How can DGP help our students?

- Our students need more than the traditional grammar approach to help them transfer skills into long term memory. Once information goes into long term memory, it can become knowledge that can be applied in a variety of learning situations.
- Teaching grammar in isolation does not work for the majority of students.
- A “whole language” approach to grammar can be ineffective because if students “spend so much time looking at the forest that they don’t see the trees” (p.3)
- Teaching grammar solely within the context of writing does not always teach students the basics nor does it help them remember and apply them.

In order for grammar instruction to be effective, students need adequate repetition of fundamental skills spread out over time.

The consistent practice and application helps our students to accomplish the GCPS elementary whole literacy goal of applying appropriate grammar … skills in writing.

Getting started With DGP

- Students work with one sentence per week
- Each day of the week brings a different task to be accomplished with the sentence
- Student correct errors and ask questions as you go
- The whole process is treated more as a “mini-lesson” taking approximately 10 minutes per day.
- Less is more
- Thinking is required
- Concepts are revisited on a daily basis so that they aren’t forgotten
- Students have the opportunity to see how all of the concepts connect

Monday: Identify each noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, tense of verb, adverb, conjunction, article, preposition, and interjection in the week’s sentence.

Tuesday: Circle the simple subject. Draw a box around the simple predicate. Underline the complete subject once and the complete predicate twice. Place parentheses around the prepositional phrase and mark the object of the preposition.

Wednesday: Identify the purpose of the week’s sentence (declarative, exclamatory, imperative, interrogative). Identify the sentence type as either simple or compound. Write the sentence with correct capitalization & punctuation.

Thursday: Write a new sentence following the same criteria as this week’s sentence.

Friday: DIAGRAM!

Thursday & Friday could easily be swapped.
Having the entire week’s worth of work on one page will help your students to begin to notice patterns and rules for grammar.

An Invitation to Explore/Notice can be great Friday/summarizing activity and a strong way to tie the DGP mini-lesson into other areas. A student exploring this sentence might notice things such as: (1.) The adjectives in this sentence are directly before the nouns they describe. Is this the same in all sentences? (2.) The complete subject is the first “half” of the sentence and the complete predicate is the last part. (3.) A proper noun is always capitalized even if it isn’t the first word of the sentence.

Once you have a few sentences in the collection, have students look back over past sentences and see if what they have noted is true in the other sentences as well. Does it happen enough to think of it as a “rule”? If so, come up with a special way to have students note this in their DGP notebook.
Strategies for using DGP to build stronger readers and writers

Nouns All Around  Have students identify and tag objects in their surroundings that are nouns. Make sentences using each noun.

Verbs in Action  Have students sit in a circle and take turns standing up to act out a different action verb. Other students in the circle guess the action.

On Your Mark  Give each student 3 index cards and have them draw a period “.” on one, a question mark “?” on another, and an exclamation point “!” on the final card. Read sentences aloud and have students hold up the card that shows how the sentence should be punctuated. Consider having students call out the sentence purpose when holding up the card (ex: DECLARATIVE, EXCLAMATORY, etc.

Words-in-the-Box  Cut out words from different print media and laminate them. Include words representing different parts of speech and include some cards with punctuation marks. Working collaboratively, give students a sentence formula and ask them to draw words from a box to create the sentence.

Example:
Write a sentence with an adjective, noun, verb, and adverb
Sentence: Funny birds sing loudly.

Word Sorting  Using the same laminated words cards, give students a stack of cards to sort into parts of speech piles.

Human Word Sorting  Have each student hold a card and walk around dividing themselves into parts of speech groups.

Silly Sentences  After students have identified all nouns in a week’s DGP sentence, have them replace those nouns with new nouns. To make silly sentences, pull random words from parts of speech piles.

EX: Original Sentence: The girls played soccer on the playground.
New Sentences: Two dogs played chase on the porch.
Silly Sentence: Two apples played ladybug on the pencil.

All ideas are taken from DGP Plus: Building Stronger Writers by Dawn Burnette. Each grade level has a copy of this resource.

Take every advantage to use your DGP sentence as a mentor sentence. Talk with your students about how the words work together, why the sentence is clear, and any noticeable grammatical patterns. Then, look for mentor sentences in other print that you use throughout the day (stories, nonfiction text, etc.) and have students practice skills on the new sentences as well.

Word Sorting  Using the same laminated words cards, give students a stack of cards to sort into parts of speech piles.
Grade Level Ideas for Using DGP:

- Chapter 2 (pg. 7—11) Tips & ideas for implementing DGP in your classroom
- Chapter 3 (pg. 13—20) Reproducible “Help Pages” and a marking guide
- Pg. 21 & 22—List of all sentences
- Pg. 23—52 Answer Keys
- Pg. 53 Class quiz template

Collecting Local Data

Pretest—Done prior to 8/30/2011

Mid year Assessment—Complete and enter data by December 16, 2011

End-of-year Assessment—Complete and enter data by May 11, 2011