we

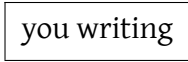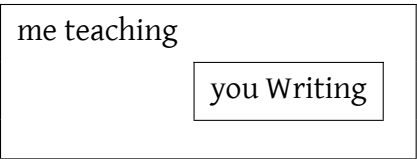# "It's a trap!"

At the beginning of this course I tried to refer to a problem which I know from experience will crop up at some stage—usually in either the first or the second writing task. It relates to the fact that the activity of writing has been "framed" by the education system, thus becoming Writing, with a capital W. A portion of something that you could happily have been doing outside a university course—

> you writing

—has been subjected to timetables and syllabuses and exams and homework etc. etc. etc., and has now become:
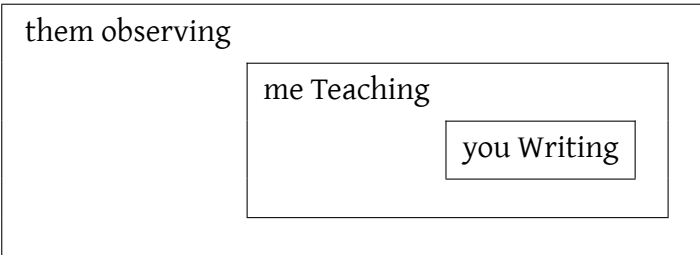
> me teaching
> > you Writing

But this means there are now two things going on. On the one hand, you are writing a text that is intended to be read by someone. But on the other, instead of sending it to that someone for them to read, you will end up sending it to me to get a grade for Writing.

In Task 1, you might forget that your imagined addressee is a nameless stranger and instead end up unconsciously addressing that easy-going Australian teacher you have.

In Task 2, I will face the dilemma of wanting you to write an information sheet that fits exactly onto one page, but at the same time needing to have your name and student number on your work as well.

But it gets worse. There is yet another level to this absurdity. Imagine I was a trainee teacher who was being observed and assessed:

> them observing
> > me Teaching
> > > you Writing

In such a situation, my teaching would mutate. Instead of just doing the teaching, I would now be doing Teaching—as a subject, in order to get a grade!

This is exactly what happened to a good friend of mine, who was a trainee Latin teacher. Functioning as a teacher (with a small t) he made a decision about how best to teach his pupils a particular part of the syllabus. Then he realized that if he did what was best for his pupils, he would look like an ineffectual Teacher (with a capital T) in the eyes of his *Fachleiter* and *Seminarvertreter*. So he decided to do what was worse for his pupils but better in terms of getting himself a good grade for his *Lehrprobe.*

https://tinyurl.com/he-tried-to-warn-you