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Abstract

Background: The analysis of teachers' conceptions about writing at university level allows the study of teaching practices associated with academic writing. At the same time, it is important to consider the context (disciplines, culture, institution, pedagogical organisation, etc.) where these practices take place. Purpose: The present article explores the teachers' conceptions about teaching and assessing writing skills at university level from two academic programmes of psychology: one in France and one in Colombia, through two questions: (a) the writing skills that teachers expect their students to acquire from attending their courses, and (b) the criteria used by the teachers to assess the written performance of their students. The main purpose is to analyse the teaching and evaluation practices that teachers describe in their discourse, taking into account the discipline and some similarities and differences between cultural contexts. Sample: Ten university psychology teachers, five French and five Colombian, participated voluntarily in the study. The teachers were a heterogeneous group in terms of their ages and number of years of work experience. They taught a range of courses or

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subjects in the area of psychology. Design and methods: The research was conducted using a qualitative method. The university teachers' conceptions were collected during semi-structured interviews. A content analysis of the interviews, using an inductive approach, was undertaken. Results: The analysis of the discourse indicates that the teachers focus their teaching practices on some specificities of the academic writing, and that they mainly assess different types of students' knowledge. Additionally, a gap was observed between teaching and assessment practices, which concerns the cognitive dimensions of writing and the rules of academic discourse. This gap seems more evident in French teachers' discourses. Colombian teachers described, in the main, teaching practices focused on the norms of academic writing. Conclusions: These findings suggest that some similarities between the teachers' conceptions are associated with the discipline. Specific differences could be explained by culturally distinct pedagogical practices related to the manner of teaching at university level. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)