

Fresh companions sit on shelf with the best

ACADEMIC WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS, John M Swales and Christine B Peak, University of Michigan Press, 1994
WRITING Ron White and Don McGovern;
STUDY SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING Trzeciak J and SE Mackay, Prentice Hall International 1994 SB £6.50, TB £9.50

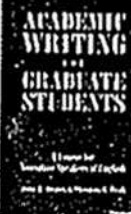
REVIEWER: Bryan Robinson

LIFE'S path presents all of us with many curious twists and turns.

My writing of this review was unavoidably delayed.

Consequently, I am working on it having in the interim received a letter informing me of the sudden death of Saxon Menne.

As Bernard Dufeu would say: "There are no such things as coincidences".



Alongside these three works on different aspects of writing skills, sits a fourth: *Writing for Effect* (OUP, 1980) written by Saxon.

Fourteen years before the books under review were published the slim equal-sized volumes of Saxon's students' book and teacher's book came out.

In the scope and meticulous detail of these works, as in so many other aspects of his professional career, Saxon was a pioneer who forged ahead opening up territories that only now have been reached by many of the rest of us.

I feel it my duty to say that Saxon provides me with the yardstick by which to measure their works.

John Swales, co-author with Christine Peak of *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* has dedicated much time and energy to teaching and research within the field of English for academic purposes.

Their book is a practical application of much of this research, along with that which he has consolidated in more academic works.



POWER OF POE: Scene from the 1932 film *Murders in the Rue Morgue* starring Bela Lugosi, taken from the CIDEB reader. See review far left

His most notable publication in this context is *Genre Analysis* (CUP 1990) which would seem to present a part of the theoretical base from which *Academic Writing* has been derived.

In some respects, however, this latest work is a little disappointing.

It is a textbook for classroom use, but unfortunately it has the appearance of a more 'heavy' theoretical tome, despite the author's intention that it be instructor-friendly and that it should be used to complement other works.

In this respect it is surpassed by the more aesthetically pleasing presentation of the *English for Academic Studies* series.

Turning to these, what can I say about *Writing* and *Study Skills for Academic Writing* that Julia Hubert has not already said (*Gazette*, March 1995)



requisites to raising themselves off the FC plateau.

Tasks based on the basic elements of any text, such as title, contents page, index, blurb and so on are here all framed in the context of the 'extended academic essay'.

But they are just as valid and demystifying mechanisms for learners (reluctantly) approaching any text.

Both *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* and *Study Skills for Academic Writing* are structured to follow the component stages in the writing of specific academic texts: the research paper and the extended essay, respectively.

Academic Writing for Graduate Students deals equally with the technical, process-based aspects of planning and structuring written work. Eg: reduced relative clauses or the use of articles in *Academic Writing*.

In contrast, *Study Skills for Academic Writing* presents a task-based approach integrating the reading, structuring and writing tasks.

Three new textbooks to add to the English for academic purposes and the general English teacher's stock of resources. They should be shelved alongside *Writing for Effect* which still has a role to play.

■ Bryan Robinson teaches at the University of Granada, Spain and is a senior examiner in the English (Language B) for the International Baccalaureate.

Coming down to specifics, *Writing* is firmly based on the 'writing as a process' principle outlined in the brief introduction.

Throughout the book, activities are proposed involving discussion, brainstorming, self or peer evaluation, planning, drafting, revising and rewriting processes.

All drawn from current research into the mental processes involved in writing. These activities are in true interactive, EFL-mode, offering questionnaires, checklists, question sheets

and the like. Perhaps the most pertinent thing about *Study Skills for Academic Writing* is that I could have done with having something like it around some 10 or more years ago when I was teaching pre-proficiency groups.

In the detailed step-by-step analysis of material which is the basis of Unit 1, surveying the material reminds me poignantly of the kinds of things I then had to prepare myself when trying to induce my learners to 'read, read, read' as one of the pre-