

Conferring with Students

Wisconsin State Standards Strand

ELA

Grade Level

K-5

Purpose

Use with students to inform instruction, monitor student growth, and provide students feedback on their understanding of the ELA CCSS.

When to Use

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Grouping

Whole Group
Small Group
Individuals

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

CONFERRING involves having a conversation with students about their reading and writing. Conferring always has a clear purpose and predictable structure. Conferring can be used to inform instruction, monitor student growth, and provide students feedback on their understanding of the ELA CCSS.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT

- Establish the purpose of the conference. On which specific area of the ELA CCSS will you be focusing during the conference?
- Establish a system of record keeping during conferences that can be used to inform instruction, monitor student growth, and provide feedback to students.
- Set up the structure of the reading, writing, or speaking and listening conference. Each conference should involve conversations about the following elements:
 1. The work the child is doing as a writer, the books the child is reading as a reader, or the collaborative discussions in which the child is participating.
 2. How the child can become a better reader, writer, or speaker and listener.
 3. Goal setting and monitoring.
- During the conference the teacher and the student alternate roles.
 1. The student begins with the lead role by describing his or her reading, writing, or collaborative discussions as the teacher listens carefully and asks questions to deepen the students' understanding of the work
 2. The teacher then takes the lead role by questioning the student as they read their writing, listen to the student read, or reflect on their participation in the collaborative discussions. Teachers also share their assessment of the student's work and participation and provide the student with strategies to become a better reader, writer, and/or speaker and listener. As the teacher takes the lead he or she ensures that the student has the opportunity to respond to the teacher's comments and ask questions.
- Thank the student for the conference. Update your notes regarding how the conference went.

RESEARCH

Anderson, C. (2000). *How's it going? A practical guide to conferring with student writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, Regie. (2005). *Writing essentials: Raising expectations and results while simplifying teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Conference (v.) to hold or participate in a discussion

Plan	Determine the <i>frequency</i> of conferences based on student need to include student-initiated conferences	Determine the <i>purpose</i> of the conference based on student need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess student progress ▪ Individualize instruction (using GRR) ▪ Monitor progress ▪ Build relationships 	Determine the <i>type</i> of conference based on student need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole group ▪ Quick share ▪ Check In ▪ One-on-one or Small group
Procedure		Sentence Starters	
Whole Group <i>A public conference where other students listen and sometimes provide feedback</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build rapport with genuine interest ▪ Select a reader/writer to share in whole group ▪ Celebrate what the reader/writer has done well ▪ Target one teaching point at a time ▪ Give specific feedback to move the student forward ▪ Select another student to provide the reader/writer feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Look how this reader/writer has...</i> ▪ <i>Right here, the reader/writer...</i> ▪ <i>Listen to these words...</i> ▪ <i>Let me show you how...</i> ▪ <i>I'm going to reread this part again...</i> 	
Quick Share <i>A public mini-conference where something is celebrated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build rapport with genuine interest ▪ Select a reader/writer to celebrate in whole group ▪ Share the memorable part of a writing piece or the memorable reader/writer behavior ▪ Give specific feedback that includes the "why" behind the celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I noticed you...</i> ▪ <i>I saw you using...</i> ▪ <i>Listen to this line...</i> ▪ <i>I saw _____ got right to work...</i> 	
Check In <i>A semi-private conference where the teacher conferences with students while they are working on a task</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build rapport with genuine interest ▪ Note who needs help getting started ▪ Assess ▪ Affirm students' efforts ▪ Target one teaching point at a time ▪ Give specific feedback to move student forward on the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Let's take a look at how to get started...</i> ▪ <i>I really like how you...</i> ▪ <i>So you're saying...</i> ▪ <i>Perhaps you could try...</i> ▪ <i>I challenge you to...</i> ▪ <i>Let's try this together...</i> 	
One-on-one or Small group <i>A private or semi-private conference where the teacher sits next to the student(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build rapport with genuine interest ▪ Ask open-ended questions ▪ Prompt the student if he/she cannot articulate his/her need ▪ Use reflective listening to respond to the reader/writer ▪ Assess ▪ Target one teaching point at a time ▪ Give specific feedback to provide students with strategies and confidence that they can take with them so that they can cope with the next writing/reading task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What are you working on at the moment?</i> ▪ <i>Tell me about your text/writing.</i> ▪ <i>Show me what you think is the best part of this piece of writing.</i> ▪ <i>Show me where you are struggling.</i> ▪ <i>Tell me more about...</i> ▪ <i>Perhaps you could try...</i> ▪ <i>I challenge you to...</i> ▪ <i>Let's try this together...</i> 	

Reference: Routman, Regie. (2005). *Writing essentials: Raising expectations and results while simplifying teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Conferring with Students

Example of a Conference Log that could be used to confer with students about their speaking and listening skills.

Name: _____

Collaborative Discussions Conference Log

Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Has completed work prior to group work <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in learning <input type="checkbox"/> Gives evidence to support ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions to generate discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Respects the opinions of others <input type="checkbox"/> Extends others' responses <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages others <input type="checkbox"/> Asks clarifying questions when something is not understood <input type="checkbox"/> Asks for evidence when something sounds incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Restates, paraphrases, or clarifies an idea <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes for understanding	Conference Notes:	Future Focus:
Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Has completed work prior to group work <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in learning <input type="checkbox"/> Gives evidence to support ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions to generate discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Respects the opinions of others <input type="checkbox"/> Extends others' responses <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages others <input type="checkbox"/> Asks clarifying questions when something is not understood <input type="checkbox"/> Asks for evidence when something sounds incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Restates, paraphrases, or clarifies an idea <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes for understanding	Conference Notes:	Future Focus:
Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Has completed work prior to group work <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in learning <input type="checkbox"/> Gives evidence to support ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions to generate discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Respects the opinions of others <input type="checkbox"/> Extends others' responses <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages others <input type="checkbox"/> Asks clarifying questions when something is not understood <input type="checkbox"/> Asks for evidence when something sounds incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Restates, paraphrases, or clarifies an idea <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes for understanding	Conference Notes:	Future Focus:

Conferring with Students

Example of a Conference Log that could be used to confer with students about their writing.

Name: _____

Writing Conference Log

Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions	Conference Notes:	Future Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions
Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions	Conference Notes:	Future Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions
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Date:	Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions	Conference Notes:	Future Focus: <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Focused <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas: Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions

Conferring with Students

Checklists that students can use when conferring about their collaborative discussions and speaking and listening skills.

Collaborative Discussions

Name: _____



INDICATORS	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE	HARDLY 1	SOME 2	MOST 3	ALL 4	N/A EX
PREPARATION							
Has completed work prior to group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings text/supplies/assignment to class Takes out text/supplies/assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I have my calculator here." "My notes are on my desk." 					
Engages in learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrives on time Puts electronics away Works with a wide range of students Takes a positive role in groups Shares materials Does equal share of the work Tracks progress towards goals/deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "My cell is turned off." "How about if I work on _____ and you work on _____?" "_____ may join our group." "You may use my book." "We need to _____ in order to meet our goal." 					
SPEAKING							
Gives evidence to support ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes eye contact Incorporates vocabulary expected of the content Reads a passage from the text that illustrates an idea Brings another information source to support an idea Presents information in an organized way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "On page ____, it states..." "I found another source that corroborates ..." "I found a source that challenges..." "First.... Second.... Third..." "... was a cause of ..." 					
Asks questions to generate discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes eye contact Uses open-ended questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How do...?" "Why does...?" "What do you think..." 					
Respects the opinions of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes eye contact Allows others to finish speaking Comments on the idea, not the person Minimizes gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Although I do not agree with _____'s idea, she gave several examples of why she thinks that." "Another way to look at it might be..." 					

Extends others' responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes eye contact • Allows others to finish speaking • Acknowledges ideas of other members • Stays on topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I agree with _____ because _____'s idea reminds me of _____." 					
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LISTENING

Encourages others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faces the speaker • Smiles • Assumes open body posture • Nods in agreement • Leans forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I like your idea because..." • "Tell me more about that." 					
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Asks clarifying questions when something is not understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faces the speaker • Allows others to finish speaking • Writes down ideas • Acknowledges ideas of other members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Would you say that again?" • "Would you give me another example so I can understand?" 					
---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--

Asks for evidence when something sounds incorrect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faces the speaker • Allows others to finish speaking • Writes down ideas • Acknowledges ideas of other members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Would you tell me why you think it is true?" • "Would you show me a place in the book that illustrates that idea?" 					
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Restates, paraphrases, or clarifies an idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faces the speaker • Allows others to finish speaking • Writes down ideas • Acknowledges ideas of other members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "So it sounds like..." • "... Is that what I am hearing you say?" • "When you say _____, do you mean _____?" 					
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Summarizes for understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens to all group members • Acknowledges ideas of other members • Captures key ideas from the discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As a group, we think..." • "These are the main points of our discussion as I see them: ..." 					
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Reflection

My two greatest strengths are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
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Two areas I need to work on are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
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I will work on them by doing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
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Conferring with Students

Example of a Reading Conference Log that can be used when conferring with students about their reading.

Reading Conference

Name		Opening Statement	Comments/Notes:
Date		Student Read	
Title		Compliment	
		Teaching Point	
Book Level		Model Teaching Point	
		Student Practice	
Genre		Restate Teaching Pt.	
Easy Just Right Challenging		Reading Log checked?	

Name		Opening Statement	Comments/Notes:
Date		Student Read	
Title		Compliment	
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Book Level		Model Teaching Point	
		Student Practice	
Genre		Restate Teaching Pt.	
Easy Just Right Challenging		Reading Log checked?	

Name		Opening Statement	Comments/Notes:
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Book Level		Model Teaching Point	
		Student Practice	
Genre		Restate Teaching Pt.	
Easy Just Right Challenging		Reading Log checked?	

Name		Opening Statement	Comments/Notes:
Date		Student Read	
Title		Compliment	
		Teaching Point	
Book Level		Model Teaching Point	
		Student Practice	
Genre		Restate Teaching Pt.	
Easy Just Right Challenging		Reading Log checked?	

Conferring with Students

Example of a Reading Conference Log that can be used when conferring with students regarding their reading.

Reader's Workshop Conference Form

Reader: _____

Dates: A _____ B _____ C _____

Reading Material

A _____ Level _____ Easy Just Right Challenging

B _____ Level _____ Easy Just Right Challenging

C _____ Level _____ Easy Just Right Challenging

Why? Tell me a little about the book. Is there something you didn't understand?

A _____

B _____

C _____

Mini-Lesson or Conference Focus:

A _____

B _____

C _____

Read Aloud / Running Records: W (weak) A (average) S (strong)

A phrasing W A S

fluency W A S

speed W A S

word-solving W A S

punctuation W A S

B phrasing W A S

fluency W A S

speed W A S

word-solving W A S

punctuation W A S

C phrasing W A S

fluency W A S

speed W A S

word-solving W A S

punctuation W A S

Comments

A _____

B _____

C _____

Vocabulary Development:

A _____

B _____

C _____

Comprehension Strategies: W (weak) A (average) S (strong)

W A S *Schema:*

Is there a part of the story or piece that reminds you of something in your life?

W A S *Questions:*

Can you show me a part of the text where you have a question?

What were you wondering about?

W A S *Sensory Images:*

Were there places in the text where you made a picture in your mind?

What did you see? What specific words helped you create those images?

- W A S Inferring:* What do you predict will happen in this piece?
Can you show me a place in the text where you found yourself making an inference?
What do you think are the big ideas in the story?
- W A S Determining Importance:* What is this story or piece mostly about?
Can you tell me some of the important ideas that struck you?
Any important themes you noticed?
What do you think is most important to remember about this story / topic?
- W A S Synthesizing:* Can you tell me what this piece is about in just a few sentences?
Can you show me a place in the pieces where your thinking changed?
How did your thinking change? Do you have some new ideas or information?

Independent Work / GOAL: P (progressing) A (attained)

A	_____	P A
B	_____	P A
C	_____	P A

Conferring with Students

Example of a Reading Conference Log that can be used when conferring with students about their reading.

Informal Reading Conference

Name: _____ Date: _____

Begin Time: _____ End Time: _____

Bring me a book that you can read pretty well.

Title: _____ Genre: _____

How did you know? _____

Why did you choose this book?

Is this book easy, just right, or challenging? How do you know?

Tell me what the book is about so far.

Read this part of the book for me. If you catch yourself thinking or talking back to the book, please do it out loud so I can hear your thinking.

Speed			Fluency			Punct.			Expr.			S/C			Rereading			Chunking			Uses finger			Skip and Return		
1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

Miscues and Comments:

Comprehension: Brief Retell or "What were you thinking?" Stopped to think on own _____

With prompting _____

Making meaning yes no

Strategy Use: monitoring ~ connecting ~ sensory imagery ~ questioning ~ inferring ~ DI ~ synthesis

Strengths:	Goal:
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What are your reading plans?

Conferring with Students

Examples of student reading goals that can be used when conferring with students regarding their reading.

Student Reading Goals

1. Reread when meaning is unclear, when something doesn't make sense.
2. Think about what you are reading and what's happening.
3. Make sure you can decode and understand the words in the books you select.
4. Think about why characters act and behave the way they do.
5. Make connections to your life and what you already know to help you understand the story.
6. Read in your mind. Don't move your lips.
7. Make a picture in your mind to help you understand.
8. Try reading in another genre.
9. Read more, at least thirty minutes a day at home, plus thirty minutes in school.
10. When you don't know what a word means, use surrounding words—or read the next sentence of two—to help you figure it out.
11. When you don't know what a word means, use word parts to help you figure it out.
12. Use the pictures (graphs, charts, visual aids) to help get meaning.