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Biography

Professor Monique Dorang, PhD, is a free-lance trainer and consultant for academic writing and publishing. She comes from an American and French cultural background and is a native speaker of both English and French. Originally from the field of humanities, she has worked as a translator for the German Institute for Standardization (DIN). In 1997, she was appointed as tenure track professor for English and French to the School of Technology of the Mainz University of Applied Sciences. In 2006, she went on to teach as Instructor of English for Science and Engineering with the Berlin Institute of Technology. She is currently providing academic writing workshops for graduates and research supervisors in collaboration with graduate schools, staff development programs, research centers, and scholarship foundations. Her workshops are writing process oriented and frequently address interdisciplinary audiences either from the fields of natural sciences and engineering or from the fields of humanities and social sciences. In applied research, her focus lies on learning strategies.

Presentation:

Supporting international graduates writing in English as Another Language

Abstract:

“Learning by osmosis” are the words with which a graduate biologist attending a workshop on Academic Writing described how international doctoral researchers find their way into science writing in English as Another Language. This striking metaphor expresses how they expose themselves, mainly through reading, to conventions on text genre, language and style in their disciplines.

Despite the relatively high quality produced through their ability to observe and replicate, writing in English in the multilingual environment of Germany's higher education institutions inevitably leads to questions concerning language and style which graduates cannot easily resolve themselves. It also happens that doubts are raised by statements made by the equally international body of research supervisors to whom they turn for guidance. Finally, confusion can also be prompted by ambiguous instructions given by scientific journals which tend to forget that their potential authors are international academics.

Whereas clarity and conciseness can be achieved during the content focused phases of the writing process, revising language and style is definitely the phase in which language professionals can provide support. This can be done through English for Specific Academic Purposes courses, copy editing, and also by developing the graduates' own strategy of emulating the language and style of skilful authors.

This presentation shows how reading tasks can help international graduates deconstruct the language and style of those authors whom they have come across through reading and whose communicative strategies they appreciate most.