skating, diving, and other "performance sports," need to develop systematic ways of taking into account the difficulty level of what the performer is attempting. In order to account for changes in what is attempted we need to study how writers develop both across and within discourse domains. This will require a common language for identifying domains and a way of charting what carries over and what changes when writers move from one to another. All discourse theorists polarize fictional and non-fictional writing, or as Britton terms it, poetic and transactional writing. As a result, we tend to assume that the two are mutually exclusive: fiction writers rarely include essays in fiction and in academia we rarely allow poetic expression. In addition to these polar ends of the discourse continuum, Lucas posits a middle category, which draws freely on both fictional and academic styles, and includes autobiography, letter, the New Journalism, and the personal reflection essay widely used in classrooms and school assessments. While it is relatively easy to chart a writer's development within either the literary or the discursive domains, growth in this middle domain is sometimes marked by shifts from fictional techniques to extended abstract discourse, as in the case presented. Whether students are moving within the mixed domain, or from the literary end of the spectrum to the discursive end, even when teachers recognize the second piece as representing a later effort, they recognize that the text is often less successful in what it attempts than the earlier piece. This difference diminishes, of course, as the student gains skill in handling discursive, transactional writing.

To make possible more careful comparisons of what changes as students move within and across domains, Lucas has developed a method of defining tasks that draws on work done by Freedman and Pringle ("Why Children Can't Write Arguments") based on Vygotsky's (Thought and Language) distinctions between focal, associational and hierarchical arrangements, as well as on Coe's (Toward a Grammar of Passages) method of charting relations between propositions in a text. Lucas's system distinguishes between four text patterns: (1) the chronological core in which the student tells a story, providing commentary at end--a sign the writer is moving toward abstraction; (2) the focal core in which the title provides the subject of focus, with each sentence relating to it--a sign that some notion of related ideas is emerging; (3) the associational core in which we see chains of associations forming, often with a closing commentary; and (4) the hierarchical core, in which long-distance logical ties supplement short-range connections between complexly interrelated ideas, in a pattern typical of advanced exposition in Western cultures. Using this system, we may begin to see how writers build new schema within these different domains, and begin to reward them for these promising signs of growth in our assessments of their writing abilities.

ASSESSING WRITING TO TEACH WRITING

Speaker: Vicki Spandel, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory
Introductor/Recorder: Alice Moorhead, Hamline University

Rarely are the lessons learned from large-scale writing assessment translated into terms that make them relevant for and useful to the classroom teacher. Yet many of those lessons show how teachers can use systematic writing assessment—especially when teaching writing as a process. Large scale, district-wide writing assessment is a costly process (at least 2.5 days for training/assessing and between $2-$8 a writing sample); however, as part of professional development programs, most districts could justify the necessary time and budget.

In this presentation, Vicki Spandel discussed her efforts, along with those of Richard Stiggins', to link writing assessment and instruction through their work in the Portland area for Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Spandel's current assessment method focuses on using an analytic rating guide. She argues that although it is difficult to separate form from content in assessment, one can assess the features of writing, thus her interest in an analytic guide that can be used holistically to assess and to teach writing. Since teachers are often afraid of assessment, using the rating guide can ensure that what teachers value gets assessed and then gets translated into practice.

As an assessment tool, Spandel's analytic rating guide was generated from writing samples rather than developed as a guide to impose upon writing. The guide captures a more complete profile of the writing samples when used along with holistic assessment. It distinguishes six features of writing: ideas and content; organization; voice, word choice; sentence structure; writing conventions. Each feature is described and ranked by degrees for a score of 5 or 3 or 1. Not only does this analytic rating guide obfuscate expectations for writing but it also offers a more defensible version of the subjective process of writing assessment.

Using this guide with the holistic assessment process, particularly as in-service workshop for professional development, has two key advantages:

1. The assessment process promotes "real" agreement among teachers and professional raters about strengths and weaknesses in writing.

2. Teachers can re-enter the classroom to teach writing more explicitly on what "counts" in writing and know this instruction is in concert with and reinforced by others.
Not only can teachers use the analytic guide but so can students. In peer review groups, students can focus their writing efforts more directly with the six feature guide as "revision stations" for students to visit for specific feedback on their writing. In Spandel's experience, teachers welcome the use of this analytic guide for assessment and for teaching writing. Many teachers claim: "I'll never teach or think or writing in quite the same way."

**READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM AS A MODEL FOR HOLISTIC EVALUATION**

**Speaker:** Karl Schnapp, Miami University  
**Introducer/Recorder:** Ann Hill Duin, University of Minnesota

Karl Schnapp's session focused on the application of reader-response theory to large and small scale holistic assessment. Schnapp began by citing the work of Stanley Fish, David Bleich, and Norman Holland as working models for the holistic evaluation of student writing. He then said that his own work is also based on Edward White's theories of composition as a socializing and individualizing discipline. From these theorists, Schnapp concluded that the best composition pedagogy views students' writing from both social and individual perspectives. In short, the interpretation and evaluation of writing depends on qualities of the community in which the writing was created and was evaluated.

Schnapp then described his specific project. His model is based on three reading theories that lead to a model for the holistic evaluation of writing. The first theory is the "top-down" model of reading as discussed by Holland and Bleich, the second is the "text-reader interaction" theory (from information-processing theory) as discussed by Rosenblatt, and the third is the "communal association" theory as discussed by Fish. Schnapp described his model in detail. Then he asked conference to fill out a survey identical to that used in his study. The survey asked us to complete questions regarding our perceptions and understanding of composition/language arts. Next we read an essay written by a freshman student and rated the student essay. Finally, we completed a second survey in which we gave information on the criteria we employ when holistically evaluating student writing. As with Schnapp's results, we had about 75% agreement in terms of the common goals of the composition instructors present. Schnapp stated that his research shows that writing teachers see writing as helping students on more of a practical level than on an aesthetic level.

The remainder of the presentation was a discussion between Schnapp and the conferrees. Key points that emerged included: the need to ask readers about what influences them as they evaluate papers; the need to determine the evaluative standards for one's discourse community; and the extent to which readers are influenced by what they are thinking about while evaluating writing.

**THE DISCOURSE OF SELF-ASSESSMENT: ANALYZING METAPHORICAL STORIES**

**Speakers:** Barbara Tomlinson, University of California, San Diego  
Peter Mortensen, University of California, San Diego

**Introducer/Recorder:** Anne O'Meara, University of Minnesota

Barbara Tomlinson and Peter Mortensen gave conferrees attending this session an opportunity to become students of their own writing processes. Much of the session was devoted to composing, sharing, and analyzing our own metaphorical stories about how we write. Tomlinson and Mortensen feel that using metaphorical stories in the classroom provides a means for students to take responsibility for their own writing, to balance personal with external assessment, and to center attention on the writing process rather than the product.

Tomlinson began by sharing some of her own metaphors for writing as well as some of those she found in her study of over 2000 professional writers. Handouts gave further examples from both professional and student writers. The metaphors were sometimes relevant to for the process of writing as a whole and sometimes symbols focusing on one aspect of writing. They ranged from clear analogies (e.g. building, giving birth, cooking, mining, gardening, hunting, getting the last bit of toothpaste) to metaphors that needed elaboration like a "gusset" (a small, irregular piece of material necessary for the construction of a garment, but hidden) and the "lost wax process" (a way of making a mold which then melts away when the product is finished). Tomlinson stressed that metaphors can reassure and guide her through composing problems as well as help her describe these problems.

The speakers then simulated their technique for using metaphorical stories in the classroom. As the participants began to compose their own metaphorical stories, Peter Mortensen asked some guiding questions to get us started, encouraging us to think of metaphors we might use for beginning writing, finishing writing, writing under pressure, writing badly, writing well, generating ideas, and so on. He suggested students could also use the guiding questions (distributed on the handout) in interviews or in collaboration to get started.

In the discussion that followed, Tomlinson and Mortensen stressed that metaphors should be accepted and explored, rather than judged. They may be original, adopted, or enforced; they may be idiosyncratic, contradictory, or even strike us as "bad." The important