INKSHED

Inside Inkshed. . . "WID/WAC in Canada. . ."

About *Inkshed*. . .

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

The next issue of *Inkshed* is scheduled for publication in June, 1998. The submission deadline is 30 May.

Please submit newsletter material to

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Barry Nolan, University of Winnipeg
Pat Sadowy, University of Manitoba
Judy Segal, University of British Columbia
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EDITORS' NOTES

Now that this long-anticipated "WAC/WID" theme-issue of Inkshed is in your hands, the editors would like to thank all who participated in the CASLL conversation that sparked this discussion as well as those who submitted individual reports. We think this issue presents a good cross-section of trends in Canadian post-secondary institutions, and the conversations and reports show a variety of ways teachers and researchers are using Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines. If you have something more to add, please send it to us, and we'll find space for it in a future issue.

Also in this issue: the preliminary programme for the 1998 Inkshed conference in Nova Scotia, a summary of the Canadian Roundtable at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago, and Barbara Schneider's report on using an ethnomethodological approach to the study of writing in organizational settings.

The next Newsletter (coming out in June) will be the post-conference issue, but we still need your news, short articles, ideas, tid-bits and reviews. We were very pleased with the variety and quality of submissions for this issue, but we still had to cajole people to submit pieces on time! The submission deadline for the June issue is May 30. (Materials can also be e-mailed to Janice or Amanda in text-only format.)

Let us know what you think of the idea of having themes for each issue of the Newsletter, and please suggest themes for future issues.

We're still working on compiling the information gleaned from the CASLL Survey on Electronic Communication, so if you haven't returned your survey yet, there's still time. As soon as Amanda returns from her semester in Vancouver, the survey will be posted on CASLL for those of you who would like to submit it electronically. From the survey results, we hope to determine the level of interest in and access to Internet-based versions of the Newsletter.

We'd also mentioned in the last issue that we would be publishing the conclusion of the "MOO about the MOO." That conversation will be concluded in a future issue; perhaps before then we will have another discussion at the CASLL castle in Connections MOO. Those who have tried to connect to Connections recently may have had trouble because Connections has a new home. Telnet to connections.moo.mud.org, Port 3333, and you will once again be able to "walk to CASLL."

Special thanks to Laura Atkinson for doing a final copy edit of this issue and to Stan Straw of the University of Manitoba, who arranged for photocopying and mailing.

~Janice Freeman
~Amanda Goldrick-Jones

Preliminary Programme Inkshed XV: Multiple Literacies: Ethics and Responsibilities

Thursday May 7th to Sunday May 10th, 1998
Oak Island Inn (between Chester and Mahone Bay) Nova Scotia
For registration and information, contact Susan Drain, Department of English, Mount Saint
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Session I: Opening (Thursday Evening)
"Bicultural Awareness and Writing in the Disciplines: Ethical Implications"
-Ann Beer & Jane Ledwell Brown, McGill University

Session II: Ethics of Authority and Ownership (Friday Morning)
"Ethical Issues in Co-Authoring"
-Pat Sadowy, Laura Atkinson, Sandy Baardman, Stanley B. Straw, University of Manitoba
"Electronic Discourse and Academic Enquiry"
-Margaret Harry & Daniel Flemming, Saint Mary's University & University of New Brunswick

Session III: Short Reports on Research and Projects (Friday Afternoon)
"Writing to Learn Discipline-Specific Literacies"
-Philippa Spoel, Laurentian University
"Who's Shaping Whose Literacies? Ethics in Representation of Teacher Book Club Experiences"
-Mary Kooy, OISE, University of Toronto
"Ethics and Responsibilities On-Line: A Case Study"
-Jeanette Caron, Diane Proudfoot & Carolyn Duvar, Concordia University
"Writing our Foremothers"
-Lorri Neilsen, Mount Saint Vincent University

Session IV: Ethics in Curriculum and Pedagogy (Friday Late Afternoon/Evening)
"Picking our Steps: Defining English in an Age of Megacuts"
-Margaret Procter, University of Toronto
"Exploring Risk as Cultural Practice: Pedagogical Implications of Post-phenomena"
-Tony Tremblay, Saint Thomas University
"Chance Operations: Following the Movement of Invention"
-M.E. Michelle Forrest, Acadia University

Session V: Ethics in Writing Centres (Saturday Morning)
"Ethics in Writing Centres"
-Roberta Lee & Miriam Jones, University of New Brunswick Saint John
"The Ethical Politics of Inclusion"
-J. Barbara Rose, Alan Stewart, Steve Hoselton, Brock Macdonald & Kathryn Voltan
Woodsworth College, University of Toronto
"Tutorial Proofreading at a Private Tutoring Agency"
-Tania S. Smith, University of Alberta

"Writing Centre Tutorials: Making Ladies in the Academy? or Theorizing Tutorials From a Critical Pedagogical Perspective"
-Victoria Littman, OISE, University of Toronto
"Tutoring the Whole Writer: Pedagogical Necessities -- Practical Limits"
-Jane Milton & Patricia Golubev, NS College of Art and Design & University of Toronto

Session VI: Ethics in Teaching and Learning Cultural Differences (Saturday Afternoon)
"The L2 Writer and the Liberal Education: the Ethics of Voice in Academic Writing"
-Michael Sider & Theresa Hyland, University of Western Ontario
"Who's Learning What? Teaching and Learning Cultural Differences"
-Thom Parkhill & Dorothy Turner, Saint Thomas & Eastern Mediterranean Universities
"Motivating ESL Students to Engage with Literature"
-Vivian Howard, Dalhousie University
"Response"
-Dr. Esha R. Chaudhuri, Esray & Associates Inc., Calgary

Lobster Dinner, Social Evening and Talent Night: Saturday Evening

Review, Business Meeting, Planning for Inkshed 16: Sunday Morning

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CASLL Roundtable at CCCC, Chicago, April 1-4, 1998

Seven different proposals from CASLL members were accepted for our annual Canadian Caucus Roundtable at the 1998 CCCCs. JoAnn Zimmer of Sheridan College volunteered to coordinate the submission of abstracts and chair the session. This is her summary of the session.

Canadian Stories: Reflections on Technology in Practice

This session, sponsored by the Canadian Caucus, outlines practices and reflections of community college, university and high school teachers, and as such, breaks from a traditional focus on the university experience. Colleges, universities and high schools share commonalities in their use of computer technology, as online and distance learning become viable options for students demanding flexible, student-centred learning. This paradigmatic shift opens avenues for different learning formats and life-long learning opportunities for both students and teachers. This roundtable will explore and reflect on some of these practices, their opportunities and challenges. Janice Freeman will examine the challenges and effects of participating in a MOO set up for members of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning (CASLL), both on CASLL's growth and evolution and the resulting changes in members' pedagogy. JoAnn Zimmer, Margaret Proctor, Cheryl Ende, Lee Easton, and Paul Beam share knowledge and reflections on how creating different types of virtual learning environments necessitates transformation. Kathryn Cook provides insights into the challenge of developing traditional teachers into "online" teachers in a faculty mentoring program. The evolution of the mentoring program from a vision of volunteerism to shared accountability of mentor and teacher has provided advantages to both

faculty, students and management. To balance the much heralded notion of opportunity and advantage comes a Stoll-like caveat from Henry Hubert, who reflects on the potentially "shadier" developments of technology, resulting from changes to our cognitive and social environment. Together, these presentations will add to the audience's knowledge of Canadian practices in community colleges, universities and high schools, as well as provoke discussion on the nature and impact of the digital revolution.

"A Cross-Border Conversation About Writing in the Disciplines (WID) and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)"

NOTE: Your Inkshed newsletter editors have tried to preserve the spirit and the core ideas of this conversation while condensing and excerpting from the original postings on the CASLL list. Participants granted permission to reproduce excerpts in the newsletter. We apologise for any glaring errors or omissions.

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1. Janice Freeman, U. of Winnipeg, initiated the conversation with the following posting in February 1998:

When the Inkshed editorial committee originally proposed the theme of WID/WAC for this issue, it was because we were all curious about how WID/WAC are changing and developing in Canada. . . Are any of your departments doing something new/different/interesting in WID/WAC? Perhaps we can start a thread here and I can summarize it in the newsletter. . . .

2. Doug Brent, U. Of Calgary:

At U of C we are proposing some writing courses which will be linked to other discipline-based courses in fairly close partnership. Not a radical concept but new to us here. I have been asked what happens if a students fails one or the other of the courses. Must she then repeat both? I can see logistical and pedagogical difficulties either way.

Have other institutions tried linked courses and if so how have they solved this problem?

Robert Irish, U. of Toronto [responding to Doug Brent]:

We don't do that [linked courses] here, but instead embed writing within the Engineering courses. That way if they fail the writing, they fail the course. I like that better than the pseudo-link I worked with in Architecture where the writing component was a separate 30% that was evaluated separately. The catch for students there was that if they failed the 30%, they had to repeat the whole course. This made the writing component the "gate" and the writing instructor, me, "gatekeeper." Charon is not a role I relish, and not a role I relish for writing. . . . (In practice, students very rarely passed one [course] without the other, but those few instances, and the more

general perception, were quite problematic).

Having two separate courses does address some of the problem, but I think you still wind up in the awkward division of style and substance. A student might appropriately respond, "If I've got the substance well enough for Prof. X, what is your problem?" After all, learning is about substance. I think we only achieve a real marriage of style and substance when we say, unless substance is clearly explained, it is not clearly understood.

Your proposal sounds interesting. Keep us posted on how it goes.

3. Ron Sheese, York University:

In response to Doug Brent's question, but perhaps of general interest: John Spencer and I each directed a section of a 3-credit course called "Writing in the Social Sciences" for two years and each was linked to a specific 6-credit course in the Division of Social Sciences (at the first-year level). John's linked course was "Education and Social Change"; mine was "Introduction to Social Science". The 3-credit (writing) course met 1 1/2 hours per week and the linked 6-credit course for 3-hours per week. The enrollment in each writing course was 25, and these groups of 25 students also constituted one tutorial in the linked 6-credit course. Each of the 6-credit courses had enrollments of about 200, so there were many students enrolled there who were not enrolled in the Writing course. John and I were each participants in the larger Social Science course; in particular, we served as the tutorial leader for our writing students (and only for those students).

With this format we were able to assign our students writing exercises based on the social science content of the 6-credit course. Our focus was on the preparation of discipline-based library research essays. Though our experiment with this format was generally successful, we have been overtaken by a Faculty of Arts move to nine-credit courses in the Division of Social Science, each course having a mandate to provide some instruction in critical skills. Some of these courses emphasize writing, but the interpretation of "critical skills" is quite broad. Course directors and tutorial leaders vary considerably in their experience teaching writing or other critical skills, though there is an attempt to insure at least one person in each teaching team is knowledgeable in this area. As we are in the midst of the first year of the project there is no official report of progress. However, I think it is pretty clear that it is not going to succeed well unless more attention is given to training course directors and tutorial leaders about writing instruction. . . .

4. Janice Freeman:

. . . .We started offering links several years ago in collaboration with the History department. (I believe they approached us as a result of a WAC subcommittee discussion.) At the beginning, all those registered in a linked section of History were also registered in the same section of Academic Writing. Instructors collaborated in a limited way--deciding on shared readings, for example, but the two courses were administratively independent. (That is still the case now.) That way, a student could fail or drop one course without affecting the other. Since these initial courses (about five years ago?), we have created links in many areas, mostly following the writing instructor's

interests. Barry Nolan, for example, teaches Biology links, and just completed a sabbatical where he studied the rhetoric of science. Another person teaches Environmental Studies links because of a dissertation based on the works of environmental writers. . . .

I think the reason these kinds of links are working out is because they were not mandated in any way. Individuals who had particular interests sought out a suitable course to link with. Differing levels of collaboration have occurred, from basic agreement on reading lists to true team teaching. Perhaps this kind of casual arrangement works on a small campus where people know each other...

5. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas University:

There's a substantial amount of information about linked courses available through the Washington Center at The Evergreen State College, and the Learning Communities listserv. I'm in the process of trying to put together a sort of reading list--but what may be most useful to you to know is that this is a very widespread movement and goes way beyond (though I think it includes) linking writing courses to discipline courses. Lots of experience out there with it, and with the administrative complications involved.

. . . . my own view would be that the easiest thing to do is make the linkage a simple matter of the registrar's signing students up for both courses and the courses functioning for all administrative purposes as though they were freestanding.

Thus a student who passed the disciplinary section and flunked the writing one could later sign up for another one, hooked to some other discipline, or to a freestanding one if that's an option. Similarly, the student who flunked the disciplinary section and could just sign up for another one, and consider her writing requirement or whatever passed. I think to hook them together more intimately would presume that, but to let collaboration happen if it develops. The Aquinas Program here, which is three linked courses, has gone both ways--separate marks, separate credit, and totally uniform homogenization. I'm involved in the homogenized one, and it's demanding and inflexible in important ways. . . .

6. Marcy Bauman, University of Michigan:

On Wed, 18 Feb 1998, Russ Hunt
wrote much wonderful stuff, but then he said:

> That [collaboration between faculty] will probably happen, but if you start off advertising
that collaboration is planned or expected my experience is that 80% of university faculty shy
away like a horse from a sudden movement at their knees . . . It's easy enough simply to link the
courses and ask the writing person to take that into account. Collaboration will follow. <

Easy enough for who? I don't think collaboration will follow, especially not if you link first and tell the writing person later. ("Oh, by the way, we've linked your course with a particle physics course. Can you bone up on the literature and make it relevant in your class?") Or you could end

up with a situation like we have here, where the Honors Humanities classes are linked with writing courses . . . and the humanities profs tend to think of the writing class as the place where they (the humanities profs) can assign all the reading they didn't manage to get to in *their* part of the link . . . almost irrespective of what the writing person wants to do.

This is not to say that writing courses can't be profitably linked with other courses. It's just to say that the linkage needs to be a little more intentional and a whole lot more equitable than asking the writing person to take someone else's curriculum into account. Collaboration *doesn't* occur on a forced march -- at least no kind of collaboration I'd want any part of . . .

7. Henry Hubert, U. College of the Cariboo:

Just a note to support everything I've just read in Marcy's response to Russ about the need for close collaboration between persons teaching the linked courses. I'll add that this collaboration must extend to support services as well, especially if this is a new venture for those publishing the schedule. Here's an example.

Two years back a History colleague and I planned linked courses. One of my first-year classes was to be made up entirely of one of the History seminars. That would give each of us 22 students. Since we had offices near each other, we collaborated closely on content, both before the term and during the term. Content collaboration, therefore, was no problem. I taught largely my regular first-year syllabus, which normally requires a research paper. In this case, the research paper was the History research paper, which the History prof and I marked independently. Other short assignments also focused on European history, with which I happen to be fairly familiar.

That wasn't the end of the matter though. The History lectures and the English class had to be scheduled independently, but by the time this went through the system, that didn't happen. That issue was finally resolved, but then the course linkage described in the timetable was worded somewhat ambiguously.

The final result led to my class having a strange mix of students:
a. About 60% that signed into the class because of the linkage. These students all enjoyed the class and said they'd take more classes like this.
b. About 40% of the class that didn't really care, but happened to see an English class that fit their timetable--and then found that they had to take History as well; or that happened to see a History class that fit their interests but then had to sign up for English; or that needed ANY class near the end of the registration period, and found a slot that was still open (because of the confusion around these two linked sections).

Conclusion: Collaboration doesn't end with those teaching course content: for new ventures, collaboration must include support services.

8. Doug Brent, U. Of Calgary:

Thanks for the feedback on linked courses. . . . I envision two separate courses with separate instructors working fairly closely together. The students in the writing course would be *all* the students in the content course, since it isn't supposed to be a remedial course for the unfixed. In our pilot this hasn't happened but I think that this is just an administrative problem.

The long-term goal, of course, is to stick-handle writing right out of the remedial corner. Right now everyone at U of C is so confused that they might not even notice it's happening until it's too late.

9. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas U.:

There are (at least) two listservs where linked-course "learning communities" are frequently discussed.

One is the First Year Experience list, which tends to be more concerned with residence-based communities and "University 101" courses, but both of those tend to involve linkages of the kind Doug's talking about, though not regularly, I think, with comp courses. Its address is

    FYE-LIST@VM.SC.EDU

It's a listserv, so you'd subscribe by sending a sub message to LISTSERV@VM.SC.EDU.

FYE-LIST archives are accessible at: http://fye.sc.edu/fye/

The other is the "Learning Communities Leaders' List" and it's at

    LEARNCOM@VM.TEMPLE.EDU

I'm pretty sure it's a listserv as well, so the same sub routine should work. I'm not sure whether there's an archive; I suspect not.

10. Doug Brent, U of Calgary:

One more question: does anyone have any interesting news about funding of linked courses? Did anyone have any success getting new money out of central funds or out of the disciplines served, or did it all come out of money that was being used to teach writing anyway.

This is really the agenda here. Right now the entire writing service [at U of C] is funded by charging students $50 to write the test. since it's the test I'm trying to phase out, I need to find a way to get the monkey off my back without shooting myself in the foot. (Perhaps I should shoot the monkey in the back?)

11. Janice Freeman, U of Winnipeg (in response to Doug Brent's question):

This is what we do-- the writing courses are funded already, and the links are in the disciplines, so there's no extra costs. . . . We have the advantage of 11 full-time permanent faculty who are generally eager to try new approaches to teaching writing.

. . . .I forgot to mention a major aspect of our WID/WAC efforts. In addition to links to individual courses, we have a series of "generic" Academic Writing courses linked . . .to the major disciplines: Social Sciences, Humanities, and Sciences. So students who want to major in, say Sociology, would take a course called "Academic Writing in the Social Sciences". How well their choice of writing courses reflects their eventual choice of majors is one of the things we're trying to determine. We suspect that many still choose their course by how well it fits into their time table. But it's a start....

12. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas U (in response to Doug's question):

In our case, and I suspect in yours, the folks with the power to fund said, okay, where are your costs? And why should we fund your program as opposed to others? We were (are) in a position to say well, there really are no costs, because we're taking money that would have been used to teach these courses, well, to teach these courses. The difference is that they're linked. That doesn't involve money.

Now, if you do real collaboration, of the kind I've been involved in in the Aquinas Program, you do have costs, because no teacher can do it without released time or a death wish. Real collaboration takes time, and if you don't extort it out of your teachers it costs money. And the money has to come from some place, and if what it means is that it'll cost more to teach a student in this situation than that one, you need to be able to convince someone it's worth it. The argument here is, well, if you put that extra money in my course, and lowered my student ratio, I'd do better, too.

My own view is that it's sleight of hand to say linking courses isn't a new program, but we'll need the same funding as if it were . . . if you can convince people, fine, but I think that monkey bites.

13. Doug Brent, U of Calgary (in response to a point Russ Hunt made about writing courses seen as "remedial"):

What I'm afraid of is that students will be streamed into the writing course if their writing is judged defective on some measure or other. This seems to be something a default mode for many writing courses. I'd rather start with the premise that everyone needs to learn more about writing all the time. The other option would be to make the course purely voluntary, but then you know how it goes--the ones who need it the most, the ones who bear serious psychological damage from writing courses starting in elementary school, avoid it like the plague.

How do you think we could set up the courses so that they don't get characterized as remedial without making them a full-participation requirement? I'd like to be able to walk this line if I could figure out how.

Meanwhile--thanks Janice [posting 11] for your point about having a mix of linked and generic courses. I think that this is important to keep in mind.

14. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas U:

[See posting 6 re collaboration and Humanities profs that Russ is responding to here--Ed].

Since Marcy is one of the people who often understands what I've said better than I do, it bothered me that she seemed not to understand what I was proposing about linked courses Probably, I infer, hardly anybody did. Let me try again.

I think it wasn't clear that . . . . I was talking about two classes which are linked by nothing but the fact that they enrol the same students. A freestanding writing course, and a freestanding particle physics course. The instructors know they're linked. . . but no one suggests that anything follows from that except that the students will share a discourse.

In that case, it seems to me, collaboration will follow, but it doesn't have to. There'd be no expectation, (even covertly, though there might be hope), that the writing prof would do anything directly for the other prof, or that she'd make particle physics relevant. It's about creating a situation where the students have an opportunity to form a community (and maybe even to make some connections for themselves between the two courses; we often, I think, presume that the connections have to occur between two courses in the institution, where what we really want is for the connection to occur in students' minds).

The reason I'm proposing this model is that it seems to me there's a chance to implement it . . . and that it's the thin edge of a wedge.

15. Graham Smart, Purdue University:

I've been following the conversation on linked courses with great interest. Here at Purdue I'm on the Introductory Writing Program Committee. We're just starting to make some tentative moves in the general direction of the sort of instruction you've been discussing. . . . [Graham asked the list's permission to make a copy of these postings for his administration.]

16. Roberta Lee, U of New Brunswick:

Miriam Jones and I are working on a resource book for faculty who choose to identify their courses as WR(writing) courses. This is a book of selected writing assignments, and syllabi with clearly articulated writing components, from courses in all disciplines. These assignments and syllabi will demonstrate a deliberate use of writing to promote critical thinking. We are going to introduce and distribute the book at a workshop in September.

We are going to include a bibliography. Does anyone have a good updated bibliography re writing in the disciplines? Or even a suggestion of a book or an article that would be especially good to

include in our bibliography?

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17. Philippa Spoel, Laurentian University (responding to the question of funding linked courses; see postings 10, 11, 12):

The problem at Laurentian is that we don't have any existing "Multidisciplinary" academic writing courses that could be transformed into linked courses. We moved away from the generic introductory writing course offered by the English department several years ago in favour of a more discipline-specific "Intro to Writing and English Studies". Currently, sections of this course are being cut, so I can't see any way that the English Department, nor any other department for that matter, would get the money to pay even for a few sections of any new linked courses. Has anyone else had to negotiate this kind of problem?

18. Doug Brent, U of Calgary (responding to Philippa):

Precisely! Linked courses, like any other courses, tend to come up against the "who pays" issue. Right now I'm courting small professional programs that actually have money to spend on contracting out the teaching of writing. This will clearly not work for larger, poorer faculties (read: the traditional arts and sciences).

As a result I expect linked courses taught by a centralized composition unit (in this case the Writing Centre) will always remain one modest part of a Writing Across the Curriculum program.

My ideal plan would see a central university requirement that students can satisfy in one or a combination of a number of ways:

- linked courses
- generic or semigeneric writing courses (e.g. "Writing for the Social Sciences" etc.)
- WI courses that have been selected from pre-existing faculty offerings that are already writing intensive, perhaps with some tuneups. These would necessarily be small sectioned courses.
- WI courses created for the purpose by fairly significant restructuring of existing courses

Both the last two options would be supported by a strong Writing Centre and by peer tutors (Writing Fellows, Rhetoric Associates, etc, as they are variously called) who would help others with writing in exchange for an honourarium, training, a course credit, etc.

I figure if we spread the costs thinly enough they won't hurt anyone too severely. But I am also aware that we are in the land of the 21% budget cut, as is Philippa (who has undoubtedly been

faced with even more budget cutting than we have here.)

19. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas U:

Doug's and Philippa's question about "who pays" for linked courses raises -- again -- an issue that's been bothering me. What I guess it is is an assumption that a "linked course" has to be a new course. . . . If a writing course is to be taught, somebody pays, no question: but it seems to me that whether that course is linked or not doesn't change things. Linking courses, by itself, is revenue-neutral, it seems to me. It's clear that if larger, poorer faculties can't afford a writing course, that's bad, but they can't afford *either* a freestanding *or* a linked course. Linkage is a separate issue, it seems to me. . . .

I'd surely buy into [Doug's ideal proposal] except for making linked courses a parallel case to the other three. Seems to me any of 2-4 could be linked, or not, and it's really a matter of administrative changes and marketing . . . but not of setting up new "linked" courses. But, of course, I may be missing something important.

20. Philippa Spoel, Laurentian U:

I agree that IF sufficient writing courses already exist and aren't in jeopardy, then transforming them into "linked" courses should be revenue-neutral. I think this is what Janice described as happening at U of Winnipeg [posting 11]. In Laurentian's case, however, our WAC program relies on subject-specific courses taught by people in those areas, not "writing" teachers (i.e., people with some training or at least experience in rhet/comp). I think our approach has many merits, but increasingly I'm coming to think that we need to provide more than this for students.

So I wish we could develop some discipline-specific courses that were taught at least in part by "writing" teachers--perhaps linked courses or team-taught courses (that is, where part of the course is taught by the disciplinary-specialist and part by the writing specialist). However, we have no budget to set up anything along these lines--that is, no department has the money. The English Dept. offers introductory English courses, but these aren't generic writing courses nor . writing-in-the disciplines courses; rather, they are courses intended to prepare students for further work in English studies. The English Dept has made a conscious and concerted effort to avoid being a service department, so we don't have generic writing courses waiting to be transformed into linked courses or even multi-disciplinary academic writing courses. . . .

21. Doug Brent, U of Calgary:

I've had several expressions of befuddlement over this, which makes me realize how sad our present case at U of C really is. The problem is this:

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT DUMPED WRITING FIVE YEARS AGO

THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO CREDIT WRITING COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF

CALGARY

At least none as such. There are some Communications Studies courses which emphasise writing but only a miserable handful of sections, not even enough to go around the Engineering students.

Effective Writing is funded entirely out of fees the students pay for the test. This goes into one-to-one tutorials. It would not be fair to divert this for credit teaching.

What courses we do teach are non-credit, funded on a direct cost recovery basis.

That's why I have to get so tricky. If I eliminate the test, I eliminate my revenue stream and there is no course-directed revenue stream to pick it up.

22. Barry Nolan, University of Winnipeg:

I have taught several of our linked Academic Writing sections, one with a History course several years ago, and now one with intro. Biology. Our Academic Writing course is intended for first year students, although some put off taking it until second or even third year, so we are planning links for students who have not yet chosen a major. The exception is one AW linked with a second year Environmental Studies course.

My first comment is that support services, as Henry Hubert experienced [see posting 7], can undo the best intentions. Something went wrong with registration in the section of AW linked to Biology that I am teaching now; while the Academic Writing for Natural Science sections filled quickly and had waiting lists, the Biology section remained less that half enrolled. At the beginning of the term I found that the section had been treated as a "catch-all" for students who had had other registration difficulties. In other words, after the dust settled, I had a small class of students most of whom didn't really care about the link, but had to have a writing course, instead of a group who had chosen to focus on writing in Biology. So it is not a link, really.

Our Centre Director meets yearly with registration staff, and we have written to the Dean of Arts and Science about this problem, so we can hope something happens for next year. Right now I am discouraged.

Secondly, and on a happier note, we at U. of W. are very fortunate to be moving toward what Doug described as his ideal [see posting 18].

Right now, most U. of W. students must take the Academic Writing course. Only about 1/5th, I think, are exempted by high school grades. We are working to eliminate this exemption, because even though most students must take the course, some students still feel they are the minority dummies in a remedial course.

Our move to offer a range of options within the Academic Writing course is intended, among other very good reasons, to prepare for the time when all students must take the course. We made a start

a few years ago defining WI [Writing Intensive] courses; this initiative could be reactivated in connection with the other options. We have a writing centre with potential for work in WID.

Your list looks admirably complete, Doug. It includes lots of variety. May we all reach that ideal some day.

"CASLL Archives Now Available on the Web"

We now, thanks to Brian Lesser at UNB, have an archive. The CASLL list is accessible on the web; if you want to go back and find out something incriminating about what someone said in the heat of the moment on CASLL, you'll be able to do it.

Currently all of 1997 -- and all of February 1998 -- are now up on the CASLL archive, and shortly it will include everything from the beginning of 1995. It's including everything posted now, automatically.

Point your browser here:

   http://listserv.unb.ca/archives/casll.html

For the older files, some minimal editing has been done -- for instance, I took out messages that were obviously sent to the whole list in error, and I've eliminated some of the quotation/duplication of messages being responded to that it seemed pretty clear was inadvertent. I expect that 1996 and 1995 will be up within a week or so. I'd be happy to have anybody who wants to make sure they haven't been traduced by this check it over and let me know (it's pretty easy, for instance, to check for your name and make sure you're not being identified as the author of some awful blasphemy you didn't actually commit . . . or perhaps which you did commit, but would now like to recant).

And be patient; at times it takes a minute or so to load a new segment of the archive. But it's a lot faster than writing to Russ and asking him to go through the files . . .

                    --Russ Hunt, St. Thomas U

"Linked Courses"

During the February "Conversation" about WID/WAC, Russ Hunt mentioned a discussion of linked courses on the Learning Communities listserv discussion. Russ has received the text of this discussion and posted it at

   http://www.stthomasu.ca/hunt/linking.htm

"Reports on WID/WAC: Changes, Developments, Challenges"

Now that you've read the excerpts from the CASLL "Conversation" about WID/WAC, here's more on the topic! The Inkshed newsletter received eight reports about the state of WID/WAC in various institutions across Canada:

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"A New Plan"
University of New Brunswick at St. John

UNBSJ has had a WAC/WID programme since 1991, when the Competence in English test was discontinued. From 1991 to the present, Writing Centre instructors have worked to promote WAC/WID at a grassroots level: meeting with professors, helping to design writing assignments, leading faculty workshops, speaking to classes. In addition a large proportion of the student body--from almost all disciplines, all years of university--has come to the Writing Centre for one-on-one appointments. Because the writing requirement had not yet been implemented at an institutional level, the Writing Advisory Committee (composed of two representatives from both Arts and Science faculties, one representative of the Business faculty, and the Supervisor of the Writing Centre) drew up a plan that will be put into effect in the 1998-99 academic year.

A key component of this plan is a Writing Resource Book, edited by Miriam Jones, Writing Centre instructor. This book, which will be in print in September, will contain selected writing assignments and syllabi with clearly articulated writing components, from courses in all disciplines. These assignments and syllabi demonstrate a deliberate use of writing to promote critical thinking. Most are selections from our own faculty members.

Each academic year, professors will be asked to identify those of their courses that fulfil the requirements for a WR (Writing Resource)course, as illustrated in the Resource Book. In other words, rather than complying with legalistic requirements (number of words of writing, etc.), faculty members who teach WR courses will be encouraged to choose writing assignments appropriate to class size, course level and the thought processes of their particular disciplines. Writing Centre instructors Roberta Lee and Miriam Jones plan to lead several workshops based on the various aspects of the Resource Book.

Reported by Roberta Lee

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"Promoting and Developing WAC"
Humber College, Toronto

Humber College has had a policy in place for several years that all full-time students take at least one writing-intensive [WI] course per semester in their program (over and above the two writing--called "Communications"--courses all students are required to take in order to graduate).

However, until this academic year, nothing concrete was being done to ensure that program teachers receive the kind of support they need to implement such assignments.

As of September 1997, I am the Writing Across the Curriculum Resource Person at Humber. My responsibility is to promote WAC in the college and help program teachers develop writing assignments, find ways to improve student writing, streamline marking, and so on. The kinds of things I've done so far to promote WAC include attending an Early Childhood Education departmental meeting to explain the criteria the Communications Dept. uses for evaluating student writing; a consultation with an ECE instructor on peer workshops; and a lecture to a final semester engineering course on report-writing and on the writing support services (Writing Centre and peer tutors) available at the college.

I've also compiled a newsletter called *The Humber WAC Letter* that will be circulated to all faculty in the second week of March. It contains, among other things, explanations of what writing across the curriculum means, what a writing intensive course is, and ways to incorporate writing into classroom activities. I also hope to offer some in-service training seminars during our May-June period, the time when most of our professional development activities take place.

I can't yet say how successful WAC will be at Humber. Like many new initiatives, it may be slow to get off the ground. Our department is confident that enthusiasm for the WAC will grow as instructors start seeing some positive results in the quality of their students' thinking and writing.

Reported by Karen Golets Pancer

"Centres of Action in Writing"
University of Toronto

The terms Writing Across the Curriculum or Writing in the Disciplines are rarely used at U of T, but they do have meaning here. Programs in most subject areas continue to expect writing from their students; what's more, faculty and administrators increasingly recognize the need not only to instruct students in the reading and writing necessary for their courses, but also to raise awareness of the ways language is used in their disciplines. Though efforts at U of T are multiple rather than consistent, they are starting to be integrated into the institutional structure. Here are a few of the action spots.

The Faculty of Arts and Science relies on committed faculty and overburdened Teaching Assistants to keep assigning and grading writing in their courses. Many have invented innovative reading and writing assignments to give students chances to grapple with disciplinary issues and to develop skills in dealing with text. These are the courses whose students keep the nine college writing centres busy giving individual tutoring and group workshops. Arts and Science has recently also invested in 80 first-year seminar courses whose mandates include "research, writing and analytical skills." These small classes (under 20 per section) are taught by senior faculty. They involve students in investigating specific issues and approaches from their research specialties, and

often ask for weekly small writing assignments based on readings and class discussion.

A number of departments, drawing on their own recognition of disciplinary needs--and perhaps from exposure to the evangelizing of writing centre people--have created upper-year specialist courses focussing on "critical reading and writing" or "professional communication." It's no secret that students can still get an Arts and Science degree without having learned to write during their studies, but it takes some effort to avoid the emphasis on active literacy.

The professional faculties get closer to talking about discipline-based writing instruction. In Engineering, the new support program is even called "Language Across the Curriculum." It focusses mainly on writing, but also touches on reading, listening, and speaking. After only two years of operation, it has created ties with 35 courses, consulting with faculty in designing assignments, working with TAs to grade them, and also offering tailored individual instruction through the Engineering Writing Centre.

The Health Sciences Writing Centre was its precursor by a year. It didn't risk the fancy terminology, but set up many of the methods of collaborative teaching. Writing instructors confer with faculty members to define the specific kinds of reading and writing that students and practitioners need to do. Supporting the new problem-based curricula and the emphasis on critical and reflective practice, instructors offer students in-course modules, workshops on common problems, and individual consultations.

Architecture has just announced plans to move to a graduate program that will attend to architects' and planners' special uses of language. Writing instructors will teach parts of an entry-year course and modules within upper-year courses alongside disciplinary faculty, as well as providing workshops and tutoring for students. These new models of integrated support and instruction are giving writing a more prominent place within and throughout the curriculum at U of T--even if they don't always claim a title for doing so.

Reported by Margaret Procter

"Spring Thaw"
University of Calgary

At the University of Calgary, a true WAC program is coming into focus, though with glacial slowness.

For many years, writing instruction at the U of C has been closely tied to the Effective Writing Test, an essay-based writing competence exam that most students must pass within their first year. In theory it is intended to diagnose students who need help and to induce them to present themselves at the Writing Centre. In practice, of course, it often becomes just another hurdle, and its ability to give a true picture of a student's writing ability based on a one-shot decontextualized essay is questionable at best. Worst of all, students in this cost-recovery province must pay $50 to

write it, not only providing a powerful incentive to put it off until the last possible moment but also firmly entrenching the idea that all this should have been taken care of at high school.

Enough woe. The good news is that the University of Calgary is in the throes of "strategic transformation." In many ways this means doubling administrative workload to reinvent the wheel. (The famous square wheel has been replaced by an innovative "triangular wheel" which saves one bump per revolution.) However, it has the advantage that the university is highly change-conscious. Effective Writing is "well positioned," to use the buzz phrase of the day, to instigate wide-ranging changes in the way writing is taught.

The first indicator of change is that one program, Rehabilitation Studies, is willing to fund Effective Writing to develop a credit writing course which will be closely paired with a discipline-specific course. This pairing will allow writing to be taught in the context of an audience and a body of knowledge. The long-term goal is to make the course a general program requirement, not just a fixer-upper for students who have not met the Effective Writing Requirement. Thus it stands to reinstate writing as a subject that all students need, not just those who are somehow broken and need fixing.

Flushed by this success (only six students in the first section, but never mind--Rome wasn't taught Latin in a day), I have persuaded the university to accept a set of "shell" courses in Academic Writing: ACWR 201, 301, 401, 501, etc. These courses will provide a mechanism for tailoring instruction to the specific needs of any academic unit which requires them, without having to add course after course to the calendar one at a time. I am, for instance, opening negotiations with Geomatics Engineering, which has long needed a course for ESL graduate students. We may be able to tailor a section of ACWR 501 specifically for this audience.

This concept of discipline-specific linked courses cannot, by itself, create a comprehensive WAC program. For one thing, departments must find the money for each of these courses separately. There is no central WAC budget, nor is there likely to be one in the near future in an institution which has just gone through a 21% budget cut. For another, there is no possibility that Effective Writing could keep up with demand if all units wanted to contract out their writing to us. We will need to phase in a multi-dimensioned plan that incorporates courses taught by disciplinary units themselves, supported by a strong Writing Centre and, ideally, a peer tutoring network modeled on the "writing fellows" programs found in many American universities.

But it's a start. We are located in the Faculty of General Studies, not the English department, which has positioned us well for interdisciplinary instruction but maintained at least a tenuous link with an academic rather than a support unit. This is central to the most important conceptual breakthrough: being allowed to offer credit courses.

Now if we can just get our funding uncoupled from that exam....

Reported by Doug Brent

"Small But Growing: Initiating WAC"
Mount Saint Vincent University

At Mount Saint Vincent University, Writing Across the Curriculum is fostered by a grass-roots WAC group, which involves a small group of faculty from various disciplines (including Sociology, English, Psychology, Public Relations, Human Ecology) who plan various information, promotion and follow-up sessions for faculty interested in exploring and experimenting with WAC. The group operates under a committee which reports to Senate. This committee, the Writing Initiatives Committee (WIC -- and yes, we have lots of fun with the acronyms), has as its mandate the oversight and coordination, where possible, of initiatives concerned with writing across the university. This is our attempt to maintain WAC as a grassroots movement (since we understand mandating WAC top-down is almost always fatal) while giving it academic credibility and an official means of communicating with the people who do writing programmes. (The unofficial means has always been there, since I co-ordinate the writing programme in English and participate also in the WIC group).

WIC has had some success -- not very long ago, we spent a year working on encouraging ungraded writing assignments. Roberta Lee visited us from UNB St John and was very helpful in talking about some of the kinds of things that can be done. A biologist, a psychologist, and a political scientist agreed to experiment in their courses and report back to us, and were generally very enthusiastic. WIC is still small-scale, but it is happening.

Reported by Susan Drain

"A Genre-Based Approach to WAC"
Simon Fraser University

Writing Centre faculty at Simon Fraser are not formally involved in developing university-wide programs specifically targeting writing in the disciplines or writing across the curriculum. Forays are made from the Dean's office once or twice a year about WAC, but so far there has been no concerted response or initiative in the direction of making some courses writing intensive and allocating time or resources to them. The Engineering and Business faculties both have required writing courses that are offered and run from within the faculty. In Business Administration, the course is a third year general communications course with a major focus on writing. At the invitation of the program director, the sessional instructors who also have Writing Centre affiliation are currently involved in discussing modifications to this course.

At the general university level, there is no entrance writing test and none of the writing courses offered by the English Department is a required course, although some departments do recommend their students take the first year academic writing course, English 199. The prerequisite for English 199 is 12 academic credits so that students come to the course with some experience of university writing. For various reasons, we've been reluctant to get involved in any mandated writing requirements in other disciplines. Like everyone else, we strive to avoid

being associated only with service and remedial functions and in our relations with faculty in other disciplines, we emphasize our role as researchers as well as our particular expertise in teaching writing. What this has meant in practice is that when we get a request to give a workshop in a political science or Fine Arts class, or give some help to a group of Vietnamese students in a graduate education class, we use the request as an opportunity to learn more about the discourse of the discipline. We typically do this in three ways: we interview the instructor about his or her expectations for student writing, we collect student and professional samples of the target genre for a discourse analysis, and we ask the instructor for a think-aloud protocol of the professional and student samples and, where available, a think-aloud of their commentary on marked papers. We find these activities help us establish cross-disciplinary relationships based on our expertise both as teachers and researchers. They seem to be successfully collaborative in that the activities depend on the disciplinary expertise of the instructor-informants and we are clearly positioned as inquirers. Since this approach is labour intensive, it means that we probably do fewer workshops than we might otherwise be able to offer if we did not draw on the specific discourse information we collect. We are not taking the generic, process-focused approach typically associated with writing across the curriculum programs. Our work is genre-based. What we are trying to build up is a bank of annotated, discipline- and sometimes course-specific writing samples and marker commentary and a collection of strategies for workshops which newcomers can refer to as they plan their own sessions. The process is underway!

Everyone who works in the Writing Centre is encouraged to get involved in our "outreach" activities and to respond to enquiries from any discipline. We get leads from the students who come in for one-on-one consulting sessions as well as from TAs and faculty in other disciplines. We're also hoping to raise our profile with a series of publications in the form of occasional papers and technical reports arising from both faculty and student research. Since the institution of two new upper division courses, "Writing and Response in the Research Genres" and "Theory and Practice of Technical and Professional Literacies," which require students to do some empirical research, students have investigated a variety of non-English discourse sites and some non-academic sites. These undergraduate students have produced insightful and interesting inquiries which illuminate our own practice and offer guidance both theoretical and practical for newcomers in the Writing Centre.

Reported by Wendy Strachan

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"Communication in Management"
McGill University

The McGill Faculty of Management has traditionally required undergraduates to complete an introductory writing course, Effective Written Communication, designed and taught by the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW) in the Education Faculty. With the recent restructuring of the Bachelor of Commerce program, continued pressure from the business community, and a focus on recruiting international students, the Faculty requested the CSTW to

construct and administer a placement test for incoming undergraduates. The resulting placement test includes reading three articles that argue for different positions on a current issue, writing a position paper, and editing two articles for the student newspaper.

Students who demonstrate problems in English fluency are admitted to a non-credit language course. Those who clearly show a grasp of rhetorical strategies, awareness of audience, and control of grammar and syntax are admitted into the advanced course, Communication in Management II (Com. II). All others are admitted to Communication in Management I (Com. I). Except those who were admitted to Com. II, every student must complete Com. I, including those who must complete a language course first. Communication in Management I focuses on strategies for written and oral presentation and includes academic writing. Communication in Management II is compulsory for students wishing to enter the internship program and focuses on workplace communication. Students in Com. II learn interviewing skills, report writing, field study research, and presentation skills. These students are expected to use communication technology such as electronic mail, Internet searching, and presentation software.

We began these new courses in January, 1998. As a result of the placement test, about 25% of the students entered the language courses, about 50% entered Communication in Management I and about 25% entered Communication in Management II.

The students had few complaints about the placement test; some told us that it was "fun" to write. We have found that most of the students in communication in Management II are first year students from out of province, meaning that they are just out of high school. So far, they have very little notion of life in the workplace and have not yet completed management courses such as Organizational Behaviour or Group Dynamics. However, they seem to find the course helpful and expect that it will be useful for the rest of their program, especially the field study component.

Reported by Jane Ledwell-Brown

"Communication in Engineering"
McGill University

Undergraduate:
The Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing has had a long-term relationship with the two largest departments in McGill's Faculty of Engineering: Electrical and Mechanical. In the early 1980s the CSTW began to teach sections of the course then called Effective Written Communication to the undergraduate students in these departments. Although the course was a generic writing course, the instructors tended to have whole sections of engineers, so could tailor the assignments (individually negotiated topics) and activities to their interests. Civil Engineering also approached the CSTW for a pilot section of the EWC course for their students. Other engineering departments at McGill have traditionally taught their own students, using a Technical Report Writing course, and sometimes drawing on adjunct professors who work in the private sector.

Since 1996 the CSTW has moved to discipline-specific courses, more and more closely related to the needs and curricula of the various faculties. In the case of undergraduate Engineering, we have developed a Communications in Engineering course that uses engineering-related texts and assignments entirely, and draws on recent findings from research in genre and activity theory as well as studies in engineering communication.

Graduate:
In the early 1990s the CSTW also began to teach a section of the graduate course Advanced Written Communication to graduate students (mostly international) in Mining and Metallurgical Engineering. This relationship continues and may grow.

Developing relationship:
The current Director of the Centre has been closely involved with two groups within the Faculty of Engineering, one a Committee on Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Engineering, and the other (the "Communication in Engineering Committee") devoted to developing a new and even more closely related course (or pair of courses) . The new course or courses will be faculty-wide. This second committee has become a fascinating and active group, with representation from each engineering department (Civil, Mining and Metallurgical, Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical, plus Urban Planning / School of Architecture), as well as the CSTW.

As with management, the close relationship developed through administrative, teaching and research connections. In the case of engineering, a major influence has been the active leadership of one engineering professor who is devoting much of his time to improving teaching and learning in his faculty, and whose initial contact with the CSTW was as a research participant for a CSTW project funded by SSHRC.

Reported by Ann Beer

"Curriculum Revisions Emphasize WID"
University of Winnipeg

It's been a while since *Inkshed* readers last heard about what we've been doing at the University of Winnipeg, and Janice Freeman has asked me to provide an update on our revised curriculum. I'm happy for the chance to do so--I think our new course offerings have strengthened writing instruction at this university by giving both students and faculty members a range of options that didn't exist in our original program. We revised so thoroughly, though, that I'll limit myself to an outline only, and then comment briefly on the impact of these changes.

The process of revision followed two reviews of the Writing Program and dominated the academic year 1993-94: all Writing Program faculty met biweekly with the Dean, the Associate Dean (Curriculum), and the English Department Chair to discuss every aspect of how the program might evolve. The five-year reviews, while generally positive about the work we were

doing, had suggested some avenues we might explore, particularly to move away from the "common curriculum" which had shaped our teaching of Rhetoric 1, the course which then satisfied the University of Winnipeg writing requirement. Many of us had come to this process dissatisfied with the common curriculum, but we quickly realized that to replace it with any single model of writing instruction would be just as unsatisfactory. Some faculty members wanted to develop courses which would specifically address the rhetorical norms and expectations of particular disciplines, knowing that this would mean grappling with such difficult issues as "insider" and "outsider" knowledge. Others had more confidence that general instruction in scholarly writing gave students skills they could easily transfer to their work in specific discourse communities. Establishing a range of options would allow all faculty members to follow their convictions and scholarly interests, as well as refreshing our enthusiasm for the work we do in the classroom. And we hoped that this change would also reduce students' resistance to a mandatory writing course. What we developed, then, was a series of half-courses which fall into three categories:

-sections linked with introductory courses in specific disciplines (we've offered them so far with History, Classics, Sociology, Biology, Environmental Studies, and Philosophy);
-sections identified by discipline area (Academic Writing in the Humanities, Social Sciences, or Natural Sciences); and
-multidisciplinary sections (a number of which focus on topics like advertising or language; several have been offered in the Computer Writing Lab).

All of these courses are called Academic Writing, to indicate their common purpose, but the designation following (L, HUM, SS, NS, MD) lets students know which section would best suit their individual interests and needs.

We've now offered these new courses for three years, with considerable success, I believe. The name Academic Writing alone has sent a clearer message about what we do in these courses and, like the name and independent status of the Centre for Academic Writing, has encouraged awareness that instruction in writing benefits the university as a whole. Response from students has been good, but we've also discovered areas of our new system that need improvement.

Publicizing the course options effectively is an ongoing dilemma. Our courses are designed for first-year students, the group most likely to have difficulty reading our *Calendar* and *Timetable*, and we ask them in effect three questions before they register in any of our courses. First, do they need to take Academic Writing? A small percentage of incoming students are exempted, usually on the basis of a Grade XII English mark. Secondly, do they need the full or the half-course version? Students with 60% or less in Grade XII English are required to take the full-year version. Finally, they need to understand what the designations indicate and which is their best choice, often when they have little idea what their major will eventually be. As a result, we offer more sections of Multidisciplinary than any other, since those are the sections that can best accommodate students who are uncertain about their field of study. Of the more specific designations, our Natural Science sections fill most quickly.

We've handled links as follows: all students in the disciplinary course who need to satisfy the writing requirement are eligible for the linked section of Academic Writing, but they are not required to register in it; once registered, they may drop Academic Writing and stay in the disciplinary section, but not the reverse, since the readings and assignments in Academic Writing are closely connected to the disciplinary work they're doing. The ins and outs of this process may account for the trouble we've sometimes had attracting sufficient numbers of students to justify offering linked sections. We've discovered that it's best to link with departments that offer multiple first-year sections, rather than to arrange the type of one-to-one match that was originally envisioned, since only then is the pool of students large enough to guarantee the enrolment we need. And that has unfortunately limited the range of links we can offer: Biology and Administrative Studies will work, for instance, but we've managed to run a link with Classics only once in the three times we've tried.

Overall, though, I believe that our revised course offerings have indeed reduced students' resistance to a mandatory writing course and strengthened our connections with colleagues across the disciplines. Attitudes towards the writing requirement and the Centre have been further improved by the popularity of our upper-level courses: Rhetoric in the Disciplines, Professional Style and Editing, Rhetorical Criticism, and Orality and Literacy. Originally designed when we were part of the English Department, and now cross-listed with English, these courses have attracted not only English majors but a large population of students whose interests are focused on writing and communication. Their interest, in fact, led us recently to propose a Combined Degree/Diploma Program in Communications, to be offered jointly by the University of Winnipeg and Red River Community College, if government approval is granted. Space doesn't permit an elaboration of that proposal, but perhaps in an upcoming report. . .

Reported by Judith Kearns

Ethnomethodology and the Study of Writing in Organizations

Barbara Schneider, University of Calgary

The study of writing in organizational settings has become increasingly interdisciplinary, with scholars in the area calling on work from such diverse fields as, among others, literary criticism, sociolinguistics, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, sociology of science, and organizational theory and communication. This work has contributed to a greater understanding of what has become one of the central tenets of the social approach to understanding writing that writing and social contexts are inextricably interrelated: writers' activities are influenced by social contexts and those contexts are in turn shaped by the writing that takes place within them. I would like, in this article, to introduce yet another approach, that of ethnomethodology, which offers a body of literature and a methodology that can contribute to a deeper understanding of exactly how this interrelationship of text and context is accomplished. At the end of this article, I append a short bibliography of some key works in the field for those who might be interested in knowing more.

Ethnomethodology is a sociological approach that grew out of the foundational work of sociologist Harold Garfinkel, who insisted that all social order is organized from within the social situation by members participating in social interaction at a specific time and in a particular location. He regarded people as having practical interactional competence through which everyday reality is produced and called for research in the social sciences to focus on "the knowledgeable ways in which, whether consciously or not, social actors recognize, produce and reproduce social actions and social structures" (Heritage, 1987, p. 225). This is a very different view of social structure and individual action than the one by which we live our daily lives (and which underpins most of our research). I believe that in its contribution to understanding the nature of social structure and human action, ethnomethodology can help to illuminate the relationship of text and context.

The question of the relationship between social structures and the behavior of individuals living within those social structures has been hotly debated in the sociological literature in what is known variously as the structure/agency or macro/micro debate. The term "social structure" is generally used to refer to large scale, or macro, patterns of social relationships that are external to individuals (or agents) and provide a context for all human activities, or micro phenomena. The link between the domains of social structure and individual activity is variously regarded as causal (i.e. human activities are seen as the product of larger social forces), mutually constraining or enriching, or as an interaction of various levels of social life. Features of social structure, such as social class, professional affiliation, rank in the organizational hierarchy, are called upon as explanatory resources for understanding the behavior of people within a particular social structure. Notice that the language I have used so far in this article when talking about text and context is rooted in this view of social structure as external to individuals, whose activities are seen to take place within the structure.

For ethnomethodologists, in contrast, the structure/agency or macro/micro distinction is a false

dichotomy. Structure is realized through the actions of agents and therefore the two cannot be studied as independent domains that interact in particular ways. Ethnomethodologists are interested instead in the question of how social order is produced as a local accomplishment of social actors. They neither affirm nor deny the existence of social structure but instead seek to investigate how social facts are assembled as an apparently objective reality. They investigate the local social practices and interactions through which structure is "made to happen, made to appear" (Hilbert, 1990, p. 795). If social structure is to be studied at all, it is studied as "something that humans do, rather than something that happens to them" (Boden, 1994, p.11). Wilson (1991) proposes a definition of social structure that focuses on the immediate experiences of actors in social interaction: "social structure consists of matters that are described and oriented to by members of society on relevant occasions as essential resources for conducting their affairs and, at the same time, reproduced as external and constraining social facts through that same social interaction" (p. 27). This is not to say, however, that individuals do not experience social structure as a social fact that exists prior to and separate from their own membership or participation in a particular social setting. They (we), of course, do. But it is in experiencing and orienting to the social world as external and constraining that this social world is produced and reproduced as an objective reality. As Wilson says, "members' notions of the social world constitute that world" (email correspondence, March 20, 1997); that is, the taken-for-granted social world is an ongoing accomplishment of individuals' interpretive activities.

What this means to writing researchers is that rather than seeing writing and social context as separate but reciprocal domains and asking what the effects of social context are on the writing activities of individual writers and vice versa, we can instead study the activities through which writers accomplish a sense of what we refer to as social structure. We can examine in detail exactly how writers, through the social practices that make up the act of writing, produce and reproduce the apparently objective facts of social context. Ethnomethodology thus offers a theoretical approach and a language for dissolving the division between text and context and for treating the activities of writers as simultaneously embedded in and constitutive of social context.

To illustrate what this approach can offer to writing researchers, I will briefly describe some research I conducted recently. One of the central tenets of ethnomethodological research is that analysts put aside a priori understandings of social structure to focus instead on how social actors accomplish a sense of social structure by studying the social world in flight, as it happens, with a focus on local sense-making practices. This requires the study of writing as it happens, not after the fact in writers' accounts of their writing activities or even in talk-aloud protocols that capture only a part of a writer's composing process. I did this by observing and recording the social interactions of two managers in an educational institution who were conducting and writing a report on an evaluation of a group of their educational programs. I conducted no interviews. Instead, I attended, taped, and transcribed all meetings at which the evaluation was discussed. These included about 20 interviews conducted by the managers with teachers in the programs being evaluated and several meetings between the two managers at which the report was discussed. I also collected all drafts of the report. My focus was primarily on the talk in which the production of the report was embedded.

Through discourse analysis of the transcripts, I was able to show in detail how the managers created a report that presented their "managerial" version of the organization as the stable and objective reality of the organization. My analysis revealed how the managers constructed the power relations that made some reality claims more available than others. They called on certain preferred ways of thinking and acting within the organization and repressed other less preferred ways of thinking and acting to support their view of the organization. And because the managers had conducted interviews with all the teachers in the programs, they were able to use the teachers' own words in the document to legitimate their managerial account as the preferred view of the organization. In other words, I was able to examine in detail how the managers, through their interpretive activities, produced a particular version of what is commonly regarded as an external, pre-existing social structure. I was able to show how writers use the resources provided by an organizational discourse to promote a preferred view of an organization as a stable and objective reality.

I think I may have given the impression of ethnomethodology as a fairly straightforward and unified approach. This is far from the truth, on both counts. I have presented just one, for me very central, part of the ethnomethodological program, but there are many others, some of which are difficult to get a grip on (not least because Garfinkel's writing is extremely dense and convoluted). In addition, there are many factions within the field, unfortunately often quite hostile to each other, and many ways of carrying out research based on ethnomethodological principles. In the bibliography that follows I have included a range of works, including general introductions to the field and empirical work specifically concerned with writing in organizations. If you want more references or are interested in knowing more about how I analyzed the transcripts, email me at baschnei@acs.ucalgary.ca

Boden, D. (1990). The world as it happens: Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), The frontiers of social theory today. New York: Columbia University Press. (A good, but not too long, general introduction.)

Boden, D. (1994). The business of talk: Organizations in action. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press. (An outstanding synthesis of ethnomethodology and organization theory.)

Brandt, D. (1992). The cognitive as the social: An ethnomethodological approach to writing process research. Written Communication, 9, 315-355. (The only example I have found of someone in the writing community drawing on ethnomethodology. She presents a very concise description of the field in this article. She also takes an ethnomethodological approach in herbook about literacy.)

Garfinkel, H. (1967a). Good organizational reasons for bad clinic records. In H Garfinkel, Studies in ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. (One of the first articles to see writing as social. This book also includes the famous Agnes article, which was the first to demonstrate the social construction of gender.)

Heritage, J. (1984). Garfinkel and ethnomethodology. London: Polity Press. (The bible of EM.)

Heritage, J. (1987). Ethnomethodology. In A. Giddens & J. H. Turner (Eds.), Social theory today. London: Polity Press. (A short version of the bible.)

Holstein J. A. & Gubrium, J. (1994). Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and interpretive practice. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (An excellent introduction to carrying out research in this area.)

Maynard, D. W. & Clayman, S. E. (1991). The diversity of ethnomethodology. Annual Review of Sociology, 17, 385-418. (A review of a wide range of ethnomethodological research.)

Miller, G. (1994). Toward ethnographies of institutional discourse. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 23, 280-306. (Miller is my favorite scholar in ethnomethodological studies of organizations; his work was key in shaping my thinking about how to study writing in organizations.)

Miller, G. (1997) Contextualizing texts: Qualitative strategies for studying organizational texts. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall, (eds.), *Strategic qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Smith, D. (1985). Textually mediated social organization. *International Social Science*, 36, 59-75. (Smith is not really an ethnomethodologist--she is a firm believer in external reality--but she is an important Canadian scholar and draws on Garfinkel in this article.)

Wilson, T. P. (1991). Social structure and the sequential organization of interaction. In D. Zimmerman & D. Boden (Eds.), *Talk and social structure: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press. (This article lays out the relationship between social structure and social intaction.)

Zimmerman, D. (1969). Record-keeping and the intake process in a public welfare agency. In S. Wheeler (Ed.), *On record: Files and dossiers in American life*. Beverly Hills: Sage. (Another fascinating early study of how writing organizes organizational life.)