Overview: 4.125

Writing for Success is a composition text that provides basic level instruction on the writing process. The text explains the steps to writing well—from the sentence and its essential elements to crafting a research paper—in a straightforward yet non-condescending tone that makes it appropriate for first-year composition students, elementary learners, community college students or ESL/ELL students. “With its incremental approach,” the text’s preface explains, “it can address a range of writing levels and abilities, helping each student in your course prepare for their next writing or university course.” Individual scores and comments on the following open educational resources review criteria are provided below:

1. Comprehensibility
2. Clarity and consistency
3. Content accuracy and errors
4. Relevance to the socio-cultural environment and inclusion
5. Organization and modularity
6. Interface, design, and attractiveness
7. Usability and technological functionality
8. Supplemental materials

Comprehensibility: 4

The text thoroughly and comprehensively covers many aspects of the writing process. The first half of the text covers fundamental writing skills in an easy to follow sequence, including a thorough grammar review (e.g., what makes a good sentence, punctuation, etc.) and sections on word choice, improving technique, how to begin the writing process, and writing essays from start to finish. While the content is generally appropriate for a first year writing course, some sections (e.g., study skills) may be considered too basic for many college-level composition courses. The second half of the text, which reads more academically than the conversational first half, provides information on rhetorical modes, introduction to research, APA and MLA documentation, and creating visual presentations. The text also includes a full chapter on help for English language learners. At over 600 pages, however, reading through the text in its entirety may pose a problem in a single semester college course.

Clarity & Consistency: 4

The content of the textbook is extremely detailed yet presented in a manner appropriate for a first-year college writing student. The prose is accessible yet thought provoking. Unfamiliar

1 Score: Level at which the textbook meets each of the criterion on a scale of 1-5, in which 5 is superior, 4 is above average, 3 is average, 2 is below average, and 1 is unsatisfactory.
vocabulary is peppered amongst familiar language but clearly defined. Main ideas are consistently and explicitly laid out in the learning objectives and key takeaway sections of each chapter. Relevant examples, sample essays, and sample student writing are provided when necessary and appropriate to reinforce understanding. Information and directions are explained fully for each activity/exercise/chapter.

**Accuracy & Errors: 4**

Linked outside reading and sources are relatively current and apropos, but some articles are outdated (e.g., more than a decade old). Some referenced works are also out of date. While both MLA and APA citation styles are covered, MLA guidelines have not been updated to the 8th edition. The text is free of obvious grammatical errors and/or errors of content or bias.

**Relevance to the Socio-Cultural Environment & Inclusion: 4**

The chapters present culturally relevant issues, topics and essays (e.g. racism, health care) with diverse perspectives. The text often emphasizes 21st Century skill development such as collaboration, discussion, critical thinking, exploration, etc. Real-world applications are provided and relevant to the student audience in the form of “Writing at Work” sidebars and text boxes and through select exercises and examples. American multicultural examples and references are integrated within the text, and links to outside sources include diverse authors like Sherman Alexie, Amy Tan, Martin Luther King, Jr., Sandra Cisneros, Gary Shteyngart, etc. The language used within the text is not culturally insensitive or offensive. Example student names throughout the text reflect some diversity in populations and genders. Writing strategies specific to English language learners and non-native speakers are also provided in a full chapter of the text.

**Organization & Modularity: 5**

Because the content covers the basics of writing for a first-year writing audience, the textbook is extremely accessible to a wide variety of students and instructors at both four-year and two-year institutions. The author(s) seem(s) to keep this point in mind as they have organized the text in such a way that the modules can be used independently without confusion—most chapters could be covered in a class period or two—or as a coherent composition text in sequential order (i.e., each chapter builds on the skills learned in previous chapters but in a natural way). The textbook chapters also provide outside readings and activities that instructors can use to delve deeper into specific chapter content. Unfortunately, specific types of writing/rhetorical modes are quickly covered in a single chapter, so instructors may wish to use an alternative text to teach individual genres.

The online version of the textbook has a clear table of contents page that is easily accessible and organized in a way where students or faculty can simply click on a section of interest and begin reading without complication. Chapter headings and subheadings clearly explain section topics, and each module/section of the text provides a clear chapter outline. The layout of each chapter is consistent and provides clear learning objectives and key takeaways. As such, module segments are easily divisible into shorter reading assignments that can be assigned as homework or embedded into outside learning platforms depending on student/instructor need.
Interface, Design, & Attractiveness: 4.5

The font, size, margins, and general formatting of the text is visually appealing and easily readable. The textbook is nicely complemented by graphic elements (e.g., multi-colored text boxes, charts, tables, figures, images, cartoons, graphics, photographs, etc.). The graphic elements are integrated purposefully and sporadically throughout the text; in other words, text boxes, images, etc. do not overcrowd the page or distract from the text and/or chapter content. Graphic elements are also captioned, identified, explained and cited appropriately.

Usability & Tech. Functionality: 4

The text is downloadable in multiple forms (epub, pdf, mobi, wxr), which allows it to be read on tablets, laptops, phones, etc. The online version of the text has a clear table of contents and is easily searchable. Most links within the text are active (about 85-90%); however, some links have been disconnected/disabled, especially in Chapter 15.

Supplemental Materials: 3.5

The textbook provides many exercises, discussion questions, writing applications, and outside reading/informational links for each chapter. The activities that are included within each chapter offer sufficient practice of the specified learning objectives. However, as is the case with most textbooks, the content could be more interactive and innovative. More active learning prompts or game-based exercises could help to improve students’ writing skills by emphasizing different learning styles. The textbook does not provide any chapter tests, quizzes or instructor answer guides to exercises posed within the chapters. Furthermore, most writing prompts are open-ended or very basic, so instructors would need to create detailed writing assignments independently of those mentioned within the text.