pedagogy and materials should encourage collaborative instruction. In addition, the assessment process can become a research tool in that it generates an interest in other areas and disciplines.

Finally, Christopher stressed the importance of sustaining momentum and maintaining interest in the assessment process. He recommended the use of awards and recognition for participants and a rotation of leadership and responsibility. He also noted that writing assessment programs should be linked to institutional self-studies and should include an investigation of comparative data from similar institutions and the development of longitudinal research. He feels that this research, which requires patience and stamina, is absolutely essential to refining measures and procedures.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE TESTING OF ESL WRITERS

Speakers: Ulla Connor, Indiana University
Joy Reid, Colorado State University

Introducer/Recorder: Dennis Donahue, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Joy Reid and Ulla Connor explained two new analytic systems that describe and evaluate ESL writing. Reid presented a system that can be used to examine essays on the basis of syntactic complexity, and Connor described a method of understanding the components of persuasive essays. The presenters offered their systems as methods of evaluating ESL students' written work and of improving composition instruction.

To ascertain whether quantitative differences exist in essays written by different groups of ESL students, Reid used a computer text-analysis program, the Writer's Workbench, developed by AT&T Bell Laboratories. She examined more than 750 essays in her study, measuring such areas as word length, percentage of long and short sentences, use of passive voice, readability, and percentage of pronouns. Two different types of writing topics were used: comparison-contrast and interpretation of a graph—and there were two questions within each essay type. In addition, the essays were examined for differences related to the students' language background (Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and English), gender, and major field of study, and for differences resulting from the three different holistic scoring systems used to score the essays.

Reid discussed some of her findings, the most significant of which was that different language groups frequently write differently. For example, Arabic-speaking students wrote the longest sentences (though comma splices may have contributed to this finding), and native speakers of English used more pronouns and used the passive voice more often than students in the other three groups. Reid also discovered that there were quantitative differences between essays written on different types of topics. The essays explaining the graphs, she found, were often longer than the comparison-contrast essays. Reid distributed a multi-page
pedagogy and materials should encourage collaborative instruction. In addition, the assessment process can become a research tool in that it generates an interest in other areas and disciplines.

Finally, Christopher stressed the importance of sustaining momentum and maintaining interest in the assessment process. He recommended the use of awards and recognition for participants and a rotation of leadership and responsibility. He also noted that writing assessment programs should be linked to institutional self studies and should include an investigation of comparative data from similar institutions and the development of longitudinal research. He feels that this research, which requires patience and stamina, is absolutely essential to refining measures and procedures.

**New Directions in the Testing of ESL Writers**

**Speakers:** Ulla Connor, Indiana University
Joy Reid, Colorado State University

**Introducer/Recorder:** Dennis Donahue, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Joy Reid and Ulla Connor explained two new analytic systems that describe and evaluate ESL writing. Reid presented a system that can be used to examine essays on the basis of syntactic complexity, and Connor described a method of understanding the components of persuasive essays. The presenters offered their systems as methods of evaluating ESL students' written work and of improving composition instruction.

To ascertain whether quantitative differences exist in essays written by different groups of ESL students, Reid used a computer text-analysis program, the Writer's Workbench, developed by AT&T Bell Laboratories. She examined more than 750 essays in her study, measuring such areas as word length, percentage of long and short sentences, use of passive voice, readability, and percentage of pronouns. Two different types of writing topics were used—comparison-contrast and interpretation of a graph—and there were two questions within each essay type. In addition, the essays were examined for differences related to the students' language background (Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and English), gender, and major field of study, and for differences resulting from the three different holistic scoring systems used to score the essays.

Reid discussed some of her findings, the most significant of which was that different language groups frequently write differently. For example, Arabic-speaking students wrote the longest sentences (though comma splices may have contributed to this finding), and native speakers of English used more pronouns and used the passive voice more often than students in the other three groups. Reid also discovered that there were quantitative differences between essays written on different types of topics. The essays explaining the graphs, she found, were often longer than the comparison-contrast essays. Reid distributed a multi-page