

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson ---

Title of lesson: Using STAR to Teach Revision

Suggested grade/age: Ninth grade

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 1 week

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

1. To establish 4 partner groups for students to work with on reading and writing tasks
2. To teach the components of the revision process
3. To introduce the concept of Question Flood as a revision tool
4. To have students work collaboratively with a partner on improving their writing

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

1. Began with discussion of one way to establish four partnerships for the school year and to build a positive classroom climate.
2. I distributed copies of Doug Buehl's "Partner Compass" and discussed process I used to effectively manage this activity early on in school year.
 - A. Students fill in squares
 - B. Students look for peers who have similar answers.
 - C. Students write peer names in one of the compass points.
 - D. Students tape these into folders or notebooks and give me their partner lists.
 - E. I make master copy and post on back wall for reference if needed.
3. Discuss meaning of the word "Revision."
4. Point out that revision and proofreading are different steps and discuss activities for each.
5. Introduce Gallagher's STAR concept:
 - S—Substitute
Replace overused words, weak verbs, weak adjectives, common nouns replaced with proper nouns, "dead words"
 - T—Take things out
Take out unnecessary repetitions, unimportant or irrelevant information, and parts that belong in another piece
 - A—Add
Add detail, description, new information, figurative language, development, Clarification of meanings, expanded ideas
 - R—Rearrange
Rearrange the sequence to produce a desired effect and the order for a more logical flow
6. Discussed "dead words" including:
 - Good, very, thing(s), really, a lot, etc., got, kind of, like, so+ well at beginning of sentence, totally, I think, I feel, I believe, in my opinion, in conclusion
7. Discussed need to eliminate as many "be" words as possible

Am, is, are, was, were, be, being been

8. Pointed out writing is circular and don't need to start with Substitution

9. Discussed concept of "Question Flood" activity to help students with the Adding part of STAR.

10. Showed student writing sample written to the prompt of writing about best birthday you remember.

A. Read

B. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of paper

C. Students provided question flood to improve piece

D. Discussed other parts of the STAR acronym which would improve writing

11. Students were instructed to write ten minutes about the worst storm they had ever experienced.

A. Wrote

B. Read to partner

C. Partner provided question flood by asking questions which were not addressed in the peer's writing.

D. Other partner followed same process with her/his paper

12. Students were assigned to revise the original paper as homework addressing all the questions partner asked and any other information may have been left out. Instructed to bring the revision tomorrow to work on another step in the process—T and S

Related Resources:

Kelly Gallagher's book *Teaching Adolescent Writers*

Googledocs presentation

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

I believe this would work well for all ability levels, but with lower level students, may post the question words who, what, where, when, why, how. Also would be good to begin by having them look at other student models to practice Question Flood on with partner before doing their own writing.

For additional information, contact:

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