

# Scaffolding tertiary students' writing in a genre-based writing intervention

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**Abstract:** In recent years, embedding writing into subject teaching through genre-based writing instruction (GBWI) has been advocated in tertiary education. However, little is known about how this approach can be shaped and implemented in this context. In a design-based research study in Dutch higher professional education, we aimed to explore how GBWI can be used to scaffold students' writing within the subject of Event Organization and to what extent students learned to use the typical features of the genre 'event proposal'. A 5-week subject-specific writing intervention was designed and subsequently enacted by a subject lecturer in a first-year class involving 13 students. Using a coding scheme for interactional scaffolding strategies, five interaction fragments were analyzed against the background of designed scaffolding and learning goals. The fragments indicated that the interplay of designed scaffolding (instructional materials and activities) and interactional scaffolding (teacher-student interactions) promoted students' writing performance over time. Comparison of students' pre- and posttests by means of an analytic scoring scheme pointed to statistically significant growth in the use of typical genre features ( $d=1.41$ ). Together, the results of this design-based research study indicate the potential of GBWI for scaffolding and promoting tertiary students' writing.

**Keywords:** Genre-based writing instruction, embedding writing, scaffolding, higher education, design-based research



Kuiper, C., Smit, J., De Wachter, L., & Elen, J. (2017). Scaffolding tertiary students' writing in a genre-based writing intervention. *Journal of Writing Research*, *9*(1), 27-59. doi: 10.17239/jowr-2017.09.01.02

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## 1. Introduction

To date, writing instruction in the L1 higher education context has commonly been offered by writing experts in specific writing classes. These classes are more or less detached from the subjects, thereby separating writing from thinking (Mitchell & Evison, 2006; Wingate, 2012). However, writing is a vital tool for students' learning and assessment in all subjects (Davies, Swinburne, & Williams, 2006; De Wachter, Heeren, Marx, & Huyghe, 2013). Since each subject has its own language, text types and conventions (Gibbons, 2009), separate writing classes may not address the problems many first-year students face in sufficiently meeting the subject-specific writing demands of the tertiary context (Tribble & Wingate, 2013). Not surprisingly, research has shown that students hardly transfer what they have learnt in writing classes to the subjects (Van Drie, Braaksma, & Van Boxtel, 2015; Zhu, 2004).

In L2 educational contexts, embedding writing instruction into subject teaching has been advocated and practiced for some decades now (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1988). The need to develop this kind of integrated language instruction emerged from the gap between students' second language learning in so-called reception classes and their participation in the mainstream classroom. One particular way of embedding writing instruction into the subjects is genre-based writing instruction (GBWI). In this pedagogy, different genres are distinguished (e.g. essays, business proposals, research reports) and analyzed so as to create learning opportunities. Through text analysis, the lecturer and students develop a common understanding of a text and its features in a particular social context. By doing so, students are empowered eventually to write such a text themselves. GBWI has proven successful in different L2 educational contexts (e.g. Ahn, 2012; Chang & Schleppegrell, 2016; Firkins, Forey, & Sengupta, 2007; Payaprom, 2012; Rahman, 2011).

In the L1 tertiary context, embedded writing approaches and GBWI in particular are not common practice yet, although they have been advocated in recent years (Kruse, 2013; Tribble & Wingate, 2013). GBWI has been argued to be a realistic, effective and feasible approach to promote tertiary students' writing in the subjects, thereby offering a promising alternative to current writing instruction (Wingate, 2012). However, more insight is needed into how this approach can be shaped and implemented in the tertiary context. Therefore, the aim of this study in the Dutch tertiary context is to explore how GBWI can be used in the subjects and to what extent it promotes student writing.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Embedded writing instruction

There are several instructional approaches that focus on content and language integrated learning, albeit with different emphases, often referred to as content-based language instruction (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). In these embedded approaches, (subject) lecturers are trained to teach content effectively while supporting students' language development.

In the Dutch context, the movement of language-sensitive content teaching (*Taalgericht Vakonderwijs*; Hajer & Meestringa, 2009) has taken the first steps to realize content-based language instruction, mainly in secondary educational contexts (Hajer, Meestringa, & Miedema, 2000; Van Drie, 2012; Van Eerde, Hacquebord, Hajer, Pulles, & Raymakers, 2006). By drawing on the three pillars of context, language support and interaction, the subject lecturer delivers content-focused lessons while paying attention to the subject language at the same time. Such embedded writing instruction offers a number of advantages compared to traditional writing instruction.

First, writing becomes a meaningful activity within the subject context (Chanock, Horton, Reedman, & Stephenson, 2012), which students perceive as essential to their study (Mitchell & Evison, 2006). Second, through embedding writing instruction into the subjects, students can be introduced to the language of their subjects more specifically. This is crucial, as research has shown that every subject has its own conventions, ways of reasoning and argumentation (Love, 2009; Van Drie et al., 2015). A third benefit of embedded writing instruction is that it offers possibilities to tackle particular subject-specific writing problems. These problems are often less of a linguistic nature, but mainly caused by a lack of understanding how subject-specific knowledge is constructed and presented (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2014). Finally and most importantly, embedded writing instruction has proven more effective than traditional, separate writing instruction courses (Blake & Pates, 2010; Wingate, 2006).

Embedding writing instruction into the subjects, however, poses several challenges to subject lecturers. Research has shown that subject lecturers generally tend to be reluctant to focus on writing development, partly because they feel writing should be taught elsewhere (Mitchell & Evison, 2006; Wingate, Andon, & Cogo, 2011), and partly because they consider themselves to have a limited understanding of the writing conventions in their subject (Bailey, 2010; Blake & Pates, 2010; North, 2005; Smit, 2013; Wingate, 2014). Besides, subject lecturers have been found to lack the necessary teaching skills, as writing instruction is not their field of expertise (Blake & Pates, 2010; Echevarria, 2007). Further, subject lecturers generally have concerns about their workload and the balance between spending time on content matter and writing development (French, 2011; Wingate, 2014).

## 2.2 Genre-based writing instruction

In the 1970s and 1980s, writing practice and research primarily concentrated on the process approach to teaching writing, which emphasized individual problem solving through a planning-writing-reviewing framework (Badger & White, 2000; Flower & Hayes, 1981). In the late 1980s and 1990s, the interest shifted towards a genre approach, which emphasized collaborative learning within a contextual framework for writing, highlighting the meanings and text types at stake (Hyland, 2003). In this study, we draw on the genre approach, as elaborated by the Sydney School (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Martin, 2009). This approach arose in Australia in the 1980s from an ideological view of empowering all students with linguistic resources for social success (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Hyon, 1996). As opposed to genre approaches of the New Rhetoric tradition (e.g. Bazerman, 1988; Miller, 1984) and, to a lesser extent, of the ESP tradition (cf. Bhatia, 2008; Swales, 1990), Sydney School researchers have been most focused on explicating textual features, primarily in primary and secondary school contexts (Christie & Martin, 1997; Hyon, 1996). Further, from the three genre traditions, the Sydney School has offered most insight into how genre pedagogy can be implemented in the classroom, making use of different instructional frameworks (Hammond, 2012; Hyon, 1996).

The Sydney School defines genre as a 'staged, goal-oriented, and purposeful social activity that people engage in as members of their culture' (2009, p. 10). More specifically, scholars in this tradition have referred to text types in school contexts as genres (e.g. Hyland, 2007). Each text type has its predictable ways to achieve its social purpose (e.g. informing, persuading) in terms of structure and linguistic choices. In other words, each text type can be characterized with respect to goal, overall text structure and typical linguistic features. The overall text structure is often referred to as 'move structure', indicating the presence of the various 'moves' or 'steps' a writer uses to achieve a particular purpose within the text (Henry & Roseberry, 2001). The linguistic features of a text are identified using the terms field, tenor and mode. Field refers to the subject matter of a text. In school contexts for example, subjects such as 'marketing' and 'history' each have their own ways of using language. Tenor refers to the relationship between reader and writer and considers how well they know each other, how frequently they meet and how they feel about each other. Finally, mode refers to how spoken language differs from written language and how this is represented in text organization (Derewianka, 2012).

In general, seven key genres for learning in school are identified in genre literature: recount, narrative, report, procedure, explanation, argument, and discussion (Derewianka, 1990). However, genres in real life often exceed the boundaries of one particular key genre. First, texts sometimes display characteristics of more than one key genre. Second, the authentic context in which genres operate also influences their features. Examples of genres that merge features of both key genres and particular authentic contexts are a marketing plan, a business letter, and an event proposal. Before such genres can be taught in higher professional education settings, they should be

explored and analyzed in terms of goal, overall structure and typical linguistic features (Echevarria, 2007). In teaching, these features are made explicit to students by means of text analysis. Genre-based pedagogy offers the guidelines to shape this teaching.

### 2.3 Scaffolding

The pedagogy of GBWI is informed by the idea of scaffolding. Scaffolding, although originally introduced to describe the adult's role in dyadic adult-child interaction (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), is nowadays typically used to refer to temporary help provided by a more knowledgeable other (here: a lecturer) that helps a learner gradually to gain independence concerning a particular area of learning (here: writing) (cf. Belland, 2014). Scaffolding is relational by nature, involving both the lecturer's and students' participation (Smit & Van Eerde, 2011; Van de Pol, 2012), and is therefore often linked to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development in which a more knowledgeable other helps a learner move forward (1978). Further, in GBWI, scaffolding not only refers to the support offered in teacher-student interaction (Van de Pol, 2012), but also to the support offered through instructional materials and activities (cf. Gibbons, 2002). In scaffolding literature, this difference is expressed by notions such as online and offline scaffolding (Smit, Van Eerde, & Bakker, 2012), and interactional versus designed scaffolding (Gibbons, 2009).

The teaching and learning cycle (TLC; Gibbons, 2002; Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011), used in GBWI, is a design heuristic that facilitates designed scaffolding. The TLC consists of four stages in which a particular text type is introduced, modeled, jointly practiced and eventually individually performed by students. In the first phase, called 'Building the field', students and teachers explore the context in which a genre is used. In the second phase, called 'Deconstruction', a genre's purpose, structure and linguistic features are explored by means of sample texts. In the third phase, called 'Joint construction', students write and rewrite their own texts, supported by the teacher who stimulates students' language development from more spoken-like to more written-like language through classroom interaction (Gibbons, 2002). In the fourth phase, known as 'Independent construction', students are expected to write in the genre without any support, as the teacher transfers responsibility to students (also referred to as handover to independence; Smit et al., 2012). At this stage, students are thought to be capable of writing the genre on their own, based on their learning in the previous phases.

Whereas designed scaffolding provides the context, instructional materials and guidelines for student learning, it is in the interaction between the lecturer and students that actual learning takes place (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). The interaction between lecturer and student can be planned only to a certain extent and is mainly responsive to the situation at stake. Examples of interactional scaffolding strategies are recapping, appropriating or recasting students' utterances as well as linking to students' prior experience and pointing forward to new experiences (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). In sum, scaffolding student writing through GBWI thus requires interplay of adaptive designed and interactional support that is gradually decreased over time.

To date, little research has been conducted on how scaffolding within embedded GBWI can be shaped and implemented so as to promote tertiary students' writing. Therefore, the following questions are central to this study:

1. How can tertiary students be scaffolded in writing a subject-specific genre in an embedded genre-based writing intervention?
2. To what extent did students learn to utilize the overall structure and linguistic features of a subject-specific genre in an embedded genre-based writing intervention?

To answer these questions, a design-based research approach (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015) is employed, which is elaborated in the following section.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Design-based research approach**

As stated before, GBWI as a way of embedding writing instruction into subject teaching is not commonly found in the existing Dutch tertiary context. Therefore, this new teaching method had to be designed first, before it could be studied (cf. Smit, 2013). Consequently, a design-based research (DBR) approach was chosen, as is common when researchers aim to develop theories about how to shape particular new types of teaching or learning (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015; Smit, 2013). In DBR, the design of educational materials and learning environments is intertwined with the testing or developing of theory (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015). As the aim of DBR is usually to explore the potential of a particular new type of teaching or learning, a prototypical DBR study is not of the control-group type, but rather employs 'within-subject' comparisons (Reimann, 2011), as is the case in the present study. Here, students' writing achievements on a pre- and posttest were compared in order to determine the influence of a GBWI intervention. This kind of comparison draws on a process-oriented understanding of causality which is common in DBR, opposed to a variance-oriented understanding of causality as is typically used in experimental research (e.g. Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015; Maxwell, 2004). To conduct the study, the typical DBR phases of preparation and design, enactment, and retrospective analysis were followed (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015). In the following section, the setting and participants of the intervention are described. Then, the first DBR phase will be elaborated as this informed the intervention conducted in the second phase. Subsequently, the methodological framework guiding the intervention will be described.

#### **3.2 Setting and participants**

This study was part of a larger design-based research project. The project aim was to explore the use of GBWI in two first year subjects in higher education. It was conducted within the Dutch program of a hospitality business faculty for higher

professional education in the Netherlands. In this faculty, students are trained to become professionals in the field of Facility Management, Tourism Management or Hotel Management.

The present study reports on the second out of three intervention cycles in the first-year subject of Event Organization (3 EC). The aim of this subject is to introduce students into the process of event organization and to enable them to gain practical experience in the different phases of this process. The intervention was conducted in the autumn of 2015 and involved 13 first-year students. Their profiles are summarized in Table 1 (all names are pseudonyms). In the last column, students' examination mark for the subject 'Dutch' in prior education is included.

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic profile of student participants

Respondent	Sex	Age	Mother tongue	Prior education	Examination mark 'Dutch' in prior education (scale 1-10)
Fiona	F	21	Turkish	Secondary vocational education	7
Anne	F	17	Dutch	Secondary general education	6
Juliet	F	17	Dutch	Secondary general education	7
Rob	M	17	Dutch	Secondary general education	6
Jenny	F	20	Dutch	Secondary vocational education	6
Sarah	F	21	Dutch	Secondary general education	7
Nicky	F	17	Dutch	Secondary general education	6
Barbara	F	22	Dutch	Secondary vocational education	8
Vera	F	22	Bulgarian	Secondary vocational education	6
John	M	18	Dutch	Secondary general education	6
Emmy	F	19	Dutch	Secondary vocational education	6
Bart	M	18	Dutch	Secondary general education	5
Dan	M	22	Dutch	Secondary vocational education	7

The subject lecturer teaching Event Organization (female/43 years/Dutch) had 3 years of experience in teaching in higher professional education at the start of the intervention. Before becoming a lecturer, she had acquired over 10 years of experience in the events industry. The subject lecturer had no previous experience in delivering embedded GBWI.

### 3.3 Preparation of intervention

To prepare the intervention, two steps were taken. First, the subject-specific genre concerned was analyzed. Second, the current teaching and learning within the subject was analyzed so as to determine the starting point of the intervention.

### **Analysis of subject-specific genre**

Within the subject of Event Organization, the intervention was focused on a particular genre called 'event proposal', which was identified in two steps. First, we drew on genre literature (Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Zhu, 2004) and identified the text as a 'proposal', belonging to the professional 'proposal genre family' as defined by Nesi and Gardner (2012). Proposals are aimed at preparing students for professional practice. They 'define a problem (move 1), establish parameters for a solution to the problem (move 2), generate possible solutions (move 3), and identify and justify a recommended solution to the problem (move 4)' (Nesi & Gardner, 2012, p. 181). The language used in this professional genre is typically persuasive, evaluative, and directly aimed at the client and his needs, according to genre literature and Dutch professional literature on proposal writing (e.g. Plattel, 2008). Second, interviews with subject lecturers of the hospitality business faculty (N=6) and professional event organizers (N=2) were conducted to understand the local color of the event proposal. As a result of this, we identified several features that characterize the 'event' character of this local genre, aimed at proposing an event to a client.

The move structure of the event proposal somewhat deviates from that of a proposal as described by Nesi and Gardner (2012). In the event proposal, the clients' needs are identified first (cf. move 1 'the problem'), followed by the introduction of the event theme (cf. move 2 'parameter for solution'). Then, the event is elaborated (cf. move 3 'solution'), after which terms and conditions are described. The justification of the proposed event (move 4) is not a separate move, but translated in the alignment between the client's needs and the proposed event in the proposal as a whole.

This alignment is characteristic for the event proposal. Although the client's request is the starting point for every proposal (Plattel, 2008), this request appeared to be particularly important in the event proposal. As both the client's needs and the proposed event are intangible and prone to misinterpretation, the language a writer chooses to convince his reader needs to be aligned accordingly. For example, if the client has requested the event organizer to propose an idea for a 'chic company celebration', formulations like 'a fun party' or 'a chill, vintage atmosphere' are out of place.

Further, the writer of an event proposal has to play on the imagination of the reader. As he proposes an idea for an event that does not exist yet, the writer needs his language to enable the reader to fully imagine the event. This is commonly realized by describing the event from the perspective of the guest and by using action and emotive verbs as well as adverbs and adjectives (e.g. 'When the guests enter the attractively lit entrance with brightly colored walls and muted background music, they will experience that red carpet feeling').

In Table 2, the elaboration of the event proposal is depicted, in terms of goal, overall structure and typical linguistic features (field, tenor, mode).

**Table 2.** Elaboration of genre 'event proposal'

Goal	Persuading the reader of the suitability of the proposed event
Overall structure (moves)	Move 1 identification of client's needs and wishes Move 2 introduction of the event theme Move 3 elaboration of the event Move 4 terms and conditions
Field	action verbs (e.g. organize, entertain, welcome, guide) emotive verbs (e.g. feel, experience, sense) adjectives and adverbs (e.g. chic, glamorous, lively) words referring to the participants (e.g. guests) and circumstances (e.g. at the hotel, at the start of the evening)
Tenor	writer and reader have met before ('as discussed earlier') writer has positive attitude towards writer ('based on our pleasant conversation') writer acts as an advisor ('based on our experience, we advise you') writer describes event from guest's perspective ('the guests are warmly welcomed') writer avoids spoken language ('kind of', 'cool')
Mode	use of signal words (e.g. of time and sequence: 'first, then, later on') use of clear references (e.g. 'the guests are welcomed....., after which they are guided...') use of brief paragraphs using topic sentences

### Determining the starting point of the intervention

After having identified the text type at stake as an event proposal, the starting point of the intervention in terms of teaching and learning was determined.

Regarding teaching, document analysis (e.g. syllabus and teaching materials) was conducted to determine current writing instruction and assessment within the subject, followed by an interview with the subject lecturer involved. Findings from both sources show that current instruction of two, one-hour lessons mainly focused on which elements the event proposal should contain, and on emphasizing the concise and professional writing style belonging to this text (i.e. designed scaffolding). Further, two sample texts were distributed in class to be analyzed in general terms ('which one would you prefer and why?'). As writing a good event proposal was not formulated as a learning goal as such, classroom interaction was not particularly focused towards this goal (i.e. interactional scaffolding), according to the subject lecturer. The lack of a learning goal in terms of writing was also reflected in the assessment of event proposals. The texts (not written individually, but in groups of approximately 8 students) were only judged for writing quality to a limited extent (10 out of 72 points).

Regarding student learning, ten student event proposals were analyzed so as to find the main problems students faced in writing this text type. These proposals were written by randomly selected student groups from previous classes, taught by the same subject

lecturer involved in the present study. To analyze the proposals, the first author used a genre-based analytic framework (cf. Gibbons, 2009; see Table 3), derived from the elaboration of the genre as described earlier. She attributed scores per genre feature to each of the event proposals, using a 3-point scale (scale: '-'=structural problem, '±'=occasional problem, and '+'=no problem).

**Table 3.** Analytic framework problem analysis 'event proposal'

Genre Concept	Genre Feature	Score (+/-)
Overall structure (moves)	Move 1 identification of client's needs and wishes	
	Move 2 introduction of the event theme	
	Move 3 elaboration of the event	
	Move 4 terms and conditions	
Field	action verbs (e.g. organize, entertain, welcome, guide)	
	emotive verbs (e.g. feel, experience, sense)	
	adjectives and adverbs (e.g. chic, glamorous, lively)	
	words referring to the participants (e.g. guests) and circumstances (e.g. at the hotel, at the start of the evening)	
Tenor	writer and reader have met before ('as discussed earlier')	
	writer has positive attitude towards writer ('based on our pleasant conversation')	
	writer acts as an advisor ('based on our experience, we advise you')	
	writer describes event from guest's perspective ('the guests are warmly welcomed')	
	writer avoids spoken language ('kind of', 'cool')	
Mode	use of signal words (e.g. of time and sequence: 'first, then, later on')	
	use of clear references (e.g. ' <i>the guests</i> are welcomed....., after which <i>they</i> are guided...')	
	use of brief paragraphs using topic sentences	

After the analysis of the ten texts by the first author, the second author validated the findings by randomly verifying a sample of the judgments. She judged all scores to be valid. Subsequently, all scores of the 10 texts were compared by genre concept (see Appendix A). As the concept of tenor scored the most 'minus points', this was identified as the main problem. The difficulty of this feature might be related to the fact that students are not familiar with the business role assumed in the event proposal. Furthermore, the fact that they have to base their proposal on an exploratory meeting that has not actually taken place, might contribute to the difficulty experienced.

In sum, the analysis of current teaching and learning led to two findings informing the design and enactment of GBWI. First, the subject lecturer's pedagogic repertoire

had to be enriched in terms of how writing can be scaffolded through means of activities and materials (designed scaffolding) and classroom interaction (interactional scaffolding). This was realized through a professional development program in which the lecturer was intensively trained and prepared for the intervention during a five month period. As part of this professional development, the subject lecturer acted as a co-designer of the lesson series and teaching materials (cf. Cviko, Mckenney, & Voogt, 2014; Reimann, 2011). Second, based on the problem analysis of students' event proposals, the overall learning goal of the intervention was formulated as 'developing proficiency in the genre of event proposal, particularly in terms of tenor'.

### 3.4 Intervention

#### Design lesson series and teaching materials

The TLC was deployed as a design heuristic to shape the intervention, as is common in GBWI studies (Gibbons, 2002). Further, a learning goal for each TLC-phase was formulated (see Table 4), in order to guide the teaching and learning to the overall learning goal.

*Table 4.* Learning goals per TLC-phase

TLC-Phase	Learning goal
Building the field	Students develop a common understanding of the event proposal in the social context of event organization
Deconstruction	Students develop control of the overall structure and linguistic features of the event proposal in sample texts
Joint construction	Students can jointly (re)write (part of) an event proposal and evaluate it
Independent construction	Students can independently write an event proposal

The intervention consisted of 5 weekly lessons, each of 60 minutes. The first and the last lesson were dedicated to the pre- and posttest. For the design of the lessons, we drew on the TLC. During the lessons, the subject lecturer gradually handed over independence. In other words, she gradually transferred responsibility for writing the event proposal to the students and gradually decreased the help offered to them. An overview of the lesson series, linked to the four TLC phases, is given in Table 5.

To scaffold students' writing development, different teaching materials (i.e. designed scaffolds) were developed. To support students' field building, a video of an exploratory meeting between an event organizer and a client was used. Further, two different sample texts of event proposals were constructed as teaching materials.

**Table 5.** Overview GBWI lesson series

Lesson	Activities	Phase of TLC
-	Introduction, pretest	-
1	Feedback pretest, discussion genre in social context, discussion differences spoken and written text	Building the field
2	Introduction GBWI and genre concepts, explanation tool, analysis first sample text	Deconstruction
3	Analysis second sample text, comparison sample texts	Deconstruction
4	(re)Writing part of event proposal, discussion student texts	Joint construction
5	(re)Writing part of event proposal, feedback, discussion student texts	Joint construction
-	Posttest	Independent construction

These texts were based on authentic proposals, former student proposals, and on our analysis and elaboration of the genre. We chose to construct good ‘student models’, instead of ‘expert models’, to provide students with realistic attainable writing models (cf. Flowerdew, 2000). The two sample texts coincided roughly in terms of overall structure and linguistic features, but differed with respect to event type, context and elaboration. An excerpt of one sample text, representing part of move 3, is depicted in Figure 1.

**Elaboration of event**

Your employees are picked up by luxurious limousines at 1.45 pm at the company. Within 15 minutes time, the driver then takes them to theatre ‘Fabulous’ in Deventer. Upon arrival, it will be clear that the event is employee-centric. A butler in full dress suit, who surprisingly happens to know the employees’ names, welcomes them personally. He guides them with due respect to the plenary room and in the meantime takes note of their wishes in order to customize their dinner.

*Figure 1.* Excerpt of sample text

Furthermore, a so-called ‘analysis and writing tool’ was designed for students as a teaching resource. This tool aims at supporting students in analyzing the sample texts in terms of goal, overall structure (moves) and linguistic features as well as to support them in writing such a text themselves. With respect to this writing phase, the correct use of spelling, grammar, and punctuation was added to the linguistic features, although these did not form the focus of the intervention and students’ developing writing proficiency. An excerpt of this analysis and writing tool, representing part of the category, ‘tenor’, is depicted in Table 6. The complete tool can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 6.** Excerpt of analysis and writing tool

Language feature	Question	Sample formulations
Relation writer-reader	Writer acts as an acquaintance of reader?	In our conversation, you indicated.../ Based on your wishes, as expressed in our conversation of....
	Writer acts as an advisor?	Based on our experience, we propose.../ Our proposal is to...



### Instruments

To analyze the enactment of scaffolding, a model for interactional scaffolding features as characterized by Hammond and Gibbons (2005) was used (see Table 7).

**Table 7.** Model for interactional scaffolding features

Interactional scaffolding feature	Explanation
Linking to prior experience, pointing forward	Referring to student's prior experiences, referring to prior or future learning activities
Recapping	Recapping most important learning points
Appropriating	Appropriating students' contributions (wordings, ideas, information) into the lesson discourse
Recasting	Recasting student wording into more appropriate discourse
Cued elicitation	Offering verbal or gestural hints about expected responses
Increasing prospectiveness	Handing back responsibility for continuing conversation

*Note.* Adapted from Hammond and Gibbons (2005, p. 21).

To gain insight into the extent to which students learned to utilize the overall structure and linguistic features of the genre event proposal, two instruments were used.

Firstly, writing assignments for the pre- and posttest were developed. These provided students with information on the content of the event proposal to be written (e.g. type of event, time, place, theme), as well as with guidelines for the requested text (e.g. addressee, length). The two writing assignments were comparable in terms of complexity level and topic (cf. Yasuda, 2011). See Figure 2 for one of the two assignments. As an example we inserted in Appendix C an event proposal written by a student, based on the assignment in Figure 2.

**Setting**  
You and your fellow student have recently started up an event organization called 'Dream Events'. Last week, you received your first request for a proposal. You are requested to propose an event for the company celebration of HBS lecturers! After a briefing with Mrs. Bisseling, manager at HBS, you have made some notes and drawn up an idea for yourself (see box).

**Notes: idea company celebration HBS**

- *Celebration for approximately 150 lecturers, mid March, at DokH2O in Deventer (8 PM- 12 AM)*
- *Aim: thank lecturers for their efforts and motivate them for the remainder of the year*
- *Title celebration: 'The stars of HBS'*
- *Lots of glitter and glamour, lecturers are treated like real stars (VIP coach transport, red carpet with photographers at entrance, glamour photo-shoot, luxurious snacks and drinks etc.)*
- *Budget will be discussed later on; proposal should now be focused on idea for the celebration*

**Assignment**  
Write an event proposal for the company celebration to Mrs. Bisseling. In this proposal, you present your idea for the event, based on Mrs. Bisseling's needs and wishes. With this proposal, you are trying to convince Mrs. Bisseling that Dream Events is the best organizer for this event.

**Guidelines**

- Use a maximum of one and a half pages for this assignment
- Use the information provided and feel free to add something you consider it necessary

Figure 2. Example of writing assignment (translated from Dutch)

The second instrument used was a genre-based analytic scoring scheme (cf. Gibbons, 2009) to evaluate students' written texts. As the aim was to measure students' proficiency of overall structure and typical linguistic features, analytic scoring was preferred over a more holistic approach (cf. Hunter, Jones, & Randhawa, 1996). We used the typical text features of the event proposal, as elaborated in Table 1, as input for our scoring scheme and added a three-point scale of 0-1-2. In addition, for each aspect a rubric was developed, providing examples of each score. An example of a rubric is depicted in Table 8.

### Data collection

To collect data, video and audio recordings of all lessons (transcribed verbatim) were analyzed as well as students' pre- and posttest results. Regarding the pre- and posttest, students were asked to write an event proposal manually, before lesson 1 and after lesson 5, in one and a half pages maximum. They were given 45 minutes to complete their assignment, which turned out to be appropriate.

### Data analysis

To answer the first research question on how students can be scaffolded in writing a subject-specific genre in an embedded GBWI intervention, a chronological chain of scaffolding events (cf. Smit & van Eerde, 2013) was identified in the lesson transcripts by the first author. Scaffolding regarding 'tenor' was focused on, as this genre concept appeared to be the most difficult for students, based on the problem analysis.

**Table 8.** Example of analytic scoring scheme

Category	Score	Description	Instruction	Example
Tenor Writer acts as an acquaintance of reader?	0	No description of previous contact	No reference to previous contact at all	Attached you will find the proposal for the celebration.
	1	Implicit description of previous contact	General reference to previous contact, but not clearly expressed	Attached you will find the proposal for the celebration, based on the requirements.
	2	Explicit description of previous contact	Explicit and clear reference to previous contact	Attached you will find the proposal for the celebration, based on your requirements as recently discussed.

To represent the relational notion of scaffolding, the unit of analysis in coding consisted of the subject lecturer's utterances in relation to student utterances (cf. Rodgers, 2004; Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010). To code the subject lecturer's utterances, a coding scheme based on Hammond and Gibbons' identification of interactional scaffolding features was used (2005; see Table 9).

**Table 9.** Coding scheme interactional scaffolding features

Code	Examples of scaffolding features (regarding tenor)
Linking to prior experience, pointing forward (code: <b>Link</b> )	When you write an email to a friend, how do you....? As discussed in the last class... ...which we will elaborate when we analyze sample texts..
Recapping (code: <b>Recap</b> )	Today, we have learnt how we can express tenor in the event proposal.
Appropriating (code: <b>Appro</b> )	Yes, they can indeed be perceived as business partners (after student has initiated 'business partner')
Recasting (code: <b>Recast</b> )	Yes, they behave like business partners, right? (after student has stated 'they know each other from business')
Cued elicitation (code: <b>Cued</b> )	What do you exactly mean by 'equal partners'?
Increasing prospectiveness (code: <b>Increa</b> )	Yes, that is a good question, how formal should we approach the client?

Subsequently, the lecturer-student interactions were linked to the designed scaffolding in the respective lesson and placed in the wider context of the TLC-phase and its learning goal. In total, five scaffolding events were analyzed to show how scaffolding promoted student learning towards genre proficiency over time (i.e. long-term scaffolding; Smit & van Eerde, 2013). Whereas one event of the first TLC-phase was analyzed, two events of the Deconstruction and two of the Joint Construction phase were analyzed. The emphasis was on the second and third TLC-phase, as these are the most important phases for writing development in the tertiary context (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011). After the first author had analyzed the scaffolding events, the second author validated the coding.

Regarding the second research question on the extent to which students learned to utilize the overall structure and linguistic features of the genre at stake, students' written pre- and posttests were analyzed by means of the aforementioned scoring schemes and rubrics. All hand-written student texts (N=26) were first scanned, anonymized and then identified with a code. Each text was attributed scores by the first author per item (0-1-2), which were subsequently totaled (see Appendix D for Sample Score Form). To compare students' scores on the pre- and posttest, we used a non-parametric test for related samples (Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test). This test is suitable for analyzing small samples, as in the present case. It indicates the probability of a significant difference between pre- and posttest scores, and is appropriate for comparing data from the same participants- in this case, the pre- and posttests written by each of the students who participated in the intervention (Carstens & Fletcher, 2007). In order to verify the reliability of the analyses, the first rater assigned a quarter of the texts (N=6; cf. Boettger, 2014) to a second rater. These texts concerned three pre- and three posttests, selected randomly. The first rater instructed the second rater in a half-day session, in which the former introduced the latter to the text type, the analytic scoring scheme and rubrics, after which they assessed three texts, outside the sample, collaboratively to align their interpretation. A weighted Kappa test identified a between-rater agreement of .72, indicating a substantial level of consistency (Landis & Koch, 1977).

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Results RQ1**

The following chronological chain of five scaffolding events shows how interactional scaffolding was deployed against the background of designed scaffolding. These linked events demonstrate how student learning regarding tenor developed over time towards the overall learning goal of developing proficiency in the genre of event proposal (cf. Reimann, 2011; Smit et al., 2012). In the scaffolding events, the subject lecturer is indicated with 'SL'.

**Table 10.** Scaffolding event Building the field

Fragment 'Understanding tenor in exploratory meeting' (Lesson 1, 10-09-2015, 35.09)	
Interactional scaffolding	<p>SL : You just watched the meeting between the client and the man of the event organization. What's their relationship like? How did they behave?</p> <p>Vera : Don't really know each other yet.</p> <p>SL : No, they don't really know each other yet. <b>[Appro]</b> Why do you think they don't know each other yet? Juliet? <b>[Increa]</b></p> <p>Juliet : Eh, actually, I thought they did.</p> <p>SL : Hey, that's funny. You think they do, whereas you don't. <b>[Appro]</b> Why do you think they do know each other, Juliet? <b>[Increa]</b></p> <p>Juliet : Well, because their conversation went very smoothly.</p> <p>SL : It went smoothly. And usually, when you don't know each other yet, then it doesn't go that smoothly, you believe. <b>[Appro]</b></p> <p>SL : And why do you think they don't, Vera? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Vera : Because, eh, they asked each other a lot of questions.</p> <p>SL : Yes, they definitely had to learn to know each other in the first place, didn't they? <b>[Recap]</b></p>
Designed scaffolding	<p>Instructional activity: Subject lecturer discusses relation between client and event organizer in exploratory meeting</p> <p>Instructional material: Film of exploratory meeting between client and event organizer</p>
TLC-phase	Building the field
Learning goal	Students develop a common understanding of the event proposal in the social context of event organization

The interaction fragment in Table 10 shows how the subject lecturer scaffolded students' understanding of tenor in a class discussion, after they had watched a film of an exploratory meeting between client and event organizer. This activity helped students developing a sense of relationship between the two conversation partners, which was crucial for representing tenor appropriately in writing an event proposal later on. As the fragment shows, it was not self-evident that all students understood this relationship right away, thereby indicating the long-term nature of learning to write in a particular genre and the need for scaffolding.

After the first lesson, which was focused on building students' understanding of the genre of event proposal in its social context, two lessons were dedicated to explicitly inducting students into the overall structure and linguistic features of the event proposal (Deconstruction phase). Based on the classroom discussion in the first lesson, we diagnosed that not all students understood tenor properly already. Therefore, the subject lecturer started the second lesson with a recap and was instructed to be responsive to questions on this feature. The following two scaffolding events (in Table 11 and 12) illustrate how the lessons in the Deconstruction phase worked out in practice.

**Table 11.** Scaffolding event Deconstruction I

Fragment 'Discussion on tenor in meeting and proposal, after text analysis' (Lesson 2, 14-09-2015, 32.17)	
Interactional scaffolding	<p>Vera : If you have used 'you' in an informal way in the meeting, should you do the same in the event proposal?</p> <p>SL : What would you think? <b>[Increa]</b></p> <p>Robin : I would just mention that you have agreed upon that in the meeting, and that therefore, you are doing the same thing in the proposal.</p> <p>SL : You mean using 'you' in an informal way? <b>[Recast]</b></p> <p>Sarah : I think it is better to use 'you' in a formal way.</p> <p>SL : Do you share that opinion, Bart, why would you do the same? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Bart : It's simply neater. It is an official document after all.</p> <p>SL : Yes, it is an official document indeed. <b>[Appro]</b> And there is a difference between spoken and written language. <b>[Recap]</b></p> <p>Vera : So you'd better keep it official, actually?</p> <p>SL : I would always use a fairly formal tone, because an event proposal is different from eh...<b>[Recap]</b></p> <p>Sarah : Also, when someone else reads the proposal, it is quite strange</p> <p>SL : Yes, that is a good addition, indeed. <b>[Appro]</b></p>
Designed scaffolding	Instructional activity: - (Student initiates discussion)
TLC-phase	Instructional material: Sample text
Learning goal	Deconstruction
	Students develop control of the overall structure and linguistic features of the event proposal in sample texts

The interaction fragment of lesson 2 in Table 11 shows how Vera demonstrated her need for guidance in reflecting tenor in the written proposal in relation to tenor in the meeting. By doing so, she unconsciously initiated a scaffolding event from which her peers could also benefit, as their contributions show. The subject lecturer acted responsively and handed Vera's question back to the class. In this way, she encouraged students to gain control of tenor themselves.

The interaction fragment in Table 12 shows how students further developed their control of tenor in the event proposal in lesson 3, based on the analysis of a sample text. The subject lecturer scaffolded this development by explicitly asking students to refer to linguistic text features representing tenor. The silence in the fragment indicates that possibly not all students were able to identify those features yet. However, the end of the fragment shows that some students (like Barbara and Jenny here) were already able to do this. Furthermore, the fragment illustrates how Emmy developed her understanding of the writer's role, from a general 'business role' to a more specific 'advisory role'. This applied more to the learning goal of the former TLC-phase than this

Deconstruction phase, indicating the non-linear process of developing genre proficiency (cf. Hyland, 2003; Smit, Bakker, van Eerde, & Kuijpers, 2016).

**Table 12.** Scaffolding event Deconstruction II

Fragment 'Discussion how tenor is expressed in sample text' (Lesson 3, 24-09-2015, 58.14)	
Interactive scaffolding	<p>SL : How does the writer approach the reader? What kind of role does he assume?</p> <p>Emmy : A business role</p> <p>SL : Yes, a business role <b>[Appro]</b>. Can you specify that a bit more? What kind of business role does he take on? <b>[Increa]</b></p> <p>Emmy : What do you mean?</p> <p>SL : Uh.. let me give you some examples: Imagine, he acts as an employee ('tell me what to do'), as a boss ('we're going to do it this way'), or is he assuming another role? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Emmy : Uh..well, yes, he acts like someone who proposes something</p> <p>SL : Yes, who proposes something, or possibly better 'as an advisor'? <b>[Recast]</b></p> <p>Emmy : Yes, exactly, that's what I mean, as an advisor</p> <p>SL : And what makes you think so? What kind of words makes you think so? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Silence</p> <p>SL : What kind of formulations does he use? In the first paragraph for example? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Barbara : 'U have invited us to contribute ideas on the event'.</p> <p>SL : Yes, very good.</p> <p>Sarah : 'to contribute', well, then you are kind of equals.</p> <p>SL : Yes, that's an equal relationship, right? <b>[Recast]</b></p> <p>SL : Do they know each other? Have they met before? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Jenny : Here, it says 'in our previous meeting'</p> <p>SL : Yes, he refers to a meeting. <b>[Recast]</b></p>
Designed scaffolding	<p>Instructional activity: Subject lecturer and students discuss findings based on text analysis</p> <p>Instructional material: Sample text, analysis and writing tool</p>
TLC-phase	Deconstruction
Learning goal	Students develop control of the overall structure and linguistic features of the event proposal in sample texts

Following the lessons focused on Deconstruction, lessons four and five were dedicated to Joint Construction. In this TLC-phase, students (re)wrote their own event proposals and evaluated their own and other students' writing. While not all students appeared to be able to identify tenor in the sample texts in the Deconstruction phase, the subject lecturer was instructed to pay extra attention to these students in the Joint Construction

phase (see Table 13). The following two scaffolding events show how the subject lecturer scaffolded students' writing in this phase.

**Table 13.** Scaffolding event Joint Construction I

Fragment 'Rephrasing a sentence in terms of tenor' (Lesson 4, 01-10-2015, 65.32)	
Interactional scaffolding	<p>The subject lecturer looks over the shoulders of Emmy and Juliet who are (re)writing their event proposal</p> <p>SL : Have a look at this sentence, from 'the theme is international' till 'feeling'. Who is central there? What's your relation with your reader? What kind of relationship do you pretend here?</p> <p>Juliet : What do you mean?</p> <p>SL : Well, we talked about the relationship between reader and writer and how you can express this in an appropriate way. Right? <b>[Link]</b> Otherwise, you won't make a good impression <b>[Recap]</b>. Thus, my question is 'what kind of role do you assume here?'</p> <p>Juliet : Well, a kind of bossy?</p> <p>SL : Yes, indeed. 'We want to...', it's not up to you to 'want' things here <b>[Appro]</b>. So, I can imagine you rephrase this sentence, because now, you as a writer have a central role, like you own the event. Of course, that's not the case. <b>[Recap]</b></p>
Designed scaffolding	<p>Instructional activity: Subject lecturer scaffolds students' formulation during collaborative writing</p> <p>Instructional material: Students' own event proposals</p>
TLC-phase	Joint Construction
Learning goal	Students can jointly (re)write (part of) an event proposal and evaluate it

The interaction fragment in Table 13 shows how students struggled in their role as text creator in this TLC-phase phase, as a follow-up of their role as text analyst in the previous TLC-phase (cf. Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011).

The subject lecturer's adaptive support as a more knowledgeable other helped students in becoming aware of the inappropriateness of their representation of tenor in their text. Through the interaction, students not only learned to write an event proposal, but also learned to evaluate their own writing from a reader's perspective, as aimed for in this phase.

The interaction fragment in Table 14 shows how students faced difficulties in attuning their writing towards the conventions of the genre. The fragment also shows students' increased ability to evaluate other students' writings, based on their own genre knowledge. The subject lecturer guided the interaction, thereby attempting to decrease her support and leaving room for the students to react to each other, as Table 14 demonstrates.

**Table 14.** Scaffolding event Joint Construction II

Fragment 'Evaluating constructed texts in terms of tenor' (Lesson 5, 08-10-2015, 19.26)	
Interactive scaffolding	<p>SL : Let's have a look at the following sentence one of you wrote: 'What's better than your little one graduating? Almost nothing!' Make your choice: go to the left of the classroom if you like it, otherwise go to the right. All students go to the right.</p> <p>SL : Ok, tell me, you have all chosen the right side, which means you don't like the sentence.</p> <p>Jenny : Well, it is children's language, 'your little one'</p> <p>Nicky : Yes, a diminutive</p> <p>Anne : And..eh..it is not professional</p> <p>SL : No, it is not professional indeed. <b>[Appro]</b> But eh...</p> <p>Bart : It just sounds so silly.</p> <p>SL : But why does it sound silly? <b>[Increa]</b></p> <p>Bart : Well, uh...there is something.....</p> <p>SL : Which has to do with? <b>[Cued]</b>. Your relationship with the reader.</p> <p>Bart : Yes</p> <p>Fiona : And 'your little one', it actually isn't about your little one, right?</p> <p>Dan : Yes, indeed.</p> <p>SL : Yes, you're right. You are no longer a 'little one' when you graduate, so that's kind of strange. <b>[Appro]</b></p> <p>Sarah : But I do understand why you....eh...but you are not sending this to the parents, right?</p> <p>SL : Indeed, you are not going to send this to the parents, <b>[Appro]</b> but to.....? <b>[Cued]</b></p> <p>Sarah : Ok, but when you are sending this to the parents, I do understand you want to appeal to their senses, like 'nothing is more beautiful than your daughter or son.....'</p> <p>SL : Yes. But, you show a good sense of the relationship, although this is not represented well in this sentence. <b>[Recap]</b></p>
Designed scaffolding	<p>Instructional activity: Subject lecturer evaluates formulated sentences with students in an interactive game</p> <p>Instructional material: Sentences taken from students' own event proposals</p>
TLC-phase	Joint Construction
Learning goal	Students can jointly (re)write (part of) an event proposal and evaluate it

## 4.2 Results RQ2

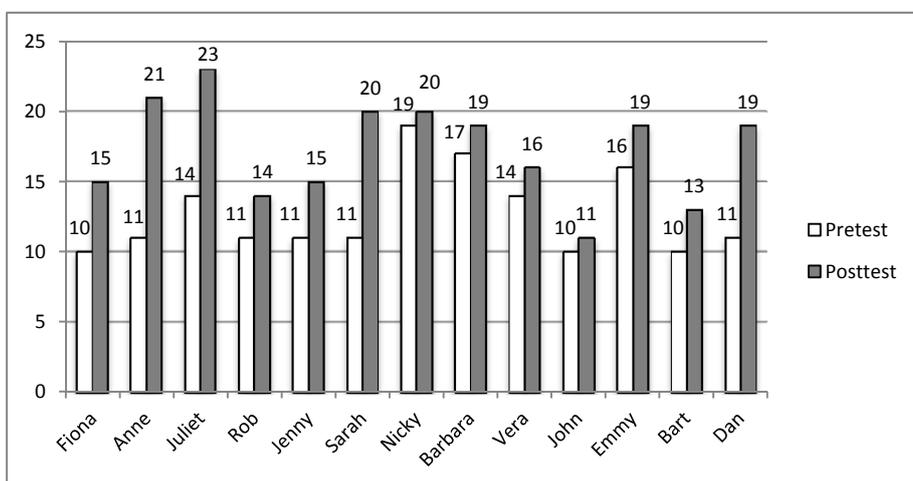
To measure to what extent students learned to utilize the overall structure and linguistic features of the genre at stake in the GBWI lessons, their average scores across these features on the pre- and posttests were compared. The comparison yielded statistically

significant differences in the use of typical genre features ( $Z=-3,203$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as depicted in Table 15. The effect size can be considered very large ( $d=1.41$ ).

**Table 15.** Results on pre- and posttests (N=13; scores on 0-1-2-scale)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Mean score pretest	.67	1.20	.8462	.18735
Mean score posttest	.73	1.53	1.1538	.24402

Figure 3 shows how each of the 13 students performed in the pre- and posttest and to what extent they learned to utilize the overall structure and linguistic features of the event proposal.



**Figure 3.** Students' total scores on pre- and posttest

Figure 3 shows that all students progressed in total scores (scale: 0-30 points) between the pre- and posttest. The maximum progress made was 10 points (Anne: from 11 to 21 points), whereas the minimum progress shown was 1 point (John: from 10 to 11 points, and Nicky: from 19 to 20 points). The average progress students made was 4.61 points. Figure 3 also indicates that both low- and high-achieving students made progress (e.g. John vs. Barbara).

Further, Table 16 shows how the 13 students developed their use of the overall structure and linguistic features (field, mode and tenor), as well as mechanics, within the event proposal. To enable comparison across the features, the relative change within each feature is calculated as a percentage.

**Table 16.** Student scores on genre features in pre- and posttest

Feature	Overall Structure			Field			Mode			Tenor			Mechanics		
	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change
Fiona	0	0	0	4	3	-1	0	4	4	2	5	3	4	3	-1
Anne	0	2	2	2	8	6	3	2	-1	5	9	4	1	0	-1
Juliet	0	2	2	4	8	4	2	3	1	6	7	1	2	3	1
Rob	0	0	0	4	6	2	2	3	1	4	3	-1	1	2	1
Jenny	0	1	1	4	6	2	3	3	0	4	5	1	0	0	0
Sarah	0	2	2	6	6	0	3	3	0	1	9	8	1	0	-1
Nicky	1	1	0	8	6	-2	4	4	0	4	7	3	3	2	-1
Barbara	0	0	0	6	7	1	3	4	1	5	7	2	3	1	-2
Vera	1	1	0	5	6	1	3	3	0	6	6	0	0	0	0
John	0	1	1	3	6	3	3	2	-1	1	2	1	3	0	-3
Emmy	0	1	1	7	7	0	4	4	0	5	6	1	0	1	1
Bart	0	1	1	4	5	1	2	2	0	3	4	1	1	1	0
Dan	2	1	-1	6	7	1	2	3	1	3	8	5	0	0	0
Total	4	13	+9	63	81	+18	34	40	+6	49	78	+29	19	13	-6
			=225%			=29%			=18%			=59%			=-32%

Table 16 demonstrates that the relative impact of change in ‘overall structure’ is the largest. Further, students have shown a relatively large change in utilizing ‘tenor’ in their event proposals after the intervention. Regarding ‘mechanics’, Table 16 illustrates a negative change between pre- and posttest.

## 5. Discussion

In this study, the aim was to explore how GBWI can be used in the subjects to scaffold students in writing a subject-specific genre and to what extent this contributed to students’ use of the overall structure and linguistic features of the genre. As embedded GBWI was an innovative approach to writing instruction in the tertiary context of this study, we conducted design-based research.

In answer to the first research question, a chain of scaffolding events throughout the TLC-phases was presented, all aimed at student learning regarding tenor in the genre of event proposal. The events arose from five GBWI lessons, which were prepared by drawing on GBWI and scaffolding literature on the one hand and by determining the empirical starting point of the intervention on the other hand. In addition, we also determined students’ starting point for each lesson during the intervention and aligned instructional activities to that. For each TLC-phase, specific learning goals were formulated ahead of the overall learning goal. To scaffold students’ development so as

to realize these goals, the subject lecturer successfully attuned her support throughout the lessons to students' needs using interactional scaffolding. The chain of scaffolding events shows how the interplay of designed and interactional scaffolding promoted students' writing development. The subject lecturer's role was crucial here as she had to 'put the designed scaffolding to work' (cf. Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Although her learning process and reflection are beyond the scope of this article, the subject lecturer indicated that she had experienced the intervention as rewarding despite her initial uncertainty about scaffolding writing. Over the course of the lessons, students developed their understanding, recognition, use and evaluation of tenor, albeit to different extents. The shift from being a text analyst towards becoming a text creator (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011) appeared to be challenging for many students. The scaffolding events in the Joint Construction phase demonstrated how some students kept struggling in representing tenor in their own texts until the end (e.g. Emmy and Juliet, see Table 13), which may indicate a need for more time and support in this phase. From a scaffolding point of view, this finding may imply that the TLC-phase of handing over to independence is only partially achieved. This phase is possibly hard to accomplish anyway, as scaffolding is an ongoing process without a clear endpoint (Bakker, Smit, & Wegerif, 2015; Benko, 2013).

In answer to the second research question, students' pre- and posttest average scores were compared. This pointed to a significant development in the use of the typical overall structure and linguistic features of the genre at stake. It appeared that the change in 'overall structure' had the most relative impact. This may be explained by the fact that incorporating the four 'moves' in the event proposal is relatively easy. With respect to the linguistic features, students improved their texts mainly in terms of 'tenor'. This feature was found to be the main obstacle in the problem analysis and, therefore, the main focus in the intervention. Apparently, centralizing text features in a relatively short intervention can contribute considerably to students' writing proficiency (cf. Chang & Schleppegrell, 2016), although this did not apply to all students in the same way. The comparison of students' pre- and posttests further showed improvements in terms of field and mode, whereas students' proficiency in mechanics deteriorated, possibly through a lack of attention to this writing aspect. Moreover, the results indicated that both low- and high-achieving students improved their writing proficiency in the intervention.

The results of this DBR study confirm the potential of GBWI to promote tertiary students' writing in the subjects (cf. Wingate, 2012). Students achieved, albeit to different degrees, the overall learning goal of developing proficiency in the genre of event proposal, particularly in terms of tenor. Furthermore, the results indicate how the design of the 5-week subject-specific intervention worked out well, although for some students time appeared to be too short in the Joint Construction phase. The outcome of this exploratory study can be considered as a proof of principle: It is possible to scaffold and enhance tertiary students' writing proficiency in an embedded genre-based writing intervention (cf. Smit et al., 2016).

### **Limitations**

A first limitation concerns the small scale of this study, as well as the local focus. However, our aim was not to strive for statistical generalization as in experimental research, but to explore how an innovative approach to writing instruction (i.e. embedded GBWI) can be used in a particular context, as is common in design-based research (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015). By doing so, we also tried to yield more general insights into the preparation and design, as well as the enactment of embedded GBWI, which may be transferable to other contexts.

A second limitation is that causality between the intervention and students' increased use of typical genre features cannot be claimed (cf. Ortoleva & Mireille, 2015). In experimental research, the logic of control-group design is often employed to establish causality between an intervention and its impact, drawing on a variance-oriented understanding of causality (see Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015; Maxwell, 2004). In this study, however, we departed from a process-oriented understanding of causality and employed a within-subject comparison design, as is common in DBR (Reimann, 2011). As the learning goal formulated in the intervention did not apply to other classes, a control group was not deemed appropriate (cf. Bakker & Van Eerde, 2015). Rather, we collected circumstantial evidence (i.e. descriptions of preparation, design, and enactment of intervention) to demonstrate that students' increased use of typical genre features is most likely caused by the intervention (cf. Nathan & Kim, 2009).

### **Future research**

In future studies, the deployment of embedded GBWI in the wider tertiary context could be tested to substantiate the findings of this study. The intervention as conducted in this study could be – when adapted to other contexts - scaled up to other subjects, ideally designed and enacted by different subject lecturers simultaneously. By doing so, several insights could be obtained. First, the transferability of students' genre learning across the subjects could be investigated. Second, more insight could be gained into the different subject-specific characteristics of writing and genres in the tertiary context. Third, a broad deployment of embedded GBWI may increase our understanding of a functional design of such interventions as well as the effects in the different subjects, enabling a comparative research design. Fourth, subject lecturers' professional development could be jointly organized, leading to insights into how to shape such a program effectively and efficiently.

### **Implications**

This study has shown the potential of embedded GBWI in the tertiary context from a DBR perspective, thereby generating some implications for practice. When preparing a similar GBWI intervention, the genre involved as well as the teaching and learning within the subject should be explored. Such a determination of the starting point ensures a clear focus and overall learning goal during the course. Regarding the design

of the intervention, we recommend involving subject lecturers in this process. Through means of co-design, subject lecturers can both develop their awareness of the language and genres of their subject as well as their ability to scaffold students' writing. With regard to the enactment of GBWI, we propose reconsidering students' starting point before each lesson so as to align instructional activities optimally. Furthermore, allowing ample time for interactional scaffolding within the lessons is crucial, as it is in the interaction between teacher and students that actual learning takes place.

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**Appendix A: Problem Analysis Event Proposals (EP)**

Genre	Genre Features	EP									
Concepts		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall structure (moves)	Move 1 identification of client's needs	+	+	+	±	+	±	+	+	+	+
	Move 2 introduction of the event theme										
	Move 3 elaboration of the event										
	Move 4 terms and conditions										
Field	action verbs	+	+	+	±	+	±	+	+	+	+
	emotive verbs	-	-	-	-	±	-	±	-	±	+
	adjectives and adverbs	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±
	words referring to the participants and circumstances	+	+	+	±	+	±	+	+	+	+
Tenor	writer and reader have met before	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	writer has positive attitude towards writer	±	±	+	-	+	±	±	±	+	+
	writer acts as an advisor	-	±	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
	writer describes event from guest's perspective	±	±	±	-	±	-	-	-	+	±
	writer avoids spoken language	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	±	-	±
Mode	use of signal words	+	+	+	±	±	±	+	+	±	+
	use of clear references	+	±	±	±	±	±	+	±	±	+
	use of brief paragraphs and (sub) headings	+	±	±	±	+	+	+	+	±	+

Appendix B: Analysis and Writing Tool

Analysis and writing tool event proposal (translated from Dutch)	
<p><b>Aim: convincing client of event proposal</b>  <b>Overall structure in moves</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 20%;"> <p><b>1 Identification of client's needs</b> Reference to meeting, essential data, basic principles, goal, target group</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 20%;"> <p><b>2 Introduction of event theme</b> Background, theme and pay-off, link of pay-off to event</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 20%;"> <p><b>3 Elaboration of event</b> Location, interior design, dresscode, time frame, programme, catering, communication, transport</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 20%;"> <p><b>4 Terms and conditions</b> Costs, risks and insurances, general conditions, proposal validity</p> </div> </div>	
Language	
Aspects	Audit questions
Field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of participants?</li> <li>Description of event with action verbs?</li> <li>Description of event with emotive verbs, adjectives and adverbs?</li> <li>Description of circumstances event?</li> </ul>
Mode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functional use of signal words?</li> <li>Functional use of clear references?</li> </ul>
Tenor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writer act as an advisor?</li> <li>Writer acts as an acquaintance of reader?</li> <li>Writer has positive attitude towards reader?</li> <li>Writer describes event from guest's perspective?</li> <li>Writer avoids spoken language?</li> </ul>
Mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct spelling?</li> <li>Correct grammar?</li> <li>Correct punctuation?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Commons words/wording</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your employees, the guests, the invitees, the butler, the manager</li> <li>To organize, welcome, arrive, begin, dine, dance, close</li> <li>To feel, experience, enjoy, smashing opening, chic dinner, warm, cosy, refreshing</li> <li>At hotel X, at the beginning of November, with a disco band</li> <li>At arrival, after which, at the end of the party, first of all, moreover, as well as</li> <li>The location has...there, the guests can..... In his opening speech, the manager welcomes.....he then invites all guests</li> <li>The proposal is, our advice is, based on our experience, we recommend</li> <li>In our conversation, you indicated.../Based on your wishes, as expressed in....</li> <li>Our pleasant meeting, we are happy to provide you with an adapted offer, we are looking forward to a next meeting</li> <li>When entering the room, the guest sees.... subsequently he is guided..... he will feel like a star</li> <li>Not: kind of, or something, super, really fun party, go crazy</li> <li>Niet: verrassen, doormiddel van, na aanleiding, feest zaal, professionele</li> <li>Niet: zal zich plaatsvinden, de organisatie....zij zijn, met grote luxe, de muziek wordt opgedraaid, knip- en plakzinnen</li> <li>Niet: het feest begint in de grote zaal. Waarna de gasten naar het restaurant worden gebracht. Er zijn verschillende workshops: koken, dansen, jongleren.</li> </ul> <p>Note: these examples have not been translated, as this would affect the essence</p>

### Appendix C: Example of a student's event proposal (translated from Dutch)

Dear Mrs. Bisseling,

In response to our meeting, you hereby receive our event proposal.

You have indicated you want to organize a company celebration for HBS on the theme of 'glitter and glamour'. The celebration takes place mid March at DokH2O in Deventer and is organized for about 150 lecturers. In addition, your aims are:

- To thank the lecturers for their contribution this year
- To motivate the lecturers for the remainder of the year
- To treat the lecturers as real stars (VIP coach transport, red carpet with photographers at entrance, glamour photo-shoot, luxurious snacks and drinks etc.)

The title of the celebration is 'The stars of HBS'. Your aim is to thank the lecturers for their contribution and to motivate them for the remainder of the year. To achieve this, you want to put the lecturers literally in the spotlights by means of a glamour photo-shoot. Your aim has been achieved when 70% of the lecturers leave DokH2O with a smile on their face.

#### Elaboration of event

The lecturers are treated as real stars. They are carried on a VIP coach from HBS to the venue. At arrival, there is music and lecturers will be served sparkling champagne. They are warmly welcomed on a red carpet at DOKH2O. Just like real stars, they are being photographed in the atmosphere of glitter and glamour. To 'recover' from this warm welcome, lecturers are offered a refreshing drink. Delicious snacks are not lacking.

Subsequently, there is a live performance. It is to be discussed what kind of performance is suitable. After this performance, there is time for you to give a short speech to thank the lecturers and motivate them. Then, a famous DJ will provide music and a nice atmosphere.

When this enjoyable celebration comes to an end, the guests are carried on the VIP coach back to HBS.

#### Timetable

- 8.00–8.30 PM Reception
- 8.30–9.30 PM Live performance
- 9.30–9.45 PM Speech
- 9.45–12.00 PM DJ performance

In a subsequent meeting, we can discuss the budget and any supplementary wishes.

Kind regards,  
Dream Events

Appendix D: Sample Score Form

Sample Score Form 'Event Proposal'		Date: 7 September 2016	Text Code: E023	Total Score: 18
Structure	Audit questions	Score	Explanation	
1 Structure in moves	a. All moves in text? 1 Identification of client's needs 2 Introduction of event theme 3 Elaboration of event 4 Terms and conditions	0   1   2	Move 4 is lacking	
2 Field	<b>Language</b> Audit questions a. Description of participants? b. Description of event with action verbs? c. Description of event with emotive verbs, adjectives and adverbs? d. Description of circumstances event?	0   1   2	Guests, host, band and service staff  Reception: picked up, guided, welcomed Duration: invited, served Closure: thanked, closed  Reception: warmly, atmospheric lightning, personal touch Duration: delicious dinner, biological, intimate atmosphere Closure: -  Time: in December, at 8 o'clock in the evening Place: at Dok120 in Deventer, in the large hall Manner: decoration (green flowers), design (standing tables, stage), music (energetic music), food and beverage (wine, dinner, drinks, cocktails)  First, then, after, when, during – functional, therefore – not functional here	
3 Mode	a. Functional use of signal words? b. Functional use of clear references?	0   1   2	They, who, which, what, they – functional, what – not functional here  You have to serve... (= too prescriptive)  Explicit reference to previous contact	
4 Tenor	a. Writer acts as an advisor? b. Writer acts as an acquaintance of reader? c. Writer has positive attitude towards reader? d. Writer describes event from guest's perspective? e. Writer avoids spoken language?	0   1   2	Positive approach in beginning proposal (our pleasant meeting), not at the end  Sometimes written form guest's perspective (when they enter the dining room, they experience..., the guests will enjoy...), but not consequently Very cool = spoken language	
5 Mechanics	a. Correct spelling? b. Correct grammar? c. Correct punctuation?	0   1   2	Therefore, welcomed  Several ungrammatical sentences  One mistake with a semicolon	