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GRCC
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Note to Teachers:
Conclusions

This is how I approach working with conclusions with students.

I present a story to students on the overhead. This story will not have a conclusion, but I don't tell the students this.

We read the story together. I ask the students if it has a conclusion or not. I ask them how they know. (What is a conclusion?) We discuss this.

I confess to the class that I took the conclusion off the story. I ask if they will please write a conclusion for this story. They hand this in to me.

After class I take some of the student's good conclusions and put them into the form you see here of good or bad conclusions. I write some bad conclusions myself. (Sometimes looking at what the students have come up with helps me with this, but I don't want to use a student's really bad example with the whole class.)

The following day I put the uncompleted story on the overhead again. We read it. I hand out the good conclusion/bad conclusion paper. Students need to make a decision about each conclusion. When they are done I have them talk to each other. Then we talk about the conclusions together as a large group.

Conclusions are subjective, and I tell this to students. Sometimes students disagree with me and I tell them that that is fine. (I also remind them that it is good to know what conclusion I think is good because I will be grading their papers this quarter.) We discuss what we think is good and bad about the conclusions.

I find that at this level students often have no conclusion at all in their writing. So having something at the end of their writing that is an effort at a conclusion is a great start. After that, I find the most common conclusions I see are 1. an emotional response to the writing "I am very glad I have pets in my life." 2. a repetition of the main idea but using slightly different words

"I became a mom when they came into my life." I don't try to get more complicated than this in level 4.

Some students, of course, are more sophisticated than this. They will write higher level conclusions. They can also add a lot of interesting conversation about conclusions during the discussion portion of this lesson.

It is possible to do this lesson with the conclusions that I have gathered from previous classes. However, I think it would be best to work with conclusions that students in your class have come up with. This will make the lesson targeted closely to the problems and issues that your class is having with conclusions.

It takes a while for students to get this, so I would suggest doing this two times, and possibly three, in the course of the quarter.