their discursive community (Bazerman, *et. al.*, 2005, 2012; Carlino, 2017; Castelló, 2009; Russell, 1990). We could add that academic writing in the teaching field goes beyond the production of a coherent text, because it requires a text that, without forgetting it, goes deep into reflections, systematization and the configuration of a pedagogical and didactic stance.

As such, we recognize that academic literacy implies redefining the reading and writing practices of teachers and students; "practices that are in turn situated in specific disciplinary fields, and practices that need to be

guided by teachers, specialists in these fields" (Bazerman, et al., 2016, p.26). Certainly, academic writing is made possible thanks to the appropriation of specific discursive genres (Bajtín, 1982) of each discipline and to textual production understood as a situated act that is concerned with its epistemic function. In short, the relationship between academic literacy and academic writing is the way to produce texts from a process-based approach (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1992). At this point it is not about the product produced, but about the circumstances, values and qualification of the text in the writing process. Academic writing develops "from the clean page to the new blotter" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2015, p.255), only from version to version, face to face with words, amendments and changes does a quality text consolidate.

From this perspective, we could state that the constructs present in this reflection are a contribution to the qualification of academic writing processes in teacher training. In addition, they provide some theoretical and conceptual approaches in relation to academic literacy, academic writing and the need to promote strategies for textual production in teacher training. Specifically, the proposal for reflection that we present below is organized into the following categories:

- Academic writing practices and discursive genres: the response to the context of teacher training.
- Social representations beyond speeches: strategies for the qualification of writing academic of the teacher.
- Writing to systematize and disseminate: from ideas to academic text.

By way of summary, this reflection article aims to review generalities about literacy and academic writing, as well as to map some social representations for the qualification of teachers' academic writing. Because of this, it is an action that requires detailed and continuous review in the field of Educational Sciences and Language Sciences.

Academic writing practices and discursive genres: the response to the context of teacher training

Writing is one of the foundations of teacher professionalization, and its nature reveals an existing relationship between social constructs and cultural patterns typical of a discursive community. From this perspective, academic writing practices correspond to the actions, experiences, uses and discourses of a disciplinary field, which a discursive community demands and encourages. In this sense, academic writing "is not a bland or generic skill, transferable only from one context to another. In reality, it encompasses a diverse set of situated and complex literate practices, generally implicit and invisible, with relative stability and partial agreements" (Fahler, Colombo and Navarro, 2019, p. 555). Its manifestation responds to the attitudes shared by a socially objective group and not to the individualities that a subject possesses.

Writing processes are fundamentally necessary to transform knowledge (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1987). These disciplinary discursive practices respond to forms of teaching that are situated from contextual, epistemological and axiological perspectives. However, in order to achieve the configuration of an appropriate academic text, strategies are required that combine objective constructions and teaching realities. Therefore, in addition to a coherent text, we need a text which, without forgetting it, delves into a critical and reflective stance, in the systematization of classroom experiences as the foundation of the teacher-researcher's academic stance.

However, we must recognize that reading practices play an important role in planning and exercising writing. Without a doubt, knowledge of the world is established through inferences, questions and intertextual relationships typical of the disciplines, because "the ways of reading and writing are specific to each area of knowledge" (Uribe and Camargo, 2011, p. 328). It is not a question of writing for the sake of writing, but of responding to the academic concerns that are generated within a discursive community. In this sense, academic writing responds to the specificities of discursive genres and the functionality that is given to them in the disciplines (Giraldo-Gaviria, 2021). Therefore, it is a bridge between the social scenarios of the practical activity of teaching and its professionalization, in which it is established as a medium that underpins the voice of the teacher and enters into the theoretical and practical relationships of the educational act.

In line with this, we could add that in teacher professionalization, basic knowledge of the written language is not enough, it requires the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge and metalanguage, as well as the

functions and uses that reveal the object of study. What is certain is that writing is not a mechanical act; it is a process that brings together situated practices that respond with meaning, particular situations of reflection and is an action of knowledge creation.

Without a doubt, the writing processes that teachers develop in their training respond to praxis. However, in the processes of teacher training, some shortcomings are evident in the systematization of experience, in the appropriation of discursive genres and in the learning processes of the writing exercise. Certainly, writing is required in the professional context, but it is not taught (Uribe and Camargo, 2011); we often assume that teachers have writing skills, but in reality, planning, the act of writing, revision and rewriting is a process that is constituted by continuous practice. Thus, to a large extent, the social representations¹ demarcate the writing practices situated in discursive communities. Among the considerations that gravitate towards teachers, expressions such as: "to write well is to know how to express oneself coherently and coherently" have limited production to orthographic aspects and rules (Cardona-Puello, 2014); in which writing is not associated as a means of transforming knowledge, but rather as a channel for transmitting ideas; in other words, the epistemic value of academic writing is disregarded.

Finally, we could say that one of the keys to qualifying writing processes in teacher professionalization lies in the identification of discursive genres, understood as "a series of language utterances that are grouped together because they have certain similarities in their thematic content, verbal style and composition" (Bajtín, 1999, p. 248), which surround discursive communities. In this order of ideas, the identification, use and understanding of the particularities of specific discursive genres allow the situated participation of teachers in the academic community in which they are trained. Therefore, reaching the right place is a product of the discursive genres and academic literacy link, since they promote reasoning in the disciplines (Carlino, 2017). Therefore, any process of writing enculturation, situated teaching or continuing teacher training cannot have a remedial purpose for the deficit of previous training, but must make the fundamental elements of the disciplines available so that in the teaching and learning processes the teaching body can debate, argue, explain, systematize and disseminate knowledge and know-how.

Social representations beyond speeches: strategies for the qualification of the academic writing of the teacher

The social representations that govern academic reading and writing determine the didactic possibilities for evaluating the texts that teachers produce in training processes. Without a doubt, comparing them "implies determining what students know, what they believe and what they do with reading and writing" (Ortiz-Casallas, 2009, p.130). In this sense, they reveal cultural constructions that a particular group, which has shared purposes, ways of thinking and practices, develops; therefore, social representations are a construct that "is formed from our experiences, but also from the information, knowledge and models of thinking that we receive and transmit through tradition, education and social communication" (Moscovici, 1984, p.473).

Within the framework of teacher professionalization, academic writing is concerned with formal aspects, i.e. grammatical, spelling and punctuation elements; a writing interested in the deep mastery of the language required by the disciplinary fields that shape the teaching practice of teachers, which, on occasion, recognizes the writing process as an organized product of information and not as a process that manages an intellectual exercise.

It would seem from all of the above that the writing of academic texts is supported by social representations that revolve around the interests, particularities and forms of teaching that teachers face in their professionalization. With all this in mind, we could point to some strategies or situations that validate ways of conceiving the processes of producing academic writing:

1. For Moscovici (1984), social representations are knowledge that "is constituted from our experiences, but also from the information, knowledge and models of thought that we receive and transmit through tradition, education and social communication" (p.473).

1) *Reading consolidates the production of academic writing.* Certainly, specialized reading habits consolidate writing production. Without a doubt, producing texts represents a network of reading practices that a community shares. Therefore, the challenge lies in the fact that teacher training environments must illustrate to teachers aspects, for example, that each typology and its discursive genres require particularities of reading, "that reading a text is also reading its contexts, and that reading, at least that which is demanded in higher education, implies working with the text: underlining it, glossing it, reconstructing it" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2009, p.31). With all this, the act of reading becomes a skill concerned with thinking, which leads to a later discussion with the written word. In short, reading and writing are individual acts which, by complementing each other, transform ideas into thoughts and thoughts into concrete facts.

2) *The exemplification goes beyond the rules, it is written under the mediation of a teacher-writer.* With this in mind, we recognize that the role of the mediator constitutes a foundation in the professional training of teachers (Giraldo-Gaviria and Caro-Lopera, 2022b), that is, expert writers represent an authority that brings teachers closer to the practice of writing. Therefore, academic writing practices are characterized by trial and error, practice and construction, and production and rewriting. Every writing process dilucidates a situated and social practice typical of the particularities of the disciplines, which is characterized by being a construction with the other (Bazerman, 2008). Therefore, writing is determined by the dynamics of training in the disciplines; the production of writing is strengthened through the support of the expert and; writing transforms knowledge as it is produced, based on particular discursive genres that develop a shared stance by an academic group. For all the above reasons, it is not surprising that the idea that the processes of producing writing belong to a group of teachers with inspiration, or that writing is a possibility for those who have been trained in the language sciences, resides in the field of professional teacher training; which represents a deep divide between seminars, courses or academic spaces concerned with writing and others that focus on a practical exercise.

3) *The revision of academic writing: it is not written through a set of rules, but as a situated process.* Textual revision is a process that starts with planning and can affect the configurations that precede the writing exercise, in other words, it affects the ideas considered before they are written (Camps, 1992). In this order of ideas, textual revision exercises are social representations of those who accompany teachers in their professionalization. Of course, some mediators are concerned with formal aspects and the evaluation of the product; others recognize writing as a process of planning, production and revision (Hayes and Flower, 1980; Didactext, 2003, 2015). What is important here is that the academic texts that result from teacher training constitute the possible ways of teaching the act of writing in the community that develops training processes. In short, it is not just a matter of producing a long text, but an academic text that contributes to the real transformation of the context in which knowledge acquired through professional training is applied.

In short, the social representations surrounding academic writing are generated from the actions of teachers who mediate in the professionalization of teaching; therefore, producing academic texts is the bridge that stretches between the theorization of disciplines and the praxis of teachers.

Writing to systematize and disseminate: from ideas to the concrete academic text

The purpose of academic writing is to shape and disseminate the discourse established in disciplinary communities. In this sense, it is an epistemic act that allows us to transform and establish other forms of knowledge, not just to develop exercises to reproduce knowledge. Writing is not a spontaneous action; its qualification is the response to experiences with reading, practice and context. Therefore, producing an academic text "goes beyond the teaching of writing" (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1992, p. 44).

Undoubtedly, "the concept of writing and its teaching has depended on historical eras; because its purpose, methodology, resources, actors, have changed" (Rátiva-Velandia et. al., 2018, p.150). Writing, then, is an intentional activity that systematizes and disseminates teachers' knowledge in their daily practices, as well as in their professional training processes. Therefore, it enables social issues to be analyzed, compared and understood, and requires teachers to have reading and writing skills in order to disseminate advances, theoretical positions and the results of everyday processes. At this point, it is important to start from a pragmatic principle: what is not written tends to be forgotten or ignored.

As we mentioned earlier, the production of academic writing, in the context of teacher training, has a high degree of everydayness, of the classroom or of situations given in the context of pedagogical practice (Giraldo-Gaviria and Caro-Lopera, 2022a). It is a practice characterized by reflection, analysis and criticism that emerges from the needs of the historical moment, the interests of discursive communities and the particularities of the disciplines. With all this, we could say that the panorama of teacher professionalization tells us of the need to consolidate a writing culture that allows not only the production of texts, but also academic discussion through work networks, learning communities or networked research. In short, boosting academic literacy processes, recognizing writing practices and identifying discursive genres used more frequently in the disciplines is an urgent task for professional teacher training.

However, it is necessary to conceive of academic writing as a process, because it is not a skill that is a product of childhood, but rather it is the culmination of cultural, social and personal experiences that the teacher has had throughout his or her professional life. Let's remember that writing "allows teachers to put their practices in parentheses. They analyze and evaluate them. Let's not forget that both writing and discerning come from the same root. Both are actions of *tamizar*, of distinguishing, of separating the *harina* from the *salvado*" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2009, p.122). Therefore, writing as an instrument for disseminating knowledge² and knowledge takes on meaning as it develops its function through the development of a discursive activity (Castelló, 2014). In this order of ideas, writing, as a means of systematizing experience, represents a stance, not just a syntactically correct construction, but a liberating, objective and transformative idea of the ideas that are generated within a discipline.

What is certain is that writing in the context of teacher professionalization demands that we break it down, go through the fire of analysis, the comparison of ideas, of meanings that the discipline in which we are trained demands; Equally, it requires time to reposition ideas, because production is not only strengthened in the writing of a first version, but also in the rewriting of the same; it needs a rhetorician's voice to persuade the members of a discursive community. After all, "if we learn to write and write about practice, we will most certainly discover points of reference for drawing up more appropriate, more precise maps of our profession" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2009, p.197).

With all this, academic writing is like the shadows of a prism in the training and professionalization of teachers, not only because it requires the construction of the teacher's profile in the light of a discipline, but because this type of production "is required, but not taught, because it is probably assumed to be a general skill, learned at previous educational levels, transferable to any situation" (Uribe and Camargo, 2011, p.383). To a large extent, the struggle of teacher training processes is rooted in the way we write for our peers, because the appropriation of academic reading and writing leads to the continuing training of teachers and its possible use as a socio-cultural practice (Bajtín, 1982; Bronckart, 2010; Camps, 2003) that reveals the realities we face in the field of teaching and learning.

We could close this section by saying that writing is the guiding letter for the systematization and dissemination of teaching knowledge, and that it is the epistemic mediator of professional practice, of practice in situ, of learning in the disciplines (Bazerman et al., 2012; Carlino, 2005; Tolchinsky and Simó, 2001). In short, "learning to write, then, is not a chance activity or the result of the genius of certain enlightened spirits" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2009, p.204). It is a skill in which the acts of constructing human knowledge in a specific time and place predominate, which responds to collective interests and particular traditions that outline a way of seeing and understanding the world.

Conclusions

Throughout this article of reflection, we have pursued the thesis that academic writing is a prism that responds to the eyes of writers and readers, as well as to the purposes and tradition of study of the various disciplines; however, its qualification depends on the academic background of the teacher, as well as on the social representations they hold about academic writing practices. In this order of ideas, to check the constructs that permeate social representations, the discursive genres of the context

2. Knowledge is a "flavor", as Beillerot et al. (1998) remind us, a space-time that seasons the ideas of individuals with stories, experiences, a relationship with the world that hovers between the ethical and the aesthetic; a construct that generates polyphonies between the discursive, the linguistic, the proxemic and the experiential. In other words, Zambrano-Leal (2019) reminds us that we designate knowledge to "situate what we master in an order of what is common, what is everyday, life, science. I know how to cook, I know how to sew, I know how to teach [...] In school, knowledge is often referred to as knowledge when it is of a different nature" (p.77).

of teacher training and the importance of systematizing and disseminating knowledge has a long way to go within the framework of teacher professionalization. With all this in mind, the proposal for reflection that we present here is an attempt to get closer to initial answers about academic writing practices. Some inferences in this respect can be seen in aspects such as:

With regard to the first category, *Academic writing practices and discursive genres: the response to the context of teacher training*, we could say that the purpose of academic writing is to link teachers to the dynamics of professionalization, in other words, writing in the disciplines is an exercise in which knowledge is not only analyzed, but in which teachers dare to produce it. Therefore, the challenge in this teacher training centers on the constitution of study networks, research seminars and learning communities that focus on and determine, in detail, what the writing interests are, the importance of academic literacy and the particular discursive genres that permeate textual production. Certainly, one possibility for qualifying academic writing practices lies in dilucidating the map of discursive genres that discursive communities often exploit; let's remember that writing is the representation of a fact and a socially situated practice (Bazerman, 2008).

In closing, we consider it important to understand that the writing dynamics of the disciplines vary according to their practices. Therefore, identifying the stable nature of the professions' fruitful writing interests makes it possible to enrich and enhance the ways and forms in which teachers communicate with members of their disciplines. Therefore, grounding epistemological and practical aspects in teacher professionalization is a step towards transforming what we do. To put it briefly, we could say that, "writing is ideal for overcoming passive oralism, unfounded parroting, and opinions only attached to our most immediate emotions" (Vásquez-Rodríguez, 2009, p.197).

In relation to the second category, *Social representations beyond speeches: estrategias para la cualificación de la escritura académica del profesorado*, es importante dejar claro que las prácticas de escritura académica son reflejo de las enseñanzas recibidas, es decir, los maestros que se profesionalizan, perfilan sus procesos escriturales a la luz de las acciones que han recibido en su formación; It is clear that production is the only way to analyze, systematize, discuss and disseminate teaching; however, we cannot assume that, as participants in educational processes in higher education, teachers write, accompany and discuss efficiently. Let's not forget that writing is a process, not a product (Hayes and Flowers, 1980; Didactext, 2003, 2015); the challenge lies in overcoming this social representation.

However, another very marked social representation of academic writing reveals that textual production is highly influenced by aspects related to grammar and spelling. Teacher professionalization requires transforming this conception, because writing shows not only the production of a correctly prepared text, but also the attitude of the professional body. In this order of ideas, we would like to make it clear that attending to academic writing goes beyond the diagnosis of writing problems and requires attention beyond the configuration of remedial courses (Ortiz-Casallas, 2011). Another obvious challenge we face lies in understanding writing practices from a didactic perspective (Narváez, 2014) from which teaching and learning processes circumscribed to the dynamics of each subject are reviewed. In other words, the "real change in the teaching of academic writing lies in the awareness and training of university teachers from all disciplines" (Núñez and Muse, 2017, p. 26).

Finally, I turn to the third category, *Writing to systematize and disseminate: from ideas to the concretion of the academic text*. In the professionalization of teachers, writing not only plays a communicative role, but also constitutes the shared ideas of a professional body, that is, academic writing is an instrument for transforming thinking (Scardamalia and Bereiter 1992). Therefore, a clear purpose for systematizing and disseminating the ideas of education professionals requires going through "a broad conception of pedagogy, didactics and reading and writing practices, since these concepts constitute the lenses that will serve us to enhance a didactic outlook" (Rincón and Gil, 2010, p. 395). In this sense, enculturation in a discursive community depends on the academic meetings that determine the disciplines; the teachers' formative efforts are evident in their participation in seminars, research groups, learning communities, etc. In short, we believe that the processes of qualifying academic writing in teacher professionalization are strengthened in practice. In fact, if we want to systematize and disseminate knowledge, it is important not only to recognize the linguistic value of the language, but also to cement teaching strategies that accompany writing from an approach based on the constructs of academic literacy (Carlino, 2013).

To make a long story short, we can consider that teacher training needs to promote processes of academic literacy, through research and the systematization of what is done, given that, in the professionalization of teachers, the accompaniment of other subjects who are experts in the disciplinary field, but also in writing, plays a fundamental role. Certainly, academic writing presents to the world the stance built up in the tradition of a professional body. Therefore, writing is grounded in practice, in reading, in analysis, in rewriting.

In short, it is worth betting on a teacher professionalization that privileges academic writing as a foundation that redefines the *ethos* of the professional body; from the understanding of the *pathos* of the teacher who considers academic production as a means of transforming practice and; from the rethinking of the *logos* of the disciplines that underpin teaching. Finally, if we understand academic production as a dialog for the construction of knowledge, we need to refine the word with precision; it is a matter of understanding that the qualification of writing responds to the active principle of writing-writing. In conclusion, writing, like a prism, refracts and reflects changes in production and qualifies itself in the making, responding to continuous practice and sustained reading. In short, the quest for a better academic writing is manifested in a pragmatic principle that Antonio Machado teaches us: *there is no path on the way, the path is made by walking*.

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