Writing Program starts courses

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and other writings pertinent to students in technical fields, this method is also being used.

"Writing is a part of technical skill," states Patsy Cumming, who, with Professor Robert Rathbone, coordinates the program. She explained that while engineering or science students don't necessarily need a course in creative writing, technical writing skills are very important for them—both for papers they must write while at MIT, and after graduation when writing will be a part of their jobs.

The writing problem at MIT is intensified by the fact that many faculty members themselves have writing difficulties.

"Teachers need to respond to the writing in lab reports," Skier said. "Instead of having an army of writing teachers, we hope to turn the faculty into specialized writing teachers capable of teaching writing in their own field."

In order to accomplish this, two faculty writing seminars were held during IAP.

The Writing Program also fills a humanistic need at MIT, program members explain. Unlike most courses at MIT, a writing class allows interaction among its students. This is important for many students who feel cut off from others.

However, writing has always been the top priority of the program. Teachers Joe Brown and Steve Reuys, along with the rest of the Writing Program staff, are struggling to make students realize that the way in which a research paper or lab report is written is just as important as the actual research or lab work done.

"The ultimate goal of the Program," Skier concluded, "is to have good writing instruction be a part of every undergraduate's education.

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