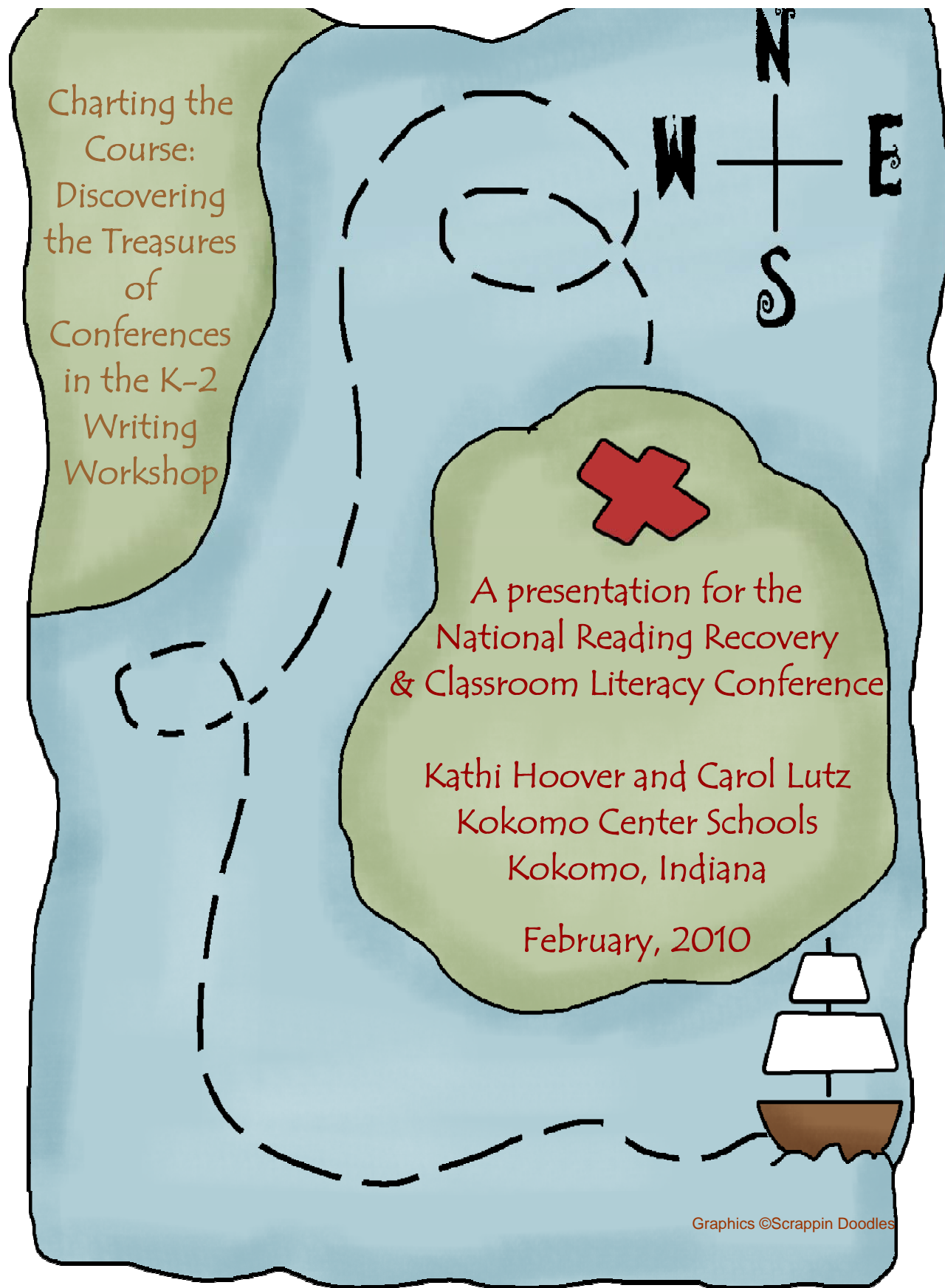


The "Write" Time for "Writing Talk" in the Writing Workshop: Conferences and Share Time



The "Write" Time for "Writing Talk" in Writing Workshop: Conferences and Share Time - February, 2010

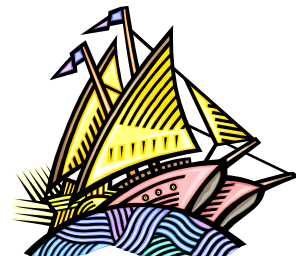
Conferencing and sharing are the *hidden treasures* of Writing Workshop. "Writing talk" is the key to unlocking the "*treasure chest*" that honors writers, teaches new understandings, differentiates instruction, and gathers data to assist instructional decisions.



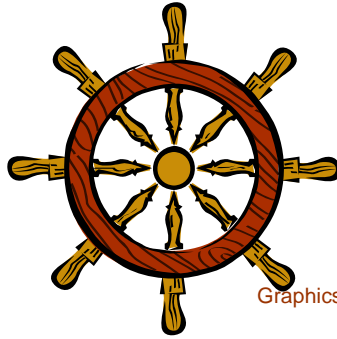
The Voyage: Launch to Port-of-Call

In this presentation, we will discuss the following points that will help unlock the hidden treasures of Writing Workshop:

1. The "Write" essentials of the Writing Workshop
2. The "Write" essentials of Conferencing with Writers: what I do, what I need, and what I do with the information I gather
3. The "Write" Essentials of Share Time Conferencing and Celebrating with Writers
4. Things to remember



Ships Ahoy: Setting Sail with Writing Workshop



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The "Write" Essentials of the Writing Workshop

The ultimate treasure (goal) of Writing Workshop is to teach our students to become independent writers. We want them to know that writing is "hard fun". In the primary writing workshop format presented below, time is allotted to teach, demonstrate, practice, and write independently.

Format of the Primary Writing Workshop	
Component	Time Frame
Gathering ritual	2 minutes
Mini-lesson	5-10 minutes
Begin work period with "Private Writing Time"	5-10 minutes
Independent work period with teacher conferencing or meeting with small groups	K: 5-20 minutes 1 st : 10- 25 minutes 2 nd : 15-40 minutes
Share Time	10 minutes

We want our young students to be able to ask questions of themselves that improve their writing. Conferencing holds the key.

"The promise of a treasure is not always realized; that doesn't mean we don't look for new discoveries."

~Rebecca Klosowski



All Hands on Board

The "Write" Essentials of Conferencing with Writers

Since a conference is simply a conversation, why is it so hard? Not only is the conversation sometimes difficult, but it is also challenging without good classroom management. In charting the path to unlock the treasures of Writing Workshop with our young students, conferencing holds the key.



📦 What is a writing conference, anyway?


A writing conference is a meeting in which there is conversation between the writer and either an adult or a peer. During this conversation, the adult or the peer asks questions or make comments that teach or encourage the writer to interact with his/her own writing. (Calkins, 1996) Conferences between teachers or peers and young writers help to teach and support the writers, focus their writing, and motivate them to become independent writers. A writing conference is not a time to work on the entire piece of writing but a time to work on one small part of the writing.

📦 Are there different kinds of conferences that take place between teacher and writer?

There are several different kinds of conferences - some informal and some formal, some involving the whole class and some involving one student.

Kinds of Conferences	
Roaming conference ("a conference on the run" Routman, 2005)	Quick and meets an immediate need
One on one conference	Focused and responds to what the child is doing and how he can become a better writer (Anderson)
Small group conferences	Time spent touching base with each student in the group (typically with students who have similar needs)
Whole group sharing conferences	A public conference celebrating a child's writing to support the writer and provide a shared learning experience for the rest of the class.
Peer Conferences	Students supporting students with the kind of help they don't need from the teacher



 What is the purpose of a writing conference?

Most conferences can be grouped into one of four categories: content, procedures, process, and goals. (Calkins) Editing conferences might also be held but are more appropriate for intermediate grades.

Purpose	Focus	Questions/ Comments
Content: the writer teaches the listener more about the subject and then adds information to the writing	Clarify the subject matter of the writing - what the student wants to write about	What do you know about ?
	Encourage problem solving	How could you begin? What could you add?
	Encourage elaboration	I didn't know Could you say that in your writing?
	Ask questions	What did you mean when you said ?
Procedural expectations- teacher talks to the writer about expectations	Re-teach procedures for the writing workshop	I notice that you seem to be having some problems with
Process: the writers talk to us about what they do well, the problems they encounter, and how they are trying to deal with the problems	Tell the writer what you notice about his writing.	I noticed that you What led you to do that?
	Extend the piece of writing by teaching a new strategy to use.	How about if you . . . ?
	Encourage problem solving	What problems have you had with your writing?
	Reteach skills taught during the mini lesson	Remember when we
	Give the writer a new way of thinking	You might want to
Goals: teacher focuses on the writer's strengths and writer sets goals for the next writing	Provide the scaffold for a new expectation	I can see you are ready to try

Keep this in mind while sailing

📦 STRUCTURE of conferences (as described by Lucy Calkins, 1994)

What do I do during a writing workshop conference?

1. Research

- Know the writer. Roam the room and observe - be a "kid watcher". Take notes (record keeping is critical!).
- Attempt to understand what the writer has done - listen to the student to better understand his intentions.

2. Decide

- After researching, think about the things that we know about the writer and the writing. The goal is not to go over the entire writing but to isolate one thing in the writing "If she is stuck, ask, "What is the problem? If she is finished, ask, "Is anything missing?" If she is confused, help to clarify. Decide the one component that the student is capable of working on. Young writers have many things to work on in their writing. Don't try to fix everything!
- Decide what the child has done well to compliment, what should be taught, and how to go about teaching it.
- Teach the writer, not the writing. Be sure that the item is one that is focused upon the child as a writer rather than the writing.

3. Compliment and Teach

- Compliment and name the strategy that the child used. One option is to compare and contrast.
- Show the writer the place where he used the strategy.
- Pick one teaching point and put in the form of a strategy - state what you are going to teach. The teaching may be in the form of



demonstration (may use your own unfinished writing), guided practice with scaffolding, or showing an example (from mentor text, student author, or own writing).

- Suggest something that the student might try or point out some language in the writing that might be clarified.
- Ask questions that will encourage students to begin revision.
- Remember to use consistent language.
- Hold students accountable for what they've been taught - remind them of the strategy discussed in the last conference and ask how it's going.
- Lucy Calkins said, *"As teachers we need to listen. We need to mentor the writer with gasping as if their writing is the best thing you've ever read."*

4. Link

- Rename the strategy that was used or taught, and remind the writer to use it again.

Managing the conference

"So how do I make this conferencing thing work?"

1. Managing the Setting

- A classroom of independent writers achieves because daily routines and expectations have been taught, demonstrated, practiced, and reinforced.
- Conferencing cannot take place until young writers can manage their own writing time and have built stamina for independent work.

Walking the plank =
not a good idea!

Time spent disciplining will derail conferencing time and create frustration for students and teachers.



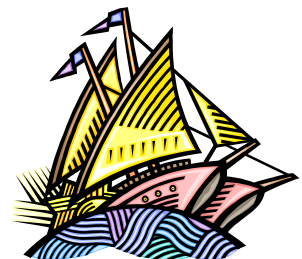
2. Procedures for Conferencing

- Move among the children - meet at the writer's work space.
- Meet with 4-6 students daily. Assign each student to a day of the week so that no students are overlooked (keep advanced students scheduled for Mondays and Fridays).
- Develop a record keeping system: conference folder, conference notebook or conference toolkit.
- Encourage eavesdropping among the other students who are nearby.
- Teach students that when we confer, interruptions are not expected.
- Make conferencing a priority.
- With more fluent writers, listen to the piece without looking at the writing during a first reading. This helps focus upon content and craft rather than conventions.

3. The "TALK" of the conference

- Limit one on one conferences to 8 minutes in 2nd grade, 4-5 minutes in 1st grade, and 2-4 minutes in kindergarten.
- Leave time at the end of the conferences to touch base with other students who may need assistance (roaming conferences). In kindergarten, quickly check in with each child to see what they are working on and what kind of help is needed today.
- The conversation should be focused upon the work the child is doing and how to help the child be a more confident and independent writer.
- The conversation should be student centered.


Smooth sailing ahead!



"Write Time" Conference Prompts
How is your writing going?
What would you like to share with me today?
What have you decided to write about?
What do you notice about . . . ?
Why did you make that decision as an author? (or illustrator)
Tell me more about. . . .
Read the part of your writing that you like best.
Read your beginning.
Read your ending.
I noticed that you . . . Why did you do that?
What is the best part of your writing so far?
Have you had any problems with this writing? Show me where your problem is.
What did you mean when you said ?
I like the part where . . . Can you tell me more?
What do you plan to do with this piece of writing when it is finished?
Additional prompts can be found in <i>Writing Essentials, How's it going?, The Art of Teaching Writing.</i>

PRACTICE THE ART OF LISTENING!

Artifacts - the Pirate's Booty

-  Now what do I do with the information that I have?
- Keeping notes during your conference is important.
 - Thorough notes are needed to plan future conferences, observe students' strengths,




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plan future mini-lessons, guided writing strategy groups, direct share-time instruction, and monitor student progress.


- "The notes you take during conferences serve as planning and assessing tools, so be diligent in completing them with accuracy and thoroughness." (Hoover & Lutz, 2008)

Buried Treasures

The "Write" Essentials of Share Time Conferencing and Celebrating with Writers - another time for teaching

 What is a share time conference?

- A share time conference is a public conference.
- It is a whole group celebration that takes place at the end of Writing Workshop.
- Both the teacher and other students celebrate the writer, ask questions about the writing for clarification, and offer suggestions.

 Are there different kinds of share time conferences?

1. Author's chair

- When sharing, students sit in a special seat, the Author's Chair, and read all or part of their writing.
- The teacher may point out a strategy or quality of good writing and other writers may offer compliments.
- The writer may ask for feedback, questions, or suggestions from other writers.



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2. Partner share


- Writers share all or part of their writing with a buddy.
- Partners may also give suggestions or ask questions for clarification.

3. Small group share

- Writers share all or part of their writing with a small group, possible their table partners.
- This may or may not include the teacher.
- Group members may also give suggestions or ask questions for clarification.

4. Teacher led share

- The teacher may choose to highlight a successful conference that will serve to benefit all writers or highlight a specific mini lesson strategy that was noticed.
- She might also point out partners who worked well together or address management issues.

 Procedures for sharing - teach children how to share and how to listen:

Sharing	Listening
Look at the audience.	Look at the speaker.
Speak clearly and loudly.	Think about what the speaker is saying.
Think about what you are going to share.	Be prepared to respond to the speaker.

“Students learn best if they are part of a community in which all members take responsibility for their own learning and also for one another’s learning.” (Fountas & Pinnell, Guiding Readers and Writers. p. 88.)

Counting the Pirate's Loot

- 🎁 What are some other ways to celebrate writing?
1. Host a Writer's Tea
 2. Arrange a time to share writing with another class
 3. Make copies of student writing and give to younger students
 4. Participate in a Young Author's Conference
 5. Publish student writing and add to the classroom library
 6. Post writing on the school website to share with the "school community"
- Celebrate at the end of each unit of study!



And Now a Word from the Galley -

Remembering the little clues that help unlock the treasures

- In Kindergarten and early first grade, say "Please read this to me" rather than making a guess as to the content of the writing.
- Publish sparingly.
- Remember that young students are capable of revising, but most editing should come later.
- Be organized so that time is not wasted between conferences. Use a system for recording observations and anecdotal notes.
- Use only about 30 seconds per child to record observations.
- Don't forget to LISTEN!

Keep this in mind while sailing -

Writing conferences are more than just the writing "gems"; they are the true *treasures* of the Writing Workshop.



Writing Workshop – Conferencing Notes

Name: _____ Date: _____



Writing Workshop – Conferencing Notes

Name: _____ Date: _____



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Name: _____ Date: _____



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Sail forth and make it happen.

Bon Voyage!



If you have questions, feel free to contact us:

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