

## Key Pedagogical Methods

The goals of SSW are that students will develop knowledge of academic writing genres; strategies for critical reading, planning and revising; and the motivational beliefs that support continued critical reading and writing in the future. Students need clear instruction to develop knowledge and strategies; they also need meaningful writing tasks and opportunities for discussion, collaboration, and practice to construct their own understanding of the strategies, which they will take with them to future courses. Increased confidence, or self-efficacy, and a sense of control over their writing and learning are also important for motivation and persistence. Here are the key pedagogical methods that we believe make the SSW approach work. In addition to these brief descriptions, we suggest reading an article written together with instructors from our first research study, which explains why they thought the SSW approach worked ([TETYC 2016](#)).

### Introduction to the Genre and Evaluation of Strong and Weak Examples

For argumentative writing:

**Discuss the purposes and elements of argumentative writing.** What is an argument? When and why do people write arguments? What do you need to do to make an argument? What are the key elements and features?

**Evaluation of strong and weak student examples.** Read aloud a strong example of argumentative writing, then discuss what makes it strong, drawing on the students' ideas. Analyze the example for the organizational elements of argumentative writing. Introduce the rubric for argumentative writing. Read and discuss the weak example and apply the evaluation criteria. We use student examples to give students a clear idea of what they will be asked to write and why. This activity begins the strong focus on learning self-evaluation.

### Think-aloud Modeling – Making the Invisible Visible

Think-aloud modeling is the heart of strategy instruction. Most of what people learn involves observation of others. One would not consider teaching methods in sport, art, or cooking without demonstration. But the cognitive and metacognitive activities of writing and reading are invisible. Think-aloud modeling, and later collaborative practice, make them visible. In think-aloud modeling, the instructor applies the strategies to plan, draft, and revise an essay live in front of the students while verbalizing the thought processes. Students observe and then participate in a discussion of what they noticed. Instructors are encouraged to engage in coping modeling, in which their difficulties and problems are revealed and then resolved through use of the strategies. It is also important to model the metacognitive, self-regulation processes. Modeling is challenging for instructors at first, but it is a powerful instructional tool.

### Collaborative Practice

After modeling, instructors and students work collaboratively to plan, write, and revise an essay. Instructors guide students in the use of the strategy and support them as they generate ideas, organize, and suggest sentences for drafting. As much as possible, all the content and sentences should come from the students. Collaboration can also involve small groups

drafting parts of a complete essay. Collaborative practice is also used as students learn to apply the evaluation criteria in the rubric to suggest revisions in preparation for peer review.

### **Peer Review – Developing Self-Evaluation**

The SSW approach places great emphasis on learning self-evaluation, and peer review is an important part of learning how to understand and apply evaluation criteria. Research shows that practice giving feedback to others has positive effects on one's own writing, and peer review provides that practice. The genre-specific evaluation criteria used in SSW make sense to students and help them in making specific suggestions for revision. Students learn to apply the evaluation criteria through teacher-led collaborative practice evaluating essays by unknown peers and providing suggestions for revision. The use of papers by unknown peers frees students to be openly critical and see how such criticism can be helpful. After such practice, students engage in peer review, generally in pairs. They use a printed rubric and make written suggestions after the discussion.

### **Supporting Self-Regulation**

The SSW approach includes an organized set of metacognitive, self-regulation strategies for goal-setting, task management, progress monitoring, and reflection (See [Strategies for Academic Success](#)). Journaling and class discussions engage students in reflecting on how they can take control of their own learning through setting goals, selecting strategies, and monitoring progress. Students write in their journals about what goals they have set, how they manage their time, how well the strategies are working, and their feelings about their progress. Class time is devoted to discussing these responses. We believe that these discussions are an important part of changing students' perceptions of themselves as learners; as they see others comment on their learning, they become more receptive to change themselves. Self-evaluation and reflection on one's progress are critical to developing a growth mindset (Yeager & Dweck, 2012) that learning is possible with effort and strategic choices.