Inkshed

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

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This issue was edited by Jo-Anne Andre, University of Calgary

About Inkshed . . .

This newsletter of the *Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning* (CASLL) provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use, particularly in the Canadian context. CASLL membership runs from January 1 to December 31 and includes a subscription to Inkshed. To subscribe, send a cheque, made out to "Inkshed at NSCAD," for $20 ($10 for students and the un(der)employed to the followin address: Kenna Manos, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 5162 Duke Stree, Halifax, NS, B3J 3J6, Canada.

Subscribers are invited to submit items of interest related to the theory and practice of reading and writing. CASLL also has a website (www.StThomasU.ca/~hunt/casll.htm) maintained by Russ Hunt. This newsletter was produced by Jo-Anne P. Kabeary, University of Calgary, Effective Writing Program.

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Inskshed editors and editorial consultants, past and present, include the following:

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From the Editor's Notepad

Three articles in this issue of *Inkshed* present the classroom as a site for struggle and resistance. The issue opens with Yaying Zhang's provocative piece on the ways in which the Western canon and ideas about what constitute good academic writing work to exclude other voices and other ways of writing and understanding; in this paper, presented at Inkshed 17, Yaying poignantly sketches a question faced by second language learners: to resist or not to resist as they negotiate their way into Canadian academic discourse communities. Also in this issue, Carl Leggo's reflective essay on evaluating writing captures his struggles as he first reproduced and later resisted traditional "error hunting" approaches to evaluating student writing. Finally, Pat Sadowy explores her resistance to the pressure she faces to "teach" the government curriculum to the student teachers in her classroom.

Also in this newsletter, you'll find notes on research in progress, minutes from the CASLL AGM at Inkshed 17, and a brief but glorious history of the Inkshed Publications Initiative as well as step by step instructions for publishing a book. If anyone out there is willing to play midwife to the next Inkshed publication, send your proposals to Pat.

We're now soliciting contributions for the next newsletter, which will focus on intersections between technology and writing or writing instruction. That issue will also include a Call for Papers for Inkshed 18, to be held in the beautiful Rocky Mountains in May 2001.

Jo-Anne Andre

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To Resist or Not to Resist:
A question for Second Language Learners

Yaying Zhang
Simon Fraser University

> So the little boys mind began to focus on the idea of surviving the hardships of school. Surviving. Getting through it. And that, he could tell, was estranging him from his family by opening pockets of solitude in the core of his being.... No longer trusting and open with others, he fluttered his lashes over the treacherous innocence of his eyes, learning to leave some space between what his heart felt and what his mouth said. It meant surviving, I say, and dying at the same time.
>
> ----- *School Days*, by Patrick Chamoiseau

> When we were alone in some corner we did talk in our own language and if the Sister caught us it was, You talk English! That's where a lot of girls kind of forgot their language.... They said it was better for us to speak English because we could learn English and read and write better if we kept our English, if we spoke English instead of talking Indian.
>
> ----- "An Indian Remembers," by Mary Englund

> Mama, I got an CAT on my language test today. But Cindy and Sandy said that I had cheated on the test. I didn't! I told them that just because I'm an ESL doesn't mean I couldn't get an "A" without cheating. Mama, do you believe that I got an "Al without cheating?
>
> ----- Ryan, my nine-year-old son

> I think Professors, and even TAs, should be more openminded and tolerant toward ESL students. Some of them really have bias and prejudice. They give ESL students low marks when they write differently, but probably better, than native students.
>
> ----- An ESL student at Simon Fraser University

As a gesture of resistance to the authoritative scholastic discourses commonly used in academia, I begin here with voices from second language learners. Although these voices have their origins in different parts of the world, and the time span of these voices covers almost a whole century, there is an echo of resistance (more determined than my own) which threads through these voices and which embodies the unequal power relations involved in the nature and process of second language acquisition.

In recent years, the general schemes of power and language have been investigated from various research perspectives. Tony Crowley, in his *Standard English and the Politics of Language* (1989), has illustrated in historical terms the political implications of the study of Standard English in British history. In Britain, from the nineteenth century through to the first decades of the twentieth century, the concept of Standard English was identified as the speech of the ruling class and permitted the ranking and valorizing of forms of speech. According to this ranking, the speech of the lower classes is "diseased" or "afflicted," and definitely in an inferior position.

Similarly, Susan Miller, in her *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition* (1991), has examined "language learning [as] the crucial locus for power, or for disenfranchisement" (7). Miller argues that freshman composition was instituted for, and has continued to be provided for, "failures," separating "the unpredestined from those who belong" (74). Focusing on English language teaching, Alastair Pennycook, in her *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (1998), has revealed that English, instead of being a neutral language of global communication, remains a language to which colonial discourses adhere and a language laden with colonial implications.

If we go beyond the theoretical frameworks of linguistics and composition studies, we find that the reciprocal

relationships between English and the discursive constructions of Self and Other have often been captured in conceptualizations of anthropology and postcolonial studies. In *Culture/Contexture: Exploration in Anthropology and Literary Studies* (1996), Valentine Daniel and Geoffrey Peck argue that any literary activity, and I would add, especially the teaching and learning of a foreign language, always has an anthropological component. In the Western intellectual realm, "getting to know the other has been anthropology's raison d'etre" (Daniel & Peck, 2), and anthropology's three strategies of engagement with differences are "conquest, conversion, and marginalization" (Connolly, cited in Daniel & Peck, 3). However, it would be mistaken to think that these strategies in dealing with the Other only apply to times of long ago and places far away. If conquest and conversion are two interrelated operations employed by anthropology in its engagement with the Other in distant lands, marginalization is probably the strategy employed by anthropology in its engagement with the Other among us. If we shift our gaze to the non-native speakers among us, it will not take long for us to realize that colonial and political implications could easily transfer from colonial schooling to modern day language acquisition of non-native students. If we take a look at the institutional forces and practices that institute the normal by marking and excluding the deviant, we will find that the performance of non-native students when asked to meet the expectations of Western instructors has often placed them outside the conventional boundaries of white academia. Because of principles of inclusion and exclusion that go largely unquestioned, non-native students are often denied participation in the play of reading and writing that goes on within the boundaries of the Western academic community.

One of the institutional sites that can shed light on principles of inclusion and exclusion is the history of the canonization of Canadian literature. In a country such as Canada, the formation of the literary canon plays a big role in the construction of national identity. Robert Lecker, in his "The Canonization of Canadian Literature: An Inquiry into Value," paints a unitary picture of the Canadian critical landscape in the 1960s that values "a relation among national consciousness, literary history, and a kind of idealized mimesis" (662). Lecker notes that during the 1970s, the so-called thematic critics, most notably Margaret Atwood, D. G. Jones, and John Moss, continued to valorize "realistic, linear, conventional novels that were the central, defining texts of the new Canadian tradition" (668). Thematic critics' interest in what literary works say about "Canada" and "Canadians" reveals that there is a unified view of what makes Canadian writing valuable. Their reading of Canadian texts became what Jeff Derksen calls "a sort of archaeological dig for hidden and universal Canadianness" (64).

Therefore, the formation and definition of the Canadian "Lit Canon" has constituted a privileged site for the unification of the citizen with the 'imagined community" (Anderson) of the Canadian nation, while the canon simultaneously relinquishes local particularities and differences. Thus, it is not surprising that in her critical guide to Canadian literature, *Survival* (1972), Atwood constructs Canadian literature as a site where the remnants of the old colonial relationship with Britain and the new colonial relationship with the United States could be resisted and subverted, and where a single Canadian national identity could be established. However, this belief fails to acknowledge hierarchical power relations Canada; it fails to discriminate between postcolonial settlers and postcolonial aboriginals and racialized minorities. Such a view runs the risk of ignoring Canada's own position of centrality and dominance in relation to its "Other" -- Canada's racialized minorities. Moreover, Atwood's exclusion of minority texts is also linked to the broader mechanisms for the exclusion of minority texts from literary production, which exist in a myriad of associated sites and practices, across a network of institutions -- publishing houses, state granting agencies, the mass media, universities, etc. It is within these institutional sites that the hegemony of the Western, liberal-humanist discourse operates, informing the criteria used by the gatekeepers of literary production.

While such a canon provides a still centre in a turning world, our students receive and internalize these canonical assumptions. To revise these assumptions would involve more than adding some new token books to the existing canon. To usher in epistemological shifts which will challenge the lip service of the official discourse of multiculturalism, the very reasons for linguistic and cultural exclusion would have to become a focus of study and research.

Now, if we move beyond the content of the canon, which is also the content of many university curricula, to examine some basic assumptions about teaching and writing, a further problem arises, one that involves the very nature of the canonical orientation itself. Let us take a look at the expectations on many instructors' assignment sheets: "Present your argument in a clear and logical way' (i.e. clear and logical to the Western instructor); "Your essay must have a central idea and your paragraphs must have topic sentences"; and "You must not give a summary of what you read. Instead,

you are expected to show your critical stance, where you stand in relation to what you read." While university professors have long been socialized into these conventional assumptions of "good writing," they often do not realize how unsettling they can be to students who do not share their background. The rhetoric of these expectations, of clarity and logic, of a central idea and topic sentences, and most important of all, of the deadly critical stance, that fundamental ethos of the Western university, often presents problems for non-native students, students outside the boundaries of what is taken to be commonplaces or routines of Western academic discourse. When faced with these Western expectations, non-native students often feel estranged because their familiar cognitive landscapes have shifted, and because once-effective strategies have been rendered obsolete.

I'd like to share with you my experience of my first grad paper, which was also my first paper for a Canadian professor. The topic for my paper was "the self-representation of Margaret Laurence." To write that paper, I did a huge amount of research -- I read most of Laurence's novels, her biography, her autobiography, her nonfiction, and even her private correspondence with her close friends. I wrote a long paper about how Laurence constructed herself as a writer, as a woman, and as a mother, and I thought I did a good job. But when I got the paper back, the feedback was disheartening. The professor wrote: "you've covered a lot of ground in preparing this paper and have given a comprehensive account of how Laurence represented herself in her writing. But what I'm more interested in is how you, as an informed and intelligent reader, critically evaluate Laurence's self-representation". I felt so stupid, and to this day I still cringe at the word "critical."

Now, I'd like to return to my initial question which is also my title "To resist or not to resist: a question for second language learners." I have no answer for the question at the moment and I am not sure if there *are* answers to this question. Indeed, non-native students face a paradoxical situation: if they choose to resist Western discourse conventions and remain loyal to their own cultures, they may forever be shunned outside the boundaries of the Western academic world; if they choose to embrace Western conventions, their entry into Western academic discourse community might be accelerated, but in the meantime they will probably have to go through the painful process of relinquishing their previous identities and creating a new sense of self. To have a better understanding of the complexities of writing situations for non-native-speaking students, and to answer Susan Miller's call to examine the political implications of writing, I hope to design a study, which will be part of my doctoral research, which examines the enculturation process whereby non-native-speaking students enter or attempt to enter Canadian academic discourse communities. Informed by the new conceptualization of genre that sees writing as a dynamic, social, and cultural activity, and postcolonial studies that challenge and destabilize the existing hierarchies of social order, my approach will privilege the perspectives of non-native-speaking students, situating them as occupying a central rather than a peripheral position. Thus, cultural assumptions of non-native-speaking students about Western discourse conventions will be embraced and Western assumptions will be held up for critical examination. I believe that to see the world through the eyes of "border residents -- to quote Gloria Anzaldua -- will allow researchers to transfer their gaze and examine some fundamental assumptions and values embedded in Western discourse conventions.

My research site will be the multi-faceted writing contexts of non-native-speaking students at Simon Fraser University, with its large number of non-native students. The data for my research will be collected from observation of classroom interactions, interviews, hearing students "reading the reception of their writing, hearing students' reflections of their composing processes, textual practices of non-native speakers, and participation in associations of non-native-speaking students. One of the factors that will offer me a meaningful perspective on the social, political, and educational implications of language acquisition is that I myself have gone through and am still going through the thrilling as well as painful process of acquiring literacy in a new country. I also have a nine-year-old son who is in his second year in Canada and who has been sharing with me his adventures into the "treacherous" territory of learning English.

I hope that such a study will create opportunities for beneficial shifts in Western epistemological paradigms that might be gained from various resources brought by non-native-speaking students. I also hope that by privileging the subject positions of non-native-speaking students, this study will help us to come to a new understanding of the complexities of the diversity we blandly cite as the "multicultural" Canada. And I hope to have opportunities to share my findings with you someday.

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-- Research in Progress --
A Description of Elementary Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction in Canadian Preservice Teacher Education

Pat Sadowy
University of Manitoba

For my doctoral dissertation, I am involved in an investigation to describe in detail the content and the methodology of mandatory curriculum and instruction (C&I) courses at the elementary level (including early and middle years) in Language Arts/Literacy (LA) in preservice teacher education in Canada. Very little previous research exists concerning the specific curricula of such courses.

I initially developed a database of department heads of accredited teacher education institutions in Canada (English and French) and sent letters to these department heads requesting names of their LA/Literacy instructors and relevant courses. As information arrived, I developed a database of instructors and the relevant mandatory courses for which they were responsible. I then sent instructor surveys to all these instructors. The brief survey concerned instructors, education and teaching experience. I also asked instructors to send me their 1998-99 course syllabi for their LA C&I courses. I have received 46% (71/154) of the expected surveys and 42% (126/300) of the expected syllabi.

I developed, piloted, and refined a coding instrument (30 pages) with which to analyze the content of each syllabus. This analysis will yield descriptions of various aspects of instruction. Among these are key topics covered, textbooks, government documents, instructors' orientations and teaching methodologies, the nature of assignments, and assessment in general. The specific orientations I am investigating are Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition, Overall LA/Literacy Orientation, and Overall Pedagogical Orientation. I also intend to look at all these factors in relation to the language of instruction, regional location of the institution, and education and teaching experience of the instructor, as well as programmatic concerns (e.g., size of sections, early vs. middle years, integration among courses, and integration with the practicum). Overall, I intend to be able to describe the stateof-the-art of current Canadian Language Arts C&I instruction. This description can then be used as a base for instructional decision making and for further research; it will provide a reference point for intensive studies of individual instructors (and instructional teams), for historical investigations, and for parallel investigations of courses within faculties of education, other professional faculties, and postsecondary institutions in general.

I have completed the content analysis of 80% of the syllabi received, and have transferred half of that information to Quattro Pro, which I intend to use for the analyses. After the content analysis phase has been completed, I will complete the inter-rater reliability phase. I expect to do this work throughout the coming year and to begin writing my dissertation in April of 2001.

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Evolving Views on Evaluating Writing: Snapshots of Practice

Dr. Carl Leggo
University of British Columbia

My views about evaluating writing are evolving views. Sometimes I think that I am caught in a revolving door, spinning around and around, not sure what I believe, not sure what I think is most beneficial, not sure what I think is going to contribute most effectively to nurturing confident writers who take pleasure in their writing and know power in their writing. As I recollect memories of my experiences as a student, writer, and teacher of writing, I am aware of the myriad experiences that have contributed to my views about evaluating writing, and, above all, I am uncomfortably aware of how troubling I find the whole question of evaluating writing.

For a long time I recapitulated the practices of writing evaluation, frequently ineffective, even counterproductive, that I had observed in my teachers. I perceived my role as a teacher as the bearer of the red pencil hunting for incomplete sentences and mixed figures of speech and dangling modifiers and faulty parallelism. I taught my students to write in prescribed ways so that their writing read like the writing of everybody else. I encouraged (even compelled) them to suppress their own voices and conceal their own personalities. I wanted none of that witty, sarcastic, punning, self-centered preoccupation that enlivened their conversation.

Now, I understand that evaluation ought to be a way of valuing, of recognizing the value in a writer's words, of respecting the value in a writer.

Two writing teachers: Two teaching styles

I have studied creative writing with two of Canada's finest writers, Robert Gibbs at the University of New Brunswick and Rudy Wiebe at the University of Alberta. The two professors demonstrated diametrically opposed approaches to evaluating writing. Gibbs was genial, warm, encouraging; Wiebe was abrasive, cutting, stern. On a continuum of evaluation approaches or styles, I would place Gibbs at one end and Wiebe at the other. With Gibbs I wrote mostly poetry. In a typical Gibbs class, students read their work, and were then gently encouraged for their successes, and gently directed concerning areas for improvement. Frequently the students met in Gibbs' home where we ate walnut sandwiches made with a recipe from Gibbs' mother. During my year of study with Gibbs I prospered. I wrote a creative thesis under his supervision, and he published my first poems in The Fiddlehead, the literary journal that he edited for many years. Gibbs supported innovation, risk-taking, the power of the word. Under his direction I flourished. I grew in confidence about my writing. I did not leave his class with a sense of arrogant pride in my abilities or an inflated sense of the literary accomplishments I could aspire to. I left Gibbs' class with a sense that I am a writer, that writing is hard work, that writing is satisfying work, that writing is a way of life I can pursue.

With Wiebe I studied fiction writing. In a typical Wiebe class students also read their work, but students attacked instead of supported one another. Wiebe had set the tone in the classes with abrasive and rough criticism, and most students in the class took their lead from him. Each class was conducted like a roast where the goal was to reveal everything that was wrong with the student's story. While the writer's story was attacked and dissected and ridiculed, the writer was required to sit in silence. Only after the victim had been scourged with verbal whips was he or she given the opportunity to reply, to offer a rebuttal or defense. But the opportunity for reply was seldom more than the ugly spectacle of a punch-drunk wrestler flailing wildly at a vigorous tag-team of sneering opponents. I recall only too vividly how I wept on the bus returning home on the nights my writing had been discussed in class. For a year I wrote fiction, and each item was attacked in a way that left me frustrated and hurt and angry. I had no defense. I refused to join the piranha-like atmosphere fueled by the smell of blood, and Wiebe discounted my responses because I was too kind. I understand that Wiebe regards writing as an important enterprise, even a sacred enterprise. I remember his explaining that one of his stories took him three months to write. I remember thinking that his commitment to his craft was painstaking and richly productive. I remember thinking that I could learn much from his example of dedication to writing.

But how has the experience of his writing class affected me? At the end of the course after eight months of abrasive

rejection when I was convinced only that my writing was not very good, Wiebe nominated me for the James Folinsbee Prize in Creative Writing and awarded me the highest possible grade. Moreover, several people told me that Wiebe had told them that I was a good writer. I had never heard the words from Weibe himself. I felt a little like the son who waits for the supportive word from his father but never hears it, at least directly from him. Perhaps I should not belly-ache too much about this experience. Wiebe has his way of conducting his writing classes, and he is an accomplished writer and widely regarded as one of Canada's most successful teachers of writing. But I have written almost no fiction for years. I have no confidence. I want to write fiction, but I choke up when I try.

I am not blaming Wiebe or the experience of his writing course for my lack of confidence. There are many factors that have contributed to my lack of confidence, but, nevertheless, I am convinced that I am a writer who will not prosper under a kind of boot camp, whip-the-private-into-shape approach to teaching writing. Perhaps I have had too many bad experiences with unsupportive responses to my writing. Perhaps I am too thin-skinned. Perhaps I am one of those writers who cannot thrive on wholesale abusive criticism. I take writing seriously. It is my way of life. I regard my writing as personal, as an extension of who I am and who I am becoming and who I might become. I understand my words as inextricably connected to my value as a person, as a human be/com/ing. I want to publish and I want to be read and I want to win literary prizes and I want to be invited to public readings, but above all I want my writing to flourish as a manifestation of who I am. My words are the most precious gift I have to offer others. If those words are rejected, I have nothing else.

Perhaps different people need different kinds of approaches. Perhaps some people need more rigorous criticism than others. What I attempt to do now is invite my students to coach me about the kind of responses that they think are most useful to them at different times. In other words, if a student wants me to focus on punctuation, I will. Or if a student wants me to approach his or her writing with a scalpel, I will. One student, Eve, complained that I praised her writing too much.

It can be argued that the student writer doesn't always know what he or she wants or needs, but I am convinced that the only way a writer improves is by growing self-reflective about writing. The writer owns the writing, and the writer must accept responsibility for caring about the writing sufficiently to want to make it good and effective. Then other writers can respond in ways that support the writer, and not tear him or her down. I agree with Jo Phenix's perspective:

For evaluation to be of any use to the learner, it must come as an integral part of any learning experience. You need to know how you are doing while you are doing it, not later. Then you have a chance to figure out how to do it better. When I am learning something new, what I need is someone to understand what I am trying to do, and help me do it better, then get out of the way while I practice on my own. I don't need a critic, I need a coach. (1990, p. 98)

Response-ability and students' writing

I spend hours responding to students' writing. I write copious notes in response to their texts. When I devote my attention to careful reading of my students' writing, I acknowledge the value of their writing. I demonstrate that I am willing to invest time in reading as they have invested time in writing. I indicate when I am moved by their writing. I respond with my stories. I question and challenge them. I encourage them to write more.

I know that by committing myself to spending time with my students' writing, I will spend less time with my partner and my children, less time reading books, less time at the local weightlifting gym, less time writing essays about evaluating writing, but by spending time with my students I am doing what I think I most need to do as a teacher. For me, teaching is about human connection and community. Teaching is about affirming other people as people. Teaching is about examining and interrogating our lived experiences through our word-making. If my students write narratives and poetry and essays, and I respond with a few cursory comments about correct usage and structure, and perhaps a mild compliment like "Well-done" or "Good work" or "A pleasure to read," and a grade, am I doing more than confirming the common assumption that writing done in school is not real writing, just a practice, a simulation, a test run, preparation for real writing in the real world?

I also encourage peer responding. And I present myself as a peer responder, too. By spending time with my students' writing, I model the kind of responses that I want them to provide one another. My model for writing and responding is the model of a Shaker furniture draftsperson who knows that only time can bring out the grain of the wood, and

make the joint that fits snugly for years. In other words, the response is offered, not out of duty, or out of a sense of putting people in their places, or out of a desire to find everything that is wrong in the picture, but out of affection and connection.

Can we know our influence on others?

I last taught high school in 1990. Armed with three graduate degrees in creative writing, English curriculum and instruction, and rhetoric and composition, I taught a course in expository writing to a grade ten class. I had last taught high school four years earlier, and I was eager to serve my students well with my newfound expertise and enthusiasm. During the school year I did everything but play spoons to invite my students into the pleasures of writing. I used numerous prewriting exercises designed to prime the pump. Natalie Goldberg and Peter Elbow and Donald Murray and Nancie Atwell and Donald Graves and Tom Romano were part of the chorus of writers and teachers of writing that I invited into that grade ten class. I sought to make writing relevant and real and riveting. I wanted to create a writer's workshop where students kept journals and engaged in the process of writing with peer editing and conferencing, every

body working on different projects at their own paces. I encouraged writing for audiences that we wanted to write to. I invited writing about subjects and issues that meant something to us. So, when some students complained that there were too few recreational facilities for young people in our small town, we wrote to the mayor to discuss the concerns with him. We wrote about gun control and divorce and drugs. I explained that the conventions of standard English usage were important, and frequently interjected mini-lessons on grammar into our writing workshops, but I always insisted that correctness was not the heart of writing because the heart of writing pulses with desire for word-weaving and word-connecting with other word-weavers.

But in spite of my committed efforts I limped through my experience in that grade ten class with a sense of growing disillusionment and frustration. From September to June most of the students showed almost no progress. Many of them continued to write as if they were writing schoolwriting, that bland, listless prose that students write for the teacher's red pencil. Most of them wrote only enough to satisfy what they perceived were my expectations even though I tried to link my expectations to their desires. Most of them engaged in peer editing and conferencing as if it were some bizarre ceremony that I had invented to bore and embarrass them. Most of them continued to ignore the mini-lessons in grammar and repeated the same errors of usage over and over. In the end I felt wounded and bruised and defeated. I had tried my best, and my best did not meet with much success. I wondered if perhaps I should have been more traditional, even tougher, in my approaches, more directive, more demanding, more dictatorial.

Then on the last day of the school year, Virginia, one of the students, stopped me in the hallway, and said, "I have a gift for you." She gave me copies of the writing she had done during the year and a note which concluded with the following words: "You really got me feeling good about my writing. I thank you for that." I realized that I had done okay. I did not know who had benefited in their own quiet ways. I did not know who had grown in confidence about their writing. Perhaps I wanted to be SuperTeacher with a bright capital ST embroidered on my chest, but what I had done was offer my students an experience with writing that they had seldom, if ever, known. Few of them were prepared or able to accept the opportunity in the ways that I had hoped, but some grew, and I am hopeful that none were actually impaired by my efforts.

Some practical advice for evaluating writing

As a writer and a writing teacher, I continue to view and review the snapshots of my practice, always eager to reject what does not work and to embrace what serves well. In drawing this remembering and reflecting to a close, I offer the following advice for evaluating writing as a way to acknowledge the value in writers and their writing:

- Focus on something positive in the writer's work.
- Temper criticism with praise and helpful suggestions.
- Read the writing carefully before responding.
- Explain what is being evaluated.
- Don't point out every error.

Be personal in your responses.
- Respect the writing of others.
- Encourage peer responding.
- Provide a second chance.
- Follow up on evaluation.
- Explain comments and be specific in your responses.
- Approach each writing assignment as unique.
- Respond to content and effort first.
- Use a variety of evaluation methods: letter and numerical grades, no grades, formative and summative evaluation, portfolio assessment, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation.
- Conference with students.
- Invite the writer to point out specific areas that you can respond to.
- Consider the evaluation tools to be used, such as red ink or purple ink, post-it notes, response sheets.
- Be flexible.
- Encourage experimentation and risk-taking in writing.
- Don't share another's writing without the permission of the writer.
- Never prejudge or judge too quickly the ability of writers. Be sensitive to students' feelings and opinions.
- Don't concentrate on mechanics as if writing is only correctness.
- Avoid comparing one writer to another.
- Don't make writing an exercise done for evaluation alone.
- Use evaluation as a means to growth, not a barrier to growth.
- Be a mentor.
- Remember that the author is the final authority and must take responsibility for the writing.

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Resisting an Assault on Academic Freedom

Pat Sadowy
University of Manitoba

Instructors who teach curriculum and instruction courses in faculties of education do not have a lot of freedom to decide what should be included in their courses. As with other professional faculties, the expectations and demands are high, both from within the profession and from the preservice students intending to enter the profession. A current example of the pressure facing professors in education faculties is the growing emphasis on curricula as mandated by provincial governments. New curricula (since 1995 or so) exist for nearly every subject area from kindergarten to Senior 4 (grade 12), and plans are in the works for remaining subject areas.

I work as an instructor of Language Arts (LA) curriculum and instruction, a mandatory course for preservice teachers who are working toward a Bachelor of Education degree and who intend to teach at the elementary level. Most will teach in Manitoba. Manitoba curricula for Language Arts are based on those developed by a consortium represented by provincial governments from the four western provinces and both territories. (Similar work has been done in eastern Canada by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation.) Following the work done by the Western Consortium, the province of Manitoba developed and published several new curriculum documents for Language Arts. I am obligated to help my students become familiar with these documents. The curriculum is mandatory; the previous (1983) document was considered by the field as a "guideline." I am, of course, also responsible for helping my students understand the theoretical and practical aspects of any teaching of Language Arts. This in itself has always been a full agenda. Now, with increasing pressure to "teach the government curriculum, I must remove something -- something important -- to fit in any new ideas.

Teaching the new curriculum is not as easy task. This is evident if one considers only the staggering volume of new materials available. In Language Arts I deal with five documents which concern my area specifically. These are:

Framework of Outcomes -- Early years
Framework of Outcomes -- Middle years
Foundations for Implementation -- Early years
Foundations for Implementation -- Middle years for All Learners

These government materials cost just over $150. While students need not purchase all of these, they are expected to know how to use them for their field work and to use them when they formally begin their careers; thus they feel that the materials are "required" whether I require them or not. I also require a general LA methodology textbook, which costs $76.

The physical size of this material is also overwhelming. Each implementation document comes in a box over five inches high and weighs about eight pounds, hardly the kind of thing one would eagerly bring to class.

More worrisome than the physical weight of the materials and the literal awkwardness of teaching with them is the high concept load. The documents introduce lots of heavy new ideas, such as:

-the concept of an outcomes-based orientation to curriculum;
-the concepts of standards for assessment;
-the defining of General versus Specific Outcomes;

Learning the (initially) complex numbering system for outcomes is also a challenge.

I know that teaching these concepts takes much more time than merely covering them. I am also overwhelmed by the addition of two more "official" modes of language. When I started teaching LA, I taught listening, speaking, reading and writing. I now must include viewing and representing as well, and these two new modes imply media studies, multimedia, computer applications, hypertext, and use of the Internet, both by teachers and by children, as well as aspects of the visual and performing arts.

I am concerned about the difference between the natural use of curriculum by in-service teachers versus the prescribed use of them. How teachers use these is an idiosyncratic process. If I structure my preservice teachers' use of the curriculum too artificially, I may kill this natural dynamic, especially for my weaker students who want "the right way" even if it contradicts their instincts.

I am concerned about the nature of a quantifiable set of outcomes. This can lead to a "checklist" mentality in a teacher's approach to curriculum implementation, and to the goal of memorizing the outcomes instead of understanding them and their interrelationships. There are five General Outcomes, and, as I was recently (and proudly) told by a government representative, 56 Specific Outcomes. (I have yet to count them to verify this....)

I worry about the government's various testing programs. I know that the standards tests of recent years posed a threat to many teachers, and I know that my students are aware of these tests. Now, as our provincial government has changed, the status of several aspects of its testing agenda is uncertain, but inclusion of this topic remains on my new agenda.

In spite of any concerns I may have about the new curriculum, others' expectations of me and my teaching all seem to me to lead toward the assumption that I will teach about this curriculum, and that I will do so thoroughly. My students want to know about it and how to use it. Some of their collaborating teachers expect it (though not all are using it!!). Publishers of school textbooks are cashing in on an outcomes orientation. Our faculty was even fortunate enough a couple of years ago to receive the guidance of a superintendent who wrote to us with a list of vocabulary (directly from the government documents) which some of our students did not know when they were interviewed by him.

Who should dictate the agenda of a university instructors course? My colleagues and I went on strike for over three weeks for the autonomy to make professional decisions related to our work. To what degree do such expectations have to change if one is working in a professional faculty? In a specific program? What if the government ultimately grants certification based on the university degree which the students achieve?

I wonder what rights or responsibilities I have in getting my students to critique the government curriculum. If I leave this till grad school, I run the risk of helping my students adopt not only the government's orientation to curriculum but also the assumption that I, myself, validate that orientation. I wonder how I might best balance the government's agenda with my own. How can I know, in fact, what the government's ."real" agenda is? As the curricula were being developed, there was only superficial consultation with us. A colleague from another university ended up on the government's committee; however my colleagues and I have no idea how that selection was made.

I wondered initially how much my resistance to teaching this particular curriculum centred on my own fear because of my own ignorance. I had no time and no method by which to learn it, yet was expected to teach it. By what processes was I expected to come to know about this curriculum and its implementation? Since Inkshed 2000, when I first shared these ideas, I have come to realize that resistance to government curriculum is not merely a personal issue with which I am contending; rather, it is a serious concern for many university educators. A couple weeks after Inkshed, I attended several sessions at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE), and specifically the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (CACS) which highlighted problems emerging from western, Atlantic, and pan-Canadian curriculum initiatives. I look forward to further conversations about these issues.

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CASLL Business Meeting
AGM Minutes
May 14, 2000
Inkshed 17
Bowen Island B.C.

ATTENDING: Kathryn Alexander, Jo-Anne Andre, Laura Atkinson, Marcy Bauman, Diana Brent, Doug Brent, Rebecca Carruthers, Geoff Cragg, Mary-Louise Craven, Janice Freeman, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Patricia Golubev, Betty Holmes, Lynn Holmes, Russ Hunt, Roberta Lee, Shurli Makmillen, Jamie MacKinnon, Pat Sadowy, Leslie Saunders, Karen Smith, Tanya Smith, Ken Tallman, Anneke Van Enk, Yaying Zhang

1. The group discussed whether it should try again to co-ordinate the Inkshed conference with the Social Sciences and Humanities Congress (CATTW or CSSR). It was decided that it would not be practical to do this in 2001 since the Congress will be held in Laval in 2001, where there are no members of CASLL. However, the Congress will be in Toronto in 2002, which might make it possible to co-ordinate in that year. Although joint sessions may not be feasible, it would be worthwhile to at least co-ordinate times and places to make it easier for cash-strapped members to attend both conferences.

2. The University of Calgary volunteered to host the Inkshed conference in 2001. This will put it in the far West two years in a row but it seemed worth breaking the tradition of alternating east/central/west locations in order to get in sync with the Congress in 2002.

Various conference themes suggested included

- writing as transaction
- reading audiences
- being read
- embracing the reader(s)
- desiring readers
- passions, potions and desires: in and through the writer to the reader

Russ's suggestion of a "passionate sprawling brute of a conference exploring the borders of desire" was unfortunately rejected as silly. The group decided to leave the details to be shopped around by the organizers via the CASLL list, with the suggestion that something expanding the boundaries of the reading/writing connection might be timely.

3. Jo-Anne Andre and Barbara Schneider volunteered to continue producing the Inkshed Newsletter for another year. The newsletter will gradually move in the direction of electronic format but for now will continue to produce paper copy for those who indicate that they prefer it. Jo-Anne and Barbara earnestly requested short work-in-progress reports, synopses of Inkshed 17 presentations, or other copy.

The newsletter subscription list will be compared with the list of paid-up CASLL members and long-standing non-payers will be reaped.

4. The group agreed to drop efforts to propose a Canadian Caucus Roundtable at next year's CCCC, but to propose a Canadian Caucus meeting with Janice Freeman as chair. A proposal was sent to NCTE forthwith.

5. Pat Sadowy reported that CASLL publications now has $4249.51 in the bank owing to slow but continuing sales of previous volumes. This would be enough to produce a further "slim volume" in a print run of 500 if anyone was willing to undertake the editorial work based on the template created by the former board. It was suggested that the Print Futures program at Douglas College might be approached as a collaborator. No one volunteered at the meeting but it was agreed that a call for proposals/volunteers could be run in the next newsletter.

6. Kenna Manos' treasurer's report was read by Russ Hunt:

INCOME:
Balance from May 9, 1999: $1639.20 Annual dues to May 10, 2000: $750.00 Total Income: $2389.85

EXPENSES:
Inkshed 2000 startup: $600.00 Total Expenses: $600.00

BALANCE:
$1789.85

Note: expenses were lower this year because Inkshed 16 paid the travel grants to graduate students out of its own surplus.

The group agreed to use CASLL funds to top up the residue from Inkshed 17 to $1000, to be used to subsidize graduate students who attended Inkshed 17. The organizing committee will contact Kenna for the top-up funds when they have the final balance, and then distribute them as they see fit.

7. The group agreed unanimously to reconfirm the current CASLL board. Previous minutes indicate that these are:

Margaret Procter, Patricia Golubev, Stan Straw, Mary Kooy (elected in 1998 for a three year term, that is until 2001), Jane Ledwell-Brown (re-elected) and Martin Behr (elected in 1999 for a three-year term, that is until 2002). Kenna Manos will stay on as Treasurer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

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Inkshed Publications Initiative: A Brief History and Initial Procedures

Pat Sadowy
University of Manitoba

In the early 1990s the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning (CASLL) established a forum for the publication of scholarly works related to the professional concerns of its members. This arm of CASLL was called the Inkshed Publications Initiative (IPI). A group of Inkshed members from Winnipeg volunteered to administer the venture and to serve as the Edito- rial Board. Those involved at the time were: Laura Atkinson, Sandy Baardman, Neil Besner, Pat Sadowy, and Stan Straw.

As a group we oversaw the publication of five books (three monographs and two edited volumes):

- *Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities* (R. Graves, 1994)
- *Contextual Literacy: Writing Across the Curriculum* (C. Schryer & L. Steven, eds., 1994)
- *Critical Moments in the Rhetoric of Kenneth Burke: Implications for Composition* (M. Behr, 1996)
- *Two Sides to a Story: Gender Difference in Student Narrative* (S. Rogers, 1996)
- *Integrating Visual and Verbal Literacies* (W. F. Garrett-Petts & D. Lawrence, eds. ,1996)

Details about these books as well as ordering information may be found at http://www/stthomasu.calinkshed/pubs .

Those of us remaining from the original publication collective have not had the time to consider another publication. Orders for the existing books continue to come in, and I continue to fill the orders and deposit the cheques. Our balance as of July 2000 is just over $4,400, which is enough to print another book if anyone were willing to take on the task.

When we were putting together the first book, the entire task was new to most of us. As an aid to putting together subsequent books, I recorded the process used. Although we modified it somewhat for each publication, the things to do list was a helpful guide. I am including that original list here to help members get an idea of what is involved in publishing a book. I am not including it to scare people away from the idea of being involved in the world of publishing. The publication of these books was a lot of work, surely, but it was a rewarding experience, one that helped us to appreciate very sincerely the work involved in the creation of any printed work. If you are interested in taking up the work of the publications initiative, please contact me (via email at sadowyams.umanitoba.ca) for further details.

INKSHED BOOK PUBLISHING PROCEDURES

1. Put out a call for proposals
2. Receive manuscript proposal
3. Copy proposal to three reviewers Receive reviews
4. Decide collectively concerning acceptance If rejected, inform author and file all materials
5. If accepted, inform author and continue steps below
6. Set up a timeline with author
7. Set up a timeline with publication collective
8. Send Letter of Understanding to author (Re: copyright, royalties, etc.)
9. Receive initial draft of manuscript
10. Edit manuscript for content changes required
11. Inform author of content changes required
12. Receive second draft
13. Continue to edit drafts for content until satisfactory
14. Contact printing companies for quotes re: budget information (e.g., print run, cover style, paper type)
15. Make final decisions about which printing company will print the work
16. Make final decisions (in writing) with printer regarding style choices, costs, specific requirements
17. Write introduction, if needed

18. Decide which style guide will be used (e.g., APA/MLA/Chicago)
19. Copy edit the entire manuscript- introduction, acknowledgements, pref ace, footnotes, tables, figures, captions, reference list, etc.
20. Check each reference item for complete ness and style formatting
21. Compare reference list to items refer enced (manually or later via indexing procedure)
22. Make final decision (with author) con cerning exact title
23. Solicit author information--names, birth date, etc
24. Apply for ISBN number for the volume
25. Apply for Cataloguing data
26. Receive ISBN number
27. Receive Cataloguing data
28. Prepare title page
29. Prepare data/ISBN etc. page
30. Copy edit data/ISBN page
31. Decide on all graphics (photographs, tables, figures) required
32. Prepare a file of Headings and Captions for all graphics that will later need to be glued on vertically
33. Make camera-ready finals of all graphics
34. Decide cover colour(s) and design
35. Solicit photograph for back cover if needed
36. Prepare copy for back cover Copy edit back cover--double check ISBN for accuracy
37. Prepare initial mock-up of entire cover at real size
38. Solicit cover designs
39. Select preferred cover design elements
40. Receive sample of finished cover
41. Approve final cover
42. Decide if indexing will be content index, author index, or both
43. Mark indexing codes for every chapter Review/double check indexing codes for every chapter
44. Mark indexing codes for introduction, preface, acknowledgements, footnotes, captions, etc.
45. Mark indexing codes for reference list (authors only).
46. Generate each index (each chapter, pref ace, references, etc.) separately to detect errors, then delete the trial index (the Define Index code prompt AND whatever was generated) from the bottom of each file. Before you start, list each file in order on paper and cross each file out as you complete it.
47. Note on a separate sheet any double sur names (e.g. two different Smith refer ences)
48. Prepare the formatting codes for the final document
49. Import formatting codes into each sub section (each chapter, preface, etc)
50. Format all footnote pages
51. Format reference pages
52. Print a copy of the document and check it for formatting errors
53. Fix all formatting errors
54. Combine all copy into one file
55. Adjust page numbering codes and chap ter header codes if necessary
56. Prepare formatting for index (in col umns) at very end of document
57. Decide on Table of Contents (TOC) layout
58. Format TOC pages)
59. Mark all copy with TOC codes
60. Generate TOC and check for accuracy and appearance
61. Generate index
62. Amend index concerning duplicate surnames of authors
63. Finalize all formatting and print a final copy
64. Glue on logo to any pages) where logo is needed
65. Glue on final graphics to final pages
66. Glue on final headings and/or captions to final pages
67. Recheck entire document for any discrepancies
68. Fix whatever is fixable

69. Put together (in a box) the cover design, manuscript, colour details, paper type de tails, print run details, etc.
70. Contact printer to pick up the whole thing for printing
71. Celebrate then sleep
72. Rejoice when you receive the final prod uct
73. Send six copies to author
74. Send two copies to National Library of Canada for Legal Deposit
75. Receive Legal Deposit receipt and file it
76. Complete and submit information forms for Canadian Books in Print and Quill and Quire
77. File all correspondence, etc. concerning the volume
78. Mail copies to members, subscribers, potential reviewers, etc.
79.

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-- Research in Progress --
Student Dialogue in the Computer Room

K. E. Smith
University of Manitoba

ABSTRACT

This study explores research methods that could be used to examine the dialogical environment in computer rooms for a better understanding of how to teach English Language Arts in the presence of technology. A sample of conversations in the computer room was tested to see if M.A.K. Halliday's functions of language would work as a categorical measure for exploring conversations in the presence of technology. Six pairs of grade nine students participated in the study, three each from two classes. Their conversations were transcribed from videotapes and then later categorized and given numbers for the type of conversational move that was made. A conversational move was defined as a phrase or phrase/gesture combination that clearly indicated a category of Halliday's functions of language.

The results of the study suggest that Halliday's functions of language facilitate an analysis of teaching using technology and that student-to-student dialogue in the computer room improves learning and encourages students to not be afraid of the problems they can encounter using technology. Recommendations for teachers include providing students with a high degree of self-regulatory background knowledge in order to successfully stay on task using the Internet as a research tool. Self-regulatory knowledge must include Web search skills, broad knowledge of web site resources, and broad and narrow concepts of content knowledge.

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