Composition Studies and Interdisciplinarity
Andrea Lunsford, excerpt from “The Nature of Composition Studies,” 1991
We can trace the origins of composition to the 9th c. BC, but more recent conditions—shifts in material conditions and industry and the expansion of the educated class—in the 19th century in the United States are probably most responsible for the emergence of composition. (8)
1. Increasingly, we understand disciplinary characteristics are not inherited or taken for granted, but rather that they are constructed, that by writing theoretical/practical/disciplinary contexts, we fashion them ourselves. (9)
2. Composition challenges "divisions between disciplines, between genres, and between media." (10)
3. Recent pushes to extracurriculum of composition—interests in both public and private arenas of writing. (10)
4. "At the very nexus of composition studies' terministic screen, literacy encompasses highly theoretical concerns over the relationship among thought, language and action; historical concerns over the organization and development of literacy; and pragmatic concerns over how literate behaviors are nurtured or practiced." (11)
5. On composition's nature: "large and loosely bounded, informed by cross-disciplinary, trans-institutional, multiply mediated, multi-genred, multi-voiced, and radically democratic principles." (11)
6. It's difficult to at once keep abreast of the continual theorization of composition while also extending what has already been theorized. (11)

Composition as an amalgamation with a teaching tradition, new science and new rhetoric.
Points toward complexities; grapples with questions about how to organize the field.
"But a better metaphor for a discipline that has been unable and increasingly unwilling to fix itself down or settle on a singular history may be the flow of a river led by many streams, with converging and diverging tributaries and branches, a river in which composition studies is one current intermingling unrecognizably with others" (130).

Like Bakhtin, Halliday (1978) views texts—and language, for that matter—not as the fixed objects (or abstractions) that Saussure, Chomsky, and the structural linguists posit, but rather as sites of an unfolding process of negotiation and contention over meaning among conversants: "The essential feature of text, therefore, is that it is interaction. The exchange of meaning is an interactive process, and text is the means of exchange" (p. 139). (297)
Chart p 302: Formalism (text as object); Constructivism (individual act of writing, reading); Social-Dualism (canon, community); Diagramism (text as discourse).
These reflect shifts from empiricism to structuralism to dialogism. Transmitters or transmission models slide toward conversancy.

"Certain kinds of knowing and doing, summed, qualify as emblems of membership and participation. Among the most significant are ready understanding and colloquialism of that discipline's (1) lexicon; (2) syntax and rhetoric; (3) definitions of evidence, including the methods for acquiring it and the mores for assessing it; and (4) its root metaphors and governing paradigms." (147). One more: "demonstrating awareness and command of its ' tacit tradition.' (148) [ref. to Weaver]" Emphasis on individuality: how might this extend the LT & article's mention of textual, social and individual? Is Emig predisposed to the solitary mind of the individual writer? (all of the cognitive science involved?) (bottom of 148)

Rosenblatt on Dewey and transactives (150). Taken to biological programming—compulsions to write are inherently biological. (152)
From Elbow—believing game versus doubling game (155). Composition is distinct because it, unlike other academic disciplines, leads with the believing game. We have basic predilections for that which students can do, rather than what they cannot.

Interdisciplinarity and Composition: Scholarly Reading Processes
Burke, ‘The Five Master Terms’ (PDF) plus pages from LWP, diss. (CNK)
Ann Berthoff, “Is Reading Still Possible?” in The Sense of Learning, 1990
"Interpretation is a dialectical activity because we are continually discovering the interdependence of words and thereby the interdependence of what is said and what is meant." (107) "Richards, Freire, and Roseblatt are all pragmatists, which means that they ask not 'Does it work?' or 'Can we afford it?' but 'What difference would it make to our practice if we proceeded from these principles?'" (113)
moving—centrifugal, outward from cognitive to linguistic to sociocultural to developmental. He is making a case for scalability in psycholinguistic development (242) and a visual array. Includes several examples of children's efforts to write for school.

re. to Bruner: “The tools support the learner in understanding the events that are unfolding in the immediate environment” (263).

“Wells’s Child about ‘The Adult as Demonstrator, Mediator, and Guide’”—here, Kucer works on adults' responses to form and meaning. Story-structures

Keywords: information encapsulation, interpsychological (ref. to Vygotsky) and scolatifying (ref. to Bruner)

Early Cognitive Theory


Phelps, Louise. “Cross-Sections in an Emerging Psychology of Composition.” 1984. “Compositionists teach not a body of knowledge, but a skilled performance” (220). Despite these pioneer efforts, compositionists have as yet no broadly shared schema for making sense of the flood of current work on psychological aspects of writing” (30); context (35): Bransford and McCarroll (39); Spiro (40); Tannen (41); Frank Smith on bottleneckes (44); tac/tal/local (49); Donald Norman (42) LWPs: This essay was written by mistake. By mis-hearing the person who asked for “Psychology of Composition” versus “Psychology of Composition.” 1984.

Moving right along. Learning (283) Memory (283): “But wait a minute. Why is it that I assume that memories are stored in places. Can't they be distributed in space? (Remember the hologram). They can. [Connects with the idea of bytes in flight. ‘Remember the hologram.’] He is making a case for scalability in psycholinguistic development (242) and a visual array. Includes several examples of children’s efforts to write for school.

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Assimilation (differentiated)—recognition, etc.; From the vantage point of consciousness or behavior, we can say that assimilation is "purely functional—that is to say, it is a means by which the organism relating to the object to the world (140). These combine in a kind of scale of adaptation—a simple biological function, P. says. Adaptation, as I read it, applies to sensorimotor intelligence rel. to efforts after equilibration. The other biological function is organization—explained earlier—smiles (71); buccal schema; Baldwin on "circular reaction" (138)—recursion; alimentary; “It must be said that the global schema of sucking movements has incorporated into itself these attitudes and that from this moment they form a whole with the schema itself" (133).

Intelligence does not therefore appear as a power of reflection independent of the particular position which the organism occupies in the universe but is, linked, from the very outset, by biological authoritiess (19).

“Nothing is more difficult to define than intention” (147). “Intention is thus determined by consciousness of desire, or of the direction of the act, this awareness being itself a function of the number of intermediary actions necessitated by the principal act” (148). “The simplest mind? Is all bodily activity toward intelligence? "Equilibration is possible after the infant is emerging into intelligence from pre-intelligence. In the pre-intelligent stages, the biological certainties of organization (regulatory) and adaptation (oscillatory between assimilation and accommodation), Is Piaget is teleological. Possibly not. But is it possible to talk about goals without leaning toward a logic of teleology (teleological).

The inventing of means is what he means by intelligence. It is the ability to differentiate that what you can do does not depend on what you have already done. Piaget describes himself as a genetic epistemologist. Vygotsky Lev Vygotsky, Thought and Language. 1934/1986.

unity of consciousness (unit of analysis), play, synchronism, inner speech, autism.

“These similarities lead us to assume that when egocentric speech does disappears, it does not simply disappear; it goes underground: i.e., turns into inner speech (33).

Age 7-12: “That period is characterized by failures of the child’s logic in its confrontation with the logic of adults” (165). Collisions and bruises. Shift from mechanistic memory to logical one: “Scientific concepts are not ahead of schooling. They are concerned with workplace literacy. Basically, critical of schooling. They are concerned with workplace literacy. Basically, school and work are “worlds apart.” Universities, it appears, have failed to prepare their students to write at work (5).

“local knowledge” (G. Geertz); “Perhaps one of the most important understandings to emerge from recent studies is the degree to which workplace writing is a collaborative or social activity” (9) Extracurricular, etc. This goes to disciplinarity, too.

“Wertsch et al. (1993) go on to trace the roots of this view, drawing on the work of philosophers like Charles Taylor (1985, 1989) and his argument that social science theory is ‘grounded’ in a certain tradition of individualism that permeates our personal and professional lives...a social science that takes the atomistic mind as its basic building block and leads “to accounts of human mental functioning in which such agency is feared as being analytically and developmentally prior to sociocultural life.” (34)." Kirschnar and Whitson, Situated Cognition, 1997

Set in tension with individual psychology (2); Collection of papers from 1992 AERA conference (3); Overview: Situated cognition is a word in process, against mind-body dualism (4); everyday studies: “knowledge entails lived practices and not just accumulated information” (4); unit of analysis: toward “the sociocultural setting in which activities are embedded” (5); Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development [problems with analysis mutually is emerging] (6); interfunctional bind—rel. to Kucer and Vygotsky? (6); individuals/complexity and—“intrinsically social nature of cognition and learning” (7); danger: social determinism; Bourdieu’s capital, field, habitus (6); correction to reading of Vygotsky as deterministic.

“Situational cognitions have developed complementary means for breaking out of the focus on individuals: by focusing on the structures and interrelations within activity systems; and by linking the community of practice to broader categories of social and political analysis” (6).


No claims about schools. Legitimate peripheral participation: learning as a situated activity learners participate in communities of practitioners and that master of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to more towards full participation in the sociocultural activities/practices of a community (29).

Fundamental questions: p. 36-37: complete participation vs. full participation

Complete participation suggests a closed domain.

“Full participation, however, stands in contrast to only one aspect of the concept of peripherality as we see it. It places the emphasis on what partial participation is not, or not yet. In our usage, peripherality is also a positive term, whose most salient conceptual antonyms are unrelatedness or irrelevance to ongoing activity.

No single core but many changing centers; peripherality is enabled or “not” which raises issues of access; Community is dynamic—everyone; New or old members, can be peripheral at some point in the negotiation and renegotiation of the world of the community (51): Understanding and experience are co-constitutive (52); Notice and expert are also co-constitutive; Everyone’s activity in the system changes; The system and its body of knowledge


Key words/key phrases/key concepts: complexity of commonplace reasoning (18), artificial intelligence (18), conceptual blending (18), Margaret Thatcher and U.S. Presidency (18), disanalysis (20), emergent (21), The Skiing Waiter (21), backstage cognition (23), contextual integration (23) felicitous blends (24), counterfactuals (31), blending and error (34), analogy/analogue projection (35), Aristotle and Gorgias (36)

“Metaphoric thinking, regarded in the commonsense view as a special instrument of art and rhetoric, operates at every level of cognition and shows uniform structural and dynamic principles, regardless of whether it is spectacular and noticeable or conventional and unremarkable” (17).

Just as we feel that we see the coffee cup for the simple reason that there is a coffee cup to be seen, so we feel that we see the analogy because there is an analogy to be seen—that is, to be perceived directly and immediately with no effort. But analogy theorists and modelers have discovered, to their dismay, that finding matches is an almost intractable problem, even when, after the fact, the matches look as if they are there all along. Nobody knows how people do it” (19). “The brain is a highly connected and interconnected organ, but the activations of those connections are constantly shifting” (22).

“Human beings are exceptionally adept at integrating two extraneously similar structures, which result in new tools, new technologies, and new ways of thinking” (27).

Identity and analogy theory typically focus on compatibilities between mental spaces simultaneously connected, but blending is equally driven by incompatibilities” (29).

Our major claims in this book are radical but true: Nearly all important thinking takes place outside of consciousness and is not available on introspection; the mental teats we think of as the most impressive are trivial compared to everyday conversation; the imagination is always at work in ways that consciousness does not apprehend; consciousness can glimpse only a few vestiges of what the mind is doing; the scientist, the engineer, the mathematician, and the economist, impressive as their knowledge and techniques may be, are also unaware of how they are thinking and, even though they are experts, will not find out just by thinking through themselves” (3).

Consciousness (Neuroscience)

Antonio Damasio, The Feeling of What Happens, 1999

protokoll (basic life regulation) emotion—includes both primary and secondary/background emotion. Can’t be controlled willfully. feeling -> consciousness and higher order reasoning.

Development

Barbara Rogoff, Apprenticeship in Thinking, 1990

guided participation – “I develop the concept of guided participation to suggest that both guidance and participation in culturally valued activities are essential to children’s apprenticeship in thinking. Guidance may be tacit or explicit, and participation may vary in the extent to which children or caregivers are responsible for its arrangement” (8).

“My stance is that the individual’s efforts and sociocultural arrangements and involvements are inseparable, mutually embedded focuses of interest” (6).

Stages of development: “intrinsically social nature of cognition and learning” (7); danger: social determinism; Bourdieu’s capital, field, habitus (8); correction to reading of Vygotsky as deterministic.

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