

Composing Theory and Pedagogy Examination

Spring 2008

Instructions

You have four hours to complete this examination.

You must answer three (3) questions, one from each section of the exam.

Questions in section A are worth fifty percent (50%). Questions in sections B and C are each worth twenty-five percent (25%). Plan your time according to the value of the question.

In your responses be sure to refer to a range of sources. Do not write extensively on a major theorist or theory in more than one answer.

Section A.

1. According to Jasper Neel, "For the teaching of writing, poststructuralism poses...such difficult questions as: What is an author? What does it mean to write? And to what degree do the privileged, academic discourses of the West write the writer rather than being written by the writer?" Discuss the impact of one or more poststructuralist theorists on composition research and pedagogy.
2. You are the director of a writing centre at a research intensive university. You are preparing a one-day professional development workshop for your staff. What issues, theories, and research in Composition Studies would you chose for your staff to focus on? Be sure to explain your choices.
3. In a recent and influential article ("Composition at the Turn of the Century") Richard Fulkerson surveyed current Composition Theory and Pedagogy and noted, "The major divide is no longer expressive personal writing versus writing for readers (or whatever oppositional phrase you prefer: "academic discourse," "formal writing," "persuasion"). The major divide is instead between a postmodern, cultural studies, reading-based program, and a broadly conceived rhetoric of genres and discourse forums (Jim Porter's term [137])." Position yourself on either side of this divide and defend your choice.

Section B.

1. Choose one textbook. Discuss and evaluate how effective the author (s) is in terms of incorporating composition theory and research into explanations, exercises and assignment design.
2. You are on a committee that is investigating first year courses. The committee has decided to propose a first year writing-in-the disciplines program. They have asked you to select a writing hand book or text book that will serve as a resource for the course. Which will you choose? Be sure to justify your choice.

Section C.

1. Discuss the following quotation with respect to issues of citation and plagiarism.
"What I would like to suggest here is that, apart from certain obvious cases, the problem of school plagiarism be looked at from the opposite point of view—namely, that of originality. If teachers do not encourage and expect originality (with all its

tasks) from their students, they are unlikely to get it.” From Martin, R. G. “Plagiarism and Originality: Some Remedies.” *The English Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 5, (May, 1971), pp. 622.

2. In his investigation into reported speech, Volosinov observed that “The true object of inquiry ought to be the dynamic interrelationship of these two factors, the speech being reported (the other person’s speech) and the speech doing the reporting (the author’s speech). After all the two actually exist, function, and take shape only in their interaction...” (“Problem of Reported Speech, p. 119). How might Volosinov’s observation inform (or not inform) current thinking about the relation to teaching students about citation and plagiarism.

3. The relationship between Internet technology and academic misconduct has been well documented, with high-profile cases such as the Chris Avenir Facebook “scandal” at Ryerson capturing news headlines in 2008, and with services such as Turnitin.com offering educational institutions high-tech methods of catching plagiarism. Discuss how concerns about Internet plagiarism affect—or should affect—assignment design in Composition courses.