

WRITING CONFERENCES

Writing conferences are an opportunity for the teacher to have one-on-one or small group interaction with students. Teachers should conference with students frequently and at multiple points of the writing process. Teachers should keep records of student conferences and track student feedback and goals. (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001)

Considerations for conducting conferences:

- Listen to the student. Leaning forward, eyes alert, and attentive reinforces that you have come to hear this young author.
- Be present as a reader. Respond to the student's writing as you would any other piece of literature.
- Understand the writer's stage of development, strengths and weaknesses.
- Assist the student in determining if the topic is of interest or should be abandoned. Follow their energy.
- Build on the students' strengths and give them concrete praise at the start of the conference.
- Identify one point to explore for continued growth. Teach the writer not the writing. Minimize your instruction in order to maximize the writer's control of the writing.

Common writing conference suggestions for primary grades:

- Add more details to the picture.
- Add words to the drawing.
- Sound out words.
- Add space between words.
- Add more details to the story.
- Add another page.
- Organize the story with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Focus on the important part.
- Focus on one topic when more than one story is apparent.