

Tips for Conferring With Writers

Writers New to Revision

- Explain, before conferring, what happens during a conference. Show a video if you have one.
- Help students understand the purpose and goal of conferring.
- Try to put each student at ease during the conference.
- Plan a focus for the conference: content, organization of ideas, leads or introductions, show, don't tell, satisfying endings, punctuation, etc. Keep the conference short—no more than five to six minutes.
- Ask questions that help students think of writing solutions.
- Listen carefully and follow-up with questions that encourage the student to talk.
- Be positive and supportive.
- Model by writing an example on separate paper to show what you want students to understand.
- Jot down the student's and your suggestions on a sticky note and place it on the student's paper. This refreshes the students' memory on the next day.
- Delay. If the conference feels like it's derailing, end it on a positive note and reschedule. Give the student something to mull over.
- Wrap-up by celebrating the student's thinking and ability to revise and/or edit various writing stages.

Writers Experienced with Conferring

- Invite students to schedule conferences.
- Ask the student to create a focus for the conference.
- Keep the conference short—no more than five to six minutes.

- Listen to the student's ideas and suggestions.
- Pose questions to get the student to think and reflect.
- Jot down the student's and your suggestions on a sticky note and place it on the student's paper. This refreshes the students' memory on the next day.
- Confer with pairs or small groups who have the same need.
- Encourage students to confer with each other.
- Wrap-up by asking the student to explain what worked and what he or she plans to do.

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