

The TAG Conference

(for more information, see *The Write Genre* by Lori Jamison Rog & Paul Kropp)

TAG is an acronym that describes a powerful structure for individual writing conferences. TAG stands for:

- Tell something you like about the piece of writing
- Ask questions
- Give advice



An effective conference starts with a couple of compliments about the piece of writing, always focused on what the writer has done; for example, *I loved it when you showed us how angry you were at your brother instead of telling us* or *You really grabbed my attention with that lead.*



The second stage, asking questions, might point out gaps in the content of the writing, or might probe the writer to think about his or her writing. The power of asking questions is that they are not critical, but demonstrate a common interest in making the writing as clear as possible.



The third stage, giving advice, is the teacher's opportunity to provide individual support for the student by advising on one or two changes the writer can make to make the writing more interesting, clear and powerful.

Older students may be taught to use TAG for peer conferences. Even the youngest students can develop the language to give "stars" (compliments) and "wishes" (questions or suggestions) to one another.