Writing Worth Doing

ISA’s four-year portfolio writing program, *Writing Worth Doing*, supports writing as daily practice in high schools for various purposes in multiple genres. By emphasizing both the writing process and writing as essential to the learning process, writing is a way of thinking, showing understanding, as well as representing and communicating ideas. Students will learn how to share their perspectives, opinions, and passions as they gain appreciation for the power of writing to express their voice. In *Writing Worth Doing*, students become invested and take ownership of their writing, including the value of revision and understand that writing means rewriting. These are the foundations of classroom writing instruction that prepare students for success in college and beyond.

The adoption of new, higher standards has placed renewed emphasis on the importance of writing in secondary schools. Once considered the domain of English teachers, the teaching of writing and the use of writing in instruction has implications for teachers across the content areas. These demands increase the number of writing tasks students are given across the curriculum and also incorporates the use of writing as a strategy for students to demonstrate their thinking.

New state standards also identify non-cognitive skills necessary to be a proficient writer, including demonstrating independence and adapting communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. Once these important “soft skills” are developed and supported, the teaching of writing conventions, students’ critical and analytic writing skills, and the writing process becomes more efficacious. Since school performance is a complex phenomenon, shaped by a wide variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, students must develop sets of behaviors, skills, attitudes, and strategies that are crucial for producing academic writing in their classes.
What is *Writing Worth Doing*?

*It is a 4-Year Writing Program that:*

- **Aligns** with expectations of post-secondary writing, develops student voice, and prepares students for college and technical school;

- **Integrates** the *Criterion* Online Writing Evaluation platform, an online service that saves teachers time and allows them to focus on content and process, rather than just mechanics;

- **Includes** on-site coaching for teachers and instructional leaders, and supports an inquiry-based approach to building writing strategies essential for student proficiency;

- **Culminates** in an electronic or traditional writing portfolio that reflects multiple genres and includes a student-designed research task or capstone project.
Writing Worth Doing has everything a school or district needs to implement a four-year writing program successfully, including curriculum, online tools, professional development, and implementation support designed to ensure transfer to classroom practice.

1. Implementation Manual
   - Connects theory to practice
   - Provides orientation tools for school stakeholders
   - Outlines a process for customization and implementation

2. Four-year College Readiness Writing Plan across the Curriculum
   - Includes considerations for a portfolio system
   - Provides sample curricula and writing prompts
   - Shares sample genre-aligned rubrics

3. Access to Criterion® Online Writing Evaluation Service for all teachers and students
   - Provides writing tasks/assignments aligned to college-level writing standards/genres
   - Offers sample benchmark and anchor papers
   - Includes scoring guides
   - Includes score/grade reports for teachers

4. Expert Embedded Coaching and Professional Development
   - Coaching individual teachers
   - Coaching grade level teams
   - Coaching school leaders

What Determinations Must A School Make?

- Portfolio design: determination of developing a “best work” portfolio and/or one that includes several revisions of a portfolio entry
- School-wide/coherent implementation plan so the portfolio follows the student and so teachers are clear about their responsibilities
- Levels of customization
Expert Coaching Services

Coaches work on pre-identified, short term outcomes with targeted teachers and leaders. The work of the ISA coach is to help the school implement ISA’s Writing Worth Doing plan in ways that make sense to their school community. To accomplish this, the coach works with teachers, school leaders, and grade-level and content area teams.

Coaching Individual Teachers

Coaches and principals decide together which teachers the coach will work with and on what particular issues. Coaches may work with novice, experienced, and expert teachers.

Coaches:
• Work with teachers to support their implementation of inquiry-based instruction that provides students with multiple opportunities for learning to write and writing to learn, and to apply higher order thinking skills which they will need to succeed in college
• Collaborate with teachers to set writing goals for students that are aligned with their school’s goals
• Co-teach lessons or demonstrate particular writing strategies so that teachers can see how particular practices are implemented
• Provide teachers with relevant readings and resources related to writing instruction as well as their particular pedagogical needs

Coaching Grade Level Teams

The coach works with the interdisciplinary grade-level teams, content area teams, or with the facilitators of those teams. In their first years, the coach helps the team develop routines and rituals for common planning time so that these weekly meetings are productive. The coach helps each team to do the following:
• Plan an agenda in advance of the meeting
• Develop facilitation skills
• Use the meeting to make decisions
• Use a systematic approach to focus on instructional issues

Coaching School Leaders

The coach’s work with the school leaders includes developing a strategic plan, year by year, including an action plan aligned with Writing Worth Doing.
• Identify student writing outcomes
• Design structures and mechanisms to operationalize the framework
• Develop school’s writing resource plan
• Supports for college preparatory writing instruction
The *Criterion®* Writing Evaluation Service

*Writing Worth Doing* features the acclaimed *Criterion®*
Online Writing Evaluation Service

The *Criterion* service is a web-based, instructor-led writing tool that helps students plan, write, and revise their essays. It gives them immediate diagnostic feedback and more opportunities to practice writing at their own pace. The *Criterion* service gives teachers and school administrators a comprehensive writing solution to help improve student outcomes by freeing up valuable classroom time to concentrate on higher level writing skills and areas of improvement.

Students improve their writing skills while working independently with immediate, detailed feedback on grammar, spelling, mechanics, usage, and organization and development. Students get more writing practice without adding to teacher workload, and teachers can concentrate on the content and style of students' work and teach higher level writing skills.

Teachers can use their own topics or select from the *Criterion* topic library of more than 400 essay assignments at various skill levels. Because it is offered online, both instructors and students can access the Criterion® service anywhere — from school, home, or any place with an Internet connection.
The **Criterion Service Offers:**

- **Immediate, automated** scoring and diagnostic review;
- **Alignment to Common Core** State Standards (CCSS);
- **A new Peer Review Tool** that allows student groups to view and comment on each other’s work;
- **In-depth customizable reports** — both student and group reports for two kinds of valuable performance data;
- **Embedded teacher comments** and student/teacher dialog boxes;
- **Hundreds of topics** in the *Criterion* library from which teachers can choose;
- **Unlimited and convenient access** — log in anytime, anywhere there is Internet access;
- **Compatibility across multiple operating platforms**, including iPad® tablets.

While it supports all stages of student writing, the *Criterion* service does not grade essay content and cannot take the place of teacher instruction and feedback. It provides supplemental feedback to help improve writing skills. This saves time and helps instructors enhance their classroom instruction.
Learn More.

If you want your school to graduate all students ready for college and career success, then an ISA partnership can help you get there.

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