Title: Organizational Frames for Writing

The Basics

What? Teacher-created organizational frames which help students respond to open-ended questions and support their responses with evidence from the text; these frames follow a formal sentence, paragraph, or essay structure which mimics a mentor sentence or exemplar essay.

When? During or after reading a text when a student is struggling to write a response about text, or when students need to improve their sentence construction and variety and/or their essay organization and development; organizational frames are best used to support students when they respond to a "Let's Express Understanding!" prompt, a culminating writing task, or an extension task in the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 units. Over time students should internalize the frames and begin to use them on their own without teacher prompting.

Why? To hone writing skills, including syntax, sentence variety, organization, and development, and provide students with a "toolbox" of organizational frames that they can use when they are asked to write in response to text.

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students prepare and organize thoughts about text, develop a written response in the form of a short or extended response, and use standard English grammar, usage, and conventions in writing.

How to Implement

1. Create or select an appropriate organizational frame. Sample organizational frames are provided under "Resources for Additional Information" and are included within the Teaching Notes and Additional Materials in the guidebooks.
2. As needed, teach students how to use the selected frame using a mentor sentence or exemplary response. This should be done the first time a frame is used and whenever students are engaging in a new type of writing. Help students understand how the organizational frame reflects a grade-level sentence, paragraph, or essay.
3. Give students time to write responses. Monitor and provide descriptive feedback and support as students work and prompt them to use the organizational frame.
4. Also use the organizational frames as students edit and revise their responses. Direct students to use different colors to mark the various parts. This will give students a visual reminder of the structure and help them see where they have or have not followed the frame.

Resources for Additional Information

Sentence Frames and Sentence Stems

- Explanation of how to create sentence frames based on mentor sentences
- Brief video from TeachingChannel.org demonstrating the use of answer frames in a fifth grade classroom
- Implementation guide from TheTeacherToolkit.com with downloadable templates for sentence stems
- Explanation of how to create sentence stems and an explanation of how to use sentence stems and signal words
- Examples of how to use in lessons: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9 - 12

Answer Frames

- Sample answer frames: The Painted Essay™, Claim + Evidence + Reasoning (CER) = Explanation, RACE or RATE (Restate the question, Answer the question, Text Evidence, Explain your evidence)
- Examples of how to use in lessons: Grades 3 - 5, Grades 6 - 8, Grades 9 - 12