

THE POWER OF CONFERRING

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WHAT IS CONFERRING?

- A way to tailor instruction to student's strengths and needs
- A time to support students' self-reflection
- An interactive experience where teachers can:
 - Offer strategies or support for skills still being practiced
 - Give feedback
 - Guide readers and writers

PREPARING YOUR INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENT

- Set expectations
 - Do the students know what they are supposed to be doing?
- Get started
 - Teach strategies for how to get started each day
- Supplies and tools
 - Do they have them and know how to access them? Sticky notes, etc.
- Establish procedures
- Volume
 - Ask the students to stop so you can report something that was just taught or share our amazing work.
- Finished? Now what?
 - Ask the students to make a plan for what they can do when they feel like they are finished

PARTS OF A CONFERENCE

- Discover: What's the student doing?
- Assess: How well are the students doing what they are doing?
- Teach: How can they do what they are doing better?

UNPACKING THE TEACHING POINT

- Ask the student to tell you more
- Ask follow-up questions
- Ask specific questions
- Name what the student is doing
- Name what you have observed
- Take a tour of the student's work
- Suggest possibilities (refer to strategies in previous lessons)

PREPPING YOUR CLASS FOR CONFERRING

- Plan for who you will confer with each day
- Teach lessons about what students can talk about with you in conferences
- Do a fishbowl lesson and ask for group feedback about what went well and what could improve
- Make a chart of things that you might talk about in a conferences
- Check on the status of the class daily

TYPES OF CONFERENCES

- Assessment conference
- Compliment conference
- Coaching conference
- Goal setting conferences

THE COMPLEMENT STRUCTURE

- Name the strategy the student is using
- Explain why you think that strategy is helpful toward the student's goal
- Refer to an example: something the student said, read, or wrote during the conference

CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

- Conferences should average 5 minutes
- Move around the room and initiate conferences
- Encourage other writers to listen in
- Conduct group conferences (students with similar goals)
- Record notes from each writing conference

CONFERENCE INTERACTIONS

- First, point out a strength/positive quality
- Guide the writer to think about strategies
- Use open-ended comments/questions
- Limit the scope of your conference (too many "fixes" = diluted learning)
- Listen to what the writer is telling you
- The teacher or student sets a goal on the paper ("self-assignment box") or on your status list

WHY SHOULD I CONFER?

- To help students identify their unique reading and writing identities
- To differentiate reading and writing instruction
- To keep students accountable for independent work in a natural and effective way
- To give students an authentic opportunity to talk about their reading and writing and learn from a model

- To allow the instructor to foster independence

CLASSROOM PREPARATIONS FOR CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

- Student Materials
 - Ensure students have all necessary tools (e.g., stapler, sticky notes, pens, paper)
- Visual Aids
 - Display charts with reminders of strategies.
 - Provide examples of expectations (e.g., mentor texts, writing samples, finished products).
- Classroom Systems
 - Set up systems for smooth movement and transitions around the room.
 - Spell out clear expectations for behavior and tasks.
 - Establish procedures for common activities (e.g., restroom breaks).
- Prep the Teaching Area
 - Designate a main area for teaching and displaying concepts.
- Student Seating
 - Arrange seating to foster effective peer conferencing or minimize distractions.
- Conferencing Areas
 - Establish dedicated areas for conferencing.
 - Prepare a conferencing clipboard and a conference tracking sheet.
- Daily Routines
 - Model how to get started each day.
 - Explain options for what students can do when they finish tasks.
 - Designate the first few minutes as independent work time to allow students to settle and avoid walking or talking during this period.
- Engagement & Monitoring
 - Conduct a quick walkaround between conferences to refocus distracted students.

Script: Reading Conference with Sammy

Characters:

- **Cari:** Teacher
- **Sammy:** Student

Scene:

Cari and Sammy are sitting together at a reading corner. Sammy has her book in front of her.

Cari:

Hi Sammy, Thank you for meeting with me today for your reading conference. How is your book coming along?

Sammy:

It's a good book! I'm reading *The Wild Robot*. It's cool.

Cari:

I'm so impressed with your sticking with this book, Sammy! It sounds like you're diving into it. What do you like about it so far?

Sammy:

I really like how Roz, the robot, learns to survive in the wild and makes friends with the animals.

Cari:

That's such an interesting theme! It sounds like the characters are making connections; that's so important, even for a robot. Have you noticed any parts where Roz struggles?

Sammy:

Yeah, sometimes the animals don't trust her at first. She has to work really hard to show them she's not dangerous.

Cari:

That's a great observation. It sounds like Roz is learning a lot. How about you—are there any parts of the story that you've found tricky to understand?

Sammy:

Hmm, I guess there are times when I don't quite understand what's happening, especially when things change fast in the story.

Cari:

What do you mean by "change fast"? Can you think of a part where that happened?

Sammy:

Like... in the part where Roz first wakes up, she's in the forest and doesn't know what's happening. But then, she's suddenly talking to animals and building a shelter. I get a little confused about how that all happened so fast.

Cari:

Ah, I see! So sometimes the order of things gets mixed up for you.

Sammy:

Yeah, that's it! I think I forget what happens first, second, and last, and then the story doesn't make as much sense.

Cari:

That's a great realization, Sammy! Sequencing the events—understanding what happens first, next, and last—can help you follow along with the story. Would you like to work on that today?

Sammy:

Sure

Cari:

Alright, let's look back at the text. Why don't we go to the part where Roz first wakes up in the forest? We can reread that section and see what happens first, second, and last.

(They both open the book to the relevant page.)

Cari:

Okay, let's look at what's happening when Roz wakes up. Can you point out what we know about her surroundings at this point?

Sammy:

Um... she doesn't know where she is, and it says she feels lost. She's on the ground, and there's a forest around her.

Cari:

Exactly! So that's our first event—Roz waking up in the forest. Now, can we find a part where something changes? What happens next in the story?

(Sammy flips through the pages, scanning for the next event.)

Sammy:

I think it's when Roz sees some animals. There's a bird, and the animals seem kind of scared of her.

Cari:

Great! That's the second event—when Roz meets the animals. So we're starting to see the order unfold0 that's what we call sequencing. Now, what do you think happens last in this section?

Sammy:

Oh, I think Roz is starting to build a shelter because she needs to stay safe from the animals, and the weather is bad.

Cari:

That's right! We've got the sequence: first, Roz wakes up; second, she meets the animals; and last, she starts building a shelter. Does that make it clearer for you?

Sammy:

Yeah, it makes more sense now!

Cari: Can you see that in your mind now? Like a movie?

Cari:

Awesome! Now that we've sequenced the events, it might help to pause after each chapter and jot down a quick note or draw a picture about what happened. This will help you remember the order of events and keep track of everything as you read.

Sammy:

I like that idea! Writing it down will help me keep track of everything better.

Cari:

Great! Let's practice one stop-and-jot together. I'll show you how after we reread the part where Roz first wakes up. Ready?

Sammy:

OK

(They reread the passage together.)

Cari:

Alright, Sammy, let's pause here. What's something important that happened in this part? Write it down in just a few words or draw a picture.

(Sammy writes her stop-and-jot.)

Sammy:

I wrote, "Roz wakes up in the forest and is confused."

Cari:

Perfect! You captured the most important part of this event. Does it help you remember what happened in this section now?

Sammy:

Yes, I think so! Writing it down makes it easier to keep track.

Cari:

Great job, Sammy! Now, you can use stop-and-jots for the rest of the story on your own. It will help you keep track of the key events and the sequence. How do you feel about trying it on your own next time?

Sammy:

I think I can do it! I'll try that.

Cari:

I'm proud you're working through this tricky part of the reading, Sammy. Keep practicing those stop-and-jots; you'll see even more progress with your reading. Next time I check back I want to see some more stop and jots.

Let's write down your goal for the week on a sticky note- so you remember what your goal is for the week.

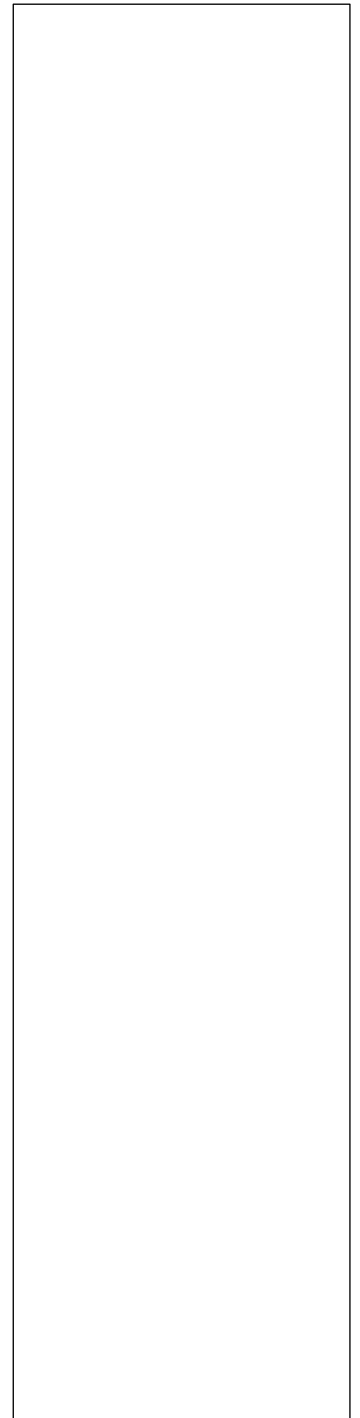
What do you think?

Sammy:

Okay, I can do that!

Cari:

You absolutely can, Sammy. Keep practicing, and I'm excited to check in again soon!



M Sandollar

①

One Day my Grandma went to Crescent Beach and found 5 sand dollars

6 other people were with us.

~~My Grandma found 5 sand dollars~~

~~on Crescent beach~~ My Grandma

found them in a ^{huge} ~~big~~ pile of

shells. You can ^{also buy} ~~buy~~ them in stores.

~~besides they~~ ~~these~~ can be hard to find on beaches.

The sandollars are white round

shells with a five petal flower

on them also five small holes.

They can ^{also} break easily.

My Grandma found the sandollars

June 15th. On the beach of Sarasota