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 Normand 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 more of a practical level than on an aesthetic level.

The remainder of the presentation was a discussion between Schnapp and the conference. 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 conferences 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
thing is that we and our students look at what the effects of writing metaphors are, what they imply about writing, and how they match or might amplify our experience. When they have students compare their metaphors to those of professional writers, Tomlinson and Morense minimize possible intimidation by emphasizing that the purpose is to find similarities and common problems.

Finally, the speakers summarized their reasons for using metaphorical stories in the classroom. In addition to taking authority for their own writing and balancing personal with external assessment, students also need to develop better self-monitoring processes because many do not have a language for thinking about their processes. (Tomlinson’s survey of 23 secondary and college writing texts showed that there was very little figurative language in these texts). The speakers have found that by comparing metaphorical stories, students can gain confidence and learn that other writers (including professionals) may encounter similar problems. Students begin to talk like writers and develop a stronger interest in writing.

THE USES OF COMPUTERS IN THE ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

Speakers: William Wrench, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Helen Schwartz, Carnegie-Mellon University

Introducer/Reporter: Marie Jean Lederman, NTNW and Baruch College, CUNY

William Wrench discussed the current state of the field of computer analysis of student writing, dividing the software programs into six different categories, each of which has a different pedagogical orientation. The first category is **error checkers**. These programs focus on homonym confusions, sexist language, usage errors, and infelicitous phrases. Some examples are Writer’s Helper (Conduit), Sensible Grammar (Sensible Software), RightWriter (RightSoft), Ghost Writer (MECC), and Writer’s Werkbench (AT&T).

The second category is **reformatters** which, rather than find errors, make it easier for writers to find their own errors. One of the first programs was Quill (DC Heath) which included a combination of prewriting, writing, and revising activities. For example, to help students revise their work, it displayed each sentence of their paper alone on the screen. Rather than make statements about or changes in the sentence, the program allowed students to **lock** at each sentence in a new way. Other newer reformatters include Ghost Writer (MECC) and Writer’s Helper (Conduit). The third category of programs is **audience awareness programs**. These programs include readability formulas and they pinpoint vague references and other problems.

The fourth category is **student conference utilities**. These computer programs try to help students develop editing skills as they read each other’s papers and “send” comments to each other. Two examples are Quill and Alaska Writer (Yukon-Koyukuk School District). The fifth category is **grading utilities**. Programs designed to help teachers in the clerical aspects of paper grading. Students turn in their work on disks, and the teacher uses the computer to help grade the work. By creating ten or twelve messages for major errors, teachers can respond with just a keystroke or two to most of the mistakes they are likely to see. Examples are the RSVP project (Miami-Dade Community College) and Writer’s Network (Ideal Learning).

The last category is **automatic graders**. This is the logical “next step” after grading utilities. Ellis Page of the University of Wisconsin proved twenty years ago that a computer could grade papers quite well based on a formula of paper length, sentence length, level of subordination, and word length. However, merely assigning a grade isn’t enough in a classroom situation in which students expect not only a grade but a range of responses from teachers. It might be possible, however, to use such computer graders in large-scale assessment programs. Wrench concluded that there are many decisions to be made about how computers will be used in writing analysis, but it is certain that there are already many opportunities and, surely, many more to come.

Helen Schwartz began by discussing several purposes of assessment: diagnosis and revision as well as improved self-evaluation. The range of writing behaviors which can be assessed are ideas, organization, rhetorical presentation (purpose and audience assessment) and grammatical correctness. In answer to the question, “How can computer programs assess these behaviors for these purposes?” she first gave a short answer, “No computer program alone is now accurate or helpful enough” and most of the existing programs may overwhelm the student with too much information at once. Style checkers can draw attention to problems, but the student must make the decisions. And sometimes readability formulas can lead students to vary sentence length by creating run-on sentences and fragments. Schwartz pointed out that “Computer programs are useful as **delivery systems** for teacher, peer and self-assessment. They help students become aware of problems in their writing and help them to solve these problems.” She gave four examples:

1) Prewriting programs such as “ORGANIZE” (Helen Schwartz, Wadsorth Publishing) can be used not only to help students see the shape of their papers but also to desensitize peer review.