



Language, History, Politics, and Culture in Global Communication Through the Bologna Process Documentation

Diane Martinez

Western Carolina University

Abstract

Students preparing to enter today's global workplaces need to understand factors that can affect writing and communication practices in international environments. Writing instructors, in turn, need to provide students with educational experiences that can best prepare them for such contexts. For these reasons, writing instructors should consider introducing students to contemporary events or initiatives that can affect international interactions across different genres and media. The Bologna Process, a multi-state effort to reform the higher education in 47 countries, is one such initiative. By integrating aspects of the Bologna Process into the teaching of writing, instructors can work with students to rhetorically analyze writing practices in international contexts, as well as introduce students to the forces affecting them in international environments that affect global workforces.

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1. Introduction

The proliferation of distributed digital workplaces today means students must increasingly interact with people around the world upon completing their formal studies. To be successful communicators in such settings, students must develop their linguistic, cultural, and political literacy. One way writing instructors can prepare students to become proficient global communicators is to help them better understand factors that can affect communication practices in international settings. One international initiative that has important implications for such educational practices is the Bologna Process. Designed to improve economic competitiveness and employment opportunities across 47 participating nations in Europe (see Appendix A), the Process is a voluntary initiative to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Area represents a higher education structure that would allow member countries to have comparable and transferrable degree programs ([European Higher Education Area, 2014](#)). As a result, the Process creates an international context for writing instruction. It also provides a valuable set of resources, such as complex documentation, that instructors can use to help students examine forms of writing that convey ideas across broad, geopolitical regions and culturally diverse audiences.

This article examines ways in which writing teachers can use Bologna Process documentation to help students better understand writing processes and practices in modern global contexts. Such documentation represents examples of writing for a culturally, linguistically, and historically diverse audience that must now follow documented

information and instruction to successfully participate in a large international sphere. By using materials associated with such initiatives, writing instructors can help students identify various cultural, linguistic, political, economic, and other factors that affect the practice of composing texts for globally distributed audiences. Specifically, this article

- Explains why teaching about the Bologna Process in writing classes is beneficial to students;
- Provides background/contextual information about the Process and documentation in order for teachers to use documents effectively in the classroom;
- Discusses ideas for integrating the study of the Bologna Process in writing classes.

Through such an approach, readers—primarily writing teachers—can better understand how to use texts associated with such international developments as resources for teaching students how to compose effectively in international situations.

2. The Global Nature of Today’s Workplace

College and university-level programs that prepare students for a particular field or line of work often emphasize discipline-specific knowledge and technical skills associated with that area. Healthcare graduates, for example, are expected to develop clinical knowledge for their field of study (e.g., clinical procedures, safety, and knowledge of field regulations). Successfully obtaining employment, however, often involves more than simply possessing field-specific skills. Rather, effective communication and problem-solving skills tend to be central to many hiring and promotion decisions. A recent survey of hiring managers, for example, indicated that employers “identified communication as the most fundamental skill an employee can bring to the job” (MacLennan, 2008, p. 5) and collaborative and interpersonal skills are equally prized in today’s workplace (MacLennan, 2008). The global aspect of the contemporary workplace, however, complicates this situation because college graduates likely will work with and write for co-workers and clients who are from or live in countries with cultures very different from their own (Saleem, 2010). This situation is especially true given the prevalence of online interactions in local and global workplaces (Brewer, 2015).

Moreover, today’s workforce is much more mobile, and migration rates have dramatically diversified the workplace. In the United States, 14 percent of the population was born outside of the country, and Canada, Switzerland, and Australia have nearly double that figure (Connor, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Along with physical mobility, employees will change jobs often, and they must acquire new skill sets to accommodate physical and professional moves (Hugonnier, 2007). These trends in mobility mean that students must be able to relate to and communicate with people from countries and cultures globally as well as locally.

Beyond the workplace, increased cultural exchanges also enhance “world citizenship”—a person’s ability to carry social and economic responsibility outside of one’s national identity to a more worldwide perspective (Hugonnier, 2007). To meet such expectations, employees must know something about how other countries and cultures work and do business (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007). Part of this knowledge is knowing the communication values of other cultures. Accordingly, effective global communication is a skill necessary for negotiation, relationship building, and collaboration within multicultural groups (Melton, 2008; Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007). Consequently, today’s workforce requires graduates who have solid technical and social skills, including interpersonal communication, mobility, adaptability, and an understanding of and respect for cultural diversity.

While not every student will live or work abroad, it is safe to assume that every graduate will communicate with individuals from another country or culture online. Online media, moreover, implies a global audience due to the open access of the Internet in most countries. Students in writing classes should therefore learn how to interact, negotiate meaning, and communicate with international audiences through a variety of media. To do so, students must understand that communication today involves a complex mix of writing styles depending on the audience, purpose, medium, message, and other factors. By fostering an understanding of global contexts, writing teachers can help students become better “world citizens” and learn effective strategies when writing for international audiences (Rice & Hausrath, 2014). The study of the Bologna Process and analysis of related documents can help students develop such skills.

3. An Overview of the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process began in 1998 with the signing of the [Sorbonne Joint Declaration](#), which is an agreement to unite Europe's higher education structure by "strengthen[ing] and build[ing] upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions" of member nations (para. 1). Participation is voluntary and represents a cooperative effort to create a higher education framework (the EHEA) with comparable curricula and degrees that transfer from one country to the next. Ideally, employers will recognize and accept the degrees of all member countries as similar, thus creating a larger pool of applicants to choose from and strengthen the larger workforce. With qualified workers regularly moving across borders, an increase in cross-cultural understanding should result.

The Process should lead to a more unified and mobile society that will bring about greater economic stability in member countries while increasing Europe's overall competitiveness in the global market (The [European Higher Education Area](#), 2014). To do so, the EHEA framework at the center of the Process promotes three degree "cycles."

- *Bachelor's*: The first-cycle degree (180 – 240 credits) requires students to enhance and extend their secondary education to a field of study in order to apply their knowledge and understanding to a profession or vocation ("A Framework," 2005);
- *Master's*: The second-cycle degree (minimum of 60 credits beyond the bachelor's) requires students to apply their knowledge, understanding, and problem-solving abilities, in multidisciplinary areas and in original ways to a research context ("A Framework," 2005);
- *Doctorate*: The third-cycle degree (credits are not necessarily assigned) requires students to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills associated with a particular field of study and make a contribution to the field through original research ("A Framework," 2005).

Ideally, each degree establishes a uniform foundation for the next degree. Moreover, these degrees are part of a larger, more intricate qualifications framework that maps course, programmatic, and institutional learning objectives to agreed-upon standards amongst participating countries. Thus, the EHEA framework supports the overarching objectives of the Bologna Process, which involve establishing

- *Comparable degrees*: All participating countries will have degrees that transfer and will be recognized by member governments, universities, employers, and other stakeholders;
- *Three degree cycles*: The degrees offered will include a bachelor's, a master's, and a PhD;
- *Credit system*: Degrees will be tracked using a common system of credits;
- *Mobility*: Students, faculty, and staff will be encouraged to study, teach, and work in member countries besides their own;
- *Quality assurance*: The quality of education offered in Bologna countries will be valued by Europeans and throughout the world;
- *European dimension*: The curriculum should focus on the unique needs of Europeans;
- *Lifelong learning*: Higher education will contain a component for continued education throughout the life of all European citizens;
- *Social dimension*: Higher education is seen as a social responsibility and should be accessible to all citizens;
- *Attractiveness*: Education in Bologna countries will be valued and sought after by Europeans and others throughout the world.

Each aspect can affect how writing is taught in given educational contexts, and thus can have implications that can affect the kinds of communiqués writing students might expect to encounter in future international exchanges. For this reason, a study of the Process, and the documentation used to share information about it, can have a great deal to offer when teaching writing students how to compose for international contexts.

4. Global Documentation in the Classroom

Key to preparing students to be effective writers/communicators in a global context is exposing them to the documents used to convey important information across different national and cultural groups. Thus, the more writing

and composition instructors can expose students to examples of such communication—and can lead them in a guided examination of the materials—the better they can prepare students to be effective writers in the global workplace they will encounter after graduation.

Bologna Process documents are comprised of guiding documents (also called ministerial communiqués) similar to an organization’s charter. They also include working group documentation, the minutes, reports, and presentations that result from stakeholder meetings where members work out the details of how the EHEA will be structured and how to implement this structure within each country’s existing higher education system. These documents are valuable examples to review, analyze, and examine within the context of a range of different writing and composition classes because they demonstrate effective rhetorical strategies that may be unfamiliar to students. Additionally, they are written by Bologna members that range from national government entities to employers and also faculty and students. Thus, from the perspective of writing instruction, these documents are useful in illustrating effective writing strategies that invoke a wide range of multicultural stakeholders.

5. Documentation Nuances

Before using Process documents in the classroom, instructors need to consider their unique characteristics and determined document hierarchy. Such background knowledge provides teachers and students a stronger foundation for effective writing practices.

5.1. Unique Characteristics

One unique characteristic of the Bologna Process is that although there are 47 national signatories, a wide range of cultures is represented by these nations (e.g., Belgium is comprised of French and Dutch cultures, each with its own language and traditions). Furthermore, the Bologna Process requires active participation of various stakeholders, such as governments, employers, higher education institutions, faculty, students, staff, and other European organizations and agencies like credit and accrediting groups (The [European Higher Education Area, 2014](#)). Consequently, its documents offer a unique and interesting avenue toward discussion of audience analysis with multinational and multicultural audiences.

Another aspect of Process documents particularly valuable to writing instruction is that all members work together to achieve a common goal—the effective implementation of Process objectives in each country’s higher education system. The related documents thus represent how a culturally diverse group of stakeholders collaborates toward a common, international goal. Consequently, teachers and students can learn about cooperation and collaboration in multicultural settings by studying documents created in such settings and designed for dissemination across similar contexts.

5.2. Documentation Structure

The document hierarchy can be broken down into two general categories.

- *Ministerial communiqués* result from Ministerial Conferences held every two years by the European higher education ministers of each Bologna country. These conferences mark a time for ministers to report on the progress of the Bologna Process and reflect on any new directions or necessary changes. Each new communiqué is given equal weight to previous communiqués and appear to be for two primary audiences: 1) members and stakeholders, and 2) the rest of the world. For member countries and stakeholders, these communiqués are guiding or charter documents because they are written by the higher education ministers of member countries and outline the nine main goals for members to work toward in a cooperative and inclusive fashion. For non-member countries, the communiqués might be considered progress reports or public relations documents. That is, these documents are written in a style where they report progress on the overarching goals; thus, they present a particular image of the Process and its stakeholders (see Appendix B).
- *Working group documentation* consists of stakeholder reports and working group reports, minutes, presentations, and other documents and include Trends Reports, Stocktaking Reports, Bologna with Student Eyes reports, Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) reports, and the recommendation reports from seminars and other working

groups. This level of documentation addresses members and stakeholders just like the communiqués do. The purpose behind each report or document varies but is usually associated with some aspect of implementing Bologna objectives as outlined in the communiqués. Including a selection of working group documentation into the study of the Bologna Process in writing classes is beneficial because these documents demonstrate the working practices of various countries and cultures.

To provide students with a more holistic understanding of writing for international audiences in global contexts, writing instructors need to have students examine both kinds of documents in their classes. To fully appreciate the factors that affect composing in global contexts, writing instructors must also familiarize students with certain external factors that one needs to consider when writing for international audiences.

6. External Factors

Collett (2007) states that when it comes to making meaning, people have to consider the experiences and histories of everyone involved. Thus, interesting questions for writing scholars to study, and for students to examine via Process documents, include

- How do education ministers communicate common goals to large and diverse groups without favoring or alienating any of the members?
- How does this same membership/cultural group collaborate to achieve those goals individually (within the same culture) and collectively (across different cultures)?

Answers to these questions can be found through an exploration into the language, history and politics, and culture as rhetorically represented in Process documents.

6.1. Language

English is the lingua franca of the Bologna Process in large part due to it being the most prominent language for the most competitive countries in the global marketplace (Hernández & Rodolfo, 2011). From a writing perspective, issues related to language are important considerations as the language/terminology of global documents should promote inclusivity and be understandable to all group members (Collett, 2007). Interestingly, some of the English language/terminology in Process documents is vague and open to interpretation. One proposed possibility for such wording is that vague and ambiguous language allows for a deliberate communication technique called strategic ambiguity, which is often used to define organizational goals and can cultivate creativity and flexibility (Eisenberg, 1984). What teachers and students of rhetoric and composition can take from the study of language in Process documents is effective communication is not always achieved simply by agreeing on a common language (e.g., English, French, or Spanish). Rather, to accommodate all members of a culturally diverse group, there have to be cultural equivalents and mutual understandings of the language being used. One way to achieve that common understanding is to have participants negotiate definitions and meanings themselves instead of having terms defined by select members, especially authority figures.

6.2. History and Politics

Process documents cannot be read in isolation. Rather, readers must consider them within the context of the greater European community influenced by European history and the European Union (EU). (Many Bologna countries, such as Germany and France or the Balkan nations, have a contentious history with one another). In terms of writing, the delicate and political line that the ministers of Bologna nations have to walk is evidenced by the careful, ambiguous, and abstract rhetoric in the communiqués. The vague language that requires members to negotiate meaning also allows them to invest in the Process and may be a strategy for creating democracy and equality in the group due to such negotiation (Tyler, 2011). Since the goal of using Process documents in writing classes is to help students learn more about effective writing strategies in international contexts, it is important that they learn about different factors that influence not only the way a document is written but also the way it is received.

By presenting these documents within a related historical context, writing instructors can help students understand how effective writing must take into account the relationships and unique situations among various audience members.

6.3. Culture

A core concept repeated in the ministerial communiqués is the necessity of Europe to unite through its higher education system. For example, in the [Bologna Declaration \(1999\)](#), unification is seen as an “irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component [. . .] capable of giving its citizens the necessary competencies to face the challenges of the new millennium” (para. 2). In the ministerial communiqués, education ministers are emphatic about the necessity for Europe to unite; however, when considering historical dimensions of the group they must address, this call for unification cannot be a top-down directive. Instead, ministers must construct a group of which all members want to belong. An emphasis on European citizenship as opposed to national diversity is a way of creating a sense of belonging for all Europeans no matter the cultural, linguistic, historical, or political difference.

By calling attention to the language, history, politics, and the construction of a common culture as found in the Process documents, writing teachers can help students learn a great deal about the multilayered nature of global communication. Such an approach helps students see how various external factors affect the overall message of any document and how that message is crafted (i.e., communication is not formulaic). Process documents also reveal how world change can come about through deliberate and intentional rhetoric that considers promoting long-term relationships among all members. The contextualization of language, history and politics, and culture as found in Process documents is only a small conversation of the depth and breadth of the complexities that comprise global communication.

7. Classroom Integration

From a pedagogical context, the overall learning objective is to provide students with the understanding needed to analyze documents written by other cultures to identify patterns such audiences associate with effective writing. To address this objective in writing classes, instructors can integrate the study of the Bologna Process through guided activities when broaching this topic with students. Such activities can strengthen students’ understanding of effective global communication practices and strategies and of cultural awareness and adaptability. Furthermore, students can practice world citizenship by learning about the Process itself and engaging in online writing situations associated with the Bologna Process.

Working off of common learning objectives found in many writing courses, the suggested activities below give teachers ideas for how to effectively use Process documents in writing classes. These activities are categorized by common learning objectives and organized similar to the writing process. Activities 1 through 3 are designed to engage students in background reading and research that is supported by prewriting activities (annotations, note-taking, short writing assignments, and class discussions). In Activity 4, students should be given an online writing assignment that affords the opportunity to practice writing in an international context. There is also a high impact practice in Activity 4 that would enable students to have first-hand cultural exchange.

7.1. Activity 1: Reading and Research

Most writing classes use a combination of reading and research to teach about writing. This first activity provides students with background reading and focused research in order to familiarize them with the Bologna Process and its associated documents, as well as learn about the Process from the viewpoint of different stakeholders. The primary assignments associated with this activity are reading, note taking, short summaries, and discussions.

Learning objectives: The purpose of this activity is to have students

- Read background information, annotate texts, and trace concepts across documents in order to articulate a general understanding of the Bologna Process;

- Identify some of the documents and stakeholders associated with the Process;
- Explain criticisms and support for the Process from various stakeholders.

Background reading: The first step of this activity is to have students explore the official [Bologna Process](#) website at [www.ehea.info](#). Students read and take note of what the Process is, its purpose, and titles of documents referred to in the reading (e.g., ministerial communiqués, Trends Reports, Bologna with Student Eyes) in order to give them a basic understanding of the Process and the many documents associated with it.

- A good preface to the reading would be a class discussion on the higher education structure in the United States or another nation and what students consider the purpose of higher education. This exercise provides a context for background reading on the Bologna Process. It also creates an ongoing discussion that builds on new information students learn about the Process while working through the following activities.
- Next, on the Bologna website, under the tab “About the Bologna Process” students should read “History” and “How does the Bologna Process work?” and note terms and concepts unfamiliar to them or that they do not understand (e.g., “social dimension” or “qualifications framework”). This activity helps familiarize them with Process terminology.

Further reading: Next, students should read the actual Process documents to see what writing forms various stakeholders use.

- Since the ministerial communiqués are the guiding documents of this initiative, it is helpful for students to read them first and in chronological order. To facilitate close reading and comprehension, teachers can guide students to focus on identifying only Bologna objectives so that they know the main goals of the Process. This can increase their understanding of the purpose and scale of this initiative. For instance, teachers may ask students to keep track of the objectives as stated in the Sorbonne Joint Declaration and the Bologna Declaration and then take note of how the objectives grow and/or change in future communiqués. The key is to minimize what students pay attention to in the documents because the wording, writing approaches, and terminology will be new to them.
- After reading the ministerial communiqués, students should read sections of working documents, such as Trends Reports and Bologna with Student Eyes (student reports). Most working documents are quite lengthy, so it is advisable for a class or group of students to focus on only one objective at this time, such as social dimension or attractiveness, and assign sections of documents that directly address that one objective (along with any introductory text in the documents). The purpose of reading the working documents after the communiqués is to have students see and discuss perspectives of the Process from different stakeholders, which prepares them for further research in the next part.

Research: Finally, students would conduct focused research to further expose them to perspectives on the benefits and progress of the Process. This activity can be supported and assessed by students reporting their findings through written summaries and discussion.

- As the Process is now over a decade old, there is a great deal of secondary research available. Many articles originate from authors who have experience with implementation of the Process in one way or another (e.g., faculty and administrators), while other sources are news stories that cover events related to the Bologna Process, such as riots and protests at universities ([Warden, 2008](#)). It is advisable for students to read what others are experiencing in relation to implementation of the Process as a comparison to the progress reported in the ministerial communiqués. This exposure helps them realize the greater implications of these documents in that they are intended to create change in the higher education structure of member countries, and students can see how this change is actually manifesting in those countries.

Through these reading and research activities, students gain foundational knowledge about the Bologna Process. This foundation can help them understand the more complicated aspects of writing in international contexts when they begin to analyze the documents in more depth in the next activity.

7.2. Activity 2: Audience and Document Analysis

One of the richest aspects of the Process documents that teachers may want to capitalize on is how the education ministers address a culturally diverse audience. This next activity helps students conduct an audience analysis of a selection of Process documents. It also helps them recognize different rhetorical approaches to accommodating culturally diverse audiences and multiple stakeholders—two very important aspects of writing in international contexts. Primary assignments for this activity include short profiles, reading responses, and discussion.

Learning objectives: The purpose of this activity is to have students

- Determine audience and purpose for various Process documents;
- Analyze the language and rhetorical approaches used in addressing a highly diverse and multicultural audience.

Audience analysis: Audience analysis requires students to engage with the reading and keep note of who is being addressed, how, and for what purpose. This initial part of the activity gives students background information about Process participants, which will help them better understand how/whether these participants are being addressed when they analyze writing strategies in the next step of this activity. Students can report their research findings through short profiles of Process participants.

- To conduct an audience analysis, teachers might ask students to reread the communiqués and sections of working documents and note who is being addressed in these documents and who are mentioned as partners or necessary organizations (e.g., [the Bergen Communiqué of 2005](#) lists several partners).
- Once students have a collective list of participants (10 – 15 stakeholders), they should research and discuss these people/organizations/stakeholders to better understand their role in the Process. For instance, teachers might ask students to research the Council of Europe, European Students' Union, and the European corporate advisory and support group called BusinessEurope and discuss their roles in the Process. Teachers could also direct students to research the historical and political connections among members (e.g., the European Union and conflicts between certain nations [Turkey and Greece, for instance]) in order to help students further understand the delicate relationships that must be accommodated by the ministers.

Document analysis: Once students have a better understanding of the role of various stakeholders, they can more carefully review how, or if, those audiences are being addressed in the different Process documents. This deconstruction helps students identify effective writing strategies for various audiences and purposes. In this step, students can be prompted with reading questions (listed below) where they provide written responses according to their findings in the Process documents. Students use close reading skills and they learn to identify rhetorical approaches for this multicultural and multi-stakeholder audience, which gives them insight into effective writing in global environments.

- For this assignment, students trace the Bologna objective of social dimension (although any objective will work) from one communiqué to the next where they take note of the goals, benefits, and progress of this objective as mentioned in these documents. Next, students should read sections from Bologna with Student Eyes reports and compare the message in the communiqués with what students say in their reports about social dimension in corresponding years. The message in the student reports contrasts, somewhat, with what is reported in the communiqués (e.g., see the progress the ministers report regarding social dimension in the [Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué of 2009](#)), and this contrast can be explained through audience analysis of each type of document (see “Document Structure” above) in conjunction with an exploration of the following questions:
 - Are the ministers reporting anything concrete or measureable in the communiqués regarding social dimension?
 - Are they presenting a false image of the progress of this objective in the communiqués?
 - What might happen to this group if the ministers simply stated the rules of Bologna and expected all members to follow suit?
 - Are they catering to certain stakeholders/audiences more than others? If so, whom are they catering to, and why would they do so?

- What role do students and their reports play in the Bologna Process? Why are they more critical and direct in their reports, whereas the ministers are more optimistic and vague?

Teachers can guide students to identify and analyze the vague verbs and statements associated with action taken or needed to be taken in the ministerial communiqués. They can also introduce students to the concept of strategic ambiguity (and possibly cooperation theory); thus, students may be asked to consider how vague language can be used as a possible rhetorical strategy to engage group members and dispel fears or concerns of politics and power between members (i.e., consider the relationship between EU and non-EU countries and those who have been at war), and when vague language is needed, possibly inevitable, and actually quite effective in professional, and, most especially, global communication.

By answering these questions, students can see how language and rhetorical approach are deliberate considerations of writers, and such considerations are often based on audience and purpose. They also learn that different writing strategies are equally effective depending on audience and purpose.

7.3. Activity 3: Critical Thinking

Most writing courses encourage students to think critically about the subjects they write about, and the Bologna Process is a subject that can lead students into intelligent, timely, and politically important discussions and thought processes. With that in mind, the following activity provides teachers with prompts that inspire critical thinking about the global influence of the Bologna Process on the future of higher education and the workforce, which in turn, can create a sense of world citizenship. The assignments for this activity are prewriting assignments that include discussion, note taking, and short writing pieces.

Learning objectives: The purpose of this activity is to have students

- Synthesize information from various documents;
- Conceive new thoughts, concepts, or conversations about subjects associated with the Bologna Process.

Synthesis and idea development: Building off of the previous activities, a natural segue into critical thinking about the Process and its global implications is to revisit the question of what students see as the purpose of higher education. By now, students should have a better understanding of the complex role that higher education plays within a nation, and they can build on that understanding and begin to position themselves on issues associated with the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in any country's educational system.

- To facilitate critical thinking, teachers can guide students through prewriting activities (e.g., class discussions or short writing activities) that explore why they are enrolled in college and what they see as their role and responsibilities in this setting. They can take this idea even further and ask students to consider:
 - What role higher education plays in the progress of a society or a nation?
 - What are the roles and responsibilities of government in higher education?

Next, students should return to the Process documents they have been working with and research how these same questions are answered there. They will once again encounter the objective of social dimension, which means that higher education is a social responsibility. The idea of social responsibility in Bologna countries means different things to different stakeholders, such as governments and students (e.g., governments may focus on accessibility while students may focus on affordability). Students can then be directed to draft their initial ideas about how this idea of higher education being a social responsibility contrasts somewhat with higher education in the United States (or another nation) where we, as a nation, struggle to define the roles and responsibilities of government (funding, demanding universities meet certain statistical averages, students gaining employment, etc.) and the individual in achieving this education. This writing activity will serve as a springboard for more focused writing in the next activity.

Critical thinking about the role of higher education in regard to a society or nation helps students understand the importance of the Bologna Process worldwide, and it is intended to trigger their own ideas about how this initiative is

changing their world and what role they want to play in it; thus, this activity prepares students with ideas that they can write about in Activity 4.

7.4. Activity 4: Writing and Cultural Exchange

Depending on the class, teachers can use the activities above as prewriting material for students to now write expository, persuasive, or research-oriented assignments that exemplify the skills and objectives of their particular course. One issue that teachers may want to consider when developing a writing assignment, however, is how can the assignment encourage world citizenship and keep students thinking about the Bologna Process even after they leave the class. In other words, writing assignments that follow the background reading, analysis, and critical thinking activities, such as those listed above, can help students step into live online conversations about the many issues associated with this subject; thus, they can now practice international and intercultural communication.

Learning objectives: The purpose of this activity is for students to

- Compose thoughtful writing that incorporates research and critical thinking about a subject related to the Bologna Process or about writing in international contexts based on their research and study about the Process and its associated documentation;
- Engage in conversations and cultural exchange with individuals from around the world.

Live conversations: The Bologna Process is an active initiative that is the subject of different online media. A quick search will yield results of blogs and other online forums that comment or report on the progress of the Process. After all of the research, note taking, writing, and discussions from the previous activities, students are now ready to have live conversations about the Process, which will involve individuals from around the world.

- To begin, teachers might assign students to search for different online forums associated with commentary on the Bologna Process.
- After reading through several of these forums, students can use notes from their previous research and critical thinking activities to compose a thoughtful response to someone else's blog, for instance. An even more ambitious task might be for the class to create their own blog about their understanding of the Process, how it compares with higher education in the United States or other countries, and how they see it influencing higher education and the workforce worldwide. The blog may even ask for commentary from individuals involved in the Process, such as those who are actively teaching at or attending Bologna institutions of higher learning. Additionally, students can include conversations about writing in international contexts as part of their blogs.

An online writing activity, such as one mentioned here, encourages students to think about the Process outside of their local academic context, and it gives them the opportunity to use research from real documents to compose writing for an international audience. This live conversation will help students be aware of their own ethos, as well as the audience they are addressing because they are conversing with individuals who have first-hand experience with a subject they are learning about. The blog activity, for instance, could be a beginning for a more extended and multicultural experience, such as the next activity discussed below.

Networked classrooms: The following is a suggestion for teachers and students to connect with colleagues in Bologna countries and further their understanding, activities, and involvement with the Process.

- Opportunities exist for connecting American classrooms, for instance, with European classrooms. Such connections promote cultural exchange through globally networked learning environments and international partnerships that offer students the opportunity to explore culture and interdisciplinary aspects of international education (Craig, Poe, and Rojas, 2010; Wang & Wang, 2012). The networked classroom provides a virtual space where students from different countries interact with one another for the purpose of gaining cultural understanding and language skills. Such networks are becoming more commonplace and can offer students first-hand experience

with multinational situations similar to what they will experience in the workplace (Anderson, Bergman, Bradley, Gustafsson, & Matzke, 2010; Starke-Meyerring, Duin, & Palvetzia, 2007). Teachers may explore the idea of connecting with classes in Bologna countries by researching United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (<http://en.unesco.org>), and they may look into the possibility of overseas visits by researching opportunities and support through the organization Education First (<http://www.ef.com>).

Using Bologna Process documents in writing classes to demonstrate effective global communication strategies is of tremendous value to students entering the workplace. These documents and the study of the Process can make students more culturally aware and accustomed to what goes into effective international writing and working with multicultural groups. By introducing these documents into a writing class, instructors help students learn more about their world and how their counterparts in other parts of the globe are being educated and what drives those educational systems. In other words, Process documents are not just tools for studying about professional communication, they can be the means for helping students see this initiative from various points of view and consider its impact on their own lives as well. They can then use this knowledge to engage in contemporary conversations about this global initiative.

8. Conclusion

Palmer (2013) argued that educators and scholars in professional communication need to design more research that explores the many facets of the globalized workplace including information spaces, documents, and genres. One strategy to achieve that goal is to conduct research on contemporary global events that generate multinational and multicultural documentation. Such research, however, should not be isolated in academic journals or conference conversations; it should be incorporated into the classroom, which provides students with multiple benefits in that they

- Learn about current events and initiatives;
- Learn about global communication practices;
- Think critically about local and global implications of events for workplaces;
- Learn more about their own culture while learning how other countries and cultures conduct business and communicate;
- Practice writing in real online international contexts.

Each of these learning objectives moves students toward understanding the global contexts in which they will write and the various factors (e.g., economic, political, social, historical) that affect audience expectations in these settings.

The Bologna Process is just one global initiative that can be used in writing classes to introduce students to the diversity of the workplace. There are many other organizations with documents, policies, and conversations that students can learn from, such as organizations concerned with global organized crime, human rights violations, and environmental issues. Documents should not be pulled out and used in isolation; rather, students should be shown how individual documents are part of a larger conversation and have worldwide impact. As students learn more about these world initiatives, they should also be shown how they, too, can contribute to ongoing conversations.

Appendix A. List of Bologna Countries

Bologna countries that belong to the EU (year of admission)	Bologna countries not in the EU
Austria (1995)	Albania
Belgium (1958)	Andorra
Bulgaria (2007)	Armenia
Croatia (2013)	Azerbaijan
Cyprus (2004)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Czech Republic (2004)	Georgia

Appendix A (Continued)

Bologna countries that belong to the EU (year of admission)	Bologna countries not in the EU
Denmark (1973)	Holy See
Estonia (2004)	Iceland
Finland (1995)	Kazakhstan
France (1958)	Liechtenstein
Germany (1958)	Moldova
Greece (1981)	Montenegro
Hungary (2004)	Norway
Ireland (1973)	Russian Federation
Italy (1958)	Serbia
Latvia (2004)	Switzerland
Lithuania (2004)	Former Yugoslav
Luxembourg (1958)	Republic
Malta (2004)	Turkey
Netherlands (1958)	Ukraine
Poland (2004)	
Portugal (1986)	
Romania (2007)	
Slovakia (2004)	
Slovenia (2004)	
Spain (1986)	
Sweden (1995)	
United Kingdom (1973)	

Appendix B. List of Ministerial Communiqués

Conference/Title	Date
Bologna Declaration (see Appendix C) <i>Joint declaration of the European ministers of education</i>	1999
Praque Communiqué <i>Towards the European Higher Education Area: Communiqué of the meeting of European ministers in charge of higher education</i>	2001
Berlin Communiqué <i>Realizing the European Higher Education Area: Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for higher education</i>	2003
Bergen Communiqué <i>The European Higher Education Area: Achieving the goals</i>	2005
London Communiqué (see Appendix C) <i>Towards the European Higher Education Area: Responding to the challenges in a globalized world</i>	2007
Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué <i>The Bologna Process, 2020: The European Higher Education Area in the new decade.</i>	2009
Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area	2010
Bucharest Communiqué <i>Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area</i>	2012

Diane Martinez is an assistant professor of English at Western Carolina University where she teaches professional and technical communication courses. Her research interests include global communication, the effects of globalization on technical and professional communication, and online education.

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