

PREFACE

With some pride I hereby introduce the 10th volume in the *Studies of Writing* book series. This volume aims to be a tool-book for writing research. In my opinion, the editors and authors of this volume succeeded in this endeavor. Four guiding questions are answered in all chapters on online-techniques.

How to... The key to such a book is providing insight in the decisions researchers make when developing 'tools and techniques'; such information is not found in journal articles and in the best case hidden in technical reports. This book provides readers with detailed information about the ins and outs of various online techniques.

When to... Another contribution of this tool-book is to provide insight into when the 'tool' can be used, in other words, to relate the tool or technique to the theoretical claims about the writing process or cognitive processes underlying writing processes. Theory, methodology, tools and techniques, handling data and interpretation form a coherent unit.

When not to ... 'There is no cow without a spot' (Dutch: er is geen koe zonder vlekje) is the literal translation of a Dutch expression. Techniques/tools have their limitations, and their problems: in applying them, and/or handling or interpreting the data they produce. In a book like this, researchers took the opportunity to provide readers with a look behind the curtains, in the process of research. Scientific, critical reflection is one of the strong features of this book.

What to know... It is not sufficient to only know how the technique works. It is not sufficient to merely know when to apply the technique. Research questions and techniques originate from 'schools of thought', from specific scientific perspectives. Where necessary, this tool-book provides necessary background information and references to underlying theories.

This 10th volume shows how rapidly the tools for studying writing processes were improved. In the first volume of the series, titled *Theories, Models & Methodology* (1996), some first accounts on methodology were presented. And now, after five years, a complete book, on a particular set of tools, is available. This is one of the synergetic results of the intensive worldwide collaboration, based in the Special Interest Group on Writing of the European Association on Research of Learning and Instruction (EARLI), where researchers from all around the world and all kinds of disciplines found their counterparts.

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Contemporary Tools and Techniques for Studying
Writing

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2002, IX, 163 p., Softcover

ISBN: 978-1-4020-0106-2