of the student writing by providing a holistic view of
writing.

Before handing out samples of student writing, Fitzgerald discussed the theoretical background for
developing the rhetorical criteria. She also reviewed some
of the common problems of holistic scoring, emphasizing
the fact that holistic scoring does not consider the different
purposes of writing. (For example, persuasive vs. self
expressive writing). The rhetorical evaluation criteria
developed at the University of Utah were designed to
alleviate some of the problems encountered when using
holistic scoring. The criteria help readers consider the
purpose of students' writing and identify the internal and
external purposes of the writing situation.

Fitzgerald pointed out that students' internal and
external purposes complicate the writing situation for
them. At the University of Utah, faculty feel that the
purpose for students' writing needs to come from the
students (i.e., internal), but in academia the purpose often
comes from the instructor and is motivated by grades
(external). The student has to think up his or her purpose
for writing and must shape this purpose to serve the
academic external purpose. Therefore, the student's
purpose is always dual. These internal and external
purposes are in essence the rhetorical situation and they
need to be taken into account when faculty evaluate
writing, particularly when this evaluation is used to place
freshmen into English courses. Students' ability to handle
this complex rhetorical situation informs instructors of
the students' readiness for college writing.

Next Fitzgerald described how the rhetorical
expectations of University of Utah professors were
determined and used to develop the rhetorical evaluation
criteria. These criteria consist of the following categories:

Category 1: The writer's relationship to college
readers and writers. Expectations: The most
prolific writers recognize that any single piece of
college writing is part of an ongoing written
discussion about a topic and that they are expected to
make a contribution to the discussion. They
recognize that an authority (i.e., professor, test giver)
identifies issues for discussion.

Category 2: The writer's relationship with his or
her subject matter. Expectations: College writers
control their subject matter, pressing it into service to
support their internal and external purposes.

Category 3: The writer's relationship to the
conventions of the genre. Expectations: College
writers employ syntactical units appropriate to their
thought, precise vocabulary, and the mechanics and
spelling of standard written American English.

University of Utah students are given placement essay
directions that explain the external rhetorical situation; and
they have 45 minutes to plan, write, and revise their
essays.

After reviewing the theoretical background and the
criteria, participants used these criteria to evaluate and
discuss some student writing. Fitzgerald pointed out that
readers are told to pay attention to content and
reasonability, that there are no hard and fast rules, and that
judgment is a balancing act of various criteria and
expectations of each institution. Readers at the University
of Utah look at the quantity of student writing as relative
to every piece of writing. In summary, Fitzgerald stated
that these rhetorical evaluation criteria force readers to
evaluate writing for its purpose, help readers define good
college writing, and address the need to teach students
about the effect that the rhetorical situation has on their
writing.

USING VIDEO IN TRAINING NEW READERS OF
ASSESSMENT ESSAYS

Speaker: George Cooper, University of Michigan
Introducer: Terence Collins, University of Minnesota
Recorder: Litz Hamp-Lyon

Large scale testing programs face a recurring
problem of reader consistency and reliability. In this
presentation, George Cooper demonstrated how the
English Composition Board at the University of Michigan
uses a video for "standardization sessions" for self-monitoring
within the reader cadre, for training new readers, and for disseminating information
about the ECB's procedures to various campus
constituencies. While Cooper presented alone, his
remarks were prepared with Liz Hamp-Lyon.

In its placement readings, members of Michigan's
ECB teams are judged by statements of criteria clustered
under three headings: "structure of the whole essay," "smaller rhetorical and linguistic units," and
"conventions of standard English surface features." Students write
essays in response to prompts that define a situation and
provide several choices of opening sentences. Two
important characteristics of the 6000 student essays, then,
are that topic choice is limited and orientation toward the
topic is guided through provision of choices for essay
openings. Further, the essays are rated for placement:
recommendations fall into one of the following categories:
exempt (7%), Introductory Composition (82%), and
tutorial (11%). These recommendations reflect scores of
1, 2, 3, and 4. While criteria for quality are outlined to
readers, no specific calibration of trait content for the four
point range is provided.
Scoring in this system depends on achieving what Cooper calls a "community of values" among readers. The video of reader standardization sessions grew out of one summer's experience in which this community of values has been lost as Cooper put it, "readers were using an unimaginable range of criteria by which to evaluate essays" and "had become entrenched in their own perspectives." The original motive for the video was self-examination. Through videotaping daily standardization sessions in which papers receiving "split" scores were the focus of discussion, Cooper's team of readers sought to capture the articulation of values giving rise to the discrepancies and to record the process of moving to agreement on application of criteria. This led the team to analyze and communicate important characteristics of their standardization sessions and our assessment as a whole. Also, this procedure modeled a process of "give-and-take" that was helpful in training new readers and in explaining the placement process to various departments.

From ten hours of session tapes, the team assembled thirty five minutes of actual exchanges interspersed with explanation and highlighting. The standardization discussion presented in the tape enacts what Cooper calls "positive sharing": talk marked by the various readers' attempts to recognize the qualities in an essay that lead to divergent scoring, each reader's comments leading to further discussion and finally to agreement. Such discussion (whether on the tape or in person at the start of a reading session) reminds participants of the criteria governing scoring. It serves the further purpose of helping group members realize the vitality of the act of reading, placing an apparently perfunctory reading act (in the context of reader-response theory) into the full context of extra-textual factors that shape readings in open view. The importance of reflecting on the evaluator as reader—co-creator of a text—rests in the capacity of texts to sway a reader-evaluator when they embody positions to which the reader might be favorably inclined or which the reader might find repugnant.

Cooper asserted that the taped standardization sessions play the key role of "forming individual consciousness into a community consciousness." The video record of this work in progress puts flesh on the abstraction and models the process for beginners in order to cultivate a community of readers who will evaluate not only the student essays, but who will also study their own responses, keeping in mind the relationship of their responses to the criteria.

**WPA PRESENTATION ON EVALUATING WRITING PROGRAMS**

**Speakers:** Robert Christopher, Ramapo College, New Jersey
Donald Dutler, Miami University, Ohio
Edward White, California State University, San Bernardino

**Introducer/Recorder:** John Schwieter, University of Minnesota

This session was organized by the National Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA), and the panelists
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