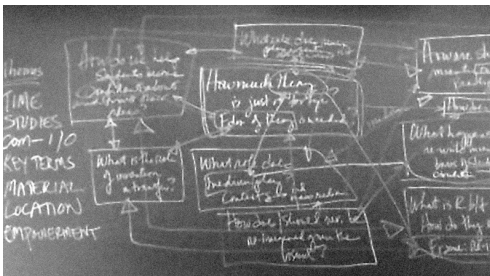


Invention



Definition

Invention is the term used to describe both what writers have to say and how they can go about deciding that content. In this sense, writing is always an act of invention. As a topic, invention includes a wide variety of issues: it can include exploring alternatives, deciding if evidence is credible, interpreting material, considering audience, and beginning a piece of writing. Indeed, there are theories of invention suggesting that invention occurs both as one begins to write and as the composer *continues* throughout the writing process. In addition, like composing itself, invention can be understood as an activity of a single writer composing in a social context and as a collaborative process involving several authors. Invention was always a part of communication, from the days of Plato and Aristotle, and interest today continues, especially as teachers develop invention techniques for both page and screen to help students decide what to say—and how—in many different kinds of genres, from proposals and reviews to research projects, and in different media.

Significance

Invention is at the heart of writing; because composing entails invention, it is considered an epistemological practice—that is, a practice through which one makes knowledge. When in the mid-twentieth century, programs in rhetoric and composition began re-creating themselves, they located invention at the center of that effort.

Resources

- Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *When a Writer Can't Write*. Ed. Mike Rose. New York: Guilford, 1985. 134–65. Print.
- Bawarshi, Anis. *Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2003. Print.
- Beaugrande, Robert de. "The Processes of Invention: Association and Recombination." *College Composition and Communication* 30 (1979): 260–67. Print.
- Hilgers, Thomas Lee. "Training College Composition Students in the Use of Free-Writing and Problem-Solving Heuristics for Rhetorical Invention." *Research in the Teaching of English* 14.4 (1980): 293–307. Print.
- Lauer, Janice M. *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*. West Lafayette: Parlor P; [Fort Collins]: WAC Clearinghouse, 2004. Web. Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition.
- LeFevre, Karen Burke. *Invention as a Social Act*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1987. Print.
- Rohman, D. Gordon. "Pre-Writing: The State of Discovery in the Writing Process." *College Composition and Communication* 16.2 (1965): 106–12. Print.
- Young, Richard. "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention." *Research on Composing: Points of Departure*. Ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell. Urbana: NCTE, 1978. Print.

