

Book Review

Gröppel-Wegener, Alke. (2015) *Writing Essays by Pictures*

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In order to bridge the gap between pre academic essay writing and University academic essay writing, the author has developed an innovative way to explain and teach the foundation rules that incorporate a way of thinking visually, that is invaluable, like building blocks, to understanding the principles of academic research, particularly if you are a designer/creative artist, as you may already be attuned to visual working. However, that said, this book is an excellent resource for any student at any level who is struggling to understand how to step up to academic writing. To established academics, this way of writing is already second nature and the author has quite rightly identified that because of this aspect, it is easy to forget to impart relevant information as to how academic research is being done. Even so, it is sometimes difficult for students to grasp the principles of academic writing that will form the very basis of their academic career. This book offers clear concise visual tools explained in a way that will allow the reader to build their own academic essay.

Writing Essays by Pictures imparts confidence by explaining in simple terms about academic research. A common problem with first time academic research writing is that the research is not deep enough. The author's pictures encourage exploration of the deeper academic depths as explained in the 'Iceberg' model. This shows that above sea level is the presented work but that most of what goes on under sea level or out of view, forms the basis of the 'Iceberg' and gives a formula for the order of that work.

Practical ideas of using postcards and visual images to help maintain consistent focus and context are important tools along with the 'collaging notes' of documentary drawings which prompt memory/sensory thought that can be interpreted into coherent thought and knowledge. The concept of 'framing' important notes and grading in order of merit, is an invaluable tool for any academic researcher. The analogy of the 'Ocean of Literature' and the importance of categorising the information and ranking this in the 'depth of the Academic Ocean' are clearly explained. The information about 'deep academic reading' and being likened to really engaging in noticing everything around oneself as you take a walk, is an absolute gem of support to the first time researcher, who may be feeling a little insecure as they encounter the world of academic writing.

The formula that this book teaches, works exceptionally well and I particularly loved the metaphors and analogies the author uses; I wished that I had had this book when starting my own first research essay, but I have it now and it is an invaluable tool and the lessons it teaches are much like 'riding a bike' that once learnt, they are never forgotten. This is a 'must read' for all academics, students and lecturers alike, as it teaches and refreshes the introduction to academic research like a breath of fresh air.

After a successful try-out of this book via Kickstarter, Alke is currently working on a revised version which is scheduled to be published by Innovative Libraries in September 2016. For more information and to order a copy please check their website:

<http://innovativelibraries.org.uk/index.php/press/> For more information on some of the activities you could also check Alke's blog at www.tactileacademia.com