Doug, Thanks ten bushels for the two pieces. I used the one piece this issue + will run the other in 5.5. Both are very fine. I fell into such fits of laughter as I key-boarded the piece in this issue that it took me twice as long to get it typed in — Thanks! And Cheers,
Jim

Inkshed

Newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Writing and Reading
Volume 5, number 4. September 1986.

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> It is difficult to imagine . . . how writers can have a purpose before they are located in a discourse, since it is the discourse with its projects and agendas that determines what writers can and will do. The writer who can successfully manipulate an audience (or, to use a less pointed language, the writer who can accommodate her motives to her reader's expectations) is a writer who can both imagine and write from a position of privilege. She must, that is, see herself within a privileged discourse, one that already includes and excludes groups of readers. She must be either equal to or more powerful than those she would address. The writing, then, must somehow transform the political and social relationships between students and teachers.
>
> David Bartholomae, "Inventing the University," *When a Writer Can't Write*, ed. Mike Rose (New York: Guilford Press, 1985): 139–140.

𝔍nksheð

The great art of writing is the art of making people real to themselves with words.
Logan Pearsall Smith, *Afterthoughts.*

Editorial Inkshedding

Subscriptions

You will notice that I'm running the subscription form once again. This is the last time for a while, I promise you, but let me tell you why it's back again now, when I told you you'd see it in March and May only. I ran the form last spring because I agreed with several people who insisted that *Inkshed* was almost certainly not reaching everyone who should be counted among its readers. At that time the newsletter had 188 subscribers. Now, after running the form twice, the newsletter has 90 subscribers. That's why.

Challenge

I can't claim to know what those numbers mean. I won't even speculate about the matter here. But I will issue these some challenges to you: First, I challenge those of you who wish to continue with us (even as an eavesdropper) to remember to re—subscribe. (If you can't recall whether or not you've already re—subscribed, check the numbers in the upper right—hand corner of your mailing label: if the numbers are 85—86, you have not re— subscribed and you will not be a subscriber after this issue.) Second, I challenge you to give copies of *Inkshed* to colleagues who are not but perhaps ought to be subscribers. (Or, if you have no way to copy the newsletter, send me names and addresses and I will send them copies.) And third, I challenge you to tell us or show us who we are or ought to be, *whether* we ought to be, what we ought to be doing. Action—doing something—is what we need. We should not merely *talk* about what to do: we should *do* it. So, if you can, define us by writing something that exemplifies what we are or ought to be, rather than tackling the definition discursively.)

I'd like again to remind you, as you consider especially my third challenge, that *Inkshed*'s nature as a newsletter is properly determined not so much by my editorial policies as by what its readers submit for publication. I publish what people send me. This is genuinely important, for it means that anyone who wishes to change the subject—or who wishes to change what we do—in *Inkshed* can do so simply by sending a piece representing the kinds of things he or she would like to see in the newsletter. If you're looking for items with more scholarly rigor, send something with scholarly rigor. If you're looking for items that have to do with Monday morning, send a Monday morning kind of piece. If you're looking for ideas about course design, send your ideas (or questions) about course design. If you're looking for more controversy, send something controversial. Really, that's all there is to it. If anyone else reads the piece (and, of course, someone will), a transaction will have occurred and there's a good chance *Inkshed* will have been changed. This does not mean someone will write back to comment or reply; but it can mean that a new subject or a different way of talking about things will have been "legitimized." Essay away, folks—especially those among you who have never submitted a piece to the newsletter. Simple sorts of information and ideas are the stuff with and through which we function. No one asks for profundity or even for fine writing. I am, as I have said repeatedly, an editor utterly without discretion. Put your oar in. To quote Andrew Marvell again, would you 'spare [your] own pains, and prevent inkshed. . .'?

Editor, *Inkshed*

Since I will be on sabbatical leave in 1987–1988, I will be unable to serve as *Inkshed*'s editor during that academic year. And, anyway, I think it's time for a change. (Getting a new editor for *Inkshed* might well be one of those revitalizing acts that needs doing.) Any suggestions for a procedure for replacing me? Any nominations? (By the way: Russ Hunt has said he's willing to serve as editor during 1987–88, but he will then be gone 1988–89.)

Anyone interested in taking on the newsletter should know that St. Thomas has from

the beginning generously underwritten all the publishing and mailing costs of the newsletter—that is: photocopying, printing, stationery, envelopes, postage. Subscription contributions have paid my own costs (for software, paper, printer ribbons, repairs, and incidentals). Photocopying costs approximately $360.00 per year; postage something like $500.00; and stationery and envelopes another $200.00 or so. (That is, *Inkshed* costs St. Thomas perhaps $1,200 or $1,400 per year.) I keyboard 90-95 percent of the copy (because I prefer to); my wife Jackie and I proofread. Then, the newsletter printed, the two of us do the folding and stuffing. I put in perhaps 25 or 35 hours per issue (I've never kept track). I could not do it without a wordprocessor. I could not do it without the support and friendship of a large number of people—starting with the Consulting Editors, but extending as well to a couple dozen others. And I could not do it if it were not fun.

I'd like to hear from you. We can talk about the matter publicly or privately.

Inkshed in Wyoming

I went to the Wyoming Conference on English again this summer. I saw going to that conference as an opportunity to give a talk on something that mattered to me, learn some things, see a number of friends, and get some rest of a kind. I gave the talk; I learned some things; I spent some good time with some good friends (including a few members of the Inkshed Caucus); but the conference began Monday morning and by Tuesday I was leading inkshedding sessions. "Back by popular demand"—at the urging of several veterans of my workshop there last year, and at the request of the Conference Director, Tilly Warnock. (What's an "inkshedding session"? In brief: people who have shared a common experience [at a conference this might be a keynote speech or a series of general sessions] write for fifteen minutes or so "in response to" that experience; some or all of those who have written then read the "inksheddings" and mark passages that seem especially interesting or timely or remarkable; marked passages are then, after being either cut and pasted or transcribed, published [photocopied] for all conferees to read. These excerpted writings thus become an integral part of the conversation of the gathering.) The final inkshedding session, Thursday evening, was a marathon affair. We formed into groups to write, collaboratively, "position statements" on issues that had arisen during the first four days of this four- and-a-half-day conference. So seriously did participants take this task that we wrote and revised for over two hours—well beyond the beginning of the Conference Cocktail Party (and then a member of my group stood at a kitchen counter in the party host's house, recopying our piece to be certain people would be able to read it the next morning). So I missed some rest. But the inkshedding contributed greatly to the conference, and it was mightily worth doing. Tilly Warnock wrote, afterward: "I think inkshedding is critical to the Wyo. Conference now and am very glad you were able to lead it again. I felt it was squeezed in but hope next year to schedule the sessions at a time more people can participate. I hope you can come again."

Inkshed III

I understand **Stan Straw** and **Nan Johnson** will be organizing the next Inkshed conference—Inkshed IV—in Winnipeg next May, scheduled for the 2-3 days before the CCTE Conference opens. Watch for announcements (about both conferences, I hope).

Missing You

I'm sorry I missed those of you who attended Inkshed III and the Ottawa conference. My health? Well, I'm just fine. Thanks.

Jim Reither

On Not Surveying Canadian Writing Programs

Call me a quitter. And call me naive, but the original idea certainly seemed natural, straightforward, pedestrian, downright perfunctory. It was to be an overdue questionnaire survey of Canadian post-secondary writing programs. Essentially an updating and elaboration of Russell Hunt's little-known 1981 report for the Canadian Association of Chairmen of English. Facts about courses, enrolments, texts, pedagogies, staffing, and matters of institutional policy. No additional impetus for such an update was necessary than Hunt's conclusion in that CACE report:

> . . . in the area of writing programmes at least, English departments in Canada represent a series of isolated, insular cultures, each speaking its own language and holding to its own patterns of assumptions and values without paying a great deal of attention to what is going on elsewhere. (5)

Who can deny that the same wilful fragmentation and serendipity persist today (despite recent efforts of Inkshed people and some others) or that the progress of "writing" as an advanced discipline in Canada would benefit from a fuller sharing of information and experiences? So, notwithstanding certain limitations and sinister hints in Hunt's document, I resolved in 1984 to undertake the onerous but apparently mundane renewal as a service to our thing.

The project was announced in the *Inkshed* Newsletter, described at the Edmonton Inkshed Conference, and made known through other channels. Encouragement and unofficial offers of help began to arrive. My own university awarded a grant to cover the cost of printing and mailing, and other funds were obtained for clerical and computing assistance. Everything looked good, albeit dull.

From the beginning, however, it became increasingly evident that a sufficiently complete survey of the type intended would be impossible. Preliminary contacts with about a dozen selected Departments coast-to-coast disclosed a lot of resistance to the scheme. In particular, I realized that the two basic conditions I had laid down for myself (the official participation of virtually all Canadian universities and colleges, and, secondly, respondents to be knowledgeable program co-ordinators, not coy Department Chairpersons) were simply not going to be satisfied. In both regards the co-operation of the institutions was in too many cases not forthcoming. After months of tiresome exploratory telephoning, correspondence, counsel, and (yes) compromise, I gave up in frustration and no little indignation. The survey has been scrapped and the funding for it returned unspent.

Because the demise of this project strikes me as symptomatic of what is wrong in our field here in Canada, and because I do hope someone else will try something like it again soon, I'll explain further. But first let me admit that two or three of my particular desiderata were perhaps unrealistic. Besides insisting on nearly complete data and (at first) on sidestepping Department chairpersons, I deviously included in the draft questionnaire various items about the "working conditions" of composition teachers, about curriculum philosophy, and in general about the special academic and administrative forces (read *politics*) that influence our work at most institutions. There were also technical and pedagogical questions the drift of which would be recognized only by *cogniscenti*. Altogether, then, I was clearly probing into areas not only of opinion but of controversy. And while I think I was delicate and above-board about it, the overt acknowledgement of such issues could have been scary for a lot of the reluctant oppressors and/or willing victims. I must also admit, more charitably, that certain questions might occasionally have been honestly unanswerable. And, further, that doubts about the reliability and validity of any results in such areas would have been quiet understandable. Mind you, there were very few items of that type.

But in fact it does not appear that the *kind* of questions really had much to do with the likely "abstention" of too many universities. An eyebrow was raised now and then at the sensitivity of certain bits, but actual resistance turned out to be of a more generalized sort. Three different areas of demurring can be cited. One that surprised me was the frequent unwillingness of otherwise supportive program co-ordinators to respond to questions of any kind unless their names and institutional affiliations were somehow concealed. I shouldn't have been surprised. Most people in such positions are untenured and in any case not authorized to speak for publication on matters of internal university policy and practice. The nervous vulnerability of these people and the importance of obtaining official and identifiable data finally induced me to yield on my initial "no-chairpersons" dictum. The compromise gained me nothing. Even chairpersons often wanted anonymity, or to respond personally rather than officially, mainly on the grounds that the whole project is just too volatile right now (on campus rather than off) for public commitments to principle or procedure. Others confessed that their writing courses were such ad hoc things that to muse on "principles" or "program" would be absurd. The third and more natural problem was the cost in time and efforts of collecting data for yet another lengthy questionnaire. One has to sympathize with that one, though it is curious that the information should be so hard to assemble. I thank the old friend and Department chairperson who promised to improvise something as a personal favour to me, but even that outlook indicates the vague and anomalous bother that Writing represents for too many academic administrators who nevertheless insist on remaining in charge of it. It's one reason I had resolved to work instead with informed and presumably enthusiastic area co-ordinators whenever such positions existed. Ah well.

So, faced with the almost certain non-participation of at least some significant Canadian writing programs, and dispirited anew by the "diplomatic" obscurantism plaguing our field, and busy enough with other academic research, I finally saw no point in pursuing even a downscaled version of my survey.

The up side, if you're cynically inclined, is that my experience confirms our dismay about the Writing situation in this country without the trouble of actually doing the survey. Though hardly cheering, such a conclusion does provide some focus for possible new Inkshed-like efforts by people who are fed up with the ignorance, bungling, timidity, injustice, jealousy, and expediency-serving obfuscation that continues to thwart the lively growth of this discipline in Canada. Another rationalization of failure is to reflect that the past year has seen changes under way in programs at several Canadian universities. To name only institutions in my immediate region, McMaster, Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier are making major adjustments. An exhaustive report on the 1985 situation would have been hopelessly obsolete by now. Moreover, here at WLU, for example, a drawn-out and fluctuating transition from one paradigm to another would make it hard for me to fill out my own questionnaire! And still in the case of my own Department, which in six years has endured four very different Chairpersons and three very different Deans, I can see how misleading it is to define "policy" or provide "history" in any such academic milieu. Still, one might expect sound curricula to survive power shifts. The literature program usually does. Call me naive.

Nor are the larger ongoing problems, myths, and phobias unique in all respects to the Canadian scene. As is my wont lately, I recommend a regular re-reading of Mike Rose's article "The Language of Exclusion" in *College English* 47.4 (1985). That shrewd essay ably outlines the nature and implications of writing's ambiguous place in the university. The closing paragraph of the piece is especially eloquent. And Maxine Hairston is good too in *ADE Bulletin 81* (1985) on departmental infighting. We may need voices like those in Canada if "composition" is to consolidate itself as a vigorous and respectable discipline for teaching and research.

And of course someone else can yet do a survey. It could possibly be a more modest enterprise or, as I would now think best, a frankly unofficial one that relies on information and opinions submitted (anonymously or otherwise) by programs co-ordinators or practising teachers. Results of such a survey would carry little weight with administrations, but we would be helping ourselves in other ways.

Finally, let me thank the many Inkshedders who wrote supportively. I cannot name you all, and apparently might do you a disservice if I did. Please feel free to shed ink here in response to the problem (apart from my temperament) implied in this brief report. We may yet discover in good Inkshed collaborative fashion a plan for getting a worthwhile survey done by the right person or team. And if I have written some sharp things wrongly in these pages—things dismissive of people selflessly doing their best in bad situations—let me apologize now while adding respectfully that bad situations do sometimes need heated things said about them.

Michael Moore
Wilfrid Laurier University

Cohort Report: Help Wanted /// Leslie Ashcroft

I'm an Albertan working on my PhD thesis at James Cook University, North Queensland, Australia. My research topic is 'Empowering: A Study of Adolescent Writers in an English Classroom.' I'm proposing a year-long case study in 1987 of a high school teacher who is doing action research in a grade ten English/composition classroom where 'empowering,' defined as nurturing personal belief in capability and competency, as the objective.

The teacher's screening criteria for conducting the class will be whether the intention is to share and nurture power in others, or to keep power for oneself. In other words, is the power in the room cooperative 'power *to* . . .' or competitive 'power *over* . . .'? Key components of empowering will be negotiated among researcher/teacher/students, overlaid on the existing curriculum, and adjusted and re-negotiated throughout the year.

By key components I have such things as these in mind: belief in the value of the individual and in his/her natural capability to write; belief in the value of writing; interdependent classroom roles for teacher/learner and students/teachers; valuing of process over product; and negotiation of course content, learning process, and evaluation.

Is anyone out there working on anything similar? Can anyone suggest how to measure interim degrees of empowering, or how best to establish opening attitudes to self as writer, to writing in general, to past school experience with writing? What proof exists, beyond general literacy complaints, that many people *do* feel powerless and inadequate about their writing ability? Are there ways students' writing folders over the year might be evaluated for degrees of empowerment? Suggestions for criteria?

Any suggestions, personal experience, recommendations would be 'empowering.' Write:

Leslie Ashcroft
Creative and Expressive Studies
School of Education
James Cook University
Townsville, Q 4811 Australia

A Discourse–Community–Specific Procedure for Discourse Facilitation   /// Doug Brent

For many years, the venerable Buzzphrase Generator first popularized by Sir Ernest Gowers has served to enhance reports, letters, memos and academic papers in every imaginable discipline. However, now that we know beyond the slightest doubt that language is a collaborative construction of the language user and the discourse community in which he, she, or it is embedded, the inadequacies of the old multi–disciplinary model of discourse facilitation are becoming apparent. We need a new set of dialogic procedural paradigms that are specific to social interactive communities.

As a preliminary step, I have attempted to create a discourse paradigm specific to our own community of writing about writing. Based on an analysis of 1,239 academic scripts, I have devised the **Brent Meta–Buzzphrase Generator** (Table 1). Like the Gowers version, the BMBG simply requires the user to select any three–digit number at random (the use of a random–number table is advised to prevent unconscious contextual bias). One word corresponded to each digit is then selected from each column, providing a possible field of 999 three–word phrases that can be inserted into any academic discourse to insure that it conveys the sense of social cognitive authority privileged by our discourse community. Two– and four–digit numbers may occasionally be selected to add the variety necessary to any truly well–crafted document. It should also be noted that the word *discourse*, usable as noun, verb, or adjective with equal facility, appears in all three columns. To prevent nonsense generation, therefore, care must be taken to reject any single buzzphrase containing more than two instances of this word.

Table 1
Brent Meta–Buzzphrase Generator

1.	social	collaborative	authority
2.	tacit	macro	context
3.	analogic	micro	matrix
4.	dialogic	meta	facilitation
5.	privileged	cognitive	paradigm
6.	rich	interactive	schema
7.	liberating	semantic	community
8.	meaning–making	communicative	heuristic
9.	hibernating	procedural	collaboration
10.	discourse	discourse	discourse

The meta–writing community, of course, is divided into subcommunities most easily identified by the conferences that members of each group habitually attend. It was therefore expected that there would be differential privileging of the phrases generated by the BMBG. To test this hypothesis, participants at four major conferences were subjected to papers containing carefully preselected percentages of these phrases. Responses were operationalized by careful counts of these phrases. (Head–noddings that proved to be preparatory to falling asleep were thrown out of the data.)

And of course someone else can yet do a survey. It could possibly be a more modest enterprise or, as I would now think best, a frankly unofficial one that relies on information and opinions submitted (anonymously or otherwise) by programs co-ordinators or practising teachers. Results of such a survey would carry little weight with administrations, but we would be helping ourselves in other ways.

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Surprisingly, when these data were run through a Corrigan and Peachfuzz Wrong–Way Analysis of Variance, results were not significant at the .05 level of confidence. However, there did prove to be a positive correlation between head–nodding frequencies and the names that were dropped at each conference. To refine these results, volunteers from each conference were presented with texts containing commonly accepted great names, and pulse and respiration rates measured. (This procedure unfortunately caused the tragic death of one Inkshed participant who suffered cardiac arrest when the text generation programme looped and presented the names 'Flower and Hayes' at a frequency of 4.7 instances per T–unit.)

Table 2 represents the results of this study. The numbers in parentheses show the number of uses per 100 T–units found to produce optimum discourse facilitation at each conference.

Table 2
Brent Differential Namedrop Table

	Inkshed	CCTE	NCTE	University of Chicago Higher–Order Reasoning Institute
Freire	(12)	(7)	(6)	(1)
Vygotsky	(14)	(12)	(7)	(2)
Polanyi	(28)	(16)	(12)	(2)
Piaget	(1)	(11)	(2)	(17)
Perry	(5)	(1)	(5)	(27)
Britton	(3)	(128)	(7)	(2)
Hirsch	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)

At present, both the BMBG and the Brent Differential Namedrop Table must be operationalized by hand. However, the researcher is negotiating with Rigidified Systems Software to produce a style–checking programme that will flag text segments found to have a deficiency or excess of appropriate names, and will automatically drop in buzzphrases at a preselected frequency. This programme, the Meta–Writer's Workbench, will make privileged meta–discourse virtually assured.

Carleton Papers in Applied Language Studies: Call for Papers
/// Toni Miller

We are in the process of preparing our 1987 publication of *Carleton Papers* (Vol. IV). Our journal is aimed at exploring relationships between underlying principles and effective practice in first and second language learning and teaching.

We invite the submission of previously unpublished articles focusing on new developments and recent research findings in applied language studies. Of particular interest are such themes as approaches to communicative language teaching, syllabus design, pedagogical implications of research on writing, discourse analysis, and computer–assisted learning.

News from Alberta

/// Chris Bullock

For the last two years I've been chair of the Writing Competence Committee at the University of Alberta. This Committee doesn't actually administer or mark the University's Writing Competence Test (now a graduation requirement), but has a rather nebulous range of functions involving "overseeing" Test procedures and the issue of writing competence policy. My efforts on the Committee have been to persuade people to see writing less as a product that can be tested once and for all, and more as an ongoing activity. . . . exemplary *Inkshed* principles!

The one tangible consequence of these efforts has been a questionnaire which the university's research unit, Institutional Research and Planning, administered to the University's teaching staff, all 2600 of them, in November 1985. Just over 50% of instructors returned usable questionnaires, and this quite large sample was very evenly spread by faculty and rank.

It seemed to me that readers of *Inkshed* might be interested both in the kinds of questions we asked and in the answers we received, and so what follows is the account of questions and answers which our Committee included as an appendix to our annual report. The questionnaire, which was called "Survey of Instructors," was co-sponsored by the University's Committee on Teaching and Learning (CITL), and so our Committee did not comment on questions of interest mainly to CITL.

Here, then, is that account.

Question 1. In this question we asked instructors what percentage of students' grades in their courses would be based on the following kinds of assignments: non-verbal, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, single sentences, short answer, extended writing, other.

Clearly the kinds of work used for assessment in the University are very diverse. More respondents appeared to base their grades at least partially on extended writing (i.e., reports and essays) than any other kind of student work (in 38% of courses more than 51% of the grade). However, in a sizeable percentage of courses represented, no percentage at all of the course grade was based on extended writing (30%). Translated into course registrations, the figures look even more striking; fully 42% of student registrations in courses covered by the Survey were in courses requiring no extended writing.

An important, if perhaps unsurprising, correlation emerges when we consider this issue in terms of class sizes. A detailed breakdown shows that as the number of students in the course rises, the kind of work which is used for assessment changes. In classes with 1-9 students, extended writing was used for over 50% of the grade in 57% of cases and multiple choice questions were used in under 1% of cases. However in classes of over 100 students, the figures are 7% for extended writing and 39% for multiple choice questions. In sum, then, it seems safe to assume that extended writing is not used extensively for assessment through the whole University, and that, in particular, as class sizes increase, the use of extended writing for assessment correspondingly decreases.

Question 2. Here we asked instructors to tell us, if they did use extended writing in their courses, how many words students were required to write throughout the course.

Some Faculties such as Arts and Education show requirements for extended writing about equally balanced between the categories of less than 500 words, between 500 and 2,000 words, and over 2,000 words required over the duration of a course (usually half-year). In some Faculties, though, extended writing assignments, when required, were clearly much shorter: in Dentistry and Medicine, for example, assigned extended writing was under 500 words per course in 70% of cases, and over 2,000 words per course in only 5%; in Science the figures were

65% and 15% respectively. On average, 500 words per course is more likely to be required in a first-year course than over 2,000 words; the likelihood is about equal at the 300 level; but, again, an important variable appears to be class size. The results show that the larger the class, the less the likelihood of students being asked to write over 2,000 words over the duration of the course.

Question 3. Here we asked instructors to rank the extent to which they took into account student writing abilities on a scale ranging from 1, 'not at all,' to 5, 'a great extent.'

On average, about 28% of instructors take student writing ability into account 'not at all' or only 'to a slight extent'; about 37% take it into account 'significantly' or 'to a great extent.' When these figures are broken down by Faculties, we note that the 'not at all' responses are highest for courses in, for example, Science and Medicine, and 'a great extent' responses are highest in Arts, Education, and Physical Education. So we notice, for example, that in 60% of courses in Science, writing ability is considered 'not at all' or 'to a slight extent'; in 68% of courses in Arts it is taken into account 'significantly' or 'to a great extent.'

Question 4. In this question we asked instructors whether they assigned a specific percentage to the mark of written expression, and, if so, what percentage.

On average, about 75% of courses at all levels assigned no specific percentage for writing. About 20% of courses in Education and Arts devoted over 10% of the mark to written expression; about 5% of courses in faculties like Business and Commerce and Medicine did so.

Question 5. In this question we asked instructors to identify (on a scale of: 1 'not applicable'; 2 no or minor problem'; 3 'some students have significant problems'; 4 'a substantial minority have significant problems'; 5 'the majority have significant problems') areas in which their students experienced problems. The areas covered included: understanding lecture presentations, participating in discussions, understanding assigned readings, remembering important material, locating appropriate literature, organising written materials, writing correct English, and conducting applied work.

In over a third of their courses, instructors perceived that 'some students have significant problems' in organising writing and using correct English. The scores in this category on the scale were higher for the writing areas than for any other area. For category 3 on the scale: 'a substantial minority have significant problems,' problems in the two writing areas were perceived in at least double the frequency for other student problems.

Question 6. This question asked instructors what percentage of their students would they refer to the Testing and Remediation Centre if remedial help was available on a voluntary basis. We then went on to ask the same question for a series of other skills, including library skills, critical analysis, dealing with stress, and so on.

It looks as if a substantial number of students would be referred by instructors for help with their writing. Interestingly, referrals are not just relevant at the Freshman level; it appears that students from the 300 level are just as likely to be referred, as well as some from the 400 level and beyond. The most puzzling thing about responses to this question is that, though quite large numbers of student referrals were promised for all areas, it appears that fewer students would be referred for writing help than for help in other areas identified by this question. This is the more puzzling in that Question 5 identified this as the area of greatest problems overall. (Perhaps, the WCC speculated, the reason for this discrepancy is that instructors saw students as already receiving remediation in the area of writing. Or perhaps instructors had an image of the Testing Centre as a place threatening to the students' self-esteem, concerned only with testing and the most 'bare bones' kind of remediation.)

Question 8. This question asked instructors to indicate agreement or disagreement with three assertions concerning the responsibility for improving writing standards and study skills.

The large majority of respondents believed that the University (77% agreeing *vs.* 10% disagreeing), Faculties (65% *vs.* 15%), and staff members (60% *vs.* 20%) are responsible for improving standards and study skills.

Question 9. This question asked instructors to support or oppose three methods of financing assistance offered to students in the areas of academic skills.

More instructors opposed than supported financing this assistance primarily from operating funds or primarily from charging fees to users. A majority (albeit a somewhat narrow one), however, supported financing this assistance 'about equally from fees and operating funds.'

Question 10. This question asked instructors how likely they would be to take advantage of assistance in developing their instructional skills in areas like 'selecting appropriate readings,' organising a course outline,' and the like.

Two of the specified areas interested the WCC in particular. First we noted that 18% of respondents saw themselves as 'likely' and 12% saw themselves as 'certain' to seek help in 'using written assignments to promote course objectives.' Second we noted that 22% saw themselves as 'likely' and 13% as 'certain' to seek help in 'selecting/grading essay questions.'

Conclusions

As you can see, the results of the 'Survey' were not startling; they essentially provided support for what many of us might have suspected about attitudes to and uses of writing in a large university. Our Committee's conclusions were, in summary, that, judging from the Survey, nearly half the students at University were likely to be in courses requiring none of what we called 'extended writing' (i.e., essays, reports, etc.); and that as class size went up, the use of extended writing declined dramatically. We were also struck by the fact that perceived problems in writing were not confined to the freshman level, but extended to the senior level and beyond. There also seemed at least oblique evidence that having a testing program did the image of writing, and the desire to seek writing improvement, harm as well as good. We *were* encouraged by the degree of interest in the issues, the often extensive comments written on the back of questionnaires, the willingness to learn, on the part of a substantial minority, about the use of writing in university courses. For the last three reasons, there seemed good reasons to support an at least partial conversion of our Testing and Remedial Centre into a real Writing Centre, to which students at all levels could be referred and to which instructors could come to learn about the application of writing in their particular disciplines. At any rate, our Committee made this proposal. For the rest, we shall see. . . .

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The act of writing takes the student away from where he is and what he knows and allows him to imagine something else. The approximate discourse, therefore, is evidence of a change, a change that . . . we call 'development.' What our beginning students need to learn is to extend themselves, by successive approximations, into the commonplaces, set phrases, rituals and gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions and necessary connections that determine the 'what might be said' and constitute knowledge within the various branches of our academic community.

David Bartholomae, 'Inventing the University,' *When a Writer Can't Write*, ed. Mike Rose (New York: Guilford Press, 1985): 146.

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