

Editing

Editing can be modeled, taught in mini-lessons, done in response groups, or during individual conferences with the teacher. Editing is the application of the spelling, grammar and style conventions, as I like to say, “out of consideration for the reader.”

Modeling Editing Find another student piece and announce you are going to show how to “fix a piece in need of help.” You should focus on one convention during each lesson. Show it on the overhead, but this time, act out an over-application of the rule. Very soon you’ll have concerned and alert volunteers letting you know where you shouldn’t have placed those apostrophes. Discuss with the class the reasons why it does or does not work, then give them a short exercise as a follow-up.

Mini-lessons In a short period of time and usually in front of a small group that needs assistance with this particular convention, a teacher may teach a lesson on the reasons and instances in which to apply the rule, discuss when it *does not* apply, then give the students a very short exercise.

Response Groups Editing can be done in response groups with the aid of an editing chart prominently displayed on a wall, or placed in their writing folders. An editing checklist can be used as a reminder of what to look for. Peer editing, done in pairs, can help more students concentrate. Word walls, word processing spell-checkers and spelling dictionaries can also be used by response groups. Some teachers encourage accountability by asking the buddy to write down the editing tasks as a reminder, or to sign the editing sheet.



Individual Conferences Conferences can be more fruitful if the teacher writes two very concrete strong points and one suggestion, either on the piece itself or on a post-it note. This helps the student focus, and the teacher can use it as a starting point during the follow-up: “So, you were going to use the name of the character throughout the whole piece, right?” You can also keep track of those notes in a notebook, in order to plan mini-lessons later on.

Bad spellers have a very hard time finding the words you just discussed. For them, it is better if you highlight those words before they leave, or if you help them add those words to their spelling dictionary right then and there. Notes on the patterns poor spellers use can give us clues about their reading and vice-versa.