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## *The Newbury House Guide To Writing* by M.E. Sokolik. Boston: Heinle & Heinle,1996, 233 pp.

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In keeping with the communicative language learning approach ascribed to by the Tapestry series, *The Newbury House Guide To Writing* approaches writing through the use of authentic materials and the integration of skills. Students are encouraged to be active participants in the classroom, and to look to both peers and teacher as resources for guidance and feedback on their writing.

The strengths of this text are multifold. Most impressive is the success with which the author, M. E. Sokolik, integrates socially relevant multicultural readings into the lessons through chapter themes. "Threads," colored boxes in the margins next to the writing samples, provide ESL students with culturally relevant information about authors and historical events, thoughts about writing, geographical facts, word definitions, and grammar points. This information helps students to build the cultural base of knowledge that North American born university students have acquired throughout their academic careers.

Effective organization is another strength of this book. In the first three chapters, Sokolik focuses on the basics of writing. Here students learn techniques for the following: generating and organizing ideas, effective note taking, critical thinking about their readings, defining the purpose for their writing, and identifying their audience and choosing the appropriate voice for that readership. Students are then given a checklist to help them integrate these concepts into their own writing. Various techniques are presented, and students are encouraged to adopt the ones which work best for them.

Chapters Four through Seven focus on specific types of writing: writing to express yourself, writing about literature, writing to persuade, and writing to inform. After reading a theme-based writing sample, group discussions are organized around both the content of the writing and the structure and style of the writing itself. Students are then guided through the essay-writing process--from choosing a topic, through the actual writing, to peer response and self-editing. Interspersed throughout the chapters are "Learning Strategies" designed to remind students of the techniques they have learned to help them in the writing process.

Editing one's own writing is the focus of chapter eight, which is organized into discussions of grammatical points known to be difficult for non-native English speakers. Each grammar point is described in terms of usage rules and one or two exercises are provided for student practice. This is the weakest part of the book. While appropriate grammar points are included, the discussion is limited to

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linguistic structure. No mention of appropriateness in discourse is made. Also, while exercises might help students gain an understanding of the general use of a grammatical structure, little instruction is given to help them edit for these errors in their own written work. As an ESL writing instructor, I find this an area in which students need explicit instruction.

The final two chapters of the book are devoted to quoting and referencing sources, and to the presentation of final papers. Techniques for preparing for in-class essays are discussed, as are issues concerning computer use and preparation of a final draft. Finally, students are provided with a glossary of grammatical terminology and an index.

Overall, Sokolik does an excellent job of teaching writing while at the same time inspiring an appreciation of the art of writing itself. Although the text is designed to prepare ESL students to write university level academic papers, the emphasis on personalization of even the most technical of topics is consistently emphasized. Through examination of writing samples by such outstanding and varied writers as Lin Yu-T'ang, Joan Didion, Langston Hughes, Sandra Cisneros, Oliver Sacks, and others, students are truly encouraged to make their writing their own.