

prod for any disbelieving professors. The chapter directed towards high school guidance personnel about preparing college-bound learning disabled students is also well done. These two chapters constitute only thirteen pages of this book, and come nearly at the end. They desire more prominence. There are also several useful references and appendices.

The survey of college programs for the learning disabled, which served as the original source of this book, would have been better presented as a journal article, substantiated with more data and less "personal communication", and, thus, available for peer review. Combining clinical hunch, taxonomies of deficit, and unannotated lists of tests, with prescriptive suggestions, does not seem a particularly effective way to reach the obvious goal of these authors, the enhancement of college success for learning disabled students.

**Renée Stevens**

McGill-Montreal Children's Hospital  
Learning Centre

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**Gary A. Olson, Editor**

**WRITING CENTERS: THEORY AND ADMINISTRATION**  
**Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1984**  
**247 pp. \$15.50**

A collection of nineteen essays by writing specialists at colleges and universities in the United States, this publication offers the first comprehensive study of the theory and practice of individualized writing instruction. Professor Gary Olson, director of the Center for Writing at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, has assembled a knowledgeable and experienced group of teachers to provide an in-depth study of the writing centre and its purpose and function.

The book's three sections are devoted to a consideration of (1) Theory; (2) Administration; and (3) Special Concerns, all

related to the operation of a writing centre. In the Preface, Professor Olson emphasizes the need for focussed research in the field of developmental writing. In the Introduction, Thom Hawkins, a leader in writing centre administration at the University of California, gives an excellent overview of objectives and methodologies. Writes Hawkins:

The growing pains of writing centers are symptomatic of a general state of flux and tension in the humanities, a condition caused by dropping enrollments and a changing student body. Writing centers are coming of age in the midst of this upheaval because they make room, provide space and time, for students to talk about ideas, to explore meaning, and to engage freely in the trial and error of putting their thoughts into writing. (p.xi)

The authors of the first seven essays concentrate on establishing a conceptual basis for writing centres, both theoretical and pedagogical. The material is of interest to all teachers of writing.

Brannon and Knoblauch offer their philosophical perspective on the teaching of writing, recommending a research-based approach as opposed to one rooted in pedagogical technique. Whether product-directed or process-oriented, the authors warn against the stifling effects of prefabricated writing models, and of strategies that undervalue and inhibit a "writer's personal (and personalized) search for meaning." They state that: "Form is a gradually achieved consequence of the search for meaning, not a preconception" (p.39). The authors describe, in vivid terms, the "messiness" of writing that is person-centered and thought-motivated. They emphasize the importance of the teacher-listener in facilitating the release of this kind of writing.

An essay by Tilly and John Warnock, of the University of Wyoming, examines writing as a tool for intellectual liberation, for the re-shaping of concepts. The Warnocks view writing in its psychological context, inseparable from person and purpose. They use the term "Liberatory Writing Center", a place and a function in which revision becomes re-vision, a re-thinking not only of an individual's writing, but of her or his intellectual assumptions.

Considered in other essays in this first section are the effectiveness of peer editing and collaborative learning; the results of research over the past decade on peer tutoring in writing centres; an investigation of the relationship between spoken and written rhetoric; a cognitive model for developmental writing; and priorities and guidelines for the operation of an effective writing centre.

Part two opens with an essay by the editor. Olson offers the fruits of his experience in setting up and maintaining a writing centre. Practical and helpful advice is given on every aspect of the operation, including sample administrative forms for referrals, records, and interviews.

The section continues with an excellent piece on funding. Peggy Jolly, of the University of Alabama, begins her essay with a survey of the historical factors related to funding tutorial services in general, and writing centres in particular. Greater accessibility to a university education and the consequent wide disparity in student writing proficiency increased the need for writing tutorial instruction. Various avenues for obtaining the necessary financing are suggested. Unfortunately, many are not applicable to Canada.

Two essays are concerned with the staffing of writing centres. The authors recommend the recruitment of students, either in partial fulfilment of a language development program or as volunteers. They stress the importance of having sensitive, perceptive individuals as tutors, and of providing good training in the basic principles of writing development. Advocacy of the use of student-tutors seems to be more closely related to financial expediency, however, than to optimum staffing arrangements.

The final portion of this book consists of six essays in which problems encountered in writing centres are considered. Olson describes those that result from negative attitudes on the part of certain professors towards writing and writing centres. Because writing is a very personal activity, negativism can exaggerate problems to the point where a student loses all confidence in her or his ability to compose. A supportive attitude toward the writing centre on the part of faculty contributes to its effectiveness.

In Essay 15, Mary Croft of the University of Wisconsin, and co-author of one of the few books about writing centres, offers suggestions for meeting the challenge of "the Reluctant Student".

The need for a nonthreatening, tension-free, friendly, personal atmosphere in writing centers has often been stressed. Indeed, the very nature, the very existence, of a writing center implies a nurturing environment, one that is conducive to work and productivity.... Because such an atmosphere is more important than ever with resistant students, efforts to create and maintain that milieu must be constant. (p.171)

Ways of removing writer's block are suggested by Thomas Nash in his description of useful invention strategies. Such heuristic devices as the tagmemic questionnaire stimulate pre-writing awareness of the many facets of a subject, thereby

helping a student out of that quagmire, the blank page and the mental void.

The new professional role of the writing centre tutor is given serious attention by Rodney Simard of California State College. Writing centres are now firmly and permanently established in many American colleges and universities. They have (to quote Olson) "progressed from the old grammar lab model, in which tutors lecture to students, to the modern writing center, in which tutors engage in a type of Socratic dialogue with their pupils" (p.197). The quality of service to the student depends upon the tutor's mastery of writing and enthusiastic commitment to it. Abilities to diagnose a student's writing problems; to adapt to each student's particular requirements; to find creative ways of encouraging good writing; and, above all, to achieve a rapport with the student in a congenial atmosphere, distinguish the professional tutor.

Subsequent essays consider the needs of students for whom English is not the first language, and of those who require assistance with business and technical writing.

Each essay is well footnoted, with a brief summary of its content. An excellent bibliography of articles, books, and dissertations is included.

This book is a primary source for anyone interested in students' ability to write well, and consequently to think logically and lucidly.

**Elizabeth C. Speyer**

Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing,  
McGill University

## **EDUCATION IN INDIA**

**Joseph DiBona.**

**ONE TEACHER ONE SCHOOL.**

**New Delhi: Biblia Impex Priv. Ltd., 1983.**

**306 pp. Rs 150/-.**

This book consists of an excellent introduction by Joseph DiBona on the indigenous system of education in Bengal and Bihar based on Reports by William Adam, a Christian Missionary, on indigenous culture in early 19th century Bengal. The rest of the book contains two of three documents popularly known as the Adam Reports (1836-38) which are recognized as containing a unique record of sociological data on Indian institutions in the pre-colonial period.