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978-0-521-65768-6 - Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies: Second Edition

Ilona Leki

Frontmatter

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➤ ACADEMIC WRITING

Exploring Processes and Strategies

SECOND EDITION

Ilona Leki

University of Tennessee, Knoxville



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Acknowledgments are given on pages 427-8.

Preface

Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies is aimed at students who are learning to write for academic contexts. Its goal is to help students develop two types of strategies: strategies for producing texts and strategies for preparing and polishing texts for readers in academic settings. The novice writer needs instruction on the process that writers go through in order to produce texts: a process of exploration and generation of ideas on paper; of seeking out appropriate feedback; and of reworking and revising the presentation of those ideas. The novice writer also needs to learn how to meet the demands of the academy by attention to form, format, accuracy, and correctness. *Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies* helps writers develop competence in all these areas.

The text is divided into three parts and is followed by appendices. Part One orients students to the writing processes they will explore and develop as they work their way through the book. Here they will initially engage in actual writing tasks with minimal guidance in order, first, to become more aware of their current writing strategies and, second, to familiarize themselves with the types of demands and support they can expect to encounter in writing assignments throughout the term. In Part Two, students are taken through the writing process and given the opportunity to discover for themselves which kinds of approaches to writing are most useful to them. Students explore their ideas through journal writing, practice a variety of techniques for generating text, and learn how to elicit feedback on their writing from their classmates and how to respond to such feedback. Students are introduced to the rhetorical expectations of English-speaking readers on organization and development of written ideas, and they learn how to accommodate these expectations. Finally, students turn their attention to form, learning how to focus on technical and grammatical accuracy for writing situations that require such attention.

Part Three provides students with the opportunity to practice doing a variety of academic assignments. Assignments emphasize developing an objective tone, responding to already published material, and incorporating the ideas of other writers into academic assignments. Because students are likely to be asked

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to write essay exams, the last section provides strategies for and practice in writing essay exams based on selected readings.

The appendixes contain a collection of readings, a series of editing exercises, and answers to exercises in the text. The readings were chosen because they are intellectually stimulating and challenging; they are loosely linked thematically to the Writing Assignments in the text. Each reading is accompanied by pre-reading and postreading questions, headnotes, and journal suggestions.

Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies embodies the notion that beginning writers develop confidence in their ability by having many opportunities to express ideas to which they themselves are committed. The text assumes that developing conviction in writing is closely tied to receiving thoughtful feedback in a nonthreatening environment and that it is extremely important for beginning writers to experience success. Consequently, the book encourages group work, provides many examples of writing done by students in writing courses, and, through the explanations and especially the Writing Assignments, strives to create the proper context in which students can explore and share written ideas that are meaningful to them. This book takes student writing seriously and trusts students to be intellectually alive, to appear in the classroom with a store of experience and information that they are willing to share and that is worth sharing. In many years of teaching, I have not found this trust to be misplaced.

CHANGES IN THE SECOND EDITION

The second edition of *Academic Writing* retains the features of the first edition that teachers and students have found helpful:

- Many examples of actual student writing
- Suggestions throughout the text for journal entries related to Writing Assignments
- A wide variety of Writing Assignments from which to select, drawing both on students' own personal experience and on new information and knowledge developed from reading
- Clear and carefully sequenced instructional material
- Many exercises to help students grasp concepts being discussed
- Suggestions for appropriate readings for the Writing

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Assignments throughout the book—for teachers who believe in the usefulness of readings in helping students learn to write. The readings relate generally to the subject matter of the writing assignment; occasionally, students may be referred to a reading selection as an example of one approach to take in dealing with a topic.

NEW AND EXPANDED FEATURES

In response to comments and suggestions by teachers who have used the first edition of this book, the second edition now also includes new and expanded features that make the book easier to use, more academically oriented, and better grounded in current theories of academic reading and writing.

Readings

In keeping with the belief that academic writing in particular draws heavily on reading, the second edition more than doubles the number of readings in the first edition. As in the first edition, the readings are accompanied by *prereading information* (in the case of particularly challenging readings, a great deal) and *postreading activities*.

The readings were selected to appeal to a wide variety of student and teacher interests, but their subject matter is also intended to be compelling, ranging from serious issues that plague the consciences of people in this culture and around the world to more amusing subjects that reveal insights into the qualities and activities of human beings. The readings also vary in difficulty so that increased teacher intervention may be called for in some of the more challenging sections. However, the gains in knowledge, information, and experience with real texts aimed at educated, thoughtful, and reflective readers repay the extra effort that may be required to grasp the ideas presented in the text.

Sequenced Writing Project

A new feature of the second edition is the inclusion of a Sequenced Writing Project, which students can carry out throughout the course of an entire term. Directions for complet-

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ing the five assignments in the Project are included with each chapter as an alternative to the regular Writing Assignments. The idea of a series of assignments forming a Sequenced Writing Project grows from the belief that students develop their writing skills best when each writing assignment they do can build quite directly on the experience and knowledge gained from completing the previous writing assignments. In fact, in the Sequenced Writing Project, students are encouraged to cite and reference their own previously completed assignments. Again, this Sequenced Writing Project is offered as an option.

Changes to Make This Book Easier for Teachers and Students to Use

New Part One: “Overview of the Writing Process.” In order to give students a sense of what their work will entail and what they will learn to do in using this book, the introductory material in the second edition has been restructured and revised. Part One now includes an explanation of how the book is organized and how each of the chapters contributes to developing a specific aspect of writing expertise; hints for writing to communicate effectively; and two Writing Assignments based on the premise that “the best way to learn to write is by writing”: The first is designed to allow students to demonstrate the writing skills and habits they now have and to then engage in analyzing that writing to identify their own particular strengths and weaknesses; the second—a full Writing Assignment modeled after one they might encounter in one of their college courses—provides an overview of the kinds of expertise the students will develop as they explore their own writing processes.

Schematic Diagram of the Writing Process. A schematic diagram now appears at the beginning of each major section of the book. This schematic graphically illustrates where the users of this book are in terms of what they have already covered and what they have to cover still.

Improved Interior Design. First, the layout of all Writing Assignments, Journal Suggestions, Reading Suggestions, Exercises, and Examples has been redesigned to distinguish them from one another and from the narrative instructional sections of the text. This makes it easier for users of this book to locate these features quickly and easily within chapters.

Second, important instructional points are now signaled in

the margin by a star (☆). These points constitute the essential information or key issues to be grasped or remembered. Also, the corners of pages that detail information about how to cite sources have been marked to allow easy and quick reference to these sections.

Third, references to other sections of the text that might be helpful in understanding or completing assignments are signaled in marginal notes.

Finally, while the conversational tone of the first edition has been retained, the narrative instructional material has been streamlined.

The revised, added, and expanded features of this new edition are intended to meet the needs of new users of this text effectively and to respond to the suggestions of the professors and students who have used the first edition successfully.

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*To Ken with love,
great joy, and gratitude*