Grammar Hack: Combining Sentences Using Mentor Text

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June 24, 2020

My presentation is meant to support my contentions that:

1. Grammar Instruction should not be taught in isolation
2. As educators, we need to respect the spaces in which our students write from day to day.
3. Learning and using grammar is a life long skill. Students will not be able to learn all grammar skills in a K-12 setting.
4. Students will not get grammar to “stick” unless they see applicable ways to use it.

The Approach/Process

Should technology be blamed for how our students write? Without engaging in a what could be a worthwhile conversation, the short answer is no! However, as teachers of writing, it is critical to meet our students where they are today. Our students are writers, but they just write in many spaces. Spaces like emails, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Text messages, and TikTok are among the most popular. Having discussions with students about these spaces and whether they are formal or informal spaces can make a difference in how they approach their own writing, especially when it comes to more formal pieces of writing they complete while in school.

Overall, I want my students to know that grammar is important in their writing, but I want to show respect for their writing spaces along the way.

Step 1 - The Hook

- Whenever I open the dialogue with my students surrounding grammar, the conversations are typically the same:
    - Boring
    - Stupid
    - Pointless
    - Definitely no fun

These are just a few of the responses we can all count on getting. I always try to engage my students with something that is hilarious, or light-hearted when it comes to introducing grammar.

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Today we will watch a Youtube video from a channel called Glove and Boots to get us thinking about Grammar in our society. This video has been downloaded using a tool called Clipgrab and edited due to a sensitive issue in the video that may offend others. By editing this video I am enacting fair use which is:

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My goal with using this clip is not to better myself or have monetary gain. The reason I am using this is to "hook" my students and get them interested in learning about their own writing; more specifically grammar.

Step 2 - The Lesson (Student's Using GrammarFlip)

- To get my student's feet wet, I use a digital tool/website called GrammarFlip. Student's would have 3-4 days to complete the lesson that is assigned to them. In this instance, they would be assigned lesson 2.27 - Simple and Compound Sentences. When Thursday arrives, we would engage in our activity surrounding the lesson they completed on GrammarFlip.
- With GrammarFlip student's must:
    - Achieve 70% or higher before be considered a master skill
    - Can retake the lesson if they did not score well or they are not happy with their score
    - Demonstrate appropriate use of the skill through writing activities before moving on to a more formal piece by the end of the unit.

Step 3 - Short Reading Activity (Mentor Text)

- At the time we are doing types of sentences, my students are reading or will have already read the classic short story "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell. Any novel or reading could be inserted and used.
- Students will then do a breakout room activity where students would be divided into groups of 4-5 people and pull out where the author uses compound sentences. Students and groups would copy down their sentence in their writer's notebook, and then we would take time to discuss:
    - Is it actually a compound sentence
    - Why do you think the author chose to use a compound sentence in this instance?
    - How could the sentence be changed or written differently with the same meaning?
- For the sake of time, I have pulled out a compound sentence for us to look at today and

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use in our next activity.

Step 4 - Writing Activity (Grammar Template)

- The grammar template came out of work I did in the Digital Literacy Rhode Island Institute in 2013. The template is designed to help students differentiate between the formal and informal writing spaces within which they write. Students then take the template and use a mentor sentence to use in the different writing spaces they may have.
- For today, each writing group will be assigned a specific writing space and work on it with their group and then report back as a whole. Each slide presentation will be forced copied and have the mentor sentence for them to use.
- If there is time, we will then take a look at several simple sentences from “The Most Dangerous Game” and turn them into compound sentences to “help” the author.
- This particular activity is for a formative assessment grade. I am looking for students to have a solid foundation and understanding of the skill being learned.

Step 5 - Formal Writing

- Students would then APPLY what they have been learning for the last 3-4 class periods and do a formal writing piece where they could write:
    - A literary analysis of “The Most Dangerous Game”
    - A compare/contrast between the Quibi movie and the classic short story

- Students will be required to apply the different types of sentences in their writing and highlight them in Google Docs in Blue (or a color of your choice) so as their teacher I can see they are using the types of sentences correctly.
- For their formal writing it is

Extensions

- Students can use Flipgrid to teach a grammar concept they learned from Flipgrid and use a whiteboard with specific examples.
- Students could rewrite the end of the story using different types of sentences (Not just compound sentences).
- Incorporate the Template into other subject areas such as science.

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Bibliography/Related Reading

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