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: Showtime!**

This tenth and final lesson provides students the opportunity to present their final product to the class. This lesson is designed as a showcase, but the display could also done utilizing a virtual whiteboard tour (when virtual) or a “show-and-tell” format. At the end of the lesson (and possibly an awards ceremony), students will contemplate the unit’s main question: What is social media, and how does it affect young people?

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.
• I can **examine** complex ideas about social media.
• I can **make** meaningful connections between the facts on my topic.
• I can **use** precise language to manage the complexity of the topic.
• I can **demonstrate** my understanding of various perspectives while still clearly articulating my own.
• I can **publish** and **present** my final “Big Make.”

• Students will independently create their own **multi-genre magazine article or ‘zine’** to distribute information about a topic of their choice.
  
  - Rubric
  - Exemplar

*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.

**ELAGSE9-10W6**: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**ELAGSE9-10SL4**: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**ELAGSE9-10SL5**: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

**ELAGSE9-10SL6**: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**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](https:// wida.org/standardsframework) 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 Ten Handout (Unplugged)

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

Synchronous and Asynchronous
Showcase Day! Establish and share protocols for the showcase/gallery walk, dependent upon the number of students, time available, and environment. For synchronous, allow students each an opportunity to share their final project with peers. If you have access to a high-quality printer, they could be printed and displayed around the room. If in-person, final products can be displayed on individual Chromebooks or computers.
around the room. In an asynchronous environment, you can allow students time during class to record a short screen share explaining their project choices or a short trailer for their research. These videos can be posted on a free virtual whiteboard tool (such as Miro or Lucidspark). Tutorials are linked for each of those tools in the preceding sentence.

Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part I of the Informational Writing: Lesson Ten 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

Allow students some time to post their final product to the virtual whiteboard or online classroom space and/or print and hang around the classroom.

Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Ten 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: Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features. [Moderate Evidence] (Graham et al., 2016).

Synchronous

For a gallery walk scenario (if displaying physically printed articles or mostly printed articles with some displayed electronically dependent upon second genre choice), provide a place for students to ask questions and/or give comments/praises.

If you prefer, you can design a Microsoft or Google form for students to complete for each project they review.

If under movement and/or grouping restrictions, you can utilize the asynchronous method below.

Asynchronous
If asynchronous, allow students to review one another's projects from the comfort of their own device by posting them onto a shared virtual whiteboard space or learning platform (Google Classroom, etc.). Depending on the tool, you can possibly even incorporate sticky notes for each project so students can share their questions and comments that way, or you can utilize a Microsoft/Google Form.

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students finish Part II of the *Informational Writing: Lesson Ten 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**

You can also allow students to vote for their favorites in certain categories, which can also be tied to school mascots and/or PBIS rewards (if your school/system participates in that).

Examples below are based on hashtags to maintain the irony of the research project; however, feel free to personalize awards based on the vibe in your classroom.

- #BestSocialMediaInvestigation
- #MostCreative
- #EmergingGraphicDesignArtist
- #BestGenreIncorporation
- #PodcastChampion
- #InfographicHero
- #BrandingMonarch
- #ProfoundInsight
- #BestHeadShot
- #PullQuotesRockMyFaceOff

Have students take a few moments to reflect upon their research and formatting journey in their Writer’s Journal, answering the unit’s central question:

*What is social media, and how does it affect young people?*
Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students complete Part III of the Informational Writing: Lesson Ten 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.

Summative Assessment

Multi-genre ‘Zine Article Display
Rubric
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:**

- Incorporate positive feedback to recognize what students have done well with their writing (*High-leverage practice*).
- The rubric can be adapted to specific student needs and goals.
- Utilize “Peer Experts” to assist students struggling with an element of the technology, as identified during the Engagement step.
- Prior to today’s lesson, model using the rubric to provide feedback on a) the exemplar as a model, and/or b) the student’s own product. 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:
  - allowing students to work with a partner on assignment, working with students in a small group setting to practice final presentations, 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:**

| ELAGSE9-10W6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically. |

**Acceleration/Extension Activity:**

- Students can seek an [online platform](Levine et al., 2013) to publish their final copy on a wider scale (Schulten, 2020).

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**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 final product with their families.
- If a virtual gallery is arranged, students can share the work of their classmates as well. Also, a virtual event can be hosted to show parents/community members the final products, following all Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines.
- If a physical gallery is in place (and school health guidelines permit it), this could be a centerpiece at a curriculum night so students could show their families their work. Presentations can be done in native languages to welcome ELL families into the building.

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**References**


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