



The Growth of Writing Studies in Canada 1980-2006

Roger Graves

University of Western Ontario

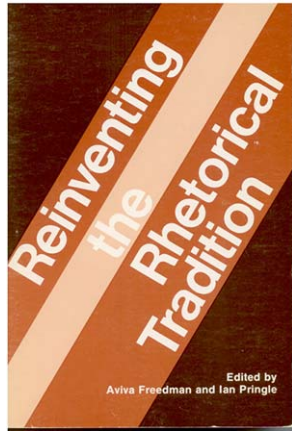
Higher literacy: a rationale

Cost of a Writing course at UWO: \$496

Cost of a misplaced comma for Rogers
Communications: \$2,130,000

Ability to express yourself clearly:
Priceless

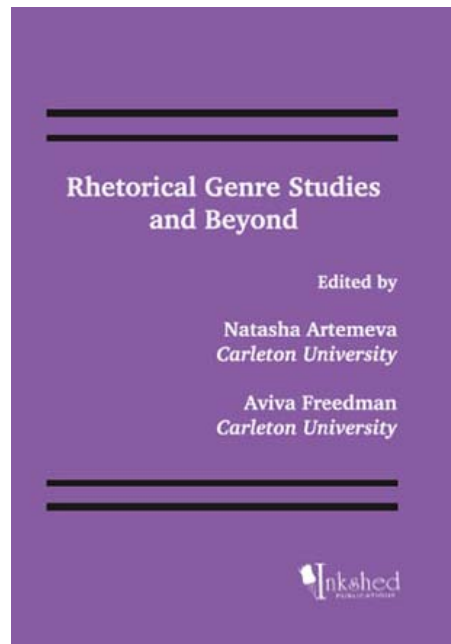
Departure from the past: 1979



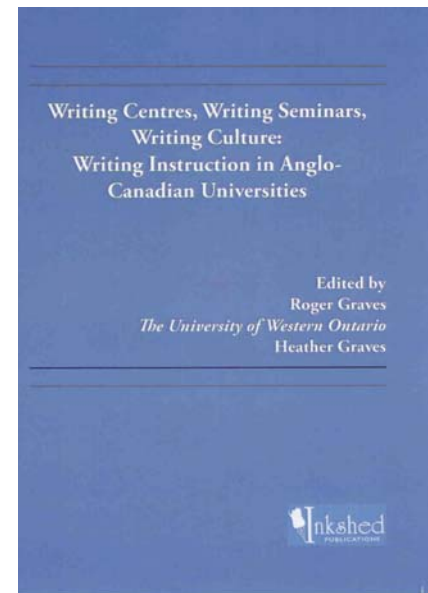
- 1979 conference in Ottawa-- “Learning to Write”-- and book that came out of it: *Reinventing the Rhetorical Tradition*
- *Proceedings of a conference of leading figures in composition and rhetoric (US) and literacy research (UK); only 2 of the chapters are by Canadian researchers*

2006: Two Inkshed books published

Rhetorical Genre Studies and Beyond



Writing Centres, Writing Seminars, Writing Culture: Writing Instruction in Anglo- Canadian Universities



Ancient history

- 19th century rhetoric, c.f. Henry Hubert and Nan Johnson
- Change in society and mission of universities
- Preachers, teachers, and lawyers--
Professionals of all kinds

"the enviable power of elegant and forcible writing [is] within the grasp of ordinary minds, and may, in general be viewed as the certain reward of patient industry."

Edgerton Ryerson, 1842

1920-1970s: Idealism supplants rhetoric

- 20th century—literature supplants rhetoric (oral and written communication) with the rise of English departments who increasingly define themselves through the study of literature
- Rise of professional schools leads to pressure to teach oral and written communication

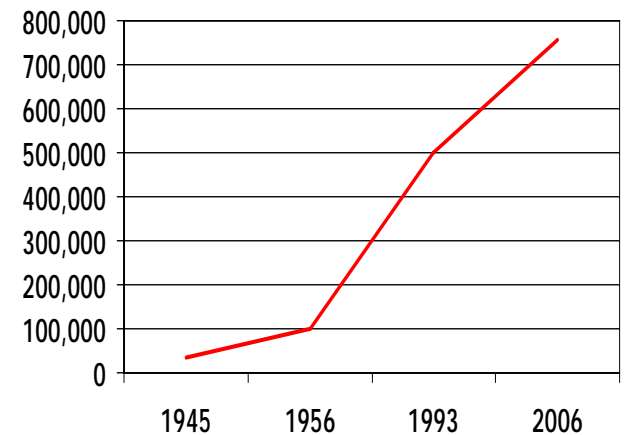
Circa 1990

- Late 20th century snapshot:
- Writing programs (courses, writing centres/labs/tutorial sessions) spread throughout universities (Graves 1994)
- Movement in US to form a field of study in composition/rhetoric/technical communication with establishment of CCCC (currently 6,000+ Members), RSA, ATTW

Why writing programs keep growing

- 1. Increasing demand** for higher education generally
 - Participation rates up: Over 750,000 university students in Canada (Statistics Canada, November 2006); in 1945 there were 35,000 students in all of Canada

University enrollments growing



2. Writing leads to higher income

Good writers get paid more (*Fortune* magazine, December 7, 1998, 244)

Take a Writing course.

Get paid more.

3. Climate of assessment

- Fordism, quality control, benchmarks
- Six Sigma
- ISO 9000
- Total Quality Management (kaizen: continuous improvement)
- Learning outcomes
- NSSE: National [US] Survey of Student Engagement

OCAV Guidelines

- Ontario Council of Academic Vice-presidents Degree Progress guidelines
- Item 4: Communication Skills
- “the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences”

National [US] Survey of Student Engagement

Broadly accepted measure in US and increasingly in Canada

Three questions specifically ask about writing
NSSE studies identify factors that improve student learning:

- Student interaction (peer groups)
- Student/teacher interactions
- Interdisciplinary links
- Scaffolding/bridging to previous knowledge

4. Digital natives/net generation

- Want to learn skills explicitly
- These students assert that it is **not enough** to trust that writing abilities will be developed tacitly
- NSSE –focus on engagement, active learning



<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/digitalnatives/index.htm>

We're turtles, they're hares

Marc Prensky on **"How Digital Natives Think Differently"**

Twitch Speed vs. Conventional Speed

Parallel vs. Linear Processing

Random Access vs. Linear Thinking

Graphics First vs. Text First

Connected vs. Stand Alone

Active vs. Passive

Payoff vs. Patience

Fantasy vs. Reality

Technology as Friend not Foe

Twitch Speed vs. Conventional Speed

Little in real life moves as fast as the stimuli that confront "Generation Nintendo" learners on a daily basis. MTV, video games, streamed media; all these technologies develop an unprecedented level of media expectations. Learning offerings are challenged to not only meet the pace of "twitch speed", but to exploit this capacity to its fullest extent.

Instructions: Roll over text on left

What does it all add up to?

Writing pedagogy intersects with these new students and the new demands for interactive or engaged learning

- Peer evaluation of writing/peer tutoring
- Experiential learning: service learning writing courses
- Computer lab based writing courses
- Writing as new media—blogs, MySpace, MSN

What does it look like?

Tania Smith:

- 17 degree programs; 21 certificates, cont. ed., community college programs
- Professional writing growing fast
- Centres proliferating; indicative of interdisciplinary nature of writing studies

University of Alberta Proposal



U of Winnipeg Writing Centre

Centre for Academic Writing

Major in Rhetoric and Communications

[UWinnipeg](#) [CAW Home](#) [AW Requirements](#) [AW Courses](#) [CAW Courses](#) [Major](#) [Joint Degree](#) [Faculty](#) [Tutoring Centre](#) [Links](#)



Navigation Summary

- [Introduction](#)
- [CAW Courses](#)
- [AW Requirements](#)
- [AW Courses](#)
- [Major](#)
- [UW/RRC Degree](#)
- [Centres - Lab](#)

By words the mind is winged
-- Aristophanes

Centre for Academic Writing Courses

Current Year: Fall, 2005 - Winter, 2006

Courses in the **Centre for Academic Writing (CAW)** teach writing as a means of discovering, developing, and revising ideas to help prepare students for success in academic studies and in subsequent careers. A number of CAW courses at the 2000-level or above are cross-listed with the **Department of English** and may be taken for credit toward a major in English, or counted toward any degree as electives.

Degrees/Programs Offered

- [3-Year BA in Rhetoric and Communications](#)
- [4-Year BA in Rhetoric and Communications](#)
- [Joint Communications Degree/Diploma \(UW/RRC\)](#)

Students interested in either Rhetoric and Communications Major or the Joint Degree/Diploma program should contact the Centre for Academic Writing (786-9117) or view our web site for basic information. Students are also encouraged to seek advice for CAW faculty about appropriate courses.

University of Toronto

15 Writing Centres
spread across 3
campuses

2 academic
programs:

Writing and
Rhetoric

Professional
Writing &
Communication

Writing Centres in Arts and Science, St. George

You are eligible to work with the writing centre at the college or campus where you are taking your course (NEW, SMC, TRN, UNI, or VIC), you may also take assignments from that college.

- [Innis College Writing Centre](#), Innis College Room 322; book appointments
- [New College Writing Centre](#), Wilson Hall, Rooms 2045 and 2047; book appointments
- [St. Michael's College Writing Centre](#), Kelly Library, Rooms 230 and 231
- [Trinity College Writing Centre](#), Larkin Building, Room 302; book appointments
- [University College Writing Workshop](#), Laidlaw Library, Room 214; book appointments
- [Victoria College Writing Centre](#), Northrop Frye Hall, various locations; write-in
- [Woodsworth College Academic Writing Centre](#), Woodsworth Room 214

If you are taking a course in **French** or **Philosophy**, you may be eligible to work with the writing centre. For information about its services for this academic year, see the [Philosophy Writing Centre](#) or [French Writing Centre](#) for an appointment.

To find out about the free **group** workshops given by writing centres, ask at your writing centre.

Writing Centres at the Mississauga and Scarborough Campuses

- [Bob Gillespie Academic Skills Centre](#), Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre
- [U of T at Scarborough Writing Centre](#), Room 210C, Academic Resource Centre

Each year, UT Mississauga offers a full range of workshops and seminars. The U of T Scarborough Writing Centre understands the demands of university level classes in science and the humanities.

Writing Centres in the Professional Faculties:

- Architecture Writing Program, 230 College Street; book appointments at the [Architecture Writing Program](#)
- [Engineering Communication Centre](#), Sandford Fleming B670; book appointments
- [Health Sciences Writing Centre](#) (for students in Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Health Sciences); you can now [ask questions online](#) too.
- [OISE Academic and Cultural Support Centre \(ACSC\)](#), Room 8-255, 25 Spadina Avenue

Université de Sherbrooke

UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE

Je veux en savoir plus

Chercher

DÉPARTEMENT DES LETTRES ET COMMUNICATIONS

Accueil Le département Programmes Baccalauréats Maîtrises et doctorats Certificats Mineures
Microprogrammes Horaires Recherche Centre de langues Gréq Dossier pédagogiques Vie étudiante
Personnel Ressources Nous joindre Babillard

recherche projet
rechercher: début
2 1606, Mal

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES

Baccalauréats
Maîtrises et doctorats
Certificats
Mineures
Microprogrammes
CRM
Activités pédagogiques
Débouchés
Régime d'études

LIN
ELC
ÉA
CL
TRA
AV

Communication, rédaction et multimédia

Le programme vise à former des professionnelles et des professionnels de la communication, de la rédaction et du multimédia polyvalents et aptes à assumer ou à prendre en charge toutes les étapes d'un projet : conception d'idées originales, recherche de documentation et analyse de contenu, rédaction selon le contexte de communication, mise en page en forme dédiée et diffusion sur de multiples supports (écrits ou électroniques).

(Régime régulier ou coopératif)

Personnel enseignant

- ◆ [Céline Beudet](#)
- ◆ [Denis Bélisle](#)
- ◆ [Julie Bonneau](#)
- ◆ [Hélène Cajolet-Laqanière](#)
- ◆ [Karine Collette](#)
- ◆ [Caroline Dubois](#)
- ◆ [Jean Forest](#)
- ◆ [André Marquis](#)
- ◆ [Chantal-Édith Masson](#)
- ◆ [Jacques Piette](#)
- ◆ [Christian-Marie Pons](#)
- ◆ [Armande Saint-Jean](#)
- ◆ [Francois Yelle](#)

Future directions

- WAC workshops to support writing intensive courses
- New, discipline-specific courses in Science and Nursing
- New Diploma and Certificate programs in Technical and Professional Communication
- New Minor in Writing Studies and New Media

More

- Re-establish Society for Technical Communication Student Chapter
- Participate in cross-disciplinary research team on text annotation
- Establish research program on writing in the disciplines

Programs and courses proliferating

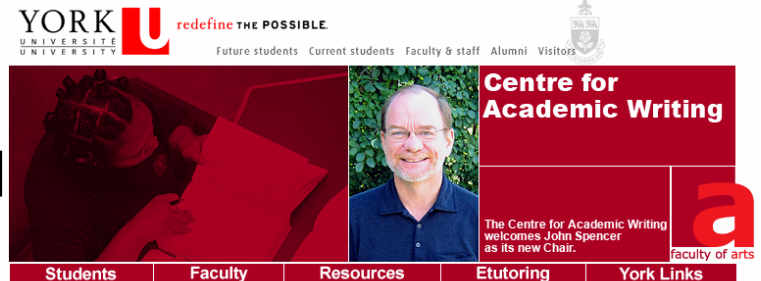
- Alberta, Winnipeg, Toronto, Western
- Growth across disciplines
- Focus on professional and discipline-specific writing
- Writing centres favoured as sites for growth—centres of teaching and research



[Home](#) > [Student information](#) > [Writing Centre](#)

Writing Centre

The Writing Centre



Future directions across the country

- Writing Studies emerging as a name for the field
- Research emerging and reaching critical mass



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Canadian Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Rhetoric and Writing. The website features a logo on the left with the text "ÉcRire WRiting" inside a circular graphic. The main header includes the title "Canadian Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Rhetoric and Writing" and its French equivalent "Réseau canadien de recherches interdisciplinaires en rédaction". A navigation menu at the top includes "HOME", "LOG IN", "SITE MAP", "CONTACT", and "RHETWIKI". A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation menu. Below the navigation menu, there is a "You are here: Home" breadcrumb trail. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with "About", "Research & publications", and "Research projects". The main content area displays a welcome message: "Welcome to the Canadian Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Rhetoric and Writing!". On the right side, there is a language selection dropdown menu set to "English (Canada)" and a "NEWS" section with a "Titre de la première nouvelle" link.

Professional organizations coordinating and growing

- CATTW
- Inkshed
- CSSR
- Writing Centre discussion list

Writing instruction: the next 25 years

- Hunt, based on his 25 years overseeing Inkshed, sees a mosaic of local initiatives
- Genre studies by Canadian scholars focus on writing learned as part of workplace activities
- WAC/WID should focus on developing similar activities within academia to support the learning of academic genres

Writing instruction: the next 25 years

As Writing Studies grows as a field,

- increasing coordination between provincial systems of higher education
- critical mass of people teaching writing come together in professional groups, journals, conferences
- Funding lines up as assessment benchmarks arrive

Writing instruction: the next 25 years

It will take all kinds of writing instruction to use what Writing Studies teaches us to help the Net Generation develop as writers and communicators experiences

- tutors in writing centres
- internship learning
- academic writing classes
- discipline-specific writing opportunities

Future of a Field?

Writing Studies courses, programs, and research

Growth of professional organizations

Increase in full-time employment positions

Tie-in to university mission statements