

Composing Theory and Pedagogy Examination

Spring 2006

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. Discuss Richard Fulkerson recent comment that composition studies has become a “less unified and a more contentious discipline” because it has divided into three approaches: critical /cultural studies, expressive approaches, and rhetorical approaches. He further declares that the rhetorical tradition has split into three foci: “argumentation, genre analysis, and preparation for ‘the’ academic discourse community”. Fulkerson believes that these divisions are “dangerous.” In your response you may challenge Fulkerson’s mapping of the field and/or his contention that these divisions are dangerous.
2. Theories of critical pedagogy (Freire) and aspects of cultural studies (gender studies, feminism etc) often co-occur in composition courses dedicated to critical thinking and inquiry learning. Yet such approaches have also engendered critique. Discuss the value and limitations of using such approaches.
3. Edward White suggests that writing specialist should continue to “restrict the destructive uses of assessment and increase its positive effects in our classrooms.” Discuss.

Section B

1. Discuss the connections between theory and practice in either Giltrow's Academic Writing or Lunsford, Ruskiwewicz, and Walter's Everything is an Argument.
2. You have been asked to design an advanced writing course for second year rhetoric students. Create a brief assignment for that course and then discuss how one of the textbooks that you studied could support that assignment.

Section C

1. Ken Hyland suggests that “the practice of academic research writing is one of asserting writer *persona* while declaring community membership and, above all else, of establishing or maintaining peer credibility.” Discuss the kinds of pedagogy that might ensue in a first year composition course that was based on Hyland’s insight.
2. Discuss the history and present status of the academic essay