

## After 7 Years, Stacey Abeyta's Revised IDR Conference Tips!

By Gina Fugnitto | Categories: Individualized Daily Reading, Making Meaning, From the Field, Implementation

Recently, I was looking for information about IDR conferences and ran across my colleague Stacey Abeyta's 2010 blog on IDR Conference Tips.

After reading the blog and considering that it was written 7 years ago, I decided to pose a question to Stacey on our Collaborative Classroom Facebook Community.

### The question: What might you say differently about IDR conferences now?

Here is Stacey's response:

I am grateful for the experiences I have had and what I have learned since I originally wrote that blog. Yes, I have changed my thinking since 2010!

Here are my current IDR Conference Tips:

- A conference with a reader doesn't have to take 10 minutes. Powerful and productive conferences do not need to be a certain length of time. Maybe 5 minutes is all it takes to support the reader.
- The reader should be the one to lead the conference. I can provide a predictable structure for the conference experience—a structure where students are clear in their role and come prepared with talking points. The student talking points help make conversation more meaningful and relevant for the reader. The talking points also allow me to quickly meet the reader where they are within the given book and scope of instruction.
- My role in the conference is first to listen carefully to what the reader is saying and then decide how I might use that information to extend or strengthen what is important to the reader.
- I also have to consider HOW I will embrace this teaching moment. What might be the coaching point for this student based on what I heard and observed? How might I illuminate that coaching point to further support this reader's use of strategies or skills not only in the particular book they brought to the table, but also as an independent reader?
- I have learned the importance of having a reader try out the goal or action before we end our time together. Applying the action in the given text allows the reader to extend that learning to other texts.
- For readers who seem a bit uncertain or might need more support, I strive to engage in a short "check-in" or a series of "check-ins" to support the application of learning from the conference experience to independent reading.
- I've learned that having readers share their goals with other readers as IDR comes to an end is a powerful practice!
- I always strive to keep in mind Debbie Miller's advice: when I'm not sure what direction to go, relax! Though I might struggle with the coaching support for this conference, I want to keep in mind that this moment with a reader is precious and is about building and strengthening our relationship.
- It is important to collect data when conferring with students. The conference data can be used to support an individual reader,

and data trends can be helpful in making decisions about small-group and whole-class instruction.

Thank you, Stacey, for reflecting on your practice! I am wondering how others have refined their conferences. As you reflect on your conference experiences over the years, what might you add? Stacey and I would love to continue the conversation on our Collaborative Classroom Facebook Community.

If you want to learn more, a blog that stimulated conversation about conferences was Jennifer Sarravallo's post for the Nerdy Book Club called Supporting Independent Readers and Independent Reading. Check it out!