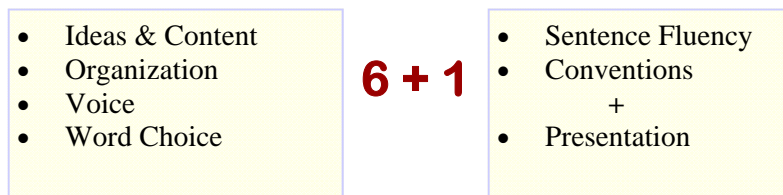


Project CRISS Connections with 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Instruction

By Marilyn Siess

Our local school district has adopted 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction, developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), for use throughout the entire district in all content areas with a particular emphasis in the language arts curriculum. All of our teachers are trained in Project CRISS, and most use CRISS extensively within their classrooms. Although CRISS is not a writing program, the principles and philosophy of CRISS and many of the specific strategies used in CRISS can be used to enhance the teaching of writing using 6 + 1 Trait Writing.

NWREL identifies the six plus one traits of writing as:



All of these traits have some connections with CRISS. Following is an overview of how CRISS and 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction can be used in combination to enhance the teaching of writing.

1. Ideas and Content focus on the heart of the message and the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

Students are reminded to:

- Connect it to your own experience.
- Keep it small.
- Surprise your readers with what you know.
- Make your ideas crystal clear.

CRISS Connections

- Various CRISS strategies, including Think-Pair-Share, Mind Streaming, K-W-L, Concept Mapping, and Carousel Brainstorming, bring out background information and help students connect their writing to their own experience.
- Power Thinking and Power Notes assist students in limiting their topics.
- Power Notes with 4s and 5x give more specific details
- Work with Powers to change generic verbs into active verbs.

2. **Organization** is the internal structure, the thread of central meaning and pattern of ideas within a piece of writing.

Students are reminded to:

- Begin with a strong lead.
- Build to the most important moment or point.
- Avoid getting bogged down in trivial details.

CRISS Connections

- Categories of Leads (CRISS manual, p. 291)
 - ✓ Typical
 - ✓ Action
 - ✓ Dialogue
 - ✓ Setting the mood
 - ✓ Amazing facts
 - ✓ Spoken words
 - ✓ Presenting a question
- Spool Paper
- Power Notes
- Graphic Organizers
- Sequence Map
- Conclusion-Support or Problem-Solution
- Chapter 5: Active Strategies for Learning (CRISS manual)
- Chapter 6: Organizing for Learning: Two-Column Notes, Frames, and Story Plans (CRISS manual)

3. **Voice** is the heart and soul, the feeling and conviction of the individual writer.

Students are reminded to:

- Write with honesty.
- Think about your reader.
- Write with confidence.

CRISS Connections

- RAFT
- Conclusion-Support (Opinion-Proof)

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

Students are reminded to:

- Use precise and colorful words.
- Develop a critical eye toward verbs.
- Keep vocabulary natural.
- Use specific words, carefully chosen to create a vivid picture.

CRISS Connections

- Sentence and Word Expansion
- Create a picture map and then write.
- Word Elaboration (or Capsule Vocabulary)
- Word Mapping
- Word Combining (or Sentence Synthesis)

5. **Sentence fluency** is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns.

Students are reminded to:

- Listen to the rhythm of the language.
- Cut the deadwood.
- Notice how sentences begin.
- Don't let sentences drift on too long.
- Read work aloud and listen to the rhythm and flow of the words.

CRISS Connections

- Sentence Expansion
- Edit by creating a Pattern Puzzle of the piece.
- Create a template or frame where not all sentences start the same way.

6. **Conventions** are the mechanical correctness of the piece.

Students are reminded to:

- Edit for spelling, punctuation, grammar/usage, paragraphing, and capitalization.
- Develop a proofreader's eye.

CRISS Connections

- Edit through Pattern Puzzles for sequencing and paragraphing.
- Edit paragraphs with Powers.

Plus 1: Presentation zeros in on the form and layout of the text.

Students are reminded to:

- Make the piece inviting to the reader.
- Use lots of white space.
- Ask if the reader will want to read this, because the presentation attracts the eye.

CRISS Connections

- Considerate Text (CRISS manual, Chapter 2: Identifying the Author's Craft and Design)

The principles and philosophy of Project CRISS, as well as specific strategies, are a good fit with 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction. A teacher who uses the two programs in conjunction with one another will help students become more able writers.

Resource: *Linking 6+1 Trait Writing to Classroom Instruction: A Handbook for Teachers*, developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. www.nwrel.org/assessment

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