



# Coaching Writing: The Power of Guided Practice

*William Strong*

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"Good coaching," William Strong explains, "enables writers, whatever their skill level, to pay attention to language and trust their meaning-making instincts. Coaching is the central activity in the 'game' of teaching (a pursuit with lifelong challenges), and it's an activity that can have a lifetime effect on language learners."

This book presents a "coaching approach" to instruction in written language - an approach that is eclectic, pragmatic, synthetic. It centers on finding balance - ways of working smarter, not harder - and thus reducing the risk of burnout in teaching. Balance implies wellness, strength, and flexibility. In pursuing balance, Strong invites teachers to consider - or revisit - practical activities, tasks, and methods for exercising language and coaching writing.

The chapters are intended as resources - not as curriculum sequences. In the first chapter, Strong discusses his work with basic writers and tells how he came to field test and use sentence-combining exercises. In Chapter 2, he provides a research-based rationale for given-language activities and illustrates many activities for connecting such work to instruction in writing and literature. And in Chapter 3, he explores the tricky issue of error in written language, outlines ideas for securing student involvement, and offers useful methods for teaching proofreading. Other chapters cover everything from paragraphing and "voice lessons" to strategies for peer-response groups, rubrics, self-assessment, and successfully managing the paper load.

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