

Conferences, Strategy Groups, Assessment, and Celebrations

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“Your goal is not to improve the writing. It is to improve the writer.”

Conferences

- **Timeframe-** 5-8 minutes
- **Conference location**
 - Confer at the student’s table. This allows other students to listen in and hopefully learn something. Additionally, a teacher’s presence at the table helps with behavior management.
 - Confer at a designated conferring location. This is more formal, private, and allows more space for materials.
- **Types of Conferences-** Demonstration, Explanation with Example, Guided Practice, Proficient Partner, Inquiry
- **Content of a Conference-** Predictable Problems, Strategies you have taught, Strategies you wish you had taught, Individual Needs of a Student
- **Conferring Cheat Sheet-** Use a cheat sheet to guide you through your conference. In short: Research, Compliment, Teach, Active Engagement, Link
- **Materials/Toolkit-** Your Writer’s Notebook, Familiar Mentor Texts, Student Exemplars, Charts, Mini Charts, Colored Pens/Markers, Post Its, Checklists
- **Data Collection-** By Hand in a Binder, Computer Spreadsheet, iPad App, etc.
- **Table Conferences-** Helpful on days when everyone seems to need some help, especially during the beginning of a unit of study. These are less formal than a one on one conference, but not quite as structured as a strategy group. Bring the work of one student to the attention of the table.

Strategy Groups

- **Timeframe** - 10ish minutes. Try to talk for 1-2 minutes tops. Kids should be working and you coaching. Try to send kids back to their independent work as soon as possible. They can be dismissed individually as necessary.
- **Group Members-** Students with a similar need, abilities may vary
- **Scheduling-** There are many ways to schedule strategy groups.
 - Meet with the same group multiple days in a row using gradual release.
 - Pull strategy groups based on observations from previous day’s writing.
 - Classroom Triage- Meet with groups as the need arises
- **Content-** Today’s Mini Lesson, Predictable Problems, Strategies you have taught, Strategies you wish you had taught, Individual Needs of a Student, Higher level strategy for top writers

Assessment

- **Assess indicators-** see Collingswood's Rubicon Atlas for units and indicators
- **Assess using checklists-** see Writing Pathways book or teacher created
- **Assess the student's utilization of the writing process-** Give an E, M, or P for each step of the writing process. This is based on daily teacher observation as well as light assessment of Writer's Notebooks, Drafting Notebooks, and the Published Pieces.
- **Assess using teacher made rubrics or Lucy's rubrics-** See Writing Pathways, make your own rubrics, or share rubrics with another teacher
- **Assess on demand pieces-** Have students write on demand piece at the end of the unit. Assess using a checklist or rubric.

Celebrations

- **Students share their entire piece and enjoy a snack!**
- **Students share a selection from their writing and enjoy a snack!**
- **Teacher lays out writing, students walk around and leave comments with sticky notes. Have a snack!**
- **Teacher "publishes" the writing in a location in the school that allows student writing to GO PUBLIC. Snack in a less public location!**
- **Teacher might consider inviting parents to the celebration. Snack with the parents!**
- **Share writing with another class (buddies) or school! Buddy Snack!**
- **Reflect and Snack:**
 - I used to be a writer who.....now I'm a writer that.....
 - Jot one thing they are proud of in this piece and one thing they want to try next time.

