

Book Review

Review of *Writing Instruction for Success in College and in the Workplace*

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In *Writing Instruction for Success in College and in the Workplace*, Charles A. MacArthur and Zoi A. Philippakos present a research-based resource aimed at addressing the challenges of writing instruction for those who need help with writing. The book introduces the Supporting Strategic Writers (SSW) curriculum, a framework designed to bridge academic and professional writing demands by equipping educators with evidence-based strategies. By combining theory with practical tools, the book contributes meaningfully to adult literacy and education.

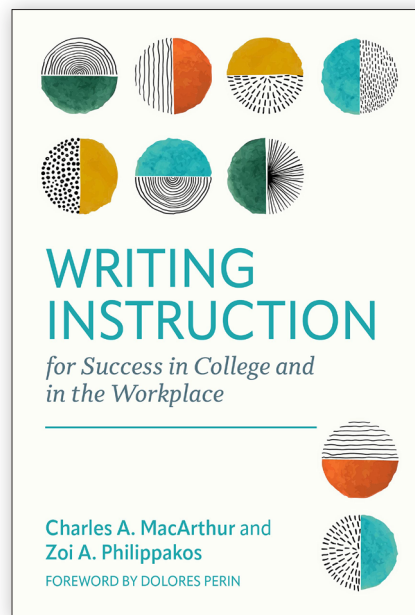
The SSW curriculum provides a structured, evidence-based approach to teaching writing. Grounded in research that demonstrates success across skill levels, it emphasizes key skills such as planning, drafting, revising, and integrating sources. Strategy instruction forms the core of the curriculum, enabling students to improve their motivation, critical thinking, and overall writing proficiency. The authors enhance the curriculum's practical value by integrating resources such as visual-graphic organizers, rubrics, and instructional sequences, ensuring its relevance in various settings. This dual emphasis on theory and practice empowers educators to deliver effective instruction while fostering student confidence and skill development.

The book's logical and accessible structure further supports its utility for educators. Divided into three well-defined sections, the book begins by introducing the SSW curriculum, outlining its research foundation and addressing literacy challenges. The second section provides step-by-step strategies for teaching writing, progressing

from simple essay tasks to assignments requiring the integration of multiple sources. The final section explores the curriculum's adaptability, offering solutions for various genres and challenges.

A standout feature of the book is its emphasis on modeling the think-aloud process, which is thoroughly detailed in each chapter. This technique allows educators to verbalize their thought patterns while planning, evaluating, and revising writing tasks, providing students with a clear example of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies involved. Modeling these practices helps students internalize effective approaches to writing,

fostering independence and critical thinking. This focus on modeling not only enhances student comprehension but also builds educators' confidence in teaching these strategies effectively. The accessible and adaptable tools provided further support for instructors in scaffolding the writing process, ensuring that students receive structured, hands-on guidance at every stage.



MacArthur, C. A., & Philippakos, Z. A. (2023). *Writing Instruction for Success in College and in the Workplace*. Teachers College Press. 240 pages. \$34.95 (paperback). ISBN: 9780807768808

Although this book was written for educators in community colleges and 4-year institutions, it is equally valuable for adult literacy instructors. The tools, such as brainstorming charts and graphic organizers, can help students transition from writing complete sentences to preparing essays for high school equivalency exams, including specific high school equivalency writing prompts. Students preparing for answering a prompt on a high-school equivalency assessment would benefit greatly from these tools as they tackle challenges like organizing thoughts, forming clear arguments, and using evidence effectively within time constraints. For example, crafting persuasive or expository essays requires learners to structure ideas coherently, a skill brainstorming charts can refine. Graphic organizers further support this process by helping students logically arrange their essays and focus on key points. These strategies not only build confidence but also lay a strong foundation for tackling diverse writing tasks in both academic and workplace contexts.

The book's practicality is enhanced by its candid acknowledgment of the challenges inherent in teaching writing. MacArthur and Philippakos identify common obstacles, such as students skipping the planning phase or instructors struggling to effectively implement the think-aloud process. To address these, the authors offer actionable solutions, including explaining the importance of strategies rather than just modeling them, selecting topics that engage students, and modeling writing that aligns with students' expected skill levels. They also highlight the importance of addressing technology-related barriers by teaching basic skills like creating, naming, and saving documents as part of the writing process. Openly addressing these hurdles and providing realistic solutions for classroom practice equips educators with a practical roadmap for successful implementation.

It is commendable that the authors constructed a curriculum that teaches the necessary skills and provides adaptable tools for workplace writing; however, the book could have been further enhanced by including specific examples of vocational applications, such as healthcare documentation or business reports, to make it even more relevant to adult literacy contexts. These examples would have helped instructors better connect workplace writing tasks to the real-world

needs of adult learners, strengthening the curriculum's practicality for career-focused education. For instance, career pathway instructors could leverage these tools to guide students through specific tasks, such as writing project proposals, documenting technical processes, or preparing instructional guides tailored to workplace scenarios. Specifically, brainstorming worksheets could help students document technical steps in a process, while graphic organizers could be used to outline the structure of a workplace proposal or instructional guide. These strategies ensure students are equipped to meet both academic and professional demands effectively. By embedding these strategies into structured, multi-step assignments that include planning, drafting, and revising, educators can effectively scaffold learning and build students' confidence in tackling a variety of writing challenges.

Impressively, the book significantly contributes to the field of adult literacy and education by demonstrating how research can be effectively integrated into professional development initiatives. It provides detailed guidance for embedding evidence-based strategies into curricula, emphasizing the importance of equipping educators with practical tools for real classrooms. The authors' fieldwork with instructors illustrates how these strategies can be scaled effectively, addressing both individual classroom needs and broader institutional contexts. This focus on fostering educator growth alongside student achievement ensures a systemic and sustainable impact, extending beyond the immediate classroom environment. As a result, the book offers a valuable resource for instructors across community colleges, 4-year institutions, and diverse adult literacy settings.

In summary, *Writing Instruction for Success in College and in the Workplace* is a highly effective resource that delivers on its promises. It equips educators with the tools and strategies needed to improve writing outcomes while addressing the practical challenges of implementation. By bridging academic and professional writing, the book ensures that students are prepared for the demands of both contexts. Its integration of research-based strategies, practical tools, and thoughtful insights makes it an indispensable guide for anyone involved in writing instruction.