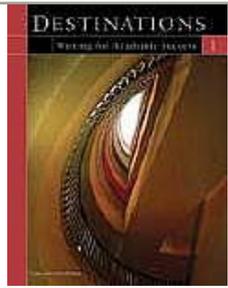


Destinations 1: Writing for Academic Success

Author:	Nancy Herzfeld-Pipkin (2007)		
Publisher:	Stamford, CT: Heinle		
Pages	ISBN	Price	
Pp. xviii + 215	978-1-4130-1935-3	\$34.95 USD	

Destinations 1, geared towards relatively low-level ESL learners enrolled specifically in US academic settings, is the first of the two-level series course for academic writing. As would be expected, the book is accompanied by an assessment CD-ROM with ExamView for teachers to create tests and quizzes and an answer key available online.

Destinations 1 has six units, four parts corresponding to each. Each unit has a central theme that serves as the topic of all the readings and the exercises within the unit:

- Unit 1: The U.S. Experience (Content area: Personal Development/Study Skills)
- Unit 2: Body Decoration and Culture (Content area: Cultural Anthropology)
- Unit 3: Mexican Americans (Content area: History)
- Unit 4: Jobs and the Workplace (Content area: Business and Workplace English)
- Unit 5: Technology and Education (Content area: Science and Technology)
- Unit 6: Myths/Fables/Legends/Folk Stories (Content area : Cross Cultural Stories/Literature)

Through this content-based structure, students have chance to read and write across a variety of academic disciplines.

Parts in each unit of the book are organized as follows:

- Part 1: Preview—Discussion and/or a short activity to activate schemata through the use of pictures, maps, questionnaires, etc.
- Part 2: Reading and Vocabulary—The main reading of the unit in which the theme and the relevant vocabulary are presented.

- Part 3: Writing Sentences—Writing presented and practiced at the sentence level.
- Part 4: Writing—Writing presented and practiced at the paragraph level.

Destinations 1 does not follow a linear order in which the students are presented with explanation and practice of all the sentence patterns before they move on to paragraph writing. Rather, they start reading and writing paragraphs as well as dealing with different sentence structures and editing from the very first unit of the book.

The strongest aspect of the book is that, in each unit, the first two parts equip students with extensive background knowledge about the theme through reading and vocabulary practice before they are ready to write. Also, students' knowledge about the content is developed even further with approximately 3-4 short readings (even more in Units 3 and 6) presented in the writing sections. In that sense, although this book is mainly intended to teach writing, it can as well be regarded as an integrated academic reading and writing book. This integration can also be seen in the design of the writing sections, exercises and prompts: all are aimed at eliciting what students have been absorbing of the reading passages and vocabulary. In turn, such reinforcement could contribute to vocabulary building and retention. For example, after having read extensively about "Body Decoration" in Unit 2, learned relevant vocabulary and done controlled and semi-controlled exercises on that theme, students are asked at the end of the unit to write a paragraph describing their or their culture's body art or a ceremony with body art.

At the end of each section in a unit, students are encouraged to write on or discuss two theme-related questions. While these give students opportunities to develop ideas through speaking or informal writing, the "Writing assignment" section closing each unit are the places where students develop an organized paragraph after they have gained enough background knowledge through each unit's readings on the theme. Thus, specifically in this section, students are encouraged to write, give/get feedback, and revise what they have written, steered along by checklists and guidelines in a continuous process. Lastly, different paragraph structures are presented to students visually in charts at the end of each unit. These reproducible organization charts act like pre-writing devices or graphic organizers, making it easier for students to organize their thoughts before writing their first drafts.

Admirably, Herzfeld-Pipkin fosters multiple-step peer reviewing. Students first have to review and give feedback to their partners on their organization charts before they write their first draft. For the students to proceed smoothly, the author has included peer review sheets for both the organization charts and the first drafts of the students' paragraphs. Given the proficiency level of the students targeted in this book and speaking from experience, though, I would rewrite these review sheets in a shorter format with clear-cut, direct questions if I was to use them with my students.

It is obvious that the book assumes a multicultural and multinational classroom, as the writing prompts are mostly directed to students' own native culture. For example, on page 84, in a Discussion/Writing section, question 2 asks students to "name one famous person from [your] own native culture" and on page 34, in

a Quickwrite/Freewrite section, one of the questions asks whether or not "the people in [your] native culture use any of the same kinds of body art or decoration seen in the photos." To use this book in other settings, I believe that it would need to be supplemented and/or modified—for example, if it was to be used in a monolingual EFL classroom if or when the majority of the students share most aspects of the predominant culture. Nevertheless, learning about other cultures and the U.S.A. through the readings in the book might be tempting for at least some EFL students.

Although the book would really be an asset to an ESL multicultural classroom in terms of the points discussed above, it still has some minor weaknesses which need to be touched upon. The layout of *Destinations 1* is somewhat difficult to follow, perhaps giving the reader some trouble finding the section of interest. One reason for this could be that the font size and font style are the same for all the subheadings, explanations and directions. Moreover, directions for the exercises are too long and complicated, making them difficult to understand for a low-level ESL learner. In addition, while the maps, pictures and photos supplementing the readings help activate students' schemata before reading and add a visual dimension to the book, students might find the book more appealing and note the contrast to the written text if the author had chosen color visuals instead of black-and-white ones.

One other drawback: When I first came across the "Skills Index" at the back of the book, I had expected to find writing skills such as "developing a topic sentence", "introducing an example as a supporting sentence", etc. Instead, this index provides an alphabetical listing where one finds a predominance of entries about grammar such as "articles" and "dependent clauses", which may cause confusion for the reader/user. For this reason, calling it "Subject" or "Topic" index wouldn't mislead.

To my mind *Destinations 1* would work best in ESL classes in the U. S. with a student population from a wealth of cultures and backgrounds. There's something in the content here for every potential student in such a setting.

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