

ISMS 2023 PME Working Group Topic Proposal

The Role of the Writing Centre in Military Education Programmes: a Canadian case study

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The proposed paper reviews the place of writing in undergraduate and staff college education programmes in Canada over several decades and argues that there is a requirement for writing support to assist many students in forming cogent written and visual communication.

The paper first examines the educational philosophies of both the Royal Military College (RMC) and the RCAF Staff College/Canadian Forces College (CFC) and the implied central place of effective communications in student learning. In discussing the former institution the paper takes into consideration the recently approved core curriculum (certain courses are prescribed in all degree programmes). In the latter case looks at the drift away from persuasive writing over the past 15 years.

The paper then examines the concepts and modalities of 'Writing Across the Curriculum' (WAC) and 'Writing in the Disciplines'. Here the paper includes an anecdotal review of a recent proposal to introduce the WAC concept at RMC alongside a review with the existing WAC programme at West Point. Tied to a pan-institution practice such as WAC is the question of faculty support for a formal emphasis on writing and effective communication. Here the paper reviews reaction from faculty with regard to adopting WAC at RMC and, similarly, faculty views on use of the RMC Writing Centre by those students at CFC who are completing an RMC masters.

From this point the paper looks at the role, capabilities and 'value added' of writing centres. It argues that writing support programmes are an important tool in better preparing

new and experienced officers with the critical thinking and communicative competencies they need to perform their critical tasks as effectively as possible.

In addition to using primary source and publicly available (Internet) sources, the paper will draw on largely anecdotal evidence provided by a number of previous RMC Writing Centre directors as well as key staff at CFC.

The author has taught at both CFC and RMC. Additionally, he has served as director of curriculum at CFC, Associate Chair of War Studies at RMC, academic advisor to the RCAF Air and Space Operations Course and twice as Writing Centre Director at RMC.