

CCCC

New Webs of Relationships: International Dialogue about Higher Education Writing Research

The CCCC organization is at a crossroads. In addition to its rich history as the U.S. home of broadly diverse strands of research, pedagogy, and purpose, the composition field has begun to see its “intricately connected web of relationships,” both past and future, as bound to institutions, traditions, scholars, and teachers in many other countries. The boundaries often evoked in a “U.S.”--“the rest of the world” binary are rapidly dissolving, as notions of global and local engage each other in new ways, tapping the deep traditions of scholarly projects across contexts and institutions. Rich productive differences and surprising commonalities abound.

We are invited by this year’s Cs call to “contest, debate, revise, and recreate who and what we are,” but how broad is the intended “we”? And if that “we” were to remain insular, what would we lose? Our own difficulties understanding each other as we pursue a range of concerns, interests, and causes, our relevance, our commonalities can be opened up through what we learn from colleagues doing innovative, powerful work outside the U.S., or from international or multinational collaborations.

We can neither ignore nor simply read about the work of writing in the world; we must enter sustained discussion and exchange in order to learn and share. The proposed workshop will make a space for exchange and dialogue about writing traditions and contexts in physical and disciplinary sites not generally included in U.S. discussions, through focusing on specific research projects. This exchange and dialogue is essential to the evolution of our disciplinary community, as we learn to depend on, and conceivably participate in work in other traditions. Both workshop facilitators from around the world and workshop participants will experience a full day of extended exploration of research about higher education writing in many different international contexts.

The multiple U.S. calls to rekindle discussion of writing studies research traditions and methods, to consider what it is for composition studies, and why it matters, can also be answered more productively in exchange with international writing studies scholars for whom certain kinds of research are highly evolved. International scholars benefit equally from exchange among peers from the variety of contexts involved in the workshop, confronting different emergent or established methods and research questions.

When scholars, and the participants wishing to be in dialogue from them, from different geopolitical, theoretical, national, institutional contexts get together to do real work, the most important element is time: to grapple with the detail and the broad brush; to really understand; to encounter and negotiate spaces and frames, from the simplest terminology to the deepest theoretical grounding. Opportunities to translate practices, institutional research purposes and projects across national, cultural and linguistic borders require reading and discussion in advance, as well as extended time together; weaving new webs of relations for the twenty-first century comes directly out of this kind of work.

The bulk of the time in the workshop itself will thus be spent in discussing new and nuanced ideas more fully and substantively. The participants will have woven the rich knowledge fabric of the workshop collectively throughout the whole process and will leave the workshop itself with a broader knowledge of international writing research, a sense of the very real complications and thrills of undertaking international collaborations, and contacts for future work.

We plan a three-phase event:

- 1) Workshop facilitators post texts by late December. All workshop participants (facilitators and those who sign up to attend the workshop) read the texts from late December to April.
- 2) Workshop facilitators post a glossary and a digest of key theorists/theories.
- 3) The workshop chairs maintain focus on guiding discussion questions that frame both the pre-workshop exchanges and the actual workshop discussions.

Our organizing questions:

- What are the research methodologies in use in different contexts? Why? What is meant by “research”?
- What are the objects of research? The research questions, populations, courses, programs, assessments, practices are objects of research?
- Do any questions of language complicate the research being done? The languages of students, teachers, researchers? The languages of schools, of international exchange?

Part of the session’s work will be to construct a group sense of possible responses to these questions: a web of its own, of relationships among methods, purposes, concerns, local-global contexts, foregrounding what participants (facilitators and attendees alike) will learn, gain, and give, about research, about methods, about fields in which our research is grounded and fields in which writing is taught and learned.

In addition, our exchanges will create paths to constructing international or intercultural understanding. What do we take as the evolving meanings of international, of global, for our concerns? How do local politics and institutional frames shape the meanings? Do we need new methods just to collaborate internationally? This meta-commentary on the complexities of attempting and attending to international work is at the heart of our work.

Procedure:

Each workshop facilitator will provide the co-chairs with a text by December 2009; these will be posted online at the CompFAQS International Writing Studies wiki for access by all workshop participants, both the workshop facilitators and the CCCC workshop registrants.

Workshop facilitators will include with their text, as separate short sections:

- A brief institutional description and an exploration of how that factors into research

about writing in their context;

-A glossary of any potentially context/culture-specific terms, both practical and profound;

-A digest (a list with one-sentence descriptions) of key theorists, theories, or frames used in the choice of methods and research design or results.

All participants, both workshop facilitators and CCCC participants signing up for the workshop, will read the work in advance.¹ The workshop facilitators will engage in discussion about the glossary of terms from December to March; the glossary collectively produced will be available for workshop registrants and will be further discussed during the workshop itself. What will be particularly significant about this workshop will thus be its rich exchanges before and during the workshop, as well as its resulting products.

The workshop facilitators' texts will be grouped into six clusters of three (while we know we cannot list more than twelve facilitators on the program, we plan to involve up to twenty-four facilitators, as we have in the past). Each person will choose a text from each cluster that is particularly important to his or her interests. At the workshop, all participants will work in small groups three times, once with the author of each of the three texts that individual participant has chosen for a focus.

Morning session:

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| 9:00-9:15 | General introduction; reiteration of the workshop's purpose |
| 9:15-10:00 | Cluster one small-group discussions |
| 10:00-10:15 | Coffee, break |
| 10:15-11:00 | Cluster two small-group discussions |
| 11:00-11:45 | Cluster three small-group discussions |
| 11:45-12:30 | Plenary discussion: refocus on objective: "what's at stake in this exchange" |

Afternoon session:

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| 1:30-1:45 | General introduction, welcoming new participants. |
| 1:45-2:30 | Cluster four small-group discussions |
| 2:30-2:45 | Coffee, break |
| 2:45-3:30 | Cluster five small-group discussions |
| 3:30-4:15 | Cluster six small-group discussions |
| 4:15-5:00 | Plenary discussion: refocus on objective: "what's at stake in this exchange" |

¹ We realize there may be registrants near the conference date who may not have full time to read the texts. We are working on plans for managing this issue; they might include no walk-in registrants or simply a note to registrants...

SAMPLE TOPICS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

Coventry University Centre for Academic Writing; Interrogating "Britannia Rules the Waves"

Studying Language Attitudes of College Students across Cultures

How and Why WAC Can/Cannot Work in Some Primary/ Secondary Schools in Istanbul

Supporting the Academic Writing of U.K. "Widening Participation" Students

Cross-cultural Dialogue and the Sustainable Learning Culture

QuADEM - Quality assessment of digital educational materials for professional and academic writing skills in European Higher Education

A Design for a Longitudinal Study of Student Writing at the American University of Beirut

Teaching Writing and Promoting Undergraduate Research Through Virtual Exchange.

"Appropriating" and Building Knowledge across Borders: What Art Has to Teach Us about Intellectual Ownership and Plagiarism

Fit for Purpose? An Evaluation of Practice-Oriented Academic Writing across International Contexts

Composition Programs and Practices in Sweden: What Can They Teach the United States?

Writing Cultures and Academic Mobility

Negotiating Academic Identities: Students' Experiences of Academic Writing in an Era of Internationalization of Higher Education.

"Flying Under the Radar:" The Cultural Politics of Writing and Literature Study Among Francophones at an English 2-Year College in Quebec.

The International Student in 'inner-circle' institutions: How far is lingua franca/transnational/international English or global Englishes an issue?

What Counts as "local" in writing for academic publication? The significance of locality in and for academic text production

Narratives from Second Language Writing Teachers in Lebanon: Preliminary Investigations

Across the Curriculum, Across the Sea; Teaching Writing at a French Engineering School

Searching for Best Practices: Identity, Diversity, and Language Inclusion in the Post-Colonial European Classroom.

Why Can't I Borrow Text?: Problems with Arab College Students' Perception of Plagiarism.

Collective authorship and new genre production in the perspective of Brazilian English Teaching Education in Virtual Learning Environments

Doctoral writing and the knowledge society: Global pressures and local responses