INKSHED

Newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning

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Inside *Inkshed*

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Consulting Editors

Inkshed provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use. Subscribers are invited to submit informative pieces such as notices, reports, and reviews of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, and workshops, as well as polemical discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to teachers in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

Inkshed is normally published five times during the academic year. The following is a schedule of submission deadlines and approximate publication dates:

1 February, for 15 February
1 April, for 15 April
1 October, for 15 October
1 December , for 15 December
Post-Conference: June-July

This newsletter is supported financially by the various Writing Programmes at York University—including the Faculty of Arts' Centre for Academic Writing, The Computer-Assisted Writing Centre, and Atkinson College's Essay Tutoring Centre.

Please send in your renewal form.....

What's New....

1. Another Fall-out from York Strike: No April Newsletter

You'll notice that this is a combined issue: that's because the York strike prevented me from working on the April issue.

2. New Editors of *Inkshed*

This is the last issue of *Inkshed* that Margaret and I are editing. The September issue is going to come from the University of Winnipeg crew—primarily Amanda Goldrick-Jones and Janice Freeman. The University of Manitoba *Inkshed* folk will also be involved providing financial and moral support. The various writing programmes at York, principally the Computer-Assisted Writing Centre, have supported the publication of this newsletter for three years. I want to thank Margaret who agreed to co-edit for the past year; I want to thank the new editors for coming to my rescue—I mean, for taking on this important job for our community. I wish them well. They can be reached at goldjo@IO.UWINNIPEG.CA and jfreeman@IO.UWINNIPEG.CA

3. Complete Set of *Inkshed* newsletters

The new editors, as well as receiving the membership information database, will also receive a full set of all previous newsletters to be available for Inkshedders' needs.

4. Fees

We've included another fee reminder for those of you who didn't submit your 1997 dues. Our finances are not in good shape: please renew today if you haven't already.

5. What's in this Post-conference Issue:

Following the "photo collection," and the minutes of the CASLL meeting, is Henry Hubert's "summing up" of the conference that took place on the last morning of the conference. The reason for placing it here—instead of last—is that in his talk he discusses the various presenters and their relationship to the theme of "reading technology."

One of the innovative features of this year's conference was that we had time to pick from and read what others had left on a central table. Inkshedders were asked to note their reactions to what they had read. Russ Hunt collected the inksheds (they're all available on his web site http://www.stthomasu.ca/hunt/ink14) and I've selected some for inclusion in this newsletter. (At his URL you'll also find the full program for the conference.)

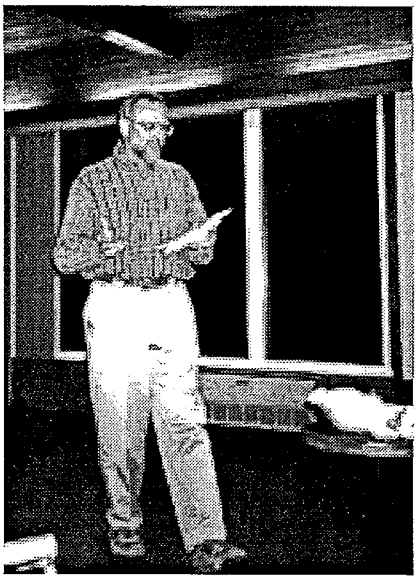
Following these general inksheds, I've followed the programme and selected inksheds from some of the presentations that I hope will provide the non-conference attendee with interesting insights about what was going on at the conference. Thanks to those presenters who typed up the inksheds and emailed them to me. (Please note that the transcribers of the inksheds frequently left off the author's name.)

And thanks to Doug Vipond for sending in his book review—which should have appeared in the April issue along with excerpts from past *Inksheds.*

Mary-Louise Craven
York University

Friday night...

...was Talent night.



Even though Henry Hubert (see photo at left) was bereft of his other "Cariboozers"—see 13.5 online for the earliest reference to Cariboozers—he updated their song (sung to the tune of "Puff the Magic Dragon") to include all kinds of technological references.

New talent emerged at the Talent Night: Rob Irish and Dennis Jerez sang a children's song (by Mike Nawrocki called the "Pirates who Don't Do Anything" from: *Veggie Tales: A Very Silly Sing-Along!* Big Idea Productions, 1997.[videotape]).

You can tell they're the pirates by their hats.

This is the refrain:

We are The Pirates
Who Don't Do
Anything.
We only stay
home,
and lie around.

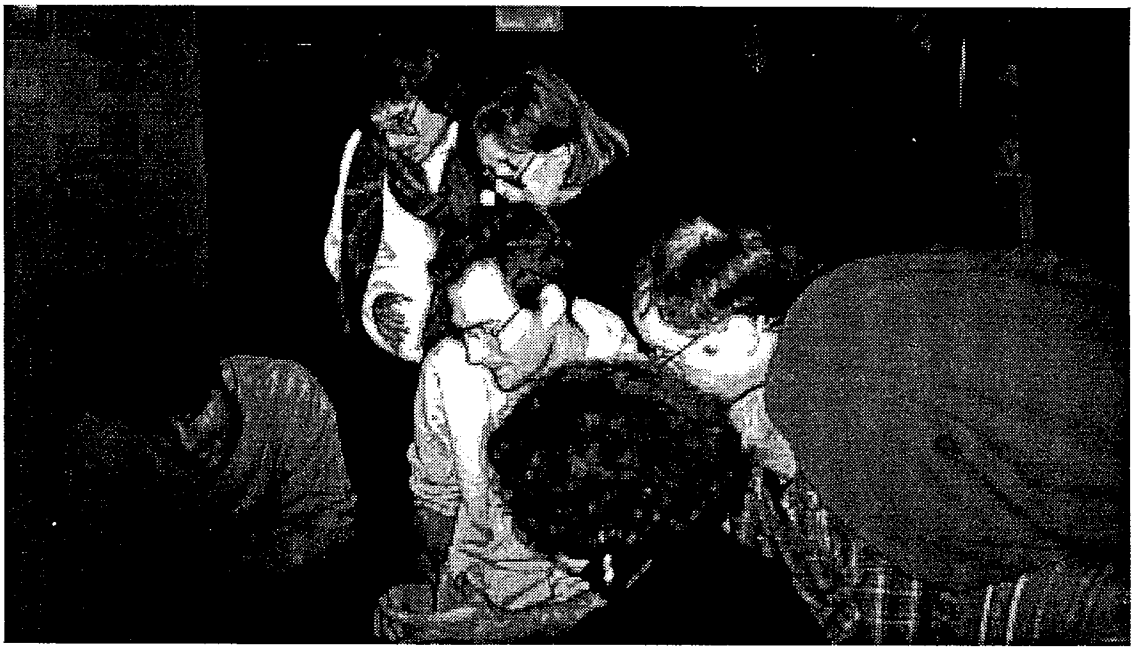
And if you ask us
to do anything,
We'll just tell you
...we don't do
anything.

And speaking of entertainment, Sandy Baardman (aka Sam Baardman) has just launched his first CD, "Kicking the Stone Home." We ordered our CDs at the conference. You can order yours (cost $15 + $3.50 for handling) by contacting Sandy at:

390 Scotia Street
Winnipeg, MB R2V 1W9
baardmn@cc.umanitoba.ca
(204) 334-6403

A review from an unabashed fan (me): "The songs are great." And listen carefully to the CBC: you never know when he'll be on the radio.

And finally on Saturday night, we all participated in a MOO session which included not only those at Orillia, but Inkshedders Doug Brent, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Janice Freeman and Roger Graves. In this last photo a group of us are clustered around a lap-top, communicating online. (Clearly not the "best" way to read technology!)



All and all, a wonderful conference. See you all next year in Halifax when Kenna Manos, Jane Milton and Susan Drain organize Inkshed 15.

Mary-Louise Craven
York University

CASLL Annual General Meeting Minutes
Geneva Park, Ontario, 4 May 1997

Present: Laura Atkinson, Sandy Baardman, Marcy Baumann, Bill Boswell, Geoff Craff, Mary-Louise Craven, Patricia Golubev, Brian Greenspan, Betty Holmes, Lynn Holmes, Henry Hubert, Anne Hunt, Russ Hunt, Rob Irish, Dennis Jerz, Jane Ledwell-Brown, Kenna Manos, Jane Milton, Karen Pancer, Margaret Procter, Leslie Sanders, Christine Skolnik, Stan Straw, Doug Vipond

1. Moved by Stan Straw, seconded by Doug Vipond, and carried: to approve the minutes of the third annual general meeting (Manitoba, May 1996).

2. A statement of thanks from Henry Hubert for organizing the 1997 conference: to Marcy Baumann, Russ Hunt, Margaret Procter, and Mary-Louise Craven. Hearty applause.

3. Election:

Nominated by Bill Boswell, acclaimed: Jane Ledwell-Brown as member-at-large. Nominated by Kenna Manos, acclaimed: Russ Hunt as member-at-large.

4. Reports:

a) Financial Officer (Kenna Manos): Kenna circulated a financial statement and reported that paid membership had considerably decreased. In discussion, various members suggested identifying people receiving the newsletter or on the e-mail list but who had not paid their fees, and reminding them to do so. Other suggestions included contacting writing programs and academic support units at universities and colleges, informing them about the organization and inviting them to join.

b) Inkshed Publications (Sandy Baardman): Sandy noted that two new books had been mailed to members during 1996-7, and that libraries could order copies through John Coutts Library Services. He said that no new books were planned unless CASLL funds were to rise sharply. Thanks were expressed to the team of editors.

c) *Inkshed* Newsletter (Mary-Louise Craven): Mary-Louise said that the terms of the present co-editors (herself and Margaret Procter) would expire by July, as would the financial support of York University. She reported that Janice Freeman and Amanda Goldrick-Jones of the University of Winnipeg had offered to take over the editorship and the maintenance of the Web site. Stan Straw said that he would be willing to ask the University of Manitoba to contribute some funds. Thanks were expressed to the out-going editors for all their work.

4. Discussion of plans for the Inkshed 98 conference: Kenna Manos, Susan Drain, and Jane Milton have offered to make arrangements for next year's conference in Halifax. After discussion, the date was set at May 7-10 and a topic centring on ethics and responsibility was chosen. Suggestions were made about finding sponsors or subsidies, and about bringing in secondary teachers and members of the public. Members expressed approval of the relaxed pace and diversity of activities this year, especially the reading time and the table of reading material.

5 Other business: Discussion focussed on ways to revitalize the CASLL listserv. One member suggested using it to share responses to specific reaidngs. A time was set to open discussion on a specific book mentioned at this year's conference.

6. A general motion to adjourn.

Margaret Procter
University of Toronto

Webs: Real and/or Virtual: Reflections About Inkshed 14

When I first saw reference to the topic of "Reading Technology" in the Inkshed 14 announcement, I immediately thought of reading the changing social landscape as affected by burgeoning digitization. As I began reading about this, my initial suspicions were confirmed: for every word I read, ten words wanted in—then a hundred, then a thousand. The computer revolution is flooding us with information. Will this flood also destroy all the world's inhabitants except for a fortunate few, be they Gilgamesh or Noah, or will this flood initially disrupt the landscape but provide longer-term nutrients to the flooded plain?

The image of the web comes quickly to mind, but the web I found at Inkshed 14 was not primarily the web of the WWW, but rather the web of professional colleagues, with individual strands at Couchiching strengthened by deepening friendships. Ultimately, I see this strengthening of interpersonal human bonds as the greatest boon any technology can provide—or their destruction the greatest danger with which technology can confront us.

Within the contexts of reading, reflection, technology, conference, and friendship, two highly satisfying innovations at Inkshed 14 included a table of shared readings, and the time to read many of those readings. Two of these readings come to mind as I think positively of developing webs. Marcy Bauman (I think) placed on the table Howard Rheingold's *The Vitual Community*, which discusses how the WWW has linked together new communities in powerfully supportive ways, at three levels: the personal, the inter-personal, and the collective, political. Geoff Cragg offered a chapter of Richard Lanham's *The Electric Word*, which suggests five ways that the computer will change the teaching of composition. Of course, the new technologies have introduced a vast number of other positive changes, from new health technologies to new physcial conveniences affecting life at molecular to inter-stellar levels.

But at Inkshed 14, as mentioned, I found the web of personal relationships just as strong as the webs of technology. I'd like to use that focus to review the conference. In the first session, Bill Boswell and Jane Ledwell-Brown challenged us to work co-operatively to solve a murder mystery, oxymoronically to build community by discussing murder—to open a conference! But the objective tasks of finding among the scramble of clues the murderer, the weapon, the place, and the motive (we failed to solve the crime) introduced wonderfully the building of relationships to sustain us not only through the conference but through following months and years, tying together minds and hearts from Halifax and Fredericton to Pennsylvania and Michigan, to Calgary and Kamloops.

Next, Laura Atkinson and Pat Sadowy shaped the history of reading for us—and then, at Talent Night, they shaped for us the geography of Northern Ontario, and the nuances of human emotion spanning southern Canada and the high Arctic. Margaret Procter reviewed reading and writing software, finding much of it less useful than it promised. But I will remember Margaret's informal discussions of coordinating Writing

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Centres at the U. of T. as important to the conference as well. (In addition, she found a Toronto B&B for me, so I could spend a week at the Robarts Library after the conference.)

In successive sessions, Brian Greenspan and Geoff Cragg debated whether the Internet shape can be caught in a textbook, after which Rob Irish and Dennis Jerz discussed the building of a website for student and teacher interaction. At talent night, however, they sang about the futility of all planning, since nothing could get them to "Bawston in the fawl."

Through Russ Hunt's mediation, Andrea Lunsford, in absentia, offered a new syllabus for a seminar on the rhetoric of intellectual property. Andrea notes in her Inkshed 14 preview that "THE text isn't really 'it' at all, and certainly not where the action is. The intertexts, really, are all." So we're back to the webs of meaning. Individual authors, Andrea emphasizes, in fact interweave the work of others that, to use Burke's term, "substantiate" individual work in multiple layerings. Andrea's presentation included reference to Susan West's discussion of "dispersing the self" in manners related to non-western discourse.

Like Rob and Dennis, Leslie Sanders presented work on a web page, this time to tie together the African-Canadian community, and, potentially, other Canadians to that African-Canadian community. Again, this reminded me of Rheingold's book, of the potential for community to be developed within the new computer-mediated social order.

Marcy Bauman's review of the last few decades in computer developments brought memories of both pain and pleasure to most of us—pain at the memories of our first touches in learning the technology; pleasure in the later advanced use to link us together in monographs and MOOs. However, when I think of Marcy and Inkshed 14, I'm almost overwhelmed by the effort Marcy put into organizing the conference itself. I don't want to slight all the other organizers (who also deserve a lot of thanks), but Marcy piecing all that hardware like a puzzle into her trunk and back seat at the end of the conference, contemplating once more her explanations at the border—that image for me symbolized Marcy and Inkshed 14. Marcy brought her technology, her knowledge, and herself to create a community for all of us.

After Marcy's review of technological developments, Christine Skolnik challenged us to step outside of conventions and preconceptions to think "from the outside." Using her experience teaching technical writing at Penn State, she commandeered the attention of oxygen-depleted (and sleep-deprived) conferees with magic tricks to illustrate her approach. Her challenges led straight to the MOO session, in which Marcy and Russ, with the able assistance of Dennis Jerz, linked us with colleagues like Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Janice Freeman, Doug Brent and Roger Graves. That MOO session for me, together with Russ Hunt's final discussion of technology to connect students, wrapped the conference into both its initial and final emphasis: the technology of reading and of digitization must be used to build the human community—OUR human community.

The conference thus very much included those who didn't give formal presentations, but whose presence meant a lot:

> Kenna Manos, who warned us the first night that she didn't just want talking heads;
> Mary-Louise Craven, who laboured to organize the conference in spite of the weight of the York strike;
> Sandy Baardman, who repeatedly astounded many of us with new images and harmonies in his songs—and who reluctantly took names for those wanting his new CD;

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last light off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Henry A. Hubert
University College of the Cariboo

Inksheds: "Reflections on readings"

What I've been trying to read is David Olson's *The World on Paper* —Margaret suggested it last night and I welcomed the tip. I hadn't recognized much of what was on the table & had been unable to make a decision. It struck me that I don't often "find" a book but rather, read something on recommendation. I think it involves my sense that I want someone to talk to about what I have read. In the course that I just finished teaching, I provided my students with a reading list. They could select any 5 of the readings BUT they must find at least two other people who wanted to read what they chose. I guess I have someone to talk to about Olson's book—now I just have to get it away from him long enough to read some more of it.

Anne Hunt

Saturday morning: what this shows is that it's still possible to reconstruct the ambience of the British Library Reading Room. Rain included, and not so far to go for coffee. People moving in and out; some noise. It's a shock to realize what I miss, most of the time: the sense of reading as an approved social activity.

Part of real work. In a way that computers aren't. During the conference what I've noticed is a few obviously composing something, and others—well, manipulating text. Fiddling. We all gaze at the fuzzy projection, but not much actual reading seems possible or practical from the overhead.

For years, decades now, I've been waiting for the breakthrough: a public forum for discussion through clear text available to all, at once. But then I realize that no matter how you process it and massage it, text is text, meaning is codified in a language that is arbitrary and approximate and opaque. Of course. Meaning is in people, not text.

Mind, as distinct from words, language, the mind's instrument or manifestation.

Learning to read never ceases, and what I imagine is a bunch of rabbis in the same place year after year, generation after generation, going over and over the same text which is never the same as the last time it was haggled over. Any assumption that that bundle of readings on the centre table will put us into communication with each other . . . well!

Any communications model is just a distracting metaphor, a displacement from what reading is (or rather, misreading, in Harold Bloom's sense).

Lynn Holmes

Well . . . I was reading Victor Vitanza's *Cyber Reader* and a bunch of the 19th & 20th century school readers. I found them alienating in different ways.
1) The Vitanza book was predictably "hip." I think something like this might be useful for part of a writing course, but it also gave me a sense of technological overload (maybe I'm just tired).
2) The "children's" book didn't seem very childlike to me . . . perhaps because I grew up reading Dr. Seuss. Or maybe it's just historical distance. Still, I don't feel distanced reading Henry James or even Pope? What's alienating me here? Some version of childhood?

Christine Skolnik

I read Randall Jarrell's book *The Bat-Poet* last night before going to bed, and I slept soundly. It's a tale of a bat who stays awake during the day and notices his world, then imitates the nightingale and writes poems describing various fellow-creatures. They respond differently—confirming the characterizations made by the poems. The poems, of course, are Randall Jarrell's.

This makes me think about the bedltime story as institution or ritual. Though it is said to stimulate children's learning by exposing them to literacy in supportive circumstances (i.e. parents' arms, usually), it also works to put them to sleep. (The book ends, in fact, with the bat and his friend the chipmunk succumbing to the drowsiness of hibernation.) A matter of getting away from the hyperactivity of modern life?

Margaret Procter

At 3:30, I go to my room to read with a beer. I take *The Bat-Poet,* & Russell's article, both of which I thought I had read before. But I discover that I had only known *The Bat-Poet* from the excerpt in Russell's piece; I had never read the whole piece. I feel odd reading gloriously by myself at a conference; I feel guilty at "missing" things, as if I have to be an eternal participant. I get over that quickly.

I then move into a trash mystery. I find I am reading it aloud, in my mind's voice, with the rhythm of the Bat-Poet's poetry.

Anon

I'm reading: 1. Selection from *Wired Women* : Interesting & thoughtful but not altogether surprising. Women are, again, marginalized.
2. *Life on the Screen* : This is blowing my mind, even though I've read only 20 pages. "The computer and the Internet allow him (a college student) to explore different aspects of himself—you are who you pretend to be.'" Is virtual reality becoming more real than RL ("real life")? Or more meaningful? Scarey stuff.
3. I am reading coincidentally a series of 3 novels by Stanislau Lem (science fiction -- sort of). In one of them (*A Perfect Vacuum*) a series of "authors" write reviews of non-existent texts. Rather like Borges.

Bill Boswell

So far, apart from quickly skimming Pat & Laura's article, I've only got past the introduction in Kathleen McCormick's *The Culture of Reading & The Teaching of English.* Nonetheless, and with the influence of the presentations this AM, what's becoming apparent is the ease with which reading becomes transparent and merely taken for granted.

McCormick suggests that one approach is to define reading as a limited set of skills, universal and natural. In contrast she posits an emerging picture of reading as a socially-constructed knowledge, culturally & historically situated. This is certainly a more attractive vision to me but I hope to also learn more about how to describe specific perceptual & cognitive tasks involved in reading.

Geoff Cragg

Session 2: (Friday at 11 a.m.)

Laura Atkinson and Pat Sadowy: "From Hornbook to Hypertext: Reading the Technologies of Reading Instruction"

They explored some of the models and definitions of reading that shaped reading instruction in the nineteenth century in North America. They tried to show how these theories persisted into the first part of the twentieth century in materials for reading instruction used in classroom. They contrasted earlier notions of literacy with later notions that (imperfectly and incompletely) replaced them. They also speculated about the relationship between ideas and technologies for implementing those ideas. To illustrate this relationship they provided several examples of primers and adjunct teaching materials from the turn of the century up to the mid-century period.

Margaret Procter: "Instructional Software: Getting out of Reading"

[Margaret showed us two computer programmes: one was an adaptation of a children's story and the other was a "drill and practice" grammar software package.]

Selected Inksheds Following the Presentations:

Alberto Manguel [*A History of Reading*] writes about the shape of the book and how this influences our reading as does the location in which we read.

Right now I am looking at Russ reading the monitor in front of an open doorway with pine trees and a rustic structure in the middle distance. The doorway is both soothing and invigorating—the sun is palely loitering on the grass and fallen needles. If I read now I couldn't keep my eyes on the page with any consistency—as it is I don't...

Betty Holmes

Laura and Pat's presentation reminded me of Larry Cubon's book on the history of technology in the schools—I wish I could remember the exact title but I'm encouraging anyone who is at all interested to at least look at the photo on the first page—neat concept, wonderful technology, but—

It is a photograph of a teacher and some children who are studying geography by going up in an airplane. This seems like an opportunity that is bursting with possibilities for kids to make connections between maps and the real world. However, what has happened is that the plane is outfitted at desks at which the children are seated—facing forward. And, at the front of the plane, directly behind the pilot's area—where the stewardess usually stands to do her thing—is a teacher, with a pointer and a chalkboard and wall map.

Anon

Well, what's really been striking me over the past few sessions is the competitive nature of reading instruction. I mean The William Tell Overture if you get things right? Reading and writing to me are places where you DON'T compete; last night after the discussion about the murder mystery activity I found myself wanting to crawl back into written words...so I went and started playing on the computer. But then today I was looking at Dick and Jane and thinking about the readers being "graded" according to reading level...and then Margaret's software where the premium is on a certain kind of performance—and the performance is competition.

Now, competition is one aspect of social interaction, but unless we're dealing with a very carefully defined game, it's a pretty DREARY aspect, IMHO. So what do we mean when we say that reading and writing are social? And why are the means of instruction "social" in such a totally different way?

Marcy Bauman

Inkshedders' Responses to this inkshed:

1. Reading and writing are social because they are occasions for people to interact with one another—to share ideas and perhaps even change each other.
2. The means of instruction is "social" in a different way because of the ideological nature of instruction—all teaching has its own ideology meant to "socialize" children besides giving them skills and information.

Laura's point that the social context, the reading model, and the technology all create each other in a vicious circle seems absolutely valid for what I've seen in attitudes toward instructional technology. We need to keep trying to understand so we can define the second and control the third. At the moment in Ontario, the economy (or at least one politicized view of the economy as not "affording" particular uses of money) seems to be running things. To teach soundly, we need to consider people much more prominently: HOW do people read and WHY do they (should they) want to read?

Margaret

Sometimes (as Margaret has shown us) the nature of the technology available forces us into using outmoded and wrong ideas. This is not the first time this has happened. At the end of the nineteenth century Parker (1883)

came up with the Thought-Getting Model of reading but what came after him was a series of innovations in reading based on a supposedly scientific attempt to isolate, identify, and assemble elements of the reading process on the model of the assembly line. These behaviourist notions of the process of reading seem to have been foisted on education by an age that was in love with the machine.

Laura Atkinson

Two things occur to me here. One is that what Laura and Pat were talking about comes quite directly out of the origins of writing and reading as a way of record keeping. It's clear that what the Sumerians (or whoever) invented it for was keeping commercial records, and that the notion that all you need to do is get the information off the [page] and into the minds of the people who need it was there as the central thing that reading was for. That's why it was assumed that reading was reading aloud. It was a record of speech. Reading was like what a computer program does when it "reads" a file: I can't see what the file says till I invoke the technology to display it on a screen. So there's a strong historical warrant for the assumptions about reading that drive all those texts.

Second: The notion of writing as transcription and reading as proofreading—accuracy is at the heart of both of these—is related closely to what Margaret was talking about. The assumption that what you need to do to make somebody acompetent writer is to give them the told necessary to put down an accurate, clear, unambiguous record of fact—uncomplicate the ambiguities involved in, for instance, the "accept/except" diction problem—is related to the same notion about what writing is for. The "forty eminent linguists" who attacked the Massachusetts curriculum document last year by saying (among other things) that writing is nothing other than notated speech were taking exactly the same view of what this technology—the technology of writing and reading was and is for.

My problem is that I'm still working on ways to respond to this historical argument. If that's what writing WAS, how did it come to be something else?

Russ Hunt

I don't think it's fair to equate the two types of computer programs described by Margaret. The first type—computer program with book which is read aloud to the student, with some "interesting" things going on—is not that far from "real" reading. There is a book—there is someone reading it aloud. It allows memorization of the text—not unlike a parent reading to a child (with all the warmth missing)....unlike the correction programs. These are so far away from what real readers and writers do that there can be little justification.

Anon

School boards etc., are buying the technology and spending masses of money. Rather than equipping every child in Ontario with computers they should be spending some of the money to hire/train teachers in the wise use of technology. It comes down to effective teaching. You cannot replace that with sexy-appearing software packages.

Inkshedders' responses to original inkshed:

1. I'm just wondering how many real books you could buy for one CD-ROM.
2. Reading a CD-ROM is not just a faster means of traditional reading. The tech changes reading practices, in ways that are objectively neither good nor bad. (The medium is the message.) By the way (sorry) this is one of the issues in the strike at York—at least in some people's minds!! So we have to a) work with techies, b) work with advertisers/marketers, c) teach teachers d) teach students. Keep your nose to the grindstone, your shoulder to the wheel, your thumb on the button, while toeing the line! Now work that way! (Leslie)

Perhaps we need to define reading. When students search the net for info to write a paper, are they really reading what they gather? Experience this term has demonstrated something—don't know what to make of it yet: given a piece (i.e. pseudoscience) to summarize, students seemed to disregard what was written there and, instead, to write a summary of their own feelings re: pseudoscience with one or two ideas taken from the original text.

If such software is a significant background experience for my students, then I must try to help them expand upon and subvert what they understand "reading" to be.

Anon

What really bothers me about the computer programmes (CAI) is the waste of money—no, scrap that: what bothers me is the waste of time. . . .In our developmental course (remedial / advanced ESL), we've lost 25% of class time to a dreadful CAI programme called PLATO. Students who go through it quickly don't even get the full amount of time in front of the terminal—and it does nothing that couldn't be done with a ditto sheet—on which at least the teacher could comment.

Anon

Technology will not go away. We literary people must clearly articulate what we want from technology, so that is can serve us. For the time being we will have to enter the technological world, in order to make it more relevant to our literary world.

Anon

I want to press buttons, not write. Pressing buttons looks like fun and I can get it done faster so that I can go and read in the sun. [Enter]

Kenna@muskoka.chair

Inkshedders' responses to original inkshed:

1. Yes, and if the reward for completing the task of pushing buttons is a thin tinny tune rather than the thrill of learning something new, we'll always rush through the task in order to do something more rewarding.

2. That tune sounded more like punishment for a wrong answer. Consider a program that annoys students with a loud buzzer until they edit a passage correctly. :)

Session 3: Friday at 1:30

Brian Greenspan:

[Brian modelled some of the technological architectures (soft and hard) that are being planned for the integrated living/learning environments of the future, and explore their implications for the future of writing and literacy training.]

Rob Irish and Dennis Jerz: "Untext me Here: Instilling Textual Literacy without Demanding Literary Technique"

[Their paper is available at:
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca:8080/~djerz/untext/

You may also want to visit their Engineering Writing Website at:
http://www.ecf.toronto.edu/~writing]

Inksheds after Rob's and Dennis' presentation:

...If we write to inform or to persuade (probably mostly to persuade, since even our information is to be acceptable to the reader) then documentation should be an integral part of that persuasion. Good citation raises the ethos of a paper, so citation becomes a matter of a) persuasion--using ethos of cited author to convince your reader b)information--using ethos of student concerned about aiding her reader to follow up valuable sources for benefit of reader. Instead of hiding sources, students then flaunt sources! Since flaunting involves pride, students sometimes then begin taking pride in their documentation.

Anon

Moving from window to window seems to me fundamental. If you were using Rob and Dennis's program you'd want to cut'n paste the bibliographic entry into your WP document, but Patricia's students wouldn't have either the knowledge or predisposition to see why that would be useful. There's something happening to reading and writing; I can't nail it down—but it seems vital to me that people understand windowing back and forth because that kind of navigation somehow changes reading and writing, or at least automates a process that used to be labour intensive. The automation does more than save time. [marginal note: does it?] Bill Boswell keeps saying that Turkle's notion that people have multiple on-line identities is alarming, but the ability to do more than one thing at a time seems to be the way the world is moving, for good or ill.

Anon

Rob's response: One of my responses to the fear factor is that different resources meet different audiences. The tech writing website is not for Patricia's student; it's Mars to her, but we will be getting to Mars

eventually. And sometime, once the luxury coach tours are in place, she may want to come along.

Even though I can see many helpful elements in Rob and Dennis's program I can't see how it can help me see the "big picture." I think I could use the program for help with details but I would still need a hardcopy of my paper to spread out around me, to shuffle into a shape I can _see_ before I could begin cutting and pasting on the computer. Is this a characteristic of a particular learning/thinking style? Can computer offer effective help for all the various learning styles or does it work best for one particular style?

Anon

Rob's response to the first question: Or is it a generational thing? As Turkle notes in "Making a Pass at a Robot" anyone over 25 is at best a "naturalized citizen of the computer world.

Session 4: Saturday at 10:30

Geoff Cragg:

Do the changes in textbook design/layout—whether these create multimedia or frozen TV—affect the reading habits and patterns, thus the cognitive processes, of our students, especially junior undergraduates?

Patricia Golubev:

Patricia looked at the habits and strategies of a group of student writers as they integrate/work with various technologies in the pre-writing and writing process.

Inksheds after Geoff's presentation:

... The culture of universities, high schools (perhaps all schooling) assumes a textbook. But courses and instructors and purposes are different, and a book that does not suit one might well suit another. . . .I think we really need to be responsible about SELECTING texts—purposefully introducing them to the students, articulating the way(s) we intend to use and intend them to use the books (and then actually following through with our intents!)

Pat Sadowy

...what strikes me first is that the authors' analysis [Apple and Christian-Smith in *The Politics of the Textbook*] really focuses on alternative choices among textbooks; it seems to be taken for granted that there *will be* textbooks, and that they will occupy the central place that they tend to occupy in North American classrooms, where Ginn & Co. fundamentally shape or at least constrain what happens at the chalkface. . . . what I'd say is that the cost [compared to the benefits of textbooks] is just way too high. We need to move the textbook out of the the centre of our discourse and put it where it belongs, on the web or in the library as a resource, which people choose to use when

they need it, and which is never, never, never assigned to be read—least of all by anybody in the class.

Anon

Session 5: Saturday at 1:30

Marcy Bauman: "A Brief, Incomplete, and Idiosyncratic History of Word Processing"

Leslie Sanders: "Collaborative Websites, or if I had Known then what I Know Now..."

[Please visit the website: http://www.yorku.ca/admin/cawc/aconline]

Christine Skolnik: "Reading Technologies from the Outside"

Inksheds from Leslie's session on the African-Canadian Website (all anonymous):

The problem of innovation and genre, it seems to me, is linked to the problems Leslie identified. The thing about the web is that the genre conventions are still emerging and so there's room for innovation.

Leslie: You mentioned that the web site was comprised of materials pieced together from traditional technologies in a fairly conservative and conventional form—generically organized, etc. What other possibilities did you consider and reject? Would some of them have been more conducive to the technologies offered by the web?

I would be extremely concerned about the anonymous quality of this web site. How would a student somewhere else in the world cite /evaluate/ interpret this info? By giving this undocumented info, are you really making this info any easier to find?

Perhaps one strategy to evaluate web sites is to assess how competent people (or experienced people whom we trust) (5 people? 10?) make the judgements about authority, then use those as heuristics for teaching.

Leslie's website poses a whole lot of complicated questions about text ownership and warrants. There was one particular screen which brought that out for me. One statement about African Canadian literature at the front of the section was framed in quotation marks, but Leslie said the group had written it jointly. The weirdness of it for me was that I had no sense of who it was who was speaking there. I'm not worried about its authority, or truth, or reliability: it wasn't a statement of fact, it was an evaluative or interpretive heading. I just didn't have any way to process it. ...All of this is closely related, I'm certain, to the issue of plagiarism which has been around the fringes of the discussion. I don't mean that this is plagiarism; I do mean, though, that plagiarism is

complicated very seriously by the way in which we find ourselves able to accept these weird texts without noticing their weirdness.

I can't inkshed right now, but I loved the presentations. Now I'm trying to integrate creativity and technology—integrated circuits. Does this mean going around in circles?

Session 6: Sunday 10:30

Russ Hunt: Remembering Writing is Dialogue: Redefining the Role of Reading

[Russ' presentation is available at: http://www.StThomasU.ca/hunt/ink14rh.htm]

What follows below is an excerpted "unlinked" version of his talk which appeared in the conference programme:

Background

Theoretical: why authentic written dialogue matters

Language learning theories
Early language, Vygotsky, etc.
Bakhtin and dialogism
Written dialogue
What's the difference between real dialogue and "realistic" dialogue?

Practical: how my Eighteenth century course was set up

Three cycles of research, three periods
Production of background booklet (examples)
Second cycle of exploration
1.Short assignments
2.Will's discussion of short assignments
3.Longer assignments
4.Editing to produce second booklet (examples)
Third cycle to come

Exploring the context

Will's Coffeehouse:

How the discussion site looks and how it works

Looking at the writing

What does the writing so produced look like, and how does it evolve? Examples:

...
Some first year students catch on...
...

Virtual Presentations:

Andrea Lunsford's virtual presentation: The Rhetoric of Intellectual Property"

In the fall of 1996, Andrea Lunsford taught an online seminar called "The Rhetoric of Intellectual Property." (The syllabus for the course is available at the Inkshed 14 website: http://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~marcyb/ink14/lunsford.html). She and some of her graduate students reported on some of their observations at the 3CCC's in Phoenix. In her virtual presentation to Inkshed14 (see below reprinted from the conference programme), Andrea asked us to look at her syllalbus, her intro to the 3CCC's presentation and finally Susan West's conclusion given at that presentation.

Dear Marcy and all CASLL/Inkshedders:

What follows are some bits and pieces of things I've been thinking about a lot over the last year, things that I see as having a lot to do with the Inkshed meeting coming up so soon. One of the things I have realized, I think, in working on this seminar and on the essays that have grown out of it, seems so simpleminded to me now that I can't understand why I haven't realized it before: we are teaching reading in all the wrong ways (as a general rule). In short, we have been teaching students to read A text, a singular contained text. What seems to me now so clear is that THE text isn't really "it" at all, and certainly not where the action is. The intertexts, really, are all. I see examples of this exciting new kind of reading in the work of Jay Grossman, who has taken Emerson's most famous essays and "read" them for their intertexts, along the way showing that Emerson's actual practices are highly collaborative and web/weaving-like, thus creating a dramatic tension with what he says in the individual essays. I see it also in Jack Selzer's recent work on Burke, the first volume of which is just out and I think quite brilliant. You can probably all think of many other examples of such intertextual/collaborative readings.

That said, will a new "reading regime" (as we called it in the seminar described below) grow up in our midst? If so, what will be its features and who will be its arbiters? I hope you will have a chance to discuss these questions at Inkshed.

Hope some of this material may be of interest. Wishing so much I could be with you.
Andrea Lunsford

Related Inksheds

We've jumped into problems about the various kinds of reading -- for information, for dialogic discussion, for "getting through" artificial and irrelevant exercises. It's salutary to remember the different kinds (historical and present) of technologies that people have developed for different purposes. Christine's comment on the glosses of medieval manuscripts helped enlarge our "I vs. You" discussion, and West's article also reminds us that there are many other ways of looking at text ownership. Many of the illustrations in Manguel's book also make the same reminders. It all makes me think that we need to know our own purposes better so that we don't keep imposing our own narrow "literary" expectations on every text. In fact, I don't mind most boxes and headings, etc., in most text (I'm glad to navigate reference texts faster, and "get through" lots of text and out again). But I also love reading Virginia Woolf and her play with linear and non-linear texts, as well as some heavily linear

and logical texts. The program is choosing FOR students, and I agree with Geoff that textbooks of the kind he describes undermine critical reading practices.

Margaret

What I've been reading so far mainly has had to do with Andrea's virtual presentation and the idea of the single author and her "ownership" of what she writes. The challenge to our cultural assumptions about text and its provenance that is mounted by Susan West is difficult for me to get my head around. I'm pretty comfortable with the notion that the single author is a weird, western concept and that the idea that the single author is somehow entitled to profit from the fact that the string of signifiers she's produced is the only one of its kind and somehow more valuable than others is an artifact of a kind of narrow Western idea about property.

(No, I'm not being ironic: I do think it's reasonable to think those are strange notions.) But what I have trouble with is the idea that somehow a text can be simply an "attending" to a sequence or set of events or objects or scenes, without an overarching ethereal intention -- whether individual or corporate. I think what West is suggesting is that in other cultures -- she uses the example of the illustrations to the Japanese Tale of Genji which simply present, sort of from the top down (like the plan of a house as opposed to a tour through it). My problem is that I still think the language has to mediate what is "attended to," and I don't see how I can "present" an event without, by the choices of the words I use to present it, the order in which it's presented, etc., "evaluating" it (in Labov's sense of our overcoding narratives with invitations to share understandings and evaluations). And if I/we can't avoid that kind of "evaluation" process (I'm not suggesting we should, either), how can we get rid of the notion of "ethereal voice"?

This is a real difficulty; I'd like to be able to think this through, but I'm not succeeding very well in separating the notion of "mediated by language" from the notion of "interpreted by a language user."

Russ

The end of Susan West's piece has an intriguing statement that has important implications for those of us teaching students who struggle with (or even resist) our attempts to help them become literate:

> . . . the thoughts we've shared . . .will entice you into a space without walls, where the project is to know' multiple forms of using language—including the traditional western model we privilege—and bring them into some relation.

Now, I like to think I'm capable of complex thought, where I can hold and relate / examine several ideas simultaneously. But it's taken me years of concerted effort / education to learn how to do this, and I'm still learning. I'm motivated to read and write and comprehend and dig deeper and relate. Many of my students, on the other hand, are motivated by other interests. If I lead them into a "space without walls" I wonder if I'm doing them a disservice. So many of them are "spaced out" when it comes to comprehension, for example. They seem only capable of skimming as they read [page ends]

Anon

I seem to remember a previous Inkshed conference that focused on collaborative writing and our efforts to encourage students to co-operate in this way. Reading Susan West, I feel as if the merry-go-round has started again. There is, after all, a folk tradition in western culture that depends on anonymous authorship and revisions in a later voice (or voices). Some folktales are known almost all over the world (See Dundes, "The Study of folklore" for an essay on the Cinderella story by an author whose name I can't remember) and are altered to fit circumstances. Folk songs are changed as are children's rhymes. "Holler down my rain barrel" from a camp song of my youth is now "slide down rainbow"; the equivalent in proverbs is "Give him an inch and he'll take a mile" with "mile" replacing the original "ell"—I wonder when kilometre will be the accepted variant. West is, I think, generally accurate, but there's an undergrowth of literature that muddies the waters. (Don't ya just love mixed metaphors?)

Betty

Doug Brent's Virtual Presentation: Rhetorics of the Web: Implications for Teachers of Literacy

(text below reprinted from the conference programme)

Those of you who attended Inkshed 13 will remember my attempt at "oral hypertext," complete with one-page overhead transparencies representing various nodes. I displayed one and read it aloud; then we voted on which would be the next "link" to follow to another node. The result was glorious near-anarchy, but with a serious purpose: to explore the properties of non-linear forms of text with no "default path" set by the writer. The exultations over this form of text, led by postmodernist critics such as Jay David Bolter and George Landow, are countered by a more modernist view that a rhetoric that is little more than a do-it-yourself kit for the reader is not really a "rhetoric" at all but merely a form of play, at best exploratory and at worst more like channel surfing than intellectual engagement. My web, of course, came to no conclusions either way.

I have laboured on it since, as Jacob Marley said of Scrooge's phantom chain. Now it is indeed a ponderous chain—er, web—and has been published in Kairos 2.1 [see http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/2.1/features/brent/bridge.htm] with the following abstract:

> We are beginning to see hypertext that uses this new medium to argue for a point of view. But is rhetorical interchange possible in a form that works against the linear-sequential argumentative structures that have traditionally underpinned rhetoric? If an author fully deploys the resources of hypertext, can she still present a point of view for critique and analysis, or is she limited to posing questions and raising issues without asking the reader to try on an answer for size?
>
> What are the forms of rhetorical hypertext and what functions can be best served by which form? . . . .Is the reader of hypertext drawn to channel-surf rather than to engage in disciplined engagement with another's ideas?
>
> This web calls upon theories of hypertext design, rhetorical theory, genre theory and the theory of transformative technology to suggest some answers to these questions and to explore possibilities for hypertext as a reading and writing tool in the classroom.

Book Review:

Clark, Herbert. *Using Language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 432 pages. ISBN 0-521-56745-9 pbk.

When we think about language, many of us are tempted to give priority to speakers and writers: After all, they are the ones who "have the idea." It seems obvious that listening and reading come second, because listeners and readers must decide, after-the-fact, what was meant.

In this book, Stanford psychologist Herbert Clark takes a contrary view. Patiently, systematically, and with many telling examples, he explains that using language is a type of *joint action* that speakers and hearers do together. Speakers and hearers need to coordinate every step of the way. So trying to understand language use by studying only speakers (or writers) is like trying to understand a flute-piano duet by considering only the flute player. Any view of language use that gives priority to speakers is wrong. In Clark's system, speakers and hearers are partners and they get equal billing. This isn't just lip-service, either. He really means it!

Clark's focus is language use, not language structure, and almost all his attention is on spoken language. Face-to-face conversation is the basic setting for using language, he argues, because it is universal, requires no special training, and is essential for (first) language acquisition. He says relatively little about other settings, including written ones, although his analysis certainly has implications for them.

In Clark's view, *language use* includes not just speech sounds and utterances, but gestures, eye contact, and other nonlinguistic signals. Because I can answer a question in conversation by using words or by rolling my eyes (a particular favourite), analysts can't afford to limit themselves to utterances. Clark takes the broad view: "Nods, smiles, gestures—these are all necessary to understanding ordinary *linguistic* communication" (392).

I found this book unusual because there is no theoretical posturing; no polemics. Instead, drawing on work in linguistics, philosophy, sociolinguistics, and psychology, Clark gets on with the job, which is to present his own framework for understanding language use. The most important concept in this framework is **lines of action**, which is further divided into levels, tracks, and layers.

Levels. Here the key idea is the action ladder. Suppose you're pressing a button to call an elevator. In Clark's analysis, you are performing actions simultaneously at different levels: (1) Pressing your right index finger against the "up" button; (2) activating the "up" button; (3) getting an "up" elevator to come. Although the various actions on this ladder are simultaneous, lower levels must be completed successfully in order for actions at higher levels to succeed: the principle of "upward completion."

Similarly, speakers perform actions at different levels. At the lowest level of the ladder, they are executing sounds; at the highest, they are proposing projects. Unlike the elevator example, however, speakers and hearers are intertwined, duet-like. Thus speaker A is executing sounds *and hearer B is attending to them*; A is proposing a project *and B is considering taking it up*, and so on.

For example, Ann asks Bob, "Where did you go?" At the lowest level, Ann is making certain speech sounds and Bob is attending to them; at the highest level, and

simultaneously, Ann is proposing a joint project to Bob, and Bob is considering taking it up. What project? The project Ann is proposing is that Bob answer her question. Bob could reply by saying, "I went to a movie," thereby taking up the project. He could, however, reply by saying, "What did you say?" In this case, he indicates that the reason he is not taking up the project is that he got stuck at a lower level of the action ladder. He couldn't successfully identify Ann's signal and therefore, by the principle of upward completion, they couldn't get any further.

Action ladders can be summarized as follows:

	Speaker A's actions	Addressee B's actions
4.	A is proposing a joint project to B	B is considering A's proposal
3.	A is meaning something for B	B is understanding A's meaning
2.	A is presenting a signal to B	B is identifying a signal from A
1.	A is executing behaviour for B	B is attending to behaviour from A

The key points here are that the actions at all four levels are simultaneous, and that speakers' and hearers' actions are joint actions: Speakers and hearers need to coordinate. Utterances have usually been seen as autonomous acts by speakers, "but that isn't right." (This is about as polemical as Clark ever gets.) "When Connie presents an utterance to Duncan, she is trying to get him to identify her words, constructions, and gestures, and that takes his actions too" (253).

Similarly, problems are joint problems. If A needs more time to plan an utterance, it's not her problem alone. The time belongs to both her and B, so they have to coordinate on the use of that time. Speakers who are having trouble deciding what to say often say *uh* or *um* —to indicate to hearers that they're having momentary problems: *to account for* the nonfluent delivery. Continuing to speak does not require an explanation; stopping mid-utterance does. We say uh or *um* as if to say, "We are experiencing technical difficulties. Please do not adjust your set."

Tracks. In addition to levels, Clark introduces the idea of tracks. Track 1 contains the official business—A and B plan, discuss, reminisce, play chess, and so on. When Ann asks Bob, "Where did you go?" the official business is that Ann is asking Bob where he went. But there is more.

Track 2 consists of background talk about the communicative acts by which track 1 business is carried out. Suppose what Ann actually says is, analysis, A is signalling that she's temporarily unable to present a signal to B. Thus *Where did you go?* belongs to track 1, the official business, but *uh* belongs to track 2. Similarly, when B nods his head, he is indicating, in track 2, that he understands what A is saying, thereby helping the two of them obtain closure at what A can be taken to mean.

Layers. A says to B, "Did the hear the one about the priest in the barbershop? There was this priest who walked into a barbershop..." Clark introduces the notion of **layering** to account for such phenomena. At layer 1, A and B jointly pretend that the events in layer 2 occurred. At layer 2, a reporter played by A is telling a reportee played by B about a priest who walked into a barbershop.

Pretending is common in language use, but the pretense is, again, something speakers and hearers do together. Clark argues that the concepts of joint pretense and layering are needed to account for jokes, stories, novels, plays—all fiction, in fact, and all

literature. But they're also needed for everyday "staged communicative acts" such as teasing, irony, sarcasm, over-and understatement, and rhetorical questions.

For example, it's raining heavily, and A says to B, "What great weather!"

layer 2: implied A is telling implied B that the weather is great
layer 1: A and B jointly pretend that the event in layer 2 is taking place

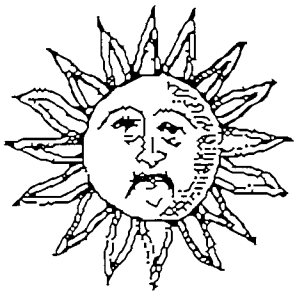
A's purpose is to get B to appreciate that A does not really think the weather is great. Layers are recursive; a play-within-a-play might require five or six layers.

I've tried to present Clark's argument in enough detail so that you can decide whether or not this book fits your interests. As I mentioned, he is overwhelmingly concerned with face-to-face conversation. He says very little about writing or reading and, except for the concept of layering, there is little direct application to literature. Still, Clark provides a powerful and original set of concepts for thinking about language.

Consequently *Using Language* could be a useful corrective, in two ways. First, Clark is talking about language use instead of language structure. Second, he makes a convincing case that language use is a form of joint action. After reading him, it will be a lot harder to give priority to speakers and writers.

Note. Thanks to Russ Hunt for comments on a previous draft.

Douglas Vipond
St. Thomas University



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