



**Framingham**  
State University

## COURSE INFORMATION

**PRDV 72428**      **Teaching the Six Traits of Writing in the Primary Grades**

**Credits: 1**      **Location: Online - Blackboard**

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

**Instructor:** Kelsey Bower, BS, M.Ed

**Contact:** [kbower@attleboroschools.com](mailto:kbower@attleboroschools.com)

774-240-7310

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed for educators, specialists, or any professionals who work in the Kindergarten – Grade 2 learning environment. The course explores effective techniques and thoughtful plans on using the six traits of writing to enrich the writing process in primary classrooms.

### **Course Objectives/Outcomes:**

At the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Define and explain the six traits of writing.

- Explain the difference between a writing guide and continuum.
- Use a writing guide or continuum to assess and reflect on a student's work sample.
- Utilize the six traits of writing to plan strategies for students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Reflect on how the writing process is taught in the classroom and identify how it could be improved through the six traits of writing.
- Design an introductory lesson plan that empowers students to use at least one of the six traits of writing.

## Course Expectations

- Students will log into Blackboard to complete all assignments and discussion board postings.
- Assignments will be completed by the due date.
  - Assignments that are completed late will be deducted 5 points per day late.
  - Module assignments will not be accepted three days past the due date.
- Each reading response assignment should be submitted via Blackboard (**assignment location to be included**) in a PDF format.
- Students will participate in collaborative conversations via Blackboard's discussion board by completing a weekly post as well as responding to two classmates' posts.
- 1 Graduate Credit is equivalent to 15 contact hours (50 minute classroom hours) plus 2 hours of out of class work for every hour in class. Thus, students in a 1 credit graduate course should expect about 45 hours of work in total.

## Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

### **Production and Distribution of Writing:**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### **Course Text:**

Spandel, Vicki. *Creating Young Writers: Using the Six Traits to Enrich Writing Process in Primary Classrooms*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Pearson, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0-13-268585-6

### **Course Content/Outline and Requirements:**

*Module Reading Response Questions and Objectives can be found at the very end of the syllabus. These will also be posted in the assignment area on Blackboard.*

#### **MODULE 1: Setting the Stage with the Six Traits/Ideas**

- **Participant Introductions:** Create a discussion board post to introduce yourself.
  - Include your name, profession (classroom teacher, paraprofessional, etc.), the grade that you work in, public or private school (you can leave the district and school name out if you wish).
  - Why are you taking this course? What do you expect to take from this course?
- **Read Chapters 1-4 in *Creating Young Writers***
  - Complete assigned reading questions by due date (see Blackboard).
- **Blackboard Discussion on “Good Writing”:** Answer the following

question (two paragraph minimum): What do you think is “good writing”? How does your idea of good writing differ from the text? How is it similar?

- **Respond to two classmates “good writing” post.** Your response should be insightful.

## MODULE 2: Organization and Voice in Writing

- **Read Chapters 5-8 in *Creating Young Writers***
  - Complete assigned reading questions by due date (see Blackboard).
- **Blackboard Discussion on the difference of Voice:** How does the trait of voice differ from the other traits? Do you think the differences make voice harder or easier to teach? Why/why not?
- **Respond to two classmates Voice post.** Your response should be insightful.

## MODULE 3: Word Choice and Sentence Fluency

- **Read Chapters 9-12 in *Creating Young Writers***
  - Complete assigned reading questions by due date. (see Blackboard).
- **Blackboard Discussion:** How does the trait of word choice relate to the trait of voice? Can one achieve strong voice without having strong word choice? Provide an example of how word choice strengthens voice.

**Respond to two classmates post.** Your response should be insightful.

## MODULE 4: Conventions and Assessing Young Writers

- **Read Chapters 13-15 in *Creating Young Writers***
  - Complete assigned reading questions by due date (see Blackboard).

- **Blackboard Discussion:** Reflecting on Chapter 15, what are two suggestions that you will apply to your classroom in relation to the assessment of writing? Include information from the text with citations.
- **Blackboard Course Reflection Post:** What are two “take-aways” you gained from this course that will improve your classroom instruction? Did you find this course to be beneficial to your instruction?

**Respond to two classmates post.** Your response should be insightful.

## MODULE 5: Final Project

**Objective:** Students will design an introductory lesson plan that empowers students to use at least one of the six traits of writing.

**Create a Writing lesson plan utilizing at least one of the traits.** Only one trait is required in the lesson plan, however, you may want to include another. For example, you could do a lesson on how word choice impacts voice; or ideas and organization. This is not required – only one trait is.

**Please note:** *While this is considered your “final project” you may want to work on it during a different module while you are reading about one of the six traits.*

**Your writing trait lesson plan must include the following:**

- Topic
- Grade Level
- Objective/Student Outcomes
- Connection to the MA Curriculum Frameworks
- Accommodations
- Lesson Duration
- Materials Needed (read aloud, extra materials)
- Classroom Materials
- Warm Up

- Learning Experiences - including explicit instruction of one (or more) of the six traits of writing.
- Closure

**Course Grading Criteria: 100 points**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Reading Response</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction Blackboard Post</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Blackboard Post and Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Reading Response</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Blackboard Post and Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Reading Response</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Blackboard Post and Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Reading Response</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Blackboard Post and Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Blackboard Reflection Post and Responses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Final Project/Lesson Plan</b>	<b>10</b>

## Reading Response Rubric

<b>15</b>	<p><b>Student completed all of the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a 1-2 paragraph response for <u>all 7 questions</u>.</li> <li>• Each response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Student completed all of the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a 1-2 paragraph response for <u>4-6 questions</u>.</li> <li>• Each response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Student completed all of the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a 1-2 paragraph response for <u>1-3 questions</u>.</li> <li>• Each response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<p><b>Student did not complete the required assignment.</b></p>

## Blackboard Discussion Board Posting Rubric

<b>5</b>	<p><b>Student completed all of the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimum 2 paragraph response.</li> <li>• Response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> <li>• Student responded to two classmates posts with an insightful response (1 paragraph minimum)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Student completed 3 of the four following requirements by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimum 2 paragraph response.</li> <li>• Response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> <li>• Student responded to two classmates posts with an insightful response (1 paragraph minimum) – counts as 2</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Student completed 2 of the four following requirements by due</b></p>

	<p><b>date <u>OR</u> Student completed 3 of the four following requirements one day late:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimum 2 paragraph response.</li> <li>• Response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul> <p>Student responded to two classmates posts with an insightful response (1 paragraph minimum) - counts as 2</p>
2	<p><b>Student completed 1 of the four following requirements by due date <u>OR</u> Student completed 2 of the four following requirements one day late:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimum 2 paragraph response.</li> <li>• Response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul> <p>Student responded to two classmates posts with an insightful response (1 paragraph minimum) - counts as 2</p>
1	<p><b>Student completed some of following requirements two days late:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a minimum 2 paragraph response.</li> <li>• Response includes quotes with citations from the text.</li> </ul> <p>Student responded to two classmates posts with an insightful response (1 paragraph minimum) - counts as 2</p>
0	<p><b>Student did not post.</b></p>



## Final Project/Lesson Plan Rubric

10	<p><b>Student included all of the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic</li><li>• Grade Level</li><li>• Objective/Student Outcomes</li><li>• Connection to the MA Curriculum Frameworks</li><li>• Accommodations</li><li>• Lesson Duration</li><li>• Materials Needed (read aloud, extra materials)</li><li>• Classroom Materials</li><li>• Warm Up</li><li>• Learning Experiences – including explicit instruction of one (or more) of the six traits of writing.</li><li>• Closure</li></ul>
7	<p><b>Student included 7-10 the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic</li><li>• Grade Level</li><li>• Objective/Student Outcomes</li><li>• Connection to the MA Curriculum Frameworks</li><li>• Accommodations</li><li>• Lesson Duration</li><li>• Materials Needed (read aloud, extra materials)</li><li>• Classroom Materials</li><li>• Warm Up</li><li>• Learning Experiences – including explicit instruction of one (or more) of the six traits of writing.</li><li>• Closure</li></ul>
5	<p><b>Student included 3-6 the following by due date:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic</li><li>• Grade Level</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective/Student Outcomes</li> <li>• Connection to the MA Curriculum Frameworks</li> <li>• Accommodations</li> <li>• Lesson Duration</li> <li>• Materials Needed (read aloud, extra materials)</li> <li>• Classroom Materials</li> <li>• Warm Up</li> <li>• Learning Experiences – including explicit instruction of one (or more) of the six traits of writing.</li> <li>• Closure</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<b>Student did not complete the required assignment by the due date.</b>

## Academic Honesty Policy

**Per the academic honesty policy in the [FSU Graduate Catalog, Student Conduct section, page 21](#), “Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State University agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the published policies and procedures regarding academic honesty. “**

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## Academic Accommodations Policy

“Framingham State University offers equal opportunities to all qualified students, including those with disabilities and impairments. The University is committed to making reasonable accommodations as are necessary to ensure that its programs and activities do not discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability. Academic Support serves students with learning and psychiatric disabilities as well as students with visual, mobility and hearing impairments.”

For more information, please refer to [Disability/ Access Services website](#) or contact LaDonna Bridges, Associate Dean of Academic Success, [lbridges@framingham.edu](mailto:lbridges@framingham.edu).

# MODULE READING RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS

PRDV XXXX

## Teaching the Six Traits of Writing in the Primary Grades

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**Contact:** [kbower@attleboroschools.com](mailto:kbower@attleboroschools.com)

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### MODULE 1: Setting the Stage with the Six Traits/Ideas

#### Course Objectives Related to This Module:

- Define and explain the six traits of writing.
- Explain the difference between a writing guide and continuum.
- Utilize the six traits of writing to plan strategies for students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Reflect on how the writing process is taught in the classroom and identify how it could be improved through the six traits of writing.

#### Assignment:

**After reading Chapters 1-4 in *Creating Young Writers*, answer the questions below. Each answer should be 1-2 paragraphs long and reference the textbook.**

1. What does good writing teach us?
2. How do you share the vision of good writing?
3. What is Writing Workshop? How can you improve Writing Workshop in your classroom?
4. Define the writing trait of IDEAS.
5. Explain what revision looks like in the primary grades.
6. What are the three parts to a writing guide/rubric?
7. How does a continuum differ from a writing guide? Which do you

use in your classroom? Why?

## **MODULE 2: Organization and Voice in Writing**

### **Course Objectives Related to This Module:**

- Define and explain the six traits of writing.
- Use a writing guide or continuum to assess and reflect on a student's work sample.
- Utilize the six traits of writing to plan strategies for students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Reflect on how the writing process is taught in the classroom and identify how it could be improved through the six traits of writing.

### **Assignment:**

**After reading Chapters 5-8 in *Creating Young Writers*, answer the questions below. Each answer should be 1-2 paragraphs long and reference the textbook.**

1. Define ORGANIZATION.
2. Review the ways to teach the trait ORGANIZATION. Pick one and explain how you could use this in your classroom.
3. Pick a student's sample from Chapter 5. Assess the student's writing piece using Figure 5.2 Early Guide to Organization or 5.3 Primary Continuum for Organization. Provide the score you would give the student and elaborate on your score providing examples from the student's writing piece and wording from the assessment tool used. Include suggestions you could provide the student to improve his/her writing.
4. Define VOICE.
5. Pick a student's sample from Chapter 7. Assess the student's

writing piece using Figure 7.3 Early Guide to Voice or 7.4 Primary Continuum for VOICE. Provide the score you would give the student and elaborate on your score providing examples from the student's writing piece and wording from the assessment tool used. Include suggestions you could provide the student to improve his/her writing. You may want to use Figure 7.2 Teacher Writing Guide for VOICE to assist with your comments.

6. How could using student samples in the classroom assist your students' ability to use the trait of Voice?
7. Review the five ways to teach Voice. Pick one and explain how you could use it in your teaching.

### **MODULE 3: Word Choice and Sentence Fluency**

#### **Course Objectives Related to This Module:**

- Define and explain the six traits of writing.
- Use a writing guide or continuum to assess and reflect on a student's work sample.
- Utilize the six traits of writing to plan strategies for students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Reflect on how the writing process is taught in the classroom and identify how it could be improved through the six traits of writing.

#### **Assignment:**

**After reading Chapters 9-12 in *Creating Young Writers*, answer the questions below. Each answer should be 1-2 paragraphs long and reference the textbook.**

1. Define WORD CHOICE.
2. Pick a student's sample from Chapter 9. Assess the student's writing piece using Figure 9.2 Early Guide to WORD CHOICE or

9.3 Primary Continuum for WORD CHOICE. Provide the score you would give the student and elaborate on your score providing examples from the student's writing piece and wording from the assessment tool used. Include suggestions you could provide the student to improve his/her writing. You may want to use Figure 9.1 Teacher Writing Guide for WORD CHOICE to assist with your comments.

3. How is WORD CHOICE conceptually considered "meaning," "weight," and "the target?"
4. Reread the lessons and strategies for teaching WORD CHOICE in Chapter 10. Pick one of the strategies that is appropriate for your classroom. Explain how you will use this strategy in future WORD CHOICE lessons in your classroom. Consider using a book listed in "Some of the Best Books Around for Teaching WORD CHOICE" section.
5. Define SENTENCE FLUENCY.
6. Pick a student's sample from Chapter 11. Assess the student's writing piece using Figure 11.2 Early Guide to SENTENCE FLUENCY or 11.3 Primary Continuum for SENTENCE FLUENCY. Provide the score you would give the student and elaborate on your score providing examples from the student's writing piece and wording from the assessment tool used. Include suggestions you could provide the student to improve his/her writing. You may want to use Figure 11.1 Teacher Writing Guide for SENTENCE FLUENCY to assist with your comments.
7. Reread the lessons and strategies for teaching SENTENCE FLUENCY in Chapter 12. Pick one of the strategies that is appropriate for your classroom. Explain how you will use this strategy in future SENTENCE FLUENCY lessons in your classroom. Consider using a book listed in "Some of the Best Books Around for Teaching SENTENCE FLUENCY" section.

## **MODULE 4: Conventions and Assessing Young Writers**

### **Course Objectives Related to This Module:**

- Define and explain the six traits of writing.
- Use a writing guide or continuum to assess and reflect on a student's work sample.
- Utilize the six traits of writing to plan strategies for students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Reflect on how the writing process is taught in the classroom and identify how it could be improved through the six traits of writing.

### **Assignment:**

**After reading Chapters 13-15 in *Creating Young Writers*, answer the questions below. Each answer should be 1-2 paragraphs long and reference the textbook.**

1. Define CONVENTIONS.
2. Pick a student's sample from Chapter 13. Assess the student's writing piece using Figure 13.3 Early Guide to CONVENTIONS or 13.4 Primary Continuum for CONVENTIONS. Provide the score you would give the student and elaborate on your score providing examples from the student's writing piece and wording from the assessment tool used. Include suggestions you could provide the student to improve his/her writing. You may want to use Figure 13.2 Teacher Writing Guide for CONVENTIONS to assist with your comments.
3. How do you think conventions will change over the next few decades? How could these changes impact our teaching?
4. Reread the lessons and strategies for teaching CONVENTIONS in



Chapter 13. Pick one of the strategies that is appropriate for your classroom. Explain how you will use this strategy in future CONVENTIONS lessons in your classroom. Consider using a book listed in “Some of the Best Books Around for Teaching CONVENTIONS” section.

5. Conventions and presentation are often considered a special case as many teachers like to address them as they go along instead of waiting until they have discussed other traits. In your opinion, where do you think conventions and presentation fit in the curriculum? Should we address conventions and presentations on the first day or wait? Explain your rationale.
6. What are the three levels of assessments. Define and provide examples of each. This response should be three paragraphs. One paragraph per level.
7. How do you feel about keeping folders or portfolios? Chapter 15 suggests the idea of keeping a folder/portfolio so that assessment of writing can be on a body of work instead of just individual pieces. What would some advantages to this? What are some disadvantages?