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Georgia Performance Standards Task for English Language Arts – GRADE 3

Grade: Third  
Title: Using A Variety of Sentence Structures and Using Correct Punctuation

Task Annotation:

This learning activity is an instructional task for the third grade narrative writing unit. An instructional task is a task that teachers give students to complete within a unit of study. This helps the teacher to gauge the students' level of understanding of the genre before the unit of study is completed and before the students complete an entire narrative composition. This instructional/learning task should help the teacher make further instructional decisions within the unit of study. This learning activity or instructional task has to do with conventions. Good writers use a variety of sentence structures to move their writing forward and to make it more interesting for the reader. This instructional task will assess where students are in that process. This instructional task will also address the appropriate use of punctuation of various sentence structures. Finally, this task will assess student's application of the rules for writing dialogue.

* Please note that the following lessons for this instructional task are not to be followed as a script. These lessons are examples of lessons teachers may want to use or adapt within the narrative writing unit.

Focus Standard:

ELA3C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student  
   a. Correctly identifies and uses subject/verb agreement and adjectives.  
   e. Speaks and writes in complete and coherent sentences.  
   f. Identifies and uses increasingly complex sentence structure.  
   g. Distinguishes between complete and incomplete sentences.  
   l. Uses common rules of spelling and corrects words using dictionaries and other resources.  
   m. Uses appropriate capitalization and punctuation (end marks, commas, apostrophes, quotation marks).  
   n. Writes legibly in cursive, leaving space between letters in a word and between words in a sentence.

The Task:

Lesson 1:  
The teacher explains to the students that the class will be looking at using a variety of sentences in their writing as an element in the conventions standard. Writers that use a variety of sentence structures make the writing pleasing to read because it has a flow, or it is not choppy. In order to show students how this is done, the teacher could find an example of a paragraph from a good children's book/novel that has a variety of sentence structures. The teacher breaks the longer sentences apart into smaller, choppy
sentences and shows the students those sentences first either on an overhead or chart. All of the sentences should be about the same length. The teacher discusses with the students how they are flat and choppy—sort of lifeless. Then the teacher shows the students how the paragraph was actually written in the book with a variety of sentence structures. The teacher and student have an open discussion about how that version sounds better. The teacher and students discuss how short sentences can work really well when they are surrounded by longer sentences. The teacher models changing up some of the sentence structures in his/her own writing that is being modeled for the students. During writing time, the students will look through their pieces to see how they can revise their sentences to vary in length. Students will share their revisions with the class during Author's Chair (at the end of class period) and solicit feedback on their decisions about how they changed their sentences.

Lesson 2:
Discuss with students the compound sentence structure. Students should begin to understand that a compound sentence is two sentences put together either by a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or joined by a semicolon. The teacher might use a lesson similar to the following one found in the book Mechanically Inclined by Jeff Anderson. There is a visual scaffold that discusses a mnemonic device FANBOYS for the conjunctions and shows Sentence, conjunction, sentence. There is also a visual scaffold of Sentence; sentence. The visual scaffold also shows a serial comma sentence pattern that shows commas between items and phrases in a sentence - Sente n, c, and e. The teacher could show students the visual scaffolds and give the students sentences from books that would fit under one of the categories. Students work with partners to decide which category to put their sentence(s) under, and then discuss their decisions. The teacher could then model using correct punctuation and sentence structure with a variety of sentences in his/her own writing model for the students. Students will revise their work using the visual scaffolds from the lesson in their own writing. Students will share with the class how they revised their sentences to have some of each (at least one of each) in their writing.

Lesson 3:
Discuss with students the complex sentence structure. Students should begin to understand that a complex sentence is a sentence with one or more dependent clauses joined with an independent clause. (Ex: Running to catch the taxi, I fell and twisted my ankle.) The teacher might chart a visual scaffold like the one found in Jeff Anderson's Mechanically Inclined: Opener, sentence. (Use a comma to set off an opener). Sent, interrupter, ence. (Use a comma to set off an interrupter.) Sentence, closer. (Use a comma to set off a closer.) The teacher could give students examples of these types of sentences from children's books/novels, and the students will work with a partner to categorize their sentences. The teacher could model using complex sentences in his/her writing. Students will revise their pieces to make sure they have a few complex sentences in their pieces. Students will share with the class during Author's Chair (at the end of the class period) their revisions.
Lesson 4:
The teacher discusses adding dialogue to narratives in order to develop their characters. The teacher might want to explain the following dialogue rules:

- Indent every time a new person speaks.
- Put quotation marks around the things people say aloud.
- Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.
- Put end punctuation inside the quotation marks.

As a visual for students to see, the teacher could use a book excerpt that uses dialogue between two or more people. As a class, discuss what the students notice about the capitalization, punctuation, and indentation. The teacher could explain the rules listed above and let students know that the reason they indent every time a new person speaks is because it helps keep the reader from becoming confused about who is talking. The teacher could model how dialogue is punctuated in his/her writing. Students work to edit their pieces for correct dialogue usage. Students share with the class during Author's Chair (at the end of class period) the changes they made and why.

Differentiation of Instruction

Readiness
The visual scaffolds from Jeff Anderson's *Mechanically Inclined* will support most students at various levels as they remain on charts posted in the classroom. There are a couple additional supports that could be helpful.

1. **Colorcode** dialogue punctuation on the chart or on individual copies for students to keep in their writing folder.

2. **Highlight** words that are actually spoken within the complete sentence so that students are very clear that only words said "aloud" are within the quotation marks.

3. **Provide** a personal editing sheet that begins with common reminders for all students such as capitalizing beginning words and proper nouns, ending with an end mark (period for statements and commands, question mark for a question, etc.), and spelling. As you work with each student or in small groups you can add individual reminders as needed by each student. See Attachment: **Personal Editing Sheet**.

Learning Profile

**Auditory Learners** are those students who gain most of their information through sound. They are usually easy to discern because they talk to themselves as they work. When they independently read, they will read out loud. They want the directions repeated or will repeat them back to the teacher to clarify. Auditory learners may benefit from a listening center, from reading partners, and stories being read aloud by the teacher or other adults. They also need directions or instructions to be repeated and backed up by a visual example or model.
Visual Learners are those students who want to see everything. They benefit from demonstrations, models, graphic organizers, pictures, and other representation. They will want to show the teacher what they mean rather than say it. In reading and writing, they prefer picture books as they gain the story through both the words and pictures. They may need to express some parts of their initial narratives or literature responses in pictures. This can be phased out as the student develops more competent skills. Some students are picture dependent, and the teacher may have to cover the picture to direct the focus to the narrative prose itself.

Kinesthetic Learners are those students who learn through the use of their bodies and through touch, such as the manipulation of objects or physically using their bodies. For example, these learners might benefit from manipulating their arms to learn the concepts of “horizontal, vertical, and oblique.” In learning the elements of a narrative, a teacher might provide a small set of stairs so students can “step up” on the rising action events, reach the climax, and step down to the solution. To learn the concept of an opening and closing, have the student introduce themselves to a peer, tell a brief version of their narrative, and then close the conversation.

Learners with developmental delays can learn but at their own pace. They will benefit from the many strategies that are successful with other students. They tend to be fairly literal, concrete, and are usually slower at gaining reading and writing skills at proficient levels. Implicit comprehension will be a struggle for them. Listening centers, peer readers, writing partners, and concrete examples and models are some ways to support these students. These students can become easily frustrated and often have a difficult time expressing their emotions, needs, or dislikes. Modeling how to express these requirements can be done through the Sentence Frames. For example, on a sentence strip a sentence can be written such as, “I feel mad because _______________,” or “I like to ______________.”

Learners with sensory issues are exceptionally sensitive to touch, light, sound, smells, and movement. They can often “hear” fluorescent light bulbs buzz, see the constant flickering of the computer screen, and will cover their ears with loud noises and clapping. Some students do not want to be touched or to touch objects. Others will not like perfumes, colognes, or hairspray odors. But there is hope by being creative and patient. A large umbrella suspended from the ceiling can block harsh light. Have the student face away from computer screens and reassure them when or if they react. Touch sensitive students may need to write with a marker as it requires less pressure to hold and press down to write. A slantboard may also assist students as it requires them to apply a certain amount of pressure. Their writing is often illegible and may require some hand over hand assistance. The best resource for these types of issues is an occupational therapist. Most systems have one or contract for services through a local facility. Touch sensitive students can also benefit from writing with their fingers in sand, uncooked rice, or uncooked beans such as peas or pinto beans.

Learners with symptoms of inattentiveness have difficulty sustaining focus on a task, being very easily distracted, wanting help before applying themselves to a task, and/or “daydreaming.” Many also exhibit excessive motor activity: out of seat, blurts out, wants to be first, volunteers for everything, acts impulsively, and/or talks continually. Some students, girls more so than boys, will be very quiet and are often overlooked as they are off thinking of other things, causing no disruption, nor demanding teacher attention. By providing a “safe space” in the classroom where a student can move to better focus, cool off, or just to move to is helpful. Also, many of the strategies that are successful with visual and kinesthetic learners are useful with these students as well.
Learners with limited English experience are obviously going to be anywhere along the spectrum of proficiency of English mastery. Be mindful that each culture has its own way of showing respect toward adults and in responding to redirection or criticism. Many cultures do not look adults in the eye as it is a sign of disrespect. Some cultures need to “save face” when being corrected or redirected. Utilize your system’s resources to find out about the students you are responsible for, and do your own research for facts and information. For students who have recently been immersed in English (less than one year), they will need significant supports within the classroom: picture dictionaries, workbooks at 1st or 2nd grade levels for English skill, spelling, and grammar (sentence structure). They will need visual representation for grade level vocabulary and key words in content areas.

Note: There are several sites online available for translating to facilitate home-school communication such as Alta Vista. You simply type in what you need to say and then choose the language you need it to be translated to