

# WRITER'S STYLUS

## Instructional Writing K-12

A Clerestory Learning Professional Development Program

When something  
can be read  
without effort,  
great effort has  
gone into its  
writing.

Enrique Jardiel Poncela



HAVE YOU EVER been moved by insightful song lyrics, inspired by the subject of an uplifting biography, transported to a fictional setting for several delightful hours, or experienced an “aha” moment triggered by a narrated documentary? We are all beneficiaries of well-written works.

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

About two-thirds of America's eighth grade students and about three-fourths of high school seniors fail to reach proficient writing levels. A survey of college professors suggests a large majority of college students possess “limited writing skills.” And a recent study found American companies are spending billions of dollars on remedial training for employees—some “new hires straight out of college.”<sup>1</sup>

**How can we empower students to communicate in ways that deserve attention, to write not just great thoughts, but to convey them with excellence?**

First, we can help them recognize that what is initially written is merely raw material, but raw material with great potential. Second, we can teach them to recognize and use revision skills to craft that raw material into beautiful and meaningful writing. That transformative communication is the heart of WRITER'S STYLUS.



## EQUIPPING TEACHERS TO DEVELOP SKILLED WRITERS

"Writer's Stylus gives me a clear, concise format to build writers in the classroom. It is good, solid teaching, not just a passing fad."

Lower School Principal, Loganville Christian Academy

Focused attention on revision is a hallmark of the Writer's Stylus writing program. While traditional writing training often advocates a multi-step "writing process," it frequently lacks specific strategies to help students produce creative, compelling, and convincing writing.

When knowing what and how to revise becomes a major instructional emphasis, other components gain meaning and importance. For example, grammar is no longer an end in itself but is a doorway to revision; when a student understands adverbs, she can find them and eliminate them when possible by using stronger verbs. This grammar-to-revision approach equips students with the know-how of good writing.

### The Course

The Writer's Stylus Basic Course is a highly interactive, 3-1/2 day professional development event for school leaders and K-12 teachers of all academic disciplines. Participants undergo a transformation, both personally and professionally, as they experience the teaching methods they will use with students.

Participants begin each day with **Acquaintance and Analysis**, a time where they are exposed to exemplary writing and challenged to identify what authors do to communicate effectively and powerfully.

Early in the event, all participants are given a writing assignment, because the only way to begin crafting a piece of writing is to draft some raw material.

At various points throughout the course, participants receive **Direct Instruction** that explains and demonstrates practices that can improve their writing. This component includes a focused look at revision skill checklists with an explanation of how **Mechanics** instruction provides students with the grammatical knowledge required to master revision skills.

Soon, participants experience a **Coaching** segment where interaction is strategic and personalized, empowering each writer to achieve at the highest levels.

And finally, in one of the most moving experiences of the week, participants celebrate their learning; several eager writers read their crafted compositions to the group. These improved essays reveal stunning growth, and teachers recognize how effective the instruction they've received can be in developing young writers.

JOIN US!

### Writer's Stylus Basic Course

Graduate + CEU credit available

SUMMER 2017 COURSE LOCATION

June 5–8, 2017  
Birmingham, AL

8:30 am – 4:00 pm daily  
Kevin D. Washburn, Ed.D., Instructor

[writersstylus.com](http://writersstylus.com)

888.622.6932

EARLY **REGISTRATION FEE** \$750/per person  
(up to 8 weeks prior to course)

REGULAR PRICING & SPECIAL PRICING  
\$800/person or \$2100/group of three  
\$400/person from Writer's Stylus schools

Just as we witness greater confidence and well-crafted essays during the course, classroom instruction that combines these methods—along with a Writer’s Stylus assessment component that guides students to maximum levels of achievement—not only helps students learn to write, but transforms them into writers who express their ideas with clarity, power, and authenticity.

## The Classroom

Students who study published works of writing, experience revision skills through direct instruction and modeling, practice with customized text, and finally interact with a caring coach-teacher while continuing to revise, develop into influential communicators. Not only do students become transformed writers, they “learn to be good learners.”<sup>2</sup>

Research tells us that writing engages “more areas of the brain and involves them more intensely than any activity thus far investigated.”<sup>3</sup> Writing “exacts from those...who want to do it well—precision, discernment, fineness of observation, and detachment. By its nature, true writing practices critical thinking...Good, sustained critical thinking underlies good, clear thinking: you could almost say that good writing is critical thinking. It is critical thinking resolved and put down on paper.”<sup>4</sup>

That sounds like a recipe for creating a masterpiece—an influential voice that earns attention.

1. Dillon, S., *In Test, Few Students are Proficient Writers*. The New York Times, accessed April 3, 2008 via <http://www.nytimes.com>.
2. Houston, G., *How Writing Works: Imposing Organizational Structure Within the Writing Process* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Allyn & Bacon, 2004), 217.
3. Houston, 8.
4. Tredinnick, M., *Writing Well: The Essential Guide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9.



When you write

EXPLODE –  
FLY APART –  
DISINTEGRATE!

Then give time  
enough to think, cut,  
rework, and rewrite.

Ray Bradbury

**Kevin D. Washburn, Ed.D.** is Executive Director of Clerestory (CLEAR-story) Learning, and Writer’s Stylus Author/Course Instructor. Driven by a passion for seeing people grow, Dr. Washburn offers instruction the way he recommends teachers teach. Research shows this approach leads to increased teacher effectiveness: teachers know why they do what they do, so they understand what students need to become better learners and can plan with greater intentionality.

With degrees in Education and English, Dr. Washburn has spent 25+ years in education as a classroom teacher and educational leader. Along with the Writer’s Stylus program, he authored [The Architecture of Learning: Designing Instruction for the Learning Brain](#), developed [The Architecture of Learning](#) instructional design model and its program. He also co-founded and owns [Make Way for Books](#), an online

children’s bookseller dedicated to being a reliable source of quality literature that fosters a love of reading.

Believing “there may be nothing more powerful you can give another person than your belief in his potential,” Dr. Washburn’s teaching and learning credentials now include certified running coach. He is a marathon runner and never misses a chance to try out the nearest Rails-to-Trail system. On short, easy run days he can usually convince his wife Julia to join him. He lives and works in Alabama.

For more info:  
[clerestorylearning.com](http://clerestorylearning.com) | [writersstylus.com](http://writersstylus.com) | [makewayforbooks.com](http://makewayforbooks.com)  
[Kevin D. Washburn Professional Bio](#)