The Writing Center opened for paper problems

By Mark Dock

The Writing Center opened this term to provide personalized aid for students who do not want to take a writing course but who have writing problems that cannot be remedied in a writing course, according to Steven Strang, Director of the Writing Center.

Various MIT departments had suggested that the Writing Program establish an aid for students with writing problems, said Strang. In response to these suggestions the Writing Program opened the writing Center. The Center is located in room 14N-337 and can be accessed by appointment or by "dropping in" between 3 to 6 pm Monday through Friday.

Strang described the Center as "a place that any student can come to and get help on any kind of writing problem, from basic punctuation problems to stylistic problems." Strang added that students who have problems with a particular paper can come to the Center for help. "We do not correct the paper," said Strang, "We see what the problem is and work on the problem in general." Strang said that the purpose of the Center is to cure the problem itself rather than edit a particular paper.

Thirty students have used the Center so far, according to Strang. Andrew W. Washburn '82, one of the staff members, says "As time goes by, more and more people are coming." Students may make only a single visit if the writing problem to be cured is a minor one, or it may make a series of appointments if the problem is more serious, said Strang.

The Writing Center is being funded by the Provost's Office, The Writing Program, and the Summer course Communicating Technical Information. Three MIT seniors and a graduate student not affiliated with MIT, as well as Strang, constitute the staff of the Writing Center. According to Strang, there is also an Advisory Committee consisting of Suzanne Flynn, Director of English as a Foreign Language; William Barrett, Associate Professor in Humanities; and Harriet Rivo, Assistant Professor in Humanities. The Advisory Committee provides the Center with suggestions on the methods it uses to remedy different kinds of writing problems.

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