Teacher's Name: <u>Elida Gallegos</u> Grade Level/Subject Taught: <u>Literacy Level 4/5</u>

Pre-Conference Meeting Notes

Principal: Tell me a little about what makes your class unique?

Elida: There is a diversity of socio-economic status in the classroom. Approximately 40% of this class is intermediate English language learners (ELLs), with Spanish as their primary language. There is a range of abilities around language, but they are all curious learners and work well together despite the language differences. They don't mind helping one another to understand the task; they are really great kids!

Principal: What sorts of resources are you accessing to support students?

Elida: I work closely with the district ESL personnel and also the literacy specialist. Together we work to select texts that are of high interest to students. I think this is important because if they aren't interested in the text they will be more likely to give up on it or just not read it. Students really enjoy *Bridge to Terabithia*; even the students who struggle have been persevering with the reading. I also try to recommend other high interest books to students so they can read for enjoyment. The media specialist helps by doing book talks with the students and I see that almost all of the students will leave the library excited by a book they have just heard about. The more I can get them to enjoy reading and to read independently, the better they will do in all of their subjects.

Principal: Tell me a little bit about the content of the lesson I will see.

Elida: This lesson supports the Common Core Language Arts Standards. The students have all finished reading *Bridge to Terabithia* and we have discussed the book as they have read it- mostly focusing on plot and summarizing the main ideas; but now I want them to think about the book as a whole and extract the most important information from the text by connecting across specific chapters. I'm assigning a different chapter to each group of students so they can focus on one chapter, but then take responsibility for reviewing that particular chapter for the other groups. Since it has been a few weeks, the early chapters might be harder to remember. The lesson will require students to work cooperatively and to create new meaning from their prior knowledge about the book. They will have to analyze what they have read and be able to communicate that information – in their own words – to the rest of the class. Next week they will take an essay test on the book so this exercise will help them prepare for that assessment.

Principal: How have the students been doing reading the novel?

We've been reading the book for 4 weeks and students do a reading journal for homework that I collect every Friday. Most weeks, about half of the students get the comprehension questions right but there is always a need to review some of the ideas, not all of my students are reading at grade level; six of them performed really poorly on our last benchmark assessment in reading. As a class, they usually do best on the questions that are strictly comprehension and they struggle with the questions that push their thinking in deeper ways.

Principal: Where might students get stuck during the lesson? What are your strategies for addressing those areas?

Elida: I will take time at the beginning of the lesson to review some key terms with the students. Even though we have used these terms often, I think it is important for the students to verbalize their meaning so they are all clear. I think this is especially important for my ELLs; they need to hear explanations more than once or twice. So that is a way that I can help them avoid getting stuck – by reviewing the vocabulary before they get into the task. Once they begin the task I'll listen to their conversations and if I hear that students are struggling I will help them out as needed. I have grouped ELLs with students who can help them with the reading if that is needed; I often mix the students according to their language proficiency in a task like this so they can help one another and that seems to work really well. That way I'm sure that they have support if I'm working with another group.