Big Idea/ Topic

Overview of Lesson Sequence:

**Teaching Others Through Informational Writing**

This 10-lesson mini unit supports students in writing longer, more in-depth informational texts as second-graders. While this unit focuses primarily on writing instruction, the assumption is that students are also engaging in reading workshop lessons centered around nonfiction texts. This overlap in reading and writing instruction allows students to begin producing the same types of texts they are reading independently and invites natural observations of text characteristics used by readers and writers of informational texts. In this unit students will observe the teacher model writing informational booklets while producing multiple booklets themselves over the course of the ten days.

**NOTE:** This learning plan uses specific texts (e.g., written, performed, illustrated) as concrete examples of standards-based learning activities. These texts are not endorsements. The selection of classroom texts is completely a local decision and subject to local approval processes.

Introduction

In second grade, students are beginning to develop fluency and confidence with their writing. In general, students understand the basic elements of informational writing and can easily be motivated to “teach others” by writing facts about a familiar topic while including an introduction and concluding section.

It is important to keep in mind the distinction between the W2 standard for writing informative texts and the W7 standard on conducting shared research. This unit will focus on the W2 standard, which requires that students produce writing that is fact-based and includes a topic introduction and a concluding statement or section. Some students may struggle with the shift from telling a personal story about a topic (e.g., *their* dog) to teaching others about the topic (e.g., *All About Dogs*). Thus, one of the goals of this unit is to support students in their understanding of how to develop their informational writing. It is *not* expected that students conduct research into topics on their own. In Kindergarten through second grades, the W7 standard expects that research is done collaboratively through shared projects. Nevertheless, if a student becomes curious about their writing topic and chooses to read more about it or searches for an answer to a particular question, teachers should encourage and support them by any means necessary. Authentic curiosity and a drive to discover are at the heart of why authors publish informational texts.

Finally, this unit is based on the premise that young writers are motivated by and better understand text creation when writing in booklet form. Booklets allow students to begin to organize their information on separate pages, an important organizational skill that will lead to an understanding of paragraphing in older...
grades. The use of booklets also allows young writers to add detailed illustrations and possibly include text features such as headings, captions, and labeled drawings, though it is important to note that the use of text features is a reading standard and not a writing standard. Thus, the goal is for students to understand their purpose and be able to use these features to understand what they read; if they choose to include them in their own writing, that is a considerable bonus. Overall, having students write in booklets from the beginning of the unit – not just as a “publishing choice” at the end – makes sense to young writers and allows for genuine connections between the reading and writing curriculum. Students should spend several days on a booklet before moving on to create multiple informational booklets on a range of topics over the course of this 10-day unit.

Standard Alignment

The elementary Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts encompass a dynamic skillset that steadily increases in sophistication, nuance, and complexity. All ELA standards target important and specific skills that are interconnected and that spiral throughout their entire K-12 education. The ELA GSE are designed to be revisited and reinforced throughout every school year. Primary grade students in Georgia regularly engage in the following holistic practices:

» Participate regularly in thinking, talking, and writing about rich stories and other read-aloud books.
» Learn to confer with peers about topics and texts by responding to others, asking questions, and following rules for discussions.
» Begin to experiment with writing using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

Of course, for students to expand their knowledge, increase their skills, and build lifelong literacy practices, they need to engage in focused instruction and participate in diverse educational experiences. Even when lessons require students to use an array of literacy skills and knowledgebases (as they always do), instruction must zero in on specific skills at specific times.

The lessons in this sequence are unified by ELAGSE2W2. Additional standards are leveraged when students are required to read or write using specific skills and practices.

ELAGSE2W2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
Instructional Design

GaDOE’s Standards-based Classroom Instructional Framework

This learning plan supports the whole child and aligns to the coherent instruction system of Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement. Each lesson of the sequence is designed in accordance with the standards-based classroom instructional framework put forth by the Georgia Department of Education’s Division of School & District Effectiveness.

This standards-based framework follows a workshop model of instruction and includes an opening, a brief transition, a work session, and a closing. Figure 1 shows general percentages of class time devoted to each segment of the instructional framework; however, it is important to note that these percentages will vary with the instructional focus. For a more detailed description of the teaching practices contained within each segment, visit the instructional framework page on GaDOE’s website.

Tovani (Tovani & Moje, 2017) puts forth a similar framework, which she calls the student engagement model (Figure 2). This model includes a catch segment during which the teacher refocuses the class by clarifying misunderstandings or introducing a new strategy. For more information, please see the professional learning study guide and framework template to design your own lesson: “TIME: Planning for Students to do the Work” (Tovani, 2020). Both frameworks are flexible, and any segment may serve as an entry point. While most class periods will incorporate all segments, this, too, will vary with the instructional focus.

Tovani also writes about the “Curriculum You Anticipate (CYA)” structures, comprised of the six Ts: topic, text, time, targets, task, and tending, to help facilitate deeper dives into the content (2021).

Teaching Others Through Informational Writing:

We read informational texts to learn new ideas and we write informational texts to share the facts and information we know with others. Informational texts have important characteristics that make them easier for the reader to understand.

TIME: This unit incorporates 10 Lessons, which depending on the environment, pacing, and your professional discretion could take more than 10 days.
**Primary Unit Learning TARGETS**

- I can **describe** the purpose of informational texts.
- I can **use** mentor texts to inspire my writing.
- I can **brainstorm** possible informational writing topics.
- I can **write** facts, definitions, and details about my topic.
- I can **write** about my topic part by part.
- I can **use** expert words in my writing.
- I can **interest** my reader at the beginning.
- I can **use** comparisons in my writing.
- I can **create** illustrations that teach the reader.
- I can **write** an ending section to my booklet.
- I can **revise** my writing to make sure it makes sense to others.
- I can **check** my writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling of word wall words.

**TASK**

**Unit “Big Make”**

- Students will individually publish an informational booklet that teaches others by choosing one of the booklets they created during the unit, revising and editing to the best extent possible, then sharing with an authentic audience, such as a Buddy Kindergarten/1st grade class or another second-grade class.

**TEXT:** The main text used in this unit will be the teacher’s modeled booklets that he/she writes alongside the students. The teacher will also show students simple published informational books that demonstrate the learning target for the lesson. Three excellent choices for published books to serve as mentor texts for students include:

- Claire Llewellyn’s *Earthworms*
- Jennifer Dussling’s *Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!*
- Nicola Davies’ *Surprising Sharks*

**Disclaimer:** The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) does not endorse any of the books, resources, websites, programs, products, and other materials that may be featured as part of the Remote Learning Plan units. Any use of books, resources, websites, programs, products and other materials are intended to serve as examples only. All curriculum decisions are made at the local level.

**TENDING:** Second grade students will demonstrate a range of writing abilities as they begin this unit, with some perhaps struggling to write a sentence while others are able to write multiple pages per sitting. It is important to separate the evaluation of students’ writing conventions (e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation, spacing) from their composition of informational texts. For instance, some students may create booklets that are difficult to decipher and yet meet the standard of introducing the topic, including facts and definitions, and providing a concluding statement or section. At this age, students may become discouraged by the gap between the sophistication of texts they can read versus the texts they are able to create on their own. During writing conferences, use student-friendly rubrics that allow writers to see progress and set goals. Proficient student writers may be accelerated by encouraging them to go into more depth on their topic of choice. They may choose to research their topic independently by reading books, viewing webpages, and watching videos, then adding newly-learned information to their writing. These accelerated students may need support with
how best to include this information without plagiarizing their sources. When tending to students’ individual needs, utilizing “catch and release” times in addition to the other scaffolds, supports, and accelerations in the Student Learning Support portions can increase your awareness of your students’ needs. For more information on engagement strategies for a variety of disinclined learners, check out Tovani’s *Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage Our Most Reluctant Students* (2021).

**Evidence-based Practices:**

In addition, evidence-based practices have been identified throughout the Remote Learning Plan Reading Power lessons, by color-coding the evidence-based practices (EBP) and accompanying citation; these are practices that have been found to be effective at producing positive outcomes with student populations. For more specific information, please review the IES Practice Guide cited for each practice.

**Lesson Sequence**

*Lesson 1 . . . Getting Started Writing Informational Booklets*

*Lesson 2 . . . Adding Facts, Definitions, and Details to Our Writing*

*Lesson 3 . . . Telling Different Parts on Different Pages*

*Lesson 4 . . . Using Expert Words in Our Writing*

*Lesson 5 . . . Introducing Our Topic in Interesting Ways*

*Lesson 6 . . . Using Comparisons to Describe New Information*

*Lesson 7 . . . Illustrating with Intention*

*Lesson 8 . . . Ending with the Audience in Mind*

*Lesson 9 . . . Getting Ready to Celebrate: Revision*

*Lesson 10 . . . Getting Ready to Celebrate: Editing*

**Learning Environments**

*Synchronous, Asynchronous, & Unplugged/Offline Distance Learning*

This mini unit is written for synchronous distance learning or face-to-face learning that utilizes various technology resources. Everything listed as *synchronous* can be utilized with little to no change in a face-to-face (f2f) environment. However, guidance is provided for modifications, including ideas for supporting students who are learning asynchronously and those with little or no access to technology. Throughout the lessons, the various learning environment modifications can be identified through the color-coded label of
**Synchronous, Asynchronous, or Unplugged/Offline.** If you are in a face-to-face setting, you will likely be able to follow this plan with minimal adjustments; however, utilizing chart paper to create Anchor charts as you move through the lessons could be an excellent addition to keep track of the thinking.

**Materials**

This learning plan requires minimal supplies, allowing you to adapt it to your teaching environment and to your students. Most days, students will need independent writing materials, blank paper to create booklets or a printed writing booklet using simple writing paper [link to simple writing paper] or nonfiction-specific writing paper [link to nonfiction writing paper], and illustration supplies such as crayons, markers or colored pencils. It often helps for each student to have a pocket folder to keep up with finished and ongoing booklets. This has the added bonus of serving as a work portfolio.

For your mini lessons, you will need demonstration texts and something that can function as a whiteboard for notes (Jamboard, Whiteboard.fi, or Miro), and an anchor chart for keeping track of new strategies and techniques. You will also be modeling during mini lessons by writing booklets alongside the students, so prepare a selection of blank booklets that mimic those the students are using.

Give yourself and your students grace when it comes to new technology—often, simple and familiar is the most effective. For more tips, please check out our new GaDOE ELA Guidance Document: “Digital Tips for Student Engagement” (2021); you can utilize the virtual introduction document here.

For more information about a workshop model of instruction, teacher as writer, and reader’s and writer’s notebooks, view this guidance from the Georgia Writing Project (GaWP) (2019).

**Evidence of Student Success**

**Diagnostic or Pre-assessment**

You may choose to pre-assess your students at the beginning of this unit with an unassisted, open-ended assessment in which you ask them to teach you about a topic of their choosing. Your second graders will have written informational texts for the past two years of school, and conducting a pre-assessment allows you to see what skills have transferred from the past. Simply remind them what informational writing is, provide them with a single piece of paper, and ask that they do their best without help from you or a parent. Compare the student pre-assessment writing to the rubric [link to 2nd grade information writing rubric] to give yourself an idea of where your students’ strengths and needs lie.
**Formative Assessment**

In this mini unit, formative assessment occurs in two ways:

Conferring ['Supercharge Your Conferring" (Serravallo, 2018)]

Sharing ['How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom" (Kern, 2020)]

**Possible Summative/Post-assessment**

- The final assessment for this unit will be presented as a Publishing Celebration for students. Students will choose one of the several booklets they created over the course of the unit to “publish” during the last days of the unit as they go through a revision and editing process led by the teacher. The Celebration will consist of second graders meeting with a Kindergarten or 1st grade class, with each second grader pairing up with a younger student to read them their books and “teach” them about the topic. Having an authentic, younger audience for their writing encourages second graders to revise and edit their booklets for clarity and precision and helps emphasize their understanding of informational books as “teaching texts.”

**Student Learning Supports**

- At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies are designed to support students who are either struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

- In this section of each plan, supports are identified for students who might struggle with conceptual processing, language, visual-spatial processing, organization, and/or memory.

- In addition, scaffolding (including that for English language learners) and acceleration/extension are provided for use.
  - For more information about evidence-based teaching practices and scaffolding, see this [infographic](REL Southeast, 2017).
Engaging Families

- Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Drawing upon the research of Day (2013), Ferguson (2005), and LaRocque (2013), Jacques and Villegas (2018) argue that family engagement best occurs for parents when the following conditions are met:</th>
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<td>A relationship with a trusted staff person or teacher who is approachable, friendly, receptive to concerns, and a champion for the student and family. Perceptions that families are welcome and valued at the school. Receptivity, transparency, empathy, and flexibility from school staff regarding communication and collaborative efforts to support learning and success. (p. 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

https://blog.heinemann.com/10-tips-for-conferring-with-student-writers-online


Tovani, C., & Moje, E.B. (2017). *No more telling as teaching: Less lecture, more engaged learning (not this but that)*. Heinemann.
