consequences, we have made and are making decisions which involve ethics and responsibility: to test or not to test; to use multiple choice or writing sample tests; entrance versus graduation requirements; how much writing across the curriculum emphasis; how much remediation; and how to establish effective dialogue with the lower schools.

The process is heuristic—and we are still in it. We who profess the value of heuristic learning need to lobby hard for shared responsibility rather than monolithic decision-making. Writing problems cannot be adequately addressed by the English Department or the Writing Centre alone; only a recognition that all faculty at all levels share the responsibility for improving student writing will enable that to occur.

AN EXAMINATION OF HOLISTIC SCORING: RESEARCH AND THEORY

Brian Huot and Sydney Smith, Syracuse University
Penny Pence, University of Pittsburgh
Michael M. Williamson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Kathleen Hunter, College of Saint Elizabeth

Because faculty view holistic scoring as the most economic, efficient, and flexible of all direct writing assessment procedures, it has become the most popular method for assessing student writing ability. Proponents of holistic scoring have claimed that most of the basic reliability problems inherent in direct writing assessment have been solved. However, increasing concern about the validity of holistic scoring procedures has been emerging in the last couple of years.

The panel presented a review of theory and research on holistic scoring and reported an ongoing research study of the validity of holistic scoring. The review aimed to place holistic scoring in a theoretical framework of educational measurement. The goal of the research study is to provide some validation of holistic scoring by examining the differential responses of expert and novice raters through the use of verbal protocols. Interestingly, expert raters appear to achieve a more personal reading and to be able to read from a much wider range of stances than do novice raters.

LARGE-SCALE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY: STORIES OF PROBLEMS AND SUCCESS

Chris M. Anson and Robert L. Brown, Jr., University of Minnesota

We reported on the three-year progress of an institutionally-mandated assessment program at Minnesota. The first two years of the program seemed unremittingly positive. In response to the university administration's call for a mandatory admissions testing program—as a means to cull and limit the student population—the Composition Program had effectively redirected efforts into a principled portfolio assessment for entrance and graduation. More significant than the program itself was the change in faculty attitudes brought about by a massive reeducation effort on the part of composition professionals acting as change agents. But major financial, administrative, and programmatic confusion in the University in 1988-89 virtually canceled the portfolio project.

That these changes were simply announced without consulting the Composition Program indicated that the ideological forces initiating the original regressive testing mandate remain undiminished. We detailed the ethnographically oriented process through which we reexamined the place of writing and assessment in their institutions. Working by a collaborative series of stories and analyses, we showed the complex of beliefs about writing which characterize many research universities and which must be well understood by program designers. Using theoretical systems from ethnography and credit-cycle economics, we suggested that faculty members' interests drive educational and curricular policy. To succeed, writing policy must not conflict with those interests. Since a major university is a conglomerate of small working units, policy makers must proceed locally and specifically—from the bottom up. The labor- and time-intensive program of portfolio assessment directly threatened the reward system of the university at large. But at more local levels,
consequences, we have made and are making decisions which involve ethics and responsibility: to test or not to test; to use multiple choice or writing sample tests; entrance versus graduation requirements; how much writing across the curriculum emphasis; how much remediation; and how to establish effective dialogue with the lower schools.

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