## Writing Conference Cheat Sheet with Observational Notes

Developed by Nicole Lehr, CESA 6 (2014) and based on the work of L. Calkins and J. Anderson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure:</th>
<th>You Might Say:</th>
<th>Observational Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>What are you working on as a writer today? Can you show me where you tried that?</td>
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<td>What is your plan for writing today?</td>
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<td>Can you take me on a tour of your writing?</td>
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<td>Is there anything you want me to know about you as a writer?</td>
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<td>What would you say is best about you as a writer?</td>
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<td>What do you think you could use more help with as a writer?</td>
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<td>Last time we met were working on... How's that going? Can you show me where you did that?</td>
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<td>Compliment</td>
<td>One strategy you are trying is... This strategy is helping you get better at...</td>
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<td>One thing about you as a writer that is so fantastic is that...</td>
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<td>You're not the kind of writer who... Instead, you're the kind of writer who...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Point</td>
<td>Now, can I give you one tip today – something that will help you to become an even better writer?</td>
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<td>Today I want to teach you that writers...</td>
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<td>Teach</td>
<td>Let's try a bit of this together. Let me try to explain to you what I mean... The other day when I was writing, I... and so I...</td>
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<td>Do you see how I'm...?</td>
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<td>Do you remember in the minute when I...? Let's see if we can...</td>
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<td>Let's try a bit of this together and then you can try on your own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coach/Active Engagement</td>
<td>Now you try... (restate teaching point and stick around to make sure writer is applying the strategy)</td>
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<td>SHORT PROMPTS: Don't forget to... That's good... now...</td>
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<td>Don't forget to keep track of your goals, .......?</td>
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<td>Now you try this in your writing... I'll be back to check on you. When I come back I am going to ask to see talk about...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link</td>
<td>So whenever you are ___________, you can remember to...</td>
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<td>Say back to me what you learned from this conference.</td>
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<td>What’s your plan as a writer when you get back to work on your own?</td>
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Steps in the Peer Review Process

1. Define exactly what you would like feedback on, directing your listener to a specific aspect of your writing?

2. The first person to share will state what they would like feedback on.

3. The writer will then read their piece. Listeners will remember what they wanted feedback on and take notes that will help them provide that feedback.

4. One at a time, each person will provide warm feedback.
   a. No compliments or praise
   b. Describe how the writer achieved the goals, using evidence to support your answer.

5. Then each person will provide cool feedback
   a. No criticism. You may not share your opinion.
   b. You may not tell the writer what to change.
   c. Frame your cool feedback as a question that will help the writer think more about what they are trying to improve upon.

Warm and Cool Feedback

**Warm**

- Don’t criticize or compliment
- Name what is effective in the writing
- Let the writer know what is working
- Point out where, in the piece, the writer successfully met their goal and provide evidence supporting it

**Cool**

- Ask the writer to consider “What if…” or “I wonder what would happen if…”
- Rather than telling the writer what needs more thought or consideration, ask them questions about the writing
- Provide statements or questions that tune the writer into areas of disconnects, gaps, dilemmas, or other areas of “weakness” in the writing

[letsgetengaged.wikispaces.com/file/view/Warm+and+cool+feedback.doc]
Wow! I liked...

I wonder...

Wow! I liked...

I wonder...
Two Stars and a Wish

Two stars you have for the author of this piece... please be specific.

One wish you have for the author of this piece... please be specific.
PQP – Strategy for Peer Response

- Writer may ask listeners/readers for a specific kind of help
- Writer reads piece ALOUD.
- Listeners/readers listen carefully.

- Writer asks: What did you like about my piece? (PRAISE)
- Listeners/readers give honest, specific praise.

- Writer asks: What questions do you have about my piece? (QUESTION)
  - Listeners/readers ask questions to clarify, to learn more, or to find out about writer’s process. (Avoid suggestions in disguise.)

- Writer asks: What suggestions do you have? (PROMPT)
  - Listeners/readers make recommendations. The writer is the one who makes the final decision about any changes that will be made.
Applying the Principles of Conferencing

- Conferences have a point to them. They are focused on helping students become better writers.
- Conferences have a predictable nature.
- In conferences, we pursue lines of thinking with students.
- Teachers and students have conversational roles in conferences.
- In conferences, we show students we care about them.

Carl Anderson’s conversation with Doran, a fifth grader, after they studied several feature articles including “So a big, bad bully is coming after you…” by Candace Purdom (1994).

CARL: How’s it going?
DORAN: Well, I’m working on my article.
CARL: Working on my article?
DORAN: Well, okay, I’m just getting started.
CARL: So does that mean you’re ready to start writing your lead?
DORAN: Yeah.
CARL: Could you tell me why you think you’re ready to start your lead?
DORAN: Well, I made a list of my bullets [subsections].
CARL: So you made a plan for the article?
DORAN: Yeah. At first I was just listing the parts, but then I thought a little bit like which would go one after the other, to make sense. So I did a part about Toys ‘R Us, then I did one about the difference between stores, and then I have here waiting toys out, and buying toys quick, and then I have coupons over here. I tried to match them near another one so it would kind of make sense.
CARL: So you’re trying to group the parts together.
DORAN: Right.
CARL: So this article will help people get that deal. You know, I can't believe how much toys cost, even for babies, so you're doing people like me-- parents-- a real service here.

DORAN: Uh-huh.

CARL: So how are you going to get started with your draft?

DORAN: Well, I guess first I'm just going to think about my lead and write about what my angle is, like at the beginning of the bully article... it's telling about what the angle is and everything. So I guess I'd start by thinking about my lead and doing that... and once that was done, I'd look back on these entries and make them bigger and add things on... and we're planning to go to maybe a toy store or something like that and look, I'm just going to do a little research.

CARL: So you still have more research to do...

DORAN: Yeah.

CARL: Wow, so you have a lot of smart plans. You want to write that lead and then, you have some material in your notebook, some entries, so that will help you as you draft, you want to kind of stretch those and write them better to write the different sections, with the "bullets." These are the kinds of plans that good writers have when they start a draft.

DORAN: Yeah.

CARL: So how do you think your lead is going to go?

DORAN: Well, I guess first I'm just going to think about my angle and write about what it is, like at the beginning of the bully article it's telling about what her angle is and everything. So I guess I'd start... well, I wouldn't say, "My angle is about such and such," I'd say, "When you're getting toys, either if you're a parent buying gifts or you're a kid trying to get some toys that you're collecting, here are some tips and ways that you can get toys for good deals."

CARL: Let me tell you what I'm hearing here. In the lead of a feature article, there's that one sentence that's the heart of the whole article, where the writer tells her reader her angle on her subject, and you really have a feel for that sentence there. I want to talk about one other thing you could do. One thing I noticed about the bully article is Candace Purdom does more in her lead than what you're planning to do. The sentence you've got planned is like the one she has right here [I point to the last sentence of the lead] where she goes, "Here are tips on making a tough spot easier."
DORAN: I see, but that's at the end of the lead for her.
CARL: For her, it's at the end. What does she do in the beginning here?
DORAN: She kind of describes what some kids think of a big mean bully.
CARL: Yeah, and it's kind of fun to read, isn't it? "Bigger than Shaquille, meaner than the Wicked Witch of the West, scarier than a Raptor, we're talking about the school bully."
DORAN: Yeah. If I was going to take after that, I could say, "So you want to get a toy that's very expensive. But you don't have so much money. Here are..." I could enlarge on that like she did there.
CARL: So what she's doing there is, she's really crafting her writing there. She's not just coming in with the nitty gritty, she's really drawing you in. So why don't you just try today to start writing your lead, okay, and keep the bully lead in your head. She really starts by drawing you in before she gets to that angle sentence. Your angle sentence was so clear and so good. So why don't you try some of this work out in your lead today.
DORAN: Okay.
CARL: Good talking with you.
DORAN: Good talking with you, too.

Doran's lead for his feature article

So you want to get that cool new toy, but you only have half the money? It's a major holiday and you have to buy toys for all your nephews, nieces and kids?

Anyone who has ever stepped into a toystore has heard kids whining for expensive toys, such as, "I want Pokemon Red, mom. That's the one for me, or, "I just have to have Nintendo 64 dad." Here are a few ways to get good deals on toys.

References
References and Additional Resources


A Few Online Resources

● Two Writing Teachers Blog
  http://twowritingteachers.wordpress.com/
  http://twowritingteachers.wordpress.com/2012/02/16/digital-conferring-notebook/

● Digital Record-Keeping Tools
  Notability-  http://www.gingerlabs.com/
  Evernote-  https://evernote.com/
  Confer-  http://www.conferapp.com/

● Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Project Videos
  https://vimeo.com/tcrwp