The Six Traits of Writing Model:
Teaching & Assessing

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Introduction

Welcome to the course *The Six Traits of Writing Model: Teaching & Assessing*, tailored specifically to professionals such as educators, teaching aides, school psychologists, and counselors who are involved with children and adolescents across various educational disciplines. The course underscores the importance of writing instruction as a lifelong skill and provides both theoretical knowledge and actionable strategies to integrate the six traits of writing into any classroom setting.

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course.

Course Materials (Online)

Title:	*The Six Traits of Writing Model: Teaching & Assessing*
Publisher:	Virtual Education Software, inc. 2017, Revised 2020, Revised 2024
Instructor:	Dr. Karen Lea

Academic Integrity Statement

The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work

Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student's own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one's own work is unacceptable.

Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout. A participant who fails to complete the entire course in the manner intended and as outlined, may have their grade reduced or fail the course. It is the student's responsibility to contact the facilitator, instructor-of-record, or VESi registrar if there is any question as to the manner in which this course is to be completed.

Aiding Honesty in Others

The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application

This course is designed to be an informational course with application to educational settings. The analysis of how to teach writing and how to integrate techniques of writing are designed for all grade levels, all content areas.

Expected Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, participants will demonstrate their ability to:
- Analyze how to integrate teaching the elements of the Six Traits of Writing
- Integrate assessing the elements of the Six Traits of Writing
- Analyze how to integrate teaching the ideas of writing
- Analyze how to integrate teaching the organization of writing
- Integrate assessing writing ideas and organization of writing
- Analyze how to integrate teaching finding voice
- Analyze how to integrate teaching word choice
- Integrate assessing writing voice and word choice
- Analyze how to teach sentence fluency
- Analyze how to teach English conventions
- Integrate assessing sentence fluency and conventions

Course Description

This course, *The Six Traits of Writing Model: Teaching & Assessing*, will discuss why writing is important and why teachers should include writing as often as possible in all content areas. The course will also include practical applications for assessing and teaching writing, including teaching students how to self-assess their own writing. The first chapter of this course will discuss why teaching writing is important and give you an introduction to the Six Traits of Writing model. Through chapters 2, 3, and 4 we will discuss the elements of the Six Traits of Writing model. Throughout those elements we will look at practical ways to use this model in your classroom.

Student Expectations

As a student you will be expected to:
- Students are required to view/read each screen in each exercise of each chapter. Screens, exercises and chapter content may not be skipped. Students are also required to access and read all content in each course handout.
- Complete all four section examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented. **You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course**. ***Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete a review of any section on which your examination score was below 50%.
- Retake any examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 50%, making sure to also be achieving an overall exam score of a minimum 70% **(maximum of three attempts).** ***Please note: Minimum exam score requirements may vary by college or university; therefore, you should refer to your course addendum to determine what your minimum exam score requirements are.**
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

Course Overview

Chapter 1: Why Teach Writing?

In this introductory chapter, we delve into the significance of writing education and the evolution of the Six Traits of Writing model. You will be equipped to critically assess the role

of writing in literacy and professional fields and to exhibit a comprehensive grasp of the theoretical underpinnings of the Six Traits of Writing model.

Chapter 2: Ideas & Organization

Writing serves not only as a conduit for rendering our thoughts and learning tangible and comprehensible to others but also as a tool to clarify and shape our own ideas. Beyond its functional importance, writing acts as a medium of entertainment. Among the numerous pedagogical approaches to writing instruction, the enduring Six Traits writing model remains a cornerstone of educational practice and is the central theme of this course. Specifically, this chapter will concentrate on the initial two components of the model: "Ideas" and "Organization," providing an in-depth exploration of these fundamental elements.

Chapter 3: Voice & Words

With a foundation laid for what to write and how to structure it, the next step for educators is to guide students in cultivating a unique voice and selecting the most effective words. It's crucial to build upon, not bypass, the groundwork of ideas and organization. These steps may be laborious, but they are vital for creating rich and nuanced written pieces. This chapter will delve into "Voice" and "Word Choice," the subsequent two pillars of the Six Traits of Writing, and will provide focused instruction about enhancing these elements.

Chapter 4: Fluency & Conventions

Sentence fluency pertains to using diverse sentence structures to imbue our writing with rhythm and flow, making it engaging and enjoyable to read. It is the element that sustains reader interest through its musicality. Alongside "Sentence Fluency," the other key component addressed in this chapter is "Conventions," which includes the mechanics of writing that ensure clarity and correctness. This chapter will concentrate on these elements, with an additional focus on applying writing skills across various disciplines and content areas.

Examinations

At the end of each course section, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all

questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Writing Assignments

All assignments are reviewed and may impact your final grade. Exceptionally or poorly written assignments, or violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (see course syllabus for policy), will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent. *Refer to the Essay Grading Guidelines, which were sent as an attachment with your original course link. You should also refer to the Course Syllabus Addendum, which was sent as an attachment with your original course link, to determine if you have any writing assignments in addition to the Critical Thinking Questions (CTQ) and Journal Article Summations (JAS). If you do, the Essay Grading Guidelines will also apply.*

Your writing assignments must meet the minimum word count and are not to include the question or your final citations as part of your word count. In other words, the question and citations are not to be used as a means to meet the minimum word count.

Critical Thinking Questions

There are four CTQs that you are required to complete. You will need to write a minimum of 500 words (maximum 1,000) per essay. You should explain how the information that you gained from the course will be applied and clearly convey a strong understanding of the course content as it relates to each CTQ. To view the questions, click on REQUIRED ESSAY and choose the CTQ that you are ready to complete; this will bring up a screen where you may enter your essay. Prior to course submission, you may go back at any point to edit your essay, but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits.

You must click SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.

Journal Article Summations

You are required to write, in your own words, a summary on a total of three peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles (one article per JAS), written by an author with a Ph.D., Ed.D. or similar, on the topic outlined within each JAS section in the "Required Essays" portion of the course (blogs, abstracts, news articles, or similar are not acceptable). Your article choice must relate specifically to the discussion topic listed in each individual JAS. You will choose a total of three relevant articles (one article per JAS) and write a thorough summary of the information presented in each article (you must write a minimum of 200 words with a 400 word maximum per JAS). Be sure to provide the URL or the journal name, volume, date, and any other critical information to allow the facilitator to access and review each article.

To write your summary, click on REQUIRED ESSAYS and choose the JAS that you would like to complete. A writing program will automatically launch where you can write your

summary. When you are ready to stop, click **SAVE**. Prior to course submission you may go back at any point to edit your summaries but you must be certain to click SAVE once you are done with your edits. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.

You must click SAVE before you write another summary or move on to another part of the course.

Instructor Description

Karen Lea holds a Ph.D. in education. Dr. Lea has 15 years' experience teaching at the K–12 level and another 14 years' experience teaching education courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Currently she is a lead program development owner at Western Governor's University. Dr. Lea has been professionally published over 15 times and has served on over a dozen panels and boards, including that of the NCATE (CAEP) Board of Examiners.

Contacting the Instructor

You may contact the instructor by emailing karen_lea@virtualeduc.com or calling 509-891-7219 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches, or other issues that involve the operation of the course.

Technical Questions

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course, please try everything twice. If the problem persists, please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at www.virtualeduc.com and also the Help section of your course.

If you need personal assistance then email support@virtualeduc.com or call 509-891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number (it is located at the bottom left side of the Welcome Screen) and your operating system, and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

Minimum Computer Requirements

Please refer to VESi's website: www.virtualeduc.com or contact VESi if you have further questions about the compatibility of your operating system.

Refer to the addendum regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and how to submit your completed information. The addendum will also note any additional

course assignments that you may be required to complete that are not listed in this syllabus.

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Course content is updated every three years. Due to this update timeline, some URL links may no longer be active or may have changed. Please type the title of the organization into the command line of any Internet browser search window and you will be able to find whether the URL link is still active or any new link to the corresponding organization's web home page.

Updated 2/19/26 JN

COURSE SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

It is each student's responsibility to read all course materials, including course syllabus and addendum, and to know and understand the course requirements, exam score minimum requirements, and deadlines. Students enrolled in VESi courses are required to check their email for any communications regarding the course until their final grade is posted with the college or university. Once your course materials are received by VESi and have been reviewed, the GRADE IS FINAL.

Grading Criteria:

You must obtain an overall score of 70% or higher, with no individual exam score below 50%, and successfully complete ALL writing assignments to pass this course. This course requires a minimum overall passing grade of "C-" to receive credit. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. Fifty percent of your grade is determined by your writing assignments, and your overall exam score determines the other fifty percent.

No grade will be submitted for partial completion of course assignments, regardless of partial score. An F will be reported if course is not completed by the end of the term enrolled. Exceptions only apply to those that request an extension (must have extenuating circumstances) prior to course deadline.

Letters will be assigned as follows:

90% to 100%   A
80% to 89%   B
70% to 79%   C
69% - lower   F

Course Completion Information:

Grading will take approximately two weeks from the time your materials are received by the instructor, after which we will submit grades to the college/university weekly. If you have a timeline to meet certain school or state requirements, please keep this time period in mind when planning your course completion dates.

Course Completion Instructions:

- Once you have completed all of the course requirements, follow the instructions from the Complete Course toolbar to submit your materials to VESi's office for processing. You can only submit the course ONE TIME. Be sure that you have completed all requirements and exams.
- Course Evaluation: Please take a moment to fill out the course evaluation which is also found under the Complete Course toolbar.
- Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records. Print Certificate: You can print a copy of your course certificate for your records.

Accessing your NDSU Transcript:

After the grade for your course(s) is posted, approximately two weeks after the course submission, you can access your NDSU transcript for documentation of course completion and performance. Instructions are found at this link: Transcript Instructions | Continued Learning | NDSU

Drops & Refunds:

Once learners have received the course materials, they are no longer eligible for a refund. Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions or Concerns:

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this class to ndsu.dce@ndsu.edu. Please include the title of the course in your correspondence.