

KATHY PEREZ



Katherine Perez, a professor of education at Saint Mary's College of California, has over three decades of teaching experience from the preschool level through graduate school. A frequent presenter and enthusiastic "teacher cheerleader," she offers guidance to both novice and experienced educators. Perez is an international educational consultant, author, and motivational speaker, specialising in instructional strategies and creative approaches to literacy and professional development. She integrates state-of-the-art methods and research with passion and practical insights from her own classroom experiences.

Perez has taught in many diverse environments, including in Richmond and Oakland, as a general educator, special educator, reading specialist, and curriculum and staff development coordinator. In order to "keep it real," she balances her college courses and her work as a coordinator for the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program by serving as a literacy coach in a San Francisco Bay Area middle school, engaging even the most reluctant learners with brain-friendly techniques.

Perez works with teachers, administrators and parents throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, the Caribbean, New Zealand, and Australia. For the past three years, she has conducted extensive training in Singapore and Hong Kong for the Ministry of Education.

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WRITE ON!

6 Traits for Success

Proven Strategies for Teaching Writing



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THE WRITING PROCESS

Anticipation Guide

The following anticipation guide is designed to raise questions. Please begin by indicating your response to each item in the margin. You may use the following key: SA for “strongly agree”; A for “agree”; U for “uncertain”; D for “disagree”; and SD for “strongly disagree.”

1. Reading aloud to students can have a direct effect on their writing abilities.
2. We cannot write about something for which we lack prior knowledge.
3. Students need to be exposed to a variety of forms (genres) of writing.
4. It is important to spell all the words correctly when you are writing.
5. Students need to be drilled with skills, rules and procedures in spelling and writing.
6. We need to provide our students with many demonstrations of our own involvement in writing for a variety of purposes.
7. Correcting writers’ errors helps convince them that they cannot write independently.
8. Students need to be encouraged to experiment with written language.
9. We need to teach writing skills with textbooks, rather than leave the acquisition of skills to chance.
10. If students are allowed to experiment with written language, conventions begin to surface in their writings.

Promoting The “Write” Atmosphere

Establishing a writer’s environment in your classroom can be of great help in teaching students to write effectively. Following are some things to consider.

- Promote a positive mental atmosphere in which students are willing to share their ideas.
- Encourage openness, questioning, and analyzing.
- Make your classroom bright and cheerful. Select posters and displays that stimulate the mind.
- Encourage your students to maintain journals and write in them each day.
- Encourage your students to maintain idea folders into which they can log ideas, puzzling questions, newspaper clippings, or just musings that they can refer to later.
- Never accept that students have no ideas for writing.
- Promote an attitude that imagination is an important ability, and like any ability it can be improved through use.
- Encourage experimentation with literary forms.
- Link writing to literature. Let students know that great books are the result of great writing.

- Treat writing as a process composed of several stages: prewriting, drafting, revision, and publishing.
- Provide time for the stages of writing.
- Encourage the acquisition of spelling, grammar, and usage skills within the process of writing.
- If possible, provide a variety of paper, pens, correction fluid, and bookconstruction materials.
- Provide dictionaries, a thesaurus, a rhyming dictionary, a grammar reference, and a stylebook.
- Encourage your students to write about meaningful topics and subjects.
- Provide a variety of writing experiences.
- Allow students to develop material at their own pace.
- Respond to the individual needs of your students; some will be more advanced than others.

WRITING PROCESS

- **TIME** - all learners need time to think, to learn, to practice new skills and strategies. Teachers provide large blocks of time for reading and writing and discussing their work. Writers need time to plan, draft, revise, share and publish.
- **CHOICE** - having opportunities to make choices about learning. Writers write best when they decide what to write about. Teachers can help students decide what they will write about and what they will read. When a specific content area is being studied, students need chances to choose topics within that area for their reading and writing. Choice motivates students and helps them make decisions about their learning.
- **RESPONSE** - all learners need responses to what they are learning. When students gather in small groups for a writing conference, they receive feedback on their ideas from both teacher and peers. Teachers respond to what students already know and what they are ready to learn, as shown in their drafts.
- **STRUCTURE**- all learners have a need for structure. Integrated language arts programs are well ordered and highly structured. The goals are to help students become eager readers, proficient writers, good thinkers and lifelong learners. Structured, predictable classrooms routines are needed to meet these goals. Teachers should provide daily

times for reading/writing workshops, reading aloud, reading and writing in the content areas, and regular sharing.

- **COMMUNITY** - because learning is a social as well as a cognitive process, the school and the classroom provide the community that supports students in their learning. A supportive learning community develops over time when teachers encourage students to take risks, try new things, work together, share new learning and celebrate academic successes. A supportive learning community implies a level of trust between students and teachers. This occurs when they view themselves as readers and writers and learners and when there is respect for individual differences and ideas.

WRITING STAGES



STAGE ONE-PRE WRITER

- Writes using lines, scribbles, shapes
- Makes letter-like marks
- Writes all over page
- Labels items in a drawing

STAGE TWO-EMERGENT WRITER

- Writes recognizable letters, randomly placed
- Uses some sound/symbol relationships for beginning sounds
- Writes from left to right/top to bottom
- Uses some high frequency words
- Leaves spaces between word-like forms/words
- Writes two and three word Sentence-like thoughts
- Writes phrases
- Chooses topics independently

STAGE THREE-EARLY WRITER

- Uses approximation of words
- Using beginning and ending sounds
- Uses vowels
- Uses sentences
- Uses capital letters at the beginning of sentences
- Uses ending punctuation

STAGE FOUR-DEVELOPING WRITER

- Phonetically spells words
- Uses correctly spelled words
- Writes multi-sentence pieces(combines thoughts)
- Is beginning to use editing skills
- Chooses a title for stories/writes on different topics
- Starts to revise for improvement

STAGE FIVE-FLUENT WRITER

- Writes most words correctly
- Uses editing skills consistently
- Writes on many subjects with a variety of style
- Organizes writing
- Revises
- Uses wide vocabulary
- Uses a variety of sentence structures

The 6+1 Traits™



Ideas

Ideas are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.



Organization

Organization is the internal structure, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas within a piece of writing.



Voice

Voice is the personal tone and flavor of the author's message, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words.



Word Choice

Word choice is the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning, the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.



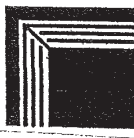
Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye.



Conventions

Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece—spelling, paragraphing, grammar and usage, punctuation, and use of capitals.



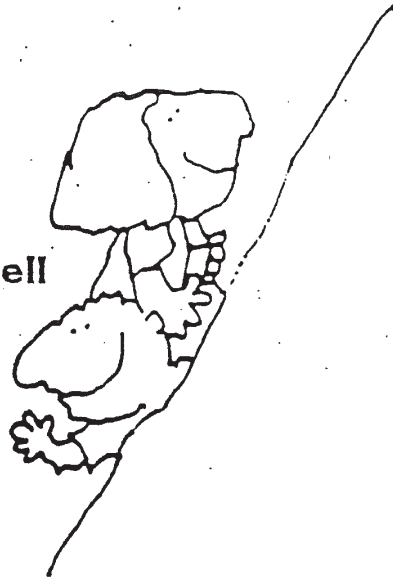
Presentation

Presentation is how the writing looks on the page. It focuses on the form, layout, and readability of the text. The piece should be pleasing to the eye.

Qualities Teachers Look For in Writing

Ideas . . .

- Makes sense
- Narrow, manageable topic
- Sounds like writer knows the topic well
- Fresh spin
- Important details



Organization . . .

- Inviting lead
- Purposeful sequencing
- Elaboration remains “centered”
- Fun to predict, but . . .
... some surprises, too!
- Doesn't just STOP
- No “dream” endings
- No redundant summaries





Voice . . .

- Sounds like a *person* wrote it
- Sounds like *this* writer--no one else
- Brings topic to life
- Punch, flair, style, courage
- Makes you *feel something*
- Sense of involvement



Word Choice . . .

- Memorable moments
- Strong verbs
- Vivid images
- "Just right" words & phrases
- Simple language used well
- Minimal redundancy
- Minimal slang, jargon, inflated language
- Not just correct--*precise*



Sentence Fluency . . .



- Easy to read aloud
- Varied sentence length
- Varied, purposeful sentence beginnings:
*Now, After a while, Because of this, Nevertheless,
As a result, Consequently, However, Therefore . . .*
- Rhythm, cadence

Conventions . . .

- Looks clean, edited and polished
- *Most* things done correctly
- Easy to decode, decipher, comprehend, & follow
- No **BIG, GLARING** errors
- Easy to focus on ideas, voice, organization



SIX TRAIT RAP

Ideas and Content is where it ought to be,
It's the development of the paper you see.
It's finding something interesting to talk about
Like your friendship with another not the mildew on your grout.

Organization is what comes next.
It's ordering your paper so it sounds the best.
With three main parts: beginning, middle, and end—
Using words like *next*, *afterwards*, and *then*.

Then we have Voice, not soprano or b ass,
But what your paper sounds like to the human race.
Does the paper show yourself in what you've said?
Can the reader read the paper and get inside your head?

Picking one word for another is called Word Choice.
It makes your paper strong and has a lot to do with Voice.
Avoiding clichés and sayings that are trite,
And using different words will give your paper more bite.

The way the paper flows is called Sentence Fluency.
It's something that you hear, not something that you see.
It's trying to write a sentence from a brand new angle.
No fragments, run-ons or participles that dangle.

Last but not least are Conventions, you know—
Like spelling, and grammar, and where the periods go.
You must dot your i's and cross your t's
Or you might wind up with a string of 3's!

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ideas

Focusing the Binoculars

Author Barry Lane says the more we focus our mental "binoculars," the more vivid images become. Look at the example—then try going from fuzzy to detailed in the samples that follow.

Example (from *Writers Express*, p. 99)

Fuzzy:

The woman looked kind of funny.

Detailed (binoculars fine tuned):

Her black felt hat, which was many sizes too large, covered all of her face except her chin. When she spoke, we could only see a small patch of white bobbing up and down under a large black lid.

Now, you try . . .

1. His car was a mess.
2. The food did not look good to me.
3. That dog was mean.
4. Her shoes did not seem to fit.

organization

A great essay, but—out of order!

Sea Snakes: Champion Divers

Land snakes can only do this a little bit.

For this reason, they can hold their breaths for a long time.

One snake dived 150 feet deep.

Some scientists studied how well sea snakes dive by attaching little radio transmitters to them.

Sea snakes are wonderful divers.

It stayed under water for three and a half hours!

Sea snakes have a single lung that is larger than the lung of land snakes.

When the snakes dived, the transmitters told the scientists how deep they went.

How can sea snakes stay underwater for so long?

Sea snakes also breathe through their skin.



Excerpted from Sneed B. Collard III, *Sea Snakes*. 1993. Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Boyd Mills Press.



Lesson for Organization

Ending Possibilities

Following is a short story with no ending. With a partner, try writing two possible endings for the story. See which you like best.

Tracker

Henry's mom would not let him have a dog. "Forget it," she told Henry. "Dogs cost *way* too much money. Besides, you have too many chores to take on a dog."

One afternoon, when they stopped at the grocery store, Henry spotted a big yellow dog in the back of a pick-up truck. The dog was staring at Henry, staring him right down. It had huge, friendly brown eyes. It looked like a Yellow Lab, but it was much bigger than any Lab Henry had ever seen. When Henry stared back, the dog stood up and pulled as hard on the rope as it could. Its tail began to move back and forth in long sweeps, and Henry could tell that dog wanted to be his friend.

He was almost ready to walk over to the pickup truck and talk to the dog when his mom came out of the store, carrying two huge bags of groceries. She squinted into the sunlight. "Henry," she called. "Come and help me. What are you staring at, anyhow?"

Ending 1

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Lesson for Organization

Ending 2

Which one of your endings do you like best? Why?

Hints to help if you get stuck:

- ▶ Surprise your reader.
- ▶ Go for feelings: an ending that's very happy or sad or funny.
- ▶ End with a thought or comment: What do you want the reader to remember most?



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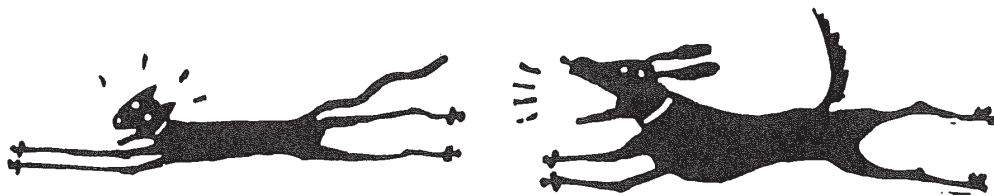
Lesson for Voice

Voice—or Not?

Compare the two samples that follow. In one, there is voice, flavor, life! The other is flat and dull. Why are they so different? After reading both, work with a partner to revise one of the dull paragraphs that follows. Give it some sparkle!

Samples to Compare

- ▶ Some people just do not know how to drive well. Roy is one of them.
- ▶ You do not want to be a passenger when Roy is at the wheel. He either cannot recognize the color red or else he does not know what red lights are for. He never stops. I pity drivers who get in his way. He zooms right up behind them and hits the horn full blast. What's worse, he passes them, even if he has to go into the ditch to do it. One of these days, he'll run into a driver who is as thoughtless as he is.
- ▶ Go to the next page



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Lesson for Word Choice

Flat Words

The problem here is that the writer has used very dull words and phrases. Track down the flat, dull words with your partner and underline them. Then, replace those tired old words and phrases with something livelier. Later, read both versions to see if you can hear the difference.

Something Scary

Mike moved way down to the lower part of his bed. His whole body was shaking. Something huge was moving down the hall toward his room. It was moving slowly. The floor was making a noise. Mike took a deep breath. His eyes got big. The thing was in the doorway now. It came closer. It was making a noise. But—the thing was moving on *very* small feet. It was only his sister, wearing their dad's old raincoat. She said, "Boo!" But Mike did not even move. He just smiled at her.

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Lesson on Sentence Fluency

Combining Sentences for a Smoother Flow

Choppy sentences make for choppy reading. Read the following paragraph aloud to see how choppy and stiff it sounds. Then, see if you can combine some of the sentences to make it flow more smoothly. When you are finished, read your revision aloud to a partner to hear how it sounds.

Example

- ▶ My dog Sparky is going to get into trouble.
- ▶ Sparky is going to get into trouble because he won't leave the neighbor's cat alone.

Revision with combining

- ▶ Because he can't leave the neighbor's cat alone, my dog Sparky is going to get into trouble.

Now see what you can do with a paragraph about Sparky and Tiger. Combine sentences and/or rewrite sentences so the flow is smooth.

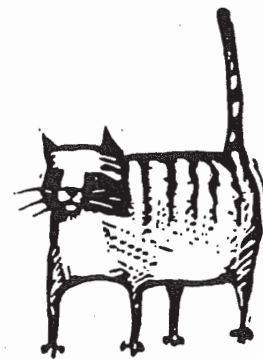
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Lesson on Sentence Fluency

Sparky

My dog Sparky is going to get into trouble. He is going to get into trouble because he can't leave the neighbor's cat alone. The neighbor's cat is named Tiger. Tiger has a fierce temper. Everyone knows about Tiger's bad temper except Sparky. Sparky does lots of things to annoy Tiger. He nibbles at his food. He chases him. He chews on tiger's toys. Tiger is annoyed by all these things. When Tiger gets mad, he swats you in the face with his claws. One of these days, he is going to swat Sparky in the face. If Sparky gets swatted by Tiger's sharp claws, maybe he will learn to leave Tiger alone.



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Journal Topics

What do you spend time doing outside of school? If extra-curricular activities, which? How much time do they take? If you work, where and how often do you do so? What do you do at work? If you are involved in neither extra-curricular activities nor work, what do you do with your time?

What is the favorite pet that you have had? Why?

What is/was your favorite toy or game?

A recent letter to the editor dealt with students receiving too much homework. How much do you get? Is it unreasonable?

What is your definition of happiness, and what makes you happy?

Who is your role model?

Describe an adventure you took.

What is the most frightened you have ever been?

Describe an object that means something to you, and tell the reasons it is important.

What is the strangest/best/worst dream you have ever had?

Name the teacher who has made the greatest impact on your life. Explain how and why.

What are the three greatest accomplishments of your life?

What is your most vivid memory of winter, good or bad?

How prevalent is cheating at school? When was the last time, if ever, you cheated?

Discuss a family tradition that you follow.

This extensive collection of prompts is intended for elementary students, but many of them are also appropriate for older students.

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html>

Journal prompts for high school or college writers.

<http://www.brtom.org/ideas1.html>

Ink Provoking—Creative Writing Prompts Updated Every Monday through Friday

<http://www.inkprovoking.com/>



Memory Bank Search...

What were some "firsts" in my life?

first day of school	first plane ride	first job
first award	first best friend	first car

What places in your life do you remember most clearly?

vacations	favorite room	building
forest	ocean	relative's home

Think about your best friends---or worst enemies

Think about times you were---

frightened	courageous	embarrassed
lonely	confident	nervous
proud	sick	determined
sad	happy	most successful
furious	bursting with news	

What about your family?

your jobs	your role (clown, counselor, etc.)
favorite relatives	strange family members
most influential family member	

What do you wish others knew about you?

What clubs or organizations are or were you involved in?

What advice have you hear over and over again?

(My mom always told me . . .)

I thought I'd . . .

I would never . . .

Think about school . . .

teachers	classes	projects	friends	events
fairs	sports	office referrals		report cards

GETTING TO KNOW YOU BETTER

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANOTHER
STUDENT...WE HAVE LOTS TO LEARN FROM
EACH OTHER...

WHO WAS THEIR FAVORITE TEACHER?
WHY?

WHAT PROFESSION DO THEY THINK THEY
WILL BE INVOLVED IN? WHY?

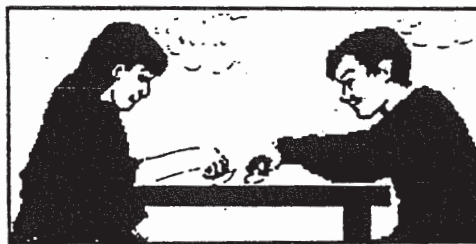
WHERE HAVE THEY TRAVELED? WHAT
PARTICULAR PLACE HAS MEANING AND
WHY?

WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT
BEING A KID?

WHAT WAS THE BEST EXPERIENCE THEY
HAVE EVER HAD? THE WORST?
THE FUNNIEST?

OREO COOKIE

USING ALL OF YOUR SENSES, OBSERVE (SEE) THIS DELECTABLE DELIGHT, INHALE (SMELL) THE ESSENCE, SAVOR (TASTE) THE DELICIOUS FLAVOR, EXPERIENCE (FEEL) THE DELICATE TEXTURE, LISTEN (HEAR) TO THE EUPHONY OF THIS TASTY MORSEL, AS IT DANCES IN HARMONY WITH YOUR IVORY WHITES. CAPTURE THE ECSTASY OF THE MOMENT, AS YOU SAVOR YOUR LUSCIOUS (?) TREAT. IN OTHER WORDS, WRITE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE COOKIE, AS YOU DEVOUR EACH AND EVERY CRUMB.



Informational Writing

IDEAS

1. Write a short proposal for an ideal school to be built in 2025. Be sure to include descriptions of the various instructional facilities—a media center, resource center, gymnasium, theater—whatever you feel might be important. Include the impact on the community, as well as information on materials and labor needed, plus projected costs.
2. Write an article that could be used by the local Chamber of Commerce or other public relations agency to encourage people to move to your community. (As an alternative, script a video presentation, indicating for each 2-3 lines what viewers will see on their screens as they watch.)
3. Create a model or drawing of a robot made from recycled materials: discarded glass, metal, plastic, engine parts, etc. Include an operator's manual.
4. Write an Owner's Manual for any object in your home or school. Make it as detailed as you feel is necessary. Include drawings or diagrams if you wish.
5. Imagine how any machine might operate differently 25 years in the future—it could be as simple as a pencil sharpener or as complex as a computer. Write an Owner's Manual that would enable a user of the future to work with this equipment easily.
6. Suppose scientists have developed an animal or plant that can survive in the atmospheric conditions of some other planet within our solar system. Write a brief technical report describing the plant or animal and the adaptations it has had to make to thrive in this different environment. Do enough research to make your report authentic and as scientifically plausible as possible.



7. Cloning has become a part of our scientific culture. Do you think this is a good thing—or not? Write an argument using scientific evidence to support your position. Feel free to quote others who have opinions on this topic to help strengthen your argument.
8. Write a series of job descriptions that might appear in your local newspaper in 25 years. Look at current job advertisements to get a good idea of the kinds of information required: qualifications, experience, education required, pay, hours, etc. Make the five descriptions as different as you can to show the kinds of jobs that will be required in the work force of the future.
9. Create a resume for any famous person, real or fictional. Make sure the resume accurately reflects that individual's personality, occupational experience, and career goals.
10. Imagine what will be required of you in your "dream job"—the job you would have if you could hold any position in the world. Then design a resume that would help you land that job.
11. The year is 2060. You are a free-lance writer who specializes in brochure design. Develop a brochure for one of the following:
 - ⇒ A new zoo in your area
 - ⇒ A new aquarium
 - ⇒ A local shopping mall
 - ⇒ A public transit system
 - ⇒ A college
 - ⇒ A tour of any major city in the world
 - ⇒ A weight loss or fitness program
 - ⇒ A new national park
 - ⇒ A computer-based game
 - ⇒ A computer-based home schooling system
12. Some people think it is just fine for people to obtain college degrees via computer. Others disagree. Draft an argument to support one position or the other, using information from colleges that offer degrees via computer and interviewing at least one person who has tried this form of instruction (as a teacher or student).

13. Create a glossary of terms such as *byte, cloning, aquaculture, eco-system, geothermal, global village, surfing the net, exponential growth, biosphere, inter-galactic, networking*, and so on, that would help persons seeking to understand life in the 21st Century. Try to include at least 25 terms you feel are relevant and important to modern life.
14. The year is 2050. Results are in for the new national assessments measuring American students' achievement in reading, writing, math, and science. Write a status report to be published by the U.S. government summarizing the results. Now, write a short article on the results that will appear in your local newspaper. Compare the two. Do they differ in length? Tone? Organization? Content? How and why?
15. Group activity: Design a holiday mail-order catalog you think might be popular in the year 2040. Do not forget to include such things as specially priced items, best sellers, hot new items, children's favorites, new electronic "toys," etc. (You might even include "nostalgic" items—things you have not seen for sale since the good old 1990s!)
16. Imagine you are the sales manager for a company that manages *all* its sales over the Internet. Lately, sales have fallen off as people have become leery of purchasing items via computer. They are worried they will not get the right items or will be overcharged—or that their credit card numbers will not be secure. You must write a public relations article that will appear on the Net to reassure your clientele—and attract new customers.
17. Write an advertisement for any product or service in your community you would like to see promoted. Imagine that your ad will appear in newspapers and magazines across your state—or geographic region.
18. You are a technical writer for *Creative Computing* magazine. Your company is giving an award for the most innovative Website designed this year, and you must deliver the award and give a speech stating why your magazine has chosen one particular Website over other competitors. What will you say?



19. You work at a local college that has decided to offer a new course on technical writing. Draft a course summary that will appear in the new college handbook. Be sure your summary makes the course appealing enough to attract lots of students!
20. Choose any informational article from any newspaper or magazine. Draft a review of this article outlining its strengths and weaknesses. Be sure to include comments on content, readability, audience appeal, thoroughness of research, and presentation on the page.
21. Many persons these days enjoy listening to information as they drive. Create a short audiotape on any informational topic—from reptiles to grammar—that drivers could listen to within a 10-minute time span. Make your tape authentic, informative, and interesting. (You don't want your listeners switching to the oldies station!)
22. Create a public awareness poster on any issue you feel is of current importance. It might have to do with education, health, aging, discrimination, fair employment, recreation—or any issue of interest to you. Be sure your poster is visually appealing—and gets the point across in a way that will promote action!
23. Draft a letter to a current congressional representative stating your position on a current issue or your wish for a change in current law. Be prepared to share your letter and the response (if any) that you receive.
24. Find a document that is difficult to read: a portion of IRS tax code, a technical manual, a legal contract, etc. Try re-writing a portion in user friendly language, and present the two documents to an audience. Talk about the changes you made and why you made them.
25. Draft two more prompts to add to this list!

HAPPY INFO WRITING!

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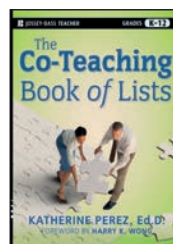
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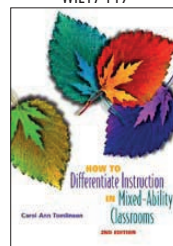


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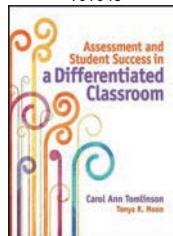
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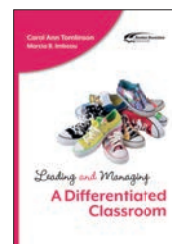
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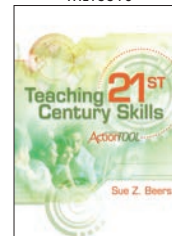
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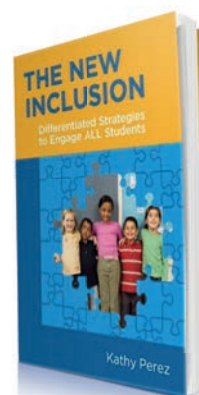
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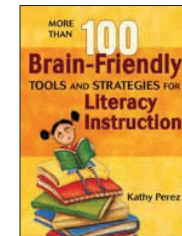
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