Hello!

Thank you for participating in training to use the 6+1 Trait® analytic model for writing assessment and instruction. The materials in your packet are designed for you to use during our time together at this workshop, as well as provide support materials for you to use in your own classrooms, schools, and districts. You may copy these materials for educational purposes, however, we respectfully request that the name of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) remain as the source. NWREL is a non-profit organization, so none of these materials may be reproduced in any publications for purchase or sale.

If the traits are new to you, buckle up, you're in for a big treat. If you are visiting the traits for a second or even third time, welcome back. We hope that you'll greet some old friends in these materials and during the workshop. We also urge you to make some new connections as we proceed with our training. This workshop seems to grow and grow as more teachers and schools are using it with greater success than we ever dreamed. There's nothing more exciting than watching kids and teachers dig in and make the 6+1 Trait model really work!

So, let's get started.
Settle in, get comfortable, pour yourself a cup of coffee, and let's talk and learn together . . . .

The Story of 6+1 Trait® Writing

Once upon a time, way, way back in the early 1980's, creative teachers in school districts across the country like Beaverton, Oregon, and Missoula, Montana, and many others, decided they didn't want to live with their standardized or holistic writing assessments anymore. They knew there must be a better way to get accurate, reliable and useable information about student writing performance. Teachers wanted a better system.

They wanted something they could teach from. They wanted a shared vocabulary they could use with students, parents and the community. And since an exhaustive search didn't produce such an instrument, they rolled up their sleeves and began the long and difficult process of creating an analytic scoring system which would fit the bill.

It wasn't easy—the road was not smooth. In some places (notably, Oregon, the source of the NWREL 6+1 Trait Writing model) teachers read stacks and stacks of essays and sorted them into piles (not always agreeing on what they liked and admired either, I might add) . . .

> Pile 1:   Really great stuff
> Pile 2:   OK, but still needing work
> Pile 3:   Whew! Needs extensive revision and editing

After they sorted, they began to extrapolate what the specifics of the papers were that caused teachers to put them into the different piles. Lists were compiled, descriptors of quality were created and common characteristics, TRAITS, emerged.

Other places (such as Missoula, Montana) began by meeting with teachers on a regular basis where they talked and shared examples of student work, grade level by grade level, K-12. They examined in great detail what student writing performance looked like at different stages of competence and by writers at different ages. From this discussion, qualities that all "good" writing shared, no matter what the age of the writer, bubbled to the surface and lo and behold, TRAITS!

Regardless of the method, one thing all early analytic writing assessment gurus shared in common was the amount of thought, time, and energy that went into this process to make it valid, honest, and reflective of what students do when they write. Finally, teachers were discovering for themselves what they knew all along . . . that for writing assessment to be instructive it has to mirror what good writing looks like. And before it can be taught to students, teachers needed to define, for themselves, the hidden criteria that exist under the surface of most writing process classrooms.

As it turns out, and to make a long story short, teachers discovered that writing (student or otherwise) was influenced by the same six (plus one) characteristics—
- Ideas (details, development, focus)
- Organization (internal structure)
- Voice (tone, style, purpose, audience)
- Word Choice (precise language, phrasing)
- Sentence Fluency (sentence structure, rhythm, cadence)
- Conventions (mechanical correctness)
- Presentation (handwriting, formatting, layout)

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Now to be fair, not everyone uses seven traits, some use four, some more. But in the long run, these same seven characteristics show up in everyone's list as separate traits or in combination with others. The lists and attributes of good writing were the foundation for the 6+1 Trait model of writing assessment and became a set of criteria describing the qualities of good writing at different levels of achievement.

Like all thoughtful documents which reflect real performance, once they were used and put into the hands of teachers, revision was inevitable. The 6+1 Trait criteria in this packet is the result of at least 13 major revisions based on the comments and suggestions of classroom teachers from across the country since the early 1980's. And, there are probably 50 or more versions of "the six-trait model" in existence today. They are used by teachers, primary through college, and not just by those who teach English, either. The traits are used by teachers of mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, special education—anyone for whom writing is an important part of instruction.

Besides that, the Trait model is now used by someone, somewhere, in virtually every state in the nation as well as many countries – France, South America, China, Australia, Great Britain, Egypt, Guam, and the Middle East. It's the model used to score student papers in numerous state assessments—and in countless district assessments. And that's just the assessment part. The link to instruction has become so real, so powerful, and so immediately applicable by teachers everywhere, that it grows and grows every day. The classroom instruction material that uses assessment as a foundation, and gives credence to the notion of assessment as instruction, is literally changing the way teachers work with student writers across the country and world.
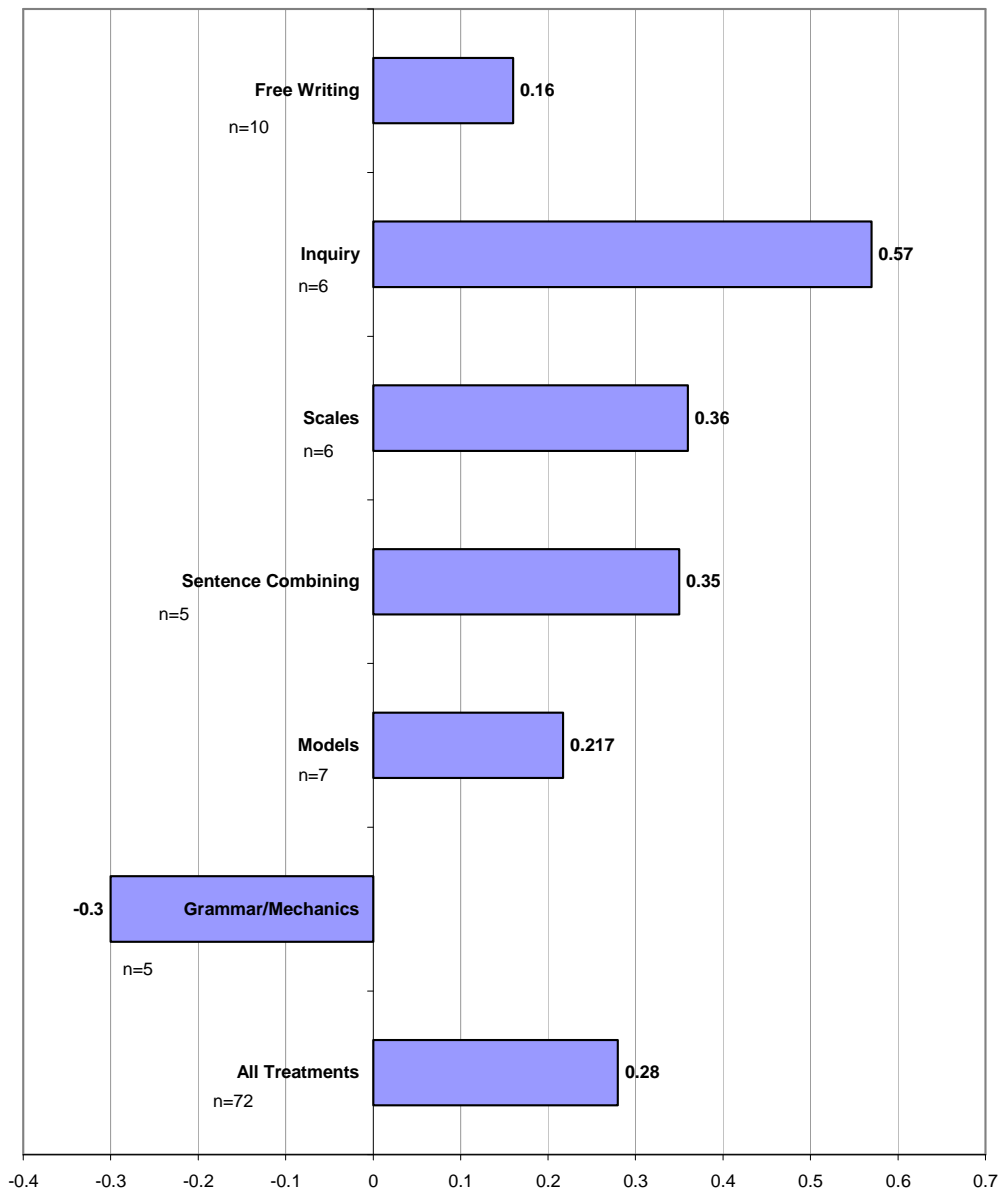
So the story of the power of teachers continues to grow. We, at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, are proud to be a part of the 6+1 Trait writing experience and to continue this good work by creating revised scoring criteria and developing new instructional materials to support the work first begun by determined teachers who were not willing to settle for anything but the best for their students!

Do Writing Criteria Help Students to Write Better?

Scales, criteria, and specific questions which students apply to their own or others' writing also have a powerful effect on enhancing quality. Through using the criteria systematically, students appear to internalize them and bring them to bear in generating new material even when they do not have the criteria in front of them. These treatments are two times more effective than free writing techniques.

George Hillocks, Jr. - *Research on Written Composition*, 1986

Fractions of Standard Deviations
Focus of Instruction Experimental/Control Effects

Free Writing n=10	0.16
Inquiry n=6	0.57
Scales n=6	0.36
Sentence Combining n=5	0.35
Models n=7	0.217
Grammar/Mechanics n=5	-0.3
All Treatments n=72	0.28

	All Treatments	Grammar/Mechanics	Models	Sentence Combining	Scales	Inquiry	Free Writing
☐ Series1	0.28	-0.3	0.217	0.35	0.36	0.57	0.16

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6+1 Trait® Writing Model Comparison to Eleven Elements of Effective Writing Instruction Identified by Carnegie Corp. in *Writing Next*

Peter Bellamy - April, 2007

1. ***Writing Strategies:*** *teaching students strategies for planning, revising and editing their compositions.*

The 6+1 Trait® Writing model is designed to meld with the writing process as two parts of a single structure. The traits provide the content that students use in the planning, revising and editing stages of composition development. The third of the model's ten instructional strategies involves teaching students specific activities to use in the pre-writing, revising and editing stages.

2. ***Summarization:*** *explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts.*

The trait model does not address this issue directly. However, considerable emphasis is given to using the evaluation of writing skills in reading texts as a stepping stone to writing performance (Strategy 5).

3. ***Collaborative Writing:*** *instructional arrangements in which students work together to plan, draft, revise and edit their compositions.*

The trait model encourages and provides models for the collaborative development of writing throughout the writing process. From Strategy 2 that encourages the collaborative scoring and justifying of scores on written papers in order to develop common language and understanding of writing skills, to the involvement of revision (Strategy 3) partners and teams throughout the writing process, the model supports the collaborative development of writing.

4. ***Specific Product Goals:*** *assigning students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete.*

The trait model is founded on the concept of setting specific criteria for the effective use of writing skills (traits). The scoring guide provides teachers and students with guidelines of what the skills look like at various levels of competency. In addition, Strategy 8 of the model encourages the use of student goal setting/action planning, and self-monitoring of performance. Use of Strategy 6 for writing assignment prompts (CRAFTS), supports the definition of assignments so that they are specific and goal oriented in terms of the teacher's writing instructional goals.

5. ***Word Processing:*** *using computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments.*

The trait model implicitly encourages the use of appropriate technology to support students in the development of compositions, particularly for conducting research and information collection in prewriting, and in taking the drudgery out of revision and editing.

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6. **Sentence Combining:** *teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences.*

The 'sentence fluency' trait is focused specifically on the development of complexity and variety in sentence structure and length. The model provides a variety of classroom activities for development of the skill, as well as the encouragement of teachers to provide models of appropriately complex sentence structures through reading quality literature.

7. **Prewriting:** *encouraging students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their compositions.*

Prewriting is an integral part of the writing process on which the trait model is founded. The model provides guidelines to teachers for activities to develop prewriting skills, and considerations to take into account at the prewriting stage of writing.

8. **Inquiry Activities:** *engaging students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular task.*

The 'ideas' trait focuses on the nature and quality of the ideas and content of a piece of writing. Teachers are encouraged to expose students to a variety of reading genre, particularly nonfiction and informational text in many forms. NWREL has developed nonfiction scoring guides that focus on the specific skills of expository and persuasive writing.

9. **Process Writing Approach:** *interweaving a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing.*

The writing process is an integral part of the trait writing model. The traits make suggestions of activities and considerations to take into account at each step of the writing process. The model also encourages the use of differentiated instruction through curriculum mapping and planning, and effective feedback using specific writing criteria in a workshop environment. 'Audience' is an important consideration in the development of assignments using the CRAFTS writing prompt model (Strategy 6).

10. **Study of Models:** *providing students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing.*

The use of reading models is addressed in Strategy 5 'Read, Read, Read' that encourages teachers to read to students from a variety of quality literature, and help them to identify specific writing skills being employed by professional authors. The model particularly supports the use of appropriate picture books.

11. **Writing for Content Learning:** *using writing as a tool for learning content material.*
NWREL has developed scoring guides for nonfiction writing (expository and persuasive modes), and encourages the use of these guides to support writing in content areas. Many of the samples provided in training workshops are nonfiction, and include excerpts from instructional texts. In addition, the CRAFTS prompt material includes examples of writing assignments appropriate for math, health, and science. Finally, teachers of

language arts are encouraged to collaborate with content area teachers in the development of student writing assignments.

Summary

As can be seen, the 6+1 Trait® Writing model is strongly aligned with nine out of eleven recommended strategies, and has at least reference to the other two. It is also instructive to read the comments of the researchers who encourage 'flexibility' as an important goal in teaching writing, and address some of the current prescriptive programs that in general focus on rigid organization to the exclusion of other writing skills (p. 22). They also point out the negative impact of an instructional focus on mechanics, and the problem of an over-emphasis on the personal or fictional narrative modes of writing.

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Literacy Assessment

✓ Assessment is **key** to child-centered instruction.

✓ Assessment is an **integral** part of instruction.

✓ The same assessment information gathered to **plan instruction** can be used for **formal evaluation.**

✓ It is valuable to **involve students**, even young ones, in **self-assessment.**

Rhodes, L. and Dudley-Marling, C. *Readers and Writers with a Difference.* (1996). Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH

Identifying the Traits

⛰NWREL

Ideas

Ideas are the main message, the content of the piece, the theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

Organization

Organization is the internal structure, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas within a piece of writing.

Word Choice

Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye.

Voice

Voice is the heart and soul, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words.

Conventions

Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece—spelling, paragraphing, grammar and usage, punctuation, and use of capitals.

Presentation

Presentation zeros in on the form and layout of the text and its readability; the piece should be pleasing to the eye.

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6 plus one! TRAITS

The 6+1 Trait® analytical model for assessing and teaching writing comprises six +1 key qualities that define strong writing. These are: **Ideas**, the main message; **Organization**, the internal structure of the piece; **Word Choice**, the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning; **Sentence Fluency**, the rhythm and flow of the language; **Voice**, the heart and soul, the personal tone and flavor of the author's message, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words; **Conventions**, the mechanical correctness, and **Presentation**, how the writing actually looks on the page. In this booklet, each trait is defined for you in more detail.

IDEAS

The ideas are the main message, the content of the piece, the theme, together with all the details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear, not garbled. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative—often the kinds of details the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. Successful writers do not tell readers things they already know: e.g., "It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue, the clouds were fluffy white…" They notice what others overlook, seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the bits and pieces of life that others might not see.

ORGANIZATION

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern, so long as it fits the central idea well. Organizational structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically: information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest and never the big picture—the overriding sense of what the writer is driving at. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up. The piece closes with a sense of resolution, tying up loose ends, bringing things to closure, answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

WORD CHOICE

Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In good descriptive writing, strong word choice clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, careful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of things. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary that impresses the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length and style, and are so well crafted that reading aloud is a pleasure.

VOICE

The voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is engaged personally with the topic, he/she imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. And it is that individual something—different from the mark of all other writers—that we call voice.
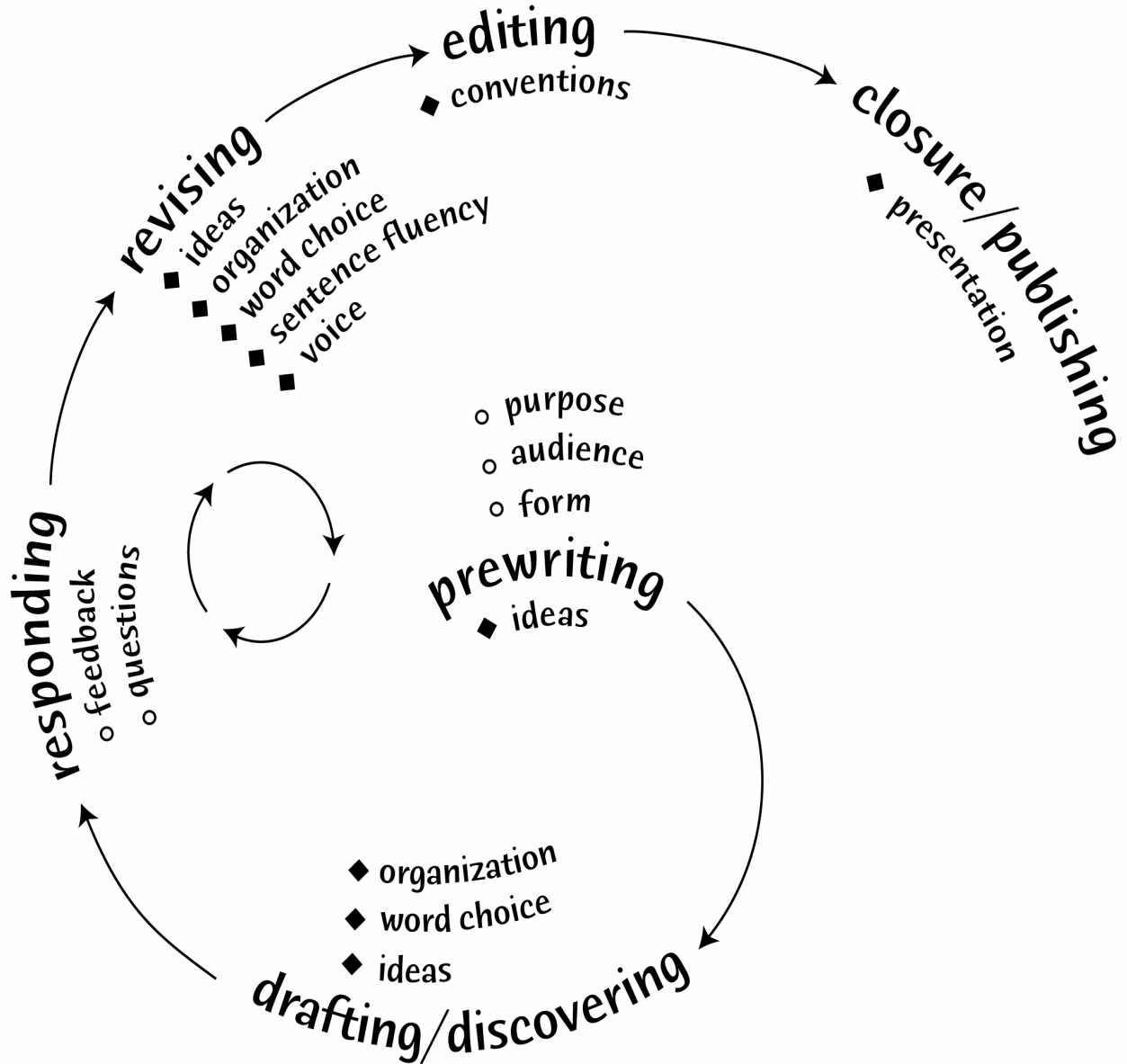
CONVENTIONS

Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece—spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing (indenting at the appropriate spots), use of capitals, and punctuation. Writing that is strong in conventions has usually been proofread and edited with care. Handwriting and neatness are not part of this trait. The key is this: How much work would a copy editor need to do to prepare the piece for publication?

PRESENTATION

Presentation is the way we exhibit our message on paper. Even if our ideas, words, and sentences are vivid, precise, and well constructed, our paper will not be inviting to read unless the guidelines for presentation are observed. Our world is print-rich, and no one can read it all on any given topic. We pick and choose based on need and accessibility. Good writers are aware of the necessity of presentation, particularly technical writers who must include graphics (such as maps, graphs, and visual aids) to guide the reader through the text.

WRITING
6+1 Traits & the Process

editing
■ conventions

closure/publishing
■ presentation

revising
■ ideas
■ organization
■ word choice
■ sentence fluency
■ voice

○ purpose
○ audience
○ form

prewriting
◆ ideas

responding
○ feedback
○ questions

◆ organization
◆ word choice
◆ ideas

drafting/discovering

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# ADVANTAGES OF ANALYTIC SCORING

- Offers a broad perspective

- Challenges us to think of writing in new ways

- Gives us a model for responding to students' writing

- Provides vocabulary for talking with students about writing

- Provides a solid foundation for revision and editing

- Allows students to become evaluators

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EFFECTIVE CRITERIA

1. Speak the user's language.

2. Give the user a vocabulary for talking about and thinking about performance in a given area.

3. Zero in on what's really important, what's really valued.

4. Narrow the performance area down to manageable scope and size.

5. Establish realistic, attainable, goals and standards.

6. Establish beginning points, not signs of failure.

7. Define and clearly separate levels of performance, making it easy to observe and chart growth.

8. Are easy to internalize and remember.

9. Are always open to refinement and new thinking.

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TEACHER CALIBRATOR
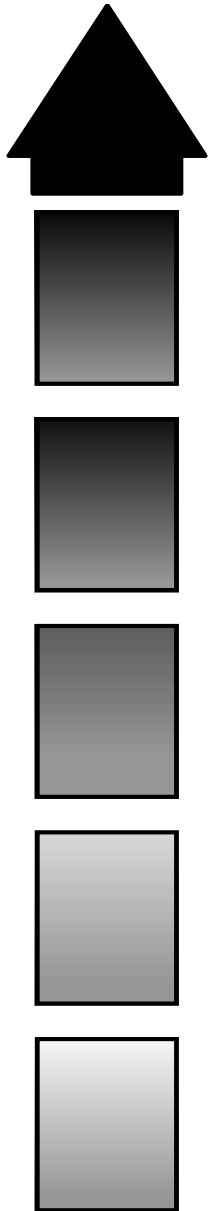
Wow! Exceeds expectations

- IDEAS
- ORGANIZATION
- VOICE
- WORD CHOICE
- SENTENCE FLUENCY
- CONVENTIONS
- PRESENTATION

5 STRONG:

shows control and skill in this trait; many strengths present

4 EFFECTIVE:

on balance, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses; a small amount of revision is needed

3 DEVELOPING:

strengths and need for revision are about equal; about half-way home

2 EMERGING:

need for revision outweighs strengths; isolated moments hint at what the writer has in mind

1 NOT YET:

a bare beginning; writer not yet showing any control

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6+1 Trait® ONE PAGER

Ideas: The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, with details that enrich and develop that theme.	**Organization**: The internal structure, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas.	**Word Choice**: The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.
⑤ *This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.* A. The topic is narrow and manageable. B. Relevant, telling, quality details go beyond the obvious. C. Reasonably accurate details. D. Writing from knowledge or experience; ideas are fresh and original E. Reader's questions are anticipated and answered. F. Insight	⑤ *The organizational structure of this paper enhances and showcases the central idea or theme of the paper; includes a satisfying introduction and conclusion.* A. An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution. B. Thoughtful transitions connect ideas. C. Sequencing is logical and effective. D. Pacing is well controlled. E. The title, if desired, is original. F. Structure is appropriate for purpose and audience; paragraphing is effective.	⑤ *Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way.* A. Words are specific and accurate. B. Striking words and phrases. C. Natural, effective and appropriate language. D. Lively verbs, specific nouns and modifiers. E. Language enhances and clarifies meaning. F. Precision is obvious.
③ *The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.* A. The topic is fairly broad. B. Support is attempted. C. Ideas are reasonably clear. D. Writer has difficulty going from general observations to specifics. E. The reader is left with questions. F. The writer generally stays on topic.	③ *The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.* A. The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. B. Transitions sometimes work. C. Sequencing shows some logic, yet structure takes attention away from the content. D. Pacing is fairly well controlled. E. A title (if desired) is present. F. Organization sometimes supports the main point or story line, with an attempt at paragraphing.	③ *The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy.* A. Words are adequate and correct in a general sense. B. Familiar words and phrases communicate. C. Attempts at colorful language. D. Passive verbs, everyday nouns, mundane modifiers E. Functional, with one or two fine moments. F. Occasionally, the words show refinement and precision.
① *The paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. The reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.* A. The writer is still in search of a topic. B. Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development. C. The idea is a simple restatement or a simple answer to the question. D. The writer has not begun to define the topic. E. Everything seems as important as everything else. The text may be repetitious, disconnected, and contains too many random thoughts.	① *The writing lacks a clear sense of direction.* A. No real lead. B. Connections between ideas are confusing. C. Sequencing needs work. D. Pacing feels awkward. E. No title is present (if requested). F. Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line. Little or no evidence of paragraphing.	① *The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary* A. Words are nonspecific or distracting. B. Many of the words don't work. C. Language is used incorrectly. D. Limited vocabulary, misuse of parts of speech. E. Words and phrases are unimaginative and lifeless. F. Jargon or clichés, persistent redundancy.

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Sentence Fluency: The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye.	**Voice**: The unique perspective of the writer evident in the piece through the use of compelling ideas, engaging language, and revealing details.	**Conventions**: The mechanical correctness of the piece; spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation.*
⑤ *The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built.* A. Sentences enhance the meaning. B. Sentences vary in length as well as structure. C. Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings. D. Creative and appropriate connectives. E. The writing has cadence.	⑤ *The writer of this paper speaks directly to the reader in a manner that is individual, compelling, engaging, and shows respect for the audience.* A. Uses topic, details, and language to strongly connect with the audience. B. Purpose is reflected by content and arrangement of ideas. C. The writer takes a risk with revealing details. D. Expository or persuasive reflects understanding and commitment to topic. E. Narrative writing is honest, personal, and engaging.	⑤ *The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing)* A. Spelling is generally correct. B. Punctuation is accurate. C. Capitalization skills are present. D. Grammar and usage are correct. E. Paragraphing tends to be sound. F. The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect; and it works!
③ *The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical.* A. Sentences get the job done in a routine fashion. B. Sentences are usually constructed correctly. C. Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; some variety is attempted. D. The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues. E. Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.	③ *The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.* A. Attempt to connect with audience is earnest but impersonal. B. Attempts to include content and structure to reflect purpose. C. Occasionally reveals personal details, but avoids risk. D. Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic. E. Narrative writing reflects limited individual perspective.	③ *The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions* A. Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words. B. End punctuation is usually correct. C. Most words are capitalized correctly. D. Problems with grammar and usage are not serious. E. Paragraphing is attempted. **F.** Moderate (a little of this, a little of that) editing.
① *The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.* A. Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward. Phrasing does not sound natural. B. No "sentence sense" present. C. Sentences begin the same way. D. Endless connectives. E. Does not invite expressive oral reading.	① *The writer seems uninvolved with the topic and the audience.* A. Fails to connect with the audience. B. Purpose is unclear. C. Writing is risk free, with no sense of the writer. D. Expository or persuasive writing is mechanical, showing no engagement with the topic. E. Narrative writing lacks development of a point of view.	① *Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make text difficult to read.* A. Spelling errors are frequent. B. Punctuation missing or incorrect. C. Capitalization is random. D. Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable. E. Paragraphing is missing. F. The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning.
Key Question: *Can you FEEL the words and phrases flow together as you read it aloud?*	**Key Question**: *Would you keep reading this piece if it were longer?*	**Key Question**: *How much editing would have to be done to be ready to share with an outside source?* • A whole lot? Score in the 1-2 range. • A moderate amount? Score in the 3 range. • Very little? Score in the 4-5 range.
Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.		

**6+1 Trait® Writing
Teacher's Planning Chart for**

IDEAS

Objective	Read Alouds	MiniLessons	Journal Ideas
Narrow, manageable topic			
Relevant, quality details			
Fresh, original ideas; personal knowledge or experience; insights			
Reader's questions are anticipated and answered			

Picture Books for IDEAS

All the Places to Love
Alphabet City
The Always Prayer Shawl
Amelia's Notebook
Antics
The Armadillo from Amarillo
Aunt Harriet's Underground
    Railroad in the Sky
Benit's Dream Bottle
A Child's Portrait of Shakespeare
Day of the Dead
Dear Mr. Blueberry
The Dragon and the Unicorn
A Drop of Water: A Book of
    Science and Wonder
Everybody Needs a Rock
Fables
Flute's Journey: The Life of a
    Wood Thrush
Go Home River
Grasper
Great Crystal Bear
Home
Home Place
I am the Dog/I am the Cat
I Hate to Read
I know What You Do When I Go to
    School
I'm in Charge of Celebrations
Jumanji
Kofi and His Magic

Letters from Felix
Li'l Sis and Uncle Willie
Lightning
Macbeth for Kids
The Magic School Bus: At the Waterworks
Miss Nelson is Back
Miss Rumphius
Mississippi Beau
Motel of the Mysteries
Nurse Lugton's Curtain
On the Day You Were Born
The Other way to Listen
Panther Dream: A Story of the African
    Rain Forest
Ragtime Tumpie
Roxaboxen
Sitti's Secret
Sophie and Lou
The Squiggle
The Story of Ruby Bridges
A Street Called Home
A Sweet, Sweet, Basket
Tomorrow's Alphabet
Tree of Life: The World of the African
    Baobab
Twelfth Night for Kids
Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge

Strategies for Writing Instruction

1. **TEACH STUDENTS THE LANGUAGE** they need to speak and think like writers.

2. **READ, SCORE, AND JUSTIFY** your scores on anonymous sample papers.

3. **PRACTICE AND REHEARSE FOCUSED REVISION** strategies by:
   → working with a partner or small group
   → working on an *anonymous* paper
   → revising for one trait at a time

4. **WRITE, Right Now!**—this means you! Write along with your students. Take a risk and share your "works in progress" with them. Ask them for revising feedback. You'll be amazed!

5. **READ, READ, READ** printed material of all kinds to illustrate strengths and weaknesses in writing.

6. **C.R.A.F.T.S.** (Context, Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Strong verb)
   → Craft thoughtful, explicit writing prompts.
   → Connect what students know and are learning to various Modes of writing.

7. **ACTIVITIES AND FOCUS LESSONS** (AKA mini lessons)
   → Weave focused trait skill lessons into your curriculum to enhance your writing program.

8. **GOAL SETTING AND MONITORING PROGRESS**
   → Teach students to set writing goals and continuously monitor their progress.

9. **CURRICULUM MAPPING & INTEGRATION OF THE TRAITS**
   → Where do the Traits fit in your program?

Strategy 2

Depending upon the age and developmental level of the student, one of the fastest, most effective ways for student writers to learn the traits is by hearing, reading, discussing, and scoring other student work or printed material. This is probably the very way you learned the traits yourself. Of course, you won't try to teach students in a one-day workshop, the way you and your colleagues probably learned the traits. You may spend two weeks, or even longer, on one trait—partly because you need more practice time with students, and partly because you may be interweaving other strategies and other kinds of writing lessons with this one.

It is worth pointing out that many teachers find this strategy so successful, it is the ***only one*** they use in teaching the traits. They may, for instance, have a student writing sample on the overhead when students come into class, then spend just ten minutes or so scoring and discussing that sample for one or more traits. And except for that one change, the remainder of their curriculum proceeds as usual. Even with that small change, many teachers notice a marked increase in their students' understanding of what makes writing work. After just a few weeks' time, students begin to get a strong sense of what good writing is all about, and teachers see that insight reflected in both rough drafts and revisions. It's the TALK that's teaching.

Some Ground Rules

This is a simple strategy, but here are a few proven suggestions for making it work:

1. **Do NOT use sample papers from student writers in your class.**
   You want students to be honest in their reactions to the writing and not be concerned with hurting another's feelings. If they know from the beginning that the paper doesn't belong to anyone in their class, it makes it safe to speak up and say things about weaker papers that they would be reluctant to say to someone they know. After a while, you can talk to them about how to make constructive suggestions as they work with a peer or a small group with "live" papers. In the beginning, however, it is important to use anonymous samples.

2. **Use samples that are either very strong or noticeably weak on a given trait.**
   Clear examples make it easier for students who are just learning the trait to see what characteristics are important in defining that trait. For instance, suppose you want your students to include interesting and important details in their writing. If you choose a middle-of-the-road paper, one that inter-mingles strong details and fuzzy generalizations, students may wind up more confused than enlightened.

3. **Work on just one trait at a time.**
   A paper that is strong in ideas may well be strong in other areas, too. A paper that is weak in organization may have other weaknesses. But focusing the discussion on one trait at a time will make your teaching easier and faster for beginning raters. Revisiting the same paper for different traits will be a comfortable and familiar process for students. It will help you reinforce the concepts of the first trait, while serving to remind students that writing is all about using all of the traits to the best of their ability. One trait logically leads to the next.

4. **Read <u>aloud</u> all the samples you use.**
   Students learn the traits more quickly and more easily when they hear as well as see the text. It's a great way to reinforce the fluency trait, too. Students need to talk, share ideas, and hear language. Silent reading and independent reflection do not work here. As you read the piece aloud, someone in the group may hear something that others overlook. That person becomes, for the moment, the teacher of the group, guiding everyone down a path that all will find familiar next time.

5. **Read and score all papers yourself ahead of time before sharing them with students.**
   It can be very hard to lead a good discussion on a piece of writing you are seeing and thinking about for the first time. If you read it in advance, you'll have the opportunity to decide on what key points and features you want your student readers to notice in particular.

What About Grade Level?

Don't worry about the grade level of the papers. It isn't as important as it may seem. It is fine—often productive—to use third-grade papers with middle school students, for instance, or a high school paper with fourth or fifth-graders. The quality of the paper and your ability to use it to make a point are much more important than the grade level of the author. Length is a factor, too. Very long papers may be hard to work with compared to those that only run a page or two. For this reason, many teachers at all levels find it more convenient to use elementary-level papers than papers by older writers. A mix is ideal.

Remember to use clearly strong and clearly weak papers to start; they are easier to rate than middle-of-the-road papers. Also, their obvious strengths or problems help define the traits in the writers' minds. Papers in the mid-point range are, by definition, a blend of strengths and problems. As students learn about writing, this mix of messages may

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be confusing—stick with papers that clearly define performance in a trait at one end of the continuum or the other.

Step By Step: Teaching the Traits with Sample Papers

(We've included a set for your use at the end of this binder)

Step 1

Decide which trait you will focus on for the lesson. Early on, it's best to do ONE at a time. Later, when students have had more practice, you can talk about two or more traits at once.

Step 2

For your discussion, choose sample papers that are very STRONG or very WEAK in the trait you have chosen. Present papers in PAIRS (one strong and one weak) as much as possible, so you have a contrast. This makes teaching the trait much easier.

Step 3

Make an overhead of each sample paper you use. You can hand out hard copies, too if you wish, but use an overhead as well. Some students need to see the paper as it is being discussed and be able to point to specific examples from the text.

Step 4

Read each paper ALOUD. Papers play very differently to the eye and ear. In addition, reading aloud helps everyone focus on the paper as a group. If the paper is especially weak in conventions, you may wish to read it aloud before you put it on the overhead for students to see. Otherwise, they may focus too much on the conventions without attending to other traits.

Step 5

Remind students to focus on ONE trait at a time, and to use the *Student Friendly Guide* you have provided. Ask them to find, in the scoring guide, specific language that justified the score they want to give. It is helpful sometimes to have students write down their scores and a few key phrases from the rubric to justify those scores. This keeps them from making overly general comments ("Pretty good." "I liked it," or "Not the best.")

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Step 6

As you present each paper, give students a minute to talk to a partner before asking for comments from the larger group. This gets more students talking, and confidently using the language of the scoring guide.

Step 7

After they've talked for 1-2 minutes with a partner and reacted to the writing, ask them to share comments aloud with the whole class.

Step 8

Ask for a show of hands: How many think this is a Strong paper? Weak? (Then depending upon answers, start in middle and work to strong/weak.) How many gave this a 3 on ideas? How many gave it a 4? and so on. Then, record the numbers on a chart like that included at the end of this strategy.

Step 9

Encourage students to be very specific, expansive, and articulate in explaining the reasons behind their scores. If a paper is "pretty good," they need to explain why; if a piece needs work, ask, "What would you do to revise it?" Teach them to support their scores with evidence from the writing.

Step 10

Usually, students are quite close in their assessment IF they have a scoring guide to go by, IF you have discussed the trait, and IF the sample papers you choose are good, clear samples of strong and weak performances. But if they are not close, put the paper back on the overhead, ask them to discuss the paper again with their partner (or a different partner, or even in a small group), then re-vote to see if scores come closer. Usually, a little discussion is all that's needed to come to agreement within the majority. It's okay for a few people to disagree! The rule is this: If you disagree with the majority vote, you need to be able to explain why—in clear, specific, trait language.

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Earth

The Earth has lots of meaning to me.

I like it cause it is where i live. And there are butiful things in the would lick trees, flowers, rocks and The nature that lives on the Earth, mountains, rivers, My grandparents, mon dad, my pets and my pets friends, the govenor, My teacher, all my friends, my brouther, my cousion, and all the nice people in the world.

But the best thing on The Earth is my relatives my relatives are very very nice.

They will do anything for you And i am glad they are here.

I like the nature cause that gives the animals a lot of homes and a river lets the animal get a drink and the trees some of them give food to the animals, and some trees give us food.

The mountains are rlly nice it is part of nature and thy are pretty big and they are part of nature and History like pikes peek and the mountions rushmore with the four presodent.

Earth has 50 states and about 7 countrys and most of the Earth is water there is Indian ocean Atlantic pacif and the golf ocean.

And It is important to me cause if we didn't have trees we would died. That is the main reason.

(Also good for Voice)

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STRATEGY 1, 2, 3, 4

What Happens Next?

1) **Notice how far we've come.** You have introduced the concept of criteria—descriptors that help define the qualities of good writing—and helped students understand how much about the traits they already understand. **(Strategy 1, Teach the Language)**

2) You have reinforced student's understanding of these criteria by showing that the writing that students create in the classroom is easy to assess. **(Strategy 2, Score some Papers)**

3) You have also shown them that revision is very doable when they know exactly what characteristic of the writing is important to work on and how much better the whole piece gets when a weak link is improved. **(Strategy 3, Group Revision)**

4) Now you have branched out from student writing to writing in the world around them, both at school and in every place in their lives. **(Strategy 4, Model Writing)**

At this point, students will truly begin to see the traits everywhere they go, and begin to evaluate the quality of writing as they read—often without consciously setting out to do so. So on to Strategies 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.

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RESODURCES: 6+ 1 TRAIT® WEBSITE

Using our website is as easy as 1, 2, 3………………okay, 4!
1.   Open your Web browser
2.   Type in www.nwrel.org/assessment
3.   Use 6+1 **Writing** link on the right side of the page
4.   Then try the 6+1 **Scoring** link on the right side of the page

That's it! Nothing to it! These two links on our website help a lot. The Writing link gives you ideas for lesson plans trait by trait, and other support resources. Go there and take a look. The Scoring link gives you and your students opportunities to score real papers by other students. Once you score these papers, you can click on another link and compare your scores with those of the professionals from the Lab.

Our website supports your writing instruction. Many of our participants think they have the model all figured out while they're at a workshop or institute; then they get back to their classrooms and reality sets in. Our website was developed for just these kinds of moments of panic. On the site you will find:
   → Support from the 6+1 Trait writing professionals
   → Links to grade level lesson plans that can help you teach the traits
   → Sample student papers to add to your collection or provide added scoring practice
   → Answers to frequently asked questions

We want to make our website as helpful as possible. Let us know if you have any ideas that would make this 6+1 Trait destination as inviting, supportive, and helpful as possible. Email us at workmanm@nwrel.org.

While you're at the website, please check out some of our products suggested on the next page.

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RESOURCES: 6+ 1 TRAIT® PRODUCTS

Teachers familiar with the 6+1 Trait writing model find these resources helpful:

MUST HAVE

1.   *Picture Books: An Annotated Bibliography for Teaching Writing*. This annotated bibliography groups picture books by trait and includes many teaching suggestions and lesson plans.

NEW! For Primary

2.   *Wee Can Write*, uses renowned children's literature, to show kindergarten, primary, and upper-preschool teachers how to apply the 6+1 Trait® Writing model with beginning writers. Developed by kindergarten teachers in conjunction with NWREL 6+ 1 Trait® experts, this book ties the literacy needs of very young writers to proven instructional strategies with creative and developmentally appropriate activities, including assessment of student understanding.

3.   *Seeing With New Eyes,* a complete guidebook for teachers who are looking for ways to help the youngest writers develop a writer's vocabulary, and with it, the confidence to create wonderful writing.

4.   *6+1 Traits of Writing* – (2 Books) Primary & Grades 3+ -- the Complete Guide

NEW!

5.   6+1 Trait Posters, a variety available for your use; new icons and a snappy design. One poster shows how The Writing Process & The Traits work together.

6.   *Dear Parent: A Handbook for Parents of 6+1 Trait Writing Students*. In this friendly easy-to-use handbook, parents gain numerous ideas for strengthening students writing and reading skills at home, using the 6+1 Trait analytical writing model. Great for students and teachers, too—anyone looking for specifics on revision.

7.   *The Student Friendly Guides to Working with Traits*. Scoring guides written in language that speaks to students. Parents will appreciate this set, too!

8.   Rubber Stamps for Scoring Student Papers. A set of four Trait stamps listing the traits; assists teachers so they can respond to editing and revising as students work on drafts or turn in formal papers.

9.   Several videos are available for purchase--browse our catalogue: Training, Seeing with New Eyes, Trait by Trait Clarification & Direction, to name a few.

To purchase these products, please go to our website, and browse through our catalogue:
http://www.nwrel.org/comm/catalog/departments.asp?d=15

RESOURCES: 6+ 1 TRAIT TRAINING

Q: <u>Workshops</u> or <u>Institutes</u>?

A: The **Content** is the **Same**; the **Delivery** model **Differs**.

Workshops—we come to you:

Schools, school districts, counties, state departments, and community organizations **contract with NWREL** to arrange for a presenter to come to you at your location and work with the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model in any combination of the workshops described below (follow-up trainings encouraged). The audience (40-60 total) can be any configuration of educators, parents, and community members you feel is most useful.

Institutes—you come to us

Teachers, administrators, and other interested parties come to us to receive training on a NWREL-sponsored site.

Our most frequently requested training includes:
1. 6+1 Trait® Writing **Introduction** K-3 or 4-12
2. Wee Can Write® **Applying the Trait Model** with K-2
3. 6+1 Trait® **Content** Writing, 6-12
4. **Training the Trainers**, Teacher Leaders (prerequisite) **Build Capacity**
5. 1-Day Overviews and/or Refreshers
6. Administrative Support Sessions
7. **Scoring**: Primary; Intermediate; Secondary – Learn How to Score, Calibrate, and Score Some More

Other -- We can work with you to customize training to meet your individual needs.

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