Discussion Board:
Zooming in on Sentences

Discussion Prompt

Jeff Anderson, in his book *Everyday Editing: Inviting Students to Develop Skill and Craft in Writer's Workshop* (2007), sums up the power of using model sentences to teach written conventions in context:

> Sentences, after all, are chunks of meaning. This small chunk of context allows the students and me to focus. And if we put a spotlight on such a small chunk of meaning, like a sentence, it should be a well-written one, don't you think?

> Giving attention to effective sentences breaks down editing skills, giving teachers a basic approach that can be used to teach any editing concept or pattern—grammar, usage, mechanics, and craft. The secret is to let students delve into the sentence. The power comes from students telling you what they see, exactly what is potent, and answering the question: How did the author do that? (pp. 19–20).

Discussion Questions

- Do you agree with Anderson's argument that using model sentences is the most effective way to teach written conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, mechanics) in context?

- What are the major differences between this approach and exercises that focus on finding and correcting all errors?

- How do you teach written conventions in your classroom?

REFERENCE: Anderson, 2007.