



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Regional Writing Centre, 10th Anniversary Symposium on Writing

Why good academic writers perform poorly in the workplace: Teaching for transfer across contexts of writing

June 1st,
Jean Monnet Theatre,
Main Building,
University of Limerick



Keynote Speakers:

Kathleen Blake Yancey,

Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of English, Florida State University.

Anthony Paré,

Professor and Head of Language and Literacy Education Department,
University of British Columbia

Tony Donohoe,

Head of Education and Social Policy, Ibec.

Barry McLoughlin,

Senior Training Consultant, The Communication Clinic.

Edel Clancy,

Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs Musgrave Group.



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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



Irish Network for the
Enhancement of Writing

Welcome to the University of Limerick Regional Writing Centre's 10th Anniversary Symposium on Writing. Our first symposium in 2007, *Research on Writing Practices: Consequences for the Teaching of Writing and Learner Outcomes*, featured a marked contrast between Ken Hyland's English for Academic Purposes approach and the Rhetoric and Composition approach of Matthew Martin and Jonathan Worley, St. Mary's University College, Belfast. Our 5th anniversary symposium on writing in 2012, *The role of the higher education in preparing writers for the workplace: encouraging real engagement with writing at third level*, questioned whether preparation for workplace writing was the responsibility of third-level education at all and, if it was, how could writing specialists engage with subject specialists and students to help them better prepare. Anyone who heard Managing Director of RUSAL Aughinish Alumina Ltd., Damien Clancy, speak will not forget his assessment of the baggage graduates bring to writing situations in his industry. Presentations by Trevor Day, University of Bath, Sally Mitchell and Guy Westfall, Queen Mary, University of London, Ciara O' Farrell, Trinity College Dublin and our own Sarah Moore highlighted some of what is being done to prepare graduates for the writing they will do later in their fields.

One might ask how this year's theme, *Why good academic writers perform poorly in the workplace: Teaching for transfer across contexts of writing*, differs from our 5th anniversary symposium. The significant difference is in challenging an unstated assumption not questioned in our 2012 symposium: that it is possible to prepare our graduates for the non-academic contexts into which they will eventually write. It is largely taken for granted at this point that attracting students to third-level education requires that they feel confident that their education not only prepares them in what they need to know for participation in their target field, but in how to organise and disseminate that knowledge in a manner that both achieves corporate goals and assures the student's successful negotiation of, and advancement within, the workplace culture. Unclear is the extent to which we can accommodate that requirement.

It is pretty much universally agreed at this point by everyone who studies writing that writing is a situated social activity, but from Bitzer (1968) to Halliday (1978) to Miller (1994) to Russell (1997) to Bazerman (2004) to Martin (2008), to name but a few, we have come a long way from the *kairos*, audience, *topoi* and decorum of ancient rhetorical teachings. If writing is situated, then it stands to reason that students would be best prepared by replicating those situations and activities with which they will be engaged in future employment. However, as Dias et al. (1999: 3) point out, "school and work are worlds apart". It is our hope that our 2017 audience will come to some understandings about why being worlds apart makes preparing graduates for workplace writing such a complicated endeavour. The symposium discussions will also offer our audience a way of framing the conversation about 'writing transfer', what is required for people to adapt what they know from past writing situations to new writing contexts. It is hoped that the audience will come away with a more critical understanding of context and that their new understanding will inform how they use writing to prepare students to become good writers in all writing situations.

-Lawrence Cleary, RWC Co-Director

- Bitzer, L. F. (1968). The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1: 1-14.
Halliday, M.A.K. (1978) *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
Miller, C. R. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70: 151-67.
Russell, D. (1997) Rethinking Genre in School and Society: An Activity Theory Analysis. *Written Communication* 14(4): 504-54.
Bazerman, C. (2004) *Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How Texts Organize Activity and People*, in (Eds.)
Bazerman, C. and Prior, P., *What Writing Does and How It Does It*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 309-39.
Martin, J.R., and Rose, D. *Genre Relations: Mapping Culture*. London: Equinox, 2008.

Symposium on Writing Organising Committee

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The Irish Network for the Enhancement of Writing (INEW) is a network of educators who wish to actively enhance their own writing and to help learners and colleagues to do likewise. INEW is a network where colleagues from all across the sector are welcome to participate in the conversation around writing and the teaching of writing. The Network aims to consistently promote and facilitate the national conversation about writing.



The Centre for Teaching and Learning aims to enhance teaching and learning processes within and beyond the University of Limerick (UL).



The HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) supports research institutions and funding organisations to implement the European Commission Charter and Code for Researchers in their research policies and practices and forms the basis upon which the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo is awarded.



Welcome Address: The importance of writing to business

Tony Donohoe

Head of education and social policy, Ibec

Bio

Tony Donohoe is head of education, social and innovation policy in Ibec. Following a career in business journalism, Tony has worked with Ibec for almost 30 years in a number of roles including publications editor and head of research and information services. He took up his current position in 2006. Tony is a graduate of the University of London (BA Hons) and the University of Exeter (MA in Leadership Studies). He is a member of the Higher Education Authority, the Apprenticeship Council, Business Europe Social Affairs Committee and the board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). He is also chair of the Expert Group on Future Skills. He has served on the National Economic and Social Council, and on the boards of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and the Equality Authority.

Ibec is the national voice of Irish business and employers, and is the umbrella body for Ireland's leading business sector groups and associations. It also provides a wide range of services to over 7,000 member businesses, representing over 70% of total private sector employment in Ireland.

“Writing for Business- not Academia”. An analysis of what employers tell us they don’t like about Graduate Writing’.

Barry McLoughlin,

Senior Training Consultant, The Communications Clinic

Abstract

Barry will look at the most common mistakes that Graduates make when planning, proofing and editing their writing. He will analyse why intelligent graduates make these mistakes and discuss methods The Communication Clinic uses when teaching writing skills that could perhaps be applied to an undergraduate syllabus.

Bio

Barry joined the Communications Clinic having worked for several years as a Solicitor in private practice. On a daily basis, he delivers courses in Writing Skills, Media Skills, Crisis Communications and Presentation Skills. He has trained staff at all levels in organisations to improve how they present themselves on paper. He has assisted organisations in developing a consistent house style for writing. He regularly meets with graduate recruiters and interviewers to assess what they are looking for in their graduate hires.

He works with organisations expecting a crisis or where a crisis situation has been thrust on them. He has worked with Government Ministers, Senior Executives in the private and public sector, media spokespersons and other individuals and groups to improve their communication skills and understanding of the media. He is the main media and communications trainer for members of Ibec, Bank of Ireland and Statestreet. His other clients include:

- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Arts Culture and the Gaeltacht
- Icon PLC
- The GAA
- Munster Rugby
- Fine Gael
- Allied Irish Bank
- Bayer
- The National College of Ireland
- UCD Smurfit
- The Department of Food and Marine
- Chartered Accountants Ireland

A writer for all reasons: Transitions in and out of school

Anthony Paré,

Professor and Head of Language and Literacy Education Department,

University of British Columbia

Abstract

Over the past decade, the nature of work and the modes and media of communication seem to change daily. The effects of those developments on the practice of writing are felt both within and beyond the academy, and present us with a dual challenge.

First, much about contemporary schooling is out of step with the new tools and methods of work: performance and evaluation continue to focus on individuals and discrete subject areas in a society where work is increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary; paper-based texts still play a central role while the wider world goes digital; and writing remains a means of displaying knowledge rather than a way to make knowledge, spur action, and create change.

Second, research has shown the degree to which communities of practice – from scientific disciplines to small offices – evolve local customs and cultures to perform their work. We know, for example, that writing and other forms of communication are highly situation-specific, and newcomers often struggle to become acculturated.

This presentation will consider the ways in which schools and workplaces might work to create rich learning environments, particularly for writing. Attention will be paid to how a revitalised approach to school writing can help prepare students for their many possible futures beyond school, and how workplaces might hasten the integration of newcomers into their writing culture and practice.

Bio

Anthony Paré is a professor and head of the Department of Language and Literacy Education in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. Before moving to UBC, he worked at McGill University, where he served as Chair of the Department of Integrated Studies in Education, Director of the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, and Editor of the McGill Journal of Education. His research examines academic and workplace writing, situated learning, school-to-work transitions, the development of professional literacies, and doctoral education. He is presently studying the writing of the dissertation, with a particular focus on the supervisory dyad and its role in the rhetorical apprenticeship of doctoral students.

Writing with radical empathy: Reader response theory as an aid to learner awareness

Sue Norton,

PhD, DIT School of Languages, Law & Social Sciences

Abstract

Good writers are more likely to achieve their desired effects if they can imaginatively trade places with their readers. An understanding of Reader Response Theory may help our students to consider the need to observe, or at least reckon with, the established conventions that support reader comprehension.

Bio

Sue Norton is a Lecturer in the Dublin Institute of Technology where she teaches English Studies, including composition and literature.

Sue is preoccupied with writing on a daily basis. She enjoys reflective essays on general subjects, both reading them and writing them. She also writes about the teaching of writing, about the writing of others, and sometimes about writing itself.

With her co-editor in America, Professor Laurence W. Mazzeno, she is currently working on the final stages of a book to be published later this year called *European Perspectives on John Updike*.

The Power of Written Communication: The experience of one of Ireland's Top 10 Businesses.

Edel Clancy

Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs Musgrave Group

Abstract

Edel will talk about the importance of communication in embedding corporate strategy; how taking the time to understand a corporate culture can pay dividends in the long run; common mistakes that graduates make when they first make the transition to the corporate world; what third-level education gets right and how third-level education could better prepare graduates for the transition to writing in a corporate context and finally what role does visual communication play in supporting written communication and what are some of the benefits and pitfalls associated with modern digital and social communications in a corporate context.

Bio

Edel Clancy is group director of communications and corporate affairs for Musgrave. Musgrave is a food retail, wholesale and export group and one of Ireland's largest companies with a turnover of €4.5bn and 45,000 employees and a portfolio of well-known food brands like SuperValu, Centra, MarketPlace and Chipmongers. Edel is responsible for corporate communications, brand stewardship, marketing, digital as well as government affairs.

Prior to joining Musgrave, Edel held senior roles with Lucent Technologies in the UK and previously with Eircell (now Vodafone) in Dublin. Edel spent six years in Brussels working with the European Commission, European Parliament and latterly as a consultant and lobbyist in the transport, agriculture and agrochemical industries.

She is a member of the boards of Retail Ireland within IBEC and Enactus which promotes social entrepreneurship amongst university students. She is a founder and previous national chair of the 5050 Group, which advocates for more women in politics. Edel holds postgraduate degrees from Ireland and the United States.

How Composers Write across Contexts: Teasing Out Conditions for Transfer

Kathleen Blake Yancey

Kellogg Hunt Professor of English and Distinguished Research Professor at Florida State University

Abstract

Many researchers continue to study writing transfer, which we might define *as the process of repurposing writing knowledge and practice a writer engages in as he or she takes up a new writing task*. One promising approach in this field of inquiry is located in a writing curriculum designed specifically to support such transfer, the Teaching for Transfer (TFT) curriculum, which includes three interlocking components: (1) a set of robust key terms; (2) systematic reflective practice; and (3) the students' development of a theory of writing available for framing new writing situations. The current research on TFT points to how this curriculum makes conditions for transfer more likely. More specifically, our findings demonstrate that after the TFT course, students are more likely to transfer--in *both* school writing tasks and non-school writing tasks--when three "conditions of transfer" (Perkins and Salomon) obtain: (a) when students have a rhetorical theory of writing for framing new writing situations, which they develop in the Theory of Writing assignment; (b) when students value the writing context and see how it supports their writing future; and (c) when students modify or "conditionalize" their writing knowledge and practice for new contexts.

Bio

Kathleen Blake Yancey is Kellogg Hunt Professor of English and Distinguished Research Professor at Florida State University. She has served in several leadership capacities, including as Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and as President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). Immediate Past Editor of *College Composition and Communication*, the flagship journal of Writing Studies in the US, she is the author or co-author of over 100 articles and book chapters and an author or editor of 14 scholarly books--most recently *Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing* (2014); *A Rhetoric of Reflection* (2016); and *Assembling Composition* (2017). Currently, she is a sponsor of the online Museum of Everyday Writing <<http://museumofeverydaywriting.omeka.net/>> and the lead PI for "The Writing Passport Project," a transfer-focused research project based at nine colleges and universities in the US. She is the recipient of several awards, including CCCC's Research Impact Award; two best book awards from the Council of Writing Program Administrators; Purdue University's Distinguished Woman Scholar Award, and Florida State's Graduate Teaching Award, which she has won twice.

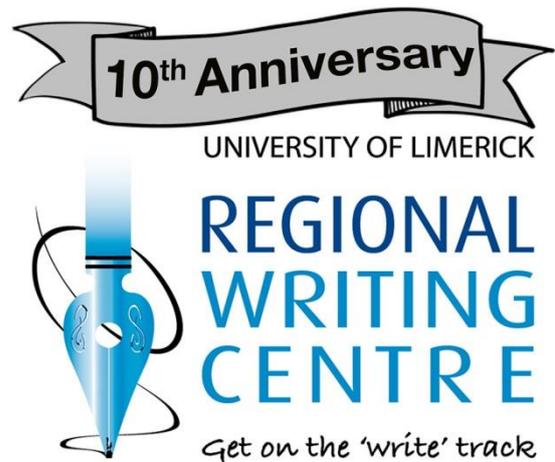


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