

## **Instructional Unit Module 2**

Lesson Topic: “Bottom Line Up Front” Report Writing

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EDTC 6321

### **Introduction**

Young engineers entering the profession often struggle with technical writing – specifically, report writing and presentations. Their writing is logical, sequential, and narrative. They tend to include too much detail and take too long getting to the point, wishing to showcase their efforts in completing the process discussed in the report. Their managers, however, prefer reports that are clear, concise, and summative, ideally embedding visuals such as graphs to condense information. For example, a polished report might include a brief introduction of the problem statement and the discovered result, followed by the summarized process, integrating visuals to display relevant data.

Assuming managers do not wish to dedicate the time and resources to have their new employees undergo an entire course on technical writing, this brief lesson on “Bottom Line Up Front” (BLUF) report writing will provide a solid start on addressing the observed performance gap. Learners will shift their report-writing style from inductive to deductive, composing an introduction for a hypothetical engineering report that begins with the bottom line – in other words, the problem statement and the discovered result that resolves it. Learners will then select an outline for the remainder of the report following their BLUF-aligned opening, indicating a preference for a concise, summative style over an excessively detailed, narrative style.

The lesson proposal, submitted previously, included considerations regarding the instructional setting and the target learners. This design document expands the previously stated instructional goals into specific performance objectives and assessments that will verify the learners’ new skill in beginning reports with the bottom line up front.

### **Instructional Goal**

Learners will implement the writing strategy known as “Bottom Line Up Front,” or BLUF, thereby shifting their approach to report writing from an inductive to a deductive presentation of information.

## **First-Level Task Analysis (Specific Goals)**

Learners will:

- Identify key background facts about the concept of BLUF.
- Choose BLUF-aligned openings for various report samples.
- Write an original BLUF opening for a sample report.
- Select the best outline for a sample report, indicating the option that models a concise and summative style following the BLUF-aligned opening.

## **In-Depth Task Analysis**

Sub-Goal 1.0: Identify key background facts about the concept of BLUF.

- Task 1.1: Watch a video intro explaining the type of report writing managers see and the type they want to see. (1 minute)
- Task 1.2: Watch a video explaining the concept of BLUF. (4 minutes)
- Task 1.3: Complete a multiple choice comprehension check to identify key facts about BLUF. (2 minutes)
- Entry Behavior 1a: Learner has written reports and other documents in academic and professional settings.
- Entry Behavior 1b: Learner is motivated to improve or modify their report writing to meet manager's expectations.
- Entry Behavior 1c: Learner is accustomed to learning new content from videos and demonstrating understanding through multiple choice questions.

Sub-Goal 2.0: Choose BLUF-aligned openings for various report samples.

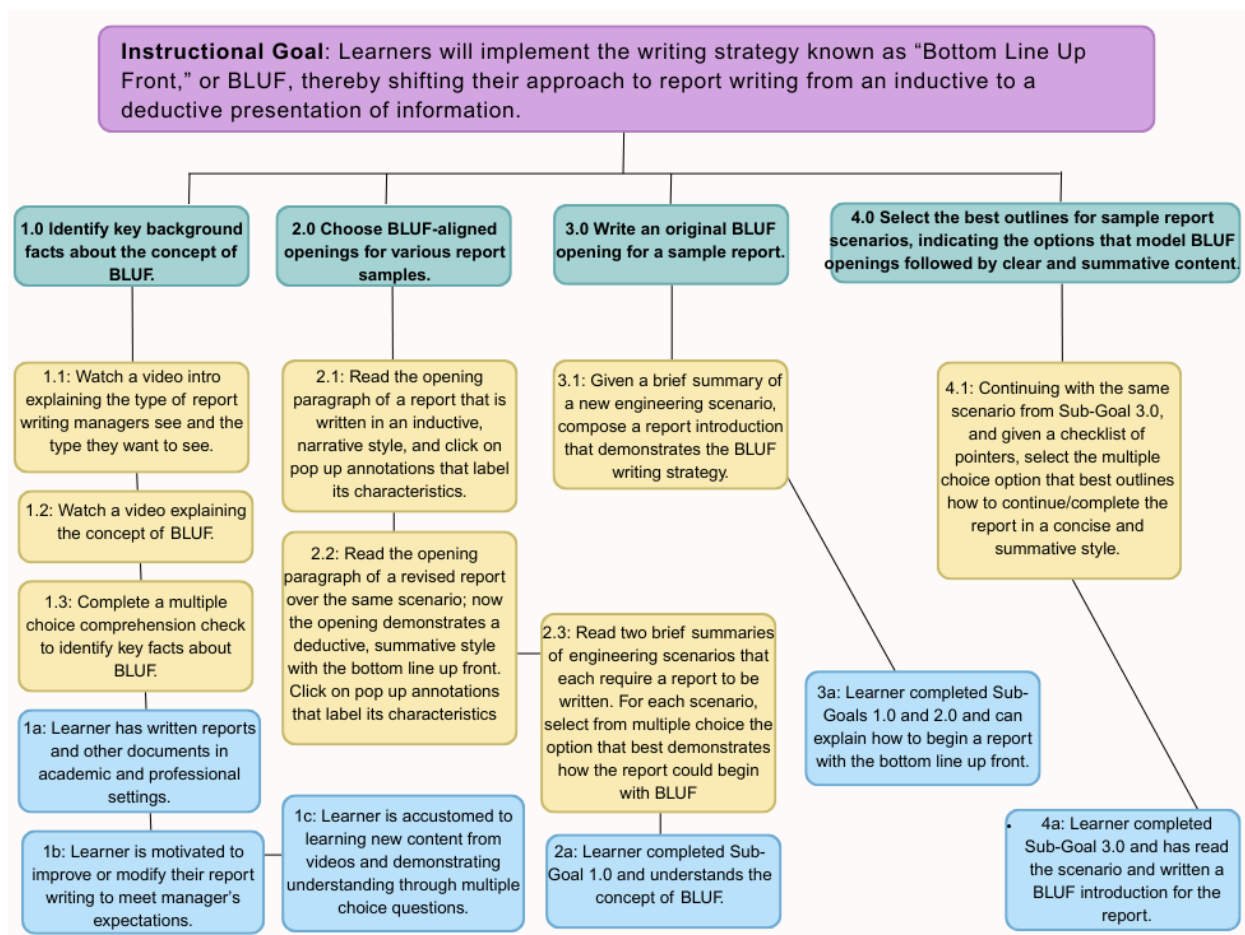
- Task 2.1: Read the opening paragraph of a report that is written in an inductive, narrative style, and click on pop up annotations that label its characteristics. (2 minutes)
- Task 2.2: Read the opening paragraph of a revised report over the same scenario; now the opening demonstrates a deductive, summative style with the bottom line up front. Click on pop up annotations that label its characteristics. (2 minutes)
- Task 2.3: Read two brief summaries of engineering scenarios that each require a report to be written. For each scenario, select from multiple choice the option that best demonstrates how the report could begin with BLUF. (8 minutes)
- Entry Behavior 2a: Learner completed Sub-Goal 1.0 and understands the concept of BLUF.

Sub-Goal 3.0: Write an original BLUF opening for a sample report.

- Task 3.1: Given a brief summary of a new engineering scenario, compose a report introduction that demonstrates the BLUF writing strategy. (8 minutes)
- Entry Behavior 3a: Learner completed Sub-Goals 1.0 and 2.0 and can explain how to begin a report with the bottom line up front.

Sub-Goal 4.0: Select the best outline for a sample report, indicating the option that models a concise and summative style following the BLUF-aligned opening.

- Task 4.1: Continuing with the same scenario from Sub-Goal 3.0, and given a checklist of pointers, select the multiple choice option that best outlines how to continue/complete the report in a concise and summative style. (3 minutes)
- Entry Behavior 4a: Learner completed Sub-Goal 3.0 and has read the scenario and written a BLUF introduction for the report.



## Performance Objectives

Steps in Instructional Goal	Performance Objectives
1.0: Identify key background facts about the concept of BLUF.	When asked questions about the meaning, origin, benefits, and industry applications of the writing strategy “Bottom Line Up Front” or BLUF, the learner will identify the correct multiple choice responses with at least 80% accuracy.
2.0: Choose BLUF-aligned openings for various report samples.	Given a hypothetical engineering scenario that would necessitate a report, the learner will compare possible opening paragraphs for the report and choose the option that best implements BLUF, with 100% accuracy.
3.0: Write an original BLUF opening for a sample report.	Given another hypothetical engineering scenario that would necessitate a report, the learner will compose a report introduction that demonstrates the BLUF writing strategy, meeting the proficiency standards explained on a rubric.
4.0: Select the best outline for a sample report, indicating the option that models a concise and summative style following the BLUF-aligned opening.	After writing the BLUF-aligned report introduction for a hypothetical engineering scenario, the learner will compare possible outlines for completing the report and will choose the option that outlines how to complete the report in a concise and summative manner, with 100% accuracy.

## Assessment for Each Performance Objective

Instructional Goal	Instructional Goal with Performance Context	Assessment
Learners will implement the writing strategy known	Given a hypothetical engineering scenario, learners will independently	The learner will (1) compose a BLUF-aligned opening paragraph for a

as “Bottom Line Up Front,” or BLUF, thereby shifting their approach to report writing from an inductive to a deductive presentation of information.	implement a deductive style of report writing by composing a BLUF-aligned opening paragraph and then choosing the outline showing concise, summative organization for the remainder of the report.	hypothetical engineering report; and (2) select the best outline from multiple choice options, indicating how to complete the remainder of the hypothetical report in a concise and summative manner.
<b>Steps in Instructional Goal</b>	<b>Performance Objectives</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Learners will... 1.0: Identify key background facts about the concept of BLUF.	When asked questions about the meaning, origin, benefits, and industry applications of the writing strategy “Bottom Line Up Front” or BLUF, the learner will identify the correct multiple choice responses with at least 80% accuracy.	The learner will pass a multiple choice quiz about BLUF with 80% accuracy or higher.
Learners will... 2.0: Choose BLUF-aligned openings for various report samples.	Given a hypothetical engineering scenario that would necessitate a report, the learner will compare possible opening paragraphs for the report and choose the option that best implements BLUF, with 100% accuracy.	The learner will select the correct multiple choice options indicating BLUF-aligned opening paragraphs for two different report scenarios.
Learners will... 3.0: Write an original BLUF opening for a sample report.	Given another hypothetical engineering scenario that would necessitate a report, the learner will compose a report introduction that demonstrates the BLUF writing strategy, meeting the proficiency standards explained on a rubric.	The learner will compose a BLUF-aligned opening paragraph for a hypothetical engineering report.
Learners will... 4.0: Select the best outline for a sample report, indicating the option that	After writing the BLUF-aligned report introduction for a hypothetical engineering scenario, the learner will	The learner will select the best outline from multiple choice options, indicating how to complete the hypothetical report in a

models a concise and summative style following the BLUF-aligned opening.	compare possible outlines for completing the report and will choose the option that outlines how to complete the report in a concise and summative manner, with 100% accuracy.	concise and summative manner following the BLUF-aligned opening.
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## Learning Domain

The instructional goal falls in the cognitive domain. Learners are developing the intellectual skill of writing reports in a deductive rather than inductive style.

## Peer Review of IU 2

While I can serve as my own subject matter expert on writing strategies, my dad is my subject matter expert in engineering and project management. Asking him for feedback on IU 2, I requested he respond to the following questions:

1. Does the Instructional Goal make sense? (In your estimation, if learners could implement the writing strategy of Bottom Line Up Front, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BLUF\\_\(communication\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BLUF_(communication)) , would they be more adept at the style of report-writing that managers prefer?)
2. Considering the four sub-goals under the In-Depth Task Analysis, does the sequence of tasks to be completed in the lesson sound feasible and valuable for the target learners?
3. Do the Performance Objectives accurately describe (or build up to) the observable skill that learners need to master?
4. Does the Assessment actually assess mastery of the skill?

Perhaps modeling the concise writing style that managers prefer, he responded:

I would answer yes to all four questions. I presume the time estimates were made to add up to an hour?

I interpreted his feedback to mean that he agrees with the relevance of the instructional goals, tasks, performance objectives, and assessments, but envisions the lesson

requiring an hour to complete. Granted, he doesn't have access to the hazy ideas of lesson content that are thus far only sketched out in my mind, but his guess at the time requirement is worth reflecting on.

I realized that my own time estimate of 30 minutes is based on an assumption that the target audience of young engineers will be confident learners with excellent reading fluency and comprehension. If I were designing this lesson for my past English classes of high school sophomores, I would budget an hour, knowing that my top students would finish in half an hour, and my lowest students would need an extended deadline beyond the hour provided in class. In lieu of having a design team including a currently active project manager with access to a real life target audience, I'm going to continue under my assumption that most young engineers could complete my lesson in about 30 minutes – but I should probably add a caveat to the documentation explaining that slower readers and English language learners may need additional time to complete the self-paced lesson module.

## Summary

IU 2 expands upon an instructional goal designed to address the identified performance gap in respect to young engineers who lack the writing skills to produce the clear, concise, summative reports desired by managers. The proposed lesson on “Bottom Line Up Front” (BLUF) report writing will lead learners to shift their approach to report writing from an inductive to deductive presentation of information. Assuming all stakeholders are satisfied with IU 2, the development phase in IU 3 will include the collection and drafting of all instructional materials and content needed for the lesson.

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