

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiating means teaching *differently* depending on individual student needs. Students learn at different paces. Some need added instruction and more practice and others learn quickly and with less practice than their peers.

Meaningful differentiation in the teaching of writing supports every student. Instruction varies according to student writing needs. Language growth includes both verbal and written acuity, and each student's starting point in writing development must be carefully assessed at the beginning of the school year.

High-Achieving Writers

Students who have strong linguistic talents often write their own stories from an early age and have mastered basic writing skills. Teachers at all grade levels must keep such students in mind, setting higher cognitive tasks, including writing form and content. Of special consideration is that higher-performing students rarely need formulas for writing. It is exposure to exemplary mentor text and modeling of rigorous writing craft, along with extensive writing practice, that leads higher-achieving students to outstanding writing achievement. While the following links are intended for teachers of high-ability writers, all teachers may find these ideas and lessons of value in their classroom. Also, because of the recursive nature of writing, the cited Next Generation Sunshine State Standards benchmark will often be only one of several appropriate writing benchmarks which also may be applicable to several grade levels.

Teaching Talented Writers in the Regular Classroom

This article by Kenneth Smith was published in *Gifted Child Today* (Volume 31 Issue 2 Publication Date: Spring 2008 Page Number(s): 19-26. DOI: 10.4219/gct-2008-762) and discusses differentiated instructional strategies for teaching the writing processes of expert vs. novice writers. It also presents an outstanding twelve-day instructional lesson designed to nurture the abilities of the more talented writer and also help the typical writer shift to a more complex writing model of the mystery genre, a model focusing upon the pattern of multifaceted character profiles. While written for middle school teachers, this series of assignments may be modified for any age student. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ789917.pdf>

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark1258.aspx>

Patterns in Writing I: Introduction

This site is an introduction to a complex, yet highly effective four-part set of lessons on the teaching of fiction (the other lessons follow below.). This first lesson introduces the concept that "structure increases creativity." Using the strategy of teaching writing from whole to part, this lesson aligns well with the needs of the high-achieving writer, illustrating how seemingly abstract structures, rules, and patterns can lead to great story-writing. Teachers also may be interested in subscribing to this gifted education site's weekly web update.

<http://www.byrdseed.com/patterns-in-writing/#>

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark1258.aspx>

Patterns in Writing II: Plot Structure

Using Aristotle’s dramatic theory model and terminology, this second lesson for advanced writers helps students use a mature model of tools with which to write. While embedding the complex thinking strategy of the Frayer Model, this unit examines not only higher-level definitions, but also essential characteristics of plot described to a depth well- beyond that provided to the typical writer. Also, examples/non-examples from popular movies and stories highlight each element of the plot pattern. The culmination of the lesson is an advanced writing assignment based on an original idea by each student.

<http://www.byrdseed.com/patterns-in-writing-plot-structure/#>

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark1258.aspx>

Patterns in Writing III: Themes

The incorporation of depth and complexity thinking tools and the expectation that students have an understanding of content imperatives differentiate this lesson instruction for higher-achieving students. Reinforcing the generalization “structure reinforces creativity,” this lesson builds on students’ growing knowledge of the depth and complexity of writing fiction through examining how an author chooses a theme and then builds creatively around the theme. Asking students to think of the big ideas authors explore in their writing, this lesson addresses the four most common themes, provides guided practice activities, and an explicit advanced writing assignment.

<http://www.byrdseed.com/patterns-in-writing-iii-themes/#>

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark1258.aspx>

Patterns in Writing IV: Character Archetypes

Using the inductive thinking model, this next lesson presents the complexity of character archetypes as a sophisticated tool to push higher-achieving students beyond the typical ideas of setting, plot, and main characters. Through the constructive learning strategy of categorization, students are asked to examine four selected archetypes - hero, mentor, jester/clown, and lovable rogue. These archetypes are reinforced through a variety of films, novels, and video games. Including an excellent, detailed worksheet for student brainstorming, this lesson contributes to student learning in both writing and literary analysis.

<http://www.byrdseed.com/patterns-in-writing-iv-character-archetypes/#>

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark1258.aspx>

Your Child – A Writer

In this article discussing the writing traits of K-5 children, Nancy Peterson, Ed. D., discusses the balance of process and product in developing good writers among gifted students and lists the characteristics of higher-achieving student writing. Especially helpful are actual examples of student writing to illustrate each of her points.

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/Parenting/Writing/Your_Child_A_Writer/Your_Child_A_Writer.cfm

Access Writing NGSSSLA at

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/PublicPreviewBenchmark866.aspx>