

Title: Six Traits of Writing Through the Lens of Authentic Intellectual Work

Class Dates: October 23 - April 1, XXXX

Class Times: 8:00 AM - 4:30 AM

Class Location:

October 23 and 24 are class contact dates.

Teachers will complete EDMA required activities and collaboration between October 24, XXXX and April 1, XXXX

Instructor(s)

Credits: 1

Description:

Best practice supports the integration of reading and writing skills. The Six Traits of Writing model is aligned with and can be used as a classroom or district performance assessment to evaluate Iowa Core English/Language Arts standards. The connection of writing instruction and writing assessment are elements of the school improvement process. Use of Six Traits as an assessment provides specific forms for use of Six Trait instructional strategies in drafting, revising, and assessing writing. As a result of linking instruction and assessment teachers will be better able to communicate to students what the qualities of good writing are and how specifically to achieve them. By connecting 6 Trait writing to the Authentic Intellectual Work framework, teachers will not only make the reading/writing connection more explicit for student but also increase the level of cognitive complexity in the writing tasks they provide, strengthen writing connections to the world beyond school, and equip students with an essential tool to communicate in everyday life.

Audience: Site Based

Targeted Subject Area and Grade Level:
6-12 Writing

Subject Category: Writing

Focus of Instruction: Combination

Learning Goals or Targets:

Teachers will become familiar with the traits of quality writing: ideas/content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

Teachers will be able to assess student's writing using an analytical scale for each trait.

Teachers will be able to use the trait descriptors to teach the traits, provide students with a target for their writing and revision of completed drafts, and to teach students to use the rubrics for peer editing/revision.

Teachers will be able to identify age-appropriate literature that exemplifies high quality writing in the various traits to facilitate students' understanding and appreciation of literature.

Teachers will make connections between the writing traits and the AIW framework, resulting in writing tasks, writing instruction, and student writing products that score high against the AIW rubrics.

Course Requirements and Participant Evaluation:

Course Requirements:

100% Attendance

Active Participation

All assignments completed and handed in

Participant Evaluation:

A Grade

~ Submit 3 Lesson plans for teaching 6 Traits including Ideas and 2 other traits that demonstrate explicit connections to the AIW standards for tasks.

~ Submit list of 6 pieces of text (one for each trait) that exemplify the trait at a high level, with rationale for each connected to the trait descriptors for each trait (found on the 6 Traits rubrics).

~ Submit collaboration log.

~ Submit reflection on learning about 6 Trait writing and how it enhances your classroom writing instruction and assessment as well as how it connects to AIW.

B Grade

~ Submit 2 Lesson plans for teaching 6 Traits including Ideas and 2 other traits that demonstrate connections to the AIW standards for tasks.

~ Submit list of 4 pieces of text (for different traits) that exemplify the trait at a high level, with rationale for each connected to the trait descriptors for each trait (found on the rubric).

~ Submit collaboration log.

~ Submit reflection on learning about 6 Trait writing and how it enhances classroom writing instruction and assessment as well as how it connects to AIW.

C Grade (Required effective July 1, 2015)

D Grade (Required effective July 1, 2015)

F Grade-did not complete all of the above requirements

Research Base:

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 1 The notion is widespread that children must learn to read before they can write. However, Bissex (1980), Chomsky (1971) and Graves (1983) found that young children begin writing as or even before they learn to read, because they have a need to communicate ideas and concepts that have been discovered by experience rather than in books. And this communication serves not only to share thoughts, but also to help organize them into coherent categories. Research has confirmed the importance of process in writing, and that what writers do as they write is at least as important as the products they produce (Tompkins 1993). Britton (1970), Emig (1971) and Graves (1975) investigated the thinking processes that young writers used as they wrote. They found that the process consisted of three basic activities: conception or prewriting, incubation or composing, and production or postwriting. Flowers and Hayes (1977,1981) found these same basic stages, and added that the process is recursive, with writers moving between steps in the process

freely. Sommers (1980, 1982) described writing as a revision process in which ideas are developed, and pointed to the limitations placed on student thinking when teachers focus on mechanics rather than content. Early research into the process of writing was brought to a head in 1972 with the Bay Area Writing Project that later became the National Writing Project. But while the writing process developed by the Project provided teachers with a framework within which to work, it did not give the detailed description of what makes good writing. Paul Diederich's work at the Educational Testing Service remained the only description of writing quality criteria until 1984 when Beaverton School District in Oregon began a study that eventually led to the development of the Six Traits of Writing. Diederich, French and Carlton (1961) in a paper presented to the National Council of Teachers of English described a factor-analytic study of the reasons teachers gave for their grades on written compositions, along with a set of eight scales developed from the study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Their scales were named: ideas, organization, wording, flavor, usage, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting. This paper along with his later article titled "How to Measure Growth in Writing Ability" (1966), are the earliest systematic attempts to move the educational community away from holistic writing scoring towards an analytic, trait-based model. Grundy (1986) in a bulletin published by the Oregon School Study Council describes the development of the Beaverton School District's writing program that uses a "process approach" to writing. A result of this change was the increasing awareness of the need for an analytic assessment tool to gauge the success of the new writing instructional model. In 1983, a committee facilitated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory reviewed a range of assessment models and finally proposed a six-trait model that included: ideas/content; organization and development; voice/tone/flavor; effective word choice; syntax/sentence structure; and writing conventions. The district produced a scoring guide for each of the traits containing descriptors of papers scoring 5, 3 or 1 on a five point scale. The Beaverton model was chosen by the Oregon Department of Education for the 1985 Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment (see report: Oregon 1985 Assessment, Writing; Oregon Department of Education).

This class is also supported by the school reform research conducted by Fred Newman in the 1990s showing that students in classrooms scoring high in authentic pedagogy (construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond the classroom) had better learning outcomes. This research led to Authentic Intellectual Work as a professional development framework for teachers encouraging them to reflect collaboratively on their own classroom practices.

Course Content/Syllabus:

This course will begin with an introduction to the concept of Six Traits of Writing for assessment and instruction. Each trait will be defined and the use of an analytic scale for assessing the quality of student work in each of the traits will be modeled. Using sample student papers at various grade levels and levels of quality, teachers will be guided through using this system for rating papers. Group and individual practice will be provided. Teachers will learn how to use the scale to encourage revision by giving students concrete feedback and methods to improve their written products.

Teachers will learn techniques for connecting literature to the analysis of traits, using literature to identify, analyze, and describe them. Teachers will use sample student papers from outside their school to model individual traits and how to rate them using the analytic scale by identifying, analyzing, and describing the traits. Teachers will participate in student reading and writing activities designed to develop each of the traits. They will learn how to support student participation in trait peer response/editing circles. Teachers will use the analytic scale for assessment of student writing. They will support student use of the teacher's rating on the analytic scale for revision.

Teachers seeking Drake EDMA credit will complete the following to meet the requirement for 30 hours of learning experiences beyond the course contact time:

- 1) Create and teach three 6 Traits lessons including Ideas and 2 other traits that demonstrate explicit connections to the AIW standards for tasks. (8 hours outside class time)
- 2) Select 6 pieces of text (one for each trait) that exemplify the trait at a high level, with rationale for each connected to the trait descriptors for each trait (found on the rubric). Includes an explanation of how the texts will be used. (10 hours outside of class time)
- 3) Log 10 hours spent in collaboration with course instructor, AIW local coach, and/or E/LA colleagues connecting 6 Traits to AIW. (10 hours outside of class time)
- 4) Complete a reflection on learning about 6 Trait writing and how it enhances classroom writing instruction and assessment as well as how it connects to AIW. (2 hours outside of class time)