**Explanatory Research Writing Lesson Plan:**

**What will the student know:** Students will know how to write, with proper grammar, a 2 page narrative essay. Some students will have had experience writing research papers from other schooling experiences including high school and college classes.

**What will the student be able to do**: As a result of completing the unit on MLA Format, Plagiarism and Explanatory writing, students will be able to:

* Recognize plagiarism
* Properly cite quotes, statistics and ideas taken from academic sources
* Recognize and locate 3 academic sources for a chosen topic
* Follow MLA format for in-text citations and Works Cited
* Write, using MLA format, a 3 page Explanatory paper with a thesis and relevant academic research.

**What will students feel:**

Students will feel confident that they can write a clear, college level 3 page explanatory paper following a basic structure after completing this unit. They will feel comfortable pinpointing undocumented research in fellow students’ papers. This will transfer to their own paper where they will feel capable of completing a small research writing assignment with little guidance. It is hoped that this feeling will transfer to other college classes where students may be expected to write research essays with little instruction.

Students can feel overwhelmed by researching and documenting the research they use in their scholarly papers. Often they may write research and write the paper but fail to use the proper MLA documentation. After completing this unit, it is expected that students will feel confident using quotations, statistics, and paraphrases to support their specific thesis.

**How will the student react:** Since it is a three-week unit, students will expect to vacillate between a numbers of reactions for the different stages of the unit. Depending on a student’s prior experience in research writing, they may feel fairly confident that they will be successful writing a basic research paper. If students are confident that they know how to write and properly cite a paper, they may be annoyed that they must complete a number of basic games/activities to reinforce skills they already have. Others may feel overwhelmed about creating MLA citations and Works Cited. Conscientious students often are anxious that they will inadvertently plagiarize and receive a failing grade. The hope is that students will take the idea of plagiarizing much more seriously both in their own papers and in their peers.

The goal of Section I will be to familiarize the students with plagiarism, and MLA format. After completing Section I, students can identify plagiarism and learn how to properly give credit to experts.

The Goal is Section II is to help students realize that there are many examples of plagiarism outside of the college classroom. This may help show the breadth of the problem as well the many consequences of plagiarizing work.

The goal for Section III is to have students to brainstorm a topic, find 3 academic articles to use to support a thesis for the specific topic. Students will write the 3-page draft using the three main points of the thesis. Each point of the thesis will be in several paragraphs and include a t least one academic expert, two statistics and two quotations.

**Pre & Post Knowledge Assessment:** On the first day of school, students are asked to write a letter to the instructor about their experiences as a writer, reader and student. This letter has several goals as it provides an opportunity for 1) all student voices to be heard 2) Students to provide a small window into their attitudes about reading, writing, and schooling in general 3) A writing sample that can be used to gauge authenticity of other writing pieces and4) provides a starting point for students to measure their own writing against at the end of the semester evaluation.

OR

Students will write 2-3 paragraphs about their experiences writing a research paper. Students will answer the following questions:

* Have you written any research papers before this class? If so, what were the topics?
* What class did you write the papers for?
* How did you research them?
* Did you use MLA or APA style to document your sources?
* How did you choose your topic?
* What is plagiarism and what examples of it have you seen? How did other students “cheat” on a paper?

**Pre& Post Behavior Assessment**

Studentswill write their own paper using the proper MLA format for in text citations and a works cited page. They will follow MLA guidelines when designing the paper including proper font, spacing, and pagination. Student will stay in class; engage in classroom discussions (not drop) complete the assignments within the time frame.

**How will I gain and maintain attention:**

MLA citation and formatting is a dry subject that is one reason I did not spend a great deal of time on it in the past. The problem is that lack of focus may have sent students the message that accurate citation of sources was not important. In order to change that, I have compiled activities that other colleges have created to share this same information with their students. These somewhat entertaining and interactive lessons reinforce the ideas of what plagiarism is and isn’t, Games are not easily found in English class so the idea of using a number of short games as well as research on YouTube may help “hook” students’ attention. Students will be working with a partner if they wish and will have a number of opportunities to choose topics of interest within certain fields.

**Connection to Prior Knowledge:**

Students will have had various amounts of prior knowledge of research writing based on their previous high school & college experiences. While the students will have varied backgrounds in academic research and writing, they will have written a 2-page personal experience paper and taken it through the steps of the writing process. The steps of the writing process include brainstorming, writing a draft, completing a self-check and peer evaluation. Peer evaluation is a vital step that asks students, using a check sheet, to read and comment on a student paper to insure that all components are present and the paper features clear concise writing using academic research.

**Blended Instruction:**

This unit is designed to reach more learning styles than the verbal linguistic that is so heavily relied on in a writing intensive class. As an English composition class, the verbal linguistic is evident in every step of the unit. An effort has been made to

If students choose to work in partners, it will provide opportunities to exchange ideas and to share information as they navigate through the various games and activities. This will nurture the interpersonal skills.

All students are required to reflect on each short assignment and pinpoint what knew knowledge they learned. This reflection focuses on the intrapersonal skills.

For the musical/rhythmic learning styles, students will listen to a variety of songs to determine if they agree that the music was plagiarized. While the student will not be creating the music, they will listen to specific parts of songs of different songs to evaluate if they are the same or if they are just somewhat similar.

Visual/Spatial: As students play games and complete the activities, there is a spatial element that is very important. For MLA formatting, proper spacing and alignment is stressed. In several of the exercises, it is very important that each space, punctuation and order of information be strictly followed. In one activity, students are asked to drag the elements of a works cited page into the correct order. This simple but important activity will appeal to students who prefer orderly design to a written project that has so many options.

**Fidelity:**

This unit on research writing begins with some low fidelity activities to reinforce basic documentation skills. These skills are not familiar and require not just an understanding of documentation but an ability to provide all necessary information in the given format. The games and activities provide feedback and repetition for students to practice and apply this new information in a simple environment where the focus is only one citation. As students continue with the games and activities in documentation and plagiarism, the fidelity does change. Towards the end of section one, the tasks do become more complicated as students are asked to read excerpts from original texts and compare it with student writings to determine if it is plagiarized. Once students determine if it is plagiarized, the next step is to distinguish if it is word-for-word plagiarism or paraphrased plagiarism. This involves more thought process and moves the activity form a low fidelity to low/medium fidelity since it replicates what students may do when peer evaluating a paper.

In section II, students are asked to read about different examples of plagiarism in the music world and in current news. This short activity is low fidelity and is included to help students see the link between plagiarism in the English classroom and the outside world.

In Section III, students are now taking their knowledge of MLA formatting and documentation, plagiarism and applying it to their writing process. Students will take a week to research and draft an explanatory paper on a topic of their choosing. This begins to enter into the medium fidelity simulation, as this is a skill needed outside of the English classroom. Once students complete the draft and begin to self check their papers, they are creeping into the higher end of medium fidelity. Once the students have reviewed their own papers, it is time to ask them to peer evaluate other student papers using the same checklist I will use to grade the assignment. At this stage, students are checking for the organization, formatting and flow of the paper and its support of a thesis. This requires students to gather their previous knowledge and critically evaluate another’s paper.

**Assessments**: Throughout this unit, there will be variety of formative assessments. Some assessments are built directly into the activities by providing immediate feedback if an answer is correct or incorrect.

In addition to the individual assessments for each activity, students are asked to respond in writing about what information they learned or were reinforced. This provides an opportunity for self reflection and an opportunity for students to process the documentation information.

Summative Assessment: The formative assessments check a student’s understanding of specific skills but it is the summative assessment that encompasses all of the skills. After finishing a three-page draft