Inkshed

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

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AC(C)UTE Revisited

In two and a half decades of teaching in an English Department at a Canadian University, I sallied forth only twice to the nation's official meetings of the Profession, namely ACUTE (Association of Canadian University Teachers of English). The first time, in 1969, was a dispiriting experience. I found the papers incomprehensible or boring (or both) and conversations outside the formal sessions trivial, consisting mainly of gossip about people I didn't know and didn't much care to know. I left feeling inadequate, wondering whether I had chosen the wrong profession.

Soon afterwards, I took unpaid leave to go to Britain where my husband did a Ph.D. and I became a full-time housewife and mother. After three years of that, my university job looked pretty good, so I returned to it and a few years later tried attending ACUTE again. I didn't find the meetings any more satisfying than I had a decade earlier, but this time I decided the problem didn't arise entirely from my own inadequacies but partly, at least, from those of the conference, the organization, and even the profession.

Then in 1979 came a turning point for me, as for a good many other teachers in this country (including lots of Inkshedders), when we attended the wonderful CCTE/IFTE conference on writing at Carleton, organized by Aviva Freedman and Ian Pringle. Here I discovered that there were other teachers in English departments in this country who shared my commitment to teaching writing and were willing to actually talk about it in public! What was even more astonishing was to learn that there were lots of professors of English in universities (mostly in the U.S.) who wrote books and articles about teaching composition, got research grants to do this kind of work, and won awards for it. At that conference I met others from English departments in Canadian universities who felt much as I did about ACUTE, that it was too narrow in its orientation, that it placed too much emphasis on literary/textual criticism while ignoring the contributions other disciplines such as education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, sociolinguistics might make to our work, and that it wasn't interested in changing to meet the needs of people like us. English professors in Canada who shared my interests, I found, looked outside ACUTE for professional support, inspiration and involvement. Like many of them I dropped my membership in ACUTE and became an active member of CCTE and NCTE (its US equivalent—sort of), and started attending the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in the U.S.

In the 80's came pilgrimages to Purdue for summer courses in Rhetoric (on the recommendation of Aviva Freedman), to graduate school at University of Texas/Austin (on the recommendation of Andrea Lunsford), to the newly instituted Canadian Caucus sessions at CCCC and, of course, Inkshed. I scarcely gave a thought to ACUTE, and any reports that came my way suggested that the organization was stuck in the same place I had left it in the late 70's. In April this year when I talked to a number of you over lunch at the Inkshed meetings, I came away with the impression that you, too, still shared my view of ACUTE.

Well, this report is to let you know, in case you haven't heard already, that ACUTE has changed! First of all the name has been modified. It's now ACCUTE to officially include within its scope Colleges along with universities, a change that reflects a new openness I sensed in the organization earlier this year when I attended, for the third time, the meetings of the association. This time my presence was almost accidental. I had gone to Kingston in May to give a paper at the Canadian Women's Studies Association and to attend the Canadian Society for the History of Rhetoric, which immediately preceded the CWSA meetings. Overlapping with both, I found, were the ACCUTE sessions. I ended up spending more time at ACCUTE meetings than at either of the others.

One of the things that impressed me most was the diversity of topics and approaches, some of them in sessions given by Inkshedders. Andrea Lunsford gave a stunning keynote address on "Scenes for Writing in the University" to a packed hall of 500 or so. They loved her, and many asked interested and concerned (if not always well-informed) questions after the formal address. In most time-slots there were sessions on pedagogy, including a presentation by Henry Hubert on "Idealism and the Withering of College Rhetoric," and in most slots there were also sessions on gender issues, such as Claudia Mitchell's on "Issues of Gender and Genre in the Reading and Writing of Adolescent Girls," which was offered as a joint session with CWSA. The opening keynote address was given by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick on "Jane Austin and the Masturbating Girl" (which has since been published in Critical Inquiry, in case any of you are interested in seeing what ACCUTE now puts in the top spot at its annual conference). In one session in a conference-long stream called "The Representation of Violence/The Violence of Representation" Linda Hutcheon gave a virtuoso performance, not only as semiotician but as audiovisual impresario, when she orchestrated two slide projectors and screens to deconstruct the ROM's controversial "Out of Africa" exhibition. There were sessions by and about aboriginal and other minority writers, where real conversations seemed to be taking place...and much more. Best of all was the spirit of excitement, of fresh winds blowing through the profession.

I asked Beth Popham, who has recently moved from Memorial to Trent, and is very active in ACCUTE, if this year's conference was an aberration, and if future ones are likely to revert to old grooves. She said she hoped not, but that a lot depends on Inkshedders. The organization is ready to hear from us, she said; it needs us if it's going to continue with an emphasis on pedagogy, research in writing and reading, and the other stuff we do. So I pass the message on to you in the hope that I may see some of you at next year's ACCUTE meetings at UPEI May 24 to 27, 1992. By the time you get this it may be too late to submit proposals for individual papers (the deadline for these is November 15), but there should still be time to submit proposals for special sessions (December 15 deadline). Some of us here are planning to submit a proposal for a special session on Collaborative Learning and Postmodern Theory. If you are interested in joining us, let me know (c/o English Department, MUN, St. John's, Newfoundland, AIC 3S7; FAX 709-737-4000; phone 709-737-8063). Or submit your own Special Session proposals to Shirley Neuman, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E5; phone 403-492-7816. Oh yes, in case you are interested, you can send your ACCUTE membership fees ($65 Regular) to her address too.

I'd like to read other reports from people who have been keeping abreast of ACCUTE. Were your reactions to this year's meetings as positive as mine? Do any of you have inside perspectives on the organization? I know not all Inkshedders are in English Departments, but I hope enough of you are that we can carry on with at least a part of this conversation here.

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Hands

He sat by the lake in the sun and looked at his hands. They had served him well. He had used them to make love, to dig in the garden, to hold a baseball bat. He had also used them to fire a rifle and to lash out in anger.

Tomorrow he would not have them. They were going to remove them. His hands were dangerous, they said, a writer's hands.

It was the hands they removed first. If that didn't work, they would silence his voice and cut out his tongue.

He took off his shirt so that he could more fully enjoy the sun's comforting warmth. He had an hour left before he had to leave the lake and return to the gray building behind him - the rehabilitation centre where the operation would be performed.

He stood up suddenly and removed his sneakers, his socks, his jeans. He stretched, feeling the strength that was still his. He sensed a disturbance behind him.

He dove into the water, ignoring the shouts and the sound of running feet. He headed for the opposite shore.

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They found his body the following morning washed up on the beach across the lake. He was clutching a handful of sand. He was smiling.

Bill Boswell
McGill University

CASWAR Structure Committee — Progress Report

Here are two Inkshedders' responses to the Progress Report (published in *Inkshed* Vol. 10.1). Many thanks to Nancy and Michael for their suggestions about the organization's name. We have received some brief notes and spoken comments, all of them positive. However, we also want to publish criticisms and adaptations of the ideas presented so far. Please get out your pen/typewriter/ computer or other writing tool and send us your thoughts. We would like to have as much discussion as possible before the May Conference in Banff.

The Committee Members are:

Ann Beer (Coordinator)
Susan Drain
Barbara Powell
Jim Reither
Wendy Strachan
Stan Straw
Catherine Taylor

Reflections on Names for Inkshed/CASWAR

I appreciated your clearly organized, reflective, comprehensive (at least, it appeared so to me) summary of cross-country discussions about the structure and name of the about-to-be constituted organization.

After playing with possible names, I came up with some alphabet soup, but perhaps the list below may add to the discussion. I've annotated some but left others "raw."

Assumptions: that the name must identify the organization clearly, highlight what really matters to us, be pleasant and easy to live with, and not seem too "offbeat" for official funding agencies (Beer, *Inkshed* 10.1, p.4). I also decided not to worry about whether the abbreviation is an acronym or not.

Notes: Society and Association, Teaching and Study, National and Canadian } are interchangeable

Writing and Reading can be reversed in order.

- Writing Reading Canada (WRC) – Canadian Writing and Reading (CWR)
- Reading Writing Canada (RWC) – Canadian Reading and Writing (CRW)
- Writing and Reading Society(Association)of Canada (WRSC/WRAC) *Macbeth?*
- Canadian (National) Writing and Reading (Reading and Writing) Assoc.(Society)(CWRA/ CRWA) *A croak or call for help?*//CWRS/CRWS/NWRA/*new and raw?*//NWRS/NRWA/ NRWS
- Writing and Reading/Theory and Practice (WRIP) *A U.S. radio station?*
- Canadian (National) Writing and Reading/Theory and Practice (CWRTP) (NWRIP)
- Reading and Writing Society (Association) of Canada (RWSC/RWAC)
- Canadian Association for the Study of Literacies (CASL)
- Canadian Literacies (CL) *Like the journal*
- Canadian Literacies Society (CLS) *Sounds familiar*
- Society (Association) for Canadian Literacies (SCL) (ACL)
- Canadian Literacies Association (CLA) *Canadian Libraries Association?*
- Canadian Association (Society) of Reading and Writing Study (CARWS) (CSWRS)
- The Inkshed Society (IS)
- Inkshed (Investigations of the Nature of Kinetic Study of Heuristics in the Educational Domain) *Just kidding*

Nancy Carlman
Vancouver

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How about WRITE? (The Writing and Reading Institute for Teachers of English - or - for Theorists and Educators).

I looked up "institute" in the OED (Short Version) and I found the following: "4. A society or organization instituted to promote literature, science, art, education, or the like."

Referring to "Teachers of English" alone may seem exclusionary, hence I came up with the alternative "Theorists and Educators." However, the former nicely parallels the acronyms for ACUTE and CCTE, and if teaching can be seen as taking place outside, as well as inside, classrooms, then there need not be a contradiction.

Finally, WRITE avoids the pitfalls of "Canadian" or (worse) "National" Association, while it incorporates the "Writing and Reading" focus of CASWAR.

Personally, I think that this acronym will put us on the WRITE track; it is neither too bureaucratic and awful for us to live with, nor is it too "offbeat" for official funding agencies.

WRITE on, eh?

Michael Hoechsmann
O.I.S.E.Toronto

The Outsider Is Called In:

Audience in the Disciplines

We recently began a collaboration with instructors in second-year courses in psychology and criminology. As part of this collaboration, we conducted think-aloud protocols with readers from these two disciplines asking them to re-read papers they had already marked and hoping to uncover principles they consulted in evaluating student writing.[1] Here we focus in particular on two related issues which these sessions exposed: (1) the phenomenon of shared knowledge[2] in these discourse communities; (2) the role that the idea of the "outside" reader – the reader who is not a member of the disciplinary community – plays in rationalizing judgements of student work.

Writing psychology

To sound like a psychologist, the student writer has to show that she can manage detail. In accounting for the material and procedural conditions of the experiment, she must make numerous judgements about what to mention and what to keep quiet about. For example, in a paper reporting the results of an experiment which tested aspects of visual perception, it is appropriate to say the following:

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1 Adapting techniques demonstrated by Waern (1988), we asked our subjects –experienced and highly regarded Teaching Assistants from the two disciplines– to read student papers out loud to us, adding commentary which (a) identified discourse features which triggered evaluation, and (b) expressed the discursive principles with which the student was either complying or failing to comply. To inspire this kind of commentary, we started each session by reading aloud a first-year literature paper ourselves, and identifying the sources of our judgements. In this modeling, we emphasized reasoning which we took to be discipline-specific.

2 For our informal sketches of presupposition and mutual knowledge, we rely on research in philosophical and linguistic pragmatics, e.g., Clark and Marshall (1981), Prince (1981), Sperber and Wilson (1982, 1986), Siklaki (1988).

(1) The order of participants was decided among the sub-groups.

And it is appropriate to say:

(2) After the trials were completed, a new subject would sit in the chair and a new measurer would write down the error factors. This would continue until all the members of the sub-group had participated as the subject on one occasion.

(Both (1) and (2) earned ticks in the margin; during the protocol, the marker suggested that (2) could have been reduced to "take turns.")

But it is inappropriate to say:

(3) All subjects were from the same tutorial group which regularly meets from 10:30 to 12:30 on Wednesday mornings.

And it is inappropriate to say:

(4) The measuring individual would mark down the error factor on a piece of paper. (Although the marker reported these commissions in the protocol, she did not note them in her marking of the paper.)

Excerpt (5), below, is the work of a student writer already sensitive to the features of intensive detail which distinguish psychologists' ways of writing, but sometimes mistaken in her judgement as to when this detail is appropriate:

(5) In this experiment a Teaching Assistant randomly assigned each subject to the vertical or horizontal test according to the odd and even numbers from a particular column of a table in the appendix of a psychology textbook.

(Marker: Too much detail. She didn't need to be so detailed. You should say, "Each subject was randomly assigned." I think we prefer the passive.

(**Notation on paper:** called a random numbers table)

Details appear to be ineligible for one of two reasons. First, details may be ineligible because they are not relevant to evaluating the validity of the experiment; for example, in (3) that it's Wednesday is irrelevant, whereas it is relevant that conditions were consistent for all trials. Proper handling of detail depends on the student's grasp of the principles of validity which the assignment was designed to test. Second, and more important to us here, details may be ineligible because they are part of the shared knowledge of writer and reader, and should be presupposed rather than explicitly stated. For example, in (4), it is efficient to assume that the reader knows that writing occurs on paper, and, in (5), it is efficient to assume that the reader knows what random assignment is. Success in the circumstances of (5) requires more precise intuitions about the discourse community's shared knowledge, and these intuitions should guide the writer's judgements about when to mention details and when to keep quiet. But we find that this domain of shared knowledge can be treacherous for the novice.

In (5), the student reveals her novice status by not presupposing the techniques of random assignment as shared knowledge. But, in other cases, where we might think that similar insider

knowledge should be presupposed, it turns out that it shouldn't be. The Muller-Lyer Illusion Board and the procedures associated with it are well known to the reader of the paper and, moreover, generally known to the psychology community. The department in which this study took place stores an inventory of these boards: they are part of the material culture of this discourse community. When the student writers set to work to describe this well known apparatus and test, they run into the marker's negative judgements, and these tangles cannot be sorted by simply presupposing knowledge of the boad and its use.

(6) Subjects who participated in the Muller-Lyer Vertical Illusion Test achieved greater accuracy than those who participated in the Muller-Lyer Horizontal Illusion Test.	Marker: You [the investigators] have no idea what she's talking about.

(Notation on paper: 0)

7) The experimenter takes the subject's score and adjusts it according to the calibrated "0" point. For example, if the calibration for a certain group was 15mm, then the experimenter would take the subject's score and add 15 (-17 + 15 = -2). If the measurement is shorter than the "0" point, then the score will be a negative number. If the measurement is longer than the "0" point, then the score will be a positive number.	Marker: She shouldn't be showing what calibration is, at this level. True, but you [the investigators] probably have no idea what she's talking about. It doesn't flow.

(Notation on paper: 0)

In (6), from the abstract, the marker is not satisfied with the account of the results of this well known test. Sample (6) in fact looked all right to us; we didn't really expect to understand it any more than we expected to understand the similarly unexplained accounts of calculations for standard deviation later in the paper. Yet the marker invoked us – uninformed outsiders – to justify her negative judgement. We were not, however, called on while standard deviation was cryptically discussed. In (7), the student first reveals her novice status by failing to accurately estimate and presuppose the discourse community's shared knowledge of calibration. But then she errs in the opposite direction: she presupposes knowledge of the construction of the Muller-Lyer Illusion Board. The marker does possess this knowledge – she does know what the student is talking about – but justifies her negative judgement of the passage ("It doesn't flow") by calling us in again ("you probably have no idea what she's talking about").

While random assignment and calibration must be presupposed as shared knowledge (which they in fact are), the Muller-Lyer Board and procedure must not, despite their commonplace status in the discourse community. Sometimes it's appropriate for the outsider to be mystified; other times the outsider's predicted bewilderment warrants negative evaluation.

Writing criminology

The criminology student has neither material nor procedural conditions to account for. But, to sound like a criminologist, he must handle concepts from the heart of criminological reasoning – concepts,

in this case, about law and youth. Like the psychology student, he must make delicate judgements about shared knowledge, although the conditions of these judgements are somewhat different.

The criminology student runs into trouble when he makes contact with ideas which have been featured elements of the discourse of Criminology 210. In (8), below, the writer mentions a late-nineteenth-century social project influential in the development of policies for the public correction of children:

(8) The child-savers' idealistic goals of control of the lower class children are seen by some as merely the capitalists of society controlling the working class and protecting property of the upper class.

Marker: He's thrown in a class thing here um without explanation. He's assuming that the paragraph above/He's assuming that the reader knows the paragraph above is about the lower class children without specifically/I think he mentioned the class concept in there. He mentioned the children of the poor. But I don't think he mentioned whether he equates poverty with class or with lower class maybe not. Anyway. It's picky. (Reads on through sentence, comes to "capitalists.") Now that's a difficult one because unless you're aware that during these times crime was essentially property vis-à-vis violent crime then throwing in the capitalist concept there can lead an uninformed reader to sort of saying huh? How did we get Marxism into this? Now he does cite at the end of that or the end of the next sentence Cohen: 1985, whose books are from the Marxist perspective, but again an uninitiated reader or a reader from outside the discipline would not be aware of that so it might be a little problematic.

The marker at first seems to be reacting to incoherence, checking the sentence's predecessors: something has been "thrown in." Yet current interpretations of nineteenth-century "child-saving," as delivered in this course, entail propositions about class, so "lower class" is not, strictly speaking, a surprise. The marker settles down but then encounters "the capitalists." His rationalization of his negative judgement depends on the "uninformed reader." This outsider would, interestingly, detect "Marxism," but not know enough about the writer's sources and about critical interpretations of nineteenth-century crime to understand why Marxism is part of all this. Although the writer has in fact touched the key terms of the interpretation of child-saving – class and property interests dressed in "idealism" – he has done so in a way which appears to presuppose rather than specify knowledge of this valued representation of the past.

In (9), a word we had no problem with arouses the reader. The student is not saying enough about "probation":

(9) The were convinced the cause and control of delinquency rested with the family and that child protection agencies as well as probation should be expanded to provide support where families were weak.

Marker: Again, a reader outside criminology would look at the term probation and think, well, what is that? But that's how the term probation is used within criminology. It's a legal disposition available to the judge under

the Juvenile Delinquent Act to put a kid on probation. It's just a common noun at that stage. It doesn't have any proper noun...

To us, "probation" just says "probation," and carries general propositions about wrong-doers not being in jail but being otherwise supervised. But the marker's response makes us begin to think that "probation" is a powerful term in criminological reasoning. It appears that, for the criminologist, "probation" is charged with significance, and the student must honour it with more wording. Yet it is on behalf of the outsider, not the specialist sensitive to these meanings, that the utterance is faulted.

In (10), the student contacts another central, interpretive concept in criminology, and, once more, the outsider's ignorance justifies the reader's resistance.

(10) In examining the act and determining a model of justice one must consider the content and procedures in an Act. The main model seen in the J.D.A. is the Welfare Model of Justice as the best interests of the child are paramount.

Marker: There are problems with that sentence. The actual construction of it. (Reads second sentence.) Again to an uninformed reader perhaps he should have indicated that the Welfare model was best interests of the child.

Although (9) seems to us a little awkwardly worded, we actually don't have much trouble with the Welfare Model of Justice: the second sentence presupposes as already known the "best interests" aspect of this interpretation of juridical policy, but, through easy inference, we can construct an idea of the Welfare Model of Justice which includes this. (And the continuation of the paragraph confirms our inference.) Nevertheless, the marker worries on the outsider's behalf: evidently this knowledge should not have been presupposed.

This essay was not written for outsiders: it is immediately addressed to a criminology instructor; it manipulates ideas and interpretations indigenous to criminology. Yet, at certain crucial points, where these valued concepts appear on the page, the marker rationalizes judgements by referring to the ignorance of readers who have not participated in the disciplinary discussion. By presupposing rather than explicitly stating propositions entailed in these concepts, the student makes a mistake.

Different disciplines, different systems of presupposition

It is not surprising that presupposition plays a role in the novice's admission to the disciplinary community. Like an in-joke, a well placed presupposition confirms that the writer shares knowledge unique to the group, and thus belongs to the group. The psychology writers erred by failing to presuppose knowledge widely shared by the community. But they also erred in presupposing other knowledge, also widely shared, and so did the criminology student. In our data, the Muller-Lyer Illusion Board and test, child-saving, probation, and the Welfare Model of Justice are entities well known in the discourse communities from which they respectively emerged. Yet this knowledge should not be presumed.

We observe that, whatever the conditions for presupposition are in the two disciplines, they are not identical. The psychology student seems to have to learn to presuppose knowledge of procedures which are not currently in question as contributors to validity, and to learn not to presuppose knowledge of material or procedural entities with which she is attempting to construct new data – even though these second entities may be as well known as the first. Moreover, the presupposable entities (random assignment, calibration, standard deviation) all originate outside psychology per

se, in mathematics or statistics: a novice may have to learn to be sensitive to these disciplinary boundaries. The criminology student, on the other hand, may have to learn to recognize interpretive concepts which the discipline has laboriously, painstakingly constructed as explanatory – concepts such as the Welfare Model of Justice, or the enriched meaning of probation. He demonstrates his membership in the community not by presupposing the propositions entailed by these high-status ideas, but by respectfully displaying them.

What role does the outsider play in mapping these systems of presupposition? In the reading of the psychology papers, the outsider is negligible – out of earshot – when, for example, calculations for standard deviation are performed. But she pops up, confused, when the Muller-Lyer Board appears. Her appearance seems to be a device for representing descriptive conventions. And her need to understand may be a fiction, or only a partial truth, for the marker expressed no concern for her comprehension when discussions of random assignment, calibration, or standard deviation were carried on. In the reading of the criminology paper, the confused outsider pops up when complex and well established interpretations of juridical history appear. This time, she seems to be an index to the worth of certain explanations. And again her need to understand is only intermittent. Knowledge of some conditions associated with provisions of the Juvenile Delinquent Act itself – conditions such as indictability, and relations between federal statutes, provincial statutes, and municipal by-laws – is left presupposed. Evidently, the writer was not mistaken in presupposing knowledge of these conditions, for the marker passed comfortably through these sections. The uninformed outsider stayed out of the picture, away from the disciplinary conversation.

The idea of the outsider doesn't play exactly the same role on these occasions. So any single explanation of the role of the outsider in justifying evaluation will not be very powerful. But some preliminary explanations may lie in Latour and Woolgar's (1979; 1986) observations on the "facts" of disciplines. Not all facts are suited for life in the outside world. So some propositions remain in-house, where they get worked on and refined, or absorbed into the taken-for-granted setting of the discipline. Nobody really expects outsiders to grasp these statements, and they are not offered to outsiders. But other propositions are available for public exhibition: visitors to the lab are addressed with the discipline's "mythology" (55). Although the range from presupposable to non-presupposable in our data does not match the lab's ranking of facts, Latour and Wollgar's work does suggest that the appearance of the outsider – the laboratory visitor – activates or represents conventions for expressing the materials of the discipline. The case may be even more complicated in our study, for it introduces a third figure – the novice or neo-insider or recent outsider – to the rhetorical occasion. The novice speaks to the master, but sometimes, as she veers towards "mythology," she is overheard by the outsider.

And, in reflecting on this complexity, we come across Bakhtin's idea of "saturated" language (1981): ways of speaking so imbued with a group's ways of doing things and conceiving the world as to be identifiable from a great distance. Saturated language, despite its highly visible, public face, doesn't necessarily signify publicly because it is understandable to the larger world. It signifies just as powerfully if it is incomprehensible. So the question of whether the viewing public actually understands may be less important than our insiders claimed when they invoked the outsider. More important is that students command the indigenous ways of speaking. When they command these ways, they become a spectacle; to the admiration and delight of the imagined outsider, they handle local materials with local know-how. This competence is comprised not simply of disciplinary knowledge, but also of knowledge about this knowledge – know-how which distinguishes

knowledge of standard deviation from knowledge of the Muller-Lyer Board, and knowledge of indictability from knowledge of probation.

The issue is no doubt very complicated: the disciplines display or conceal insider knowledge in elaborate ways. Our limited data and slight speculations don't permit us much certainty. But we can propose that a student enrolled in both Psychology 201 and Criminology 210 may be somewhat confused about what to mention and what to keep quiet about. She may be mistrustful of blanket advice not to assume that the reader "[knows] what [she's] talking about," and she may suspect that the marker's notations on her paper are not telling the whole story. And if she's also taking a lower-division literature course, she is liable to have heard from her TA not to tell him "what he already knows" and to assume that he has "read the book." Her experience in psychology and criminology could make her suspect that such advice is an oversimplification of the academic audience's real expectations.

(This paper was first presented at Inkshed 8 in Quebec, April 1991.)

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Research in Progress: Two Reports

Writing in Chemical Engineering

Researchers are currently interested in understanding how writers learn the conventions of the particular discourse community they have chosen to enter. My own doctoral study, now under way, examines several chemical engineering students learning to write technical reports. These students enrol in two courses, Technical Paper I and Technical Paper II (with paper I a prerequisite for paper II), and must write 2 reports of approximately 10 pages in length. The documents identify a technical problem, develop a solution, and provide recommendations for a practical resolution. Both assignments are simulations of report writing within professional engineering contexts.

These courses demonstrate one department's explicit attempt to teach students writing conventions appropriate to the chemical engineering workplace. On a more global level, writing these reports immerses students within a part of their professional culture. Social relationships (i.e., superior to subordinate) that reflect the dynamics of the larger social/professional system are created through the writing. These technical reports, therefore, serve as an important bridge between academic and professional discourse.

My overall goal is to identify those elements of the immersion process that enable students to learn, as well as those dimensions that hinder or impede their learning. The study relies on a qualitative methodology, I am conducting ongoing interviews with both students and staff, observing classes and student-teacher writing conferences, analyzing the development of student papers, and examining prescriptive departmental documents for writing (i.e., course hand-outs). Data collection has just begun and, so far, the interest and cooperation from both students and staff have been overwhelming.

I thought I'd share the focus of my work with other Inkshedders in an effort to open up a dialogue on studies of this nature. There are both strengths and limitations to these investigations and various theoretical approaches that could be considered. As well, we could share relevant research studies that are not always accessible through the mainstream literature of our academic discourse. If you are doing, or have done, similar studies on discipline-specific writing courses, I'd like to hear about your findings. Perhaps there are in-house studies and/or reports from either composition or engineering departments which would be useful to my investigation. In turn, I'm more than willing to talk about my own study as the research progresses.

Liz Sloat
McGill University

Reader Response to Writing in a Business Setting

The goal of my research is to understand how readers reveal their criteria for effective writing in a business setting. A major assumption of the study is that these criteria will be illustrated through the writer's stated intentions for a specific text, the reader's expectations for the text, and the selective attention of the reader as expressed during the reading of the text.

For the past year, I have been collecting data at a private company engaged in research and development in Canada. My research participants, supervisors and analysts, work in two areas: marketing and information systems. All have at least one university degree and have been with the company from six months to twelve years.

Data collection methods include in-depth background interviews with all participants (twenty employees), interviews with writers (analysts) about a specific text, and respond-aloud protocols from the readers (the analysts' supervisors) on the first reading of the specific text. In a variation of the Critical Incident method, I ask participants to recall and describe a piece of in-house writing that made a particular impression on them (either negative or positive). In addition, I have collected written guidelines for report formats, policies and procedures, performance appraisal forms, annual reports, and samples of writing. Currently, I am conducting follow-up interviews to verify my understanding of the data and to record reported changes in the participants' situations.

At the 1991 Inkshed conference in Quebec, I briefly reported that my data (partly collected at the time) was beginning to show some interesting patterns. For example, I have found that supervisors often explain the needs and responses of readers outside their departments by performing the roles of these readers through direct speech. In this company, most supervisors rotate through a number of positions and often sit on task forces with people from other departments and divisions. Thus, the career development policies and the use of task forces for special projects support this ability to assume the role of other readers. This role of surrogate reader is one of a complex of roles assumed by readers during a reading; other roles include gatekeeper, coach, performance appraiser, strategist, and resource seeker. I have observed, as well, that during interviews (guided conversations, rather than standard questions and answers), participants frequently explain their situations by means of illustrative stories. Acting on a suggestion from Russ Hunt, I have begun to look at the evaluation structure of these stories as a way of discovering what points the speakers make and how these reveal something of the organizational culture.

The place of written guidelines is somewhat unclear. In the background interviews, readers (supervisors) provide detailed descriptions of the report structures they expect. Writers (analysts) are usually less clear about these readers' expectations when they write reports. Both writers and readers claim that all reports must clearly state the purpose and objectives; however, the definitions for these two elements vary. Writers most often use existing reports as models for their reports. Preliminary findings suggest that report structure is the feature most often commented upon during the respond-aloud protocols. Since my entry to this site, standard written guidelines have been reissued or rewritten with explanatory notes.

Has anyone studied the ways in which writers internalize and use written guidelines for reports at work? Are models perhaps more useful to writers than written guidelines?

Jane Ledwell-Brown
McGill University

Conversations, Not Conversions:

Real Heuristic Encounters With Language

I would like to return to the dialogue that I started a few issues back in *Inkshed* 9.2. In that piece I described a writing assignment for which some of my students observed and described young children learning to write narratives. I would like to draw a relationship between that exercise and the study of literature in the secondary English classroom. But first let me thank L. Steven (*Inkshed* 9.3) for his scholarly response to my initial piece, and shake G. Smart's (*Inkshed* 10.1) hand for his understanding of the issues involved.

In *Inkshed* 9.3, L. Steven says that "we need only entice our students into exploratory, heuristic encounters with language" (14) in order for them to truly appreciate literature. I have no problem with this, and I would hope that since Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* has been around since 1938, the exploration of literature would be and has been a heuristic encounter. However, it seems to me that literature study in the high school has been and still is in some classrooms a study of "Great Books" and what can be evaluated objectively to be the author's meaning. And I'm guessing that a few university literature teachers are still delivering the tablets of truth to their students without any heuristic encounter. Moreover, at both levels of education, "literature" is narrowly defined, and rarely includes student work or other texts outside the accepted canon.

Steven suggests "that Lucey might find real writing assignments in a return to literature; not literature as a compendium of forms, themes, images, settings, etc. to be ferreted out, but as 'the site of our culturally significant narratives, a world to be encountered'"(16). I don't think my students ever left literature study while they observed the narratives that grew in front of them or that they themselves wrote describing, explaining, or speculating about what the children they observed were learning. What measure can we use to determine the cultural significance of a given narrative?

The study of literature in Ontario secondary schools is described as being the study of fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. Heuristic encounters with language are essential in the secondary English classroom. It seems to me that what is critical in teaching in that classroom is the student-teacher relationship in the study of literature. What's needed is a scene where the students are the navigators taking the teacher along in their encounters with literary and non-literary texts. For if the teacher is the navigator determining every twist and engagement with the text, there is a distortion of the study. It can easily become regurgitation. The thrust of my point about literature study in *Inkshed* 9.2. The *Ontario English Curriculum Guidelines* state that "Evaluation of student performance must be accurate, fair, and curriculum based if it is to encourage further learning"(11). The type of learning in the classroom where the teacher is supreme being is focused upon a single outcome: what does the teacher want. The curriculum is very narrow and limited in this relationship.

Again, the teacher's part in all this is crucial . Students in the OAC option course - The Writer's Craft, which supplied the material for my discussion in *Inkshed* 9.2 - identified writing situations of interest to them. The small group of students on whom I focused in *Inkshed* 9.2 chose to study how young children write. The OAC Curriculum Guide requires an oral report and, for this OAC option course, an original piece of writing. My students chose to read the literature on the subject, as well as to read the narratives of the students they observed. They took their study beyond the classroom, in order to find significant narratives. As the teacher, I played many roles: information resource, advisor, questioner, reengager (focuser), and listener.

Writing this piece has helped me remember a session delivered by a British scholar at a CCTE conference. A video tape was shown of a young, very eager boy who was interviewing a truck

driver at the truck driver's worksite. The young student was out of the classroom, in the real world. He was outside the classroom with pen and paper. He was realizing many things besides the narrative he was writing. However, the same writing assignment this English student was involved with could have been done in class, where all the students could be learning together. The students could read culturally significant narratives about truck drivers. The teacher, or any of the students, could pretend to be truck drivers. The teacher could show a video about truck drivers. And certain students could be little cub reporters writing questions and then posing them. All within the confines of whatever is culturally significant.

I could be wrong, but aren't the narratives of our children culturally significant? I wonder if the study of literature in some corridors of learning designed to honor the word is nothing more than the study of a Canadian Version of a Hirschian Great List of "culturally significant narratives." Secondary schools service society, not just students of "culturally significant literature."

Wayne Lucey
Assumption Catholic High School
Burlington, Ontario

Editorial Inkshedding

As of this printing, we've had 83 re-subscriptions and 20 new subscriptions. Since our bank account is (temporarily) healthy, we've sent newsletters to the entire mailing list, including delinquent subscribers. However, a day of reckoning is at hand, and soon, so please re-subscribe. Also, we've included a subscription form for your friends, students, and colleagues. Think of all those people on your Christmas gift list.

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Although we've managed to print two fat *Inkshed* issues, we are quickly developing a case of Editors' Anxiety: the fear of having nothing to publish. Does no one have a rebuttal to Russ Hunt's denunciation of textbooks (*Inkshed* 10.1)? Any thoughts on the Structure Committee's report (10.1)? What sort of research are people doing? Is anyone doing any consultation work, or teaching people outside of traditional classroom contexts? Please send us contributions.

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A note of thanks to Louise Murphy, who transfers contributors' hard copy to disk, and to Jim Harris, our computer wizard, who is responsible for the newsletter's layout. If you can, send us your contributions on disk (recent IBM or Macintosh compatible word processors), and enclose one hard copy version.

Jane Ledwell-Brown
Anthony Paré

Textual Practices: Problems and Possibilities

This year's Inkshed has been extended to four days, from 5:00 p.m. Saturday May 2 to 1:00 p.m. Tuesday May 5. This, unfortunately, overlaps with CCTE (April 29-May 3); but it is the only way to ensure that Inkshedders can take advantage of excursion fares by flying on the Saturday. If you are presenting at one or the other (or both), please let Kay Stewart or Chris Bullock know your plans and try to arrange for an early CCTE presentation or a late Inkshed presentation.

At last year's Inkshed there was great enthusiasm for a Rocky Mountain location, even if the costs were higher than those for a location in Calgary. Accordingly, accommodation has been arranged at the Buffalo Mountain Lodge, a very well-appointed resort at the summit of Tunnel Mountain just outside Banff. Prices are higher than those offered at some Inksheds, but are very competitive for the area and include all meals, tips, gratuities, taxes — the works. (See enclosed registration form.) A block of rooms will be held until March 15; please pay the Lodge directly upon departure. A meal-only fee of $50.00/day can be arranged for those who wish to stay elsewhere, but all participants are strongly encouraged to stay at the Lodge (and will be hard pressed to find anything much cheaper in the Banff area). Modest subsidies for part-time faculty and students may be possible, depending on how successful we are at obtaining grants. If so, we will let you know as soon as possible after the conference.

Note: This is a mountain area and could receive almost any kind of weather in early May. Bring winter clothing, although you could end up suntanning.

Transportation will be provided from Calgary to Banff and will be included in conference fees (details to follow in registration packages). For the information of those who wish to book their plane reservations early, you should plan to arrive at the Calgary airport no later than 1:30 p.m. on Saturday and leave no earlier than 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday if you wish to avail yourself of the transportation provided. Since Banff is 130 km from Calgary, taxis are not an option. An airport shuttle departs Calgary Airport at 5:45 p.m. and departs Banff at 8:30 a.m. daily, times which obviously do not mesh well with the conference. It may be possible to arrange car pools for some of those whose connections do not work out. Please let Doug Brent know if you expect to have difficulty with the "default timing."

Doug Brent
University of Calgary

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