Title: Modeling (Mentor Texts)

The Basics

What? Using published texts to model writing techniques

When? After reading a text and before independent student writing

Why? Provides a model that demonstrates quality writing

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students understand an author's craft, refine their writing about texts, and improve their language skills, including using standard English grammar, usage, conventions, and vocabulary in writing.

How to Implement

1. Select a meaningful, published text that represents writing expected of the profession and discipline.
2. Create a writing task in response to the text.
3. Determine the writing skill or trait (e.g., transition words, sentence variety/fluency, figurative language, word choice) to address.
4. Introduce the skill or trait to the group, providing a strong example from the text.
5. Ask students to reread the text and record additional examples of the focus writing skill or trait.
6. After reading, have students discuss the examples and the effectiveness of the writing based on the reviewed skill or trait.
7. Then have students complete the writing task incorporating the skill or trait studied in the mentor text.
8. Monitor and provide descriptive feedback and support as students work.

Resources for Additional Information

- Article from Kelly Gallagher that describes how to use mentor texts in a secondary classroom
- Overview of the strategy with recommendations of texts for student use and professional texts for additional reading about the strategy
- Overview of mentor texts from TeachMentorTexts.com
- Outline of this strategy that includes mentor texts organized by traits of writing from Scholastic.com
- *Writing with Mentors* from Allison Marchetti and Rebekah O'Dell
- Research which indicates that using models or mentor texts along with explicit instruction is beneficial to students, particularly English language learners
- Examples of how to use in lessons: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12