

Clerestory Learning Professional Development Series

The Writer's Stylus™: Transforming Substance to Significance

Credits

3 Graduate Credits

30 hours (4 full days) of classroom and online instruction plus a major curricular project, additional reading, and one of two possible written responses with follow-up via email

Course Meetings

The Writer's Stylus course meets for 3-1/2 days at locations determined by the hosting organization. Individuals pursuing graduate credit **MUST be active participants in every session.**

Instructor Information

Kevin D. Washburn holds a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in instruction and curriculum and a bachelor's degree in English. His experience as a teacher in elementary through college level classrooms and leadership positions in curriculum and instruction combine with his penchant for reading and research in both educational and scientific areas to uncover important implications for learning. Whether speaking in the classroom or convention setting, Dr. Washburn seeks to imbue a passion for quality instruction. He is the creator of the Architecture of Learning instructional design model and author of its training program, which he has used with hundreds of teachers now implementing the model. Dr. Washburn is also the co-author of an instructional reading program used by schools across the country. He is a member of the International Mind, Brain & Education Society and the Learning & the Brain Society.

Prerequisites

An acceptable undergraduate degree (e.g., a bachelor's degree in education) that would qualify the student for entry into a graduate education program. Optional but strongly recommended prerequisite: Architecture of Learning™ Basic Training.

Required Texts

The *Writer's Stylus Training Course Book* is mandatory for all participants. Copies may be ordered from Make Way for Books via telephone (888-622-6932), email (julia@mwfbooks.com) or online (www.mwfbooks.com).

Participants pursuing graduate credit are also required to read either *A Writer's Coach* by Jack Hart (9781400078691), OR *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark (9780316014991), OR *Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction—and Get It Published* by Susan Rabiner and Alfred Fortunato (9780393324617). See selection guidelines and follow-up assignment in the Work Submission & Grading section. These materials may also be ordered from Make Way for Books (www.mwfbooks.com) or from any book retailer.

Rationale

About two-thirds of America's eight grade students and about three-fourths of high school seniors failed to reach proficient writing levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a 2006 survey of college professors suggests a large majority of college students possess "limited writing skills," and a 2003 study found American companies are spending billions of dollars on remedial training for employees—some "new hires straight out of college" (Dillon, 2008).

The need for writing capacity has increased as electronic communication has soared. However, test results and observations by business leaders and college professors indicate that our current instructional efforts fail to equip students with proficient writing ability.

This course takes a twofold approach in addressing this need: 1) it equips teachers with increased knowledge, understanding, and utilization of sound writing practices, and 2) it equips teachers to convert this knowledge into improved writing instruction for students.

Intended Audience

Educators at all levels who are responsible for designing effective writing instruction and for assessing student writing, both within language arts and other content area classrooms.

Course Purpose and Topics

The Clerestory Learning Professional Development Series: Writer’s Stylus equips teachers by increasing individual writing capacity and by increasing teacher capacity to foster student writing achievement.

Topics include:

1. What are We Teaching and Why?
Differences between what we assume to constitute writing instruction and what knowledge, understandings, and abilities actually contribute to writing success. A Revised Writing Process. Drafting too much—editing too little.
2. Revising Writing: Making Waves of Improvement
3. Coaching: Optimizing Student Writing Achievement
4. Instruction: Teaching the Right Skills the Right Way
5. Instructional Design: Developing a Holistic Program

Competencies Developed

Participants will develop capacities in:

1. refining writing through multiple revisions, knowing what to analyze, how to recognize needed revisions, and make improvements
2. using the writing process to produce writing of publishable quality
3. thinking and communication, using critical thinking as a precursor to and purpose for writing
4. teaching students use of the writing process and methods of success for each step (e.g., successful revision)
5. coaching peers, students, and self throughout the writing process to reach optimal achievement
6. using instructional methods to develop student drafting capacities for increased writing assessment results
7. designing instruction that fosters student writing development—i.e., engages students in the full process of producing writing worthy of publication consideration

Course Policies

- Participants must attend all class sessions and participate actively
- Participants must complete all assignments and submit them as directed (see Work Submission & Grading)
- Participants must demonstrate a willingness to learn, an eagerness to grow, and diligence in completing the tasks that will foster such growth. These are obviously ungraded elements, but they distinguish professional educators and are expected traits of graduate students.

Work Submission and Grading

All assignments given for completion during the class sessions should be completed as directed. Most of these will not be collected by the instructor but will form the basis for in-class activity.

All post-class work must be submitted via email attachment (see Instructor Contact information below). Attachments may be Microsoft Word documents, Apple's iWork Pages documents, or Adobe pdf documents. Documents submitted in other forms will not be accepted. No documents sent by US Mail or fax will be accepted.

Grades awarded will be A, B, C, I, or F. It is expected that ALL student work will reflect high standards and a high degree of effort on the part of the learner.

Grading will be based on the following:

1. Class attendance and participation (33%)
2. Instructional unit development: Participants pursuing graduate credit must complete the development of a writing unit that includes:
 - An outline of the unit (may be presented on an Architecture of Learning™ planning grid—see examples on pages 34, 40, and 46 of the *Architecture of Learning™ Basic Training Course Book*)
 - Detailed plans for each activity in the unit. These should be written with the detail of a teacher's edition, as if the author were developing the unit so that someone who has never seen it before would know exactly what to do. (Again, see examples in *Architecture of Learning™ Basic Training Course Book*)
 - Appropriate assessment instruments, including rubrics, that have obvious connections to the unit's content.

Submitted results count for 34% of the final grade.

3. Reading of one of two possible resources and submission of the associated materials (33%):

Option A

A Writer's Coach by Jack Hart (9781400078691) OR *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark (9780316014991): select one of these resources if you desire to increase your understanding of writing to improve your own writing capacity and your knowledge of writing for use in teaching *but not necessarily pursue publication of materials*.

After carefully reading *A Writer's Coach* or *Writing Tools*, write a BRIEF (e.g., three-sentence) summary of each chapter. Then explore, in writing, what new ideas/understandings you gained from the book and how these will influence your teaching of writing. There is no required length. The submitted results will be evaluated for writing (application of the new knowledge gained from the class sessions) and comprehension and response to the book.

Option B

Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction—and Get It Published (9780393324617): select this resource if you are interested in pursuing publication.

After carefully reading *Thinking Like Your Editor*, develop and submit a potential "Submission Package" for a work you'd like to develop. Follow Rabiner and Fortunato's suggestions for the content and style of your submission package. The results will be evaluated for writing (application of the new knowledge gained from the class sessions) and comprehension of the book as evidenced in the "submission package."

All of the above **must be original work, created and completed by the individual requesting credit.** All work will be evaluated using a rubric, which will be distributed during the course. All materials must be submitted **within six weeks of the final class session.**

Instructor Contact Information

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