

Instructional Model Task

The Living Textbook

This task specifically addresses educational objectives. The activities are designed for students in grades 4-8. Originally published and made available by the Baltimore Sun Newspaper in Education Program.

Materials Needed

- 1 copy of a daily newspaper for each student
- 1 copy of this task for the teacher and each student
- a chart (on board, chart paper, or the overhead) with the following subjects listed: **reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies.**
- pen/pencil
- chalkboard/overhead projector

Purpose and Background

Grouping of students can be modified depending on materials and the age of students. The task was written for students to complete independently. The amount of the time needed will also depend on the level and ability of the students. The teacher may wish each student to cut out the part of the newspaper they have read for each question below in order to score the answers to each question accurately. This could be pasted on paper and made into a booklet called "***The Living Textbook.***"

This task integrates learning goals from the following areas:

- Reading-Reading for Information - the four stances
- Social Studies-Geography-People of the Nations and the World - Skills Processes
- Science-Concepts/Earth/Space - Applications
- Mathematics-Statistics-Communication
- Writing-Limited Writing-Writing To Inform
- Language Usage

Introduction/Background

The teacher will assist in completing a subject chart with the entire class. The chart will remain on display while the students work on the task. Students need to read many sections of the daily newspaper and skim many others, in order to complete this task (this chart activity is not meant to be scored).

PART I:

Activity 1

A. Identify the main idea of the article you have selected. Be sure to include as many details as you can from the reading. (Global) You will be scored on whether your response accurately reflects the main idea of the article you have read. You may earn a higher score depending on the amount of detail you provide.

B. What are some techniques the authors of the front page use to assist you in reading the front page? Be sure to use specific information from the paper you have read to support your answer. (Critical) You will be scored for your response to this question. The answer must include reference to at least two techniques the authors of the front page uses (such as bold print, large letters, pictures, position of the article on the page). Make sure to use detail (quotation, description of photos, etc.) from the specific examples from the front page instead of listing techniques.

Activity 2

A. Look through the newspaper to locate a map. (The weather map will work). Evaluate the map by looking to see if it has all of the features of a good map. You will not be scored for this part of the question.

B. Write your evaluation of whether the map is a good one. Support your decision with examples from the map you are using. (Social Studies/Geography/Developing Interpretation) You will be scored for your response to this question. The answer must include at least two of the features of a good map, which are directions, legends, grid systems, boundary lines, and scales. You can raise your score if you tell specifically how at least two of these features are used on the map you have chosen.

Activity 3

Look through the paper to locate a graph. Write a descriptive paragraph that interprets the data presented on the graph you have chosen. Make sure your paragraph includes specific evidence from the graph. Be sure that you use clear and complete writing with correct usage, punctuation, spelling and capitalization (CUPS). (Mathematics, Statistics/Developing Interpretation) State the main idea of the graph and then explain what the data is showing. You will be scored for your response to this question. You may earn a higher score by the amount of detail you give in your explanation. This can be scored also for language usage using the language usage rule (CUPS).

Activity 4

Skim the newspaper to find a place where mathematics is used to communicate an idea. (Any advertisement using mathematics will work.) On your paper, explain what the author is trying to communicate to the reader. Be sure to use evidence from the text in your answer. (Mathematics Communication/Developing Interpretation) You will be scored on your response to this question. The response should include specific examples from the text of

the advertisement to support the answer. It should also refer to the mathematics in the ad.

Activity 5

A. Locate the weather map. Select a city and write it on your paper. This response will not be scored.

B. Based on what you know and have read from the map, explain how you would dress for the weather in the city that you have selected above. (Science Concepts and Applications/Personal) You will be scored on your response to this question. This response should include a reference to the temperature of the city selected and the knowledge of the way to dress for the temperature of that city. A higher score can be gained if specific details about the city are added.

Activity 6

Look carefully at the articles and stories in the first section of the newspaper. Explain how the daily newspaper links people from all over the U.S. and the world. Remember to use the specific examples from the newspaper you are using. (Social Studies Geography Skills and Processes/Developing Interpretation) You will be scored for your response to this question. The answer should include some reference to the places in the country or world listed on the front page of the paper. You should comment on how we can learn about the rest of the world because of the newspaper. Specific details from the front page should be included.

Activity 7

A. From the newspaper, select one current event that interests you. Summarize the event using specific examples from the text. Be sure to use clear and complete writing with correct usage, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization (CUPS). (Global/language Usage) You will be scored on your response to this question. The summary must include the main idea for the article you have read and specific detail from the text. You may receive a higher score determined by the amount of detail from the article you give the summary. This can be scored also for language usage rule (CUPS).

B. Make a prediction about the impact of this event on you or other individuals. Use examples from the text in your answer. (Social Studies, People of the Nation and World/Personal) You will be scored for your response to this question. Your response should include a prediction and details from the current event to support your prediction.

Activity 8

Locate the sports section in your newspaper. Find a chart showing the scores for any league sport. On your paper, make a prediction about the teams based on the patterns you observe in the data. (Mathematics Statistics) You will be scored on your response to this question. This response should include discussion of the patterns of the data in the chart. The data upon which prediction is based should be included in the answer.

Activity 9

Find the classified ad section of the newspaper. Select one employment ad of not more than ten lines. (To save space and money, advertisements are not written in complete sentences.) Rewrite the ad in complete sentences using subjects, verbs and complete thoughts. Be sure that you use clear and complete writing with correct usage, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization (CUPS). (Language Usage) Students should be scored for their response to this question. The ad should be rewritten accurately in complete sentences using clear and complete writing with correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization (CUPS). It can be scored using the language usage rule.

PART II:

As a class, check the chart on the board about the subjects that may be covered in the newspaper. Add or change any information on the board to reflect accurate information based on the activities and reading you have done in Part I. You can refer to this chart throughout the final writing activity. This chart should not be scored. It is to be done as a whole group activity based on class discussion and reading. It should serve as a prewriting activity for the "writing to inform" which will follow. The chart should remain posted in the room or copied and given to students.

DIRECTIONS: Today you will be writing to inform. When you write to inform, you use specific information to fully explain your topic. When you write to inform you follow these steps:

1. Think about all you have learned from the readings and the activities you have done.
2. Think about what your audience needs to know about the topic.
3. Put your information in a logical order.
4. Use examples and descriptions to make the information clear to your audience.

Writing Prompt: Writing to Inform

Your school has been given several free classroom sets of daily newspapers to be used once or more a week. Now that you have read and studied the daily newspaper, your principal wants you to explain to other classes in your school why the newspaper can be called "***The Living Textbook.***" Based on what you have read and what you know about the newspapers, write a letter to another class in your school informing them how they can use these free newspapers as "***living textbooks.***"

Remember to support your explanation with examples from the newspaper you read and the class subject chart on the board. Remember to make sure your written response addresses form, audience, topic, and purpose of writing (FATP). Be sure that you use clear and complete writing with correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization (CUPS). (Limited Writing/Language Usage)

This response should include evidence that you can write a letter, which includes specific reasons why the newspaper can be used in the classroom. An excellent response would have some reference to the fact that if the newspaper were used as a textbook, students could always be reading current and changing material. Support for the letter should include specific reference to the activities and articles the class read in the newspaper and details from the chart on the board.

Scoring Criteria - Writing and Language Usage

Limited Writing Scoring Rule: Writing to Inform

2- Consistently addresses audience's needs by using purposeful and specific information to fully explain the topic. Text is uniformly organized, and language choices often enhance the text.

1- Sometimes addresses audience's needs by using purposeful and mostly specific information to adequately explain the topic. Text is generally organized, and language choices sometimes enhance the text.

0- Rarely or never addresses audience's needs by using purposeful or specific information to explain the topic. Text lacks organization, and language choices seldom, if ever, enhance the text.

Language in Use

2- Consistently uses word and sentence order and language choices to express meaning with style and tone. Text conveys uniform impression of correctness* and any errors that are present represent risk-taking.

1- Sometimes uses word and sentence order and language choices to express meaning with style and tone. Text generally conveys uniform impression of correctness* and errors may or may not represent risk-taking.

0- Rarely or never uses word and sentence order and language choices to express meaning with style and tone. Text appears error-ridden.

*(CUPS) correct usage, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization