Post-Conference Checklist

Did the conference have:

- Student take a lead role

- Work samples or demonstrations to show proof of learning

- Student invite an audience (teacher, parent, peer) to participate in the process

- Audience take an active role and give feedback

- Student emulating the conference behaviours modelled to the class pre-conference

- Student has set new learning goal

- Student develop a sense of academic self-efficacy (connected to strategies learned during the conference)

STRATEGIES FOR SUCESSFUL CONFERENCING

- Establish positive relationships
- Build goal lists
- Use anchor charts
- Practice verbal prompts
- Create student checklist
- Vary conference types

Conferencing

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LEARNING

PROS

- Get the chance to know the students on a more personal level
- Students feel known on a deeper level - increases trust
- Students empowered to ask questions about their work and reflect on product and process
- Can save time, every conference is ongoing formative assessment → less time grading

CONS

- Daunting for teachers to find time within class hours
- Hard for reluctant, shy or quiet students
- Need to be prepared with your own objectives, explain your key focus, otherwise you risk confusing your students on their learning objectives
- Could be seen as a waste of time, especially if only "good" students' parents participate and there is not much to discuss

BIAS

- Not all students have the same support at home, may not have as much family involvement or feedback
- Important to pay attention to non-verbal cues and tone of voice
- Not all conferencing types will work for every student
- Easier to conference with outgoing students
- Potentially diminishes students ability to see each other as teachers

WHY USE CONFERENCES?

A helpful pre-conference checklist. Does this conference:

- Allow students to develop social communication and conversation skills?
- Allow for students to become aware of their own strengths and needs, which leads to them becoming more successful learners?
- Provide students with immediate feedback and clarifications?
- Allow students to take on a lead role in their education? (taking part in reflection, self-assessment, goal-setting, and effective communication of their thoughts and needs)
- Grow the students' metacognitive capabilities?
- Incorporate student in the assessment process? (to foster achievement)

KEY POINTS

* Students take a lead role
* Work samples or demonstrations are used to show proof of learning
* Students invite an audience to participate in the process
* Audiences take active roles and give specific feedback to learners
*Model appropriate conference behaviours before conducting any conferences

CONFERENCE TYPES

READING
Allow teachers to:
- see what books students are reading and help them adjust level if necessary
- determine if students are applying what they are learning during other parts of literacy block
- spend one-on-one time with students, build relationships, and provide relevant instruction
- conferences are typically 5 minutes long, held weekly or every 2 weeks
- use "observe-compliment-teach" format

WRITING
- an opportunity to teach new teaching strategy in depth to student
- allows teacher to scaffold new techniques and actively promote future writing improvements
- be sure to have a clear procedure in place so student can focus on writing
- allow for flexible expressions of written literacy
- teach a clear strategy and work with student to practice strategy prior to setting it as their writing goal

CHECK IN / MINI
- good for students who may not be able to provide many details in one sitting
- lends itself to long-term projects where weekly check-ins or group Q&A meetings help students stay on track
- UD: many students may feel unsure or overwhelmed at formal conferences; these are easier for students to explain detail while they are actively engaged and working in the process

SORE KNEE
- shortest, most informal conference type
- no pre-planning is necessary
- one-on-one conversations at students' desks
- provides clarification and instant feedback
- teachable moments