Title: Mini-Lessons for Small Group Writing

The Basics

What? A ten to fifteen minute lesson that focuses on one particular writing skill

When? Prior to student application of the skill addressed in the mini-lesson topic

Why? Allows students to focus on a specific writing skill, to immediately apply the skill in their own writing, and to receive timely feedback from both peers and teacher

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students refine their writing skills and use grade-level conventions in writing and speaking.

How to Implement

1. Form a group of 3-4 students based on common strengths or weaknesses as determined by student writing or other assessment.
2. Determine the writing skill or concept (e.g., transition words, varying sentences, grammar) to address with the group based on the group's weaknesses or strengths.
3. Pull together the group while the rest of the class is working independently or in small groups on a whole-class assignment or other task such as independent reading.
4. Introduce the skill or concept to the group, providing strong examples from literature and/or student writing.
5. Model application of the skill using the provided examples and engage students in explaining the process and effectiveness of the skill based on the demonstration.
6. Then ask students to practice the skill independently with a teacher-provided example or with their own writing.
7. Monitor and provide descriptive feedback and support as students work.
8. Explain to the group that the skill or concept will be evaluated on the next independent writing task to determine whether students effectively apply and use the skill or concept.
9. Follow up with students who continue to need help.

Resources for Additional Information

- Mini-lesson toolbox including ideas, format, and sample mini-lessons
- A grammar guide to use as a resource to help understand at each grade level what students' written language should look like, identify gaps, and target grammar skills.
- Interactive, targeted editing and revision lessons for grades 3-8, and reading and writing mini-lessons.