



## General Procedures for Conducting a Conference with a Writer

Although there is not a perfect conferencing procedure that will work every time with every student, there are some steps that we suggest you follow. Obviously, you will need to personalize this procedure and the questions for each conference you have depending on the student and her needs. After awhile, this will all come naturally to you and it won't seem so rigid.

### I. Welcome the Student

- Make eye contact.
- Smile and introduce yourself if you don't know the student.
- Be friendly and convey the message that you want to help the student.

### II. Have the Assignment Clarified

- Ask the student to explain what the assignment is, which class it is for, and when it is due.
- Read a copy of the assignment if there is one available.
- Look at the rubric if one is provided.

### III. Ask the Student What She Specifically Wants to Accomplish During the Conference

- If the student's response is vague or she asks you to "just read it over and tell her what you think," try to get her to focus more to determine the plan of the conference.
- Ask questions such as "What do you like best about your essay?" and "What do you think needs more work with your essay?"

### IV. Have the Student Read her Paper Aloud as you Listen Carefully

- a. Listen specifically for problems in the area the student mentioned.
- b. Concentrate on what the student is saying rather than how you will word your response.
- c. Stop the student when necessary to discuss a certain section.
- d. Jot notes on a separate sheet of paper if desired.
- e. Ask the student questions about the section; your role is to help the student identify the problem and solve it himself.
- f. Be positive with your comments.

**V. After She is Through Reading the Draft, Make General Comments**

- a. Make a positive comment about something you liked in the writing.
- b. Summarize any overall suggestions you have for the student.
- c. Point to a specific section and ask how the student might revise it given the response you gave her. If she says that “she doesn’t know” you should continue to work with her. Ask questions. Talk about options. The writer should talk about how she will revise the piece or make changes based on the conference. You must make sure that she understands what her options are for improving her paper.
- d. Be specific with your reactions. For example, if you say that the essay needs more support.....what does that mean? Talk the student through this.
- e. If you noticed any glaring or frequent sentence level problems, you may point them out at this time. You don’t need to be an expert or even know how to solve the problem—just bring it to the attention of the author. You can also use *Rules for Writers* as a reference to help address the issue. Consulting the adult in The Write Place or another tutor is also an option.
- f. Ask the student if there is anything else she’d like to go over with you.

**VI. Complete the form for The Write Place**

- a. Fill out the ½ sheet duplicate form
- b. Give the student the yellow copy.
- c. Put the white copy in the tray.
- d. If time allows, enter the information into the online system. Once the information has been inputted, place a check mark on the top right corner of the white page and put it in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tray. After the forms are entered into the electronic system and receive the “check mark” they should be distributed to the appropriate teachers.

