On the **Importance** of Teaching **Academic Writing** to **Teacher Trainees**
Background

- New School Curricula
- New Teacher Program
- Teaching Writing as a Process

Results

- Before
- During
- After
  - The self-reflective papers

Conclusions
The Swedish National Agency for Education

Läroplan för Grundskola 11
Central Contents: 
Production and Interaction

1. Oral and written production and interaction of different kinds, also in formal contexts, where the pupils are to give instructions, narrate, summarise, explain, comment, evaluate, motivate, and adapt to a given purpose and situation.

2. Adaptation of own and others’ spoken and written production to vary, clarify and define as well as to create structure and adapt to a given purpose and situation.
The New English Studies and Education at Malmö University, 2011
Academic Writing at MU: Writing as a Process

Good product depends on good process
After finishing the course, the student:

understands the basic elements of rhetoric, including the interaction of purpose, writer, audience, content, form and meaning;
After finishing the course, the student:

understands writing as a **process** that includes prewriting, drafting, writing, rewriting, peer review and editing;
After finishing the course, the student:

can use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking and communication;
After finishing the course, the student:

can control such features as grammar, punctuation and spelling;
After finishing the course, the student:

can write a well-crafted paper and give a well-crafted oral presentation in a variety of English and an accent that can be understood by the majority of English speakers;
After finishing the course, the student:

can *evaluate* learner texts or other texts on different levels in terms of basic rhetorical elements, and
After finishing the course, the student:

can demonstrate the ability to work to agreed **timetables**, manage workloads and meet deadlines.
The Students

Previous experience of courses in AW&R

- 95% No
- 5% Yes
“I do hope I’ve improved, but since I’ve never really been challenged like this before I can’t really tell yet.”

“I have learned a lot. The first written assignment we had was also the first academic text I have ever written.”
Widening participation policy
Some very young students
Scaffolding
Production
Feedback
Revision
Repetition
Self-Reflective Papers

The Rhetorical Knowledge

The Content Knowledge

Self-Assessment
The Rhetorical Knowledge:

1. What **choices**, if any, did you make in your papers to accomplish your **purpose** to writing and your appeal to the **audience**?
The Rhetorical Knowledge
“I believe the best way to appeal to my audience when writing future papers is to present my ideas in a structured fashion. By breaking down arguments into paragraphs and present the reader with a thesis which clearly shows where my paper will go, my readers will be more prone to actually engage with my text and arguments. Other important aspects of this structure are to avoid inflammatory language and emotional arguments, and instead stick to evidence-based argumentation supported by researchers and academics.”

“I manipulated the balance between pathos, ethos, and logos in order to achieve effect. I focused on these techniques, because I feel that by better understanding them, I can become a better writer.”

“When writing I [...] choose a language that I thought was appropriate and suitable for the audience.”

“I often considered how I might use punctuation to achieve believability and strength.”
Self-Reflective Papers

The Rhetorical Knowledge

The Content Knowledge

Self-Assessment
Self-Reflective Papers

The Content Knowledge:

1. What **new perspectives**, if any, did you gain about particular subjects from your consideration of multiple and/or **alternative viewpoints** on different topics?

2. What elements from various papers best illustrate the **critical thinking** you engaged in in your writing for this course?
“Having to view a topic from different viewpoints actually help me strengthen my own resolve for a specific stand on that topic.”

“It can be challenging to summarize the [opposing] points in a neutral way, especially if you have strong personal feeling about the topic.”

“I also gained insights into how it is possible that commonly accepted arguments can have little or no factual base.”

“I learned that many sources on especially internet often interpret information their own way.”

“I had to leave my “comfort zone” [...]. This paper really challenged me. I also really have learnt how important it is to find reliable sources, something I am not good enough at, yet.”

“I made a search on previous work on the topic and made my choice according to what I read. That took some critical thinking, to decide which articles were trustworthy, but also which side had the most valid points.”
Self-Assessment:

1. Have your ability to **identify strengths and weaknesses in your writing** changed during this course?

2. What is the **most important thing** you have learned on this course?

3. What **knowledge of yourself as a writer** have you gained from the writing you have done on this course?

4. What **changes**, if any, have occurred in your writing practices or your sense of yourself as a writer?
Self-Assessment

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course process

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“[What] I have learned on this course is that writing really is a process. It might be that I never really thought about it before, but it really takes a lot of time to present a text that your reader will appreciate.”

“I am now aware of how I will be perceived by others, and what kind of impressions I am making by saying things in a certain way. The most important thing I have learned on this course is how to appear credible to everyone, and not just the people who share my opinion.”

“The most important thing I have learned on this course is to read and re-read my paper so I can identify any mistakes and correct as much as I can before handing in my paper.”

“I also feel I’ve improved my perception when it comes to proof reading and sentence structure.”

“I have learned to write in a more structured way, and I have learned that planning and setting up goals for yourself along the way is good. You cant do like you did in high school and write an essay the day before and still get an A.”
Conclusions:

- Participation in society:

  “[T]hese teachings clearly corresponds with how “real life” information is ideally presented. In addition to this, I believe that learning how to properly organize and present my ideas will serve me well as a consumer and citizen in an open society.”
Conclusions:

- Valuable knowledge and skills:

  “My increased **awareness** is the most important thing I will take [away from] this class, because it will continue to offer me new **opportunities for learning for the rest of my life.**”

  “I have been provided with some very **useful tools** for the future.”
Conclusions:

• Paying it forward:

“I expect to use this new knowledge in the future not only in my future courses but also in my teaching. If these templates were taught in earlier ages I believe it would make it a lot easier for all [pupils].”
“[Academic] writing is hard, but not dangerous.”