

Pre-
Publication
Sample

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

writing

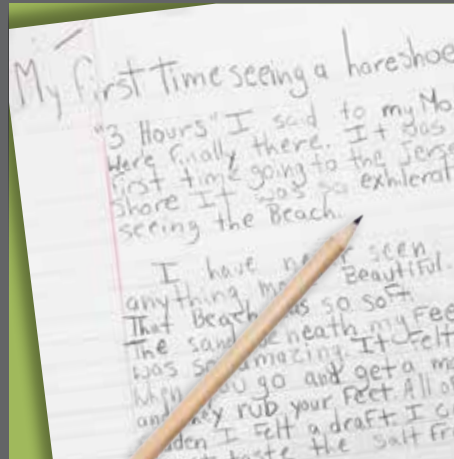
CONFERENCES

Grades K-8

ESSENTIALS



CLASSROOM



Carl Anderson

series editor **KATIE WOOD RAY**



DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™



book

MAP

Dear Readers,

As a young classroom teacher, I read my first Heinemann book—*In the Middle*, by Nancie Atwell—way back in 1988. Clocking in at more than 300 pages, I read it cover to cover, and the book literally transformed my teaching. *In the Middle* showed me the value of student-centered practices and beliefs, and after reading it, I began a journey of professional reading that's sustained me ever since. The authors of books like Nancie's have been my most important teaching mentors.

Professional books look very different today, and teachers access information and inspiration to feed their teaching in new, dynamic ways. But although the way we read is evolving, the transformative power of foundational ideas remains the same. This important realization was the genesis of the Classroom Essentials series. As the leading publisher of professional books for teachers, we asked this important question: "How might we reimagine how we offer content in books for today's busy teachers—whether they're veterans, new teachers, or just new to professional reading?"

With a laser-sharp focus, each book in the series highlights one essential, student-centered practice,

giving you the information you need to get started trying it—or refining it—in your own classroom right away. Informed directly by the content, each book utilizes a fresh, highly visual design to create an engaging, contemporary reading experience. Most books in the series also include robust online resources—including video that shows you what the practice looks like in today's dynamic classrooms. Perhaps most importantly, authors in the series connect you with their own teaching mentors, showing you how today's most progressive practices are built on a solid foundation of research found in professional literature.

As the series editor for Classroom Essentials, my deepest hope is that these books build a strong, lasting bridge between important work in our field from the past and a future full of bright possibilities for the students we teach.

Warmly,

Katie Wood Ray



1 What Is a Writing Conference?

MY FIRST WRITING CONFERENCE WAS A DISASTER 1

WRITING CONFERENCES HAPPEN
IN WRITING WORKSHOP 3

WHAT IS A WRITING CONFERENCE? 4

A Writing Conference Is a Conversation . . . 4
. . . That Teaches Students to Be Better Writers 6

WHY CONFER? 10

We Confer to Develop Relationships With Students 10

We Confer Because Each Student Is a Different
Kind of Writer 12

We Confer to Help Students Make Good Choices 14

We Confer to Receive and Give Feedback 16

We Confer to Inform Whole-Class and
Small-Group Instruction 18

2

Start by Discovering What the Student Is Doing as a Writer ...

INVITE STUDENTS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR WRITING 22

WHAT WILL STUDENTS TALK ABOUT? 28

Name the Genre They're Writing 28

Describe Where They Are in the Writing Process 29

Discuss What They Think Is Going Well in Their Writing 30

Name a Problem They're Having With Their Writing 31

Describe How They're Solving a Problem 32

Explain How They're Crafting Their Writing 33

Discuss The Meaning They're Trying to Get Across in Their Drafts 34

Talk About How They're Using Conventions 35

Name The Goals They're Trying To Achieve 36

Talk About Their History and Growth As Writers 37

FIVE SCENARIOS THAT HAPPEN AFTER YOU ASK, "HOW'S IT GOING?" 38

Scenario One: The Student Tells You Something He's Doing that You Want to "Get Behind" 38

Ask Students to Say More 42

Ask Follow-Up Questions 43

Name What Students Are Doing 46

Scenario Two: The Student Tells You Something He's Doing that You Don't Want to "Get Behind" 47

Scenario Three: The Student Has Trouble Talking About What He's Doing 49

Ask Students to Look at Their Writing 50

Support Students with Specific Questions 51

Name What You Have Observed 52

Suggest Possibilities 53

Refer to a Chart of Recent Mini-Lessons 54

Take a Tour of the Student's Writing 56

Scenario Four: Ultimately, the Student Doesn't Talk About What He's Doing 58

Scenario Five: The Student Says He's "Done" 62

TRY IT YOURSELF: STUDYING YOUR CONFERRING 63

3

...Assess and Decide What to Teach ...

RECOGNIZING PATTERNS IS THE KEY TO GOOD DECISION-MAKING 66

Recognizing Patterns from Student Talk 68

Recognizing Patterns in Student Writing 68

WRITING PATTERNS AND TEACHING POINTS 70

Writing Process Patterns 70

Rehearsal 70

Drafting and Revising 74

Editing 76

Publishing 78

Qualities of Writing Patterns 80

Focus 80

Structure 84

Detail 86

Voice 88

Conventions 90

TRY IT YOURSELF: BUILDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING PATTERNS AND TEACHING POINTS 92

4

...Then Teach Powerfully

MOVE ONE: GIVE FEEDBACK 94

Respond to the Content of Student Writing 96

Highlight Students' Strengths 96

Name One "Next Step" 100

Putting It All Together 101

MOVE TWO: DELIVER A TEACHING POINT 102

Cue the Student 102

Explain What You're Teaching 103

Explain How to Do What You're Teaching 106

MOVE THREE: COACH 108


MOVE FOUR: LINK TO INDEPENDENT WORK 110

STUDYING THE FOUR TEACHING MOVES IN A TRANSCRIPT OF A CONFERENCE 112

TRY IT YOURSELF: IMPROVING YOUR CONFERENCE TEACHING 115

About the Videos in This Book

By viewing the video in the online resources, you can watch me confer with writers in a range of grades who are writing in a variety of genres. Along with each conference, you'll find a video commentary from me that will help you better understand the teaching you see.

Across the chapters in this book, whenever you see this icon , I've identified specific conferences that will help you envision the work you are reading about at that point. Some conferences are referenced multiple times for different reasons, and whenever I can, I give you a grade range of conferences to choose from to illustrate the same idea.

While I don't have conferences to represent every important aspect of conferring, you'll see a wide range of common situations that will help you imagine conferring with your own students. Sometimes, you'll watch an entire conference clip, so you can see how a concept plays out across the writing conference. Other times, you might choose to watch just part of a clip as you study one of the three parts of a writing conference. Or you might simply use the descriptions to choose conferences that interest you before or after you dig into the reading.



VIDEOS

To access the online videos, visit WWW.HEINEMANN.COM. Enter your email address and password (or click "Create New Account" to set up an account). Once you have logged in, enter keycode **00000000000000** and click "Register".

GRADE	STUDENT	DESCRIPTION OF CONFERENCE
K	Massimo	Massimo is writing a nonfiction book. I teach him how to develop details by labeling his illustrations.
1	Ariana	Ariana is writing a nonfiction book. I teach her to elaborate by adding "action facts."
1	Jovani	Jovani is writing a nonfiction book. I help him learn how to write a new lead by studying a mentor text.
1	Urijah	Urijah is writing a nonfiction book. I teach him to elaborate by including "number facts."
2	Jackson	Jackson is writing a personal narrative. I teach him how to write precise character actions.
2	Shelby	Shelby is writing a nonfiction book. I teach her to elaborate by adding "action facts."
2	Skyler	Skyler is revising a personal narrative. I teach her to use "revision tools" to add on to her draft.
3	Addison	Addison is writing a review of Disneyland. I teach her to analyze the mini-stories she has included to develop her reasons.

GRADE	STUDENT	DESCRIPTION OF CONFERENCE
3	Billy	Billy is writing about an opinion. I teach him to elaborate on his reasons by writing about hypothetical situations.
3	Sage	Sage is writing about an opinion. I teach him to elaborate by writing precise examples.
4	Sam	Sam is writing about an opinion. I teach him how to write a counterargument.
4	Matthew	Matthew is writing about an opinion. I teach him to elaborate by including examples.
5	Kiely	Kiely is writing a memoir. I teach her to write a reflective ending.
5	Ginger	Ginger is writing a memoir. I teach her to develop important scenes.
5	Shreya	Shreya is writing a memoir. I teach her to write a reflective ending.
6	Elsa	Elsa is writing a memoir. I teach her to develop scenes by writing character actions.
6	Emily	Emily is writing fiction. I teach her to cut unnecessary parts.

GRADE	STUDENT	DESCRIPTION OF CONFERENCE
6	Logan	Logan is writing a book review. I teach him that writers can begin a review by introducing their perspective on the book.
7	Connor	Connor is writing fiction. I teach him how to make a plan for his story..
7	Grace	Grace is writing fiction. I teach her to include telling character details.
7	Henry	Henry is writing a literary essay about The Odyssey. I teach him how to develop his analysis of the text.
7	Maggie	Maggie is revising her fiction story. I teach her how to make a revision plan.
8	Ari	Ari is writing a fantasy story. I teach him to develop the interior life of his characters.
8	Sophia	Sophia is writing fiction. I teach her to develop her theme by including specific events about her characters.
8	Theo	Theo is writing a memoir. I teach him to include details that develop his main point.

What Is a Writing Conference?

A Writing Conference Is a Conversation . . .

A writing conference is, first and foremost, a conversation. The word *conversation* suggests so many things about the way you should talk with students.

Invite students to have a real give-and-take with you.

Even though in conferences you're a teacher talking to students, you're also a (more experienced) writer talking to (less experienced) fellow writers about what writers do—come up with topics, make a plan for a piece of writing, write a lead, develop a section with detail, use commas in a series, and so on. In this give and take, you'll learn about what students are trying to do as writers and how well they're doing it, and the students learn how they can do their work better.

Speak in a conversational tone.

Tone is the foundation of the good relationships you want to develop with students over the course of the school year. Speaking in a warm, friendly manner puts students at ease and makes it more likely they will talk with you about what they're trying to do as writers. What you learn from this talk helps you assess students and decide what you should teach to help them grow.



Sit alongside students, at their eye level.

How you sit with students helps establish a positive tone in conferences. You might grab a nearby empty seat or sit on one that you carry with you around the classroom. As you sit, it's important to make frequent eye contact with students and make sure that your facial expressions show an interest in what students are telling you.

Use “active listening” strategies.

For example, give some wait time after asking a question so that students have the time and space they need to come up with a response. Ask students to “say more” about what they tell you. And repeat what children say to check that you're hearing them correctly. Using these strategies shows that you have a real interest in what students are saying and that you're really trying to understand them. Students will usually respond by talking to you more.



VIDEOS



Massimo, Grade K



Shelby, Grade 2



Matthew, Grade 4

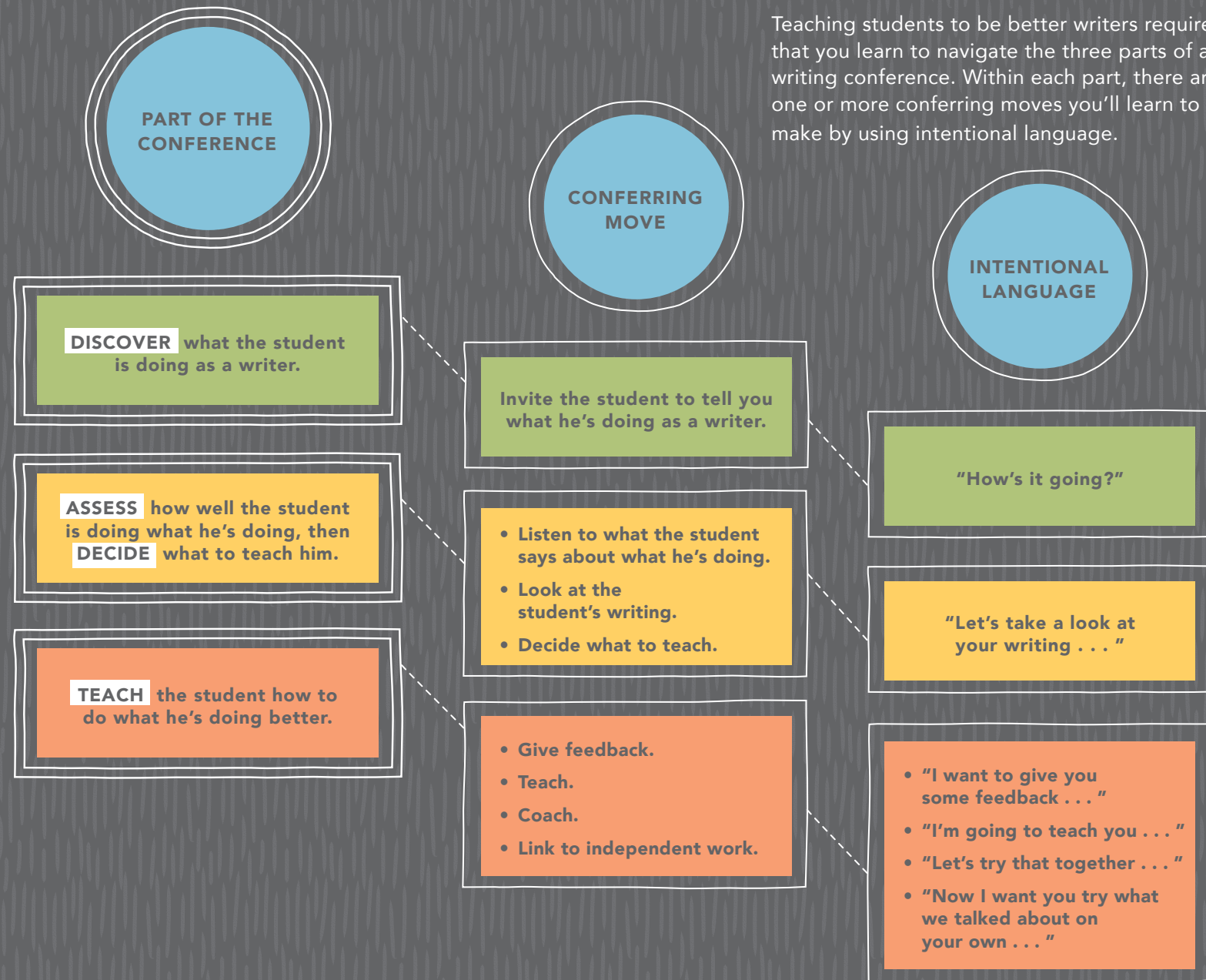


Sofia, Grade 8

WORDS FROM A TEACHING MENTOR

[Conferences] are not mini-lectures but the working talk of fellow writers sharing their experience with the writing process.

—DON MURRAY, 1985



Teaching students to be better writers requires that you learn to navigate the three parts of a writing conference. Within each part, there are one or more conferring moves you'll learn to make by using intentional language.

Writing Patterns and Teaching Points

Experienced writing teachers recognize many patterns of approximation when they confer with student writers, and they know what to teach in response to each of these patterns. How can you build this repertoire of patterns and teaching points? One way is to ask more experienced writing teachers. In this spirit, I'll list some of the most common patterns I see when I confer with students in schools around the world and a possible teaching point for each one. I'll put the patterns into two categories—*writing process patterns*, and *qualities of writing patterns*.

Writing Process Patterns

Many of the lessons you'll teach students are about how to move through the different stages writers go through as they compose:

- rehearsal (or prewriting)
- drafting
- revising
- editing
- publishing.

Rehearsal

Rehearsal includes all the things writers do before they actually start work on drafts. This "before work" can make lots of difference in the quality of students' finished work. Before starting drafts, writers



Connor, Grade 7

A TEACHER'S
GUIDE TO

writing

CONFERENCES

BY CARL ANDERSON

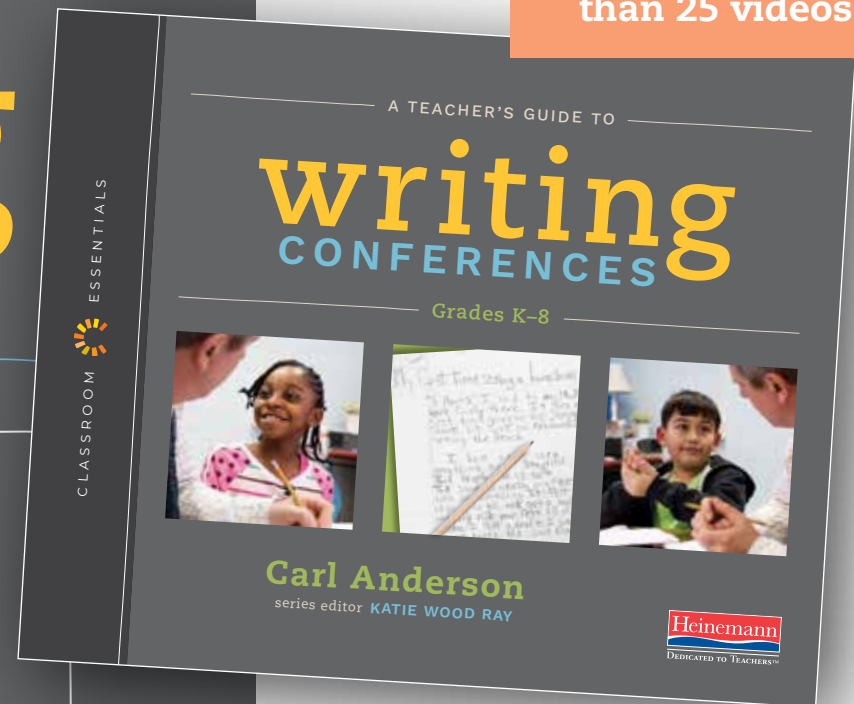
Helping students become better writers is what writing conferences are all about. In *A Teacher's Guide to Writing Conferences*, Carl Anderson explains the underlying principles and reasons for conferring with students, and how to make writing conferences a part of your daily routine. With clear and accessible language, Carl guides you through the three main parts of a writing conference, and shows you the teaching moves and intentional language that can be used in each one. Lots of video and teaching tips bring the content to life, and provide everything you need to help you become a better writing teacher.

Carl Anderson is an internationally recognized expert in writing instruction for Grades K-8, working as a consultant in schools and districts around the world. A long-time Staff Developer for the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Carl is the author of numerous books on teaching writing, including the bestselling *How's It Going? A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers*.

Grades K-8 • 978-0-325-09918-7
128pp est. • \$19.50 est.



Includes more
than 25 videos!



- How can I get started with conferring, or improve my conferences?
- How can conferences help me meet the diverse needs of student writers?
- How can I fit conferences into my busy writing workshop schedule?

Click here
for more
information
about this
book.