



WRITING CONFERENCES

Grades K-8



WELCOME!!

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#EmpoweringNationBuilders

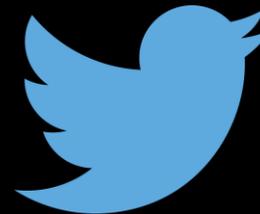
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Presentation Materials ↓

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AGENDA:

- INTRODUCTIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA
- THINKING LIKE A WRITER
- WRITING BLOCK SETUP
- WHAT IS A WRITING CONFERENCE?
- HANDS-ON PRACTICE



IMPLEMENTING A NEW PRACTICE IN YOUR
CLASSROOM TAKES TIME.



WHAT IS A WRITING CONFERENCE? A CONVERSATION.

“[Conferences] are not mini-lectures but the working talk of fellow writers sharing their experience with the writing process.”

– Don Murray, 1985

The goal is for students to become confident writers who think and talk about themselves as writers.

HOW DO WE CREATE THIS CONVERSATION?

- Ask a student to come sit with you
- Speak in a conversational tone
- Sit at eye-level
- Use “active listening” strategies
- Pick one thing to work on

A WRITING LESSON CONSISTS OF 3 PARTS:

1. MINILESSON (10-15 min)

2. INDEPENDENT WRITING (25-30 min)

3. SHARE SESSION (5-10 min)

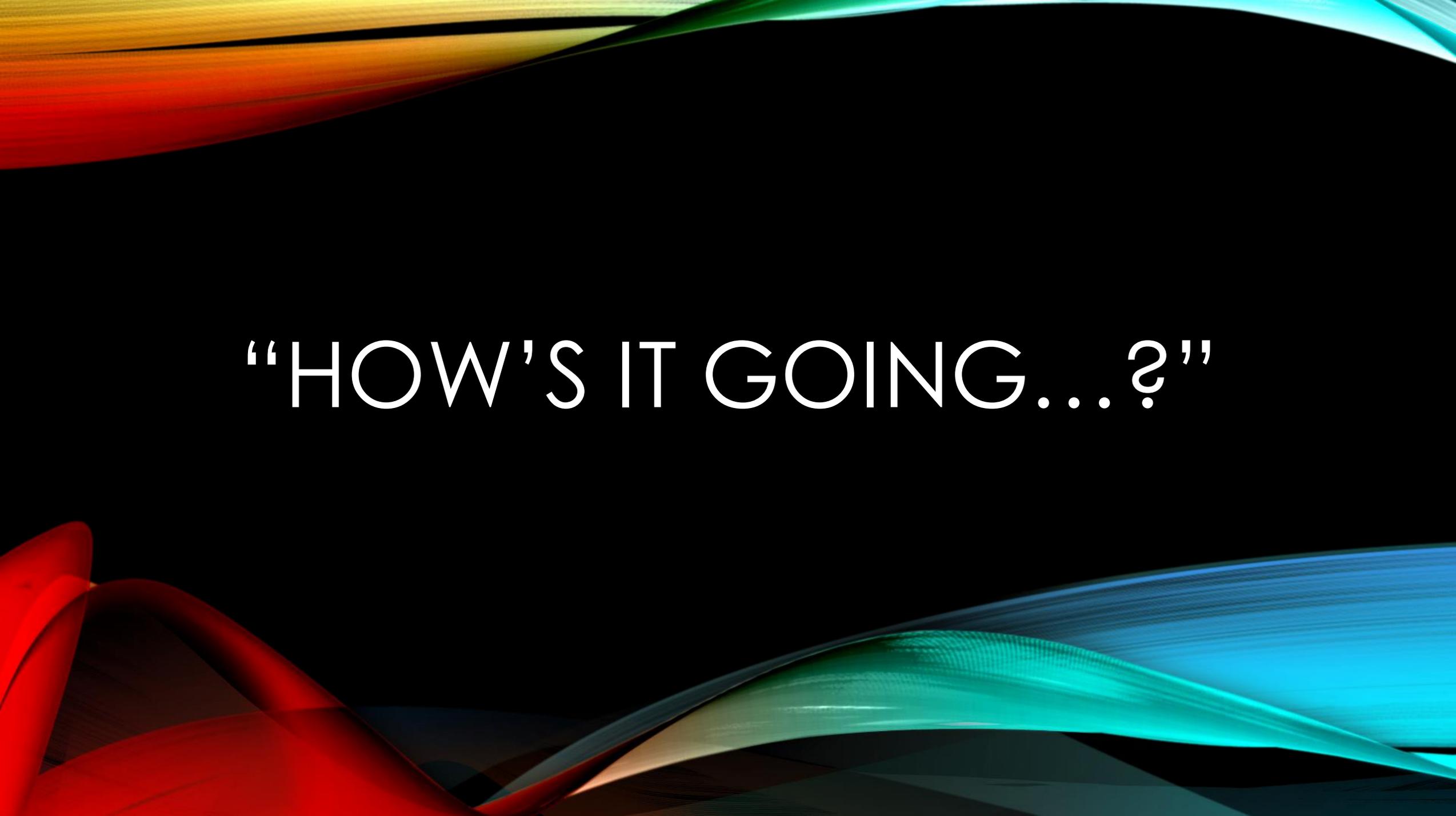
Minilesson and sharing session times should be adjusted according to grade level.

(approx. 5 min each for the primary grades)

WHERE DO MY MINILESSONS COME FROM?

There are many great writing programs out there, but the problem that presents itself when you use them without conferencing is, they can not pinpoint the needs of your individual students, or in what order you should be teaching the lessons to best support your learners. By conferring with several students a day, you might begin to notice a trend among your students and can guide your lessons by their needs.





“HOW’S IT GOING...?”

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE CONVERSATION:

- Where are you in the writing process?
- What is your next step?
- What is going well for you as a writer today?
- Are you doing anything as a writer that feels a little bit hard today that I can help you with?
- What recent minilessons are you trying out in your writing today?
- Are you working on any of your writing goals today?

ASSESS & DECIDE WHAT TO TEACH

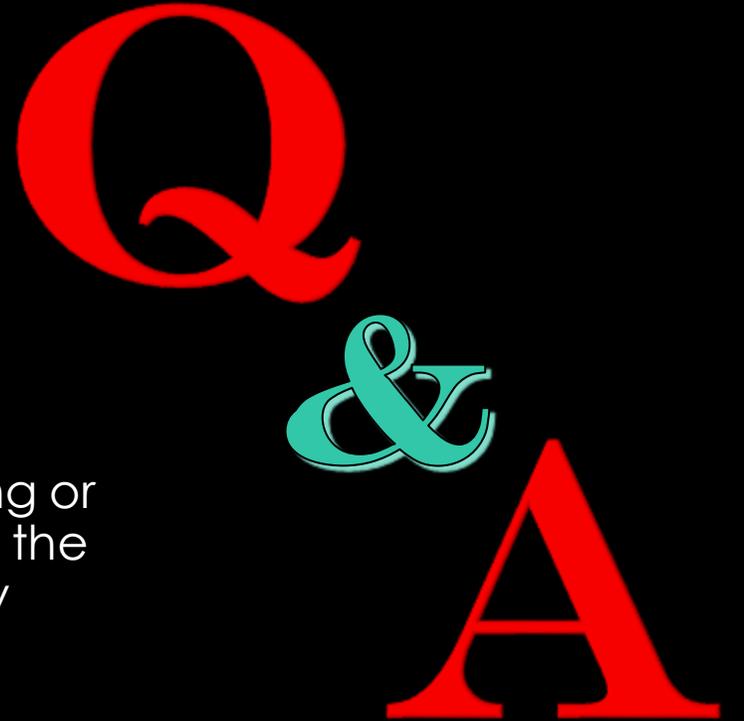
Recognizing patterns is the key to good decision making

When you recognize one of these patterns in a writing conference, you can quickly decide what to teach – something that makes the student's partial learning more complete.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF THE STUDENT HAS SO MANY NEEDS THAT YOU AREN'T SURE WHERE TO START?

Look for something to teach that is appropriate for the stage of writing that the student is in. For example, if the student is drafting or revising, teach them one thing about focus structure or detail. If the student is editing, teach them how to correct one error that they make several times in their piece.

Building confidence is as important as building the skills.



HOW MANY CONFERENCES SHOULD I HAVE EACH DAY?

- Plan 4 to 7 minutes per conference
- Then one minute per student for taking notes
- Also a quick check in with each student later in that period.

At this pace, you should be able to have 4 conferences a day in 30 minutes of independent writing time.



WHAT ARE MY OTHER STUDENTS DOING WHILE I CONFER WITH ONE STUDENT?

- Teach minilessons that model expectations during independent writing time
- Make sure students know where and when to access supplies
- Teach strategies on how to get started writing each day
- Teach students strategies for spelling unfamiliar words and composing sentences
- Explain what to do when a piece is finished
- Provide and model the use of revision and editing checklists
- Teach students to have peer conferences, look at mentor texts, or read charts that summarize recent minilessons when they need help
- Designate the first 5 minutes of writing time as 'no walking no talking' time
- Between conferences, do a quick walk around the room to redirect students who are distracted



IS IT OK TO CONFER WITH STRUGGLING READERS MORE THAN OTHERS?

Of course. Students who struggle will get more conferences than stronger writers. After all, fairness doesn't mean students get exactly the same amount of time from their writing teachers – fairness means that students get what they need.



PARTS OF A CONFERENCE

DISCOVER what the student is doing as a writer.

ASSESS how well the student is doing what he's doing, then DECIDE what to teach him.

TEACH the student how to do what he's doing better.

CONFERRING MOVES

Invite the student to tell you what he's doing as a writer.

- Listen to what the student says about what he's doing.
- Look at the student's writing.
- Decide what to teach.

- Give feedback
- Teach
- Coach
- Link to independent work.

INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE

"How's it going?"

"Let's take a look at your writing..."

- "I want to give you some feedback..."
- "I'm going to teach you..."
- "Let's try that together..."
- "Now I want you to try what we talked about on your own..."

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VIDEO – LIAM GR.1

<https://www.heinemann.com/myonlineresources/viewresources.aspx?sku=E09918>

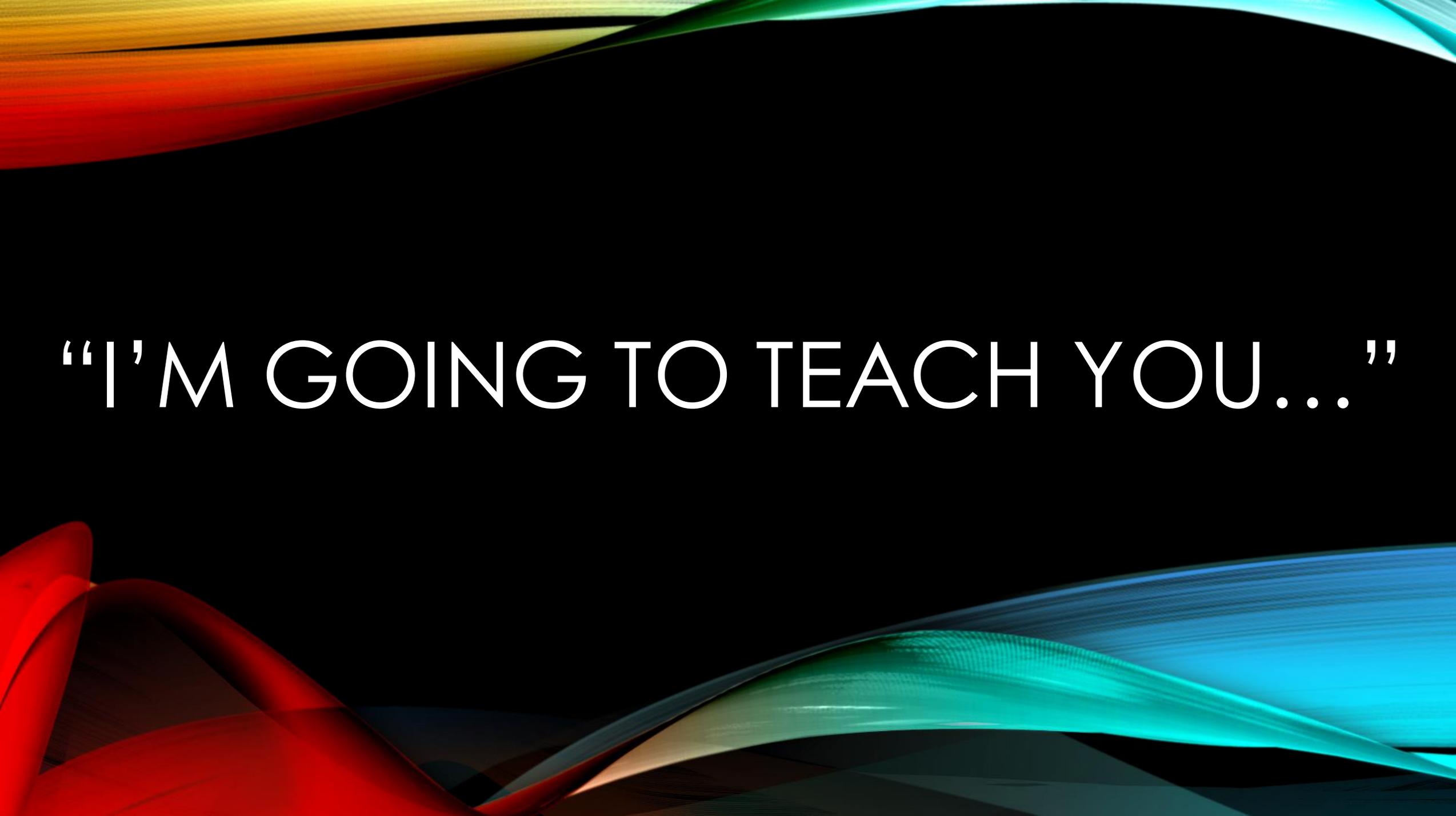
**“I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOME
FEEDBACK...”**

**You did a pretty
good job
punctuating your
writing.**

Instead of giving general feedback....

**I see that you
ended most of
your sentences
with periods and
question marks.**

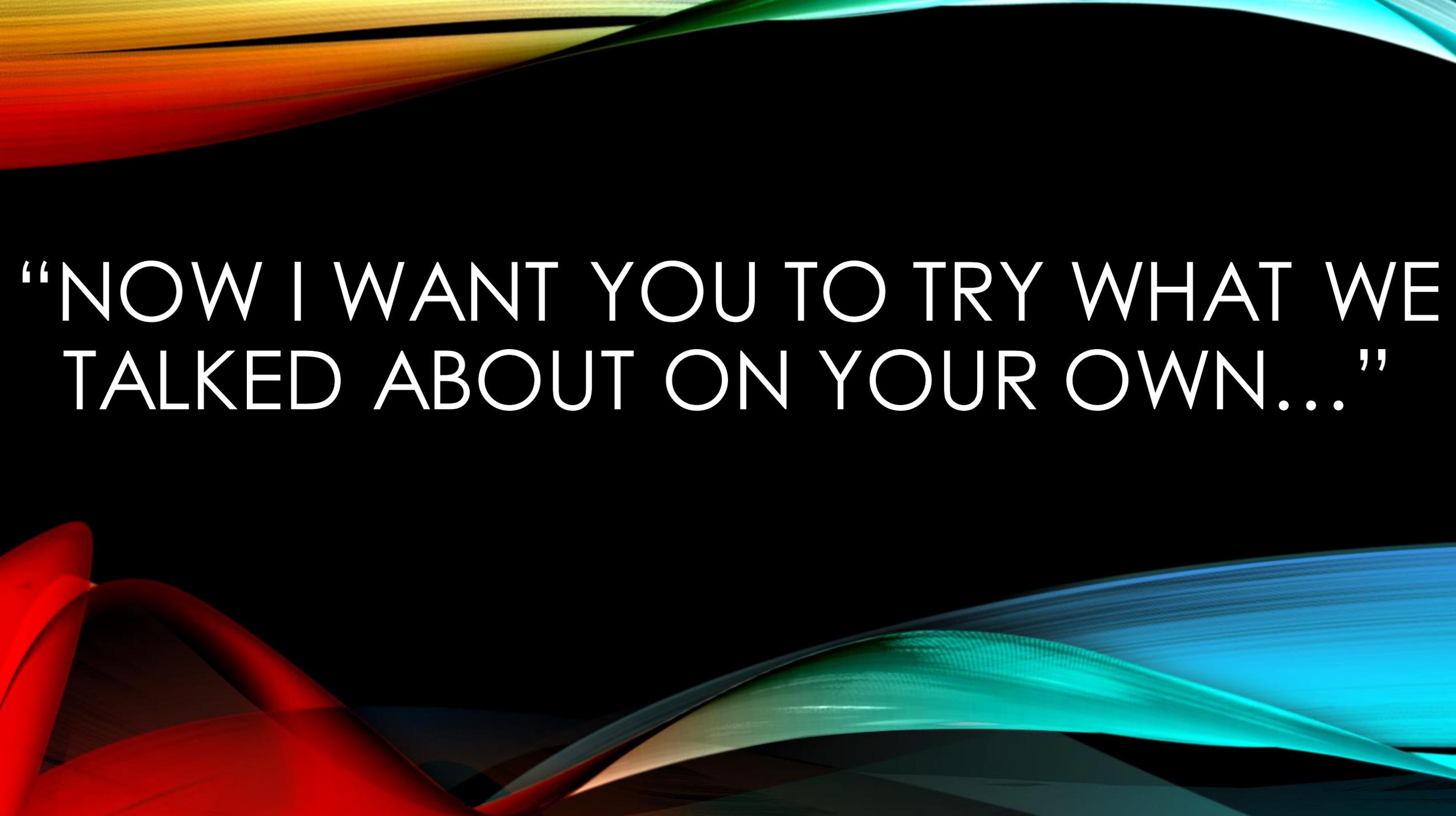
Give specific feedback!



“I’M GOING TO TEACH YOU...”



“LET’S TRY THAT TOGETHER...”



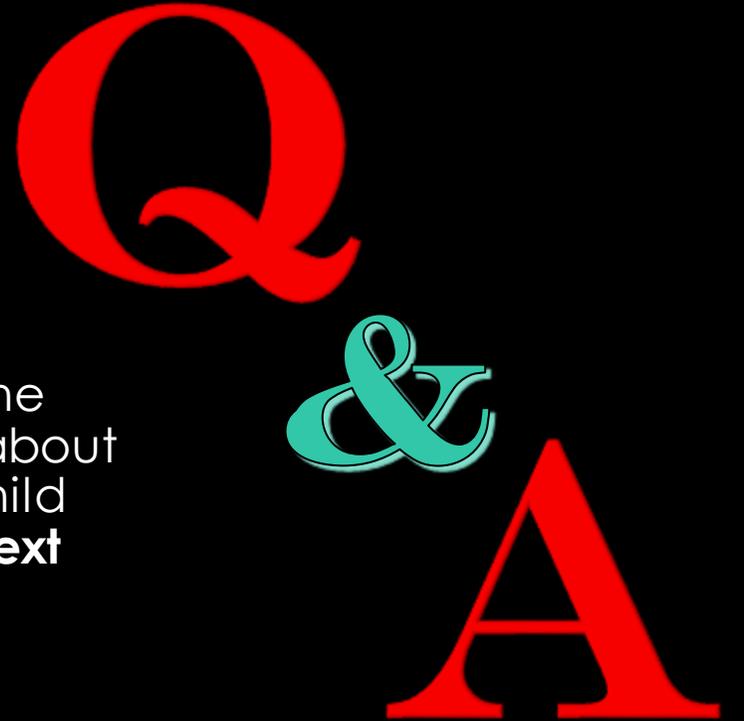
“NOW I WANT YOU TO TRY WHAT WE
TALKED ABOUT ON YOUR OWN...”

FOLLOWUP – LIAM GR.1

<https://www.heinemann.com/myonlineresources/viewresources.aspx?sku=E09918>

HOW SHOULD I TAKE NOTES ON CONFERENCES?

There are lots of tools for note taking and you will need to find one that works best for you. What's most important is that you think about the kinds of notes you need to record: the **date**, the **topic** the child was writing about, **observations**, and **teaching point** as well as **next steps**.



IMPROVING YOUR CONFERENCE TEACHING

- Read a piece of student writing and identify an issue you might address in a writing conference. Write out what you would say to this student, including all 4 moves.
- Role-play with a colleague who has also read this chapter. Give feedback once the role-playing is over.
- Use your smartphone or tablet to record a video of your conferences with students. Watch them later on and make note of which of the 4 moves are your strongest, and which need work.
- Ask for your principal or a colleague who has read about the 4 moves to come and observe a conference. Ask the observer to make note of the moves you made and make suggestions on how you can improve.

****Remember that conferencing will not be a skill learned overnight. You will need to teach yourself and your students to confer in a meaningful way****



THANK YOU!!

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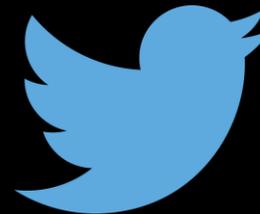
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