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 texts. 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: Writing Partner Day*

This seventh lesson allows students an opportunity to review one another’s magazine article draft and second genre draft. They will focus on providing commendations of and recommendations for precise language and active voice in their review. Trends will be identified through the ticket-out-the-door about strengths and challenges, and this information can be used to help cater the next lesson in the series.

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>• Peer Review Checklist</td>
<td>• Students will independently create their own multi-genre magazine article or ‘zine’ 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>• Second Informational Genre</td>
<td>• Rubric</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>make</strong> meaningful connections between the facts on my topic.</td>
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<td>• Exemplar</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I can <strong>use</strong> precise language to manage the complexity of the topic.</td>
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<td>• I can <strong>demonstrate</strong> my understanding of various perspectives while still clearly articulating my own.</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)*

**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.

  c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
  d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
  e. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.

**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 Seven Handout (Unplugged), PDF version of Quotations Handbook from UNC Chapel Hill Writing Center, Precise Language PDF for offline/unplugged learners (Nichol, n.d.), Active v. Passive PDF for offline/unplugged learners (Traffis, 2021)

Engage

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

Synchronous and Asynchronous

Lead a discussion with students about precise language and word choice in their writing. One way you might begin the conversation is by sharing this list of suggestions to improve precision in
writing then having students annotate the list (Nichol, n.d.).

What questions do they have? What suggestions do they agree with? Disagree with? What is their personal #1 writing trick to help with precise language. Allow students a few moments with a small group or partner to discuss and share out.

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part I of the Informational Writing: Lesson Seven Handout (Unplugged).
2. Provide students with a copy of the precise language list of suggestions (Nichol, n.d.).
3. 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**

Familiarize students with the checklist they will be using today while working with writing partners to share feedback and to help enhance one another’s papers. Give students access to the Lesson Seven Handout, and ask them to annotate it. Allow them time to study the list, ask questions, and clarify what they are seeking to do.

- **My writing partner** double checked that the facts were accurate and came from a credible source before they started organizing their ideas.
- **My writing partner** filled in information for each box in the tree chart diagram above before they started writing their magazine article in their writer’s journal.
- **My writing partner** transferred all of their information from their tree chart into their writer’s journal for the first draft of their magazine article.
- **My writing partner** introduced the topic in their first paragraph in their writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **My writing partner** expounded on their topic in my 2nd, 3rd, and 4th paragraph in their writer’s journal or typed draft.
- **My writing partner** organized their ideas into paragraphs and provided headings.
- **My writing partner** has an effective conclusion.
- **My writing partner** has at least 4 sentences in each of their paragraphs.
- **My writing partner** uses new vocabulary and clearly defines it in their writing.
- **My writing partner** uses precise language and active voice.

Conduct a short review of active vs. passive voice if necessary. Your students might have a solid understanding, but if they do not, a quick resource is this Active v. Passive Voice article on Grammarly (Traffis, 2021).
### Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part II of the [Informational Writing: Lesson Seven Handout (Unplugged)](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: Use assessments of student writing to inform instruction and feedback.** [Minimal Evidence] (Graham et al., 2016).

**Synchronous & Asynchronous**

Allow students time to share their writing with one another and commit to completing the partner checklist, as well as providing glows and grows, on the Lesson Seven Document.

Serve as a facilitator of discussions and answer questions as they arise. However, allow students time to wrestle with one another’s drafts thus far. In order to be a quality review with thorough suggestions, allow at least 30 minutes for students to review one another’s papers.

### Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part III of the [Informational Writing: Lesson Seven Handout (Unplugged)](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**

Allow students time to regroup with their writing partner to discuss the commendations and recommendations from each.

Also, it might be useful to provide a “brag board,” so students can post sentences or phrases they find particularly creative/intriguing. This can also be done by providing time to share information with the class. As a class, you might invite students to complete a Microsoft or Google form ticket-out-the-door, asking for trends in what they saw (challenges and strengths), which can then guide your instruction the next day.

### Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part IV of the [Informational Writing: Lesson Seven Handout (Unplugged)](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:**
- Writing Partner Peer Feedback
- Ticket-out-the-door Strengths/Challenges Trend Form

**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 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.

**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).*

- Rather than allow students to self-select partners, you can flexibly group students based on their abilities, needs, and strengths, as identified with formative assessment *(High-leverage practice).*

- Be sure that you incorporate positive feedback to recognize what students have done well with their writing *(High-leverage practice).*

- Meet with students who might need more assistance with precise language and/or active voice. **EBP:** Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle. [Strong Evidence] (Graham et al., 2016).

- Model using the writing partner checklist, and help students go through their partner’s work to identify the required elements. **EBP:** Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle. [Strong Evidence] (Graham et al., 2016).
Supports for English learners:

- Suggestions for this lesson include but are not limited to: providing students with resources (including audiovisual) to develop students’ conceptual understanding of precise phrasing in native language (including the Spanish subtitles in this video (Pressman, 2016) regarding precision of expression), allowing students to work with a partner on assignment, working with students in a small group setting to review draft progress, 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:

ELAGSE9-10W2: 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.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
e. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.

Acceleration/Extension Activity:

- High-achieving students can be grouped to review one another’s papers. A
- Students can also analyze the quality and function of the existing transitions in a partner’s work to create an additional layer of review.

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 the review checklist with a family member and gain their feedback, too.
  - Can family members offer more precise language for some parts of their article?
  - Did they write anything that was unclear?
References


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtSt6yx2JjE&t=220s


The lessons in this unit were created in collaboration with the Georgia Writing Project and Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB).