



Theorizing Composition: A Critical Sourcebook of Theory and Scholarship in Contemporary Composition Studies

Mary Kennedy

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The last 25 years have witnessed extraordinary growth in the academic specialization variously described as composition studies or rhetoric and composition. What was noticeable about the field in its infancy was a preoccupation with practice, a lack of emphasis on theory, and an exclusive reliance on the writing process. As its disciplinary status has grown, the field has become far more theoretical. Composition studies has expanded its focus, reconceptualized the writing process, and embraced a wide range of critical perspectives. The result of this change is that terms such as poststructuralism, social construction, gender, and genre, which were largely unknown in 1965, now dominate discussion. This reference book is a guide to the multiplicity of theories that have emerged to form the disciplinary foundation of composition studies.

The volume consists of 66 entries, each of which is written by an expert contributor and focuses on a particular theory or group of theories. While the entries show how various individuals have contributed to theoretical movements, very few concentrate on the work of a single theorist. Each entry first provides a critical summary of a particular theory or group of theories, including key elements, basic concepts and claims, and information about seminal or particularly influential works. It then reviews the theory's critical reception in composition studies and discusses its significance in the field. The bibliography at the end of each entry lists primary texts and major scholarship related to the theory and provides additional suggestions for further reading. The volume closes with a selected bibliography of important works.

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