



UPDATE

Portfolio Conference Gets High Marks

by Pam Perfumo

On April 22-23, 1994, the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy joined the Stanford School of Education to sponsor a conference on portfolio assessment. The conference, titled "Evaluating Writing Through Portfolios: The State of the Art," covered a wide variety of instructional and assessment issues, and included participation by researchers, administrators, and teachers from around the country.

Joan Herman, associate director of the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA, opened the conference with a keynote address about the challenges that face educators to make portfolios a lasting assessment tool. A collection of break-out sessions followed, including presentations by noted professionals in the field such as Alan Purves from the Center for the Study of Literature at the State University of New York, Miles Myers from the National Council of Teachers of English, Sandra Murphy from the University of California at Davis, Mary Barr from the California Learning Record Project, Elise Estrin and Nanette Koelsch from Far West Educational Research Laboratory, and Robert Calfee from Stanford University. Small group sessions afforded much discussion and interaction among participants.

One of the high points of the two days was a keynote discussion panel. Panel members included researchers and administrators involved in portfolio projects. They presented some opening issues and then invited audience participants to direct questions or comments to the group. A lively discussion ensued, covering issues from large-scale assessment questions to computer technology applications around portfolio use. The conference activities concluded with a keynote address by Pat Belanoff, professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Lankshear Talks on Literacy, Work, and Empowerment

by Jim Loddell

Colin Lankshear, from the School of Education, Queensland University of Technology, and author of *Literacy, Schooling, and Revolution*, presented a talk on February 24 at the University of California, Berkeley, co-sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Lankshear addressed questions such as: *When can literacy in the context of work and work-related training programs be said to empower?* and *What is the role of research in such contexts?*

In addressing these questions, Lankshear drew on current efforts at work and training reform in Australia. Lankshear stated that, as long as the discourse of the workplace remains under the control of employers, workplace literacy programs can never be truly empowering to employees. In most cases, workers must either accept the goals set by owners or find themselves unemployed, a circumstance which effectively deprives them of any real power.

For workplace education to be *truly* empowering, differential modes of access must be developed, especially for women and minorities, to powerful discourses and literacies—the kind of knowledge that provides access to good jobs for the entire workforce.

Lankshear was also critical of many researchers in the workplace education arena. "People use concepts like empowerment in very explicit ways to mean, seemingly, on a straight reading of them, almost anything *but* empowerment." He faulted much of the research conducted to date, because it involves too little *empirical* study: "There's too much guesswork and too little close analysis of what's actually going on."



UPDATE

Additions to Center Audiotapes Series

The Center is offering a number of new audiotapes of talks given at the NCTE Assembly for Research Conference in Chicago, February 11-13, 1994. The following tapes are available:

Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Betty Jane Wagner, Brenda Landau, and Griselle Diaz-Gemetti, "Introducing M-CLASS, The Multicultural Collaborative for Literacy in Secondary Schools: Teacher Research in Action"; \$7.00.

Glynda Hull, "The Literacy of Labor: Observations on Reading and Writing at an Electronics Factory"; \$7.00.

David Jolliffe, "Problems of Identity Formation in Work-Related Texts: Insights from Discourse Analysis and Worker Interviews"; \$7.00.

Carol Heller, "Tenderloin Women Reading and Writing the World and Their Lives"; \$7.00.

Marcia Farr, "Literacy and Religion: Reading, Writing, and Gender Among Mexican Women in Chicago"; \$7.00.

Carol Lee, "Slipping into the Breaks and Looking Around: Towards a Theory of African American Literary Expertise and Its Implications for School-Based Literacies"; \$7.00.

Steve Athanases, "Beyond Silence and the Graceful Gesture: Urban Tenth-Graders Discussing Literature and Diversity"; \$7.00.

Shirley Brice Heath, "Research on the Move: Acting to Literacy"; \$7.00.

Anne DiPardo, "Off the Beaten Track: Collaborative Teaching in an Alternative School Setting"; \$7.00.

George Hillocks, "Reflection on the Teaching of Writing to Inner City Students"; \$7.00.

Flora Rodríguez-Brown and Timothy Shanahan, "Toward an Ethic of Family Literacy Theory, Research and Practice"; \$7.00.

Also available is a tape of *Teacher Research and Teacher Change in Diverse Urban Classrooms: A Sociocultural Focus on Literacy*, an interactive symposium, presented at the April 1994 AERA Conference in New Orleans. This tape focuses on results from M-CLASS (Multicultural Collaboration for Literacy in Secondary Schools), one of the Center's ongoing projects, which explores the dynamics of learning to write in multicultural classes. M-CLASS involves twenty-four teacher researchers, six at each of four sites: Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco. The New Orleans teacher researchers are featured in this presentation. \$7.00.

New Center Publication

Community Literacy, (Occasional Paper No. 34) by Wayne Campbell Peck, Linda Flower, and Lorraine Higgins.

This paper articulates a vision of community literacy that can serve as a source of renewal for urban communities. Based on the experiences of the Community Literacy Center on Pittsburgh's North Side, the authors examine the social and historical context of urban settlement houses, discuss how the concept of community literacy is positioned within other established theories of literacy as they relate to community building, and examine a set of guiding principles that have emerged after five years of reflecting on community literacy in practice. January, 1994; 40 pages; \$4.00.

To order, send a prepaid request (California residents please add 8.25% sales tax) to: Center for the Study of Writing, School of Education, 5513 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.