



WHOLE-CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Title: Sentence Composing

The Basics

What? A strategy used to improve sentence structure through imitating, rearranging, combining, expanding, matching, etc.

When? In conjunction with a text being read in class

Why? Improves student writing content and style by varying sentence structure and increasing fluency

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, and conventions.

How to Implement

1. Choose a passage of a text to analyze and specific sentences from the passage for students to imitate.
2. Ask students to reread the passage, focusing on the sentence structure.
3. Ask students to examine preselected sentences by chunking, unscrambling, combining, rearranging, etc. to understand the structure of the sentences. Different practices that can be used to examine sentences are included under “Resources for Additional Information.” Note: This can be done as a whole class using index cards or sentences strips for each of the words and punctuation in a sentence. It can also be done individually by students who then share their sentences orally while the teacher records the sentences.
4. Discuss the differences between the student variations of the sentences, focusing on what makes a sentence grammatically accurate, clear, supportive of the content, etc.
5. Determine which sentences are successful and which sentences need additional revision. Consider using shared or interactive writing to revise the sentences.
6. Finally, ask students to imitate a specific well-written sentence to use in their writing about the text.

Resources for Additional Information

- [Theory](#) of Sentence Composing from Don and Jenny Killgallon
- [Overview](#) of the different practices used in sentence composing
- [Image Grammar](#) by Harry Noden, which uses the concept of “brushstrokes” to improve sentences
- Additional [professional resources](#) from Jeff Anderson on using mentor sentences to improve student writing
- [Blog](#) of mentor sentences for imitation and creation based off the work of Jeff Anderson and organized by purpose, length, syntactical techniques, devices, etc.