

After the minilesson, students leave the meeting area with a sense of purpose.

- Absolutely
- They act like it, but I'm not sure they are working.
- They line up with questions.

{Help students make a plan before leaving the meeting area. Stacey used plan boxes in her classroom. I liked students to verbalize their plans before leaving the meeting area. }

If students need help, they use resources other than the teacher.

- Of course!
- Their arms fall off from waiting for me.
- What resources would they use?

{Identify the most pressing needs. Consider how these needs can be met without your help. Can you establish a system or a chart or a resource box to scaffold independence? }

Students consider audience and talk about the influence the audience has on their writing.

- Absolutely
- They talk about it if prompted.
- They only write for the teacher.

{Empower students to share their writing beyond the classroom walls. Maybe you want to consider the March Slice of Life Writing Challenge for your students. }

Students draft fluently -- they are able to put words on the page smoothly and quickly.

- Absolutely
- Most do, but there are still those that won't.
- Only the 1 or 2 kids who "like" writing.

{Set aside a drafting day for students in order to practice their fluency. On this day everyone drafts. Another option is to consider word count. Of course this isn't in a competitive way, simply as a measure for writers to gauge their fluency. }

Students make plans.

- Absolutely
- Some, but others still don't see the point.
- They fill in the graphic organizer I give them.

{Set aside a minilesson or two dedicated to the possibilities of planning. Review different ways you've used to plan this year and introduce a new option. }

Students know and use several strategies for revision.

- Absolutely
- Only when reminded
- I'm not sure they even know the meaning of revise.

{Spend some time considering the writing process. Check out Kate Messner's REAL REVISION or Ralph Fletcher's PROTECHNICS ON THE PAGE or Barry Lane's AFTER THE END for more revision ideas. }

The charts in the room are useful.

- Absolutely
- We used to use them, but not anymore.
- What charts?

{Consider charts as a go-to resource for students. What teaching points keep coming up in your conferences? What might make a good visual reminder for your students? Take down the unneeded charts and replace them with current learning. }

Students are writing with more conventions than they did at the start of the school year.

- Absolutely
- Not really.
- I think it's gotten worse.

{Model the importance of writing with conventions all of the time. Remind students to reread their work at the beginning and end of work time. Encourage the use of conventions. Avoid the term "sloppy copy." }

Students have energy for writing.

- Absolutely
- They go through the motions, but aren't excited.
- They would rather clean their rooms.

{Provide opportunities for choice in writing projects. Try to only limit one of the following decisions: purpose, audience, genre, or topic. }

Your conferring notes are useful.

- Absolutely
- I want them to be, but I don't use them.
- What conferring notes?

{Begin to hold yourself accountable for recording the teaching point and compliment in each conference. Take a few moments before meeting with a student to look back at his/her notes. Try to write a goal or two for each of your students. }