

Friday Session-On Demand Writing in Classroom

Note: this lesson will obviously offer a little more structure than a cold EOC writing on-demand, but it's a good starting point to scaffold student learning before jumping into cold-writing.

Begin with good prompt

- Engages students
- Authentic audience
- Not overly wordy or terse

Note: MAP/EOC shies away from topics that although they may engage students, may also elicit emotional/explicit responses.

Share VFW prompt, its strengths and limitations (authentic audience, money motivation, topic blasé)

Lesson Structure

Offer an authentic read

- Internet/newspaper/magazine article
- Student sample (if you have it)

Note: student samples in small schools can be problematic; students can easily identify one another's work/voice/etc.

Share Barry Bond article. I have students annotate articles-teacher choice.

Present scoring guide

- Discuss the holistic scoring guide itself
- Lead discussion in how the sample does/does not meet the criteria of rubric

Note: the teacher can lead the discussion to note structure, voice, and other qualities of the writer. If the article is "professional" in nature, the students will find no faults; this is a benefit to the student sample.

In structuring the lesson, I may move the presentation of the scoring guide so I don't front load too much. It'll depend upon how much writing students have done and how familiar they are with holistic grading.

Share scoring guide.

Present prompt and prewrite

- May be presented before the scoring guide
- Give students some time to brainstorm alone
- Share out ideas (small or large group)
- Go back to article for concrete examples
- Gage student preparedness to begin drafting

Note: we shared out "Qualities of Hero" rich discussion- "my grandma isn't any of those things, but she's my hero..." "Look, the only thing I like are bikes..." "Chuck Norris is awesome..." There's not a lot of time here spend on prewriting, this follows structure of the test.

Write

- Give students the writing checklist (similar to the page on MAP/EOC that students ignore)
- Occurs in-class only
- Rove reading over student's shoulders

Note: the teacher may need to spend some time presenting the checklist and how to use it- “check it if you can prove it”.

If you let students take it home to finish it, just like homework, you lose control over who does the writing, discussions, and the atmosphere in which the writing is done.

Will they have additional “mull” time, yes. Teacher decides the structure here: one class period to write? two?

Sitting behind the desk here will produce frustration on the part of students. Example, student who blazed along and wrote about 20 heroes in five paragraphs.

Share checklist.

Scoring

- Name-free consideration
- Quick read annotate strengths and weaknesses
- Benefit of including a + or – after the score

Note: name-free is difficult in a grade driven classroom, but save the grade for the finished piece. This allows clear mind and more objective scoring. Grades are subjective; Suzy has come light-years from where she was... EOC scorers won't know and won't score her on progress. This is truly a formative assignment.

Share 2-3 student samples.

Post-Writing

- Data collection (chart types of errors and scores)
- Create mini-lessons based on error types
- Revise, edit and publish the piece
- Students chart their scores

Note: this data will most closely reveal where your EOC scores are at this point and allow you to differentiate. Let's be honest, for EOC essays students do not revise, edit, publish; they write!

Mini lessons will be authentic.

Student chart the final score for growth (hopefully) over time.

Variations

- Revising, editing and publishing structure
- When and how to present the scoring guide (before prompt, after prompt, etc)
- How to insert necessary mini-lessons

Note: It's okay to interrupt writing if you see a “teachable moment.” Example: we can't all write about police and military. The discussion revolved around developing a strong and unique voice in this type of essay.

Revise, edit, publish need to be addressed, but this can happen in dozens of ways: peer editing groups, writer's conferences, read aloud, use rubric to see where you landed, make three self-suggestions using the scoring guide for improvement, etc.