

Reseñas/Book Reviews

Writing for Nursing and Midwifery Students

Julio Gimenez.

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 207 pages. ISBN 978-0-230-00857-1.

The publication of a textbook for students of English for Specific Purposes is nothing new, but it becomes a celebration such book relates to the area of English for Health Sciences. As far as published teaching/learning materials are concerned, this ESP field has traditionally received less attention than others –such as Business or Computing English. Fortunately, this trend seems to have been changing over the past years when a few books of English for the Health Sciences have been published. *Writing for Nursing and Midwifery Students* by Julio Gimenez, a Senior Lecturer in English for Academic Purposes at Middlesex University, is a clear example of the reversal of this process and an attempt to fill that unpleasant void sensation.

Writing for Nursing and Midwifery Students offers a set of strategies for students and professional people who need to write at work. As its author clearly states in the introduction, this handbook has been designed and arranged to help students with their writing tasks throughout their undergraduate nursing and midwifery programme in an English speaking context or for upper and advanced level students in a non-English speaking context. It combines an explanatory and detailed theoretical approach with the practice of numerous and varied writing activities. This coursebook is conceived for native speakers who are being trained in nursing and midwifery, or either for non-native students who have an advanced command of English. Moreover, notwithstanding its title, the teaching materials may be also used by other scientific or health-related students together with professionals who need to improve their writing skills and communication strategies in their working life.

Following two useful lists of tables and figures –which help to locate condensed information, guidelines, diagrams and summaries–, acknowledgements and a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into three main parts and eleven chapters (three, four, and four, respectively). In

Part 1 “The essentials of Academic Writing”, the author introduces the fundamentals of academic writing at university level and the principles of macro-structuring texts and micro-structuring paragraphs, explores academic genres and explains the process in general academic writing with a focus on the nursing and midwifery student. It illustrates the general principles of academic writing in relation to construct of genre and shows those special texts nurses or midwives are likely to produce in university courses or during their professional career. In this part the author also provides useful information on how to turn critical thinking and reflection into an organized structure and adds checklists that are helpful to solve common grammar and English language use problems. Part 2 “Writing Genres in Nursing and Midwifery” is basically dedicated to a deeper reflection on the principles of academic writing for nursing and midwifery outlined in the previous chapter. This section deals with the application of the basics on how to write reflective essays, a care critique or expose arguments effectively. The last chapter in this second part also examines and focuses on the style of action plans, care plans, reports and portfolios, and explains how to prepare and write a dissertation. In part 3 “Working with Texts”, Gimenez supplies all the necessary strategies to enrich academic writing products and focuses on how to use varied sentences or cohesive devices to improve the flow of the texts making them varied in their structure and paragraphs. This part ends with the mechanics of the different styles of referencing in academic writing (Vancouver, Harvard and APA styles), with an explanation of plagiarism and how to avoid it, and an introduction to the most common bibliographic software programmes. In line with its practical aim, this useful handbook closes with a glossary of key terms, a list of further readings and resources, and suggested answers to varied writing activities so as to facilitate self-study and distance learning.

The overall presentation of *Writing for Nursing and Midwifery Students* is up to date and excellent in design and presentation. The approach it takes is very practical and straightforward. It emphasises the fact that, in communicating with other people, one should aim for directness, clarity, precision, and simplicity and shows how to achieve it covering a wide range of topics, all of which are closely related to health professionals’ everyday use at work. The tables and figures and general graphic features are attractive and well laid out. The textbook has been made as easy to use, simple and comprehensible as possible and has been designed to succeed in meeting the specific writing needs of both students and professionals. It has a very rich potential for

being adopted as an excellent textbook at health-related schools and medical faculties. Based on a wide pedagogical approach, its organisation offers the student both theory and authentic tasks with a graded progression, becoming more demanding as needs arise and course progresses.

In conclusion, the author has provided the teachers and students of English for Health Sciences with an attractive and interesting textbook for the teaching and learning of writing skills. It is an innovative book from the theoretical point of view and, if we consider the lack of material devoted to the development of writing skills in the health science field, instructors, students and professionals should warmly welcome it. I recommend this book to teachers of English for Nursing, Medicine and health-related areas but also to those who wish to speed up and enhance their students' writing learning processes whatever their specialization, and to those professionals who wish to do an in-depth exploration of the academic writing skills.

(Revised review received October 2008)

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