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Course Project 1-Published Piece

Real World Lesson Plans

Gradually teachers in all disciplines are trying to move away from the more rote memorization and heavy literature and canon-based teaching so often associated with a more traditional approach in lesson planning. The value of real world application to the work being done by both teachers and students has grown increasingly important over the last several years. The mini-unit/lesson plans which follow are an attempt to provide further examples and opportunities for teachers to practice what they preach, giving students opportunities to work with examples of writing that pertain to the real world. Whether students will eventually be writing similar texts later in life in their professions, or whether they will need it just to function successfully in society on a daily basis, the three lesson plans included in this piece are intended to reach students on a variety of levels, whether it be as reader or writer.

The three topics which follow: manuals, business letters and editorials, have been chosen based on their real world application potential. Students use manuals to program a VCR, or put together a new computer they may have purchased. Some may have had difficulties reading the instructions that accompanied the product, and either struggled through the directions or thrown them to the wayside entirely. In either instance, very rarely will students have really considered why they grew so frustrated, or if the instructions were easy, why they were so easy to follow. The manual lesson plan is designed to get students engaged with writing material they have extensive experience with, but have done very little critical interpretation and creation of.

The general purpose of the manual is similar to that of the business letter writing. Most students are so aware of technological advancements from the simple telephone to the more recent e-mail, that most students may have never written their own letter, let alone a business letter. This lesson not only provides an opportunity for students to learn about business letters, but also helps them to understand the important role they play in

the business world. Whether or not students are intending on going into the business world, most professions will require, at some point, that employees have the ability to write competent, professional letters.

The editorial lesson plan follows the same vein as the manual and business letter in that it exists to provide students an opportunity to both look at a piece of writing that is incorporated into the real world situations of writing, whether it be the newspaper or a magazine. This lesson also helps students to recognize that even if they do not enjoy reading fiction and the texts they are often exposed to in the English classroom, that to be a critical consumer and an aware citizen, they need to be able to understand the rhetoric and persuasive strategies that journalists use in everyday writing, as is found in popular writing (i.e. -newspapers).

What is so great about these lesson plans is their many functions. These lessons allow the teacher to deviate from the more traditional essay writing and canon reading that is common in the English classroom, and still provide a meaningful and engaging lesson that will not only be interesting to the teacher, but the students as well. The practicality of these lessons is endless due to their real world application. Students can use their prior knowledge and explore specific types of writing that are incorporated into their every day lives that most often go unnoticed. Though these lessons are detailed and give specific time frames, adjust them as you see fit to accommodate your students and your own style of teaching. Lengthening some lessons could result in a more extensive unit on manuals or letter writing in general. If your students have had previous experience with persuasive writing, perhaps the lessons on editorials could be shortened to be a small facet in persuasive writing. Whatever options you as the teacher decide, the lessons which follow are merely suggestions and options to engage students in real world writing.

Lesson Plan 1-The “How To” Manual

Grade Level: 11-12th grades

Rationale: Manuals are a staple in society today and serve a very necessary function. Manuals are needed to hook televisions to VCRs, to program anew computer, to put together a bed, etc. Students rarely notice these manuals as examples of writing, a sort of technical writing not often explored in the English classroom. This lesson is designed to get students thinking about all the sorts of manuals that they come across and how they are uniquely designed in order to fit a specific audience. If the manual is not written properly, the directions may not be properly followed and the product may not be of much use. Taking these elements into consideration students will not only look at the way manuals are created but take the various facets they have learned about in manual writing to create their own manual.

Objectives:

- 1.) Students will be able to identify key characteristics of a manual and understand its specific purpose, i.e.- to instruct someone on how to build a bed.
- 2.) Students will apply the knowledge gained about manual writing to construct their own manuals.
- 3.) Students will use their knowledge about successful manuals (those that have a clear purpose and are easy to understand and follow) to critique and analyze each others’ manuals.

Standards:

IRA/NCTE Standards: 1, 3-6, 8, 11, 12

Illinois State Learning Standards: 1.A.5.b, 1.B.5.a, 1.B.5.c, 1.B.5.d, 1.C.5.c, 1.C.5.d, 3.A.5, 3.B.5, 3.C.5.a, 3.C.5.b, 4.A.5, 4.B.5, 5.C.5.a

Procedures:

Day 1

- 1.) Set induction: Students are given a handout as they come into class that is a set of instructions on how to make a paper airplane. The directions should be specific enough so that a student who has created a paper airplane before will know what to do, even if the directions are not very clear. Students who have never made an airplane, however, might not be able to finish the task due to lack of direction.
Tip: This activity can be done with origami or any activity that involves some sort of directions. (Time frame: 5 minutes)
- 2.) The teacher will have students come together and hold up their paper airplanes. Teacher will help lead a discussion on why some people were able to finish a successful paper airplane, and why others struggled. Questions should be framed so that students begin looking at the importance of phrasing in directions. What sorts of directions would have been more helpful? What additional directions were needed? **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**
- 3.) A mini-lesson/lecture will be given by the teacher after the class discussion of the airplane activity. The teacher, using a sample manual (make sure this sample manual is brief and easy to understand, choosing a complicated manual might confuse students and be too boring), will go over some of the basic characteristics

of manuals. Students should be taking notes as the teacher speaks so that they can refer back to it later. **(Time frame: 15-20 minutes)**

Tip: To make it easier for the students the teacher might want to have highlighted or bolded, the sections or key phrases that she/he thinks might be of importance to the students.

- 4.) Students will free-write discussing their own experiences with manuals. The teacher should put these questions, or ones similar to them, on an overhead or on the board. Have you ever read a manual? What for? What it easy to understand or difficult? Why was it easy or difficult? **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**
- 5.) Students will then discuss, as a class, what they have written and share experiences with one another in dealing with manuals. Have students come up with lists on the board of the ideas/elements they came up with as a class, the list should include both the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful manuals, make sure students understand the latter are facets of a manual they wish to avoid. Teacher should monitor discussion. If teacher feels there are elements students missed she/he should ask questions that direct students to think about those elements, or just add the element directly to the list. **(Time frame: 10-15 minutes)**

Tip: As the teacher you may want to have students copy the list on the board to refer back to later or as the teacher copy them down and add more later (if necessary) that can be used as a rubric for the things that should be included in the manual they will later create.

Homework: For extra credit, ask students to bring in a manual they might have at home, or one they have found on the Internet, have them read them and determine whether they think it is a good manual or not.

Day 2

- 1.) Teacher will have students present to their class any manuals they may have brought in and whether they thought it was a good manual, why and why not. If students do not bring in examples, the teacher should be ready with a brief example of both a good and poor manual and go over with the class why one is better than the other. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 2.) The teacher will then give students an opportunity to browse a variety of manuals that she/he will have brought in for the class, as well as examples on the Internet to give students a feel for different approaches taken towards manuals. **(Time frame: 10-15 minutes)**
- 3.) Teacher will then bring class back together and begin a brief discussion on the important aspect of audience in dealing with manuals. Teacher should have some key elements related to audience on an overhead for students to copy down for their project. Some manuals for children's toys might be different than manuals on how to set up computer networks or home entertainment centers. What role does audience play? How does that affect the way in which the manual is written? These sorts of questions should guide the teacher in getting feedback from students on role of audience in manual writing. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 4.) Teacher will briefly explain the assignment for students to create their own manuals and hand out a prompt that outlines the basics for the assignment. The teacher should then go over the prompt with the class and after explaining the

assignment take any questions the students might have. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**

Tip: You may wish to hand out at this time a very detailed outline for what students will be creating, or just give a brief overview and an outline for the next day, depending on what you think would be most beneficial to the individual students.

Day 3

- 1.) Teacher will again go over expectations for the manual assignment, reviewing the prompt and elaborating on the activities for the day, and put students in groups of two or three, making sure that a variety of abilities are represented in each group. **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**
- 2.) Students will spend the rest of the time brainstorming ideas for what they want to write a manual about and coming up with a list of steps or information that needs to be incorporated into the manual. The teacher should spend this time roaming from group to group monitoring progress and posing questions to the group that might help them produce a more concise and informative manual. **(Time frame: 20 minutes)**
- 3.) Students will spend time filling out a work log outlining what has been accomplished throughout the period, identifying what each group member contributed. **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**
- 4.) Students will all come together and share some of their ideas, both areas where they are struggling and areas that they feel confident about, what exactly are they doing a manual about. Teacher should be ready to pose questions to individual groups if students do not take the initiative to start the discussion, or the discussion slows too much. **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**
- 5.) Teacher will give a brief overview of where groups should be up to this point in the project and what they need to accomplish during the class period tomorrow in order to be on pace with where they should be. **(Time frame 3 minutes)**

Day 4

- 1.) Teacher will remind students of what needs to be accomplished during the class period and discuss with her/him any problems within a group. **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**
- 2.) Students will spend the entire day working on manuals. They will be using computer programs to add graphics, diagrams and whatever pictorial support they think will enhance their manual. Teacher should continually monitor students and quell any deviation from learning and the task at hand. **(Time frame: 35 minutes)**
- 3.) Students will again fill out a work log outlining what has been accomplished throughout the period, identifying what each group member contributed. **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**

Day 5

- 1.) Teacher will begin by reminding students of some of the things each group is doing and remind students that this will be the last day to work on the manuals. **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**
- 2.) Students will spend entire day working on manuals. **(Time frame: 35 minutes)**
- 3.) Students will fill out a final work log charting their progress during the day. **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**

- 4.) Teacher will remind students that they need to have e-mailed/handed in a hard copy or disk, and their group manuals to her/him by the end of the period. Students will also be reminded to make sure all the work logs are done and are to be turned in the following day. **(Time frame: 3 minutes)**

Homework: Students should complete a 1-2 page journal discussing the project. What did they like about it? What did they dislike? What would they do differently next time? Why did they choose the topic they did? Did the project meet your expectations for what you thought you were going to be doing? What were some of your successes/failures with the project?

Day 6

- 1.) Teacher will present to the class her/his own example of a manual she/he created. Have students give feedback on what they liked about it, what they didn't like about it, suggestions for improvement, etc. **(Time frame: 7-10 minutes)**
- 2.) Each group will present their manual modeled in the same way as was presented by the teacher. **(Time frame: 30-40 minutes)**
- 3.) Students in the audience will fill out the same rubric as the teacher, commenting on the quality and overall effectiveness of fellow students manuals.
- 4.) Teacher will conclude with any remarks she/he had, successful things they saw being done with the manuals, suggestions for next time. **(Time frame 5 minutes)**

Resources:

- Sample business training/technical manuals (both hard copies and online-google search, "sample manuals")
- Overheads
- Banner paper for ideas on first day
- Computers
- Program on computer that has manual formats

Special Needs:

- Handouts may be given in lieu of overhead notes
- Big print examples of manuals for visually impaired students
- Any additional assistance needed on an individual basis

Assessment:

The final assessment will be the finished product of the manuals, which will be a group grade. The work logs will also be factored in as part of the grade as well. The rubric for the manual should be done with the help of students from the class when the class discusses what makes a good manual. The teacher should add elements regarding the formatting or look of the manual, as well as how easy the manual was to follow and understand.

Lesson Plan 2-The Lost Art of Letter Writing

Grade Level: 9-12th grades, could be adapted to lower grades

Rationale: Students today rarely have an opportunity to write hand-written letters, formal or otherwise. The modern technology of the telephone and e-mail has made hand-written letters somewhat obsolete. This lesson is designed to show students that letter writing is still very much an important aspect of writing, and that often times when we write e-mails or letters on the computer we neglect to use the proper formats that once accompanied letter writing. Students will be looking at a variety of formal letters that might be sent out in the business world.

Objectives:

- 1.) Students will be able to identify audience and purpose in a variety of sample letters given to them.
- 2.) Students will be able to identify ways in which letter writing differs from other writing genres.
- 3.) Students will be able to create their own letters paying special attention to audience and purpose.

Standards:

IRA/NCTE Standards: 1, 3-9, 11, 12

Illinois State Learning Standards: 1.A.5.b, 1.B.4.a-c, 1.B.5.b-d, 1.C.4.a, 1.C.4.c, 1.C.4.d, 3.A.4, 3.B.4, 3.C.4.a, 4.A.4.a-b, 5.B.4.a, 5.B.5.a

Procedures:

Day 1

- 1.) Teacher will begin class by putting a very poor example of a formal business letter on an overhead and providing context for the students on who sent the letter, who received the letter, and the topic of the letter. Students will then write a brief paragraph response to what they think about the letter. Is it a good letter? Why/why not? How might it be changed? What are their initial reactions to the letter? **(Time frame: 5-10 minutes)**
- 2.) The teacher will then begin open discussion/lecture on the importance of letter writing in the business world, in spite of recent technology that might suggest letter writing is an ancient art. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 3.) The teacher will then hand out packets of five sample letters, two of which are examples of poor letter writing. **(Time frame: 2 minutes)**
- 4.) As a class the students and teacher will go over the various letters, (two good and one poor) identifying speaker, audience and purpose for each and looking at whether or not the letter is persuasive or effective based on the speaker's ability to establish a clear audience and purpose. Remind students that they need to put themselves in the shoes of the intended audience before they begin to analyze it as being effective or not. **(Time frame: 20-25 minutes)**

Tip: This section is designed for a class that has previous experience with speaker, audience and purpose, so if your students have not had this prior knowledge it will need to be worked into the lesson, or discussed in a day before the lesson is begun.

Homework: Have students do the same thing done in class (identifying speaker, audience and purpose) with the two remaining letters, and journal about what makes them good or bad.

Day 2

- 1.) Set induction: Have students read a letter from a president to someone of importance, have students journal on whether or not they thought the letter was appropriate based on speaker, audience and purpose, using their homework and previous days class work to help guide them in their decision. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 2.) Have students begin brainstorming ideas about letters they could write. What sorts of issues are important to them? Who would they like to write a letter to? Stress the importance of choosing a real audience. **(Time frame: 30-40 minutes)**
- 3.) Explain to students the importance of being able to write formal letters and that the letters they had been drafting and brainstorming about need to be taken to a finished stage because they will be sending them to their ended audience/forum. Briefly explain what the class will be doing for tomorrow. **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**

Homework: Write/finish a rough draft of a letter. Write a cover page that outlines the audience and purpose, along with any other information that you want your reader to know about, for instance, why did you write the letter? Why do you think the topic is important? What do you hope to accomplish by writing the letter?

Day 3

- 1.) Give another brief example of an interesting letter and identify with the class speaker, audience and purpose. **(Time frame: 5-10 minutes)**
- 2.) Have students get in groups of two or three to workshop their rough drafts. **(Time frame: 25-30 minutes)**
- 3.) Have students write comments to one another. What sorts of things did you like about the letter? Did you feel as though the purpose and audience was clear? Do you have any suggestions or ideas for future drafts? **(Time frame: 5-7 minutes)**
- 4.) Have students look over others' comments and plan on what changes they will be making for homework to the letter they have written. **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**

Homework: Students need to complete a revised and publishable piece of their original letter to be handed in three days from the last day of the lesson.

Resources:

- Copies of business letters transferred to overheads
- Packet of letters to be handed out to students
- *The Elements of Business Writing: A Guide to Writing Clear, Concise Letters, Memos, Reports, Proposals, and other Business Documents* by Gary Blake and Robert Bly
- *Over 300 Successful Business Letters for All Occasions* by Allan Bond

Special Needs:

- Large print packets for visually impaired students
- One-on-one conferences with students having difficulties writing their letters our providing additional examples that they could use to spark ideas for the contents of their letter.
- Having students examine just one example of bad and one of good letter for homework on the first day.
- Hand-outs of the overheads used at the beginning of each lesson so students can write on the copies notes that might help them.

Assessment:

Assessment of students for this lesson will be based on the homework done identifying speaker, audience, and purpose, class participation, and the both the rough and final drafts of the letters they have written to be published.

Lesson Plan 3-What's an Editorial?

Grade Level: 11-12th grades

Rationale: This lesson plan is designed to get students considering a real-world application of writing and people's expression of their ideas and opinions. Many students might not read novels or short stories, or lengthier pieces of writing, but newspapers, and their role in the larger media circle, play an important role in representing current arguments and events that are of importance to our country and world as a whole. Editorials provide a way for readers of newspapers to interact with and respond to what is being written. Members of society, including students, have an obligation to express their concerns and opinions regarding what newspapers write so that multiple perspectives can be explored. Writing editorials allows students, and members of society to be critical consumers of the media.

Objectives:

- 1.) Students will be able to identify what an editorial is.
- 2.) Students will be able to interpret, analyze and understand the arguments or purposes of a variety of editorials.
- 3.) Students will be able to use the knowledge gained in interpreting and exploring editorial writing to create their own editorial.
- 4.) Students will be able to apply specific writing techniques to create persuasive editorials.

Standards:

IRA/NCTE Standards: 1, 3-8, 11, 12

Illinois State Learning Standards: 1.A.5.b, 1.B.5.a-d, 1.C.5.a-b, 3.A.4, 3.A.5, 3.B.4.a-c, 3.B.5, 3.C.4.a, 5.B.5.a

Procedures:

Day 1

- 1.) Teacher will hand out a sample editorial piece and have students read it silently. **(Time frame: 5-10 minutes)**
- 2.) Teacher will have students journal on what they thought the editorial was about. What sort of feeling did you get from the editorial? What do you think the intended tone of the editorial was? What is the author trying to argue, in other words, what is the point of the editorial? **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 3.) Students will come together as a class to explore some of the aspects of the editorial. Was the argument the speaker made convincing, why or why not, use specific examples from the text to support ideas. Have a volunteering student write reasons the editorial was convincing or not on the board for students to look at. Teacher should help redirect discussion if it gets off task and ask questions to get students thinking critically about what they read, instead of just, this was good or bad. **(Time frame: 20-30 minutes)**

- 4.) Teacher should present mini-lesson on the function of an editorial, using the editorial used in the class discussion as an example/ model. Outline either elements of editorials, or the process one goes through when writing an editorial. First, getting an idea, then deciding what support to use, etc. Whatever you think the students in the class need in order to write their own editorial. This mini-lesson/ lecture will most likely need to be continued into the next class period.

(Time frame: 7-10 minutes)

Tip: If you have written your own piece of editorial, you might use that to help students have a better sense of authorship and that not only journalists write editorials.

Homework: Have students brainstorm some ideas or issues that are important to them that they might want to write an editorial about.

Day 2

- 1.) Using a short, interesting editorial the teacher should continue with the mini-lesson from the day prior and have students take notes on things they should consider/concentrate on when writing their own editorial. **(Time frame: 10-15 minutes)**
- 2.) Have students get in groups to share their ideas for editorials, bounce ideas off one another and see if the students can get more ideas or direction for their piece of writing. **(Time frame: 15-20 minutes)**
- 3.) Have students begin an outline in class for their argument. What support are they going to use? What is their argument going to be? Who is their audience? What is their tone going to be? What emotions do they want to show as the author to help persuade their audience? How are they going to show that their argument is important? **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 4.) Teacher should brief students on what they are going to do for homework and during class the next day (workshop drafts) **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**

Homework: Students should prepare a rough draft of an editorial to be able to workshop in two days class time.

Day 3/Day 4 (same thing on each day)

- 1.) Teacher will hand out photocopies to students of a variety of editorials that they are to read (one each day) and have them read one editorial of their choosing on day 3, and one editorial on day 4. Have students commit to an editorial for each day and before they begin reading make sure as teacher that there are at least two people reading one editorial, if only one student is reading an editorial, make them switch to their second choice, so they can be part of a group. **(Time frame: 10-15 minutes)**
- 2.) Students will free-write after reading the editorial. The teacher should write a variety of questions on the board to have students consider while writing their free-response. What is the argument? Do you think the author was persuasive? Why or why not? How did the editorial make you feel? **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 3.) Have students get into groups based on what editorial they read. Have them discuss the editorial, using their free response as a guide. Teacher should be wandering from group to group to ensure that students are remaining on task. **(Time frame: 20-25 minutes)**

- 4.) Teacher should end class with a brief reminder that students should have their rough draft of their editorials ready to workshop the next day during class. **(Time frame: 3-5 minutes)**

Day 5

- 1.) Teacher should immediately have students get into groups to share their rough drafts. **(Time frame: 5 minutes)**
- 2.) Have students workshop their pieces. Each student in each group should read at least two other students' drafts and write a response to their draft, including both words of praise and suggestions for improvement. Teacher should move from group to group to get a feel for some of the topics and comments fellow students have on the work that is being produced. **(Time frame: 25-30 minutes)**
- 3.) Have students come together and discuss the sorts of things they saw in one another's work in a critical fashion. **(Time frame: 10 minutes)**
- 5.) Teacher should close class with some of the positive things she/he saw during workshopping and remind students that they need to turn in a finished editorial two days from day 5 of the lesson. **(Time frame: 2-5 minutes)**

Resources:

- Selection of editorials (both from the local newspapers and national newspapers) for students to look over during the course of the lesson.
- An example of teachers own editorial writing.
- *Editorial Eye* by Jane Harrigan

Special Needs:

- Handout of key elements or outline format for students to follow when they are creating their own editorials.
- Large print editorials for students who are visually impaired.
- Additional editorials/worksheets for students having trouble identifying elements of editorials.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed based on class participation, free-write responses to editorials handed out by teacher, and rough and final draft of their own editorial.

Additional Resources used for these lesson plans:

www.google.com –key words: “sample manuals,” “sample business letters”

www.amazon.com –key words: “business letters,” “editorial writing”

<http://www.ncte.org/standards/> -IRA/NCTE Learning Standards

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/Default.htm> -Illinois State Learning Standards