

## Introduction

In this special issue of *Technostyle* we are pleased to present six articles—three in French and three in English—on a topic we believe to be central to our field: the expertise of professional writers and its development. The aim of the issue is twofold: to examine the expert practices of “career writers” (Couture & Rymer, 1993)—technical communicators, journalists, editors, web-content designers, grant writers and other individuals who, professionally, are identified primarily by writing; and to consider how, as educators, we can best prepare our students for engagement in such expert practices when they leave our classrooms to enter the workplace.

This special issue appears against a backdrop of recent research arguing that much professional writing is thoroughly enmeshed in the particularities of local contexts, and that therefore certain aspects of the expertise needed to function effectively in a given work environment can only be honed through experience in that environment (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999; Henry, 2000). While we recognize the contribution and important implications of this research, we continue to believe that students in our classrooms can be guided in developing expert writing practices that will later serve them well in a range of different worksites. The six articles in this issue address, in different ways and from a variety of scholarly perspectives, such theoretical and pedagogical concerns.

Bertrand Labasse s'intéresse aux fondements épistémologiques d'une nouvelle discipline qu'il nomme la rédactique. Examinant tour à tour les connaissances déclaratives et procédurales qui fondent l'expertise langagière et communicationnelle du rédacteur professionnel par rapport au novice, il souligne la part importante que les experts concèdent à la planification et à la structuration de l'écrit. À cette base disciplinaire constituée des sciences du langage et de la communication s'ajoute la psychologie cognitive, fondement de la compréhension du lecteur, faisant de la rédactique la rencontre entre trois disciplines. Pour conclure, Labasse met en garde contre la tentation de transformer des notions scientifiques en prescriptions pseudo-scientifiques et appelle à la collecte de données expérimentales pour faire émerger une nouvelle discipline scientifique, la rédactique.

Éric Kavanagh examine les motivations derrière la décision du gouvernement canadien d'ajouter le segment « du Canada » aux appellations de ses parcs et lieux historiques nationaux. Ainsi, plutôt que Lieu historique national de la Bataille-de-la-Châteauguay, nous lisons sur les affiches : Lieu historique national du Canada de la Bataille-de-la-Châteauguay. Kavanagh examine plusieurs raisons d'ordres linguis-

tique et communicationnel qui justifieraient d'autres approches dans la politique d'appellation de Parcs Canada, à qui Parcs Québec a emboîté le pas en nommant chacune de ses réserves environnementales Parc national Québec. L'auteur met en évidence la nécessité pour le rédacteur professionnel de comprendre la culture organisationnelle de son mandant, à défaut de quoi il sera confronté à l'échec.

Isabelle Clerc et Céline Beaudet se sont penchées sur les distinctions à établir entre les compétences des rédacteurs professionnels et des rédacteurs techniques. Il y a un déficit de rédacteurs techniques au Québec et dans les pays francophones d'Europe, d'où la question motivant cette recherche. Les auteures soutiennent que cette pénurie est le résultat d'un malentendu plutôt que d'un manque réel de candidats. Examinant les compétences d'un rédacteur professionnel non spécialisé et d'un rédacteur professionnel spécialisé (comme le rédacteur technique), Clerc et Beaudet soutiennent que les deux sont des experts en communication écrite et que, dès lors, ils doivent être formés, à la base, en sciences du langage et de la communication. « Tant que les employeurs chercheront les communicateurs parmi les experts en contenu, tels les ingénieurs, ils perpétueront d'eux-mêmes la pénurie de rédacteurs techniques », concluent-elles.

Marjorie Rush-Hovde describes how four technical writers, in two different worksites, employed a variety of socio-interactive tactics in dealing with constraints within their organizations. These tactics were used to maintain organizational practices, to resist them, or to shape the practices pro-actively. Rush-Hovde shows how certain tactics allowed the technical writers to negotiate effectively with co-workers in their organizations, especially by providing arguments congruent with their organization's goals and culture, while other tactics were largely ineffectual. She suggests that the ability to deploy socio-interactive tactics successfully is a key area of expertise for technical writers.

Claire Harrison looks at another facet of the expertise enacted by professional writers. Drawing on data gathered from four freelance writers and on her own experience as a freelancer, Harrison identifies six roles that writers play in their relationships with clients and texts in attempting to gain mastery of an organization's discourse genres. According to Harrison, these roles enable writers to develop "rhetorical knowledgeability": through "reading" on organization's ideological landscape and gaining a sense of how the ideology shapes discourse, freelance writers are able to reproduce, enhance, or alter the organization's genres with great dexterity.

In their study, Graham Smart and Nicole Brown observed 24 student interns from an undergraduate Professional Writing major as they moved from the classroom into the workplace. As the interns accomplished writing tasks in a variety of

genres within their respective worksites, their interactions with co-workers and culturally constructed artifacts enabled them to perform and further develop expert writing practices. Smart and Brown challenge the cognitivist concept of learning transfer, arguing that what occurred in the internships was a transformation of learning and a reinvention of expert practices.

We believe that, collectively, these six articles offer our readers a range of insights about the expert practices displayed by professional writers and about the role that educators can play in preparing their students to enter the workplace as competent and confident practitioners. We hope you view this special issue in a similar light, car c'était notre intention et le point de vue à partir duquel nous avons conçu notre numéro.

Céline Beaudet, Graham Smart

## REFERENCES

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