



Bulletin

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF TECHNICAL WRITING
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES PROFESSEURS DE RÉDACTION TECHNIQUE ET SCIENTIFIQUE

Dear Members,

There is a new editorial team at the helm of the CATTW *Bulletin*, and this is their first issue. I would therefore like to begin this President's Message by thanking Brock MacDonald and Katherine Tiede for having taken over the editing of the *Bulletin* from Bill Bunn, who did an admirable job as editor of our newsletter for two years.

There have been other changes in the executive of CATTW: our new Vice-President, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, will be organizing the next two annual CATTW conferences, to be held at the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities. The program that Amanda has prepared for this year's conference, which will take place at the University of Winnipeg, promises to be most interesting and reflects our members' ongoing interest in this annual platform for the exchange of scholarly research.

As you well know, the vitality of our organization depends on the involvement and dynamism of our members. The participation of the CATTW membership in our annual meetings is a key element in the synergy that we must maintain to ensure that our association continues to grow. Other components essential to our growth are our continued commitment to recruiting new researchers and graduate students in Canadian universities and our ability to attract presenters and participants from outside Canada to our conference. It is the diversity of our membership, which

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Chers membres,

Une nouvelle équipe d'éditeurs est aux commandes du *Bulletin* et voici leur première livraison. Je commencerai donc ce premier message à titre de présidente de l'ACPRTS en remerciant Brock MacDonald et Katherine Tiede d'avoir pris la relève de Bill Bunn, dont nous avons tous pu apprécier l'excellent travail depuis 2 ans.

C'est une année de changement à la direction de l'ACPRTS : notre nouvelle vice-présidente, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, est responsable de l'organisation des deux prochaines rencontres de l'Association, lors du congrès de la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines. Le programme de notre rencontre de cette année, à l'Université de Winnipeg, annonce des échanges fructueux et témoigne de l'intérêt soutenu des membres pour cette plate-forme d'échanges annuels.

Comme vous le savez, la vitalité de notre regroupement dépend essentiellement du nombre et du dynamisme de ses membres. La participation de tous aux rencontres annuelles est un élément clé de la synergie que nous devons entretenir pour assurer le développement de notre association. S'ajoutent, comme facteurs de réussite, notre intérêt soutenu dans le recrutement de nouveaux chercheurs des universités canadiennes et d'étudiants des cycles supérieurs, ainsi que notre capacité d'attirer des présentateurs et conférenciers venant de l'extérieur du Canada. C'est en cherchant à

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Du rédacteurs en chef ♦ From the Editors

In this issue of our Bulletin you'll find the preliminary program of this year's CATTW conference, including abstracts of the presentations. This year the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities is being held in Winnipeg, on our Vice-President Amanda's home turf; as always, it promises to be well worth attending. See you there!

In this issue you'll also find (in case you missed it earlier) our Association's response to the proposed restructuring of SSHRC, an issue of which we all need to be aware. Thanks to our President, Céline Beaudet, for preparing this response, and to all the other members who contributed their thoughts.

Technostyle: Call for Papers

Technostyle is the journal of the Canadian Teachers of Technical Writing (CATTW) / Association canadienne des professeurs de rédaction technique et scientifique (ACPRTS). Technostyle presents articles and reviews of interest to teachers, practitioners, or researchers involved in technical, academic, professional, scientific, and governmental communication. We are pleased to announce an upcoming special issue of Technostyle on the expertise of professional writing and its development.

We invite manuscripts written from a variety of approaches to the study of nonliterary communication – rhetorical, linguistic, sociological, cultural, ethnographic – but all submissions should be securely situated in relevant research. While manuscripts addressing pedagogical issues are welcome, authors should avoid describing lessons without explaining their significance to broader theoretical concerns. In addition to the criterion of relevance to the teaching, practice, and research

Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Association canadienne des professeurs de rédaction technique et scientifique 2003-2004 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE / COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF 2003-2004

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of technical writing, suitable submissions for publication are as follows: articles based on sound empirical research, the significance of which is explicated in terms of relevant and current theory, or articles that make a contribution to a current, developing rhetorical framework. Technostyle also welcomes articles that place these concerns in a context specific to relevant scholarship in Canada and to international contexts.

Manuscripts should be addressed to:

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Manuscripts should be no longer than 6,500 words (25 double spaced, typed pages) and should be submitted in two copies free of internal or external indications of identity of authorship. All manuscripts will be externally reviewed and authors may be asked to undertake revisions in response to reviewers' evaluations. The editors also invite submissions of 500 words that respond to articles published in Technostyle. Publication is subject to editorial decision.

(continuer de la page 1)

maintenir un membership diversifié, où s'entremêlent les différents groupes d'âge, les orientations de recherche multiples (théorique, appliquée, d'intervention) et les références culturelles variées, que l'ACPRTS se distinguera comme association au sein de la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines (ci-après, la Fédération) et auprès du Conseil de la recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH).

À titre de présidente de l'ACPRTS, j'ai participé cet hiver à une rencontre organisée conjointement par la Fédération et le CRSH, rencontre ayant pour objet de discussion la restructuration du CRSH (voir le rapport que j'ai déposé dans le site WEB de notre association [et dans ce numéro de notre Bulletin—rédacteurs]). Dans le projet de transformation du CRSH, il est beaucoup question d'accorder une importance grandissante au réseautage, aux partenariats et à l'interdisciplinarité. Notre association peut bénéficier de ce changement de paradigme, comme je l'ai fait valoir dans mon rapport, et peut aussi contribuer à l'instaurer. Je compte sur votre participation à notre prochaine assemblée annuelle pour faire le point sur cette question et pour pousser plus loin la réflexion sur les voies que l'ACPRTS peut emprunter pour se positionner favorablement auprès du CRSH. Les enjeux sont évidemment financiers, mais les retombées anticipées sont aussi la reconnaissance scientifique de notre discipline en émergence.

Notre présidente sortante, Natasha Artemeva, est toujours aussi dynamique et engagée à promouvoir notre Association. Elle s'est particulièrement dévouée, cette année, à l'établissement de liens plus formels entre l'ACPRTS et la Société canadienne de rhétorique, d'une part, et avec l'American Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, d'autre part. Ces démarches ouvrent d'intéressantes perspectives pour la tenue de sessions conjointes lors de nos prochaines rencontres annuelles. C'est également un dossier à suivre lors de notre prochaine assemblée annuelle.

Au plaisir de vous revoir tous et toutes bientôt, à Winnipeg!

Céline Beaudet
Présidente de l'ACPRTS
Université de Sherbrooke



March 2004

Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (CATTW)
Association canadienne des professeurs de rédaction technique et
scientifique (ACPRTS)

Consultation on the Transformation of SSHRC

1. Role of SSHRC

The role of SSHRC should be

- To provide financial support in the human sciences for research by individual researchers, by small groups, and by large groups
- To promote the dissemination of knowledge and the results of fundamental and applied research through adequate financial support
- To support small associations in their efforts to grow, particularly in emerging disciplines

2. Team Research and Networking

Research in technical, scientific and professional communication takes place in an interdisciplinary framework. Professional language practices are observed and studied from a variety of theoretical and methodological angles; moreover, such studies are very often undertaken in collaboration with groups and organizations from outside academia.

Therefore CATTW members are very comfortable with the increased value being placed on applied research and on collaboration between researchers and the community. They are already making a tangible contribution to the well-being of the community through well-established research with a variety of partners. CATTW considers that the creation of an Institute of Professional Communication would help to shape and support these collaborative undertakings. Such an Institute could serve as an interdisciplinary window for SSHRC-supported research, and could provide a site for the exchange of information between researchers and the community. With its expertise in professional public communication, CATTW could contribute effectively to the creation of such an Institute.

However, CATTW members recognize that the applied dimension of their research is not adequately recognized and valued by granting agencies, scholarly journals, or university promotion committees. Fundamental research remains the cornerstone of the university career. CATTW members have long combined their expertise in both modes of research, basing their applied research on fundamental research in linguistics, in discourse analysis, in the sociology of communication, and in educational sciences, to mention but a few disciplines. Since SSHRC intends to revise its policies with respect to applied research and university-community partnerships, CATTW urges SSHRC to do so in collaboration with university administrations, to ensure that the criteria used to evaluate professors' accomplishments are uniform and reflect this new orientation.

Another difficulty that can arise from partnerships between university researchers and non-academic partners is that people in the workplace more often than not seek to have their own conclusions corroborated by university researchers and may consider a true research process to be a waste of time. It is important to protect the neutrality of researchers and their ability to exercise their critical spirits. Innovative thought and the production of new knowledge should be preserved and valued. In the case of partnerships between scholars and



community members, clear guidelines must be established to protect the integrity of the research and the freedom of the researcher.

3. Promotion of Research

CATTW members believe that SSHRC should do more to support and promote research.

An association's annual conference is an indispensable tool for the exchange of research results and for the consolidation of networks among members. CATTW asks SSHRC to improve its program of aid for attendance at scholarly conferences, to increase such aid, to make this program more accessible, and to provide stable, long-term funding for all associations. In the current situation, a dozen associations that are members of the Federation are nevertheless excluded from the SSHRC program that provides aid for conference attendance, a situation which CATTW considers unfair.

Participation in an association's annual conference is also important to the education of graduate students; CATTW has difficulty providing them with adequate financial assistance to defray the costs of their participation. Similarly, lack of financial support can deter new scholars from participating, as they often do not yet have access to personal research grants. Lack of funding also limits the participation of international scholars and the ability of the association to invite guest speakers. CATTW is making considerable effort on the international scene to attract European and American members. The lack of funding for conference attendance restricts the potential growth of the Association, and in particular our efforts to establish a dynamic network of scholarly exchange between members from Canada, the United States, Europe and other continents. These restrictions are particularly detrimental to the Francophone Canadian research community in the field of technical and scientific writing, since this small community of scholars must turn towards Europe to enlarge its network of collaborators.

The publication of conference proceedings and of a scholarly journal associated with our field of research is also indispensable to the dissemination of our research and the promotion of our discipline. It also provides an important avenue to contact and attract scholars from the United States and Europe, with whom CATTW is cultivating numerous links which remain fragile in the present financial circumstances. WEB publications alone are not considered as reliable nor taken as seriously as print publications.

The Association considers that SSHRC should undertake and finance a serious study of the implications of the move toward WEB publication of scholarly research.

4. SSHRC Programs

Standard research grants, for individuals and for teams, should be maintained. It is essential that SSHRC provide programs to support new scholars at this point in time, when Canadian universities are facing a major renewal of their teaching staff and when the production of grant-supported research remains the major criterion for promotion.

Financial support for research journals aimed at readers from outside the university community would be an idea welcomed by the CATTW membership, which is already involved in various applied research projects and partnerships with the community. The possibility of publishing such a journal would give increased visibility to the work of our researchers and would contribute to the recognition of their contributions to the community. Such a journal could be associated with the proposed Institute of Professional Communication.

We stress that the program of aid and attendance grants for scholarly associations must be improved, revised, and made accessible to all associations, since an association's annual conference is an irreplaceable platform for communication, exchange, and recruiting.

5. General Observations

- The new move towards partnerships and networking must not be made at the expense of individual research; moreover, it must not restrict the research subjects supported by grants throughout Canada.



- One of the significant repercussions of research in the human sciences is the improvement of teaching in the associated disciplines. This is an important result of research grants, since training the next generation of scholars is of primary importance.
- CATTW has a leading role to play in the promotion and emergence of a new discipline. In fact, professions associated with the fields of communication and language practices are at the heart of the new knowledge-based economy. The processing, management, production and communication of information are activities that are integral to the workplace. There is a growing need for specialists in the field of professional communication. In such a context, CATTW's contribution and efforts should be recognized by adequate financial support.

Document prepared by
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Consultation sur la restructuration du CRSH

1. Rôle du CRSH

Que l'organisme

- soutienne financièrement la recherche en sciences humaines, au niveau individuel, de petits groupes et de grands groupes.
- favorise la diffusion des connaissances et des résultats de recherche fondamentale et appliquée par un soutien financier adéquat.
- soutienne les petites associations dans leurs efforts de croissance, particulièrement dans un contexte où le champ disciplinaire est en émergence.

2. Recherche en équipe et réseautage

La recherche en communication technique, scientifique et professionnelle se pratique dans un cadre interdisciplinaire. Les pratiques langagières professionnelles sont observées et étudiées sous différents angles théoriques et méthodologiques, d'une part, et s'effectuent très souvent en partenariats avec des organisations autres qu'universitaires, d'autre part. C'est pourquoi les membres de l'ACPRTS se sentent tout à fait à l'aise avec la valorisation de la recherche appliquée et des partenariats chercheurs-communauté. Leur contribution au bien-être de la collectivité, par leurs recherches avec divers partenaires, est tangible et instaurée de longue date.

L'ACPRTS considère que la création d'un Institut de la communication professionnelle serait un atout pour encadrer et soutenir cet effort de réseautage. Un tel Institut pourrait servir de vitrine interdisciplinaire à la recherche subventionnée par le CRSH, servir de plaque tournante de l'information pour les chercheurs et la communauté. L'ACPRTS possède l'expertise de la communication publique professionnelle et pourrait contribuer efficacement à la mise en place d'un tel Institut.

Toutefois, les membres de l'ACPRTS constatent que ce n'est pas la dimension appliquée de leurs recherches qui est valorisée par les organismes subventionnaires, les revues savantes ou les comités de promotion dans les universités. La recherche fondamentale demeure la pierre d'assise de la carrière



universitaire. Les membres de l'ACPRTS pratiquent depuis longtemps sur les deux terrains, alimentant leurs recherches appliquées de leurs recherches plus fondamentales en linguistique, en analyse de discours, en sociologie de la communication, en sciences de l'éducation, parmi d'autres. Comme le CRSH souhaite réviser ses politiques à l'égard de la recherche appliquée et des partenariats université-communauté, l'ACPRTS estime qu'il devra le faire en concertation avec les directions des universités pour que les critères d'évaluation des dossiers soient les mêmes partout.

Autre difficulté soulevée à propos des partenariats universitaires et non universitaires est que les personnes liées au marché du travail cherchent, plus souvent qu'autrement, à faire corroborer leurs conclusions par les chercheurs universitaires, voyant dans un véritable processus de recherche une perte de temps. Il y a nécessité de protéger la neutralité des chercheurs, la capacité d'exercer leur esprit critique. L'innovation de la pensée et la production de nouvelles connaissances doivent être préservées et valorisées. Dans le cadre de partenariats entre chercheurs et membres de la communauté, des balises claires devraient être énoncées pour protéger l'intégrité de la recherche et la liberté du chercheur.

3. Promotion de la recherche

Les membres de l'ACPRTS sont d'avis que le CRSH doit soutenir davantage la promotion de la recherche. Le colloque annuel est un outil indispensable pour l'échange des résultats de recherche et pour consolider le réseautage parmi les membres. L'ACPRTS demande au CRSH de réviser à la hausse son programme d'aide à la tenue de conférences et de le rendre accessible pour des termes prolongés à toutes les associations. Dans l'état actuel des choses, une douzaine d'associations membres de la Fédération n'ont pas accès au programme de financement pour l'assistance aux conférences, ce que l'ACPRTS juge inéquitable.

Le colloque annuel est aussi une occasion importante de formation pour les étudiants des cycles supérieurs; l'Association peine à les dédommager pour leurs frais de participation. La même restriction financière nuit à la participation de nouveaux chercheurs, souvent moins dotés de subventions personnelles de recherche, ainsi qu'à la venue de chercheurs internationaux, entre autres comme conférenciers invités. L'ACPRTS déploie des efforts considérables sur la scène internationale pour recruter des membres européens et américains. L'absence de fonds disponibles pour favoriser leur venue nuit au rayonnement de l'Association, en particulier à ses efforts d'établir un réseau d'échanges dynamique entre les membres provenant du Canada et de l'Europe ou d'autres continents. Ces restrictions affectent particulièrement la communauté canadienne francophone des chercheurs en rédaction technique et scientifique, une petite communauté, qui se tourne largement vers l'Europe pour élargir son réseau d'échanges.

Par ailleurs, la publication d'actes de colloque et d'une revue savante associée à notre domaine d'intérêt constitue un indispensable outil de diffusion de la recherche, de promotion de notre champ disciplinaire. C'est également un pont important pour rejoindre et attirer les chercheurs des États-Unis et d'Europe, avec qui l'ACPRTS cultive des liens nombreux, mais fragiles, dans les circonstances financières actuelles. Les publications WEB n'offrent pas la fiabilité et le sérieux des imprimés. L'Association est d'avis qu'une étude sérieuse des implications d'un virage WEB de la publication savante doit être entreprise et financée par le CRSH.

4. Programmes du CRSH

Les subventions ordinaires de recherche, individuelles ou d'équipe, doivent être préservées. D'aucune manière le CRSH devrait-il abolir son programme pour nouveaux chercheurs alors que nous vivons au Canada un important renouvellement du personnel enseignant et que le critère de promotion reste la production de recherche subventionnée.

Le soutien financier de revues de recherche pour publics non initiés serait une idée bien accueillie par les membres de l'ACPRTS, déjà engagés dans divers partenariats de recherche appliquée avec la communauté. La possibilité de publier une telle revue donnerait plus de visibilité aux activités des chercheurs et contribuerait



à la reconnaissance de leur apport dans la communauté. Une telle revue pourrait être associée à un Institut de la communication professionnelle.

Nous tenons à répéter que le programme d'aide à la tenue de conférences doit être amélioré, bonifié et rendu accessible à tous, car le colloque annuel est une plate-format de communication, d'échange et de recrutement irremplaçable.

5. Observations générales

- La nouvelle culture du partenariat et du réseautage ne doit pas être implantée au détriment de la recherche individuelle, d'une part, et faire en sorte de restreindre les sujets de recherche subventionnée à travers le Canada, d'autre part.
- L'une des retombées significatives de la recherche en sciences humaines est d'améliorer l'enseignement des disciplines qui s'y rapportent. C'est une retombée non négligeable des subventions de recherche, car la formation d'une relève de qualité est essentielle.
- L'ACPRTS joue un rôle de premier plan dans la promotion d'un champ disciplinaire en émergence. En effet, les professions associées aux domaines de la communication et des pratiques langagières sont au cœur de la nouvelle économie du savoir. La recherche, le traitement, la gestion et la production d'informations sont des activités indissociables du marché du travail. Les spécialistes du domaine 4 sont en demande. Dans un tel contexte, l'apport de l'ACPRTS devrait être reconnu par un soutien financier adéquat.

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CONGRÈS ANNUEL DE L'ACPRTS/CATTW ANNUAL CONFERENCE
(Société/Society # 215)

30, 31 mai, 1 juin 2004/30, 31 May, 1 June 2004

PROGRAMME PROVISOIRE/PRELIMINARY
PROGRAM

Le dimanche 30 mai/Sunday, May 30

Room 326, Helen Glass Building

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. **BIENVENUE/WELCOME**
Céline Beaudet, Présidente/Céline Beaudet, President

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Research, Teaching, Practice**

Anne Parker and Norma Godavari, University of Manitoba

The Confluence of Knowledge Management and Knowledge Transfer: Teaching Research Skills in a Technical Communication Class

This paper will look at the feasibility of teaching engineering students the art of “library research.” We argue that engineering students and professionals must develop two important skills: *finding* complex technical information and *communicating* it. On the one hand, these students must access complex sources of information to be used in their professional lives. On the other hand, they must interpret that information and translate it into a useful communication. To show these are indeed two confluent skills, we describe the context for our study, the technical communication course where students learn about knowledge transfer, the art of communication. We then describe the tutorials designed to help our students master the art of knowledge management, the art of doing research. We conclude our paper by offering some preliminary indicators that warrant further inquiry, such as the quality of the sources and the quality of the report.

Robert Irish, University of Toronto

The Lab Report as Engineering Ur-Text



Although laboratories are foundational to engineering, lab reports get ignored. Communication professors dismiss them as “student” genres; engineering professors distrust them: their form is ossified, learning value dubious and copying rampant. However, the lab report involves six essential disciplinary thinking moves: formulating a hypothesis, grounding in theory, establishing methodology, iterating a test case, evaluating the test and drawing conclusions.

I will analyze a student lab report to show core thinking, and an industry report to illustrate the genre’s “constellations . . . of improvisational strategies” (Schryer 2000). Articulating the improvisational flexibility of the lab report and its cognates reveals not only how the moves comprise the genre in its varied rhetorical situations, but also how the genre’s hierarchy of rules shapes related genres throughout our culture. Such understanding will better enable us to induct students into the thought of their disciplines.

10:15 –10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30 –12:00 noon **A Sense of Place**

Parul Rai, Oklahoma State University

Influence of a Sense of Place on Technical Writing: the Case of Union Carbide

After a gas leak at Union Carbide’s (UC) plant in Bhopal, India, Thomas Browning, the retired vice president, health, safety, and environmental programs at UC, wrote a report on the accident. Browning wrote his report from the perspective of his company’s shareholders, the US media, and general readers in the US. Browning used various rhetorical strategies to separate his readers in the US and victims in India. Browning used various rhetorical strategies in his report that were influenced by who he was writing for: readers in the US. The report minimizes discussion of victims within the context of the accident to create a separation between victims and the parent organization in the minds of people. Would Browning have written his report the same way if he were writing about an accident that had happened in his own country? I will analyze Browning’s report using five criteria: references to victims, use of outside sources, organization of the report, references to UC and Union Carbide India Limited, and reference to the Chairman.

Céline Beaudet et Amélie Rheault, Université de Sherbrooke

Premises, Stereotypes and Clichés in a Discourse of Simplification: The Case of the Radio Show *Deux psy à l’écoute*

The corpus that we have examined was taken from an open-line radio show (2002), *Deux psy à l’écoute*, where the star host, a certified psychiatrist practices a form of instant populist psychology on the airwaves. The show has gained great popularity over the past five years. Specifically we have retained for study the important part of the «shared evidence», the stereotypes and the clichés, used in the argumentation of the enunciator of the discourse. We have based our study, in particular, on the works of Christian Plantin (1993) and Ruth Amossy (1997, 2000). Our starting hypothesis is that this type of argumentation broadens the accessibility of the discourse at the surface while blurring its intelligibility at the profound level. The shared evidence, which constitutes the fundamental part of the argumentation in this show, is based on the argument of authority, which the host constructs for



himself. This strategy allows the host to declare the truth according to a narrow point of view of the social roles, as he combines it with a more general truth, recognised by social consensus. Therefore, the role of the host largely resembles that of a preacher, more than the role of an advisor in a counselling relationship.

Tania Smith and Andrea Williams, University of Calgary

A Sense of Place: Local and Virtual

How do the multiplicity of disciplinary, technological, and physical places for learning in this large and complex course hinder and/or help students to bridge learning/working spaces and situate their projects? Various aspects of this question have been explored in recent scholarly articles by Wohjan *et al* (2001) and Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch (2001) on interdisciplinary student teams and/or client-based projects. Nedra Reynolds, in her 1998 article “Composition’s Imagined Geographies,” draws on concepts from cultural geography to call for scholars of writing to examine “how spaces and places are socially produced through discourse.”

This paper will present our research on interdisciplinary client-based research projects situated in a large-format Professional and Technical Communication course using Blackboard technology. Our study examines the roles of virtual places, instructional places, and local field research places in producing rhetorical contexts for interdisciplinary writing teams and their clients.

12:15 – 1:45 p. m. **Networking Lunch at the University Club**

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. **“Borderless” Discourse**

Katja Thieme, University of British Columbia

The Canadian Suffrage Movement: Questions of Genre and Addressivity

We might argue with Carolyn Miller (1984) that suffrage writings shared generic conventions because they followed the same social goal: achieving the vote for women. Suffrage discourse repeatedly placed itself within the context of national, as well as trans-national history. It claimed, for example, to contribute to a century-old history of evolving morals. In making such claims, suffragists aimed not only to create mutual knowledge, and a rhetorical community, among each other, but also to condemn their opponents' arguments as regressive. Suffrage discourse was a very public discourse: suffragists needed male politicians to overhear and adopt their arguments. Much of the debate took place in the women's sections of the large newspapers. As a result, the way in which the texts addressed multiple audiences--the audience design, in Herbert Clark's (1992) terms--became a distinct feature of the discourse.

Tatiana Rousetskaia, Carleton University

Writing for Business: Cultural Identity, ‘Borderless’ Discourse



This study is dedicated to the cultural identity of ESL students and the development of their business writing communication skills. The purpose of the study is to find out how the cultural background of the students affects their business communication. The findings show that the students' integrated culture, i.e., the power and status/ power distance component (G. Hofstede, 1991) affects the preferred format, style and organization of ideas in their writing for business. Students' belonging to low-context and high context cultures (Hall and Hall, 1990) also predetermines their choice of syntax structures, wording, "degree of politeness" and conciseness while communicating their ideas.

The pedagogy of the teaching of writing for business should be viewed as synergy of building and developing written communication skills based not only on the linguistic/language characteristics and strategy of business writing, but also on the cultural constructs that create certain constraints for the writer.

Dana Landry, University College of the Fraser Valley

Border Stories: Learning at the Centre and at the Periphery

"The apprentice's ability to understand the master's performance depends not on their possessing the same representation of it, or of the object it entails, but rather on their engaging in the performance in congruent ways" (Lave and Wenger p.21). It is this claim I wish to explore in greater detail. Scholars have argued that the discursive and knowledge making practices of academic experts are markedly different from those of the students they teach and that, in fact, borders, largely epistemological and institutional, exist between masters and apprentices (Crowley, 1989; Giltrow and Valiquette, 1994; Miller, 1991). I suspect that existing pedagogical borders can be blurred such that masters and apprentices can engage in academic performances in congruent ways, that by adapting our pedagogy and the theoretical principles that guide it, we can move closer to apprentice learners, thus enabling them to more effectively estimate the discursive practices of their expert instructors and the academy of which they are a part. I also suspect that such blurring of borders can be accomplished, in part, through narrative, through creative non-fiction, through talk and story.

3:30 – 3:45 p.m. **Break**

3:45 – 5:00 p.m. **Research, Teaching, Practice**

Elena Aminkova and Rosana Hilbig, Carleton University

Bridging Academia and the Workplace: Developing New Promotional Materials for the Feldenkrais Method

This study demonstrates how we can converge two conflicting entities: academia and workplace. Its main purpose was to develop new promotional materials for the Feldenkrais method, a particular physiotherapeutic method, by analyzing the motives in workplace that create the need for such materials. This goal was achieved by applying research in genre as social action to the creation of new promotional materials. We interpret this application as discovering a compromise between academic and workplace discourses. The theoretical part of the study is mainly based on Rhetorical Genre Theory. According to Rhetorical Genre Theory, the analysis of any genre involves more than a



formal description of a text it also includes motives in workplace that give rise to that genre. The study also brings about a better understanding of the genre of promotional materials and possible methods for its development and improvement.

Catherine F. Schryer, University of Waterloo

Regularized Practices: Genres, Improvisation, and Identity Formation in Healthcare Professions

This paper will combine structuration theories derived from Giddens and Bourdieu together with Activity theories derived from Engeström to discuss the complex ways that genres (Miller, Bakhtin, Schryer) such as case presentations work to socialize healthcare professionals. A case presentation occurs when one healthcare professional uses a recognized format to transfer knowledge to another healthcare professional. Most healthcare fields also expect their neophyte practitioners to use this same format to transfer knowledge about a case to their supervisors. In the process of performing these genres, students learn the limits of their fields and to negotiate the constant interaction between “received” knowledge and the improvisational adjustment of that knowledge to specific situations. From the classical rhetorical perspective this interaction of different ways of knowing describes the debate around the term “technai” or knowledge as scientific or artful. Our research indicates that these two ways of knowing are both necessary but that they exist in a constant tension, a tension that is tacit and unacknowledged. The genre of case presentations mediates this tension. However, we also contend that because of the tacit nature of this interaction, professions often convey unintended messages to their newcomers. In other words, “situated learning” (Lave and Wenger) is not unproblematic.

Le lundi 31 mai/Monday, May 31

Room 326, Helen Glass Building

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. Convergence and Conflict

Doreen Starke-Meyerring, McGill University

Beyond Local Particulars and Global Universals: Conceptualizing Global Literacy in Technical Communication

Current globalization processes such as the negotiations for the General Agreement on Trade in Services by the World Trade Organization add new dimensions to technical communication ranging from outsourcing to increasing collaboration in global teams. For technical communication practitioners, teachers, and researchers these globalizing trends pose the question of what kind of literacy technical communicators need in globalizing workspaces.

This presentation argues that the current approach in technical communication scholarship on communication across local contexts with its focus on either local particulars (Tebeaux 1999, Thatcher 2001) or global universals (Goby 1999, Weiss 1998) may not suffice to answer this question. The presentation draws on recent work in New Literacy Studies (Street 2003; Brandt & Clinton 2002; Collins & Blot, 2003) to propose a conceptualization of global literacy in technical communication that



responds to current globalization trends.

Diana Wegner, Douglas College

Community Uptake of a Government Management Plan: the Interactive Dynamics of Advocacy and Managerial Genre Systems

This paper reports on the findings of a study of the discursive interactions of a community group facilitated and mandated by a municipal government as part of its plan to steward its natural areas. Using the concepts of uptake (Freadman 2002 and 1994), genre system (Bazerman 1994, Devitt 1991), and dialogical interdiscursivity (Wodak 2000 and 1996, Sarangi and Roberts 1999, Fairclough and Wodak 1997, Fairclough 1992), I analyze this group's deliberations as dialogical activity (Engestrom 1999 and 1995) across different genre systems. Uptake occurs when different discourses come into alignment, so that space and time are conjunct in specific ways as particular dialogic and interdiscursive "ensemble[s]" (Foucault 1972).

As civic, activist and managerial systems interact, what uptake choices do participants make? What genre resources do they capitalize on? How are their strategies enabled or hindered by the different resources of participation and reification (Wenger 1998)? What are possible implications for how such collaborations founder (where they are susceptible to hegemony) and for how they succeed (where dialogical relations prevail)? Evidence of uptake across genre systems is drawn from transcripts of the proceedings of the group's meetings, documents used and produced by the group, a questionnaire and follow-up interviews.

Kim Honeyford, University of Waterloo

Converging Technologies for Psychological Assessment Tools: Implications for Documentation Development

The psychological assessment tool industry is adopting the internet as a test delivery method. Introducing traditional testing practices to a new media environment has implications for technical writers creating within-product documentation, such as instructions for the test-takers, and accompanying documentation, such as descriptions of required resources and test administration guidelines for psychologists.

Tension resulting from transposing paper-and-pencil format conventions to an electronic format was evident in a pilot study involving pre-release versions of a psychological assessment tool called MSCEIT (Multi-Health Systems, 2002). The study, centred on Schryer's concept of genre as "stabilized-for-now" (1993), investigated the consequences of transferring the paper-and-pencil assessment genre characteristics to the internet format's design. The study's results suggested a need for a different approach to documenting a product for multiple audiences.

10:30 –10:45 a.m. Break



10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Research, Teaching, Practice**

W. Brock MacDonald, University of Toronto

Writing After It Hits the Fan: Coping with Workplace Genres Not Taught In School

Catherine Schryer (2000) defines genres as "constellations of regulated, improvisational strategies triggered by the interaction between individual socialization . . . and an organization." In this presentation, I examine some of the strategies working engineers develop for writing in genres that involve particularly stringent demands for successful 'regulated improvisation,' such as letters responding to client complaints about project delays and cost overruns. The experiences of three individual engineers provide striking examples of widely varying workplace practices and attitudes towards this kind of writing; I will use elements of both genre theory and activity theory to contextualize these practices and attitudes, and to explore their pedagogical implications.

Clara John, Carleton University

Within a Master of Science Thesis: A Textual-Rhetorical Analysis of an Academic Genre

In this presentation, I use the principles of the social-rhetorical approach to writing theory and research (Bakhtin, 1986; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Miller, 1984/1994) to demonstrate how the ideologies of the academic and scientific (medical) research communities are consolidated in a Master of Science thesis. The representation of these ideologies in the text is largely influenced by the writer's own representation of identity and authority (Gross, 1990; Latour & Fabbri, 1981/2000; Ivanic, 1997). Outstanding about the author of the selected MSc thesis is a duality that characterizes his situation: he is a practicing physician and a graduate student. Author identity and authority thus become key factors in determining how closely academic and/or professional standing reflects disciplinary ideology in the written product. The inevitable centrality of the author's social reality in the creation of the MSc thesis is accomplished through a textual-rhetorical analysis of the text.

Jennifer MacLennan and Jeanie Wills, University of Saskatchewan

Negotiating the Team-Taught Classroom: Ideas, Identity, and Territory

Effective team-teaching requires a willingness to recognize, and successfully negotiate, issues of territoriality, face, hierarchy, and personal authority. While the experience is enriching if handled well, there is also potential for disaster. In seven months during 2003, we logged approximately 225 hours in team-taught courses: as co-instructors of a required undergraduate course that included daily observation by as many as a dozen faculty and deans; as co-coordinators of the same course; as co-presenters in a writing workshop for professionals; and as co-leaders of a graduate seminar in a professional master's programme. Drawing on the theories of Kenneth Burke, Erving Goffman, George Dillon, Edward Hall, Wayne Booth, Lloyd Bitzer, and others, we examine how instructors with different backgrounds, levels of experience, and kinds of risks can develop a shared "rhetoric of the classroom" that enriches not only their students, but each other.

12:15 – 1:45 p.m. **Lunch**



1:45 – 3:00 p.m. **Keynote Speaker**

Jo Allen, North Carolina State University

Technical and Professional Communication in 21st Century Higher Education: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rewards

As an academic discipline well grounded in theory and practice, technical communication is, in many ways, a model discipline for educating students in light of the needs of the 21st century. In that sense, it is also a model discipline for helping to shape the future of higher education. In this presentation, I will describe our disciplinary contributions to and impact on higher education from various angles: the communication/rhetoric tradition, calls for accountability in higher education, resource constrictions and new revenue streams, collaborative engagement in the academy and beyond, and other issues facing higher education.

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. **Break**

3:15 – 5:00 p.m. **Annual General Meeting of CATTW/ACPRTS**
(Dean's Conference Room, Engineering Building)

7:00 p.m. **CATTW 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner**
(Hotel Fort Geary)

Le mardi 1 juin/Tuesday, June 1

Room 326, Helen Glass Building

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Keynote Speaker**

Laura Gurak, University of Minnesota

Technical Writing and Communication in a Digital Age

There can be no doubt that technical communication has been changed by the ubiquitous nature of digital technologies. The reach and speed of Internet communication force us to reconsider traditional ways of thinking about space and place. Because of the Internet's non-hierarchical structure, information can flow across global boundaries, bypassing normal channels. Legal issues now become global considerations (for instance, differences between Canadian and U.S. copyright laws). In addition, the speed of online communication means that one message can reach a large audience in just seconds. What are the implications of these changes for teaching and research in technical communication? Focusing on legal and ethical issues as well as issues related to the teaching of writing, this presentation will use case examples to illustrate the relationship between digital technologies and our field.

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. **Break**



10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon **Identity, Convergence, Conflict**

Katharine Patterson, University of British Columbia

Where Am I in My Text? Self-Representation and Positioning in Student Writing

All writers place themselves and their audiences in the text, wittingly or unwittingly, according to their awareness of genre, their rhetorical aims, the linguistic resources available to them, and their own situatedness, a positioning that is recognized by readers who share the same sociocultural context (Ivanic, 2001). Even advanced student writers, however, have little conception of this positioning. Achieving this awareness and learning to deploy linguistic resources strategically in writing is not easy and, it has been argued, may not even be achievable from a position outside a particular discourse community (Beaufort, 1997). Drawing on an analysis of my students' commentary in texts such as process journals and revision statements, my paper will argue that student writers need to have corporeal experiences of purposeful discursive action in a variety of specific social settings--real places--in order to increase their awareness of and facility with the ways in which identity in writing is a discursal construct over which they can exert some control.

Natasha Artemeva, Carleton University

Activity Theory and the Situated Perspective: Opposition or Complementarity?

The purpose of the proposed theoretical exploration is to investigate potential complementarity of activity theory (AT) (Engeström, 1987; Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1981) and the situated perspective (SP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) as applied in writing research. Recent research studies (e.g., Artemeva & Freedman, 2001; Smart & Brown, 2002; Winsor, 1999) have demonstrated the relevance of AT and the ST to the study of various aspects of technical communication. These two theoretical approaches are often viewed as radically different because of the differences in the units of analysis and other fundamental concepts they employ. The discussion of conditions and mechanisms of learning and development within each of the approaches will allow me to demonstrate the advantages of using AT and SP as complementary theoretical approaches to the study of technical communication.

Nadeane Trowse, University College of the Fraser Valley

Plagiarism or Prophylaxis: Citation and Style Guide Prescriptivity at the Kill-or-Cure Borders of Academic Discourse

How does style matter and how can we as teachers of technical writing talk about this? Using the UCFV Writing Centre as research site, this paper proposes to examine the connection of official style guides with their administration of citation in scholarly settings as an under-discussed gatekeeping practice, a site of educational myth, socio-cultural meaning, and evaluation with a focus on the place of citation and the recognized citation styles as a problematic of globalizing scholarly stylistics. We note that Louis Menand's assertion about a "best" way to do things reinstates notions of unified language and identifies citation as a difficult ritual, administered by exacting precepts/preceptors, demanding of skilled compliance. We ask questions about how an "official" style guide, as Menand celebrates it, might act as a Foucauldian panopticon informed by socio-cultural ideologies of language, scrutinizing, evaluating, and disciplining. In this view, errors of citation often get interpreted as moral/ethical flaws,



to be deplored/punished (even linked, as “plagiarism,” with crime) as Cameron, Milroy and Milroy, and others have remarked in discussion of attitudes arising in the standardizing of English. Our paper interrogates citation as “habitus” (Bourdieu), as a social practice, to determine what kind of “structure structuring structures” (Giddens) it is: to examine the activity of citation practices as a metagenre (Giltrow) and therefore as constraint on who can speak and be heard, in what ways, to whom, under what conditions.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **Power, Ethics, and Practice**

Barbara Schneider, University of Calgary

Power and the Regulation of Technical Communication

The issue of the relationship between organizational context and technical communication practices has become a central concern among scholars of technical writing (e.g. Pare, Schryer, Yates & Orlikowski). The debate focuses on how aspects of context regulate the writing activities of individuals in organizations and how these individual activities in turn influence organizational context. In this paper, I propose an ethnomethodological approach (e.g. Garfinkel, Hutchby, Miller) to understanding power that I believe can lead to a deeper understanding of the relationship between social context and individuals’ communication activities, and offer insights into the regulation of communicative practice in organizations. The ethnomethodological approach proposed here allows us to analyze power and regulation of communicative practice not as structural features of either discourse or organizational life but as accomplished by technical communicators in social interaction as they pursue their practical interests in organizational settings.

Amanda Goldrick-Jones, University of Winnipeg

Using an ‘Ethic of Care’ to Engage Online Technical Writing Teams

An extensive body of scholarship has scrutinized “face to face” collaborative writing in technical or professional writing classrooms and contexts: notably, Ede & Lunsford (1990); Lay & Karis (1991); Bosley & Morgan (1993); Blyler and Thralls (1993); Duin and Hansen (1996); Burnett (1991, 1993, 1996); Haskins et al. (1998); and Ingram & Parker (2002). But little work has been done on mediating conflict in collaborative writing assignments within a wholly computer-mediated (CM) environment. A comparison of student teams in two recent online technical writing classes indicates that disrespect, an inability to “listen,” and a lack of sensitivity to others pose a tremendous risk to learning. Requiring online teams to create a code of conduct based on an “ethic of care” (Gilligan [1982]; Cole & McQuin [1992]; Larrabee [1993]) offers a promising way for students to deal productively with interpersonal tensions and create a productive learning experience in a CM environment.

2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Break



2:45 – 4:00 p.m. **Workshop**

Deborah Andrews, University of Delaware and Linda Driskill, Rice University

Crossing Borders: An Integrative Approach to Communication Instruction in Science and Engineering Courses

Science and engineering students have been told that good communication skills are essential to their career success, but they are often reluctant to take a course in technical communication. Those who oversee the science and engineering curricula are often similarly reluctant to require such a course. An informal survey confirms this apparent discontinuity between the perceived importance of communication skills and a lack of attention to them.

Given the need for good skills and the tight time frame for instruction, what is the best approach to developing those skills? One approach is indeed a stand-alone course, which may take a variety of shapes and be offered as part of a core curriculum or as an elective, in person or online. Another is coaching or other individualized instruction on an as-needed basis. A third is integrative instruction; communication skills are developed in discipline-specific courses and independent team projects. It's this last approach I'd like to investigate with participants in the proposed workshop. We'll discuss the logistics and content of such instruction. In particular, we'll look at how an integrative approach can help students develop the skills and attitudes they need to work in the global community: to address audiences and collaborate on teams across borders of nations and cultures as well as disciplines.

4:00 p.m. **Adjournment**

The Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (CATTW)/ Association canadienne des professeurs de rédaction technique et scientifique (ACPRTS) would like to thank the following supporters:

- Alaa Adb-El-Aziz, Ph.D.
Associate Vice-President
Research and Graduate Studies, University of Winnipeg
--for providing travel funding to graduate student presenters.

- Douglas Ruth, P.Eng., Ph.D.
Professor and Dean of Engineering
Faculty of Engineering, University of Manitoba
--for hosting our May 31 Annual General Meeting.



(continued from p. 1)

includes scholars and researchers of varied ages and experience, from different cultural backgrounds, and with diverse research orientations (theoretical, applied, collaborative) that helps to distinguish CATTW within the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and within the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

This past winter, as President of CATTW, I participated in a meeting organized jointly by the Federation and by SSHRC to discuss the restructuring of SSHRC. After consultation with the membership, I drew up and submitted a report, which you can read on the CATTW website [and in this issue of the Bulletin—eds]. The plans to transform SSHRC include much talk about placing greater emphasis on networking, on partnerships, and on interdisciplinarity. Our association can benefit from such a change of paradigm, and we are well positioned to play an active role in such a transformation. I am counting on your participation at our next Annual General Meeting, where we can continue discussions on this question and can further reflect on ways in which CATTW can situate itself to its best advantage in this transformation of the research community. There are obviously financial benefits at stake, but there are other repercussions that we can foresee, including an increased awareness and recognition of the contribution our emerging discipline can make to both the academic and non-academic communities.

Our Past President, Natasha Artemeva, has continued to be as dynamically committed as ever to the promotion of our Association. In particular, she has worked this year to establish more formal links between CATTW and the Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric as well as between CATTW and the American Association of Teachers of Technical Writing. Natasha's efforts create very promising possibilities of holding joint sessions at future meetings and conferences. This is also an issue for discussion at our upcoming Annual General Meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all in Winnipeg in the near future!

Céline Beaudet
President of CATTW
Université de Sherbrooke

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ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES PROFESSEURS DE RÉDACTION TECHNIQUE ET SCIENTIFIQUE

☞ QU'EST-CE QUE L'ACPRTS?

L'ACPRTS regroupe des Canadiens et des Canadiennes qui pratiquent l'enseignement de la rédaction technique et professionnelle dans les collèges et les universités, au sein du gouvernement ou dans l'entreprise. La rédaction technique englobe ici tous les aspects de la rédaction fonctionnelle: administrative, scientifique, médicale, spécialisée. L'Association s'intéresse également aux aspects oraux et visuels de la communication technique, ainsi qu'aux relations entre écriture et informatique. Les membres de l'ACPRTS peuvent échanger des idées, des techniques, assister à la rencontre annuelle des membres, et recevoir la revue bi-annuelle de l'Association, *Technostyle*, ainsi que le *Bulletin* semestriel. Les frais d'adhésion sont de 25 \$ pour les étudiants, de 40 \$ pour les membres individuels et de 50 \$ pour les membres institutionnels.

☞ QUI PEUT DEVENIR MEMBRE?

Toute personne qui enseigne ou étudie la rédaction technique ou administrative, ou qui en fait un objet de recherche, ou encore qui s'intéresse aux aspects visuels, écrits et oraux de la communication technique, peut devenir membre.

☞ OÙ ET QUAND SE TIENT LA RENCONTRE ANNUELLE DES MEMBRES?

Les membres de l'ACPRTS se réunissent chaque année dans une université canadienne accueillant le Congrès de

la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines et sociales, à la fin du mois de mai ou au début de juin.

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 - Pour une typologie des résumés fonctionnels
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☞ COMMENT PUIS-JE DEVENIR MEMBRE?

Il suffit de remplir le formulaire ci-dessous et de le retourner à l'adresse suivante, en y joignant un chèque (à l'ordre de l'ACPRTS) :

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**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS
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☞ CATTW IS...

an Association of Canadians who teach technical writing, mostly at universities and community colleges, but in some instances in government and industry. ("Technical" embraces all aspects of functional writing: engineering, medical, scientific, business, etc.). The Association also focuses on oral and graphic communication, and computer-mediated writing. CATTW members are able to exchange techniques and ideas with members at other universities and colleges, attend the annual conference, and receive the Association's refereed journal *Technostyle* twice a year as well as a semestrial *Bulletin*. The annual membership fee is \$25 for students, \$40 for individuals, and \$50 for institutions.

☞ WHO MAY BELONG?

Anyone who studies, researches, or teaches technical or business writing, or is concerned with the graphic, written, or oral presentation of technical/business information.

☞ WHERE IS THE CONFERENCE HELD?

We meet at a different Canadian university every year, as part of the annual Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada Conference, in late May or early June.

☞ WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF *TECHNOSTYLE*?

A sampling of papers from recent editions of *Technostyle* illustrates its broad range of interest:

- Stylistic Prescriptivism vs. Expert Practice
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