PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FACULTY TRAINING: THE RESULTS OF COMPONENT ANALYSIS

Jay Marsella, University of Hawaii

Using the matrix developed for our program evaluation, program leaders analyzed five groups of data to improve faculty seminars for writing-intensive instruction. In this case program directors used the following data to evaluate seminars: (1) Pre- and Post-Seminar Attitude Survey on Writing Across the Curriculum; (2) solicited and unsolicited faculty evaluations of the seminar; (3) data on faculty participants; (4) writing produced in the seminar by faculty participants; and (5) seminar curriculum. Analysis of the data using the matrix yielded the following patterns of change:

1. The writing-to-learn goal and the collaborative learning-by-doing methodology were readily implemented, in spite of the fact that most participants anticipated a seminar in "what composition specialists know that we should know when we prepare to teach writing-intensive courses."

2. The needs of the discourse communities were more difficult to address because of various situational constraints—namely, the bias, training, and experience of program leaders; expectations and preconceptions of participants; and participants' lack of awareness of unique features of their own discipline's discourse. Early attempts to tap and make explicit the needs and differences of various discourse communities did not fully succeed because seminar leaders did not develop appropriate activities to help participants make explicit how the discourses of their disciplines were alike and different from other discourses.

3. The evaluation matrix helped seminar leaders understand the need to make explicit participants' tacit information about their disciplines and help students understand and master the discourse forms of the various disciplines.

4. New seminar leaders and guest speakers bring with them the biases of their disciplines.

Furthermore, the emphasis of one goal often leads to the sacrifice of another.

As a result of these changes in seminar curricula, seminar leaders are beginning to understand how preconceptions about what various disciplines do influence what writing programs are able to accomplish. As a result of the seminars, faculty participants are able to recontextualize the courses they teach to accommodate the broader focus of collaboratively-based learning by writing.

AN INTERACTIVE MATRIX FOR EVALUATING PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Thomas L. Hiigers, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Program evaluation has changed. Where early efforts looked for inputs which influenced outcomes, recent models give equal or greater emphasis to processes and contexts. Thus, an important goal of program evaluation is describing and, over time, redefining goals of program evaluation.

The teaching of writing too has changed; we now emphasize written language that is specific to a community of users, and language learning that occurs within contexts of specific communities of users, with masters teaching apprentices. In at least some universities, the teaching of writing has moved from English Departments into the many departments whose members constitute different language-using communities. The newly ordained writing instructor is the master physicist, historian, or engineer. Changes in university writing programs require new approaches to program evaluation. To describe the processes and contexts of a program which involves writing instruction in many disciplines, today's evaluator must study the processes and contexts of each discipline.

Experience with the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Writing Program suggests that diffuse evaluation can be aided by an interactive matrix. The matrix involves three program processes: collecting, analyzing, and disseminating. It also involves three program components: ideology, goals, and personnel. Most importantly, it
recognizes interactions of components with processes (e.g., collecting involves ideology), of process with process (e.g., to collect is also to disseminate), and of component with component. This matrix has guided our decisions on placement examinations, on teacher training, and on course guidelines.

Our experience with program evaluation guided by this matrix leads to several observations for writing-program evaluators:

1. Decisions are best guided by ongoing, systematic, internal evaluation.

2. Effective internal evaluation involves multiple stakeholders and multiple managers as program investigators.

3. Description requires attention to commonalities and differences across disciplines, with study of situational constraints.

4. Use of the interactive matrix will yield information which would otherwise be unlikely to guide decision-making.

HOLISTIC EVALUATION AS EMPOWERMENT

Diane McGee and Christine Starnes, John Abbott College, Montreal

The presenters discussed an adaptation of holistic evaluation that is innovative in several ways. It brings the responsibility for testing back to the teacher by testing in the classroom itself. In addition, it assesses the learning of specific content material across the curriculum rather than general writing ability. Importantly, two of the proposed models of holistic reading allow students to be directly involved in the evaluation process. Over all, this adaptation empowers both teachers and students by suggesting practical means of implementing writing across the curriculum at the same time that it increases collaboration among faculty.

The study that suggested these models was a 1987-88 project under Canada's French Research Category in which 22 participants (representing 11 disciplines) holistically evaluated at least one assignment during a semester. The findings supported our hypothesis that holistic evaluation can be used to assess learning in content courses. The outcomes demonstrated how the use of such procedures in the classroom can empower both students and teachers. Students received a clearer sense of the purpose of writing, which led to better planning, clearer expression, and a deeper understanding of the topic. They also benefitted from the motivation resulting from more positive feedback and an understanding of the grading system. For teachers, the collaboration led to an articulation and validation of their own pedagogical values and practices, a deepened awareness of the processes of learning and writing, a less tedious marking task, and more congruence between teaching and testing.

We explained three elements of the models in detail: the relationship between the teachers involved, the preparation of the prompt and the scoring guide (concrete examples were distributed for analysis by the audience), and the procedures for reading and scoring the papers. We stressed models in which students were the second readers.

DESIGNING RISING JUNIOR WRITING ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

Norbert Elliot, New Jersey Institute of Technology
Maximino Flata and Paul Zelhart, East Texas State University

With increased national emphasis on the evaluation of educational outcomes, faculty within a specific institution frequently find themselves charged with ensuring the writing competencies of undergraduate students. This presentation focused on the methods used by a rural university—East Texas State University—to conduct its rising junior writing assessment program.

If developers of assessment programs are to understand fully the issues and possibilities evoked when an institution undertakes evaluation of writing ability across the university, a comprehensive knowledge of the historical background of writing assessment is essential. In this program, therefore, East Texas