The SCAMPER Mini-Lesson Model for Teaching Strategic Writing in the Primary Grades

FACT: Every year, large numbers of students in the US graduate from high school or drop out of school unable to write at the most basic level (Kamil, 2003; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003).

FACT: The majority of our students benefit from carefully planned, individualized writing instruction based on what they need to know next about writing (Tompkins, 2008).

SOLUTION: The question is not whether to teach writing strategies… but how and when to teach them (Graham, 2011). The SCAMPER mini-lesson model provides direct instruction sessions designed to help primary students become strategic, skilled, self-regulated writers.

WHAT IS SCAMPER?

S - Screen and Assess—Teacher determines exactly what aspect of written language conventions, or composing individual students need to learn next about writing.

C - Confer—Teacher talks with students about a strategy’s purpose. Students talk about their writing, their perceived writing goals, and their needs. Then, teachers explain how a particular strategy will help them improve a specific dimension of their writing.

A - Assemble Materials, then, the next day, proceed with the rest of the model...

M - Model—Teacher demonstrates how to use the strategy through think alouds.

P - Practice—Students practice the strategy with support from the teacher and peers.

E - Execute—Students attempt the strategy independently.

R - Reflect—Teachers help students voice how they used and will apply the strategy in their everyday writing.

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