



Uncommonly Good Ideas-Teaching Writing in the Common Core Era (Language and Literacy)

Sandra Murphy, Mary Ann Smith

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This innovative resource provides teachers with a road map for designing a comprehensive writing curriculum that meets Common Core standards. The authors zero in on several “big ideas” that lead to and support effective practices in writing instruction, such as integrating reading, writing, speaking, and listening; teaching writing as a process; extending the range of students’ writing; spiraling and scaffolding a writing curriculum; and collaborating. These “big ideas” are the cornerstones of best researched-based practices as well as the CCSS for writing.

The first chapter offers a complete lesson designed around teaching narrative writing and illustrating tried and true practices for teaching writing as a process. The remaining chapters explore a broad range of teaching approaches that help students tackle different kinds of narrative, informational, and argumentative writing and understand complexities like audience and purpose. Each chapter focuses on at least one of the uncommonly good ideas and illustrates how to create curricula around it. *Uncommonly Good Ideas* includes model lessons and assignments, mentor texts, teaching strategies, student writing, and practical guidance for moving the ideas from the page into the classroom.

“An uncommonly good book about uncommonly good ideas about teaching writing in the era of the Common Core—and beyond. In this slender volume two master teachers, Sandra Murphy and Mary Ann Smith, share the knowledge accumulated during their lifetimes of teaching writing and exploring the broader world of related theory and research. They confront the hard problems all teachers will face, but do so with an evident joy in their chosen profession. The book is slender, readable, and well worth the ride, whether you are a novice terrified as you stare into your first classroom or an old hand looking for an extra boost with a new class and a new year.”

—**Arthur Applebee**, Distinguished Professor and chair, Department of Educational Theory and Practice, University at Albany

“Throughout this book I find the intelligence and insights that help me think about what it looks like to teach writing through the Common Core State Standards while maintaining my own integrity as a teacher. This book is a master class that you can take throughout the year, reading today about what you need to learn to do better tomorrow.”

—**Jim Burke**, best-selling author and high school teacher

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