



Southland College Prep Charter High School

Writing Your Future: A Toolbox for Success

March 24, 2021

The Southland College Prep team discussed the [Six Traits model](#), an evidence-based approach to teaching the elements of writing:

1. Ideas – main message or topic
2. Organization – internal structure with a beginning, middle, and end
3. Voice – tone and attitude that engage the reader
4. Word Choice – diction; use of words to convey intended meaning
5. Fluency – rhythm and flow of the text; sentence variety
6. Conventions – correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar

The 6+1 Trait model (Education Northwest) includes an additional element:

7. Presentation – appearance of the final text on the page

Southland College Prep has found success using the Six Traits writing model across the curriculum. Approximately 80% of Southland students who complete the national AP English Language and Composition test earn a score of 3 or higher. To strengthen writing instruction in District 162, Southland staff provided training and supported elementary and middle school teachers in using Six Traits methods. A deliverable of the Charter School Dissemination Grant was a [writing manual that includes writing samples and instructional guidelines](#). As a result of the training, District 162 teachers improved their skills in teaching writing, and students increased enthusiasm for writing, confidence generating and expanding ideas, and vocabulary and research skills.

The [Teaching Elementary School Students to be Effective Writers Practice Guide](#), published by the What Works Clearinghouse, offers suggestions aligned with the Six Traits. Examples of effective practices include teaching students the writing process, teaching students to write for a variety of purposes, and creating an engaged community of learners. The practices of the Six Traits Writing Model have been heavily researched and shown effective with students in elementary through high school levels, including students from [low-income families](#) and [English language learners](#).

The Southland presenters discussed how technology can support writing instruction, for example, by using “track changes” and commenting functions in online shared documents, and breakout rooms in online meeting spaces to conference with students. Research about technology to support writing instruction offers a set of effective strategies to support students, including those with disabilities, in improving writing skills during online and distance learning.

Rowland A, Smith SJ, Lowrey KA. Connecting Evidence-Based Writing Strategies with Readily Available Technology Solutions. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*. 2021;53(3):253-255. doi:[10.1177/0040059920954778](https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059920954778)

- * Combining writing intervention with technology solutions can help students improve their writing skills.

Rowland A, Smith SJ, Lowrey KA. Pairing Technology With 6 Traits of Writing Instruction. *Journal of Special Education Technology*. August 2020. doi:[10.1177/0162643420945600](https://doi.org/10.1177/0162643420945600)

- * Describes how technology can support students in developing skills in each area of the Six Traits model.

Rowland A, Smith SJ, Lowrey KA, Abdulrahim NA. Underutilized Technology Solutions for Student Writing. *Intervention in School and Clinic*. 2020;56(2):99-106. doi:[10.1177/1053451220914893](https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451220914893)

- * Describes four types of commonly-available technologies to enhance writing instruction.

6 Trait Writing Resources

Smekens Education Solutions- [Six Traits of Writing: The Ultimate Guide](#)
Education Northwest - [6+1 Trait® Writing resources](#)

