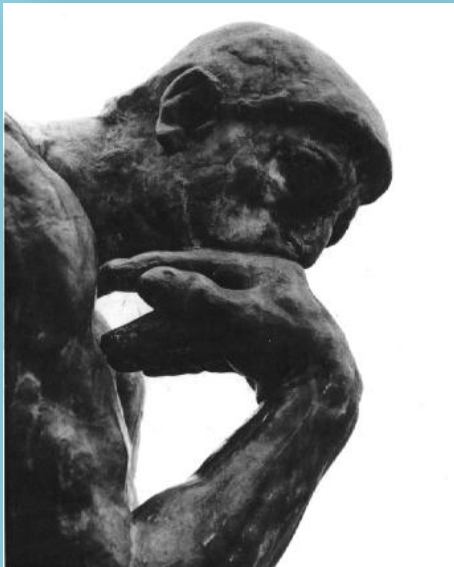


# ***Critical Trait Thinking***

***especially during Pre-Writing & Revision...***

favorite resources from my Common Core State Standards Workshop  
and my 6 Writing Traits Workshop



...because Common Core State Standards for Language Arts require our students to *analyze* reading and writing, not simply *comprehend* it.

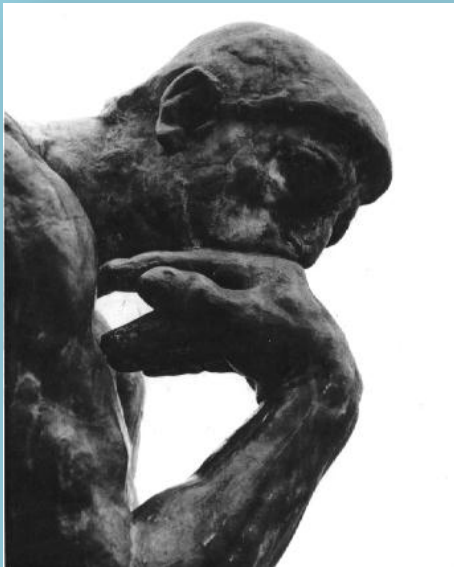
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# ***Critical Trait Thinking***

## ***especially during Pre-Writing & Revision...***

some of my favorite resources from two workshops I conduct for teachers on the six traits and the writing process

### **Permission Statement:**



My materials in this packet are copyrighted. By purchasing my packets, you have my permission to remove page citations if using any of my resources or handouts in your classroom with your students. If you are sharing any of my materials with other teachers, however, you will need to keep my citations intact.

Please share these materials, and share them often. I only ask that other professionals be aware of where these materials originated if you are sharing them! Thank-you.

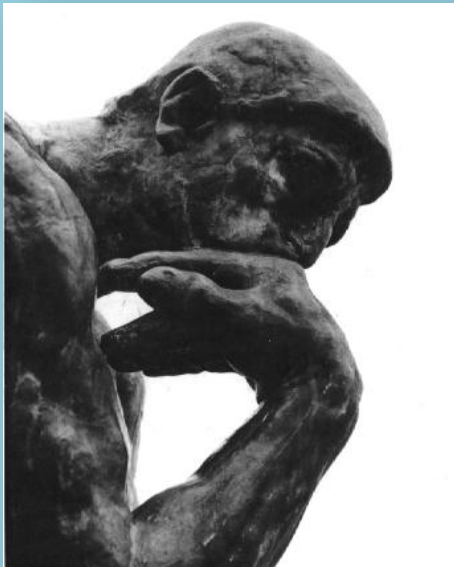
# ***Critical Trait Thinking***

***especially during Pre-Writing & Revision...***

**Hello, teaching colleagues!** You're looking at a partial version of my "Introduction to the 6 Trait Post-its" slideshow, which I present during my 2- and 3-day professional development workshop: **[Critical Trait Thinking and the Writing Process](#)**. You can **[purchase](#)** the entire PowerPoint at my website, which comes with full-sheet versions of every Post-it note I have created and use with my students. My PowerPoints are designed to be self-paced for independent learning, but they also can be shared whole staff.

In six Northern Nevada counties, as part of my contract, I provide this workshop free-of-charge as a year-long professional development experience to *any* school that requests my services.

During June, July, and August, I am available for hire to provide this 2- or 3-day workshop for schools or districts outside of Northern Nevada. You may **[contact me](#)** at my website for details.



**This Workshop's Essential Question:** How does a teacher help students to think about writing skills at the analysis and evaluation level of Bloom's taxonomy during both reading and writing instruction?

---

**This workshop:** Inspires teachers to use trait-inspired tools that help all students analyze and evaluate their own writing, as well as the writing of their peers.

### Voice Post-It

Rank these five skills against each other, from 5 (highest) 1 (lowest):

- \_\_\_\_\_ My writing style reveals a lot about my personality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My word choice skills sound natural, not forced.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My writing comes across as honest and convincing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My writing attempts to connect with my audience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My attitude about my topic is obvious.

**Here's my favorite trait tool!** In addition to my new Mentor Text Response Post-its, I created versions that have my students *analyze* and *evaluate* their own use of specific trait skills in draft writing.

The important verb here is *rank*. Why? Discuss. 😊

When students have ranked their own skills, they can be asked to look closely at the lower-scoring skills and, from that examination, determine a personalized revision plan for their drafts.

**A personal observation:** Revision is the least-taught step of the writing process. I think many teachers want there to be a easy-to-teach formula for revision that will work with all students' drafts, but there absolutely isn't. Every student draft turns out differently, showing different strengths and weaknesses. A formula just isn't possible. By giving students choices for creating their own revision plan, we begin to personalize revision.

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On the next slide you will find a portion of the rough draft of an expository essay I wrote to this prompt, which I was having my students write to as well:

Think about a game you enjoy. You have a reader who has never played the game but wants to learn. In a report to your reader, describe the game and explain how it is played. Be sure to explain the rules, the equipment, the number of players, and anything else your reader might need to know to play the game.

My entire rough draft can be found in my training packet (available, if this PowerPoint is purchased). On the next slide, you can see how I self-ranked my own voice skills, which was the trait I was focusing on with this lesson. I revised my model based on the skills I ranked the lowest.

**Modeling the use of this Post-it to create a personalized revision plan is essential!**

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### Voice Post-It

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Here is how I self-ranked my voice skills.

There are actually two ways to play the game "Heads Up, Seven Up." Both are fun. Which way did you learn to play?

In one version of the game, seven students are chosen to come to the front of the class. All the students at their desks put their heads down and put their thumbs up on their desks. The seven students move around the classroom and each tap one student's thumb. When tapped, you have to put your thumb down. When all seven students come back to the front, everyone puts their heads up. Tapped students stand up at their desks and try to guess which of the seven students up front touched their thumb. If you guess correctly, you take the place at the front of the person who tapped you for the next round of the game.

(Complete rough draft in packet)

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### **My revised introductory paragraph:**

Here's a simple truth about "Heads Up, Seven Up." It's easy to cheat. In fact, everyone has probably cheated at this game at least once. If you never have, see if you can figure out how you might cheat if you were playing either variation of game that I'm going to explain to you.

#### **Voice Post-It**

Rank these five skills against each other, from 5 (highest) 1 (lowest):

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Focusing on my 3, 2, and 1 score, I revised the essay to make those skills stand out more.

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### **My revised second paragraph:**

#### **Voice Post-It**

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Focusing on my 3, 2, and 1 score, I revised the essay to make those skills stand out more.

In one version of the game, seven students are "it." When you're "it," you go to the front of the class, and all the students who aren't "it" put their heads down and stick their thumbs up next to their concealed eyes. The seven "its" move quietly around the room, and each one of them taps one student's thumb. The students at their desks, who are supposed to have their eyes tightly shut so they don't know who has tapped them, lower their thumbs if they are tapped. Once all the "its" have touched just one thumb out in the sea of thumbs, they return to the front of the room. When the teacher says, "Heads up, seven up," the seven students whose thumbs were touched stand up. They each try to guess which of the seven "it" students touched them. If you guess correctly, which is easy to do, especially if you peeked a little when you weren't supposed to, you take the place of the "it" who had touched your thumb.

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## Expository

### Voice Post-It

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## Leonardo da Vinci and Me

by David, third grader

Do you ever wonder if you have something in common with someone famous? You could, and I do. I have some things alike and different with Leonardo da Vinci.

Leonardo had a huge feast when his nephew got married. I had a huge feast too, when my sister got married. Leonardo did not believe in war. I don't believe in war, too, like him. Leonardo da Vinci was a hard working artist. Although I am not an artist, I would like to be a hard-working man.

Leonardo was a scientist. Although I am not a scientist, I would like to invent stuff. Leonardo was from Vinci, Italy. I am not from Italy, but I am from America.

You can see Leonardo and I have some things alike and different. I hope this can teach other readers about Leonardo da Vinci.

## You Be David.!

Rank the voice skills and come up with a revision plan!



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## Narrative

### Voice Post-It

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## The Monster

by Brandon (B.C.), third grade writer

I'm out on Pyramid Lake, rocking in my small fishing boat with the wind in my face. I'm waiting patiently for a bite. Next thing I know I have a bite. My pole bent down like crazy.

Everyone said, "Yeah, B.C., yeah!"

So, I picked up my pole and I'm fighting this fish and it's fighting me back. I reel the monster fish in. It's hard because it is heavy. I found out later it weighed 50 pounds.

Everyone on the boat said, "Oh yeah, B.C."

We ate the fish for dinner that night. Everyone said, "This is tasty and this is juicy. Oh yeah!" Ten people ate off the fish, and they scraped their plates clean. There were still leftovers.

## You Be Brandon!

Rank the voice skills and come up with a revision plan!



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## Persuasive

### Voice Post-It

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## You Be Dakota!

Rank the voice skills and come up with a revision plan!



Dakota's House  
Highway 44  
January 14, 2009

Dear Freckles the Cat,

I would really love it if you would pretty please let me chase you. I can't chase you when your owner yells at me. I would appreciate it if you wouldn't hide from me. I promise I won't hurt you, if you let me chase you once in a while. I would also appreciate it if you wouldn't run up trees. The wood hurts my paws!

If you don't let me chase you, I'm stuck with my owner watching dumb shows and listening to my owner *screech*; they call it singing, but that's not what I hear!. It's terrible. If you would just let me chase you four days every week, I would be happy. One other thing, around our owners, we don't get along! – Secret Friendship. Thank You!

Sincerely,  
Shimms the Dog (and 3rd grader Dakota)

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**From experience, I can tell you this.**

- It absolutely takes many attempts, mini-lessons, and strong modeling to help students really use these Post-its well. Don't give up on them because students struggle with them during the first few tries; the struggle happens because students are not used to thinking about their own writing at the analysis and evaluate level of Bloom's.
- Investing time early-on to teach students to use the Post-its well was the best investment I ever made in my classroom. The years I used the Post-its to teach pre-writing and revision were the years I helped create the smartest group of thinkers I ever had.

**The next-to-final word  
on these Post-it Notes!**

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### Use the Post-its to Differentiate!

- Determine one focus trait for *all* students to think about during pre-writing and revision.
- Have at the ready a second trait Post-it for your students who can handle (and would benefit) from thinking about a second trait.
- A second ranking might give your medium- and advanced learners additional choices for revision and additional opportunities to work with trait-specific language.

### Sentence Fluency Post-It

Rank these five skills against each other, from 5 (highest) 1 (lowest):

- 5 My sentences mostly begin with different words.
- 3 I use both simple and complex sentences.
- 1 I use a variety of transitional words and phrases.
- 2 Sentence structures that might surprise the reader add voice.
- 4 I add rhythm to my sentences with prepositional phrases and similar writer's tools.

**The final word on these Post-it Notes!**

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