

Communicating The News...It's Elementary

By

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Elementary school students enjoy communicating their thoughts, ideas and opinions just as much as adults do. Proof of this can be found by visiting any school classroom, cafeteria, hallway or playground to witness the endless array of student chatter. Although most students like to talk, very few like to write. Students are more likely to make a phone call than write a letter, more likely to tell you about a story than to write one and they would prefer to read than write if given a choice. The challenge is... How do we get students to engage in more writing activities? What things are students interested in, to write about? How do we get students to write well? These are some of the questions that I hope to answer in this curriculum untitled "Communicating The News...it's Elementary".

This curriculum unit will help students use the newspaper as the source of developing their writing and communication skills. It will assist in helping students become school newspaper reporters for the Fort Pitt Elementary School Castlegram. The Castlegram is our school newspaper, which is published quarterly with most of the articles being teacher-oriented. Students have submitted articles in the past, as requested by the classroom teacher but for the most part The Castlegram is not a "student" paper. Presently, students do not report on any school or community events or activities and students do not take part in the publishing or editing of articles. If students are involved in the creation, formulation and publication of the school newspaper they are more likely to read it, submit articles for it and will be more willing to be an ongoing part of the school newspaper.

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chatter. Although most students like to talk, very few like to write. Students are more likely to make a phone call than write a letter, more likely to tell you about a story than to write one and they would prefer to read than write if given a choice. The challenge is... How do we get students to engage in more writing activities? What things are students interested in, to write about? How do we get students to write well? These are some of the questions that I hope to answer in this curriculum untitled "Communicating The News...It's Elementary".

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Newspaper History

What is the future of our newspapers for the next century? How will news be reported in this next millennium? Pete Hamil, in his book "News Is A Verb", speculates on the current downward spiral of today's newspapers and their uncertain future. Hamil states that "...the opportunity to build circulation among readers is being ignored and the content of newspaper is being coarsened and cheapened. Instead of being the medium that corrects, verifies or debunks the faffago of fact and rumor that is passed along by the Internet, we are merely passing it along ourselves. Instead of doing what television can't do we are trying to become printed television." He further describes newspaper as becoming dumber and brainless printed junk food. This certainly was not the intentions of newspapers publishers or newspaper writers of "**Yesterday**".

In 1733, John Peter Zenger established a newspaper called the New York Weekly Journal. Zenger wrote a series of articles criticizing the British government, which caused him to be arrested and charged with criminal libel. In his defense, Alexander Hamilton convinced a jury that Zenger had printed the truth and that the truth is not libelous. This case created some issues among the colonists who wanted to separate themselves from the restrictions that the British government put on freedom of speech. Therefore, in 1789 some states refused to sign the Constitution because it did not guarantee personal liberties, specifically freedom of speech or freedom of religion or other freedoms essential to the new nation. These states insisted that a Bill of Rights be part of the Constitution before they would adopt it. These freedoms still exist for newspapers "**Today**".

Although, Hamil says that "newspapers are increasingly filled with sensation, rumor, press-agent flackery and bloated trivialities at the expense of significant facts," he believes that there are still some good newspapers in this country that offer a combination of quality and intelligent services. "These newspapers will survive. These quality newspapers will have a powerful role to play in the **"Future"**. They must do what television news and the Internet cannot do or choose not to do; that is, provide knowable facts to a large audience and separate the knowable from the speculative. In the age of information overload, newspapers must be the medium that people believe. They don't have to be first, they can be last but they must be right

Connecting the National Standards

The Pittsburgh Board of Education has adopted Core Curriculum Frameworks to help the district meet the National Education Standards proposed by the Department of Education. These Core Curriculum Frameworks are in the areas of: Communications; Family and Consumer Sciences; Mathematics; Arts and Humanities; Citizenship; Wellness and Fitness; Science and Technology; Environment and Ecology; and Career Education and Work (Appendix A - pg. 1-2). Within these core areas are 62 content standards of academic knowledge and skill that students will have to demonstrate to earn a high school diploma in Pennsylvania.

For our purposes this unit will focus on the Communication Standards (Appendix A - pg.3). The lessons are matched to specific standards below. All of the lessons will cover more than one standard.

Communication Standard #2 All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts. (Unit Lessons: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7);

Communication Standard #4 All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade in all subject areas. (Unit Lessons: 2, 5 & 7);

Communication Standard #6 All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications. (Unit Lessons: 3, 4 & 5) and

Communication Standard #7 All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure, and use. (Unit Lessons: 1 & 2).

Lesson 1: Parts Of A Newspaper

Many parts make up a newspaper. Whether it is a local or national newspaper you will basically find the same components and sections. In this lesson students will define terms related to parts of a newspaper and identify parts of a newspaper. To begin this lesson you need to have handy a local and a national newspaper to use during the classroom discussion. First, find out what the students already know about newspapers

and the news. Ask them questions such as: What is news? Who reads the newspaper at your house? How do newspapers get the stories to write? What sections of the newspaper do you read? If you sense that the students are not exposed to the newspaper in their homes, then use your personal experience to explain how and why you or members of your family use the newspaper. While students are sharing their answers, write their responses on chart paper (keep the chart paper until the end of the unit to use as a comparison for what students have learned about the news later in this unit).

After you have gotten enough responses from the students, show them the local newspaper. Identify and define some sections of the newspaper that would be familiar to elementary school students such as:

comic section - often a colorful section of funnies, cartoons and jokes

weather section - gives information about the weather conditions locally and nationally

sports section - gives team scores, highlights all sports events including high school etc. and

television section - outlines television viewing for that day, with program listings, times and stations etc.

Each of these sections are self-explanatory and may or may not need to be elaborated.

Allow students to share their ideas about each section, to determine their knowledge of newspapers. Make sure that the newspaper is visible to all students during this discussion. If students are having difficulty seeing, move them closer. If your classroom has a "meeting area" then the first portion of this lesson can be done in that area.

Continue to show the local paper to the students, but this time focus their attention to the front page. Identify and define the following terms:

banner - gives the name of the newspaper and tells where the paper is printed and how much it costs

headline - it is the title of a story, written in large bold type above a story

byline - appears under the headline/title and tells who wrote the story

dateline - tells the city, state and/or country where the story happened, all letters are capitalized

caption - located under the photo and tells what is in the picture

index - gives the page number of the different sections of the newspaper, and a

news story - an article that reports a news event.

Display these terms and definitions on chart paper to use as a reference for students throughout this unit. Have the students take turns identifying these parts of the national newspaper, which you have provided. When students have demonstrated an understanding of these parts, discuss why each part is important. Explain to them that a reader would not know where a paper is from without a banner, or how the index makes searching for the comics or weather easier than looking at every page. During this discussion, share with the class that the other parts (headline, byline, dateline and caption) are designed to give the reader important information before he or she begins to read a news story, which the reader uses to determine whether or not he or she wants to take the time to read a particular story. Inform

your students that this can be done by skimming the lead paragraph, which gives them the topic or main idea of an article.

Activity 1

For this activity students will need to bring an old local or national newspaper from home that can be cut, or you may provide the newspapers instead. They will also need construction paper, paste, scissors, crayons or colored markers. Students are going to create their own front pages by cutting out different parts explained in the lesson and pasting them onto the construction paper. Remind students to include all the parts of the newspaper listed on the chart paper, to have a complete front page. They can use crayons and/or markers to decorate their banner at the top of the page. The banner should have the student's name and the date this assignment is completed. Display the completed front pages on a bulletin board in the classroom or use to decorate the room or hallway. Grade the students' work and keep it in their portfolios.

Activity 2

Engage students in a newspaper scavenger hunt. Give them specific items to look for such as: advertisement for tires, cost of a two bedroom apartment with utilities included, what program is coming on at 8pm tonight on KDKA Channel 2, how much does chicken breast cost this week, which store has the best sale on blue jeans, who won the Pirates game and the score, etc. To make it challenging, keep score of who gets the information the fastest by giving them a point.

Activity 3

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom.

You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However, this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 1.

Give students the front page of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette (use your own local paper). Instruct them to color each part of the front page the following colors: banner-yellow, byline-orange, caption-blue, dateline-green, headline-yellow, index-red and one news story-white.

Lesson 2: Headliners!

“Extra! Extra! Read all about it!” was a phrase that was used long ago to create excitement about news stories. That certainly isn't the case today; however, during the Pittsburgh Press strike of 1992, there were two "town criers", hired by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. They would go and stand in Market Square, in downtown Pittsburgh, during the lunch hour. Often clanking a bell, dressed in town crier attire and herald the old time chant "Hear ye, Hear ye" or "Extra, extra read all about it" and update the local people with the news headlines in Pittsburgh and around the nation. Time would only allow for the headlines to be read and bits and pieces of the story.

How do writers get you to read their stories today? By making the headlines as interesting as possible. In this lesson titled "Headliners!" there are three objectives. Students are going to: 1) define topic and main idea; 2) write a headline for a news article and 3) determine the main idea of a news story. To start, review the definition of a headline or check for understanding by asking the students to give you the definition, which is the title of a story written in large bold type above the story, generally having a subject and verb. Introduce the lesson by defining the terms topic and main idea for the class. A topic: is the general thing or subject that all the sentences in the story talk about. A main idea: is the most important idea about a topic add these definitions to the newspaper glossary chart already created in Lesson 1. Inform the students that the headline usually states the main idea of a news article. Share the following article with the class. Either write it on the chalkboard or chart paper, and have students identify both the topic and main idea: *"Not all elephants like peanuts. Chuckles, the oldest elephant in the Mule Town Zoo, refuses to eat peanuts. Zoo-keeper Birdie Lyons says that animals are just like people. "Not all people like hamburgers, " says Birdie. "It's just the same with elephants and peanuts!"* .*Classworks! Newspaper, Scholastic 1988*
The topic is elephants; the main idea is that not all elephants like peanuts. After students have identified the topic and main idea, they now are ready to write a good headline for it. Have them use the main idea *"not all elephants like peanuts "* to help them create various headlines. As you record their responses, point out to them, that headlines aren't always complete sentences. They are phrases, and they do not have a period at the end. If students have not grasped these terms, then repeat the lesson using other examples of articles, to reinforce students' understanding of topic and main idea. You will need to prepare these articles in advance on chart paper or use an overhead projector and transparencies.

Activity 1

You will need to find and cut out six news articles on the student's reading level, about the neighborhood. (Keep one article for the latter half of this activity). Also have paper, pencil, paste and a sheet of poster paper. Once you have found the articles, cut them out and remove the headlines from each. Write a number in the top left hand corner of each article. Make several copies of each article and distribute to all students. They should have only one article, paper and pencil. Students will silently read their article. Afterwards, they are to write down the number of the article, found in the top corner, and write a good headline for it. When the students are finished, have them exchange articles for a different one and repeat the process. After the students have had a chance to read a variety of articles, call out the numbers and have students share their responses to that particular article. Point out to the class about how their headlines relate to the main idea and reflect each other's ideas.

Activity 2

This activity will extend the student's understanding of the lesson. Take one article and remove its headline. Paste the article on the bottom of the piece of poster board already

hanging from the chalkboard. Have students read the story and think of a headline to write on the poster board above the story. Leave this up for a few days so that students can continue to write on it if they wish. At the end of a few days, discuss the different headlines and ask the students, which ones they think are the best, or have them choose the ones they think would attract the attention of their friends, parents or other teachers.

Activity 3

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom. You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However, this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 2.

Copy and read the following news stories with your students. Have the students circle the best headline for each story. It must describe the story well and be interesting. On the last story have students write their own headline,

1. MIDLAND, PA- Mrs. Holly Trump announced a new recipe for chocolate cake today. Mrs. Trump said that her cake taste great, just like real cake, but has no sugar or calories. "Kids can eat it all day long," Holly said, "and they'll never get a cavity. My cake won't even spoil their appetites! "
 - a. Mrs Trump's Cake a Fake
 - b. No-Sugar, No-Calorie Cake Announced (answer)
 - c. Kids Like Chocolate Cake

2. HOTSVILLE, CA- People in the town of Hotsville are confused. Two days before their Fourth of July celebration, a snowstorm hit. "I don't know what we'll do about the town parade and picnic", said Jack Frost, mayor of Hotsville. "But I do know that we'll have the best snow cones in California".
 - a. New Snow Cone Recipe Discovered
 - b. Fourth of July Parade Cancelled
 - c. Snow in July? (answer)

3. NORTH POLE- Elves at the North Pole have announced that they will work overtime for free this year. "There have been a lot of good kids this year, so we'll need more toys than ever," said Mytee Short, the leader of the elves. "Working for Santa is so much fun that we don't care how much we're paid."

Write a headline here: _____

Lesson III: Getting the Facts

Most students have read, know or heard the story of the "Three Little Pigs" by James Marshall and others. All the facts, information and testimonies we have about that horrible, dreadful day came directly from the three pigs. No other sources were investigated or consisted. Depending upon which author you read, the account of events

goes something like this.... the three little pigs, who were not very good carpenters, built some homes with some inexpensive materials, which were destroyed by a big bad wolf. The wolf was accused of huffing and puffing and blowing down the pig's houses, all because he was looking for dinner. One or maybe two of the pigs didn't survive.

Well it goes something like that. In all these many years since I first read this story I have never heard from the Wolf himself. Finally, the wolf is interviewed and gives his account of the facts from that day as written, by Jon Scieszka in his children's book The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (Scholastic, 1989). Now you can share with your students both stories of what really happened on that awful day (Read both stories to the class). This is a fun and exciting way to get your class ready to learn the objectives of this lesson. The purpose of this lesson is to help students to identify the parts of a news story that indicate: who, what, where, when and why and to determine missing information. Students will also create a news story that covers these facts. Inform students that almost all news article contain the five W's or wh-question words: who-person; what-thing; where-place; when-time and why-reason/condition. Read the article that follows and have the students match the facts that go with the five W's:

"Brunhilda was the most popular witch in Transylvania. Every Halloween, Brunhilda and her dog, Ziggy, would ride their vacuum cleaner through the Transylvanian skies, terrorizing trick-or-treaters and alley cats. (Ziggy especially liked to scare alley cats. When asked why she took to the skies each season, Brunhilda replied, "What's Halloween without a little fun ?" (Scholastic, 1988).

Some answers maybe: Who - Brunhilda; What - rides a vacuum cleaner to scare trick-or-treaters and alley cats; Where -Transylvania; When - Halloween; Why - for fun. Once students have demonstrated an understanding of the five W's, then read the following article and this time tell students to focus on which of the W's is missing.

"Irving, the pet snake in Mr. Sheldon's science class, escaped. It has been three days since the three-foot long snake has been seen by teachers or students. Mr. Sheldon says that it is normal for snakes to seek dark, enclosed areas when they shed their skin, and that this is provably why Irving escaped. Mr. Sheldon assured Mr. Wright, the principal, that Irving is harmless and will be found when he gets hungry." (Scholastic, 1998)

First ask students to identify which W's are given - write the answers on the board and then have them tell which one is missing. The answers are: Who - Irving; What - disappeared; Where - from the science class; Why - snakes seek dark, enclosed areas when they shed their skin. The missing W is When. Have students retell the story but include the missing information. Several responses may be given and recorded.

Activity 1

All you will need for this activity is a chalkboard, chalk and some index cards. Ask students to think of different titles to some of their favorite fairy tales and write them on the board. List the words who, what, when, where and why next to each title. Have

students volunteer to give you the five W's for each fairy tale. Next have the students do an imaginary interview their favorite TV star, sports star or cartoon character. The teacher will choose a familiar character and have students interview you to determine who the mystery character is. All questions must involve the five Ws. Once the students have the idea, have them take turns being the characters. This is done by putting the names of popular characters on index cards, have one student pick from the pile and the other students ask questions using the W-words to figure out who the character is (keep the card concealed). Then have students take turns. Remind students that they must guess the character without forgetting any of the W-words.

Activity 2

Assign the students to watch the evening news on television. Tell them that they are to focus on how the reporter used the five W's to cover the lead news story. Write the list of W-words for students to take home and use to record answers.

Activity 3

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom. You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 3.

Read the following story with the students. Have them identify the important facts to answer the questions below

ENCHANTED KINGDOM- All citizens of Forest Towne should be alert!!!
A fox has been seen going in and out of the houses owned by senior citizens.
This fox was last seen at the home of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother.
Little Red Riding Hood said, " I caught the fox sleeping in my granny's bed"
And then in a hysterical voice she said, "He was hungry and he chased me
around the room. I screamed as loud as I could and he jumped out the window
and ran". So all Forest Towne residents be on alert for a dangerous, hungry and
sleepy fox.

Fill in the blanks: who? _____ what? _____ where? _____ when? _____ why? _____

Lesson IV: A Field Trip To the Newspaper Office

At this point students have been given a foundation for understanding newspapers. They have some historical background on the evolution of newspaper writing. Students have been exposed to the local and national paper and they now have basic knowledge about the actual content, formation and use of a newspaper. It is now time to involve students in the actual writing and creation of a newspaper article and the newspaper itself, by planning a field trip to the local newspaper office. Therefore, you will need to contact your local newspaper office to schedule a field trip for this unit. I have scheduled my field trip during the midway section of this unit but you may choose to do it some other

time during this unit. Whenever you plan your visit, it is important to contact the newspaper office early enough so that they may accommodate your class. If your school has funding for field trips then a voucher may need to be submitted early for approval. If not, you may choose to generate your own funding through grant writing, soliciting community businesses or having the parents pay for the trip. If none of these suggestions works, then contact your local newspaper and request that a reporter or editor come and speak to your class. Most newspaper offices will be willing to come if contacted early. Prepare the students prior to the field trip with a list of questions they need to ask. Ask the students what they hope to see at the newspaper office and then have them write their own set of questions. You will need to focus them on the following areas: creating of a story, the writing of an article, the editing and proofreading techniques, and how the paper gets published and distributed. This information will help them as they move through the rest of the lessons in this curriculum unit. Review previous lessons so that the class is focused for the field trip. Students will keep a journal so that they can write about their experience at the newspaper office. This will be kept as part of their portfolio items for this unit. After the field trip, a good suggestion is to take the class to lunch or provide a picnic lunch somewhere close to your school.

Activity 1

Once you have returned to school, have a question and answer period about what the students have learned from the field trip. Ask the students if they got any or all of the questions they wanted answered. Give students time to reflect and write in their journals about their experience at the newspaper office.

Activity 2

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom. You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However, this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 4.

Have the students draw a picture of their visit to the newspaper office. Let the students tell you about the picture and you can write their responses on the picture. Have them copy their responses in their own handwriting on separate paper. Another suggestion maybe to write specific questions in the student's journal and have them write the answers with assistance if needed.

Lesson V: Creating The Story

Melia wants to be a writer just like her mom, so her mom tells her that a writer works with words. In Joan Lowery Nixon's children's book *If You Were A Writer*, Melia learns how to use words, to create stories that make pictures. She starts to share these stories with her brother and sister but comes to realize that she must write down her words so that they don't get lost! Read this story to your class. Focus your discussion on the words Melia uses to create pictures that excite her listeners to want to hear more. The students will create a short article from the main idea and lead paragraph using the subject "Our School Lunch is..." Give the students other topics and have them play with words to create an interesting lead sentence. Next, inform students that the most important part of a news story is the first paragraph or lead paragraph. This paragraph should grab the attention of the reader and encourage them to read the remainder of the story . A good lead paragraph usually starts with the story's most important words. For example "A giant snowstorm caused school closing today" instead of "It was reported that schools were closed today because of a giant snowstorm". Read a few lead paragraphs from the local newspaper -- either you or your student can read them. Keeping students involved keeps them focused on the task, so whenever possible, have the students do the reading. Discuss the elements used to encourage the reader to continue to read. You may ask questions such as: "What action words or descriptive words were used to make the lead interesting or exciting?" "What was the most important or unusual facts?" "Did the lead make you want to read further?" "Could anything been done to make the lead more exciting?", etc.

Activity 1

Choose a school event such as a basketball game, school dance or field trip and challenge students to write the lead for a news story about the event. You can help them organize their thinking by writing the five W's on the chalkboard.

Activity 2

Select several articles that would be of interest to your class and cut them from the newspaper. Then cut the paragraphs apart for each article selected and cut away the

headline. Rearrange the sequence of paragraphs incorrectly, paste, Xerox and distribute to students. Have the students read the articles and determine in which order the paragraphs should be placed. Discuss how they determined the lead paragraph.

Activity 3

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom. You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However, this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 5.

Lesson VI: Proofread, Revise and Edit

In this lesson students will learn some basic proofreading marks to indicate spelling and grammatical errors in an article. Demonstrate for the students the following proofreading marks on the chalkboard, chart paper or overhead transparency. Students will need to know: circle with and x inside -period, ^, - comma, "v - quotation marks, ≡ capital letter, / - lower case, ^ - insert, 0 - spelling error. Review the proof marks and demonstrate how each is used. Using the following sentence have students suggest where proofreading marks should be placed:

Mrs brown wnt to a surprize party Yesterday (correct answer: Mrs. Brown went to a surprise party yesterday.).

Give the students several example sentences using a variety of proofreading marks.

Activity 1

You will need a computer with a word processor in order to do this activity. Type an article of interest for the students using the word processor. The topics could range from sports, cartoon shows, movies, music videos, etc. Make sure to include all errors that are listed above. Save the article onto a disk. Have the students retrieve the document and type in the corrections using the proofreading sheet you have provided. After students have made their corrections, remind them to save their changes under a file with their name.

Activity 2

Assign each student to write a news story on a topic of interest to the class. Topics may range from school events, community affairs, TV programs, sports activities, etc. When students finish their stories, have them exchange papers. They should use proofreading marks to correct any mistakes they find and then rewrite their article making the necessary correction.

Activity 3

This activity is provided for special needs students who are in the inclusion classroom. You may or may not have these students in your classroom. However, this is a modified lesson for students who may be having some difficulty grasping lesson 6.

Using the proofreading marks above, have students mark the following sentences and paragraphs.

1. The dog chased the cat.
2. The cat ran and didn't look back.
3. "You'll never catch me", said the cat.
4. The dog just barked.
5. Tommy looked out His window.
6. He came out and took the dog home.
7. The cat stayed away from the dog.

Rufus the Cat has been missing for three days. Rufus' owner, Mrs. Sherry Ball, says the cat has never left the neighborhood before. "I'm worried sick," said Mrs. Ball "if anyone sees him please return him," she said. All information is to be sent to Happy Town police station.

Answer: Rufus the cat has been missing for three days. Rufus' owner, Mrs. Sherry Ball, says the cat has never left the neighborhood before. "I'm worried sick," said Mrs. Ball, "if anyone sees him please return him," she said. All information is to be sent to Happy Town police station.

Lesson VII Publishing Articles for the School Newspaper.

The very first article that your students will prepare to report on is titled "Back To School". The title may vary, but the subject is the same. Have students choose interview subjects from the following list, who they wish to interview and write concerning this topic. They may choose the: principal, a parent, a classmate, a lunch staff person, teacher, custodian or bus driver. Each student will need to incorporate all previous lessons from this unit in order to write their article. A review might be necessary by the teacher. These articles will be ready for the first edition of your school newspaper. If your school does not have a school newspaper already established then you will be able to create one with the information provided in this curriculum unit. Once the articles have been written, proofread, edited, revised and rewritten, then it is time to publish them. You will need to examine the layout of your newspaper, review with the students that news articles usually go on the front pages of the paper with feature articles following on the other pages. The layout will vary, based on the decision of the editor. Although the editor usually makes these decisions, your students will decide how these articles will be arranged. Because the topic is the same for each article, students will determine which article to feature and which are supporting articles. Have students explain their reasons for choosing which article to be the feature article and why. Should the principal's article replace the lunch staff person's or should the view of the classmate be considered before the teacher's etc. Students will have many opportunities throughout the school year to write, report and publish articles. Your students may choose to report on the following topics: Back to School, New Teacher - New Student (a view from a newcomer), Report of the Reporters (newspaper field trip article), The Role of the PTO, Should Halloween be Celebrated?, School Bus Chaos, A View from Behind the Stage(Christmas program interviews), Do students like the afterschool programs, What

activities/events should we have at school this year? You may choose topics that fit the events and activities in your school and community. Publishing your newspaper takes team effort. Here are some jobs you may want to consider for your class to do together.

First, you will have to decide on a name for your newspaper. This could easily be done by soliciting names from just your classroom students or make it more exciting by involving the whole school. Have a ballot box for names and take a vote on the favorite among the students. Next, decide what your first issue will contain. This may include your first news articles along with comic strips, a puzzle, calendar of events and an editorial. This should be decided at the onset of this unit. For my purposes, my students are only writing articles to be included in our current school newspaper with the intention that we will submit several articles for each publication, which appear every quarter. If you plan to do your own publishing, it is possible to write a grant to offset the cost or to join in partnership with a local business or solicit funds from a variety of communities organizations. If none of these suggestions work, then you can use the pre-printed newspaper from Newspaper, Make-Your-Own-Newspaper (see bibliography). Therefore, some jobs may need to be assigned to either individuals or small groups. The editor-in-chief is the person or team responsible for arranging the articles in the sequence they will appear in the paper; copy editor has to be someone with a sharp eye and good spelling and punctuation skills. They go over all their articles to check for and correct errors. The mechanical department is a team that decides how the newspaper will be printed, which depends upon what equipment you have available, such as a word processor or copy machine. Also decide who will get copies of your first issue. Then you'll know approximately how many copies to print.

Finally, to ensure the successful circulation of your newspaper, you may choose to announce its release during the morning announcements or opening exercises in your school. Students can also make and post flyers announcing the upcoming edition of the newspaper. Keep parents involved by sending copies home with your students. You may also want to place copies in the teacher's lounge or in the school library for other teachers and staff. To conclude this unit, have an informal discussion with your class after the newspaper has been circulated. Focus your discussion on the student's opinions and views about their work, feedback and or criticism from peers, parents and teachers. Ask students for feedback and any suggestions they may have about the newspaper. If students are interested in continuing this process then you have established your school's first staff of student reporters. Hopefully your class will be excited and enthusiastic about their first newspaper, that they will want to continue producing the newspaper for your school.

This curriculum unit is a great way to get your students involved in reading and writing, using student-generated topics to create a school newspaper. Teachers can supplement their Language Arts curriculum by using the lessons on: topic and main idea, "wh" or "W" words, and identifying parts of a newspaper. The lesson narratives, suggestions and activities in this unit were developed to give teachers a fun and exciting way to incorporate newspapers into their classroom, while also implementing the communication standards established by the district. Success for students at all levels can be achieved in

this unit by simply using the third activity in each lesson. Hopefully, this unit will help students understand the importance of news and newspapers and the impact newspapers have on the community and the world.

Student Bibliography

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The New Pittsburgh Courier, Front page. community news 1999
USA Today, Front page, editorial, sports, 1999

COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and Identify the purpose, structure, and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in business, work, and other applied situations.

Unit of Teaching, Learning and Assessment