
A MODEL FOR ESTIMATING REVISION SKILLS: POST-DRAFT PLANNING

Speaker: Maurice Scharton, Illinois State University

Introducer/Recorder: Andrew F. Yaronczyk, Shaker Heights Middle School and
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Maurice Scharton, Director of Writing at Illinois State University, presented an informative workshop on a model for estimating revision skills through an analysis of post-draft planning. His goal has been the development of methods for assessing and evaluating aspects of the writing process that are usually overlooked in assessment. In Scharton's program, the holistic assessment of students' placement tests is supplemented with an analytic reading of their revision skills, which is carried out by a third or fourth reader.

Scharton handed out a sample of the placement test itself and explained how it takes into account the provisional nature of first drafts. This first handout also contained samples of three student placement essays, and Scharton asked the conference participants to score these three placement papers holistically on a scale of one to five. The results were tabulated and displayed on an overhead.

In the second handout, Scharton provided a sample of the revision prompt given on the placement test. Its instructions and symbols enable students to indicate on the first draft of their placement essays what additional changes and revisions they would make, if time permitted. These changes and revisions indicate writers' post-draft planning. Scharton's second handout also contained the three placement tests from the first handout, which were now clearly marked with the writer's personal changes and/or revision plans. These three sample post-drafts indicated each student's plans for revising and changing his or her original placement essay to make it more appropriate for the intended audience and purpose. Scharton again asked the conference participants to evaluate every plan or change and he again tabulated the consensus on the planned revisions.

Scharton concluded that the data in his research on post-draft planning indicate that the assessment of students' revision skills provides valuable placement and diagnostic information. In addition, Scharton noted that there is a greater need to group students and that there are more grouping options available than placement tests traditionally have suggested or permitted. Finally, he pointed out that there are more planned revisions indicated by writers than actually appear later as carried out revisions. Scharton is continuing to study this problem. ■