

Special Issue of *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie*

Teaching Academic Writing in Canada

Co-editors

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Special Issue Focus

Canadian approaches to the teaching and learning of academic writing have often been framed in contrast to similar knowledge work being undertaken in the U.S. For example, Jennifer Clary-Lemon (2009) has traced these oppositional perspectives in terms of two historical themes: the British-inflected approach of “teaching...writing through literary study” and “nationalist anti-American sentiment” (pp. 94-95). Canadian approaches to teaching academic writing have, however, continued to evolve in ways that are quite unique from the various uptakes that characterize American approaches to writing studies. Indeed, Graves and Graves’ (2006) “Introduction” to their landmark collection of essays that examined the “baffling variety of writing courses, centres, programs, and degrees offered at Canadian universities,” (p. 1) observed that the field of writing studies was transforming at an ever-increasing pace (p. 19), which is to say nothing of the considerable changes we have witnessed in the past 15 years. Accordingly, this issue will build on scholarship that has examined trends in “non-literary” Canadian writing instruction (Smith, 2006, p. 319) and mapped out the intellectual terrain of those who both teach and study writing within the Canadian context (Landry, 2016). In doing so, we use this special issue as an opportunity to 1) offer a survey of more recent developments, and 2) disseminate these ideas to broader disciplinary communities across Canadian higher education as a means of fostering instructional alignment across the disciplines.

Many Canadian-specific approaches to teaching academic writing are of interest to faculty and educational developers working across the disciplines. For instance, we can look to the emphasis on developing communication studies as not a distinct subfield, but stand-alone field (Robinson, 2000; Schiele & Landry, 2012); discrete differences in approaches to writing/communicating-in-the-disciplines (Behrens, 2007; Herteis, Wright, & Abernethy, 2001); writing for the public good (Giroux, 2016) via university-community engagement (Hall, 2009); and movement towards the decolonization of academic writing in scholarship and teaching (Brydon, 2016; Fladd & Marken, 2019), particularly the addition of indigenous voices and experiences (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Another Canadian tradition may be observed in how writing centres have developed in unique ways. Following Margaret Procter,

writing centres have helped create a distinctive position for Writing Studies in the Canadian university culture, one that does not necessarily depend on a departmental home. They can raise awareness of writing issues precisely because to sustain themselves as non-departmental units, they need to argue publicly about the nature of writing as an intellectual activity and to show how their writing instruction across the curriculum contributes to the knowledge creation that is the core value of a university (2011, p. 416).

These approaches to teaching and learning reflect Canadian educators’ attention to the broader politics of inclusion and exclusion, which is particularly important given the uncertainty that characterizes higher education in the contemporary moment.

Accordingly, this special issue of *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie* will emphasize Canadian approaches to academic writing that take up the following interrelated pedagogical circumstances and exigencies: location and place; work within and between disciplines and departments; and the question of writing-related knowledge transfer. Proposals that 1) offer actionable, broadly adaptable writing pedagogies and/or 2) draw on cross-disciplinary collaborations are particularly welcome. In addition, proposals may explore a variety of pedagogical perspectives including, but not limited to:

- bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism
- multiculturalism / biculturalism
- writing for public good
- digital / multimodal learning-in-the-disciplines
- remote teaching and learning
- accessibility in/and academic writing
- science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) education
- writing in/and writing centres
- writing-in-the-disciplines
- writing-across-the-curriculum
- writing-related scholarship of teaching and learning
- graduate student writing support
- first-year academic writing courses
- educational developer perspectives on teaching, learning, and assessing writing
- academic labor practices

Significance

This special issue has the potential to foster instructional alignment across the disciplines by integrating academic writing pedagogies within the diverse teaching and learning contexts that characterize Canadian higher education. This is a needed pedagogical development because, while writing programs continue to grow (e.g., Science Communication at McMaster University; first-year writing at University of Toronto Mississauga; Communication Arts at University of Waterloo; Writing, Rhetoric, and Communications at University of Winnipeg, etc.), there has not been a focused examination of how this growth has complicated approaches to teaching and learning academic writing in more than a decade.

Most importantly, the growth of these programs is not only of interest to writing faculty. Writing is a complex cognitive activity, and writing tasks are ubiquitous assessments across the curriculum, as noted in a recent (2022) *University Affairs/affaires universitaires* opinion piece by Andrea Williams. In fact, like Williams, Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle have drawn attention to the fact that writing

continues to serve as a vehicle through which knowledge is both generated and demonstrated and to draw the attention of many stakeholders who, regardless of their expertise, weigh in on what “good writing” is, and how it should be taught and learned and by whom, and how that learning should be assessed (2015, p. 6).

This tension presents an opportunity for a timely, open-access collection of work that synthesizes a broad range of pedagogical trends and challenges. This will form an important context for Canadian educators and SoTL researchers across disciplines and institutions.

Submission Guidelines

We invite proposals describing unpublished empirical, qualitative, quantitative, experiential, analytical, reflective and/or non-traditional methodological approaches to teaching academic writing that explore one or more of the topics outlined above. Please email MS Word or PDF proposals (500 words) to: teachingwritingcanada@gmail.com

Publication Timeline

- € 30 April 2023: Proposals (500 words) should be submitted via email to the guest editors.
- € 30 May 2023: Authors invited to submit full-length articles will be notified.
- € 30 July 2023: Complete manuscripts will be submitted for peer review.
- € 30 September 2023: Peer reviewers' feedback will be conveyed.
- € 30 October 2023: Revised articles will be due.
- € 30 November 2023: Expected publication date.

Guest Editor Bios

Sarah Seeley is an assistant professor, teaching stream and the Associate Director, Curriculum at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy at University of Toronto Mississauga. Her research has examined the curricular and ideological assumptions shaping communication intensive and first-year writing programs and the cultural circumstances and labor paradigms shaping language-focused teaching and learning at universities in North and South America. Her current research explores confidence and knowledge transfer among Canadian first-year writers with a specific focus on bridging first-year writing and science writing.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk is an associate professor, teaching stream and the Associate Director, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Tyler's current research interests include writing transfer, writing assessment, university transition, Writing across the Curriculum, and discourse analysis. He is currently a Research Associate at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania where he is collaborating with Communication Studies faculty on a longitudinal research project studying the impact of mandatory first-year Communication Skills courses and consulting on the development of Tanzania's first university writing centre.

Oguzhan Tekin is an assistant professor in the teaching stream at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Due to his passion for sociolinguistics, his foray into research was through topics such as critical language awareness, language-based discrimination, (reverse) linguistic stereotyping, social identity and language. This informs his approach toward issues around second language writing and identity as well as attitudes toward writing. Inspired by his own experiences as an international student in the North American context, he is currently exploring prejudicial attitudes toward international students and their academic and social integration to host communities.

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