

6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CONTENT

- Ideas
- Organization
- Voice
- Word choice
- Sentence fluency
- Conventions
- Presentation
- Assessment
- Instruction of traits
- Feedback to students

The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model provides teachers with an analytic model for assessing and teaching writing. The model consists of seven qualities that define strong writing. These are: (1) Ideas, the heart of the message; (2) Organization, the internal structure of the piece; (3) Voice, the personal tone and flavor of the author's message; (4) Word choice, the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning; (5) Sentence fluency, the rhythm and flow of the language; (6) Conventions, the mechanical correctness; and (7) Presentation, how the writing actually looks on the page.

The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model provides teachers with professional development to assess students' written work. The training involves learning how to use the Scoring Guide and the Anchor Papers for consistency of application across raters and schools. Scoring papers becomes the foundation for instruction.

The program provides teachers with an organizational structure for teaching writing. Teachers use the assessment to provide specific feedback to students and to focus on improving specific skills. The seven traits, or qualities, give students and teachers a common language to talk about the quality of writing. The connection between effective writing instruction and the assessment of student writing contributes to creating successful writers and teachers of writing.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

CONTEXT

- Wide variety of schools and districts
- Wide range of student populations

The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model has been used in a variety of schools and districts. Since 1985, the program has expanded to include thousands of teachers and hundreds of schools in almost every state and in a number of other countries as well. The program is appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school teachers and for students of a wide range of ability levels.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model has a wide variety of professional development opportunities available for those interested in learning how to implement the program through the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL). Workshops in local schools and districts, institutes at the NWREL, videotapes, resource books, Internet resources, and other forms of technical support are available.

The basic training is two days in which participants learn to evaluate student writing in grades 3–12. The goal of the first day is assessing student work. The second day of the workshop focuses on building teachers' knowledge about the traits and helps teachers use the assessment to focus instruction. This day helps teachers develop application lessons for identifying quality writing, managing the writing process, mastering revision techniques, practicing editing skills, and developing confident writers. A separate two-hour overview of the program is available for school administrators to acquaint them with the program, its effectiveness, and ways to support teachers implementing the program.

An advanced training program is available and consists of three and one-half days for those experienced with using The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model and who are interested in becoming a trainer for others. NWREL is continuously developing new training and resources to support teachers in their implementation of the program.

the BOTTOM LINE



The 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model improves student writing performance. While most of the research was done at the elementary level, those studies of secondary students in 7th, 9th, and 11th grades demonstrated improved writing scores when their teachers systematically implemented the model. With its extensive use, its well-designed professional development, classroom-focused resource, and support for teachers, it is a successful writing program, one that demonstrates its success in student writing performance.

PROCESS

- Training
- Demonstration
- Videotapes
- Assessment
- Follow-up support
- Training of trainers

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Teachers in grades 3–12
- Entire school faculties
- Departments
- Teams
- Individual teachers

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Writing assessments scored using the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model

In studies of 5th grade students whose teachers systematically used the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model, students outperformed a similar group in every trait on a pre- and post-assessment of students' writing. In another study of secondary students' writing, a t-test of related means shows that students whose teachers used the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model assessment and instruction performed better in all categories when pre- and post-test scores are compared. Not all improvements were significant however. Other studies of elementary students' writing confirm that 6 + 1 Trait™ contributes to increased performance on all traits.

A study of the impact of the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model on teachers' implementation and fidelity to the model was conducted at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. At the high school level, teachers reported using the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model as the most widely used writing model and the most widely used assessment model. Teachers also reported having the flexibility to make adaptations to the model or to the materials as necessary. One hundred percent of the respondents to this study's survey reported that the 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Model increased the quality of their students' writing.

PROJECT DIRECTOR

JANICE WRIGHT
Assessment Associate
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S. W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204-3297



Phone: (503) 275-9581



Fax: (503) 275-0450



E-mail: wrightj@nwrel.org



Web site: www.nwrel.org

SAMPLE SITES

SITE #1

Bridgette Belasli
Lake Washington School District
P.O. Box 97039
Redmond, WA 98073-9739
phone: (425) 702-3274
fax: (425) 861-7765
e-mail: bbelasli@lkwash.wednet.edu
web site: www.lkwash.wednet.edu

SITE #2

Sheila Raihl
Gadsden Independent School District
P.O. Drawer 70
Anthony, NM 88021
phone: (505) 882-6457
fax: (505) 882-0376
e-mail: sraihl.gisd.k12.nm.us
web site: www.gisd.k12.nm.us

DOCUMENTATION

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