The students in the project selected from their writing the pieces they believed would illustrate how they used writing as a tool for learning, and they wrote letters explaining to the portfolio reader the reasons for the choices they made.

We presented examples from a student's portfolio to show the kinds of learning and reflection evident in his work, and also to illustrate a number of questions it raises about portfolio assessment. Many of these questions arise from differences among students, across classrooms, and across subject areas; others involve problems of creating useful vocabulary for communicating about students' work and the learning demonstrated in portfolios. Portfolios may not easily lend themselves to standardization, and their primary value may be in what they reveal about learning to students themselves and to their teachers and parents.

**SYSTEM-WIDE EXAMINATIONS: IMPROVING EVALUATION AND PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

*Peter Moskos and David Ireland, Carleton Board of Education*

Ontario's Academic Credit English examination is a major component of the Carleton Board's systemwide program in student and program evaluation of senior English. The aims of the program include a commitment on the part of teachers and students to the evaluation process; a consistency in procedures and marking reached through consensus; an openness whereby students know what they must do to achieve; and an integration of student and program evaluation.

In a demonstration of conference marking, workshop participants used the essay marking guide developed for the examination to mark sample student essays. Reflection upon this activity led to a discussion of key features of the project: The first is teacher involvement in the development and management of the examination by committees. Next is the training of teachers in evaluation techniques. Another key feature is classroom use of exemplar booklets which contain objectives, marking guides, and marked samples of student writing showing how criteria have been applied. Teachers also learn about centrally organized conference marking in which they remark and comment on each other's evaluations and review all aspects of the examination. Evaluation data and teacher reactions are used as a basis for modifying curriculum and for developing new evaluation instruments and strategies. We then discussed recent findings from analyses of the marking and of student writing and considered ways that teachers can respond to these findings.

The project has had a significant impact. It has profoundly affected the way teachers evaluate in English. It has bolstered the confidence of teachers, students, parents, and trustees in evaluation procedures and, for the first time, brought teachers together to examine their standards and to develop their skills in evaluation. In addition, the project has had a major impact on the way in which English is taught. There is wide agreement that the project has done as much to improve instruction as it has to improve evaluation.

**COMPUTERS IN COLLEGE WRITING: PROGRESS REPORT ON A NATIONAL PROJECT**

*Michael Ribault, The City University of New York*

This presentation focused on the status of a three-year grant made to The City University of New York by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (a branch of the United States Department of Education) to investigate the effectiveness of the use of computers in teaching writing at the college level.

The initial goal was to identify a number of representative institutions across the country that had already implemented computer-based writing programs, design a uniform research model for assessing the effectiveness of computers in the writing program, and develop ways of disseminating the results to other institutions seeking to embark on a computer-based instructional approach to the teaching of writing. It was clear from the beginning that although very little has been done to empirically test the outcomes of computers in the English class and that such research very much needed to be done,
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