Big Idea/ Topic

**Teaching Others What We Know: 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.

**Lesson Seven: Illustrating with Intention**

In this lesson students will focus on the illustrations in their booklets as teaching tools. Students will learn about diagrams, close-ups, captions, and cutaway drawings as ways of teaching their readers. It is important to note that this standard is pushing students beyond the basic requirements of the W2 standard. Usage of these text features is expected of students as **readers**, but it is not required that they use them as writers. Therefore, introduce these tools to your students and encourage them to try them, but don’t require their usage as an assessment.

**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 Targets</th>
<th>Lesson “Small Make(s)”</th>
<th>Unit “Big Make”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can create illustrations that teach the reader.</td>
<td>Students will add detailed drawings such as diagrams, close-ups, captions, and cutaway drawings to existing booklets or an ongoing booklet.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*adapted from Cris Tovani’s *Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage our Most Reluctant Readers* (2021)
**Standard Alignment**

**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.

**ELAGSE2RI7**: Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

---

**Instructional Design**

*For more information regarding daily routine practices and/or additional information on the unit framework (including materials), please see the [Unit Plan 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), document camera, anchor chart 3 [link to anchor chart 3 – illustrations] student sample book Sharks [link to student writing sample text], teacher’s ongoing booklet with one of the sample text features already drawn (e.g., close-up), published books that show the targeted text features: Surprising Sharks (diagrams, close-ups, captions) and Spiders (diagrams, captions, cutaways)

**Students**—blank paper, unplugged handout version
**Engage**

**Opening:**

*Synchronous*

- Show students the anchor chart on using illustrations that teach. Go over each type of illustration and be sure to point out that some of the examples have multiple types in one; for example, the cutaway drawing also shows close-ups and the close-up drawing has a caption. [EBP: Teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content [Moderate evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010)].

- Share with students a few pages from texts that have these types of illustrations. The book *Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies includes captions, diagrams, and cutaways while the book *Spiders* by Gail Gibbons has diagrams, captions, and a cutaway drawing showing the underground home of a trapdoor spider.

- As you show these examples, think out loud about what you can learn from the illustrations. Point out any information that can be learned solely from the illustration that’s not mentioned in the text. Explain that this is why illustrations are so important in informational texts.

- Show students the sample student text “Sharks” and think aloud about how the illustrations teach us information about sharks. Ask students to identify the different types of illustrations this writer used.

*Asynchronous*

Post on your learning management platform a brief video of yourself, a) sharing the anchor chart and explaining the different types of illustrations; b) sharing the sample illustrations from published books and thinking aloud about what you can learn from them; c) showing students how you can learn from the illustrations in the sample student text “Sharks” and; d) showing students the drawing from your own booklet.

*Unplugged/Offline*

Have students work through part 1 of Lesson 7 Handout – unplugged.

**Explore**

*Synchronous*

- Show students the booklet you’ve been working on and the picture you’ve already drawn. Ask students to tell what information they can learn from looking at your picture.
• Have students share suggestions about what other illustrations you could add to your booklet and what information you might include. It’s not necessary to actually draw these in front of the students. [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous**

Have students record a brief Flipgrid or Seesaw video telling another illustration you could add to your booklet.

**Unplugged/Offline**

Have students work through part 2 of [Lesson 7 Handout – unplugged](#).

**Apply**

**Synchronous/Asynchronous/Unplugged/Offline**

Students will work independently on their booklet, either continuing a booklet they’ve already started or beginning a new one. Today they will pay extra attention to their illustrations and add a detailed drawing of some type. This action of going back to revise illustrations will set up your class to be ready to go back to revise text in a later lesson. [EBP: Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content [Moderate evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010); EBP: Provide daily time for students to write [Minimal evidence]; EBP: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes. [Strong evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Reflect**

**Synchronous**

Students should pair up and share with their partner an illustration they are proud of. Have 2-3 students share their illustrations with the class, talking through the type of illustration and what can be learned from it. [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous/Unplugged/Offline**

Students will continue working on their booklets. These can be shared with teachers via a scheduled online conference, regular phone conference during which the student reads aloud their writing, or photos can be emailed to the teacher of the student’s work.
Evidence of Student Success

At a minimum, students will be considered successful in this lesson if they are able to include detailed illustrations that match the text. Since the use of captions, close-ups, cutaways, and diagrams is not a required standard, consider it a bonus if they are able to use them to illustrate their text.

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 Engagement]  
  “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: Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge [Minimal evidence] (Foorman et al., 2016)].
- **Visual-spatial Processing:** Provide opportunities for students to engage with visual representations and/or manipulatives (virtual or concrete) as they explore informational writing and communicate ideas.
- **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 Flipgrid) 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:
Some students may struggle with representational drawing, and for these students it can be well worth the time to help them learn to draw. You might pull a small group of students and model how to draw a person by looking at either a drawing or one of your actual students. Walk through the shapes you see and the details: *I see that her face is like a circle, so I’ll draw that here. In the middle of her face is her nose, and it looks almost like a triangle*… Help students slow down and see the two-dimensional shapes and details on three-dimensional objects around them. For more support with this, check out *Talking, Drawing, Writing* by Horn and Giacobbe.

Additionally, some students may want to include a type of drawing (e.g., cutaway, close-up) but lack the background knowledge necessary to successfully create it. In these situations, gather resources that can help students learn the details they need. In doing so, students will begin the earliest steps of research by gathering needed information from text illustrations.

Supports/scaffolds for English learners:

- Educators are encouraged to refer to resources such as WIDA’s Essential Actions Handbook or the downloadable GO TO Strategies from CAL to find a variety of scaffolds appropriate for ELs across ELP levels.
- Sample language objectives/targets for this lesson (*Please note the following language objectives are examples and should not be used across all ELP levels. Teachers should take students’ ELP levels into account when creating language objectives for their lessons)*:
  - Identify examples of the information each type of illustration (as presented in anchor chart 3) lends itself to through teacher support and modeling.
  - Orally explain which illustration best suits a topic by using sentence starters and annotated anchor chart notes.

**Acceleration/Extension**

**Standard:**

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
ELAGSE2RI7: Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

Acceleration/Extension Activity:
Students who easily include the above-mentioned text features in their booklets could be encouraged to use even more sophisticated features such as maps, charts, and graphs. Students may study and emulate sample nonfiction texts to see how authors use these features to convey even more specific information.

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

- As family members read informational books with their children, pay special attention to the illustrations and the information that can be gleaned from them. Look for and identify captions, cutaways, close-ups and diagrams in a variety of texts.
- To help students practice illustrating, try having them make their own illustrations for nonfiction texts that are different than what the author/illustrator included.

References


Georgia Writing Project (GaWP). (2018). Cultivating a writerly culture. Georgia Department of


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