Big Idea/ Topic

Informational Writing: What is social media, and how does it affect young people?

This ten lesson mini unit challenges students to think critically about social media through reading and composing informational text. Students will demonstrate what they have learned by creating a magazine or ‘zine’ about social media, a topic that they are familiar with. Students with access to technology may use Canva to create their zine and students who are unplugged may use images from magazines, white paper, plastic sheet covers, and a 1 inch. binder to create their zine.

For more information about teaching informational writing, The New York Times offers a video on Teaching Informational Writing as part of their writing webinar series.

NOTE: This learning plan uses specific texts (e.g., written, performed, illustrated) however, these texts are not endorsements. The selection of classroom texts is completely a local decision and subject to local approval processes.

Informational Writing: Organize Information & Connect Ideas

Drafting Day One

This fifth lesson focuses on students taking all the facts discovered during the research phase, organizing them in a coherent way, and beginning the process of composition. It includes a mini-lesson on selecting and incorporating relevant quotations as supports in their informational text.

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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Lesson “Small Make(s)”</th>
<th>Unit “Big Make”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I can <strong>examine</strong> complex ideas about social media.</td>
<td>• Informational Writing</td>
<td>• Students will independently create their own <strong>multi-genre magazine article or ‘zine’</strong> to distribute information about a topic of their choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I can <strong>organize</strong> complex ideas about social media by using headings, graphics and multimedia.</td>
<td>Tree Chart</td>
<td>• Rubric</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>draw on</strong> mentor texts to inspire my writing.</td>
<td>• Success Criteria</td>
<td>• Exemplar</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>identify</strong> facts about social media and its effects on young people.</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>determine</strong> which quotations are best for explaining my topic.</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>make</strong> meaningful connections between the facts on my topic.</td>
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*adapted from Cris Tovani’s *Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage our Most Reluctant Readers* (2021)

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**Standard Alignment**

**ELAGSE9-10W2**: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**WIDA English Language Development Standards for English learners (ELs):**

Teachers of ELs are encouraged to use the resources in the **WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition**, to design language expectations (p.28) specific to the GSE. Examples of the English language needed to support informational writing can be found on pp. 186-187.
Instructional Design

For more information regarding daily routine practices and/or additional information on the unit framework (including materials), please see the Informational Writing Unit Overview.

Various evidence-based practices (EBPs) are identified throughout the lesson below; however, we believe good teaching can be eclectic, “...thoughtfully, intentionally taking some of the best of different teaching methodologies, while always holding onto some research-based, core beliefs, we can help our students flourish in ways that teaching only one way will not” (Roberts, 2018, p. 6). Always feel free to adapt the lesson to meet your professional needs with your specific student population. Ideas for student supports and enrichments can be found in the “Student Learning Supports” section.

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 (unplugged / offline).

Materials

Teacher—virtual whiteboard (shared document),

Students—reader & writer's notebooks, digital or physical annotation tools, Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged), digital tool such as the Chrome extension PDFFiller that will enable students to type directly on a PDF, Informational Text Magazine Article Tree Chart, PDF version of Quotations Handbook from UNC Chapel Hill Writing Center, Magazine Article Draft Success Criteria Checklist
Engage

Opening: Whole-group discussion. [Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning [Moderate evidence] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].

Synchronous and Asynchronous

When you come back together, remind students about what you are working towards. Preview the success criteria for their draft of the ‘zine article.

Criteria for Draft Success:

- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I double checked that my facts were accurate and came from a credible source before I start organizing my ideas.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I filled in information for each box in the tree chart diagram above before I start writing my magazine article in my writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **ON DRAFTING DAYS ONE AND TWO**, I transferred all of my information from my tree chart into my writer’s journal for the first draft of my magazine article.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I introduced my topic in my first paragraph in my writer’s journal.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE AND TWO**, I expounded on my topic in my 2nd, 3rd, and 4th paragraph in my writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY TWO**, I provided headings for my paragraphs.
- **ON DRAFT DAY TWO**, I composed my conclusion.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY TWO**, I selected the second genre for inclusion in my final product, and I began working on it, using my research from the first lessons in this unit.
- I have at least 4 sentences in each of my paragraphs.
- I use new vocabulary and clearly define it in my writing.

Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part I of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
**Explore**

**EBP: Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features.** [Moderate Evidence] (Graham et al., 2016); **EBP: Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.** [Strong Evidence] (Kamil et al., 2008).

**Asynchronous & Synchronous**

Discuss the role of quotations in articles. An entire (separate day) could be spent delving into the question of “How do I embed a quotation into a sentence?” You know your students’ skill level, but if this is something that they do not know how to do, it might be worth it to pause, interrupt the lesson sequence, and work on this skill.

Share the following quotations resource from the UNC Chapel Hill Writing Center with students, and give them a few minutes to review. [PDF version]

Come back together, and on a shared document, collaborate on the list of main take-aways. If they do not identify them, the following is a summary of what you might choose to highlight.

- Provide context
- Embed quotation into your text in an interesting way
- Attribute quotation to source
- Explain its significance/relevance to your topic
- Cite the quote
- Use the tool for punctuation questions

Share the Informational Writing Magazine Article Tree Chart with students so that they can begin organizing their thoughts and considering what quotations they might choose to support their topic.
Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

Apply

EBP: Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. [Moderate Evidence] (Kamil et al., 2008); EBP: Connect and integrate abstract and concrete representations of concepts. [Moderate Evidence] (Pashler et al., 2007).
**Synchronous & Asynchronous**

**Catch and Release**

While students read and work independently, conference with individual students or small groups as planned or by spontaneously checking in with them and their writing process. Review tips about effective small group and conferencing practices (Roberts, 2018); also, Anderson’s tips for virtual writing conferences (2020) is a good resource.

Once students complete their tree chart graphic organizer, they should begin writing their magazine article draft in their Writer’s Journal or typing it online, whatever works best for the individual and your established classroom procedures.

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part III of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Reflect

EBP: Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation. [Moderate Evidence] (Kamil et al., 2008).

Synchronous and Asynchronous

Ask students to complete the success criteria checklist if they have not already done so.

Criteria for Draft Success:

- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I double checked that my facts were accurate and came from a credible source before I started organizing my ideas.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I filled in information for each box in the tree chart diagram above before I started writing my magazine article in my writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **ON DRAFTING DAYS ONE AND TWO**, I transferred all of my information from my tree chart into my writer’s journal for the first draft of my magazine article.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE**, I introduced my topic in my first paragraph in my writer’s journal.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY ONE AND TWO**, I expounded on my topic in my 2nd, 3rd, and 4th paragraph in my writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY TWO**, I provided headings for my paragraphs.
- **ON DRAFT DAY TWO**, I composed my conclusion.
- **ON DRAFTING DAY TWO**, I selected the second genre for inclusion in my final product, and I began working on it, using my research from the first lessons in this unit.
- I have at least 4 sentences in each of my paragraphs.
- I use new vocabulary and clearly define it in my writing.

If they cannot check a box for drafting day one, then ask them what their next steps should be. Now reflect on what they found and determine their next steps to compose a final product. They should also use this time to jot down their lingering questions.

Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part IV of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Evidence of Student Success

Students will independently create their own magazine or ‘zine’ to distribute information about social media and its effects on young people. **This will serve as the evidence-based deliverable.**

Formative Assessment:
- Review of Magazine Article Tree Chart
- Success Criteria Checklist

Formative Assessment

“More of What’s Meaningful”: Formative Assessments (Serravallo, 2013)

Formative assessment can occur in two ways:
- Conferring [Guidance: Tips for Conferring to Maximize Student Engage]
  
  “Supercharge your Conferring: Focus on Goals, Strategies, and Feedback” (Serravallo, 2018)
- Sharing [“How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom” (Kern, 2020)]
  
  “8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom” (Minero, 2020)

Student Learning Supports

At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies, though not exhaustive, are designed to support students struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target, and/or learning English as an additional language, and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

**Supports/Scaffolding**
- **Conceptual Processing:** Allow additional processing time. Review this content prior to the lesson occurring so that the student will have additional time to formulate responses. Summarize each lesson segment and keep summary accessible for students. Implement scaffolds identified below for various circumstances.
- **Language:** Prior to beginning of the lesson, explicitly teach vocabulary required to engage with the content. [EBP: Explicit vocabulary instruction [strong] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].
- **Visual-spatial Processing:** Provide opportunities for students to engage with visual representations and/or manipulatives (virtual or concrete) as they explore topics for informational text.
- **Organization:** Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments as necessary. Help students bookmark frequently utilized sites (such as Canva) or how to group tabs in Chrome to assist with organization.
- **Memory:** Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual...
space so that students can revisit lesson segments, as necessary.

**Lesson-specific Scaffolds:**

- If students struggle (especially in the virtual world), you could do a guided small group or one-on-one session in a break-out room to use your expertise and provide intensive supports *(High-leverage practice).*
- Incorporate positive feedback to recognize what students have done well with their writing *(High-leverage practice).*
- The number of required paragraphs can be modified.
- Meet with students to be sure they understand the topics. Model organizing facts into paragraphs or incorporating quotations in response to an identified need. **EBP: Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle. [Strong Evidence]** *(Graham et al., 2016).*
- Model using the success criteria, and help students go through their work to see what they achieved. **EBP: Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle. [Strong Evidence]** *(Graham et al., 2016).*
- Partner work can also be utilized. Students could review the success criteria in pairs.

**Supports for English learners:**

- Suggestions for this lesson include but are not limited to: providing students with paragraph/sentence frames, using the checklist as an opportunity to model or teach skills (e.g. introducing topic in first paragraph, composing conclusion), etc.
- Educators may find it valuable to review **WIDA’s Proficiency Level Descriptors** *(pp. 210-211)* when planning for differentiation based on students’ levels of English proficiency.
- Teachers of ELs are encouraged to incorporate **high leverage practices** for teaching EL students and to utilize relevant evidence-based strategies such as those found in Project EXCELL’s downloadable **GO TO Strategies** *(Levine et al., 2013).*
Acceleration/Extension

Standard:

**ELAGSE9-10W8**: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Acceleration/Extension Activity:

- If students have the foundational understandings to accomplish the draft, open it up to different types of pre-writes, as long as they are working on the same skills. Allow additional time for mini-conferences with these students to make sure they are on track.
- Additionally, these students could go ahead and begin developing their second genre to be incorporated into the final product.

Engaging Families

Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families. At the secondary level, much of the communication occurs with the student serving as a liaison.

- Have students share their research topics (and the evidence they found) with their families. They can also discuss their organizational strategies and/or their ideas for what they will do with their second genre.
- Encourage families of English learners to write together by joining an **intergenerational writing competition** or creating a script to compete in a **video contest**, as eligible.

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.
References


Tovani, C. (2021). *Why do I have to read this? Literacy strategies to engage our most reluctant readers*. Georgia Department of Education

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