

Klauser. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987. 143 pages. \$9.95 (softcover).

Writing on Both Sides of the Brain can best be described as a do-it-yourself writing workshop. Based on Henriette Klauser's Writing Resource Workshops, the book is replete with exercises, practical advice, examples, and—most of all—the voice of someone who understands the writing process and the problems writers face. This is not a textbook, but it would serve as an excellent resource for anyone who teaches or participates in writing classes. Furthermore, anyone required to write on the job will find useful guidance here.

Klauser addresses writers who have, at one time or another, been anxious about the physical act of putting words on paper. According to her, the main reason for this problem is that most writers—professionals and amateurs alike—attempt to write and edit simultaneously. Therefore, she aims to teach them to balance these two conflicting processes so that they may manage anxiety and engage in whole-brain writing.

Klauser uses analogy to make the concept of opposing brain functions easy to understand. In the first chapter, she sets up a conflict which she carries throughout the book: Caliban vs. Ariel. Caliban, the monster in *The Tempest*, is compared to the left side of the brain, which makes writers edit prematurely and should, therefore, be controlled. Ariel, the symbol of flight and freedom in the same work, is compared to the right side of the brain, which supplies ideas. The goal of all writers should be to gain control over Caliban (The Critic) so that they can write freely without self-judgment holding them back. Then, when the appropriate time arrives, writers can invite Caliban to do the needed editing.

Writing on Both Sides of the Brain contains nine highly readable chapters, the first seven devoted to writing. In these chapters Klauser motivates writers to get words on paper. She does this by discussing and giving examples of some common breakthrough techniques such as rapidwriting, branching, and rumination. After each discussion, she presents exercises and suggests that writers record their reactions to them in a "Progress Log."

The last two chapters deal with revision. Klauser evidently expects readers to be knowledgeable about grammar or at least to know where to find help, because she excludes grammar rules from her book. However, she does discuss passive voice, wordiness, and parallel structure. Interesting additions are "Tricks of the Trade": The Echo (full-circle ending) and End with an Accent, which explains the importance of the last line in a manuscript. Among other things, discussions of visualization, organization, and faulty reasoning are also included.

Two appendixes add good information in the right place. The first one, Whole-Brained Spelling, discusses visualization as one way of improving spelling patterns. The second, Writing on Both Sides of the Brain with a Word Processor, explains how to apply the techniques in this book to a word processor.

Many of the techniques addressed in *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain* commonly appear in books on writing; however, Klauser's approach does not. Throughout this work, she provides anecdotes about her writing workshops, along with success stories about people who have participated in them. There

are humorous illustrations intended to inform and motivate readers, and there are accounts of Klauser's own writing processes. Put simply, Klauser, with her constant voice of encouragement, makes readers feel like workshop participants.

Of course, the book is not without fault. There are places where the transitions between discussions are unclear. And should anything be added, Klauser could perhaps suggest a schedule for the exercises. Then again, readers can probably design the schedule that works best for them.

What I suggest is that readers complete the book in one sitting—they will want to. Then decide how it should be used. Whatever the approach, *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain* will be—I promise—one of those books writers grab when beginning a writing project.

Jessica L. Stanley

Student, East Carolina University
Greenville, NC

TECHNICAL WRITING—PROCESS AND PRODUCT.

Charles R. Stratton. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984.

Textbook-scope publications on technical writing used to be a hard-to-find trickle, but nowadays they have become a veritable stream. One of the latest is *Technical Writing—Process and Product*, by Charles R. Stratton, from the University of Idaho. It seems that, besides baking potatoes, other good things also come from that state.

While the book is designed for students—easy to read, understand, and remember—as the author says in his preface, it has also an orientation toward on-the-job training. Emphasis is put more on the "process" of writing and revising and less on the final product, reflecting the author's belief that it is more important to know HOW to write rather than what to write or what the final writing should look like. An interesting novel point about the pursuit of excellence is made by the author, contending that not everything must be excellent; e.g., a memo, request, etc. This reviewer considers the point rather self-evident and entirely moot. Obviously, certain endeavors, being trivial, are not worthy of the effort to attain excellence, while others, of major scope and consequence, cannot be compromised. After all, does not the pursuit of excellence enhance craftsmanship and make for human progress?

The wealth of information in this book is organized under four main parts with their relevant chapters.

Part I—Preliminaries—has chapters on writing for business, industry, and the government; on adequacy vs. excellence; and on communication-context analysis. It discusses the difference between writing in academe and outside and the analysis of the communication context in terms of the audience, purpose, and type of information to be presented. The main idea here is to know how to convey information more effectively.

Part II—Basic Writing Techniques—is designed to impart adequacy covering all stages of producing writing—data gathering through handling drafts, manuscripts, and revisions,