

## MY WRITING CONSULTATION COMPETENCY: A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Dear Writing Consultant:

This questionnaire is intended to help you reflect on your competency as a writing consultant. You can complete this questionnaire more than once as you continue to develop your professional skills as a consultant.

This questionnaire is based on the SYSTEMIZATION WRITING CONSULTATION (SYSTEMATIK SCHREIBBERATUNG) by Knorr (2023), which distinguishes between three demands on writing consultants: context, person, and situation. The questionnaire is structured accordingly. In the first part of this questionnaire, you will be presented with statements that you can use to reflect on your practical knowledge. The second part contains statements that can be used to test theoretical knowledge. This questionnaire is long, which means you may focus on individual areas or sections and complete the questionnaire over several sittings.

The questionnaire is structured as follows:

Part 1: Demands on Writing Consultants .....	3
Context: Academia, Science, and Research .....	3
Domain Higher Education, Science, and Research .....	3
Disciplinary Cultures .....	4
Media Environment of a Consultation.....	5
Demands Placed on the Person.....	6
Identity and Role .....	6
Conversations and Communication Skills .....	7
Situation: Identifying Individual Challenges .....	8
Identifying Process-Related Challenges .....	8
Identify Text-Related Challenges .....	9
Setting .....	9
Analyzing Texts in Different Languages .....	10
Analyzing Texts in the Language of Your Choice .....	10
Analyzing Texts in Your Working Language(s) .....	11
Situation: Consultation .....	12
Consultations on Process-related Challenges .....	12
Consultations on Text-Related Challenges .....	13
Consultations on the Writer's Role, Voice and Positioning .....	13
Consultations on the Reader's Perspective .....	14

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Consultations on the Structure and Related Features of Texts .....	15
Consultations on Conventions.....	18
Consultations on Linguistic Challenges .....	19
Consultation Language: German.....	20
Consultation Language: English .....	21
Overall Assessment of Consultations on Textual Challenges .....	22
Consultations on Media Challenges.....	23
Reflection on Part 1 .....	24
Part 2: What Do You Know?.....	25
Demands Related to Context .....	25
Demands Related to Person.....	25
Demands Related to Situation: Identifying challenges .....	26
Demands Related to Situation: Consultations Dealing with Language.....	26
Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on the Role and Perspective of Readers.....	27
Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Citation Conventions .....	27
Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Resources .....	28
Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Requirements .....	28
Reflection on Part 2 .....	28

As this is a questionnaire that encourages reflection on your writing consultation competency and as you continue to evolve as a consultant, you can complete the questionnaire at various points in your career as a writing consultant, collect and compare the results, and use them as a further building block for portfolio work.

#### *A Note to New Writing Consultants*

If you are currently enrolled in or have just completed a writing consultant training program, you may not (yet) be able to answer some questions. That's perfectly fine. Feel free to use the questionnaire to reflect on the aspects addressed. After all, that is the purpose of self-reflection: to think about what you have learned and experienced so far, to identify potential, and to plan your future development.

#### *On This Tool*

We would be grateful if you were to share your experiences with this tool with us. We look forward to receiving your feedback. We hope you enjoy working with the self-assessment tool!

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### My Writing Consultation Competency

This self-assessment form belongs to:

Name:	
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Completed on:

Date:	
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### Part 1: Demands on Writing Consultants

#### Context: Academia, Science, and Research

This section focuses on demands placed on writers and writing consultants in academia and research broadly defined. These contexts include the domain higher education, science, and research and related disciplinary cultures as well as the media environment affecting consultations.

#### Domain Higher Education, Science, and Research

In this context, writing is determined by rules and conventions that differ from, let's say, those in journalism. For this reason, the focus here is on demands placed on students and/or researchers.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I am familiar with the principles of good scientific practice, research ethics, and academic integrity.								
I feel confident when dealing with the requirements associated with "good scientific writing."								
I am familiar with counseling services (e. g. student services, methods center, language learning counseling) for students at my university.								

*Space for further Reflection*

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### Disciplinary Cultures

Every discipline has its own set of conventions regarding writing. These conventions are reflected in, for example, the structure of texts, in specific kinds of arguments, in technical language, or in citation guidelines. As all academic and scientific texts belong to the field of science, there are, however, also many similarities. Interdisciplinary degree programs pose a particular challenge to writers because they might be subject to several different sets of rules and conventions. Writing consultants therefore need to develop a sense of different conventions in each discipline.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can describe how new knowledge is developed in my field through different approaches (such as methods, procedures, and thought patterns).								
I can identify and compare the approaches in my discipline to those in other fields.								
I can recognize possible discipline-specific practices in other people's texts.								
I feel confident that I can help other people learn how to recognize different disciplinary conventions and related issues.								

*Space for further Reflection*



### Media Environment of a Consultation

Writing consultations can be carried out in person or in an online setting. Here you can reflect on the influence these different contexts may have on a consultation.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No Answer
I feel comfortable when I am in a shared physical space with a person seeking advice.								
I feel comfortable in a digital session (e.g. video conference).								
I find it easy to adapt to different media environments (face-to-face or online) for consultations.								
I feel comfortable discussing texts with people seeking advice in person.								
I feel comfortable discussing texts with people seeking advice online.								
I can design my consultation room (face-to-face or digital) in such a way that a pleasant atmosphere is created.								
I can design my consulting room (face-to-face or digital) in such a way that responsibility for the text always remains with the person seeking advice.								
I can design my consultation room (face-to-face or digital) in such a way that everyone involved can work together on the text (i.e., without one person having to twist their neck, getting too close to each other, not being able to read the text due to distance, small font size, etc.).								

*Space for further Reflection*

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### **Demands Placed on the Person**

As writing consultants, we are always involved as a person. This section encourages you to reflect on different dimensions of yourself and your role as a writing consultant

#### **Identity and Role**

Every person is different, and this is how it should be. As a writing consultant, you act in a specific function and role that can also be shaped and experienced in different ways. Distinct institutional approaches to writing can influence a consultation, as can personal traits and your evolving professional persona as a writing consultant.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can respond to very different concerns and situations when dealing with students.								
I find it easy to think through new situations and concerns.								
I can professionally handle sudden, intense emotions from people seeking advice (e. g. when they burst into tears).								
I can address it openly when I reach my professional limits in consultations.								

#### *Space for further Reflection*

How do you perceive yourself in consultations? How may people seeking advice perceive you? Do they see parallels between your “private” and “professional” personality? Which aspects of your personality do you want to share in a professional context, and which do you want to leave out? How much do situations affect you? Where do you see the limits of your professional actions?



### Conversations and Communication Skills

Writing consultants facilitate their clients' development by engaging them in conversations on writing.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No Answer
I can start a consultation in such a way that people seeking advice can talk openly about their concerns.								
I can use my voice and body language effectively.								
I can observe and analyze myself and my linguistic actions during a conversation and adjust them as needed.								
I can listen attentively to others.								
I can react spontaneously to statements made by people seeking advice (and am not at a loss for words or do not know how to proceed).								
I can recognize signals in the voice and body language of people seeking advice.								
I can incorporate signals from the voice and body language of the person seeking advice into my response.								
I can consciously structure a consultation. (The structure can vary depending on whether it is, for example, a process- or text-related consultation or the first meeting or follow-up consultation).								
I can make sure that those seeking advice know at the end of a session what they want to do next (e. g. by asking them to summarize their next steps or results).								
I feel comfortable guiding a person seeking advice through a consultation.								

*Space for further Reflection*

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### Situation: Identifying Individual Challenges

Writers may face challenges when they, for example, develop the structure of a text or work with a new genre. Identifying these kinds of challenges is a crucial first step in any consultation. This section discusses aspects that play a role when identifying individual challenges.

#### Identifying Process-Related Challenges

Process-related challenges occur when a writing process comes to a standstill. Writing processes can be described with the help of the [Cascade Model of Academic and Scientific Text Production \(Knorr 2024\)](#).

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can see why persons seeking advice organize the process the way they do.								
I can get people to share linguistic and cultural experiences with me that may have an impact on the process (e. g. what languages they grew up with, what they learned at school, where they have studied).								
I can find out where the person seeking advice is in the work process.								
I can identify which ideas and conceptions underlie the work and writing process of those seeking advice.								
I feel confident in identifying process-related challenges.								

*Space for further Reflection*

How much of my own experience do I share in process-related consultations, and how do I use it?





**Identify Text-Related Challenges**

The texts that students bring to consultations are rarely ever fully developed and often require revision and editing. Writing consultants have to analyze the text regarding various aspects (discussed below) to be able to provide individual feedback. Two aspects are relevant in this case: the time at which the text is made available and the language in which it is written. Texts may be available to writing consultants in advance or shared during a session. The timing determines how consultants can prepare for a meeting. The texts presented may be written in (one of) the writer’s language(s) of their choice or in their working language.

**Setting**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can respond to a text that has not been made available to me prior to the session.								

*Space for further Reflection*

**Analyzing Texts in Different Languages**

Researchers have examined how students use the various linguistic resources available to them, and studies have distinguished, for example, between native speakers of German and those who speak and write in German as their second (third, fourth...) language (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*/German as a foreign language). Here, we take a different approach, one that emphasizes the affective dimension by distinguishing between languages that writing consultants feel comfortable or enjoy using regardless of whether they are native speakers or not (*Wohlfühlsprache*) and languages that they use for academic, scientific, or professional purposes (working language/*Arbeitssprache*).

**Analyzing Texts in the Language(s) of Your Choice**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can analyze texts written in the language(s) of my choice with a focus on structure, genre, and similar features.								
I can analyze texts for linguistic requirements in the language(s) of my choice.								
I can analyze texts for media requirements in the language(s) of my choice.								
I feel confident that I can identify text-related challenges when working with writers who use in the language(s) of my choice.								

*Space for further Reflection*

**Analyzing Texts in Your Working Language(s)**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No Answer
I can analyze texts written in the language(s) of my choice with a focus on structure, genre, and similar features.								
I can analyze texts for linguistic requirements in my working language(s).								
I can analyze texts for media requirements in my working language(s).								
I feel confident that I can identify text-related challenges when supporting writers who use my working language(s).								

*Space for further Reflection*

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## Situation: Consultation

Once potential challenges have been identified, the actual work with writers begins. This line of work and related skills are addressed in this section. In the following, we distinguish, at times, between consultations in German or in English. At many universities in Germany, these languages can be used in exams, and for this reason, many institutions or organizations offering writing support, for example writing centers, deal with texts written in German or English.

### Consultations on Process-related Challenges

A writing consultation is process-oriented if the focus is on the writing process. While writers often share a text prior to or during a meeting, they do not need one. Indeed, some writers might run into problems during the process, preventing them from preparing a text. In this case, writing consultants need to focus on the writer's process and identify options for getting the project back on track.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can motivate people seeking advice to reflect on their writing and work processes.								
I have developed an approach to writing that suits me, and yet I can support writers by helping them discover an approach that works best for them.								
I feel confident that I can support writers when it comes to procedural challenges.								
I can provide those seeking advice with strategies and tools for the process-related actions listed below and thereby help them overcome potential hurdles:								
Generating ideas								
Finding a topic								
Identifying a research question								
Conducting research and reviewing the literature								
Managing information (e.g. sources, notes)								
Organizing ideas								
Drafting the text								
Revising and editing the text								
Organizing the process (project planning and time management)								
Communicating with examiners								

*Space for further Reflection*

**Consultations on Text-Related Challenges**

If a text (or section of a text) is available, you can provide feedback on it. To do so in a systematic manner, writing consultants can focus on different dimensions and demands, for example those outlined in the SYSTEMIZATION SCIENTIFIC WRITING (SYSTEMATIK WISSENSCHAFTLICHES SCHREIBEN) by Knorr (2023). This framework consists of five sub-categories:

- Consultations on the writer’s role, voice, and positioning
- Consultations on readers’ perspective
- Consultations on the structure and related features of texts
- Consultations on conventions
- Consultations on linguistic challenges

**Consultations on the Writer’s Role, Voice, and Positioning**

One of the most challenging aspects of scientific writing is how to enter a debate as a contributor of equal standing, how to develop an individual style and a voice in one’s text, and how to position oneself vis-à-vis others in the field. Not surprisingly, it is challenging for writing consultants to support writers in this respect because there are many different ways to develop and project a distinct voice.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can show writers how they can become visible as authors and add their perspective in their texts.								
I can show people seeking advice how they can make a name for themselves as an author in their text and position themselves in a debate (e. g. to establish themselves in a field).								
I can show those seeking advice how they can arrange the multiple voices from the literature their texts to clarify and support their argument.								
I feel confident that I can support writers when it comes to positioning and the issue of voice.								

*Space for further Reflection*



### Consultations on the Reader's Perspective

One common problem with texts by novice writers is that they are written primarily with the author's perspective in mind. To communicate effectively, writers have to write for an audience and consider the needs and expectations of their readers.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can explain to writers how they can both share their ideas and consider the needs of their readers.								
I feel confident giving advice on the issue of audience.								

*Space for further Reflection*

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**Consultations on the Structure and Related Features of Texts**

Writers in a university context have to work with various genres, which differ in structure and objective. As a result, writing consultants have to respond to a wide range of academic and scientific texts.

Listed here are common genres assigned or written at many universities. This kind of list far from complete. You are therefore welcome to add genres that are relevant in your context.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can describe the characteristic features of and demands related to the following genres:								
Term paper/research paper ( <i>Hausarbeit</i> )								
Bachelor Thesis								
Master Thesis								
Report								
Essay								
Learning journal								
Protocol/lab report								
Journal or research article								
Dissertation								
...								
...								
...								

*Space for further Reflection*



The structure and other characteristic features of a genre may vary depending on the discipline.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can describe the demands placed on writers using different approaches:								
Literature-based work (a text based exclusively on a review of and engagement with the literature)								
Empirical work (a text involving data collection and analysis)								
Creative work (a text that is meant as an original work of art in its own right, e. g. in design or architecture)								

*Space for further Reflection*

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Regardless of the disciplinary context, individual sections of texts have specific functions. Note that depending on the disciplinary context, writers may not have to include all of the sections below. For example, research papers in literary studies commonly do not have methods, results, or discussions sections; instead, they may have one longer section with a structure matching the paper's argument.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can describe the communicative function of the following sections:								
Abstract								
Introduction								
Theory/Literature Review								
Methods								
Results								
Discussion								
Summary								
Conclusion								

*Space for further Reflection*

Overall assessment

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I feel confident when advising on structures and related issues.								

*Space for further Reflection*

**Consultations on Conventions**

Scientific writing is subject to rules and conventions. This is also true when it comes to citation and references to other texts, which, to students and instructors, are crucial. For this reason, this section focuses on these two aspects. It is important to note here, however, that there are other conventions, for example those determining the use of the first person or of standardized phrases in disciplinary contexts. These issues will also be covered below.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can explain the principles of good scientific practice to other writers.								
I can explain why citations and paraphrases are used in scientific texts.								
I can explain when to quote and when to paraphrase in scientific texts.								
I can convey to writers how to quote and paraphrase in scientific texts.								
I can help writers develop a sense for possible discipline-specific uses of quotations and paraphrases.								
I can take away clients' fear of unintentional plagiarism.								
I feel confident when advising on citation conventions.								
I can raise writers' awareness of linguistic conventions in disciplinary contexts.								
I feel confident when advising on linguistic conventions.								

*Space for further Reflection*

What would you still like to learn about conventions?

**Consultations on Linguistic Challenges**

Language issues, for example grammar or style, are often referred to as “lower-order concerns” in the literature on writing. This is not to say, however, that they are of minor concern to those seeking writing support. Indeed, for some, language issues may turn out to be paramount. For example, if non-native speakers of English have to write a paper in an English-language academic program, constructive feedback on language issues by writing consultants may help writers to acquire the communication skills needed to clearly convey their ideas and successfully complete the program.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I feel confident when talking about language issues when it comes to texts written in a language/languages that I feel comfortable using.								
I feel confident when talking about language issues in texts written in (one of) my working language(s).								
I am sure that the way I speak reflects my commitment to diversity (e. g. that I use bias-free language).								
I am sure that the way I write reflects my commitment to diversity (e. g. that I use bias-free language).								

*Space for further Reflection*

**Consultation Language: German**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can express myself clearly in German (e. g. when it comes to word choice).								
I feel confident when using the required technical language in German.								
I feel comfortable when it comes to grammar.								
I can explain grammar rules.								
I feel confident when it comes to spelling.								
I can explain spelling rules.								
I can show people seeking advice what effects their language choices have on readers.								
I can help people seeking advice to find the words or phrases that expresses what they want to say.								
I can show writers how they can identify for options for using language for the desired effect.								
I can provide students with strategies, techniques, and/or resources to help them find further options for articulating and communicating their ideas.								
I feel comfortable using German as it is being used in academic or scientific contexts.								
I feel confident when working on German language issues with writers.								

*Space for further Reflection*

How comfortable do you feel using German in consultations?

How do you feel about other languages that you (have to) use when giving advice? Which language(s) would you like to use more? What would you use these languages for? Why?

**Consultation Language: English**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can express myself clearly in English (e. g. when it comes to word choice).								
I feel confident when using the required technical language in English.								
I feel confident when it comes to grammar.								
I can explain grammar rules.								
I feel confident when it comes to spelling.								
I can explain spelling rules.								
I can support writers by showing them how they can craft their texts so that these texts meet the linguistic and stylistic expectations of readers. This includes, among other things, paragraphing or creating flow.								
I can recognize the differences between major varieties of English (specifically British and American English).								
I can explain key differences between major varieties of English.								
I can share strategies and techniques that give writers more options of expressing their ideas.								
I feel comfortable using English in an academic or scientific context.								
I feel confident when working on English language issues with writers.								

*Space for further Reflection*

How comfortable do you feel when using English in consultations?

How do you feel about other languages that you (have to) use when giving advice? Which language(s) would you like to use more? What would you like to use these languages for? Why?

**Overall Assessment of Consultations on Textual Challenges**

All in all, there are several textual challenges that may be addressed in consultations...

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
Overall, I feel confident when advising on textual challenges.								

*Space for further Reflection*

How do you feel about the inherently complex task of responding to academic or scientific texts? How do you intend to deal with these feelings?



## Consultations on Media Challenges

Writing is closely linked to media. In academic work and writing, different media are used for very different purposes. This dimension, too, is part of the process and therefore often the subject of writing consultations. This also includes the use of AI tools.

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 = Fully applies	No answer
I can explain to writers how writing fluency and writing medium are related.								
I can share information management techniques and strategies so that writers can keep track of notes, the literature, etc.								
I can share techniques and strategies that can help writers navigate their own texts (especially if they are very long).								
I can explain how a reference management system works in combination with a word processing program.								
I can explain how text structure, formatting, and automated processes (e. g. for creating tables of contents, etc.) are connected.								
I feel confident when answering questions about information management.								
I know the regulations and recommendations that apply to the use of AI tools at my university.								
I know procedures and strategies for using AI-based tools at different stages in the writing process.								
I can explain how generative AI tools work.								
I can describe the advantages and risks of using AI-based tools in scientific text production.								
I feel confident when answering questions about the use of AI in scientific text productions.								
I feel confident when supporting writers on issues related to medium.								

*Space for further Reflection*

What feelings do you associate with your media use? What influence do these feelings have on your advice on media use?



### Reflection on Part 1

The questionnaire has encouraged you to reflect on a wide range of demands placed on writing consultants. Please take some time for a final reflection and write down some key points.

What are your strengths as a writing consultant?

Are there any areas in which you would like to further your education? If so, which ones?

Is there anything you need to be able to work (even more confidently) as a writing consultant?





## Part 2: What Do You Know?

In this part, you will be presented with aspects that are needed in the context of writing consultations. Test your knowledge!

### Demands Related to Context

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I am familiar with the examination requirements at my university and in my degree program.						
I know the examination requirements of other degree programs at my university.						

### Demands Related to Person

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I have an idea of who I am as a writing consultant.						
I know my writing type.						
I know my individual writing challenges.						
I have reflected on my language biography, which means I know why and how I use languages.						
I use language deliberately when it comes to scientific work and writing.						
I can describe which languages I feel comfortable using ( <i>Wohlfühlsprache</i> ) and which languages are primarily used for academic, scientific, or professional purposes (working languages). I also know which languages from my repertoire do not play a role in my studies or professional life.						



**Demands Related to Situation: Identifying Challenges**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I can distinguish between my approach to writing and those of others.						
I can identify errors or phrases that are not appropriate in an academic or scientific context.						
I can give reasons why phrases are not appropriate, for example in a scientific context.						
I can identify deviations from punctuation and spelling conventions in German.						
I can identify deviations from punctuation and spelling conventions in English.						
I can identify communicative intentions in a text.						
I can recognize it if writers do not position themselves or do not seem to have a distinct voice.						
I can explain how writers can position themselves vis-a-vis other writers and by drawing on the literature.						
I notice when discussions of ideas and positions of other writers do not seem to be appropriate, for example when writers do cite or paraphrase accurately.						
I notice when ideas or words taken from sources are not properly integrated into the text (which, in this case, seems to be more of a collection of choice quotations).						

**Demands Related to Situation: Consultations Dealing with Language**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I feel comfortable and confident whenever a consultation focuses on or is conducted in German.						
I feel comfortable and confident whenever a consultation focuses on or is conducted in English.						
I use the languages I feel comfortable with in consultations (even if these are not the target languages of the institution).						

**Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on the Role and Perspective of Readers**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I know how writers refer to and situate themselves in texts.						
I can describe how writers use language to refer to or situate themselves in their text, and I can do so in the language used for the consultation.						
I can explain how different voices and perspectives—the author's, but also those of others—can be integrated a text.						
I know how I can consider readers' prior knowledge, needs, and expectations when writing my text.						
When reading texts, I can identify the ways in which writers cater to readers' needs and expectations.						
I can explain why citations and paraphrases are used in scientific texts.						

**Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Citation Conventions**

	1 = Does not apply at all.	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I can explain the three major types of citation conventions (footnotes, parenthetical references [e. g. author-year], numbers).						
I can explain the difference between citation conventions and citation style.						
I can identify the type of citation convention used in a text.						
I can explain the difference between quoting and paraphrasing.						
I can explain what plagiarism is.						
As a writer, I worry that I might also commit unintentional plagiarism.						

**Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Resources**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
I can refer students to reference works or websites where they can learn about citation styles.						
I can refer students to reference works or websites with introductions to academic or scientific writing.						

**Demands Related to Situation: Consultations on Requirements**

	1 = Does not apply at all	2	3	4	5 = Fully applies	No answer
When writing in German, I can quickly type on a keyboard.						
When writing in English, I can quickly type on a keyboard.						
If I have to think while writing, I prefer to write with a pen.						
I can explain the influence of the writing medium (e. g. pen vs. keyboard writing) on writing fluency.						
I always have an overview of my notes, texts, books, PDFs, etc. that I need to work on a project.						
I can empathize with someone who has difficulty keeping track of notes and their text.						
I know various literature management software.						
I can explain the principles of literature management.						
I know most of the functions of my word processing program.						
I create tables of contents automatically.						

**Reflection on Part 2**

In the second section you were able to test your knowledge on writing consultations. What are the most important insights for you?