

THE NEXT-STEP GUIDE TO

# Enhancing Writing Instruction

RUBRICS AND RESOURCES FOR SELF-EVALUATION AND GOAL SETTING



FOR LITERACY COACHES, PRINCIPALS, AND TEACHER STUDY GROUPS, K-6

Bonnie Campbell Hill & Carrie Ekey

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# Introduction

**A**s literacy consultants with our hearts still in the classroom, Carrie Ekey and I visit schools around the world, learning alongside students and teachers as we explore how to teach writing. For the last three years we've visited classrooms, asked questions, read as many books as we could, and collected hundreds of pictures and ideas on a worldwide scavenger hunt. We deluged teachers and coaches with pleas for specific examples of how they incorporated the ideas presented in professional books in the very real world of their classrooms. We have learned so much as we read, viewed, listened, talked, and wrote.

This book is a synthesis of our findings: photographs, book lists, descriptions of the best and newest resources about writing, and classroom stories. You'll recognize some of these insights, since you've probably read some of the same books and articles. As you read about the classroom teaching we describe, you'll also probably recognize strategies, minilessons, and units that you are implementing yourself. We hope you'll feel validated by all that *works well* in your classroom, then decide *what's next* in your own journey as a teacher of writing. Just as we want all our students to feel valued, wherever they are on a continuum of becoming writers, we hope you'll feel affirmed for the good work you're doing, inspired to read further and incorporate new ideas so that you can teach writing even more effectively, intentionally, responsively, and joyfully.

## Who We Are

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### Bonnie

After teaching in elementary schools in Boulder, Colorado, and Seattle, Washington, I returned to graduate school to get my doctorate in education and began to teach at the university level. Instead of guiding thirty students each year, I could guide thirty teachers, each of whom had twenty to thirty students. The teachers I worked with in the Seattle area shared what they were doing, and I was often able to visit their classrooms, learning alongside them. I began presenting at state and national conferences, often in conjunction with these outstanding classroom teachers. Eventually, I began writing professional books in order to share what I was learning and the amazing work these teachers were doing. Many of the teachers I met through my college classes contributed ideas and even co-authored some of these professional books.



With the publication of my books came invitations to speak at conferences for international schools in various parts of the world, followed by invitations to work at some of these schools. Since I spent third, fourth, and fifth grade at an international school in Istanbul, Turkey, and have a deeply ingrained love of travel, I jumped at these amazing opportunities. At this point I've worked with over fifty international schools and spoken at conferences in Central and South America, Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. I hope to share with you some of what I've learned about successful classroom environments from teachers and students in classrooms around the world.

Much of my initial work in schools involves “putting the pieces together”—linking a school's philosophy, standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting. That's a lot to tackle at once, so after discussions about what pieces of the puzzle each school has in place, the administrators, teachers, and I usually create a four-year plan for implementing change, new ideas, and best practices in literacy. Since my time with each school is usually limited to a few days or a week, my friend and colleague Carrie Ekey provides follow-up support to these schools based on their specific needs as they expand their expertise in literacy instruction and assessment.

## Carrie

I officially retired from the Denver metro area's Jefferson County School District in 2002. I've been an elementary classroom teacher, a lead district staff developer, and a curriculum specialist. I was also a core coordinator and instructor at a master's program for teachers at Regis University in Denver. Since Bonnie Campbell Hill first convinced me to begin consulting overseas, I've visited over twenty-five international schools. After Bonnie's initial visit to a school, I help the staff reach a common understanding of a balanced literacy program, as well as help develop literacy curriculum. Often I help administrators create a vision, goals, and a long-range plan. I then introduce literacy instructional strategies to teachers through workshops and demonstration lessons and develop common understanding and practices around literacy instruction and assessment in grade-level team meetings. I sometimes work on improving classroom libraries and often hold literacy workshops for parents.

In addition to my ongoing work with international schools, I served as a consultant-in-residence for one year at the International School of Beijing and for two years at Hong Kong International School. I've worked harder in the last eight years than ever before and hardly feel “retired”!

Most recently, I've developed initial units of study in literacy for schools that don't have the staff to do this themselves. I've also begun to train literacy coaches for international schools with the support of NESA (the Near East South Asian group of schools). I recently completed the first iteration of this two-year training program with twenty-five teachers from fourteen international schools in twelve countries. This fall, I began training a second cadre of twenty-one additional international school teachers who will meet in various countries four times over the next two years. Many of these teacher leaders and coaches have contributed ideas and photographs for this book.

In our ongoing tag-team work with schools, Carrie and I continue to build on each other's work, share ideas, and swap travel tips. Between us, we've racked up a slew of frequent-flyer miles. The twenty- or even thirty-six-hour flights are physically exhausting, and we don't stop running from the minute we hit the ground until we fly out. Since our jobs are fairly unusual and the examples we will share come from teachers and classrooms around the world, we'd like to begin with a short explanation of our roles and the context for our work.

Most of our careers have been spent working in classrooms in the United States, and we continue our connections with many of these teachers, especially those close to our homes in Denver and Seattle. These teachers have contributed many of the examples and photographs in this book and on my website. However, a great deal of our time recently has been spent working with international schools. These K–12 schools are most often created for the expatriate communities living in these countries, and most have an American curriculum and classrooms much like ones down the street from our houses. These international schools are essentially a miniature school district with a director (superintendent) and a high school, a middle school, and an elementary school. The teachers are primarily from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, although some are from other countries as well. The schools in Africa and South and Central America have a higher percentage of teachers from the local country.

The students in these schools come from all over the world. Some are members of embassy families and some have parents who work for huge international companies or non-governmental agencies (NGOs). Postings are usually for two to five years, although some families stay longer. The number of local students varies greatly from school to school, although it's usually less than 20 percent. We have also had the privilege of occasionally working with local schools, such as two amazing bilingual (Arabic/English) schools in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Each school has its own challenges related to student and staff turnover (sometimes as high as 50 percent!), access to resources, the added responsibility of teaching the local language to students, access to professional learning experiences like conferences, and politics.

However, the most astonishing aspect of our work is that the major educational challenges are the same, whether it's a classroom in North Dakota, London, or Tanzania. Good teachers around the world all want to know how to improve their instruction to better meet their students' needs. The dedicated teachers we work with, whether they're from Denver, Colorado, or Doha, Qatar, all want to keep up with current research and best practices.

This book was a daunting undertaking. Carrie and I were often emailing each other from around the globe as I worked with a school in Paris and she was busy doing classroom demonstrations in Indonesia. Thank heavens for email and Skype phone calls! In the two years it took us to write this book, we've been interrupted by a tornado and blizzard (Colorado); a typhoon (Hong Kong); an earthquake (Indonesia); surgery (both Carrie and her husband, Glenn); the death



of Carrie's mother; and innumerable power outages, computer glitches, and flight disasters. Despite the challenges of weather, technology, and daily life, we persevered because of our deep desire to help teachers and our belief in the value of this project. Our floors, dining room tables, and nightstands have overflowed with stacks of professional books. We enlisted the help of two knowledgeable colleagues, Sandy Garcia Figueroa (a principal in Arizona) and Laura Benson (a literacy consultant in Colorado), to help us read and annotate hundreds of professional books and DVDs. We've tried to create a "metabook" in which we synthesize everything we've ever read about writing instruction and list the most helpful resources about each topic. We've also gone into classrooms and emailed the wonderful teachers we know in order to gather stories and photographs showing what these cutting-edge ideas look like in practice. Our stack of permission forms for the hundreds of photographs we collected is three feet high! So although our names are on the cover of this book, it's truly been a worldwide collaborative project and journey.

As we wrote, we discovered that it was simply too confusing for readers if we wrote in two voices, so Carrie graciously allowed me (Bonnie) to write in the first person. I've occasionally woven in Carrie's stories in her own words, but much of the text is a combination of our experiences and knowledge.

## About the Staff Development Rubrics

---

To support teachers and schools, Carrie and I created a rubric so that teachers can assess their strengths and areas for growth in teaching writing and word study. The rubric can be found at the end of this introduction. When we first shared the writing instruction rubric, most teachers were very accurate, if anything underestimating their abilities. Others who were clearly novices marked themselves as "leaders." We realized that the rubric couldn't stand alone. Some teachers "didn't know what they didn't know." We needed to share key ideas gleaned from the best books and DVDs on each aspect of teaching writing and make them come to life through photographs and examples from classrooms around the world. That's what you'll find in the chapters of this book.

If you are a literacy coach, assistant principal, or principal, you will read this book through a different lens. Therefore, we've also created a version of the rubric specifically for literacy coaches and principals. As you try to help teachers in your building expand and deepen their knowledge of best practices, you may want to use the "school" version of the writing instruction rubric to ascertain *what works* for your staff and *what's next* so that you can provide time, resources, and professional development opportunities based on those goals.

# Warning!

Because Carrie and I created these staff development rubrics as tools for teachers to evaluate their own teaching and set their own goals, we want to emphasize that they should *not* be used by administrators for evaluation. The rubrics can help principals, coaches, and teachers identify best practices, but as soon as they take on the aura of evaluation, they lose all their potential for change. Teachers won't be honest about their strengths and areas for growth unless they are part of a supportive and risk-taking environment in which everyone is viewed as a learner.



## The Teacher Rubric in Action

I asked Melissa White, who teaches second grade at the American Embassy School in New Delhi, India, about how her writing instruction has changed over the past few years. She wrote:

Twelve years ago when I started my teaching career as a third-grade teacher, I used a writer's workshop model to teach students how to write. My lessons were based primarily on 6+1 traits of writing or formulaic writing with little emphasis on writing strategies. Students occasionally self-selected writing topics and were invited to confer about their writing piece during the editing and revising stages of the writing process. Word study consisted of weekly spelling lists with words taken from guided reading stories. Students had the freedom to choose words from their reading or writing to add to their weekly spelling list. Writing for most of my students was uninteresting and not enjoyable. They put in their daily writing time and came away with a few published pieces that lacked creativity and voice. Once they published a piece of writing, students could opt to share their work with peers. According to the writing instruction rubric by Bonnie Campbell Hill and Carrie Ekey, I was a writing teacher in the Apprentice stage in all categories.

I knew I had to figure out how to make each lesson more meaningful, help my students grow as writers, improve my understanding of writing pedagogy, and, most important, instill a love of writing in each of my students. I began talking to my colleagues about how they taught writing. I also took the time to observe writing instruction in a number of classrooms. At the same time, I was working on a master's degree in

elementary education, which provided me the opportunity to familiarize myself with current best practices. I was introduced to Lucy Calkins' *The Art of Teaching Writing* (1994) and *Units of Study for Primary Writing* (2003). All of these experiences showed me that my idea of writer's workshop lacked a number of the necessary components to build strong writers. I began to implement daily minilessons that taught specific writing strategies and modeled these strategies in my own writing. Students chose interesting topics and engaged in daily independent writing. Their writing became more focused and they published more frequently, while sharing their work with peers throughout the writing process.

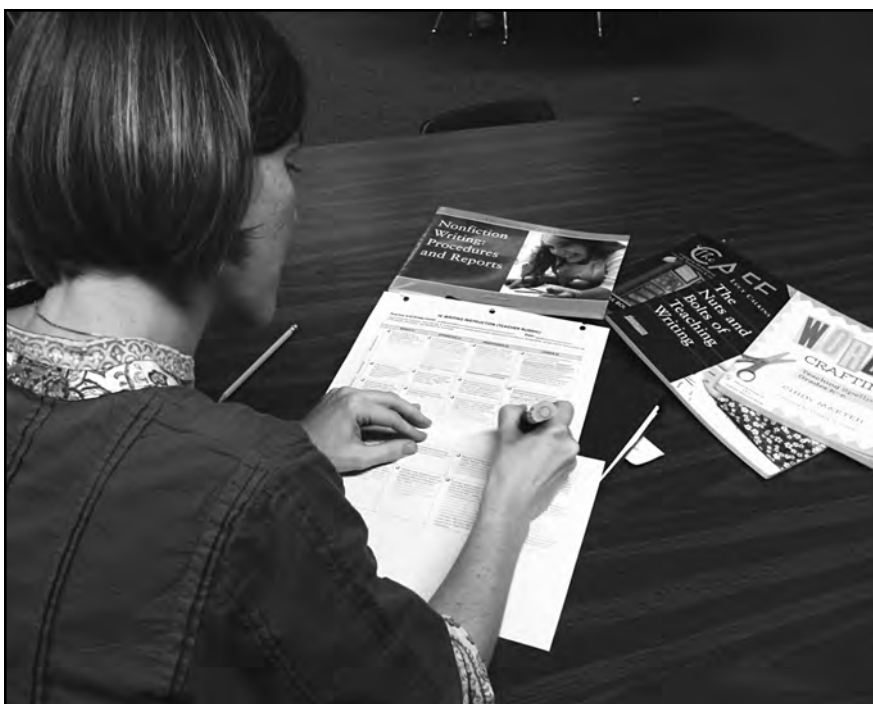
My current school developed a schoolwide philosophy about writing, began using the writing continuum (from *Developmental Continuums*, 2001) by Bonnie Campbell Hill to communicate student writing development and brought in consultants to model and guide curriculum building and writing instruction. My professional development growth continued through the Summer Writing Institute with Lucy Calkins at Columbia Teachers College, where I learned that an effective individual writing conference would help me to understand the needs of my students, lift their writing through the reinforcement of effective writing strategies, and get my students excited about their work. In addition, I strengthened my new knowledge through attendance at regional educational conferences, served as grade-level leader on my school's literacy committee, and joined the International Literacy Coaching Cohort led by Carrie Ekey. During the past few years, our school literacy committee has undertaken a number of projects including collecting anchor papers to evaluate student work with detailed lists of descriptors to guide that evaluation and developing grade-level yearly curriculum maps of units of study in writing.

These professional experiences have allowed me to increase my capacity to write and to teach writing and have enhanced the educational experience for my students. Currently, I see myself moving from the Practitioner stage on the rubric into the Leader stage. The greatest reward has come from seeing the love of writing my students now exude. My students get excited about writing and make the most of their writing time. They spring into action by quickly finding their writing folders and locating a comfortable place to work. The writing instruction rubric allows me to reflect on where I have been as a teacher and the progress I have made. The rubric also helps me focus on what I need to still work on.

The next area of growth that I see for myself using the rubric is in the area of word study. I have grown in this area as I moved away from using whole-class spelling lists and began incorporating strategies from *Phonics*

Lessons (2006) by Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas. I have also incorporated lists of words and strategies from a program by Rebecca Sitton. Our whole elementary staff, myself included, has discovered that we had not been differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual students. I began studying *Word Crafting* (2003) by Cindy Marten and *Words Their Way* (2008) by Donald Bear and his colleagues with my school literacy committee as we began working on a schoolwide word study philosophy and plan for instruction. So I would put myself at the very beginning of the Practitioner stage. I'm just beginning to use a pre- and post-test developmental spelling inventory as well as observations during writing workshop, which help me monitor my students' word study knowledge in order to design specific word sorts and other activities to meet their needs. I'm also supporting my students in automaticity by having them use sight words in authentic writing situations. I would like to deepen my understanding of best practices for word study so that I can provide stronger individualized instruction and best utilize classroom instructional time.

Melissa told me that the writing rubric had really helped her affirm what was working well and see where she could improve. It's a delight to learn alongside teachers like Melissa who are so reflective, dedicated, and such lifelong learners.



**Melissa White Using a Rubric for Self-Evaluation**



**Administrator Susan Young (Principal) and Kathy Zabinski (Literacy Coach) Filling Out the School Version of the Rubric**

## The School Rubrics in Action

Both Carrie and I have visited the American Embassy School in New Delhi, India, and have been very impressed with how intentionally and effectively they have tackled the challenge of improving instruction and student learning in the area of writing. We wrote to Kathy Zabinski, the current literacy specialist, and asked her to describe their journey.

I joined AES as a fourth-grade teacher four years ago (school year 2006–2007). I was part of a team of five fourth-grade teachers and we met weekly to plan our curriculum collaboratively. I represented my grade-level team on the elementary school literacy committee and reported back to the team regarding literacy initiatives being worked on at the committee level. Our school was in the second year of working with a literacy specialist, Stacey DuPont, who was helping us develop a balanced literacy framework for our school. As a school, we had adopted a set of “Essential Literacy Agreements” that included word study, shared writing, and writing workshop, including minilessons, conferring, and independent writing as elements of a balanced writing program. We had also worked with Bonnie and Carrie to build proficiency in using the reading and writing continuums to inform our instruction.

With thirty classrooms in the elementary school (soon to become thirty-six), there was a range of experience with a workshop model. However, most teachers were developing literacy plans based on our essential agreements, incorporating writing workshop with a predictable schedule three or four days

a week, and offering students regular and authentic opportunities to share published work that had been taken through the writing process. During those first two years of work, the literacy committee helped move our school from the Apprentice stage on the writing rubric to the Practitioner stage as we began to understand and articulate the components of a balanced writing program based on beliefs and agreements adopted by our entire school.

Initially, Bonnie worked with our school on providing the big picture and introduced her reading and writing continuums and assessment tools. Our professional development next focused on developing expertise with the components of our balanced literacy framework and learning to use the reading and writing continuums with our students. Carrie supported this work in small- and large-group professional development sessions on three separate visits to our school from 2006 to 2008. We also used faculty meetings to talk about instruction and to examine student writing by using the continuum alongside anchor papers. Additionally, some teachers joined professional book clubs to deepen their practice. Some teachers studied *The Art of Teaching Writing* (1994) by Lucy Calkins and *Writing Essentials* (2005) by Regie Routman, while the kindergarten teachers focused on *Talking, Drawing, Writing* (2007) by Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe. During grade-level collaborative planning, teachers often shared what they were learning from their readings and discussions in their book clubs. While we were moving more fully into the Practitioner stage as a school for our writing instruction and writing workshops, our units of study throughout the school were often based on genres and/or 6+1 traits, and conferences were primarily focused on editing and conventions (Apprentice stage). Our word study programs differed widely across the school.

For our next steps in professional development, we focused on creating units of study for writing. One teacher at each grade level spent a year piloting the *Units of Study* (2003, 2006) by Lucy Calkins. We shared highlights with our grade-level teams, which were then reported back to the literacy committee. As we piloted the units, it soon became clear that we needed to revise our writing curriculum. The following summer, those of us who had piloted the units attended the weeklong writing institute with the Reading and Writing Project at Teachers College and returned to school ready to lead our teams as teachers developed and implemented units of study in writing. Supported by the literacy committee, we developed a schoolwide, articulated sequence of units of study in writing, along with structured minilessons. While we were working on the units of study across the grades, I returned to Teachers College with Stacey to attend a special session for literacy coaches as I prepared to step into her position as literacy specialist. The coaching workshop really helped us to refine our understanding of the structure of a minilesson and techniques for conferring with students about writing. I started this school year with demonstration lessons designed to highlight the elements of a focused minilesson and effective methods of conferring.

This intense two-year focus on writing instruction has moved our school much closer to the Leader descriptors on the rubric. This year, we've tackled the challenging issue of how to incorporate word study into a writing workshop model. Last year, our first-grade team worked collectively to develop beliefs and agreements for their grade-level word study program. Building on their work, the literacy committee has begun work on schoolwide belief statements and essential agreements for word study. Our school was fortunate to have the time, resources, and support to engage in effective professional development. The combination of grade-level collaboration and implementation of whole-school initiatives by the literacy committee effectively moved our school along the continuum of development in writing instruction.

## About This Book Series

Carrie and I originally began this literacy-focused project intending to include writing, reading, assessment, and reporting. However, as we worked with teachers and schools, we realized that the conditions for learning were vital to the success of any literacy initiative. We learned the hard way that our presentations on writing workshop rarely took root in schools in which teachers had not read professionally or considered why and how to teach responsively. Literacy initiatives sometimes fell short when the majority of students were pulled out of the classroom for English language support. And sometimes the swirl of politics and personalities within a school created an atmosphere of resistance and animosity toward any ideas we presented. It became clear that a healthy, respectful classroom and school environment were fundamental to change and that we needed this necessary foundation before we could help schools build meaningful and long-lasting literacy initiatives. For these reasons, in the first book in our series, *The Next-Step Guide to Enriching Classroom Environments* (2010), we focused on setting the groundwork so that literacy initiatives could be successful.

In this second book, we zoom in specifically on ways to create classrooms in which young writers can flourish so that you can explore new ideas and resources alongside your own practices. Do you like to write? Do you love to teach writing? I enthusiastically jumped into my first year of teaching with my own love of writing and of children but with no clue how to teach my eager second graders how to write. I'd taken a class on children's literature, but there was nothing in my coursework about teaching writing. I spent the last weekend before school began jotting down possible "story starters." I also bought thirty-two stenographer's notebooks and carefully glued in alphabet tabs along one edge to make "word books." After handing out the notebooks and explaining their use that first Monday, I soon had six students dutifully lined up with their word books flipped open to the appropriate letter so I could spell the words they



needed. The first two students watched as I wrote the correct spelling for their words. The next two kids in line were thumb wrestling. By the time the last two kids reached me, they couldn't remember what word they needed and had long since forgotten my story starter and what they were writing. I remember thinking, "There's something wrong with this picture."

Luckily, Donald Graves came to speak in Boulder a few weeks later and the way I taught writing changed forever. I realized that I didn't need to spend my weekends coming up with creative prompts; my students needed to discover their own writing topics. As I listened to Don speak, I felt a huge sense of relief as he talked about the writing *process* and the value of students getting their ideas down independently without focusing on spelling every word correctly. Teaching writing suddenly seemed doable and natural. Thirty years later, most teachers have a strong grasp of the writing process and a writing workshop approach, yet writing instruction still varies widely from school to school and teacher to teacher.

## Key Components

In this book, we explore five aspects of teaching writing:

- ▮ Writing workshop.
- ▮ Units of study.
- ▮ Writing instruction.
- ▮ Writing conferences.
- ▮ Word study.

These five components form the five categories on the writing rubric, and each is discussed in a separate chapter.

## Chapter 1: Writing Workshop

If a parent asked you how you teach writing, what would you say? What are the components of your writing program? How knowledgeable are you about writing workshop? Chapter 1 begins with an overview of teaching writing, then explores each of six key components of writing workshop—time, predictable schedule, choice, risk-taking environment, modeling, and response—and the components of a gradual release instructional model—modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent writing.

Once you've figured out a structure for writing workshop, the next question is *what* to teach. As you model your own writing, students share their pieces, and you explore the work of published writers, you'll want to explore specific aspects of the writing process. How do you help your students choose topics? What are some good books about teaching revision? How often should your students publish their work?

The final section of this chapter offers ideas about the five interwoven components of writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

## Chapter 2: Units of Study

How do you decide which genres and forms of writing to teach? Do you have a schoolwide plan or calendar? Chapter 2 provides ideas and resources for designing individual, grade-level, and schoolwide plans for units of study for writing. It offers specific ideas and resources for teaching eight genre-based units: poetry, fiction, nonfiction, persuasive writing, memoir and personal narrative, essays, writing to a prompt, in addition to writing in other genres.

## Chapter 3: Writing Instruction

How do you develop minilessons? How can you help reluctant writers? Chapter 3 delves into nine specific aspects of teaching writing: minilessons, using a writer's notebook, demonstrating with mentor texts, supporting struggling or reluctant writers, addressing gender issues, supporting English language learners, incorporating technology, considering the politics of writing instruction, and communicating with families.

## Chapter 4: Writing Conferences

In addition to whole-class and small-group instruction, you probably also hold individual writing conferences. How many students do you confer with each day? How do you decide the one teaching point that will best help each writer? The heart of writing workshop is the one-to-one interaction that occurs during individual writing conferences. This chapter presents tips, quotes, and insights from writing experts and classroom teachers about writing partnerships as well as individual and peer conferences.

## Chapter 5: Word Study

Do you have a clear philosophy statement and vision for how you teach word study? Is there schoolwide agreement about best practices? Has your school had conversations about how you teach controversial topics like phonics, spelling, and handwriting? Are there fun ways to incorporate minilessons about punctuation where you can see results appear in students' writing? Word study is more than just teaching spelling. In this chapter, I'll present ideas about how to weave word study into a writing workshop approach, with ideas and practical suggestions for teaching phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and other conventions of language (including handwriting, punctuation, and grammar).

# Book Lists, Annotations, and Professional Book Log

If you are like me, you probably agonize over which professional books to purchase with a limited budget. I want to know as much as I can about a book in order to ascertain if it will address a particular need I have for my learning and “next steps.” I want to know the grade-level range, the topics covered, and if this book has new and practical ideas I would find helpful. Most publishing companies now provide book annotations on their websites; however, most of those annotations still do not have enough information for me to make my final decision about whether to buy a book. At workshops and conferences, Carrie and I often “book-talk” the best professional books we read and are often asked by teachers, coaches, and principals for advice about helpful books on specific topics. For this reason, Carrie and I (with help from Sandy Figueroa and Laura Benson) have written over three hundred annotations that we feel will help you decide which professional books and DVDs to add to your personal library about writing instruction and word study. We have included annotations and bibliographic information on my website ([www.bonniecampbellhill.com](http://www.bonniecampbellhill.com)) as a free resource to educators who have bought this book. The annotations are linked to every descriptor at the Leader stage of the writing instruction rubric.

I encourage you to look up the annotation for *A Place for Wonder* (2009), Georgia Heard and Jen McDonough’s new book, to try out the website. It will only take you a few minutes and I believe it will hook you into using the database. I promise to add new resources as they are published, which will help you to keep up to date with all the latest professional resources, even after you read this book.

I also know that a “picture is worth a thousand words.” When Carrie and I present, teachers often ask for copies of the pictures of classrooms that we insert in our PowerPoint presentations. They tell us that actually *seeing* photographs of writing instruction in real classrooms makes the ideas more tangible and inspiring. For these reasons, I have also posted additional photos of writing instruction and word study on my website. I believe that just looking at these glimpses from exemplary classrooms will inspire you as you rethink your writing program. I would encourage you to go to my website, click on the link to this book, then explore these photos. We hope that in addition to this book, my website and database will provide additional inspiration and ongoing support for your professional learning about teaching writing. I want to give a special thank-you to Carrie’s husband, Glenn, for his help taking and organizing many of the photographs in this book and on the website. I also want to thank my very tech-savvy sons, Keith and Bruce, who designed the website and database as a way to share our annotations and photographs with readers.

As you read this book, you may want to glance at the book lists in each section and highlight or put a check (✓) by the books you’ve already read and use an



asterisk (\*) to denote the books you'd like to read next. If you find an area you'd like to explore further, you may want to read the annotations on the website in order to determine which books would be most helpful to read on your own or with a colleague. The Professional Reading Log (Appendix A) can help you prioritize your "to read" list of professional books. As a literacy coach or principal, you may want to note individual or grade-level teachers who may find specific books helpful, or indicate books you want to read to deepen your knowledge about teaching writing and word study. You might also want to offer professional book studies focused on some of these titles.

## What Works? What's Next?

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As you read this book, you can examine the writing rubric to determine your (or your school's) areas of strength (*what works?*) and the concepts you might want to explore further (*what's next?*). The corresponding rows of both the teacher and the school versions of the rubrics are broken out at the end of each chapter, along with a "ponder box" of self-evaluation questions, to make it easy for you to pause and reflect on your or your school's teaching and learning.

Highlight the specific descriptors in the rubric that reflect your practices and knowledge, pat yourself on the back, and celebrate all that you already have in place. Then, use a different-colored highlighter to indicate areas for improvement. Or you might want to use one color this year for aspects you already have incorporated and use a different color next year as you implement new ideas and dig deeper into a topic as a way to visually track your professional growth. After making those changes, observe your students and evaluate the effect the changes have had on their writing.

Some of you may decide to read one or two professional books on your own during the school year or during your vacation. If you have colleagues with similar interests, you may want to read a book with another teacher, in grade-level teams, or maybe study a professional book with a cross-grade-level group of colleagues. If you're a real techie, you may want to keep a blog about the books you read. If you are a principal or literacy coach, you might choose a few books to read, as well as facilitate grade-level or small-group professional book studies about how to create classrooms that nourish and support young writers.

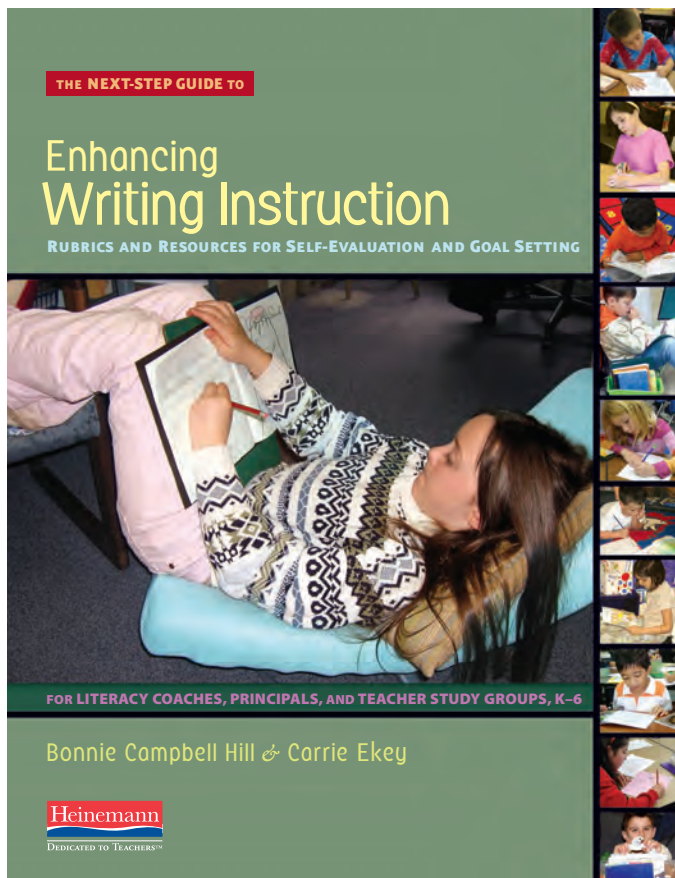
One more warning: As you read about all these fabulous books and ideas about teaching writing, it's very easy to become overwhelmed. Remember that no one teacher implements all these ideas, and no one could possibly read all these books. Whenever you start feeling inadequate, take a deep breath and remember that change takes time. It's important to start small. The only way to continue the literacy journey is to take one step at a time. All the ideas and books I share are exciting, but pick just one or two intriguing ideas to try and one or two books to

read. Once those are under your belt, you can come back and pick a new goal. Remember that your ultimate purpose is to create classrooms that are both rigorous and joyful in which writers will flourish.


And one final tip: Learning is so much more fun when you work alongside a friend. Work with a colleague or your literacy coach (if you're lucky enough to have one). Celebrate when you try something new; when new ideas work, share your learning with other colleagues. If you are a principal or coach, affirm teachers who take risks and incorporate new ideas, and encourage and structure opportunities for collaboration and sharing.



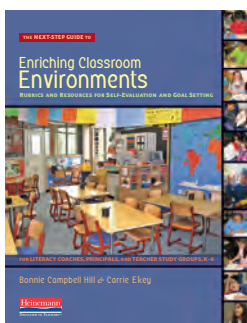
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“ I believe everyone should read this book. If you're a novice to writing workshop, this book will help you on your journey as a teacher of writing. If you've been teaching writing for many years and consider yourself an expert, this book will inspire you further and to help you incorporate new ideas. If you're a literacy coach or a principal of a school, this book will help you sift through the breadth of information to help others teach writing more effectively. ”

—**Georgia Heard**  
Author of *The Revision Toolbox*

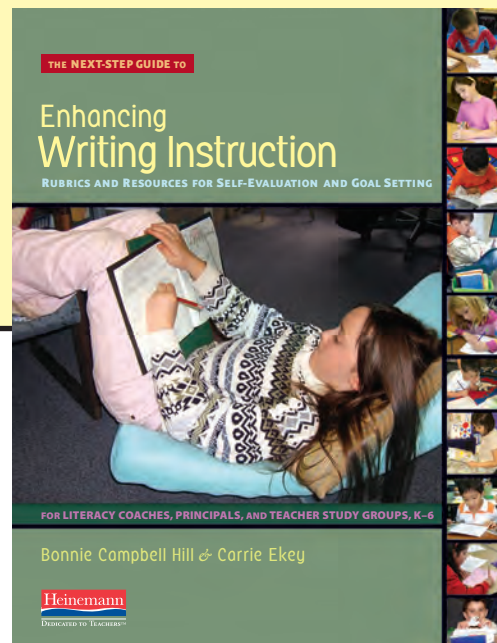
Use the powerful tools in ***The Next-Step Guide to Enhancing Writing Instruction*** to take the guesswork out of identifying best practices and growing your writing instruction program.

***The Next-Step Guide to Enhancing Writing Instruction*** synthesizes cutting-edge ideas in writing instruction with two detailed rubrics to help you create classrooms in which young writers can flourish:

- A **rubric for leaders** helps principals, staff developers, and literacy coaches ascertain what works at your school and what's next so that together you can set schoolwide goals and provide time, resources, and professional development opportunities for writing instruction and word study.
- A **rubric for teachers** helps them assess their strengths and areas for growth in teaching writing and word study.

Each chapter walks through one strand of the rubrics and provides opportunities to develop common language and practices for writing instruction and word study:

- **ponder boxes** guide book study, stimulate discussion, and suggest next steps
- **book lists** point the way to further professional learning
- **classroom photographs and vignettes** from exemplary classrooms burst with practical examples and ready-to-use ideas



#### Writing Instruction (Teacher Rubric)

	NOVICE	APPRENTICE	PRACTITIONER	LEADER
Writing Process	<input type="checkbox"/> I teach writing primarily through whole-group assignments, after which students work independently. I provide writing time once or twice a week; otherwise, writing is integrated throughout the day and focuses mostly on other content areas. I determine writing topics and/or provide story starters or writing prompts. I am the primary audience for student writing.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am beginning to incorporate writing workshop with some instruction and minilessons. I teach writing two or three times a week for thirty minutes a day; I direct the writing and occasionally allow students to choose topics or give students free rein during writing workshop; during writing workshop, I monitor student writing or work at my desk during writing workshop.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have implemented writing workshop with minilessons, independent writing, and some sharing. I also teach writing through some modeled, shared, and interactive writing. I teach writing with a predictable schedule three or four days a week for thirty to forty minutes a day; students write independently, often on topics they have chosen themselves; students write in a variety of genres and text types.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have implemented writing workshop with clear components (minilessons, independent writing, sharing, and some guided writing when necessary). I also teach writing through modeled, shared, and interactive writing. I teach writing with a predictable schedule for forty-five to sixty minutes a day, as well as across the curriculum; students write independently on topics they choose themselves.

#### Writing Instruction (School Rubric)

	NOVICE	APPRENTICE	PRACTITIONER	LEADER
Writing Workshop and Writing Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Most teachers teach writing primarily through whole-group assignments, after which students work independently; teachers provide writing time once or twice a week at most; otherwise writing is integrated throughout the day and focuses mostly on other content areas; teachers determine writing topics and/or provide story starters or writing prompts; in most classrooms, teachers are the primary audience for student writing; most teachers work at their desks when students are writing; in most classrooms, student writing is completed as a draft that is transcribed neatly into a final copy with little or no revision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some teachers are beginning to incorporate writing workshop with some instruction and minilessons; in most classrooms, writing is taught two or three times a week for thirty minutes a day; most teachers direct the writing and occasionally allow students to choose topics or give students free rein during writing workshop; during writing workshop, most teachers monitor student writing or work at their desks during writing workshop; in some classrooms, students share their writing with peers (author's chair); in most classrooms, student writing is taken through the writing process and published a few times during the year, often for a writing contest, class book, bulletin board display, or celebration; teachers display some student writing in classrooms and hallways.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most teachers have implemented writing workshop with minilessons, independent writing, and some sharing; in all classrooms, writing is also taught through some modeled, shared, and interactive writing; writing is taught with a predictable schedule three or four days a week for thirty to forty minutes a day; in most classrooms, students write independently, often on topics they have chosen themselves; in most classrooms, students regularly share their writing with peers (author's chair) and begin to share in writing partnerships; in most classrooms, student writing is taken through the writing process and published and shared often during the year; teachers display a variety of student writing in classrooms and hallways throughout the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> All teachers have implemented writing workshop with clear components (minilessons, independent writing, sharing, and some guided writing when necessary); in all classrooms, writing is also taught through modeled, shared, and interactive writing; writing is taught daily with a predictable schedule for forty-five to sixty minutes a day, as well as across the curriculum; in all classrooms, students write independently on topics they choose themselves, often within a unit of study; at times they choose their own genres or text types; in all classrooms, students share their writing with writing partners, in writing groups, with peers (author's chair), and with authentic audiences outside the classroom; each teacher fosters a risk-taking environment in which students are comfortable giving and receiving peer and teacher feedback; in all classrooms, student writing is taken through the writing process and published and shared frequently and consistently, often in connection with units of study; student writing is displayed in classrooms and hallways throughout the school that reflects range, variety, and the steps in the writing process.



The rubrics in ***The Next-Step Guide to Enhancing Writing Instruction*** arise from **Bonnie Campbell Hill** and **Carrie Ekey's** consulting experience in hundreds of schools worldwide. They bring the latest research in instruction and staff development to literacy initiatives so teachers can grow in understanding and effectiveness. Bonnie (right) is a former teacher and author of *Supporting Your Child's Literacy Learning* (2007). Carrie (left) is a former teacher, staff developer, and curriculum specialist. Bonnie and Carrie co-authored ***The Next-Step Guide to Enriching Classroom Environments*** (2010), the first book in this series. Visit [bonniecampbellhill.com](http://bonniecampbellhill.com) for additional photographs and annotations linked to their books.





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