The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary. Many more GaDOE approved instructional plans are available by using the Search Standards feature located on GeorgiaStandards.Org.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 3 – 5th Grade

Grade: 5
Topic: Informational Writing – Creating a Speaker’s Voice
Instructional unit: Unit 3, “Communicating About Our World through Informational Writing”
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The task: The teacher poses the question, “What does creating a speaker’s voice mean?” and allows students to brainstorm possible answers. The teacher explains that speaker’s voice means written words that carry with them the sense that someone has actually written them (they do not sound like facts from a computer or an encyclopedia). The teacher then demonstrates the difference between “encyclopedia” writing and authentic non-fiction writing using speaker’s voice by reading an excerpt from an encyclopedia and an article from National Geographic for Kids (or some other source) on the same topic. After reading from both sources, the class will discuss the difference between the two and chart student observations. Stress will be placed on the difference between interesting non-fiction (the article) and the reference non-fiction (encyclopedia excerpt). The teacher notes that the article “shows us” (it paints a picture with words and creates a visual image) and the encyclopedia “tells us” (it tells us in a dry, straightforward/robotic way). The teacher will tell students that when writers use their voice in informational writing, the end result reads like easy conversation. As a whole group activity, teacher and students could draft an informational piece focusing on creating speaker’s voice. Students can practice independently by drafting their own informational piece of writing.

Differentiating Instruction

- Students will work in pairs and read to their partners an excerpt from an encyclopedia and an excerpt from a non-fiction writing to see if they can hear the differences in the writing types (telling reader information in a dry, straightforward/robotic way vs. painting a picture for the reader with words and visual images).

Modifications/Accommodations

- Teacher will write on board student responses to “What does creating a speaker’s voice mean?”

Focus Standard:
ELA5W2 The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.
The student produces informational writing (e.g., report, procedures, correspondence) that:
a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker’s voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
b. Develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on a subject.
c. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to a specific purpose, audience, and context.
d. Includes appropriate facts and details.
e. Excludes extraneous details and inappropriate information.
f. Uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, and narrating a relevant anecdote.
g. Draws from more than one source of information such as speakers, books, newspapers, and online materials.
h. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.
i. Lifts the level of language using appropriate strategies including word choice.

Georgia Department of Education
Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools
Speaker’s Voice • GRADE 5 • UNIT 3
August 2, 2007 • Page 1 of 2
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Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers: Read other pieces of non-fiction orally and have students listen and identify where they “hear” the speaker’s voice. Students will continue to practice this craft in their daily writing. The teacher will monitor student progress through conferencing.