

The 7 Elements of a Differentiated Writing Lesson

The Seven Elements

Skill/Trait Focus

Mentor Text

Graphic Organizer

Student Choice

Teacher/Student
Writing Models

Students Talk
about Process

Real Revision



Hello, teaching colleagues! You're looking at a partial version of the "Goal-Setting & Intro to the Seven Elements" PowerPoint I present during my 2- and 3-day professional development workshop: [The Seven Elements of a Differentiated Writing Lesson](#). You can purchase all eight PowerPoints used in this workshop at our [Teachers Pay Teachers Store](#). Like this PowerPoint, the materials are all self-paced for independent learning, but they also can be shared whole staff.

During most of June, July, and August, as well as during our district's Fall and Spring Breaks, I am available to provide this 2- or 3-day workshop for schools or whole districts who wish to hire me as an independent contractor. You may visit my website's [trainer page](#) to see my rates and upcoming availability.

The *7 Elements* of a Differentiated Writing Lesson

The Seven Elements

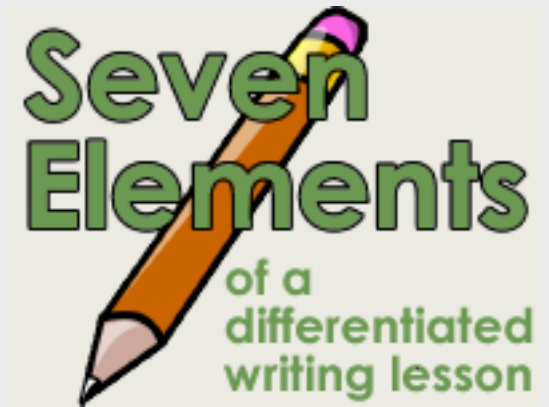
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Here is my initial **goal-setting PowerPoint** for teachers and administrators interested in improving writing instruction using differentiated philosophy and techniques.

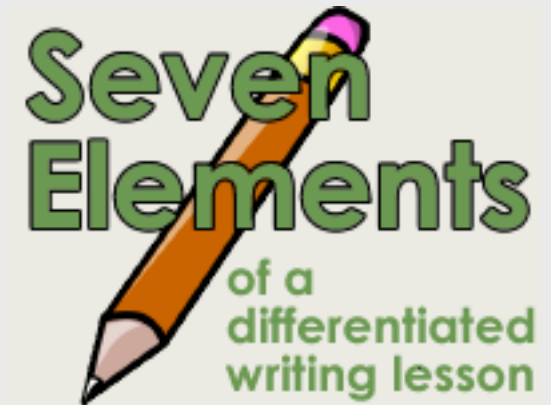
(Note-takers begin on page 1 of your packet.)

Essential Questions: What's a realistic goal for you?
How many of the seven elements could you focus on
and still maintain quality instruction while learning?



- Fact:** This workshop will focus on going into depth on seven, research-inspired strategies that can strengthen writing instruction when used effectively.
- Fact:** Becoming better at effectively using any of the seven elements is not easy work. It requires diligence. It requires time. Learning will be enhanced by collaboration.
- Fact:** Trying to improve on all seven simultaneously is an unrealistic goal. The “Seven Elements” are presented to you as a long-term professional development goal.
- Fact:** Many of the “Seven Elements” complement each other; they can be learned about together.
- Fact:** You will be asked to commit to studying one, two, or three of the seven as a professional goal during the next school year.

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Let's liken this workshop's goal-setting process to realistic goals students might set with their own writing.

If there are Six Writing Traits...

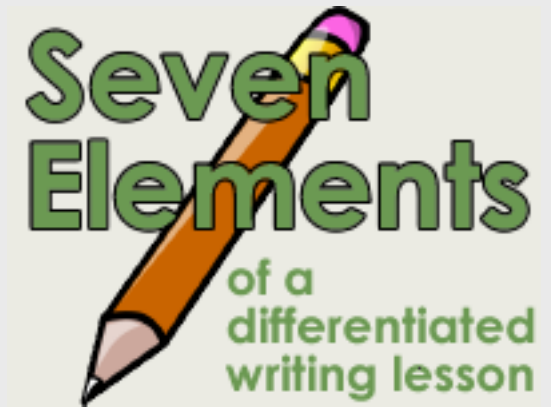
- Idea Development
- Organization
- Voice
- Conventions
- Word Choice
- Sentence Fluency



This is Alfredo, a 5th grader. With writing skills, he's pretty competent but not one of your "superstars." Alfredo likes to write.

...how many (out of six) do you realistically think Alfredo could think about, improve upon, and still learn something about while revising?

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Let's liken this workshop's goal-setting process to realistic goals students can set with their own writing.

If there are Six Writing Traits...

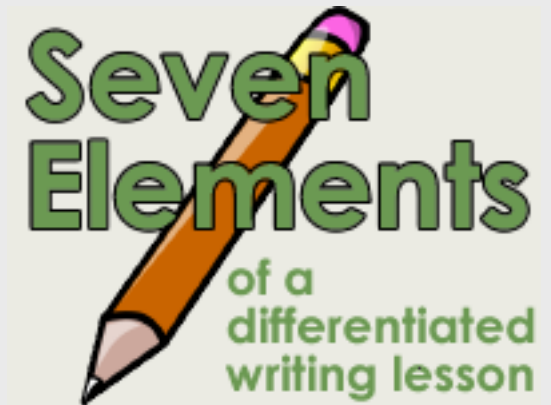
- Idea Development
- Organization
- Voice
- Conventions
- Word Choice
- Sentence Fluency



This is Brooklyn, a 6th grader. With writing skills, she's gifted, but she'd rather read her independent novel than spend extra time revising.

...how many (out of six) do you realistically think Brooklyn could think about, make choices for, and still learn something about while drafting?

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Let's liken this workshop's goal-setting process to realistic goals students can set with their own writing.

If there are Six Writing Traits...

- Idea Development
- Organization
- Voice
- Conventions
- Word Choice
- Sentence Fluency



This is Avery, an 8th grader. With writing, he really struggles and needs one-on-one time. He tries, but conventions frustrate him.

...how many (out of six) do you realistically think Avery could think about, make choices for, and still learn something about while pre-writing?

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If there are...

The Seven Elements

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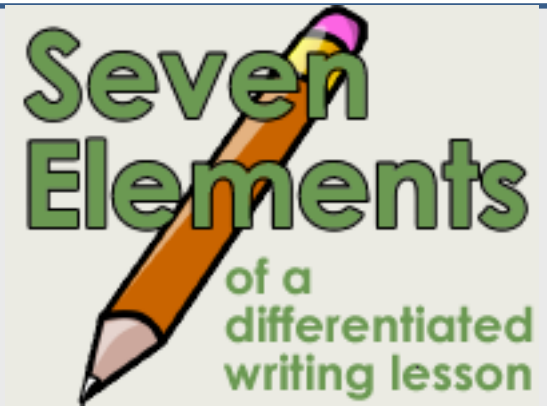
...to choose from...

...and...



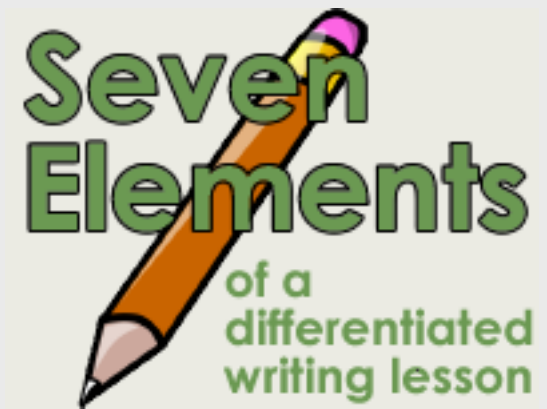
(your picture here)

...you know *you*
better than I know
you...



...what realistic
goal will
you set for
yourself
during this
workshop?
How many of
the 7 will you
commit to study
this next year?

Essential Questions: What's a realistic goal for you?
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Before setting a goal, you'll obviously need to think deeply about the seven elements. Let's start by asking your opinion (no right answer) about these seven bold statements that I like to make...

Bold Statement #1: Without a graphic organizer, most students would not produce writing that is organized?

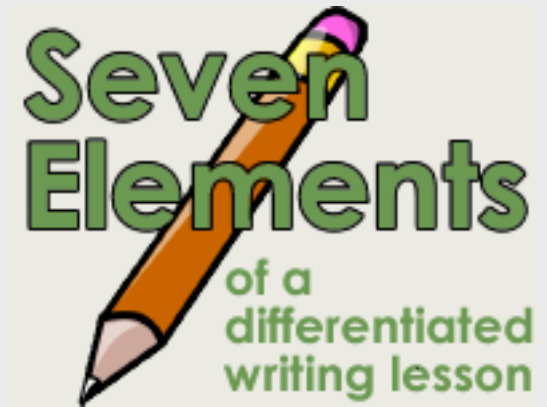
<p>Please rank (from 1 to 5) your level of agreement with the following seven statements.</p> <p>1 indicates a strong disagreement.</p> <p>5 indicates a strong agreement.</p>	<p>Topic 1: Graphic Organizers</p> <p>Without a graphic organizer, most students would not produce writing that is organized.</p> <p>Disagree ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Agree</p>	<p>Topic 2: Mentor Texts</p> <p>A published model that exemplifies a writing skill that is about to be taught should always be discussed when teaching writing.</p> <p>Disagree ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Agree</p>
<p>Topic 3: Talk during the Writing Process</p> <p>If students are allowed to talk to each other before, during, and after the writing process about what they are writing, the quality of their final product improves.</p> <p>Disagree ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Agree</p>	<p>Topic 4: Trait or Skill Focus</p> <p>A very specific trait (or writing skill) should be chosen and communicated to students before, during, and after they write.</p> <p>Disagree ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Agree</p>	<p>Topic 5: Teacher/Student Models</p> <p>Before writing, students should talk meaningfully about skills or traits in student and teacher models.</p> <p>Disagree ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Agree</p>
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My workshop contains research-based materials that show teachers new ways to design graphic or advance organizers that focus students on writing skills found in any set of academic standards!

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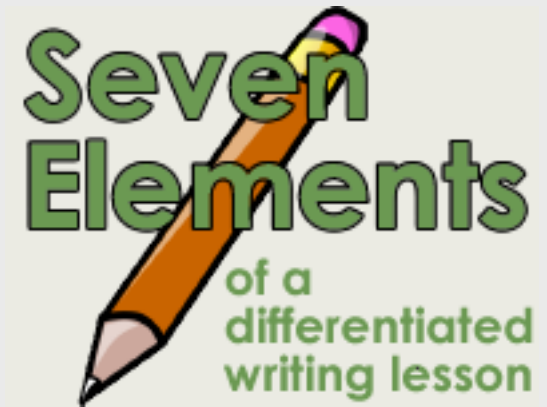
Writer's name:		
Floating Down the River an original assignment from WritingFix (Pre-Writing Worksheet)		
<p>Like the hen in Jan Brett's <u>Daisy Comes Home</u>, you will imagine that you are on an adventure today and that you are floating down a river. In your story, you will meet three animals. You will share an equal amount of details about these three animals. Your story will have an equal number of sentences about these three animals.</p>		
Let's plan your story!		
<p>Close your eyes and imagine this. You are on an inner-tube enjoying a warm and refreshing float on a gentle river. What details do you see in your mind when you think of this? Write them below, and try to write down both things you see (nouns) and describing words (adjectives).</p>		
Details I want my reader to see:		
<p>Now imagine this. You meet an animal in or near the river. What animal will it be? What will it be doing as you float by? What important details might you include to help your reader see the same animal you see in your head?</p>		
First animal:	What is it doing when you see it?	What important details should you share?

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Bold Statement #2: A published model (mentor text) that exemplifies writing skills should always be used when teaching writing?

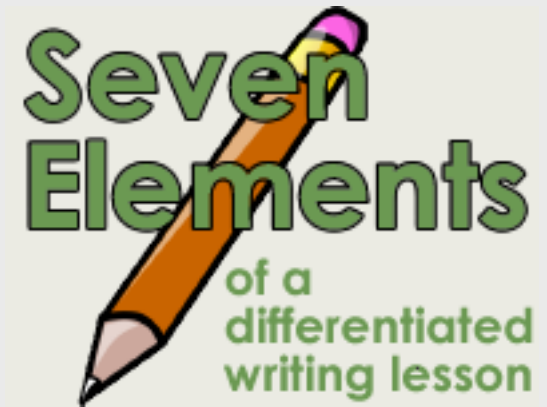
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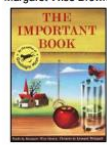


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My workshop shares the classification system I created for my own library of mentor texts, and we explore just how using a mentor text well can inspire a reluctant writer to try something new!

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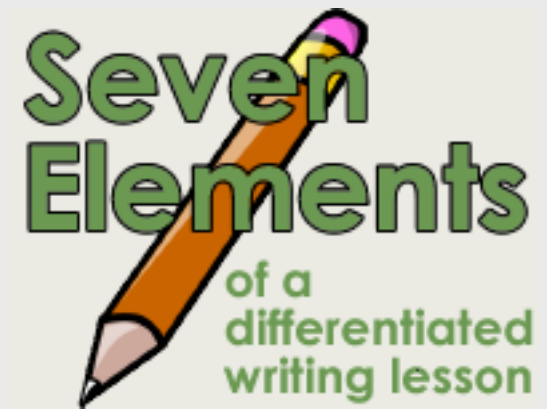
"Mentor Text" Classification		
<p>What is a mentor text? A <i>mentor text</i> is a published book (or song lyric or magazine article or...?) whose big idea or whose written craft can easily inspire a student to write about a similar idea or to write with the same craft technique used by the author. The best mentor texts can be brought out over and over again throughout a school year. When students know they are going to be write like an actual author, their buy-in increases.</p>		
<p>Idea Mentor Texts If you like a book's idea and think students could create an original idea based on the one from the text, you are probably selecting an <i>idea mentor text</i>.</p>	<p>Structure Mentor Texts If a published book presents a structure that can be easily impersonated with students' original ideas, you are choosing a <i>structure mentor text</i>.</p>	<p>Craft Mentor Texts If the author's writing style or his/her techniques with words, phrases, or sentences can inspire your students to write similarly, you are selecting a <i>craft mentor text</i>.</p>
<p><i>Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs</i> by Judi and Ron Barrett</p>  <p>In this book, food falls from the sky for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so students can write about their own day, writing about unique foods not used in the original story.</p>	<p><i>The Important Book</i> by Margaret Wise Brown</p>  <p>Students create original "Important Book passages" about topics they've learned about in social studies, using the structure shared by Margaret Wise Brown on every page of this mentor text.</p>	<p><i>All the Places to Love</i> by Patricia MacLachlan</p>  <p>Students study MacLachlan's amazing use of prepositional phrases, then apply some of her techniques to a rough draft they have already created.</p>
<p><i>Daisy Comes Home</i> by Jan Brett</p>  <p>A thought: Most well-designed mentor text lessons borrow both ideas and structures from the books that inspire them. For example, in <i>Daisy Comes Home</i> by Jan Brett, a main character floats down a river past three animals, and the book very clearly gives equal amounts of details about each animal encounter as part of its structure, which is a structural example of good pacing. If you were to have students write about floating down a river past three different animals and to give equal details to each encounter, you are using this book as both an <i>idea</i> and <i>structure</i> mentor text.</p>	<p>A thought: A craft mentor text usually needs to be shared (or re-shared) after a rough draft has been written to prepare students for a revision tasks. Craft lessons have the most impact in between first and second draft.</p>	
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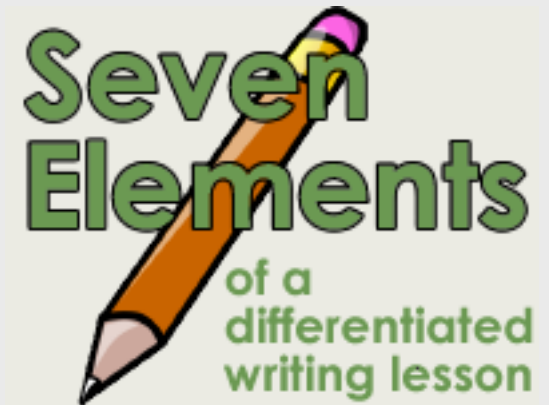
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My workshop explores resources and techniques for helping students collaborate with each other in meaningful ways before, during, and after the writing process. Student collaboration is an important 21st Century Skill!

Bold statement #3: If students are allowed to talk to each other before, during, and after writing, they will produce better writing.

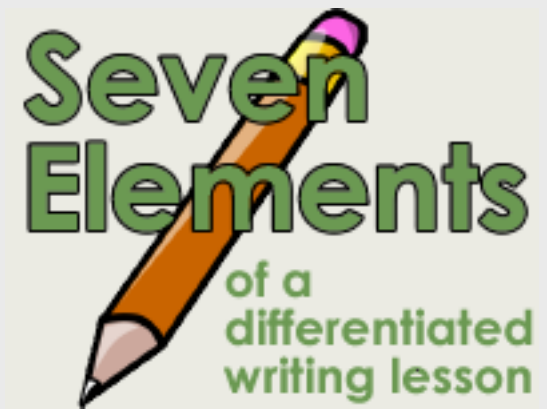


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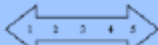
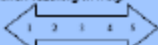

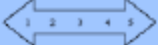

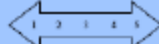
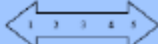
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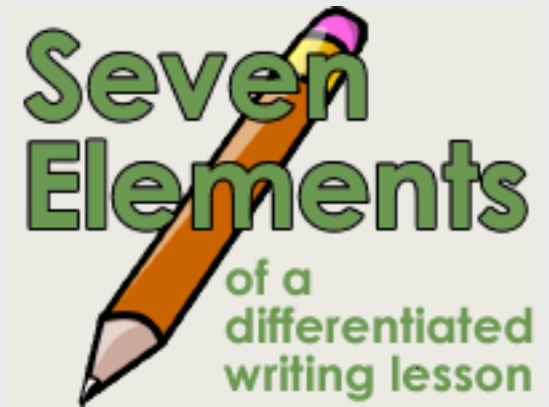
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My workshop is supported by the research that says writing lessons should be more skill-based and less product-based. Products are assigned, but skills are taught, and I am proud to *teach* writing, not simply *assign* it.

Bold statement #4: A very specific skill (or writing trait) should be chosen and communicated to students before, during, and after they write.

Idea Development Sticky Note

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

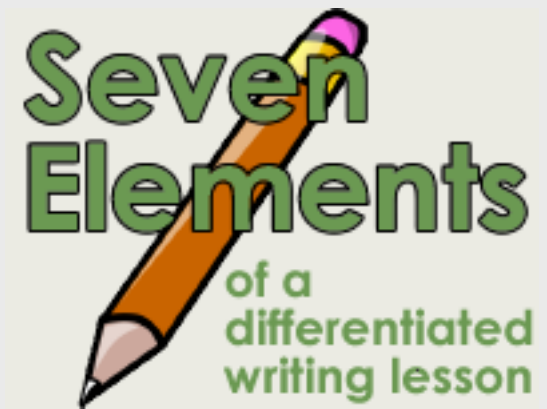
- _____ I use a balance of showing and telling skills.
- _____ My details, instead of being general, are specific.
- _____ I describe things in unique and memorable ways.
- _____ My writing is focused and doesn't stray off topic.
- _____ It is clear from my writing that I like my topic or idea.

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Bold statement #5: Before writing, students should meaningfully discuss a teacher and/or student model of the writing they will be doing.

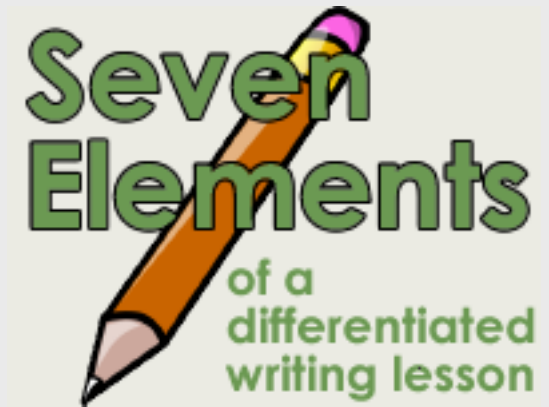
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My workshop explores ways to read student- and teacher-made samples using tools that develop critical thinking. When students can analyze another's writing for strengths and weaknesses, they can do the same for their own writing.

Bold statement #5: Before writing, students should meaningfully discuss a teacher and/or student model of the writing they will be doing.

Mexico Trip
by Justin S., 5th grade writer

My dad and I went to Mexico for summer vacation. What were we doing in Mexico? Good question. My dad would not tell me. When we pulled up to this place, I went cold. It was definitely not a mansion. It was not even a medium-sized house! We got out of the car. When we got in the house as tiny as a mouse hole, my jaw dropped immediately. There were no living plants, no lights, no clean walls or countertops and ...NO TELEVISION! I felt a tear in my eye. The beds were made out of pure stone. The toilets...you don't want to know. All of the nonliving plants were pure black. I finally blinked and tears came pouring out. My dad took me out on a hike to let me cool down, but it didn't work. I suffered in that cave my dad called a house for a month.

Justin

Joshua

What's **voice** in writing?
It might be:

- Humor or sarcasm
- Point-of-view
- Passion or emotion
- Mood or tone
- Persuasive techniques
- Other stylistic writing techniques

Talk with a writing partner. Compare and contrast the **voice** techniques used by Justin and Joshua in their two different settings descriptions. Use this Venn diagram to record your ideas about how Justin and Joshua use similar and different voice techniques.

The Mars Rover
by Joshua M., 5th grade writer

This planet has never been stepped on or known to have any life. No working probe has reached this world. Almost no one knew anything of the Red Planet until now.

If you were on Mars in the year of 2003, you could look up into the atmosphere and see an object parachuting down to you, even though nothing lives on Mars. The object was a space rover wrapped in a mechanical ball. When it unfolded, NASA had to direct it down the ramp. There was a big problem. The rover was too big and it wasn't facing the ramp. Finally, it made it down safe.

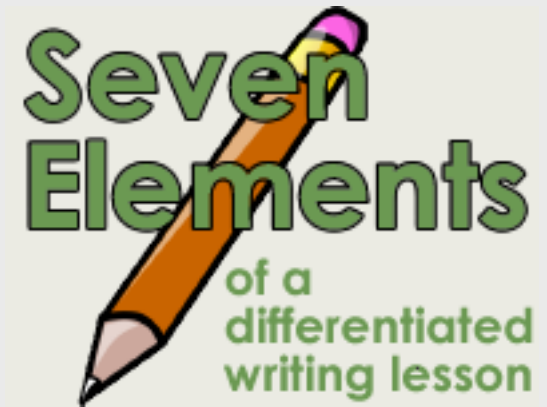
This was one small roll for the rover but one big step for mankind.

5 = "I strongly agree."

3 = "I could go either way."

1 = "I strongly disagree."

Essential Questions: What's a realistic goal for you?
 How many of the seven elements could you focus on
 and still maintain quality instruction while learning?



Before setting a goal, you'll obviously need to think deeply about the seven elements. Let's start by asking your opinion (no right answer) about these seven bold statements that I like to make...

Bold statement #6: Students will be more invested in writing assignments if they are allowed to make choices about topics or steps of the process.

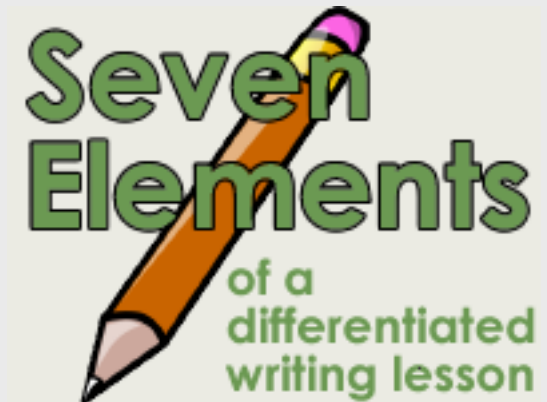
<p>Please rank (from 1 to 5) your level of agreement with the following seven statements.</p> <p>1 indicates a strong disagreement.</p> <p>5 indicates a strong agreement.</p>	<p>Topic 1: Graphic Organizers</p> <p>Without a graphic organizer, most students would not produce writing that is organized.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>	<p>Topic 2: Mentor Texts</p> <p>A published model that exemplifies a writing skill that is about to be taught should always be discussed when teaching writing.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>
<p>Topic 3: Talk during the Writing Process</p> <p>If students are allowed to talk to each other before, during, and after the writing process about what they are writing, the quality of their final product improves.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>	<p>Topic 4: Trait or Skill Focus</p> <p>A very specific trait (or writing skill) should be chosen and communicated to students before, during, and after they write.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>	<p>Topic 5: Teacher/Student Models</p> <p>Before writing, students should talk meaningfully about skills or traits in student and teacher models.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>
<p>Topic 6: Student Choice</p> <p>Students will be more invested in writing assignments if they are allowed to choose topics to write about.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>	<p>Topic 7: Revision</p> <p>Revision is the one step in the writing process where students learn most about what makes quality writing.</p> <p>Disagree Agree</p> <p>← 1 2 3 4 5 →</p>	<p><u>The Six Traits:</u> Ideas Development Organization Voice Word Choice Sentence Fluency Conventions</p> <p><u>The Writing Process:</u> Pre-writing Drafting Response Revision Editing Publishing</p>

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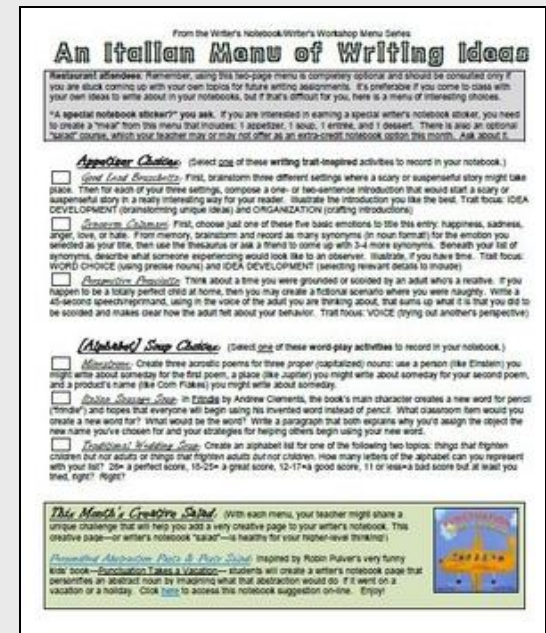
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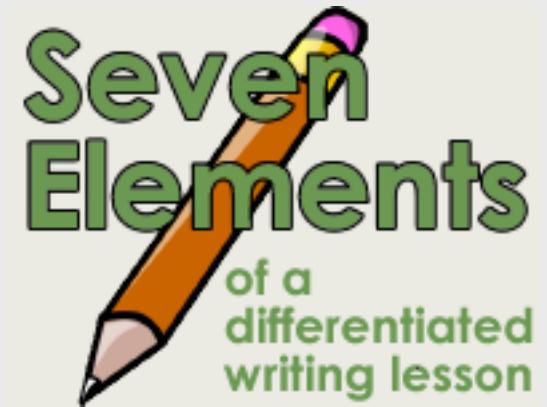
My workshop supports the philosophical element of differentiation that allows students more choices. When students are allowed to make thoughtful choices during the writing process, they will work harder on an assignment.

Bold statement #6: Students will be more invested in writing assignments if they are allowed to make choices about topics or steps of the process.



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Essential Questions: What's a realistic goal for you?
 How many of the seven elements could you focus on
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Before setting a goal, you'll obviously need to think deeply about the seven elements. Let's start by asking your opinion (no right answer) about these seven bold statements that I like to make...

Bold statement #7: Revision is the one step of the writing process where students learn the most about what makes quality writing.

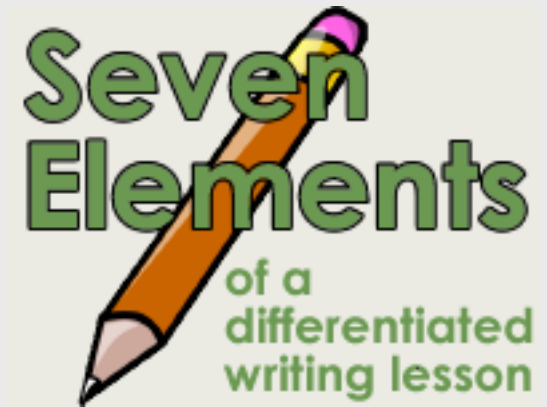
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Essential Questions: What's a realistic goal for you?
How many of the seven elements could you focus on
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My workshop explores what revision looks like when it's done well and when it isn't done well. When students are truly revising their writing, they are close to the topmost levels of Blooms taxonomy.





Bold statement #7: Revision is the one step of the writing process where students learn the most about what makes quality writing.

The Revision Sprint

Up to four runners will sprint through your paper's rough draft... nothing like a good 50-yard dash to get your heart racing! Your teacher will tell you what names to give the runners; write their names below them.

When you read your paper, indicate which of the four runners won the race by drawing a big, thick arrow between that runner and the finish line; then, determine where the other three runners were on the track when the race was won by drawing each of them an arrow. Decide who wins and comes in last based on the names of the runners.

When you revise your draft, you will need to make sure **your slowest racer ties your fastest racer**. Before writing next draft, talk to your teacher about how you plan to make your slowest of runners a much better racer.

Your Racers:	10 yards→20 yards→30 yards→40 yards→50 yards	Finish Line
		
		
		
		

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The 7 Elements of a Differentiated Writing Lesson

The Seven Elements

Skill/Trait Focus

Mentor Text

Graphic Organizer

Student Choice

Teacher/Student
Writing Models

Students Talk
about Process

Real Revision



Hello, teaching colleagues! You're looking at a partial version of the "Goal-Setting & Intro to the Seven Elements" PowerPoint I present during my 2- and 3-day professional development workshop: [The Seven Elements of a Differentiated Writing Lesson](#). You can purchase all eight PowerPoints used in this workshop at our [Teachers Pay Teachers Store](#). Like this PowerPoint, the materials are all self-paced for independent learning, but they also can be shared whole staff.

During most of June, July, and August, as well as during our district's Fall and Spring Breaks, I am available to provide this 2- or 3-day workshop for schools or whole districts who wish to hire me as an independent contractor. You may visit my website's [trainer page](#) to see my rates and upcoming availability.