

mediation is unsystematic. Moreover, learners may refuse or argue with the mediation offered. Thus, the author concludes by suggesting that further research needs to be undertaken at the level of negotiated interactions, as opposed to interventions, between a computer and a learner. The concluding chapter of the book by Cedric Sarre (France) is entitled “Computer-Mediated Negotiated Interactions: How is Meaning Negotiated in Discussion Boards, Text Chat and Videoconferencing?” Cedric records the findings of a comparative investigation of the potential of three different CMC modes—discussion board, text chat and videoconferencing—to foster negotiated interactions as well as the influence of task type on such interactions. The results of the study reveal that all CMC modes allow negotiation, but videoconferencing is conducive to more meaning than the other two modes. The author emphasizes the need for more empirical studies on the role of videoconferencing in second language acquisition.

This book is a fine amalgamation of the multifarious CALL techniques being used in different parts of the world to foster second language learning. A distinctive feature of the book remains its inclusion of recent research studies in the field. The format of this eBook as well as the nature of its content embraces the openness of the internet (accessible online, free of charge)! A must read for all those who are interesting in keeping abreast with the latest developments in second language teaching using technology.

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### **Handbook of Intellectual Styles: Preferences in Cognition Learning and Thinking**

Edited by Zhang, L., Sternberg, R. J. and Rayner, S.

Dublin: Research-publishing.net

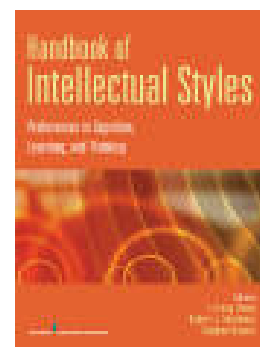
First Published: 2011

Current Issue: 2014

ISBN 13:978-1-908416-00-1 (eBook)

ISBN 13:978-1-908416-01-8 (print on demand), pp. 217

*Reviewed by: Shruti Pal*



‘Intellectual Styles’ is an umbrella term for all types of styles. It takes into consideration, the concepts and constructs of ‘cognitive styles’, ‘learning styles’, teaching styles’ and ‘thinking styles’. This is done in an attempt to give a less complicated and single reference point for ‘styles’ research in general, and is itself the product of recent research aimed at a unification of the plethora of styles.

*Handbook of Intellectual Styles* is a collection of carefully selected articles that give a holistic account of various intellectual styles. The book begins with a preface, in which the editors define intellectual styles as “a generic term for all style constructs, with or without the root word ‘style’, and refers to people’s preferred ways of processing information and dealing with tasks”. The editors identify the goal of the book as: “to provide a complete, definitive, and authoritative single volume on intellectual styles”.

The book is designed to achieve three main objectives:

- To create a reference for scholars and students, who wish to understand more

about intellectual styles and their related constructs such as intelligence, creativity, metacognition, personality, and human development.

- To provide an up-to-date, panoramic picture of the current state of research on intellectual styles.
- To make resources available to anyone who is interested in applying the notion of styles to his/her work or personal life.

With these objectives in mind, the book has been divided into nineteen chapters, which are further sub-divided into seven sections, covering a wide range of issues and topics in the field of intellectual styles. The contributions have been drawn from experts who have either constructed conceptual frameworks, or published studies based on empirical investigations, or done both.

The chapters present a detailed and comprehensive picture of intellectual styles, and deal with the history and development of cognitive styles; learning styles and learning strategies; and the relationships and applications of styles to a range of psychological, educational, organizational and cultural topics. Each chapter contains a detailed reference list. The book ends with an epilogue and a twenty page detailed index of the terms used in the book.

The key features of the book include:

- It provides a comprehensive review of intellectual styles from multiple perspectives.
- It is written for students and scholars in diverse academic arenas, as well as practitioners in education.
- It includes contributions from researchers from diverse disciplines, such as psychology, business, education, and health sciences.

Though the book provides a ready reference to the readers, I would recommend it with a fair share of warning for various reasons.

Firstly, handbooks are intended to provide ready reference. They are generally contain a compendium of information in a particular field or about a particular technique. They are designed to be easily consulted, and provide quick answers in a certain area. Although this book ensures that all aspects associated with intellectual styles have been taken into consideration, it mainly revolves around the works of Zhang and Sternberg. While it is true that their works have brought the concept to its current form and status, they are not the only people associated with the construct. Therefore, their dominance in a handbook seems a little unfair.

Secondly, the text can be divided into two broad categories—content and supporting in-text citations, and the two share text space approximately in the proportion 40 : 60 respectively. While it is understandable that in-text citations are necessary to back a claim, lack of content comes out as a prominent drawback of the book.

Another reason why the book may not be able to quench your thirst for knowledge is that very often in the chapters, points are mentioned but not elaborated upon. In fact the basic requirement of defining a concept has also been skipped at certain points.

The chapters are quite repetitive in their content. More than a half of them have a definition of the terms ‘Intellectual Styles’ and the ‘Zhang and Sternberg model’. While it may be useful to remind the readers about the constructs, but is very un-handbook like.

According to *PsycCRITIQUES*, “Because of the thoroughness of the literature reviews and the comprehensive coverage of the chapter topics, this book should be required reading for any scholar working in related areas of personality or intelligence”. Every word of this comment is true as the book seems to excel in these two areas only.

Finally, the understanding of intellectual styles as a concept for both individuals and groups has far-reaching implications for practitioners in education and researchers in cross-cultural psychology, multicultural education, organizational behavior and work performance, and many other academic disciplines. I would recommend this book to students and practitioners of education, psychology and the allied fields.

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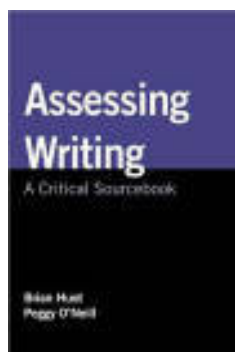
### **Assessing Writing: A Critical Sourcebook**

Brian Huot & Peggy O'Neill (Eds.). (2009)

New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47596-3.

By *Praveen Singh*



This is a collection of already published papers (twenty-four) aimed at researchers and teachers of composition/writing and (writing) assessment. The editors discuss the need for and the challenges of writing assessment. They notice that even though no one denies that assessment is a critical component of teaching writing/composition, there exists a paradox. While on the one hand it is important that an effective writing teacher knows the writing assessment needs of the students, faculty and institutions, on the other hand some view it as a “punitive force”.

The papers in this book aim at helping the audience “understand the theory and practice

of writing assessment” (p.1). The contributions range from scholars who are part of the academic setup to those who bring fresh insights as administrators or executors of the findings within the field. This volume, however, does not concern itself with the “assessment [that] writers do as they write” and even “the responses and classroom evaluation” have [also] been left out (p.1).

The book is divided into three sections, Foundations, Models and Issues. Here I discuss some of the papers.

The first three articles in the “Foundations” may be seen as a dialogue on some of the common goals. The first paper discusses the “differences between holistic, analytic and primary trait scoring”, helping one to understand and compare common writing assessment procedures. The second paper offers a strong argument *for* holistic scoring and the third paper discusses the “reliability issues in holistic assessment”. Therefore, these help the reader understand at least one of the major approaches in writing assessment.

Moss’s paper titled “Can there be validity without reliability?” is an interesting read. Moss argues for a more flexible understanding of reliability as a measurement concept and challenges the traditional notions of it. Camp’s paper on the “development of writing assessment from an educational measurement perspective” offers a perspective on the act of balancing the requirements of Reliability and Validity and concludes by “moving toward the new models of writing assessment”(p.122). Yancey discusses the developments of writing assessment in “over a fifty-year period” as different waves where the first three take the form of “objective tests”, “the holistically scored essay” and “portfolio assessment and programmatic assessment”. In the final wave, Yancey hopes, assessment programs will focus on individual assessment and also include “topics that are only now forming” (p. 146).