



Student-Led Conferencing

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Purpose of the Workshop...



- Reflect upon current practice of parent-teacher conferencing in relation to the purposes of a conference.
- Introduce and explore ways to involve students in the conferencing process.
- Introduce a variety of structures for student led conferences.



Current practice of parent-teacher conferencing?



- Consider your past experiences with conferences.....
 - How successful have you found these experiences?
 - What are some concerns you may have regarding the effectiveness of these conferences?
 - What brought you to this workshop today?
 - What are you hoping to take away from this session?

Different Conference Options – Reasons or Purpose for Holding a Conference..



- **Feedback** (*strengths and areas for improvement*)
- **Goal Setting** (*long-or short-term achievement goals*)
- **Intervention** (*area of concern*)
- **Demonstration of Growth** (*Improvement on one learning target – growth over time*)
- **Communicating Achievement** (*Level of achievement – demonstration of competence – evidence of meeting goals*)

The Purpose of a Student-Led Conference



- The purpose of a student led conference is to allow the individual child to take ownership of their learning and articulate their learning strengths and areas to work on. When a student is able to do this their learning inevitably improves.
- Student led conferences are part of a multi-faceted reporting system that is in place to communicate to and inform stakeholders. (Guskey, 2001)
- Conferences where students are active participants are a natural extension of learning when students have previously self-assessed and set goals. (Stiggins, Arter, Chapuis, Chappuis : Classroom Assessment for Student Learning 2006,p.361)

From an Assessment Point of View....



- Authentic assessment is derived from collected data and information on a student over a period of time.
- Effective data is collected with the use of portfolio assessment, anecdotal notes, observations, conversations, checklists, rubrics, self & peer-assessment, reflections, learning logs and goal setting (triangulated).
- Student-led conferences provide teachers the opportunity to incorporate these various elements of the assessment process as a means of reporting to students and parents.
- Assessment is now looked at as a team approach among teachers, students and parents.

***Laura Cardillo Marricco & Gerry Robillard: Student-Led Conferences: A Closer look at Assessment*

Benefits of Student Led Conferencing



- Parents, students, and teachers are identifying conferencing and reporting practices that effectively **Communicate** and **Support Learning**.

(Anne Davies: Knowing What Counts – Conferencing and Reporting)



Benefits of Student-Led Conferences



- **Students are held individually accountable for their learning**
- **Greater sense of responsibility**
- **Pride in their accomplishment**
- **Focus by all on assessment for learning**
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem in students**
- **Increased parent involvement**
- **Strengthens the home-school partnership**
- **A pleasant more relaxed and positive experience for all concerned**

Characteristics of Student-Involved Conferences...



Characteristic # 1

- Students take a lead role

- Collect **work samples**
- **Reflect** on their learning
- **Set goals** to improve their learning
- **Active** partners in the process

This leads
to the
creation of
student
Portfolios

Characteristics of Student-Involved Conferences



Characteristic #2

- An audience is essential to the process
 - An audience that the student knows and cares about gives them a **purpose** for collecting work samples, talking about their learning and sharing their skills.
 - The audience needs to **listen** and give **specific feedback** to the student to support their learning...(three stars and a wish?)
 - An audience can go beyond parents and guardians ...the audience can include relatives, family friends, coaches, previous teachers, community members, future employers etc.

Characteristics of Student-Involved Conferences



Characteristic #3

- Support Student Learning

- Research shows that when students are involved in the assessment process-articulating what they have learned-achievement improves
- When students communicate their learning using a variety of work samples, they go beyond what grades & numbers can show...they are able to examine the range of their own learning.

Content of The Conference



- Student Strengths
- Areas of focus
- Future Learning Goals / Plan

Structure of the Conference Depends on....



- Student age
- Past classroom experiences
- Preparation of parent, teacher & student
- Purpose of the Conference
 - Formative
 - Purpose is to give or receive feedback, to help students formulate goals, or to create with colleagues or parents an individualized program or other intervention for a student.
 - Summative
 - Purpose is to share information about learning that has already occurred.

Commonalities in Student Led Conferences



- Is scheduled by the teacher, held at the school and follows an agenda
- Students prepare for and take on a lead role
- Reviews the learning of the student by using samples of student work (often a portfolio)
- All participants understand their roles and are active in the process
- May include a written summary report of how successful the conference was

Questions to consider...



Question #1

- The idea of student led conferences is new for many parents. Communication with them will be very important in order to promote understanding of the benefits of this type of format. How might this communication be accomplished?

How will I communicate to Parents before the conference?



Send information out to parents at least the week before.

If student led conferences are going to be a school wide event consider communicating through the school newsletter a month or two before the event.

Happy Days Elementary School



Dear parents / Guardians,

You are invited to attend a conference on Tuesday November 16, 2008 at 7:00p.m.

At this time, the student, parent(s) and teacher(s) will meet together to talk about the learning that has taken place during the term. The conference will take 15 minutes. Your son/daughter knows a great deal about his/her own learning and has collected work samples to show you.

By working together, we can support your son or daughter's learning. I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Yours truly,

Ms. Smiley

Format

The number one purpose of the conference is to support the learning of your child by:

1. talking about strengths and areas of progress
 2. looking at and discussing work samples
 3. talking about areas needing improvement
 4. setting one or two goals for the next term
 5. discussing ways to help meet goals
- A written summary of the conversation will be sent home

Please return this portion

(student Name)

(parent name)

____ yes I will attend the conference at the designated time

____ no, I am unable to attend and would like to reschedule.



Peace River School Division

Learning Together - Success for All



Dear Parents / Guardians,

You are invited to bring your child to school for a student / parent / teacher conference Thursday Nov. 18th from 7:00 – 8:00.

Using work samples and discussing criteria your child will lead you through his/ her accomplishments of this past term. Your child will also be asking for feedback on these achievements as well as your input in setting goals for this next term.

I will be available to discuss strengths and areas for growth for a 15 minute slot during your visit.

In preparation for our upcoming conference, please take a few minutes and jot down some ideas about your son or daughter. You might want to include accomplishments that take place outside of school as well as in school.

Yours truly,

Any areas of strength, growth, accomplishments:

One or two areas you'd like to see improvement in:

On specific goal:

P.S Please bring these notes to the conference for you own use. Please do not sent this form back to school.



Recommended Questions for Parents

Here are some suggested questions you may want to use as you go through this student-led interview with your child.

- What have you learned this term?
- What would you like to learn that you do not know already?
- What are your goals this year?
- What does your portfolio tell me about you as a learner?
- Which piece of work are you most proud of? Why?
- Which subject is difficult for you? Why?
- Which is your favorite subject? Why?
- What makes you happiest at school?
- What things frustrate you at school?
- What would you like to accomplish by the end of this year?
- What are three things you hope to change in the future?
- How can we work together to help you achieve your goals?

Questions to Consider...



Question #2

- What steps will I need to take with students so their involvement in conferences will be successful? What support might I enlist to help with student preparation for conferences?

How will I communicate to and prepare students before the conference?



- Consistently have students engaged in conversations about their learning...
 - Co-construct criteria
 - Work samples
 - Goal setting in relation to learner outcomes
 - Self and peer assess according to criteria set
- Review with students the parent letter that goes home
- Role play the conference before hand. Classmates can practice different roles.

More ways to practice Learning Conversations with Students



- Portfolio Afternoon
- Goal Envelopes
- Home / School Performances
- Personal Newsletter

Self-reflection



- As students work through assignments have them regularly reflect on their work. Doing this on a regular basis helps students set goal, chart their progress & understand their own learning.
- What benefits might teachers reap from this practice?

Improvement

This work shows I've improved...

Date _____ Signed _____

Getting There

I think I'm starting to ...

Please notice....

Date _____ Signed _____

My Favourite



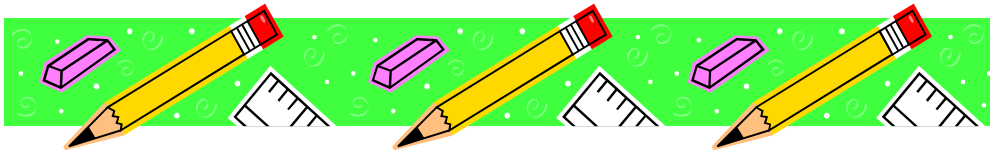
This is my favourite piece because _____



My Best Work

This is my best work because _____

My Most Challenging



This is my most challenging piece because



By Myself

I completed this work all by myself!
One thing I did really well is

Goal setting



My goal for Term 1 is:



My goal for Term 2 is:



My goal for Term 3 is:



My goal for Term 4 is:



During the Conference...



- Time Structures
- Classroom set up
- Agenda

During the conference....



Time Structures

- 4 students with parents in your class at the same time for an hour time slot
- Follow the more traditional format with one student's entourage in the room at one time....something to consider however is that a 15 - 20 minute time period may not be enough time to allow students to work through the agenda.

During the Conference



- In a Jr. High / Sr. High setting students may go through portfolios with their parents & fill in a summary report beforehand (either in school or sent home) with student – teacher – parent meeting for a shorter time.

During the Conference



Classroom Set Up

- Make sure that there is room for student groups to work comfortably. (enough chairs for all to sit)
- Student work / portfolios are easily accessible. Perhaps at student desk or in designated file.
- If you are having learning stations, make sure that all materials are readily available at all the stations and they are appropriately spaced around the room. Directions on what to do at each station should be readily available either on the agenda or at each station.
- Decide if you are going to float or be stationary...do you go to groups or do they come to you?

During the Conference



Agenda

- Have a set agenda that the students are familiar with...rehearse beforehand.
- Centers may be set up to demonstrate learning / skills from programs of study
- Students have a portfolio of work which they walk parents through. Work samples and reflections have been gathered that show growth, achievement of outcomes or goals set by the student.
- Have treats

After the conference



- Make a copy of the summary report so that parents and students have a copy for their records.

Summary Report for _____	
The following is a summary of our student-parent-teacher conference held on _____.	
Areas of Strength	Areas needing improvement
	Additional Notes:
Goals for next term	

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Teacher Signature

After the Conference....



- **Parent Guardian Feedback**

Parents / Guardians
<p>We need your comments to improve our student-parent-teacher conferences. Thank you for taking the time to complete this form and return it to the school.</p>
<p>Two things you liked about the conference:</p>
<p>1. _____ _____</p>
<p>2. _____ _____</p>
<p>One suggestion:</p>
<p>1. _____ _____</p>
<p>One Question:</p>
<p>1. _____ _____</p>

After the Conference...



- **Teacher Self-reflection**

- What were the successes?
- What areas might need adjustment before the next conferences?
- What follow up is required for parents and students who were unable to attend?
- What additional training would help me be a better facilitator during the Student Led Conference?

After the Conference



Student Reflections

- One thing that went well during my conference was...
- I believe my parents learned....
- Things could have gone better if...
- My opinion of this conference is.....
- I am happy I shared....because....

Parent Concerns



- Parents can select either a traditional parent-teacher conference or a student-led conference.
- The student leaves at the conclusion of the student-led conference, and the teacher and parents meet privately.
- The parent and teacher can schedule an additional conference time.

Questions to Consider ...

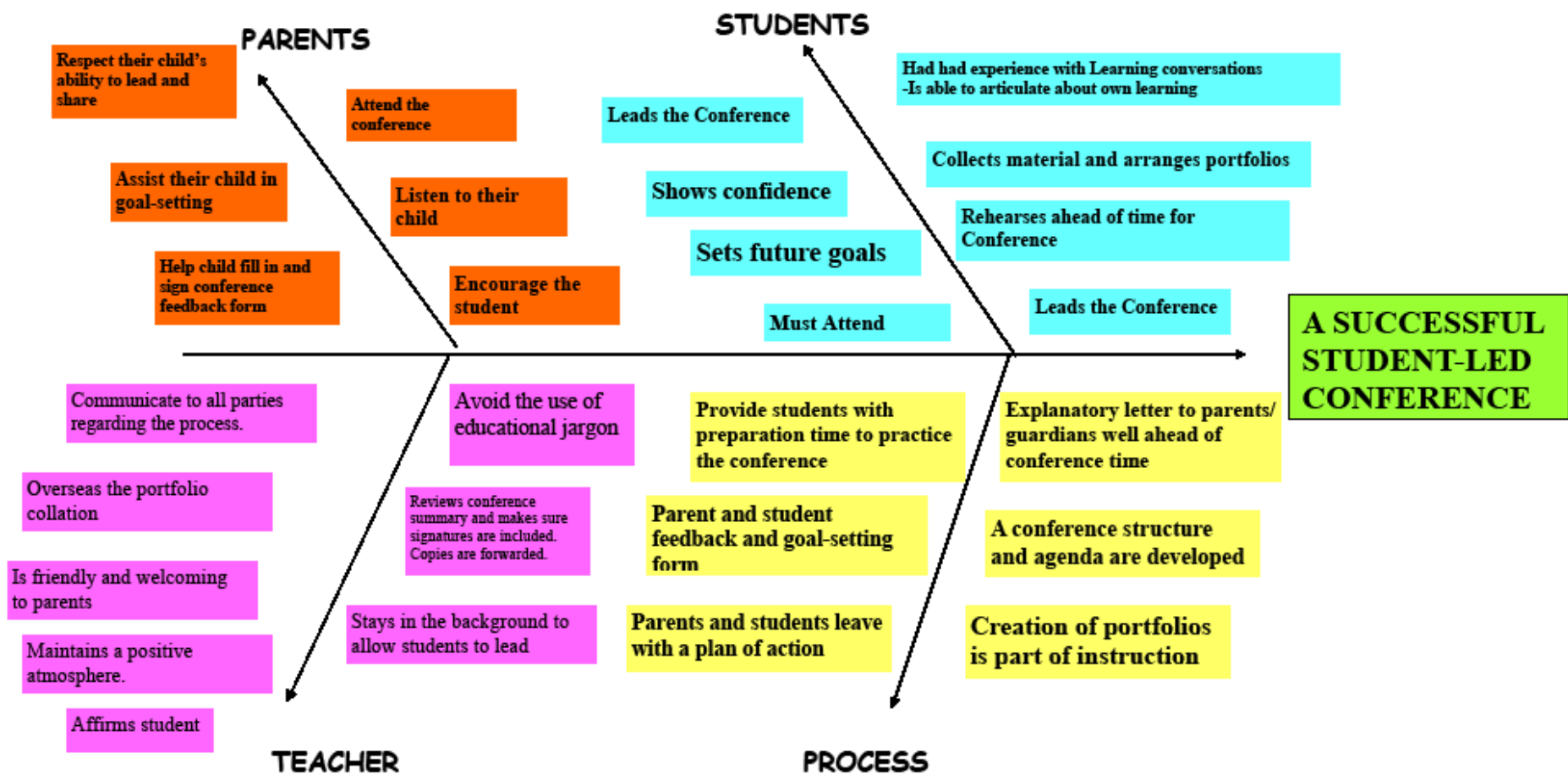


Question #3

- What steps would you need to take to implement student led conferences in your classroom / school?
 - Identify possible barriers and challenges to student-led conferences. How might they be overcome?



STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES: A MODEL FOR SUCCESS



Adapted from: *Student-Led Conferences: Un Close and Personal*, By Brenda Dyck 2002

Student Led Conferencing Resources



- **Student-Involved Conferences** — Anne Davies and Rick Stiggins (PRSD IMC 371.1STU) 1 DVD and 1CD
- **Knowing What Counts: Conferencing and Reporting** — Kathleen Gregory, Caren Cameron, Anne Davies
- **Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right – Using It Well** – Richard J. Stiggins, Judith A. Arter, Jan Chappuis and Stephen Chappuis (Chapter 12 Conferences About and With Students)
- **Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning** – Thomas R. Guskey & Jane M. Bailey (Chapter 10 Guidelines Developing Effective Reporting Systems)
- www.educationworld.com search for student-led conferences