

Composing Theory and Pedagogy Exam

Fall 1996

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 more than once.

Section A (50%)

Choose one of the following questions.

1. Discuss some of the historical factors and/or theories of reading and writing that characterize the current state of composition courses in Canada.
2. Many composition theorists working from a variety of theoretical perspectives recognize the significant role of collaborative writing. However, theories of collaborative writing--which emphasize consensus--contradict current insights into cultural diversity. How can theories and practices related to collaborative writing help to resolve this dilemma?
3. Different traditions of composition studies (such as the expressive or socio-cognitive traditions) have different perspectives on the writing subject. Discuss the perspectives on the writing subject used by two traditions and the impact these perspectives have on those traditions' pedagogical practices.

Section B (25%)

Choose one of the following questions.

1. Composition researchers often both develop theory and write textbooks. Choose one composition theorist and discuss the relation (or non-relation) between his or her theoretical insights and his or her actual practices as represented in one textbook.
2. You have been asked to teach a first-year literature course that will include a focus on writing. You now need to select a composition text to meet this requirement. Select a composition textbook and explain your choice. In your explanation, state the theoretical basis of your own view on teaching writing and the relationship of your chosen text to these views.

Section C (25%)

Choose one of the following questions.

1. Scenario: Your chair has just announced that the department will receive a new computer centre. She recognizes that a business or technical communication course would find this centre useful. She now wants to know whether a composition course would find such a centre useful, and whether software exists that could help the students learn how to write so that personnel costs could be reduced.

Write a report to your chair indicating whether, and under what conditions, a computer centre would prove useful to a composition instructor. Be sure to ground your response with reference to appropriate sources.

2. What role, if any, do you see the World Wide Web playing in composition pedagogy. Be sure to ground your response with reference to appropriate sources.