

## **Academics' Comments on Writing Matters**

*This group of essays is an extremely useful commentary on, and analysis of, students' writing abilities in higher education today. It brings together the accumulated wisdom of the RLF Fellows' experience and it makes a number of valuable recommendations.*

**Professor Philip Martin, Dean of Humanities, de Montfort University**

*I believe that this report, representing as it does a synoptic account of the views formed by RLF Fellows, is going to prove immensely valuable. Also, because it is written by writers, the whole document makes an extremely welcome change from the anaesthetic prose of too much educational development. I loved the blend of detail and wider argument.*

**Professor C.B. Knights, Director, English Subject Centre (Higher Education Academy)**

*Writing Matters describes with admirable clarity a situation that is well known to students themselves and those working with students but not yet sufficiently widely acknowledged at the level of institutional strategy in HEIs. The case is made very convincingly that the value to students, academic departments and graduate employers of addressing student writing skills would outstrip the costs. The report points clearly to writing skills being a developmental issue, not a remedial one. I think this is very helpful. Both students and academic departments have tended to see the problem as some kind of deficit. Students don't know how to address it without help and, as the problem has grown, academic departments have been reluctant to own it. Writing Matters focuses attention on the scale of the issue, the elephant in the dining room, but more importantly it advances practical suggestions about what might be done. The authors of the report are sensitive to the environmental changes which have contributed to the present condition of student writing and are conscious of the squeeze on resources within institutions. But right at the centre of Writing Matters is student need. The message is clear: in every sense, we fail our students when we don't act to address this. I will certainly be circulating this very useful report within my own institution and making it a focus of discussion in how we enhance the student learning experience.*

**Dr Judith Vincent, Acting Vice Principal, University of Paisley**

*The attachment of Royal Literary Fund Fellows to universities with the specific remit of helping students with their writing skills is an exciting and innovative venture which is already having positive results. Universities from all groupings and with differing missions have been involved as the problem of poor writing skills is not limited to any sector of higher education. This is an exciting scheme and it should be extended as far as possible... I commend its progress to date and wish it continued success.*

**Professor Nigel Palastanga, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, Cardiff University**

*I found the report interesting and engaging. I was particularly impressed with the range of articles presented in the volume. The booklet makes the case for writing programmes in HE and I am sure that it will act as a great advocate for the work. It provides good case studies and examples which can be adapted in different circumstances and situates the work in the new world of HE that we are all now facing. I do think it will be useful to educational developers as well as new lecturers. I suspect it could also be used on training programmes for lecturers.*

**Professor Mary Stuart, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Sussex**