

# Everyone's a Teacher in a Writing Community

## Praise-Ponder-Polish



Lynne R. Dorfman  
lynnedorfman@comcast.net

Diane Esolen Dougherty  
joedidoc@gmail.com

Literacy Consultants

## Writing Inventory

- Do you like to write? Tell why or why not.
- Are you a writer? Why? Why not?
- What do you do well as a writer? What can't you do yet but would like to try?
- What do writers do?
- What do you know about writing a narrative?
- What do you know about writing information?
- What do you know about writing opinion/argument?
- When you write, who is your audience? Who would you like to write for?

# STATUS OF THE CLASS

P = prewrite  
 R = research (just ~30 min)  
 D = draft 1  
 V = REVISE  
 Peer Reviews

Period Endy - Inform. Unit  
 Week of 3/14

Izzy	P R D D D	Kelly	P R/D D D	Brian	P R D D D	Joey	P R D D D	Ben	P R D D D	
Kayla	P R Ab D P	Keller	P R D D D	Jackson	P R D D PR	Aubrey	P R D D D	Jamie	P R P D D	
Gio	P R D D PR	Steph	P R P D	Alexia <i>talked to about organizing</i>	* P R P P P	Dylan	P R P D D	Jameir	P R/D D Ab D	
Margaret	P R D D D	Alexandria	P R PR R D	Mike	P R D D	Hannah	P R D D	Sarah	P Ab D D D	
Claudia	P P/D V PR D	Amanda	P R D D PR	Aly	P R P/D D D	Natalie	P R P D	Adrianna	T R P/D D D	

A one-week glance of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade writing workshop during an informational unit of study

## Conferring and Feedback

Take a moment to reflect upon why we hold writing conferences with our students. Brainstorm a list of reasons.

When conferring with your students, what are the overall goals you hope to accomplish?

When you think about these goals, do they change based on the mode of writing you are teaching? Why or why not?

Think about the modes/authors you study and create an essential conference question(s) for each of these modes/authors.

Mode or Author \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mode or Author \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mode or Author \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Types of Conferences

### Process Conferences

- What are you working on?
- How is it coming?
- What are you going to do next?
- Goal is to help person become more reflective and self-reliant.

### Status of the Class

- Whole group conference at beginning of workshop.
- Each student makes a public commitment to some kind of work.
- Students may run status of the class and record in upper grades.



### Topic Search Conference

- To help students generate a list of possible topics.
- To help to narrow the topic.
- To find a focus or “so what”.
- Teacher can be the recorder and hand over list at the end of conference.
- Sometimes in pairs or small groups to generate more good ideas.

### Content Conference

- Conversations aimed at discussing and developing ideas.
- To develop the meaning or content inside a research report.
- Teacher may offer information, authors, and sources.

### Ear Conference

- Read aloud the entire piece or a portion.
- A way to hear own work and get a sense of “flow”.
- Students can be encouraged to pause as they notice problems or get new ideas.
- Teacher can read a section to the student, pausing to allow students to make changes or note problem areas.

### Evaluation Conference

- Stress ongoing process of inquiry and search for revisions.
- Outcomes – specific writing goals entered in a log or folder.
- A form – portfolio conference scheduled quarterly.
- Sometimes can involve the student in the grading process or ask for a written self-evaluation as a product of the conference.

### Praise/Question/Polish

- Often a small group or whole group conference.
- Look for writer’s strengths to praise. Be specific.
- Are you left with any questions as the reader?
- Offer one key suggestion to improve.

## **Essential Conference Questions for Three Writing Types**

### **Narrative:**

Is your story about one thing?

Are you telling the inside story (the one nobody knows but you) or the outside story?

How did you introduce the setting?

What do you need to do next?

Is there a place for a splash of dialogue?

What is the problem in your story?

Do you have any lazy sentences (strong verb is absent)

Is there tension/conflict?

How do you reveal your characters to your readers?

Does your story have a satisfying ending?

### **Informational:**

What is your text about? What made you choose this topic?

Did you present the information in a logical order?

What sources did you use?

How did you take notes?

Why would anybody want to know this information?

How did you develop your ideas? Anecdotes? Statistics? Quotes from experts? Facts?

Opinions? Descriptions?

### **Opinion:**

What made you choose this topic and position?

Show me where you state your opinion clearly.

What is your most important evidence to support your opinion?

What sources did you use? How did you include them in this piece?

What kind of tone (expert? angry? whiny?) does your piece have? What makes you think so?

### **Conversations About Spelling**

- What do you do when you're trying to spell a tricky word?
- What kinds of words do you find tricky?
- How important do you feel spelling is?
- Do you ever have a hard time remembering how to spell a word that you used to know?
- When you are writing, how often do you substitute another word that you know how to spell for one you are not sure of (*big* instead of *colossal*)?
- Did you ever choose a different topic to write about because the first topic had too many words you did not know how to spell?

### **Some Spelling Strategies**

- Encourage students to take a few seconds to figure out words they already know how to spell rather than write them any-which-way.
- Spend a few minutes every Monday to introduce a concept. One day during the week, spend a few minutes engaged in activities to explore and practice that spelling strategy and end with a wrap-up on Friday.
- Teach students to pause when they get to a tricky word during the writing process and think, "Do I know how to spell this word?" (sight words, words with familiar patterns, words the class has studied)

- Use a strategy or the word wall or spell checker – make a good effort during the composing process.
- Teach students to use “sp” above a word or circle it if they will need more help so they do not interrupt their process.
- Diane Snowball & Faye Bolton (1999): Have-a-Go Strategy. Students write a word three different ways until they find one that looks right. This is a great strategy to use visual memory – make a choice – and move on with the writing of the piece. Use the margins of the writing piece to have-a-go rather than go elsewhere.
- Other tools: Different colored pens or pencils, spell-checkers, a print-rich environment, spelling experts in our room.

### Spelling Strategies Self-Assessment

Writer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mark the strategies you use (Put a star next to the ones you use the most.):

1. Stretch words out slowly and listen to sounds
2. Draw a line under words I am not sure of during drafting or write
3. Clap out the syllables and check each syllable for a vowel
4. Try to visualize what the word looks like
5. Use a piece of paper or the margin to spell the word several ways
6. Use words I know to spell other words
7. Use my “Need to Spell Correctly” list
8. Use the class word wall
9. Refer to the tricky words and homophone lists
10. Use a dictionary
11. Use a thesaurus
12. Use spell checker on the computer.

Write a spelling goal for this year:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

If I know I can find the word quickly, I might

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If I think it will take me some time to find the correct spelling, I wait until editing, and then I might

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During editing, I ask a friend to edit with me. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your response.

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During editing, I add words to my personal spelling list in my writer's notebook that I think I will use again. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

When I come to a word I am not sure of during drafting, I usually

or \_\_\_\_\_

During editing, I would follow up on the word by checking \_\_\_\_\_

or by \_\_\_\_\_

If I were to give advice to a younger student about spelling, I would tell that writer:

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## Question

Writers ask questions that will help the author review and think about their writing to...realize where things might not be clear...hear where something is missing...notice where something could be stronger, funnier, more suspenseful, more informative...etc...and consider what could be changed or added or removed.

“How did your puppy get lost anyway?”

“Didn’t the gorilla have to escape from the zoo before he sat on the mayor? Shouldn’t this sentence come before this one?”

“Could you replace the word ‘neat’ with a different word in two of the three places you used it?”

“I’m confused about how the girls got into the volcano in the first place. Could you add a sentence or two to make that clear?”

## Polish

After gaining response from others, the author decides what input to use...what suggestions to discard or include...what changes to make. And then the author revises.

From *If You’re Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You’ve Gotta Have This Book!* by Marjorie Frank

**PQP** Response from \_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of piece \_\_\_\_\_

Praise:

Question:

Polish:

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**PQP** Response from \_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of piece \_\_\_\_\_

Praise:

Question:

Polish:

# Pair Share Sheet

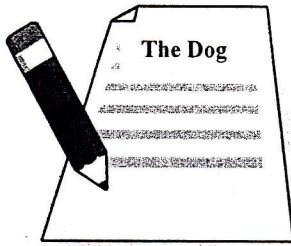
Author's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

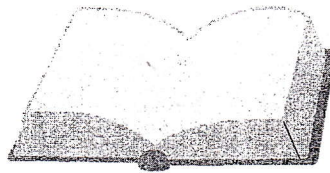
Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle one.**  
I like your . . .

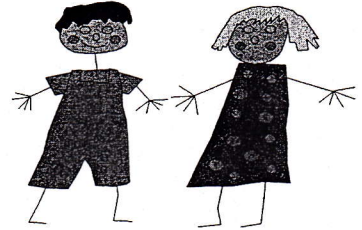
title



story

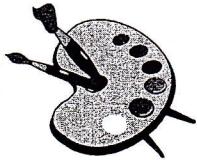


character(s)



**Circle one.**  
Maybe you can add . . .

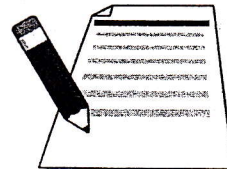
color words



a setting



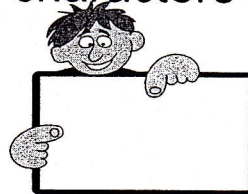
a different title



a character's feelings



the characters' names



like \_\_\_\_\_

# *Conference Clock*

*Name:*

**Time:**  
**Name:**

**Time:**  
**Name:**

**Time:**  
**Name:**

**Whole Group Share:**