Title: Modeling (Student Examples)

The Basics

What? Using student writing to model expectations for a particular task

When? After reading a text and before independent student writing or for revision of student writing between drafting and publishing

Why? Provides a model that demonstrates writing which meets and does not meet expectations

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students understand the expectations for a written task, 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 or create a writing prompt or task in response to text(s).
2. Determine no more than two writing skills or traits, which have been the focus of instruction leading up to the writing task (e.g., writing an introduction, developing a thesis/claim, organizing a paragraph or essay, maintaining a formal style, creating coherent writing, incorporating grade-level vocabulary, using transition words, using relevant evidence, addressing a counterclaim, varying syntax, etc.)
3. Develop expectations for the writing task based on the grade-level standards and include the identified writing skills or traits. This can take the form of a writing rubric.
4. Select or create responses to the writing prompt or task that represent a range of ability with the identified writing skills or traits. Note: These should be anonymous and from previous school year or different class so as not to embarrass students.
5. Have students read an exemplary response (one that shows strong ability with the identified writing skills or traits) and discuss the qualities of the response which make it strong, focusing on the identified writing skills or traits. For example, if focusing on the structure/organization, ask students to identify the role/purpose of each sentence or paragraph in the response (e.g., "How does this model begin? After restating the question, what does the writer do? What is the purpose of the next sentence? How does it connect to the first sentence?")
6. Ask students to read the additional responses and evaluate their quality based on the provided expectations and exemplary response.
7. After reading, have students discuss the responses and how they could be improved. Note: If there isn't time to read multiple responses, skip steps 6 and 7.
8. Then have students complete the writing task incorporating the skill or trait examined.
9. Monitor and provide descriptive feedback and support as students work. For example, as they write, prompt them as needed by orally reminding them of the discussion from step 5. For example, "Remember, the model started by restating the question. How would you restate this question?" or "After restating the question and providing the answer, in the model, it provided evidence for the answer/how the writer knew the answer. How do you know that's the right answer? What evidence can you provide from the text?"

Resources for Additional Information

- Research which includes the study of models as an effective strategy to improve writing in grades 4-12
- Example of how to use in lessons