

## BOOK REVIEWS

BARBARA E. WALVOORD, LINDA LAWRENCE HUNT, H. FIL DOWLING JR., & JOAN D. MCMAHON (EDITORS). *In the Long Run: A study of faculty in three writing-across-the-curriculum programs*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. (1997). 168 pp. US\$19.95 (NCTE members US\$14.95). ISBN 0-8141-5642-8.

The Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) movement began in the United States in the early 70s as informal workshops for faculty at colleges and universities (for a Canadian perspective, see *Contextual Literacy: Writing across the curriculum*, 1994, edited by Schryer and Steven). Its main objectives were to improve teaching and to facilitate students' learning by focusing on teaching strategies and writing-to-learn assignments. While the workshop leaders were faculty members themselves, often from English departments, administrators responding to public calls for improvements in teaching soon embraced WAC. Grants to improve teaching allowed the workshops to expand, even into summer institutes. Barbara Walvoord, a pioneer in the movement, has written extensively on how to set up a WAC program, and on her own work in WAC, most thoroughly in *Thinking and Writing in College: A naturalistic study of students in four disciplines* (1990). So how has WAC progressed over the last twenty five years?

In this new book, *In the Long Run*, Walvoord and colleagues provide detailed data from 1993-95 about WAC programs at three schools, Whitworth College (a small private liberal arts college), Towson State University (with bachelor's and master's degree programs), and the University of Cincinnati (a large research-oriented comprehensive university). The authors draw on interviews with and reports from 42 faculty, and on syllabi and other course documents. Walvoord and colleagues define WAC as widely as possible as whatever teachers take away from workshops that improves their teaching, including non-

writing strategies such as small group problem-solving. The picture that emerges from the ethnographic material is of WAC as catalyst, as change-agent. Each instructor comes to a workshop with different expectations and leaves having found something unique in the exchange. Some faculty members have developed new strategies and assignments (some of which are shared in the book). Others used the experience to reconsider teaching philosophy. The authors include some dissenting voices; for instance, the observation is made that WAC is permeated by a 'true believer' mentality. While cautioning that each WAC program is unique to its institution, the authors claim that the same themes emerge from research at the three institutions. The authors build an image of WAC as community, providing safety for self-reflection through collegial support and validation for innovative teaching.

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MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, KEVIN RATHUNDE, & SAMUEL WHALEN.  
*Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success & Failure*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (first published 1993; paperback edition 1997).

The book discusses factors that affect the perseverance over three years within talent fields among a sample of gifted secondary students enrolled in a set of Chicago area public schools. As such, this work joins the short list of high-quality longitudinal studies of high-ability individuals, beginning with that initiated by Terman (1925). The present research should be of particular interest to researchers, educators, and makers of policy. It is of secondary interest for secondary education generally considered, as well as to researchers and practitioners involved in career development, career counselling, and the development of school-to-work programs. (The work would be of greater interest to these groups had the authors included appropriate references to the vocational literature, which is nearly wholly absent.) Finally, the book may be of value to parents of gifted children, who will appreciate the authors' efforts to write in plain language rather than professional jargon, although some technical terminology is unavoidable. The new paperback edition undoubtedly makes the book more affordable to a wider audience, but it is also (unfortunately) now at least five years behind the most current literature on the subject. (Only five references are as recent as 1992, with most of these by the authors themselves.) Perhaps a revised edition should have been produced with the introduction of the paperback in order to maintain the work's currency.