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Beyond the Formula: Using Strategic Scaffolding to Foster
Critical Thinking and Authentic Writing

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

by

M. Elizabeth Lonnecker

Committee in charge:

    Susan Scharton, Chair
    Cheryl Forbes
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2018

The Thesis of M. Elizabeth Lonnecker is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2018

This thesis is dedicated to my friends and family who were so supportive throughout this long journey. I especially appreciate my dear friend Sara Dozier for reviewing and editing my thesis. I also want to thank my students who make me want to keep learning so I can be a better teacher.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Beyond the Formula: Using Strategic Scaffolding to Foster
Critical Thinking and Authentic Writing

by

M. Elizabeth Lonnecker

Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

University of California San Diego, 2018

Susan Scharton, Chair

Much writing instruction in high school is based on using formulas and templates, such as the five-paragraph essay. Writing these types of essays does not necessarily give students the skills and strategies they need to be successful writers beyond high school (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate, 2002). Consequently, many students are graduating from high school unprepared for college and workplace writing tasks (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Kline & Williams, 2007). In addition, formulaic writing does not necessarily foster critical thinking skills (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate, 2002). Struggling students, specifically, often receive this kind of writing instruction based on templates because of the perception that they need remediation before they can compose more sophisticated texts (Brannon et al., 2008).

The Beyond the Formula (BTF) curriculum was designed to provide scaffolds that foster critical thinking as a foundation for composing texts instead of requiring students to adhere to a formula. With the BTF curriculum, students analyze information from various sources about current topics and then compose texts based on rhetorical strategies, instead of using a prescribed formula. BTF was implemented in a twelfth-grade English class in a Southern California public high school. The school is designated as a Title I school. The racial demographics of the students are: 13.5% African-American, 76.7% Latino/Hispanic, 7.4% Caucasian and 1.3% Asian. The activities were designed to provide scaffolds to struggling students in order to give them access to curriculum that promoted critical thinking. In addition, the curriculum topics were based on current events in order to foster student engagement and interest.

The teacher-researcher used rubrics, student interviews and essay excerpts for the evaluation. The data analysis indicates that strategic scaffolding can provide students with sufficient support to produce texts without using a formula or template. Additionally, students of all levels can participate in the prerequisite critical-thinking activities required for these kinds of writing tasks. However, struggling students need more guided instruction and practice with writing strategies and conventions to produce proficient texts. Overall, the data demonstrates that students of all levels can participate in higher-level thinking and writing activities with the support of effective scaffolds.

Critical Pedagogy: A Philosophical Framework to Guide Our Educational Decisions

If, as educators, we see our ultimate mission as empowering our students to become active agents in their own lives, then we must look at education in terms of a much broader context than only preparing students for college or a career. Giroux explains that critical pedagogy is the idea that the purpose of education is to give students the tools to not only be critical thinkers, but to produce "… the modes of literacy, critique, sense of social responsibility, and civic courage necessary to imbue young people with the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to be engaged critical citizens willing to fight for a sustainable and just society" (Giroux, 2013). He asserts that critical pedagogy is not a methodology, but an ideology that is concerned with the connection between knowledge, power, and agency.

Situating our educational practices and ideas within this context gives us an expanded vision for our work as educators and helps us clarify what pedagogical choices elevate our students and what practices keep them constrained. Freire (1970) describes a "banking model" of education where teachers deposit knowledge into passive students, who just serve as receptacles for whatever information the teacher chooses to share. This model keeps students disconnected from their own thoughts, opinions and insights and helps them practice acquiescence and obedience instead of mindful engagement. Critical pedagogy challenges this educational paradigm by supporting students to become active thinkers and agents in their own lives.

All students need access to this kind of transformational, empowering pedagogy whether they continue their educational career or immediately enter the workforce. Many of my students are from populations that are underrepresented in academic life beyond high school, and some choose to go to a university, but most of them choose to go to community

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colleges, trade schools or straight to the workforce. The students who continue their education are often unprepared for college level academics and oftentimes, in discussions of equity and access, the focus remains on preparing these students for higher-level academic tasks in college. These are important and essential goals, but we must also remain cognizant of our students who are not pursuing higher education and who may choose careers that do not necessarily require rigorous academic skills. Even though they may choose a less academic path, they still need pedagogy that requires critical thinking. Giving all students access to curriculum that will foster critical thinking skills is just as imperative as providing it for students who are pursuing higher education. Ultimately, the goal of education is to prepare our students to be full participants in a democratic society, with the power to positively impact their communities and their own lives.

Liberation Instruction

Presumably, most educators want to empower their students, but it is quite a journey to take this concept out of the ether and into the classroom. The idea of empowering students is heady, lofty stuff: the reality of it is arduous, painstaking and not necessarily clear-cut. One way to support this idea of critical thinking is with critical writing, but much of the current writing instruction that students receive entails using templates for writing assignments. Students may produce polished essays when they use templates or formulas, but these tools rarely promote deeper critical responses. An example of this type of formulaic writing is the standard five-paragraph essay, which consists of a three-part thesis with three body paragraphs that correspond to each component of the thesis. The conclusion summarizes the thesis and main ideas. Brannon, et al. (2008) argue that the five-paragraph essay is based on a deficit model of education that keeps students constrained not just in their writing but also in

their thinking and that it does not serve any useful purpose. These authors assert that teaching students this model maintains the status quo where at-risk students receive fill-in-the-blank writing instruction. Students who are more advanced are exposed to more sophisticated types of writing, which translates into social stratification. The students who receive formulaic writing instruction learn to "just follow orders," which are the hallmarks of working class life (Brannon et al., 2008).

I have been a teacher for 15 years, and for most of that time I have taught my students a formula for writing. I felt comfortable teaching and grading formulaic essays, and my students were relatively proficient at producing them. I certainly believed that I was providing my students with adequate writing instruction. However, five years ago my principal decided to change my teaching assignment and I transitioned from teaching ninth grade English to twelfth grade English. Previously, I had only taught middle school and ninth grade, so this was a significant change. To prepare for this new assignment, I started participating in the San Diego Area Writing Project workshops. I began to completely change my perspective about teaching in general and writing in particular. The San Diego Writing Project (SDAWP) is a part of the National Writing Project (NWP), which is a network of sites based on college and university campuses that aim to create teacher-leaders who will provide instruction that improves writing and learning for all students.

Because of my participation in SDAWP, I began to understand that I needed to provide writing instruction that focused on active and engaged inquiry, and not on simply producing polished pieces of writing that conformed to a formula. This change has not been easy or straightforward: the process of learning a new way to teach writing has been an ongoing, and at times difficult and disconcerting, journey. The idea that formulaic writing is

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not acceptable in college courses is shared by many college professors: Johns and McClish, professors in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Department at SDSU, assert that "the five-paragraph essay template does not serve students well in most university classes" (2005). It was quite unsettling to realize that the writing instruction that I had been providing for my students was not adequately preparing them for college or the workplace. However, the Writing Project ultimately provided the instruction and support I needed to transform my writing instruction. The work that I have done with the Writing Project is the foundation for my research project.

My project involves activities that allow my students to foster deep and meaningful engagement with the topics we cover in class. Helping students progress beyond writing formulas and templates begins with encouraging them to look at issues from multiple perspectives. They can then synthesize information from different sources and use those texts to formulate their own thoughtful responses. It is difficult to respond to multiple texts, and sophisticated responses are not supported with formulas or templates. However, students still need a structure to guide their writing, so instead of using formulas we use authentic texts, which serve as "mentor texts." Mentor texts are published pieces that students can use as authentic models for their own writing. Students can analyze the structures of various texts and use those texts as guides for creating the structure of their own writing. Using mentor text is a central component of the Writing Project philosophy. My students use these activities, among others, as the foundation for composing their own thought-provoking texts.

This type of writing instruction is much less straightforward than simply using a template or formula. It requires more effort from both students and teachers because it is a more complicated, less clear-cut process. Students who are going to college may be more

motivated to engage in a more challenging process, but many of my students are not going to college, at least not immediately after graduating, and they may choose jobs that do not require much writing. Most of the college-bound seniors at my school site choose to take Advanced Placement (AP) English courses. I teach the regular senior English courses and most of the students in my classes are not college-bound.

Students take my class the second semester of their senior year. Teaching writing is often challenging, especially with English language learners and students with writing skills below grade level. It becomes even more difficult with students who are at the end of their often not-so-successful educational careers. However, every time I start to question whether these students need the same kind of rigorous writing instruction as college-bound students, I find renewed strength to keep trying to teach critical writing. I know that writing skills are thinking skills. If students can synthesize information from different sources and then formulate precise, articulate responses they will have skills that will help them more successfully navigate the world around them.

It is more complicated to compose texts without prescribed formulas, but the benefit is that students actively engage with relevant topics, and then formulate their own responses based on authentic and rigorous inquiry. If students realize that they are capable of deep and thoughtful responses, even if they have underperformed in school their whole lives, it may help them envision broader possibilities for themselves. These possibilities could include higher education, which they may have previously disregarded because they did not see themselves as intellectually capable. The aim of my project is to provide a comprehensive, rigorous writing program that will serve all students in becoming more proficient critical

writers and critical thinkers. The next section will provide research to demonstrate the need

for this type of writing instruction.

CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Writing Proficiency of High School Graduates and College/Workplace Expectations

Lack of writing proficiency is a problem for many students who are graduating from high school, whether they continue their schooling or enter the workforce. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 70% of students in grades four, eight and twelve wrote at or below basic levels (Coker & Lewis, 2008). A 2005 survey found that 50% of college professors surveyed did not think that their students were prepared for college-level writing (Kline & Williams, 2007). Students entering college must be prepared for diverse and complicated writing assignments that they may have to produce without much support from faculty (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate, 2002). College students are expected to synthesize information from different sources, analyze the content, identify and respond to the author's argument and formulate their own opinions, using the text as a starting point (Johns & McClish, 2005). However, college faculty report that only one-third of students are proficient at the two most common writing tasks: analyzing information or arguments and synthesizing information from several different sources (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate, 2002). Students need strong literacy skills for the workplace as well: a report by the Institute for Higher Education Policy determined that 65% of the workforce needs advanced reading, writing and critical thinking skills (Phipps, 1998). A 2004 report from the Virginia Commonwealth University found that employers consider literacy and critical-thinking skills more important than either job-specific skills or computer skills (Reardon & Balliet, 2007).

Additionally, studies from a range of English-speaking countries found that employers value oral and written communication skills as much or more than technical skills (Gray, Emerson, & MacKay, 2005). However, according to a 2006 survey of 431 human resources

professionals and senior executives, 81% of them report that high school graduates were deficient in writing skills (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). The National Commission on Writing determined that U.S. companies spend $3.1 billion a year and the United States government spends $221 million a year to provide writing remediation to their employees (2005). Additionally, The American Diploma Project reviewed high school course work and exit exams across the country and found that most students are not prepared to be successful in college or the workplace because of deficits in their critical-thinking abilities (2004). Clearly, many students who are graduating from our high schools are not prepared for either workplace or college demands, in terms of both literacy and higher-level thinking skills.

Secondary Writing Instruction: The Deficits of the Five-Paragraph Structure

There are complex reasons why so many of our students exhibit deficits in writing and critical thinking, but one factor may be high school writing instruction. Many high school English teachers use a formula, such as the five-paragraph essay format, to teach students how to write an essay (Sawchuk, 2018). The five-paragraph essay is a standard format that consists of an introduction and conclusion and three supporting body paragraphs. The thesis statement has three related components and each body paragraph elaborates on one of the components (Nunnally, 1991). The University of North Carolina Writing Project Collaborative found that this format persists in education even though "…scholars in composition have documented the irrationality of [its] use for over 30 years" (Brannon et al., 2008). Conversely, Nunally (1991) states that the five-paragraph essay format can be used as guide for beginning or struggling writers, and that it can help students learn coherence and unity in their writing. But, he asserts that the format is only a beginning step and teachers need to help students progress to more sophisticated writing. Brannon, et al. (2008), on the other hand, argue that the five-paragraph model produces formulaic writing that keeps

students, especially poor children and minorities, in remedial classes. More advanced students receive more sophisticated writing instruction and they therefore have more opportunities to practice higher-level thinking skills. This type of instruction prepares them to be active, engaged, responsive citizens who can formulate their own ideas and responses.

Using the standard five-paragraph essay does not prepare students for college level writing that demands critical thinking (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate, 2002). Some studies posit that in order to deeply engage with the text and formulate their own well-reasoned and robust responses, students should discard formulaic structures. One of the reasons that formulaic writing is problematic is because using formulas and templates may not teach students how to construct an authentic argument. For example, the first writing prompt that I assigned to my students asked them to determine why Americans are so unhealthy, based on our eating habits. Students had to formulate an argument based on the texts that we had examined in class. The assignment required them to make a claim and provide a rationale to support their argument. A sample thesis might be, "The single most important factor contributing to our health crisis is the increase in portion sizes over the past 20 years." In this case, the student must analyze all the information that has been presented, take a stance on the issue and then craft an argument to support their point of view. With the standard five-paragraph formula, they could have just used three different examples to answer the prompt, without actually formulating an argument. For example, with a 5-pargraph essay, a sample thesis might be: Americans are so unhealthy because we consume too much sugar, we eat too much fast food and our portion sizes have increased in the last 20 years. With this kind of structure, students do not actually have to take a stance and compose an argument. Instead, they can just offer three separate examples related to the question. When they use a formula,

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students do not practice critical thinking skills like synthesis, analysis and evaluation. Because they do not actually formulate an argument, they are basically just writing summaries of three related responses.

In addition, because they do not have to construct an argument, students are not learning how to use academic language in a more sophisticated way. For example, with the five-paragraph formula, students can use transitions words and phrases only to introduce the next topic. They may use words and phrases like: first, secondly, lastly, next and finally. On the other hand, if students are formulating an argument, they must use transition words and phrases as rhetorical tools to support their argument. With authentic argumentative writing, students must use words and phrases such as "even though," "consequently," and "as a result." These kinds of words and phrases require addressing exceptions and opposing viewpoints, as well as examining cause and effect, instead of simply listing related examples.

Lastly, because students do not have to practice more complex critical thinking skills when they are using a template, they can become accustomed to this linear, formulaic writing that is ultimately less cognitively demanding. When students are exposed to more challenging requirements they may be resistant because they are used to less demanding tasks (Tsui, 2002). In effect, formulaic writing may ultimately impede students' progress not only because they are not practicing transferable skills, but also because they are becoming accustomed to less cognitively demanding tasks. In addition to developing critical thinking skills, students must also develop critical thinking dispositions. The dispositions are the habits that make students want to engage in critical thinking, and they are a crucial component of fostering critical thinking skills (P. A. Facione & Facione, 1992). If students do not engage in writing

tasks that require critical thinking skills, then they will not develop the habits of mind that they need in order to participate in academically rigorous tasks.

The Common Core Standards: New Assessments Require More Sophisticated Writing

There is evidence that our students are not prepared for literacy demands in the workplace and post-secondary education (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). This alone necessitates a change in our literacy instruction, however, educators will be compelled to develop more effective teaching methods with the implementation of the new Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards are educational standards that have been adopted by 42 states and the District of Columbia for students in kindergarten through grade 12 in English language arts and mathematics (Common Core State Standards Intitiative, 2010). The standards correlate with college and workplace expectations, as well as international benchmarks. The goal of the standards is to require students to be critical readers, writers and thinkers and to deeply engage with high-quality texts. Students who meet the standards will be able to "demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic" (Common Core State Standards Intitiative, 2010). Formulaic methods of writing will not meet the demands of the new standards. Teachers must introduce innovative writing practices to adequately prepare students for these new assessments. More importantly, aligning writing instruction with the new ELA standards gives students a greater opportunity to acquire the skills to be critical thinkers.

The research indicates that fostering critical thinking skills and critical thinking dispositions will benefit students of all academic levels. One way to foster these skills and dispositions is for educators to provide writing scaffolds that enable students to produce texts that demonstrate critical thinking. Using writing strategies as scaffolds instead of a template

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or a formula helps students respond to each specific writing task based on the rhetorical

demands, instead of just following a prescribed formula. Using a template does not require

responding to the rhetorical demands of each specific writing task. The Research Review will

provide an overview of the supporting research.

Introduction

A fundamental component of critical pedagogy is teaching students to be critical thinkers. This type of instruction benefits all students, regardless of the path they chose to take after high school. All of our students need the skills to successfully navigate and to actively engage with the world around them. One way to facilitate this kind of learning is with writing instruction that requires critical thinking. The purpose of this literature review is to, first, provide a definition of critical thinking and then to examine the connection between critical thinking and writing. Additionally, this literature review will examine pedagogy that provides students, especially struggling students and English-language learners (ELLs), with the necessary support to successfully engage in classroom activities that promote critical thinking through writing.

What is Critical Thinking?

The new Common Core Standards have created a renewed interest in fostering critical thinking skills in the classroom. They emphasize the analysis and synthesis of multiple sources of information , as opposed to simply regurgitating facts or summarizing and identifying main ideas (Common Core State Standards Intitiative, 2010). While many educators have been interested in pedagogy that promotes critical thinking, it will soon become an essential component of the curriculum for most educators because of Common Core. Critical thinking is not a new concept or endeavor. Almost a hundred years ago, Dewey (1916) discussed "reflective thinking", which is often used synonymously with critical thinking. A discussion of critical thinking using Dewey's ideas is useful, since subsequent definitions are variations or extensions of Dewey's original thoughts (Bean, 2011).

Dewey defines critical thinking as the process of solving an authentic problem using the scientific method (Dewey, 1916). This critical thinking process requires students to progress through all the stages of inquiry to find a solution to a real problem (Tanner, 1988). For Dewey, the purpose of education is to promote the moral and intellectual development of the individual to provide the foundation for a democratic society. Situating learning within other people's ideas and experiences gives the learner a community to facilitate their own learning and then enact that learning to positively change society. Ultimately, the aim of critical thinking is for the learner to be able to positively contribute to their community. They can do this by actively engaging in a systematic way of thinking about issues and problems.

The American Philosophical Association's Committee on Pre-College Philosophy convened a panel to formulate recommendations for instruction and assessment for critical thinking (P. A. Facione, 1990). A total of 46 experts participated in the Delphi method of qualitative research over a two-year period. Approximately half of the scholars were from philosophy departments, with the remaining panelists from education, humanities, social sciences and the sciences. The expert panel came to a consensus and defined critical thinking as "…purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, and inference as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (P. Facione, 1990, p. 3). The panel identified six core skills to facilitate critical thinking: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Becoming proficient at these skills leads to critical thinking, although a student does not need to master all the skills to be a proficient critical thinker (P. A. Facione, 1990).

To promote this type of thinking in the classroom, teachers need a clear definition and understanding of critical thinking to develop effective curriculum (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999). The panel identified sub-skills for each skill which provides guidelines for teachers to determine what tasks correspond with each critical thinking skill. Teachers can develop activities to cultivate these skills for students at all grade levels, as well as for students of varying academic abilities, based on these categories. The skills and sub-skills are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Critical skills and sub-skills: Delphi Project (Facione, 1990)

Skills	Sub-skills
1. Interpretation	• Categorization • Decoding Significance • Clarifying Meaning
2. Analysis	• Examining Ideas • Identifying Arguments • Analyzing Arguments
3. Evaluation	• Assessing Claims • Assessing Arguments
4. Inference	• Querying Evidence • Conjecturing Alternatives • Drawing Conclusions
5. Explanation	• Stating Results • Justifying Procedures • Presenting Arguments

Disposition Towards Critical Thinking

The Delphi Project concluded that in addition to determining the requisite academic skills required for critical thinking, it is also necessary to examine students' attitudes or dispositions towards critical thinking as well (P. A. Facione, 1990). An essential criterion in Dewey's definition of critical thinking is for students to have an attitude that encourages intellectual growth (Carol, 2002). A critical thinking disposition is the inclination or

motivation to use higher order reasoning skills in response to a problem, dilemma or situation in which a choice must be made. This is important in terms of the classroom because a lack of skills and a lack of motivation may require separate pedagogical approaches. A lack of skill may lead to a lack of motivation, but this is not always the case. A student who does not know how to employ critical-thinking strategies may need a different kind of instruction and support than a student who knows how to do so but chooses not to (Giancarlo, Blohm, & Urdan, 2004). Therefore, in order to foster critical thinking skills for students, educators must promote the skills as well as the dispositions (P. A. Facione, 1990).

While it may be relatively straightforward how to assess the cognitive skills correlated with critical thinking, it may be a little less clear how to measure students' attitudes and dispositions towards thinking. Nonetheless, having a positive disposition towards critical thinking is as important as having the necessary cognitive skills (P. A. Facione, 1990) and educators need specific guidelines about these dispositions if they are going to effectively cultivate these attributes in their students. To that end, Facione & Facione (1992) developed The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI), which was the first assessment designed to measure students' dispositions towards critical thinking. The CCTDI was developed for post-secondary students based on the Delphi Project findings about what dispositions promote critical thinking. The inventory measures seven traits: inquisitiveness, systematicity, judiciousness, analyticity, open-mindedness, confidence in reasoning and truth seeking.

This inventory was given to 586 entering freshmen at a private, urban university. The freshman were academically capable students, with a 3.47 average GPA and an average combined SAT score of (N. C. Facione, Facione, & Sanchez, 1994). The results indicate that

many of these students, who were presumably academically strong based on their GPA and SAT scores, did not leave high school with all the critical thinking dispositions that they would need for college level work. High school teachers must be aware that even academically high-performing students do not necessarily acquire these habits, even when they have demonstrated academic success. Secondary teachers can implement pedagogy that specifically addresses these dispositions in order to adequately prepare students for higher-order thinking tasks.

To promote critical thinking dispositions among their students, high school teachers need a specific idea of what traits compose these dispositions. The California Measure of Mental Motivation (CM3) was designed to identify and measure these dispositions for secondary students (Giancarlo et al., 2004). The CM3 was based on elements from the CCTDI, definitions from the Delphi Project and applicable research. The four major scales of the CM3 are learning orientation, creative problem solving, mental focus and cognitive integrity. Learning orientation is a general inclination to gather information and skills. It entails strategically using information to solve problems and being motivated to engage in demanding tasks. Problem solving involves using creativity and imagination to address challenging issues. Mental focus indicates an organized, systematic, persistent approach to problem solving. Cognitive integrity is the inclination to accurately and thoroughly consider varying viewpoints. It also encompasses intellectual curiosity.

The CM3 was developed over a two-year period based on four independent studies (Giancarlo et al., 2004). The purpose of the first study was to validate the CM3. The study had multiple data collection sites across the United States and involved students from sixth through twelfth grades. Sixty-two percent of the participants were African-American, 19%

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were Caucasian, 17% were Latino and the remaining 1% were various other ethnicities.

Seventy-five percent of the participants were lower to middle income. Each site tested at least

30 students and a total of 1,378 students were tested. After the first study was conducted,

revisions were made to the CM3 and the remaining studies were conducted to determine the

reliability and validity of the tool after the changes. Forty-eight out of 100 questions from

Study One were included in the subsequent studies. Studies Two and Four included public-

school students in Northern California with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Study Three

participants included mostly Caucasian females at a private college-preparatory school in the

Midwest.

The researchers compared the students' scores on the CM3 with their PSAT or SAT

scores and GPA's. The results indicate that scores on the CM3 have some correlation with

student achievement and motivation. These results have important implications for high

school teachers because the CM3 offers specific areas to target in terms of critical thinking

dispositions. Fostering these attributes is equally as important as developing the cognitive

skills to promote critical thinking (P. A. Facione, 1990) and the CM3 offers some attributes

specifically for secondary students. Secondary teachers can use the scales from the CM3 to

determine what habits of mind correlate with critical thinking. The scales are presented in

Figure 1.

Learning Orientation

A disposition toward increasing one's knowledge and skill base. Valuing the learning process as a means to accomplish mastery over a task. Interested in challenging activities. Uses information seeking as a personal strategy when problem solving.

Creative Problem Solving

A disposition toward approaching problem solving with innovative or original ideas and solutions. Feeling imaginative, ingenious, original, and able to solve difficult problems. Desire to engage in activities such as puzzles, games of strategy, and understanding the underlying function of objects.

Mental Focus

A disposition toward being diligent, systematic, task oriented, organized, and clearheaded. Feeling at ease with engaging in problem solving. Feeling systematic and confident in ability to complete tasks in timely way. Feeling focused and clearheaded.

Cognitive Integrity

A disposition toward interacting with differing viewpoints for the sake of learning the truth or reaching the best decision. The expression of strong intellectual curiosity. Valuing the fair-minded consideration of alternative perspectives.

Figure 1. Major scales of the California measure of mental motivation (CM3) (Giancarlo et al., 2004)

Critical thinking and struggling students.

Acquiring these critical thinking skills and dispositions is challenging for any student, but some educators assume that this is especially true for students who are already struggling with mastering basic skills. As a result of this perspective, struggling students may be less likely to experience instruction that allows them to learn and practice these skills and dispositions. Previously, learning theories mostly defined learning as a linear, sequential process. Based on this understanding, educators believed that students should master basic skills before they were exposed to higher-order thinking tasks (Zohar, Degani, & Vaaknin, 2001; Zohar & Dori, 2003). Consequently, lower-achieving students who did not master basic

skills received little or no exposure to more advanced academic tasks (Zohar & Dori, 2003).

Within the past 25 years, learning theories have evolved to describe learning as a process in which students make progress over time as they are involved in authentic thinking tasks situated within relevant contexts (Zohar et al., 2001). These new theories support the premise that students at all levels need instruction that fosters critical thinking skills: thinking is seen as an integral part of the entire learning process and not just an end goal once students have mastered basic skills (Zohar et al., 2001; Zohar & Dori, 2003). Although new learning theories have evolved to determine that all learners need critical thinking instruction, teacher practices often still reflect the previous theories (Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1993). These practices frequently exclude lower-achieving students from critical thinking tasks because they have not mastered basic skills and therefore teachers assume that they need remediation before they can engage in higher-order thinking activities (Raudenbush et al., 1993).

Raudenbush, Rowen and Cheong (1993) determined that teachers are much more likely to focus on critical thinking tasks for more advanced students. They asked teachers in math, science, social studies and English at 16 different school sites to describe their instructional goals for each class. Their findings indicate that the teachers emphasized critical thinking skills for their higher achieving students but not for their lower achieving students. The teachers adjusted their teaching practices based on the academic level of their students, which perpetuates and accentuates the achievement gap because lower level students do not have the same access to rigorous curriculum. Consequently, they do not move beyond remediation (Raudenbush et al., 1993).

Because of the persistence of this educational paradigm that disadvantages low-achieving students, Zohar & Dori (2003) used results from their study of science education and critical thinking to determine if struggling students can make academic progress in a learning environment that encourages critical thinking. The original goal of the study was to evaluate the results of four different research studies in secondary science classrooms, focusing on instruction in critical thinking skills. Researchers found similar results in terms of progress when they compared the scores of low-achieving students and high-achieving students. As a result of their findings, they analyzed the evidence in terms of the outcomes specifically for struggling students. Some of the tasks that Zohar and Dori identify as higher order thinking skills are crafting arguments, making hypotheses, solving complex problems, responding to assumptions and formulating conclusions. The findings indicate that both high and low achieving students improved the quantity, quality and complexity of questions they formulated. Low and high achieving students also made gains in their reasoning abilities. All students made substantial gains in their critical thinking skills and content knowledge, however, the net gain for the struggling students was greater (55.7) than the gain for the more advanced students (31.6). In the pre-tests, there was a large discrepancy between the scores for the high- and low-achieving students in terms of knowledge and critical thinking skills: 42.1 for the high-achieving students and 15.2 for the low-achieving students. However, the posttests results were almost the same: 73.0 for the advanced students and 69.3 for the low-achieving students.

Based on their analysis from these studies, Zohar and Dori (2003) concluded that all students benefit from instruction that promotes critical thinking. They contend that low-achieving students can make substantial gains in higher-order thinking skills if they are given

sufficient instruction and support. However, teachers may be reluctant to expose low-achieving students to critical thinking tasks because they may confuse and frustrate students (Zohar et al., 2001). If students have had less practice with rigorous academic tasks they may have a lower frustration threshold with challenging activities. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have access to the pedagogical tools and theoretical understandings that will allow them to persevere in giving all students access to rigorous curriculum (Zohar & Dori, 2003). It is especially challenging to deliver rigorous curriculum to students who are already struggling, but it is crucial for these students to have access to higher order tasks so they can move beyond remediation. Teachers can remain committed to equitable instruction if they have the theoretical understanding and pedagogical support to deliver challenging curriculum to struggling students.

Critical thinking and writing.

To determine how to promote critical thinking in the classroom, Tsui (1999) conducted a study among 24,837 students at 392 four-year colleges to determine what kind of instructional techniques and courses promote critical thinking. The students took a pre-test when they entered college as freshman and then a post-test as seniors. The survey questions determined the progress that students made in developing critical thinking skills. The results indicate that writing assignments and instructor feedback on such assignments had the highest correlation with promoting critical thinking skills. Additionally, independent research projects, group projects, class presentations and essay exams also contributed to growth in critical thinking skills among the students. Multiple-choice exams did not promote critical thinking skills. The type of instruction that yielded the most growth for students entailed solving a problem or answering a question, as opposed to memorizing information.

Educators may assume that all writing tasks will automatically foster critical thinking, but this is not necessarily always the case (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004). In 1987, Washington State University (WSU) developed and implemented a writing program that integrated writing in all the disciplines (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004). The faculty developed the program based on the assumption that if student writing improved, students would also make gains in their critical thinking skills. However, the findings did not support this assumption. The 2001 Progress Report on the Writing Portfolio at WSU stated that 90% of the upper-division students demonstrated writing proficiency based on upper-division writing portfolios. However, the WSU faculty reported that despite these findings, many students seemed to lack critical thinking skills (Condon and Kelly-Riley, 2004). As a result, the faculty began to examine the connection between critical thinking and writing more closely. The faculty evaluated senior-level papers for critical thinking using *The WSU Guide to Rating Critical Thinking* (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004, p. 59) which includes seven crucial elements:

- identification of a problem or issue
- establishment of a clear perspective on the issue
- recognition of alternative perspectives
- location of the issue within an appropriate context(s)
- identification and evaluation of evidence
- recognition of fundamental assumptions implicit or stated by the representation of an issue
- assessment of implications and potential conclusions

They found that most of the papers earned low scores for critical thinking. As a result of these findings, the *WSU Writing Assessment Program* began evaluating student work based on writing criteria as well as critical thinking, using *The WSU Guide to Rating Critical Thinking* (Appendix E). The purpose of this guide is to provide a way to measure critical thinking, in

addition to providing instructors with parameters to evaluate if their own assignments required critical thinking.

An important finding from these assessments was the inverse relationship between critical thinking and proficient writing. *The WSU Guide to Rating Critical Thinking* was used to assess sixty writing samples from entry-level Writing Placement Exams and junior-level timed writing exams. The results from the writing and critical thinking assessments indicate that exams with lower writing scores yielded higher critical thinking scores. On the other hand, the more proficient writing correlated with lower critical thinking scores. This discrepancy may be because new ways of thinking may lead to less proficient writing as students contend with more complex cognitive tasks (Haswell, 1991).

Although these assessments were conducted with college-level students, the findings offer relevant considerations for secondary teachers. First, high school teachers should design writing prompts that require critical thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, not just summarization that only requires recalling information. Having students write many texts will not necessarily lead to an increase in critical thinking skills: The quality of the writing prompt is more important than the quantity of writing assignments (Anderson, Anson, Gonyea, & Paine, 2009). Critical thinking must be oriented toward a purpose, such as answering a question or solving a problem (Bailin et al., 1999) and teachers should design writing tasks that require these kinds of processes. Instructors can use resources such as *The WSU Guide to Rating Critical Thinking* to create writing prompts and tasks that will require students to address elements of critical thinking.

Additionally, secondary teachers should recognize that more complex thinking tasks may yield less proficient writing (Haswell, 1991). As the difficulty and complexity of the task

increases, the quality of student writing decreases (Bean, 2011). This is a crucial piece of understanding for secondary teachers who often feel pressure to demonstrate student progress. Because student writing proficiency may decline as students practice critical thinking skills, teachers may feel less inclined to create writing tasks that stimulate real thinking because it could appear that students are regressing in terms of their writing. If teachers recognize that student writing may become more problematic as students learn how to incorporate new thinking skills into their texts, educators can remain committed to supporting real intellectual progress instead of reverting to assigning less complicated writing tasks.

Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development.

For low-achieving students to participate in writing tasks that foster critical thinking skills, teachers must provide academic support that will allow students to engage in activities that are beyond their current levels of ability. Learners acquire these new skills by progressing through the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1986). The ZPD is an area in which students need support to attempt skills that they cannot practice independently (Vygotsky, 1986). With the support of an expert guide, such as a teacher, students can acquire and practice higher order thinking skills with guidance until they are able to implement these skills independently. To facilitate students' progress through this process, teachers can provide students with scaffolds. These are temporary structures that allow learners to complete a task that they could not successfully execute on their own (Bruner, 1978). For example, as students are learning how to analyze an author's argument, the teacher might demonstrate different kinds of analysis and then give the students a chart with leading questions that will provide students with guidelines for analyzing the text. After students have had sufficient opportunities for practicing the process with support, they can independently complete an analysis without support.

Collaborative learning as a scaffold.

To produce writing that demonstrates higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis, students need ample opportunities to develop these skills. Students can practice using these critical thinking skills by engaging in purposeful group projects and discussions. Students use critical thinking skills when they interact with peers in problem-solving situations, and these situations facilitate their cognitive development (Bayer, 1990). According to Vygotsky (1986), students are more able to participate in higher-level tasks within a group than they would if working independently. This increased student interaction correlates with improvement in critical thinking skills (Terenzini, Theophilides, & Lorang, 1984).

Gokhale (1995) conducted a study among 48 undergraduate students at Western Illinois University to determine if working in collaborative groups improved students' critical thinking skills. The study group and the control group were each given pre- and post-tests to measure their progress. Both groups listened to the same lecture and completed the same worksheet. The worksheet had both drill and practice questions and critical thinking questions. The critical thinking questions required analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the information and concepts. After he students in the control group completed the worksheet individually they were given an answer sheet to evaluate their answers and to determine how the problems were solved. Then they were given a post-test. The collaborative learning group received instruction about the collaborative process and then they completed the worksheet together. The collaborative work included discussing why they came to a particular solution for each problem. After their discussion they were given a post-test. The findings indicate that the collaborative group performed better on the critical thinking questions than

the control group. Additionally, students reported that working in groups helped stimulate their thinking and reduced their anxiety about engaging in problem-solving tasks.

This study has implications for high school students for several reasons. First, it offers evidence that collaborative groups are effective for higher-level thinking activities, even at the college level. These results may be reassuring for secondary teachers who think that collaborative groups are only appropriate for younger or lower-performing students, or for less demanding academic tasks. Additionally, activities that reduce student anxiety about higher-order thinking tasks may be particularly important for struggling students who may not have had as much exposure to rigorous curriculum (Raudenbush et al., 1993). Collaborative groups allow students access to tasks that they could not attempt independently. Working in groups may increase participation because students are more willing to take risks in small groups they would not take if working alone. If students can practice using these critical thinking skills in a group before they must apply them in a writing task, they may be more likely to transfer these skills to their independent work. A crucial component of fostering students' critical thinking skills is encouraging the dispositions of critical thinking. Anxiety affects the willingness to engage in more challenging critical thinking tasks. Collaborative group work fosters a classroom environment that supports and encourages students to be critical thinkers as they engage in more difficult and complex tasks.

Genre-based pedagogy as a scaffold.

In addition to having scaffolds for critical thinking, students also need effective writing scaffolds that will help them transfer these higher-order thinking skills to the texts they produce. While a traditional five-paragraph essay provides a very clear organizational pattern for writing, it does not necessarily provide an opportunity for students to practice these critical thinking skills. If students do not use a template, they need writing instruction that

helps them understand the different formats and rhetoric of various genres of texts so they can adequately organize their own texts. A genre is a text that has a specific purpose and uses certain rhetorical elements and organizational structures to achieve that purpose (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). For example, the structure of an opinion-editorial about vaccinating children that is published in a local newspaper is different than the structure of a research article about the same subject in a scientific journal. In addition, the opinion-editorial text may have less academic language and an informal, emotional tone with personal experiences as examples. A research article in a scientific journal, on the other hand, would most likely have formal, academic language and scientific evidence as opposed to personal experiences. The organizational structures and rhetorical elements of each type of text are different because of their different audiences and purposes, even though the topic is the same. The goal of examining genres is to help students understand a writer's linguistic and rhetorical choices based on the audience and purpose (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). Henry and Roseberry (1998) define the rhetorical choices in a text as "moves" that an author makes to facilitate the communication of their ideas.

Genre-based pedagogies give students "explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts" (Hyland, 2003, p. 18). By deconstructing the text and identifying specific rhetorical moves and structures, students can begin to understand the components of the text and determine what elements support the author's purpose. Effectively scaffolding instruction so students can access and understand more complicated material provides students with the strategies to independently engage with the texts that they read (Hyland, 2002). Ultimately, students can use their understanding of the intersection between audience, purpose and genre to compose their own texts based on the rhetorical situation,

instead of simply using a formula or template. For example, if students are writing a persuasive essay about how to address childhood obesity and their audience is a group of researchers, they could begin the essay with a summary of the most important research findings and lead directly into the thesis. However, if their audience is a group of middle school students they might start their essay with an anecdote about the typical teenager's eating habits, leading up to a rhetorical question about the students' own eating habits. The genre for both essays is the same, but the rhetorical needs of each different audience changed the components of the text. The first essay could begin with an informational section and the second one could start with an anecdote. Giving students the strategies to compose their own organizational structure allows them to be responsive to their audience and purpose, and therefore craft a more effective argument.

Genre-based pedagogy and English language learners.

Students who are second-language learners (ELL) need scaffolds that will allow them to navigate rigorous curriculum with limited language skills. Scaffolding for ELL learners should not entail simplifying the concepts, but rather giving students multiple opportunities to access the subject matter (Walqui, 2006). Providing effective scaffolding for ELL's allows them to have access to a rigorous, engaging curriculum that will help them develop higher level thinking skills at the same time they are acquiring language skills (Walqui, 2006).

All students, including English language learners, need explicit instruction in how texts are organized and constructed in order to produce their own texts (Hyland, 2003). They must understand why and how writers make the rhetorical choices that facilitate communication with their audience (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). Providing second language students with precise information, and the support to practice strategies for composing the

texts that they will write in college or the workplace gives them the skills to effectively communicate their ideas in an academic setting (Paltridge, 2004).

The writing needs of native English speakers are different than the needs of English learners. English speakers have much experience with oral and written structures and L1 learners can understand rhetorical structures in ways that ELL learners cannot (Hyland, 2003). Writing instruction that gives students information about how texts are composed in specific genres closes the gap for ELL learners who have a greater need for an explicit understanding of text structures than first language learners. Writing instruction that only teaches students the steps of writing process does not give ELL students the information about language usage that L1 students are able to figure out independently. Genre-based instruction gives students information about the various rhetorical requirements of specific types of text (Hyland, 2003).

Henry and Roseberry (1998) conducted a study at the University of Brunei, Darussalem to determine if genre-based instruction would improve student writing in terms of effective communication. A total of thirty-four university students participated, with half in a study group and the other half in a control group. They were first-year university students who had just completed their bilingual secondary education. Their first language was Malay and they received instruction in English for the course in which the study was conducted. The study group received genre-based instruction and the control group received more traditional curriculum.

The findings indicate that teaching rhetorical structures gives students an understanding of how to organize their own writing. The authors determined that providing students with the understanding of text structures makes it easier for them to organize their texts, which subsequently allows them to focus on other rhetorical elements. Additionally, the

students in the study group reported that this approach improved their motivation because they understood the requirements of the genre and this allowed them to accurately measure their progress. Increasing motivation is an important component of fostering critical thinking dispositions, such as the willingness to implement critical thinking skills (P. A. Facione, 1990). Providing students with effective scaffolds, such as explicit instruction about the nature of different genres, may make students more motivated to engage in academically challenging activities because they have the support to access these tasks.

The research indicates a need for writing instruction that promotes critical thinking for all students. The Curriculum Review will evaluate various curricula in terms of strategies and scaffolds that will help students compose texts based on the rhetorical demands of a writing particular task.

CHAPTER 4: CURRICULUM REVIEW

Introduction

Critical pedagogy offers educators philosophical guidelines to situate their practice in a social justice framework that encourages all students to be active, engaged citizens. The research indicates that operating within this framework requires implementing curriculum that promotes critical thinking and active inquiry. To implement curriculum of this type, teachers must understand how to scaffold higher order thinking skills that students may not be able to practice on their own. Students need explicit instruction about how to compose sophisticated, thoughtful texts that demonstrate critical thinking.

Currently, much of the writing instruction for secondary students is based on a writing formula or template. Formulaic writing templates, such as the five-paragraph essay, often discourage deep engagement with the topic because the emphasis is on the form, not the ideas. With formula-based writing programs, the primary task is to conform to the model, instead of engaging in authentic inquiry on a topic of students' choosing. A formula-based process does not foster critical thinking skills or dispositions: students are not thinking deeply about the topic because the formula does not require it. Additionally, this type of formulaic writing tends to be particularly detrimental to struggling and low-achieving students because they are less likely to progress beyond this kind of writing (Brannon et al., 2008)

A range of various approaches to writing currently exist. I will be reviewing an example of formulaic writing, The Jane Shaffer Method (Schaffer, 2017), as well as a process-model writing program, 6 +1 Traits of Writing (Culham, 2003). Additionally, I will examine The Expository Reading and Writing Course (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005), which is based on genre-based pedagogy that offers students scaffolds to understand the rhetorical, linguistic and organizational choices of writers.

The Jane Schaffer Model

The Jane Shaffer model (Schaffer, 2017) is in widespread use at my site and across the nation. Many of my students have been taught to write with this model. The standard five-paragraph essay typically consists of a three-part thesis statement and corresponding body paragraphs that address each part of the thesis. The Jane Shaffer method is based on that structure, in addition to specific components for each body paragraph. All the body paragraphs have the same format: Each body paragraph must contain two concrete details, such as evidence or a quote, and two statements commenting on the detail. The introduction and the conclusion must be at least 40 words long, and the introduction must have at least three sentences (Wiley, 2000). Wiley (2000) asserts that Schaffer's method inhibits students' thinking because it focuses on the structure of the text, instead of the ideas, and it therefore discourages a robust interaction with the topic. He argues that this restrictive formula is especially detrimental for struggling students because they receive writing instruction that basically teaches them how to complete a template instead of encouraging them to fully explore the subject matter.

The majority of my students are struggling writers and a structured approach like this one gives our students some clear parameters for their writing, such as making commentary when they introduce a piece of evidence. However, this method is troublesome for several reasons. First, it does not teach students how to construct an authentic argument. Students can simply list related examples instead of formulating an argument. In addition, except for adding commentary to an example, students are not practicing any rhetorical strategies that they can use for more advanced writing. Students spend the most time learning and adhering to a formula, instead of practicing critical thinking skills such as synthesis, analysis and evaluation. Students are not acquiring many transferable skills with this method. Genre-based

pedagogy entails providing students with a conceptual understanding of all the components of a writing task, such as audience and purpose, as opposed to just using a formula. When students have a conceptual understanding of these components, they can make linguistic decisions based on the writing context and rhetorical situation. More effective writing results because purpose and audience is considered. Students engage in complex writing tasks and are not constrained by a template. Because the Jane Shaffer method does not require authentic inquiry, it does not necessarily foster critical thinking skills. While students produce polished, organized pieces of writing, they are not developing a new way of thinking (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004).

A student asked me to help her with an essay for another class, which required her to use the Jane Schaffer Method. The essay was based on an analysis of *The Odyssey* (Homer) and she had a clear understanding of how to answer the prompt based on her understanding of the text. However, she had to follow the Jane Schaffer Method to compose her text. Instead of making structural choices based on the rhetorical situation, she had to conform to the rigid organizational guidelines. Not only was the emphasis on the structure instead of the content, it was very limiting and confusing to make the analysis conform to the structure. Schaffer (Schaffer, 2017) argues that her formula is a beginning step for students and that ultimately students should move beyond using the formula. However, she does not offer any strategies to help students use this model to transition to more sophisticated writing, and it is difficult to discern what transferable skills could be used to compose a more sophisticated type of text.

Process method study: 6 + 1 traits of writing.

The 6+1 Traits of Writing program (Culham, 2003) is based on the process method of writing. This program breaks the components of writing tasks into six main areas: organization, ideas, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice and voice. Each component is

taught separately, except for conventions, which is taught throughout the entire unit. I chose to examine this method because I have previously used it in my high school English classes.

The 6 +1 Traits program has delineated all the essential components of a text, and this makes it easy to teach and easy to measure growth. However, addressing each element separately does not necessarily support students to produce a rhetorically effective text. The results of a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education demonstrated that the schools that implemented the 6 + 1 Traits program in 5th grade classrooms produced significant gains in certain aspects of student writing (Coe, Hanita, Nishioka, & Smiley, 2011). The students who participated in the 6 +1 Traits of Writing program scored higher than the control group on three of the six traits: organization, word choice and voice. There was no difference between the groups and the other traits: ideas, sentence fluency and conventions. Organization, word choice and voice are essential components in a text, however, the purpose of a text is to convey ideas, and if the other elements do not support that endeavor than it is less relevant if they have improved or not. The driving element of a text should be the ideas, and all the other components should support the communication of these ideas. Also, with the process model, these elements are seen as separate components of a linear process, instead of rhetorical choices that support the content. The results indicate that the organization score improved when using this, but the idea score did not. Students may be understanding the structure as a separate component from the content. This issue could become increasingly problematic as students write more complex texts in different genres, requiring more a more comprehensive understanding of how to organize information based on the rhetorical situation.

Hyland (2003) argues that the process approach ultimately does not give students enough support to figure out the complicated, diverse structures of texts. He states, "So while process models can perhaps expose how some writers write, they do not reveal why they make certain linguistic and rhetorical choices. As a result, such models do not allow teachers to confidently advise students on their writing" (Hyland, 2003, p. 19). The process method does not explicitly teach students to recognize the different rhetorical situations that require making linguistic decisions based on audience and purpose, and not just the genre (Hyland, 2003). So, while there are helpful components in the process model, this method alone does not offer students, especially struggling students, enough support to make effective rhetorical choices based on each unique writing task. Genre-based pedagogy entails providing students with the understanding of how to make rhetorical choices based on audience and purpose, which requires more explicit strategies than the process method offers alone.

The Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC)

The CSU Expository Reading and Writing Course (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) was designed by the California State University system for high school students. The curriculum was developed in response to the large number of students entering California state universities unprepared for reading and writing tasks at the college level. The course focuses on expository text, as opposed to literary fiction, which is often the foundation for secondary English classes. This focus is a response to the Common Core Standards that require 70% of texts in twelfth grade English to be expository texts (Common Core State Standards Intitiative, 2010) instead of the traditional English literature canon. I have chosen to review this curriculum because I have used it as the basis for my twelfth grade English class.

The ERWC (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) curriculum consists of 16 modules that each focus on a specific topic. Some of the module topics include the politics of food, racial profiling, juvenile justice and bullying. Each module includes related texts and specific reading and writing strategies, along with a culminating writing task. Some of the reading strategies are: surveying the text, making predications, introducing key vocabulary and concepts, re-reading the text, analyzing stylistic choices, considering the structure of the text, summarizing and responding and thinking critically (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005). The writing strategies include: formulating a working thesis, organizing the essay, developing the content, revising rhetorically, editing the draft (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005).

Several of the reading strategies are particularly useful in helping students understand the components of a text. For example, the first time students read an essay they are required to mark off sections each time the subject matter shifts. Then, students determine the rhetorical function of each of these sections. The re-reading strategy requires the students to identify the issue or problem and the supporting examples and arguments. The final reading task for each essay consists of responding to questions related to the ethos, pathos and logos of the article. The students assess the credibility of the author and his or her arguments, evaluate the emotional impact of the text and analyze specific components of the essay, as well as the overall message. These reading strategies offer explicit guidelines for students to effectively analyze a text, which is an important component of genre-based pedagogy. The reading activities also contribute to the development of students' critical thinking skills

because they must analyze and evaluate the authors' arguments, instead of simply summarizing their point of view.

However, even though the reading strategies in this approach are effective overall, there are some shortcomings with how they are applied to specific genres and text types. First, there are very few activities for purposeful group discussions and interactions, which help support students' interest and comprehension. An important component of engaging students in more demanding cognitive tasks is keeping them interested in the topics and activities, yet there is little variation in the reading activities as they are applied to varying texts. Could this be appropriate in some way: applying strategies/behaviors to various texts are opps to practice and apply? Students need support to access challenging content, and collaborative work can be an effective strategy to help students understand texts and implement strategies that they cannot independently practice. This curriculum does not offer activities that support collaboration.

To effectively cultivate critical thinking skills in students, educators also need to foster critical thinking dispositions, such as the willingness to engage in cognitively demanding tasks (Giancarlo et al., 2004). Collaborative work can be a scaffold to help students be more inclined to participate in challenging tasks that they cannot do independently. Fostering these habits is just as important as fostering the skills (P. A. Facione, 1990). Maintaining students' interest in the topic and activities by giving them access to the material with effective scaffolds are crucial elements of encouraging these habits.

The writing strategies for the curriculum include: reading the assignment, using the words of others, formulating a working thesis, composing a draft, organizing the essay, developing the content and revising and editing. The "Using the Words of Others" activity

demonstrates three ways to use an author's words: direct quotes, paraphrasing or summarizing. The "Formulating a Working Thesis" activity poses questions to help students compose a thesis. The Composing a Draft Activity lists guidelines such as: state your opinion in the thesis, consider your audience, choose evidence to support the thesis, maintain a reasonable tone and consider opposing points of view. The "Organizing the Essay" activity lists guidelines for the introduction, body and conclusion of the text.

These sections are useful, but they do not provide students with enough explicit instruction and practice to be able to independently compose these elements. The writing section provides guidelines and advice for students, but does not include activities that help students formulate, defend and support their opinions. For example, the curriculum suggests that students consider other points of view, but it does not have an activity to introduce students to this concept, such as a structured small group discussion about different viewpoints about the topic. In the reading section, students are required to dissect the articles and examine each section in terms of the author's purpose. This same kind of activity could be used to help students compose their own text by having them consider each section of their own text in terms of audience and purpose. The ERWC (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) expects students to do this, but does not provide adequate support for how to do it. The pre-writing activities include making webs and clusters, but before students can even begin the writing process they need guidance to formulate and clarify their stance. Pre-writing activities need to entail tasks that facilitate students' thinking about the topic, not just organizing their ideas. They cannot organize their ideas until they have formulated some ideas, and the curriculum does not provide activities for this purpose.

Lastly, students do not have the opportunity to practice composing texts from diverse genres. Most of the writing tasks in the curriculum address the kind of prompts that students will encounter on college placement exams, and so students do not have exposure and practice with the kinds of writing tasks that they will find in their college courses or the workplace. Because of this narrow focus, students do not learn different strategies across genres.

The writing component, while offering some useful strategies, is less effective overall than the reading component. Moss & Bordelon (2007) conducted a study to determine the teacher and student outcomes from using the ERWC curriculum and they found that the curriculum was an important bridge from high school to college level literacy. However, some teachers reported that the curriculum needed to focus more on writing and that there needed to be more diverse writing tasks.

The ERWC curriculum is particularly effective for reading instruction, and it provides excellent strategies for analyzing and evaluating texts, but the deficits in writing production need to be mediated with additional curricular supports. Specifically, students need more support formulating and supporting their opinions, as well as guidance composing their essays based on the rhetorical situation. The Jane Schaffer Method requires adherence to a rigid structure that does not necessarily provide transferable skills. The 6 +1 Traits of Writing offers some useful activities to address certain components of a text, but the program does not provide enough support to give students a clear understanding of the requirements of different rhetorical contexts. The ERWC Program (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) offers some very helpful activities for analyzing texts and understanding rhetorical situations, however, there are deficits in the writing instruction. The curriculum that I have designed addresses these issues with activities that will provide guidance and support

for students to compose texts based on rhetorical strategies instead of a template. These

components of Beyond the Formula intend to provide students with the strategies to generate

texts based on specific rhetorical situations instead of relying on templates or formulas.

CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW OF THE "BEYOND THE FORMULA" CURRICULUM

Using Scaffolds to Promote Critical Thinking with Writing

Many English teachers are using writing programs that require strict adherence to a formula. These formats offer a very clear, linear way of writing and are easy to assess. The problem, however, is that they do not prepare students for writing tasks beyond high school. Perhaps more importantly, they do not necessarily foster critical thinking skills because students do not have to deeply engage with the topic and their own writing and thinking. Other curricula may offer a more comprehensive understanding of how to analyze texts to use as guides for producing texts that do not require a formula. However, these programs lack support for how to teach strategies so students can transition from analyzing to producing texts.

I understand why teachers use these formulas and templates because they provide a very clear, systematic way to teach writing. For most of my teaching career I have taught writing using a template, and it was not until I started participating in workshops with the San Diego Writing Project (SDAWP) that I realized that this method was not giving my students the writing and thinking skills that they needed to be successful after high school. While my students could produce organized texts with a thesis and three supporting pieces of evidence, they could not write texts that veered from this format. Additionally, although their texts were well-organized, they did not necessarily present a strong argument or point of view. With the five-paragraph essay, students can offer three examples related to the topic, but that do not necessarily make a coherent argument.

Participating in SDAWP has transformed my idea of teaching in general and writing in particular. Now I understand the writing process as a response to each particular task, with different rhetorical demands depending on the audience and purpose. This type of writing

instruction is much more complicated and complex than using a template for each writing task. It requires strategies such as analyzing published texts, such as opinion-editorials and speeches, to determine the structure and components of each particular writing text. The Beyond the Formula *(*BTF*)* curriculum is an attempt to provide this type of writing program, based on my work with SDAWP.

Purpose

The purpose of the Beyond the Formula curriculum is to provide all students the pedagogical support to produce a variety of diverse texts that demonstrate critical thinking and attention to audience and purpose. The BTF writing assignments require students to consider multiple perspectives about a single issue in order to formulate an evidence-based response. The BTF curriculum aims to provide scaffolds so students can effectively participate in these tasks. These scaffolds include activities that make generating ideas and formulating arguments the focus of the writing task, as opposed to adhering to a specific structure. In addition, these scaffolds include strategies such as text boxes, which is a way of mapping out the organizational structure based on the purpose of each paragraph or section. Some traditional writing instruction emphasizes organizational structures and conventions, as opposed to the generation of ideas. The BTF curriculum is an attempt to create lessons that make generating ideas and formulating a stance the emphasis of writing instruction.

Curriculum Goals

Three goals in the Beyond the Formula curriculum are achieved through activities that support the overall purpose, as well as the specific curricular objectives. For Goal One, students will synthesize and analyze evidence from multiple sources about a single issue. Beyond the Formula offers opportunities for students to engage with multiple texts about the

same topic. Students analyze texts from differing perspectives to expand their own ideas and opinions about the issue. In addition to reading for content, student also analyze the authors' rhetorical and linguistic choices to use as a guide for their own writing. The activities for synthesis and analysis include annotating articles, completing charts and writing academic summaries, as well as participating in small group discussions. The texts include current news stories, research articles, opinion-editorials and TED talks.

Students will formulate their own responses to an issue, based on their synthesis and analysis of different texts for Goal Two. After students have analyzed multiple texts about the subject, they establish their own stance about the topic. Throughout the units, students collect evidence and respond to each author's perspective. They then formulate, refine and solidify their own opinions. The activities include short writing responses and group discussions and presentations. In addition, students participate in lessons about relevant writing conventions, such as incorporating evidence into the text. The culminating writing tasks for each unit require students to articulate and defend their stance, based on evidence and reasoning.

To achieve Goal Three, students will independently compose texts using a variety of strategies. The final unit requires students to choose their own topic and independently research their subjects. Students participate in several guided activities to help them choose their topics. They then independently conduct research and compose their essays, with teacher support from individual writing conferences. They give a presentation of their research and they make revisions based on feedback from their peers.

Features

The Beyond the Formula curriculum is designed for high school students of all level, but it can also be adapted for middle-school students with age-appropriate topics and additional

scaffolds. The curriculum entails reading, discussing, analyzing and synthesizing information from various texts on a specific topic. Based on these activities, students formulate their own evidence-based opinions about these issues. The BTF curriculum is based on three units: the connection between food and health, juvenile justice and an independent research project. Students participate in similar activities in the first two units so they can practice using the strategies. Then they can independently implement these strategies to compose texts for the final writing task. For the culminating unit, students conduct a research project based on an essential question about a topic that they are interested in researching. The units are based on current, relevant issues. All units can be modified to include topics interesting to students. The final unit does not necessarily have to be an independent project if the teacher determines that students still need more guided instruction. The features, research constructs and assessments for each goal are listed in Table 2. The texts and graphic organizers for each unit are listed in the Appendix.

Table 2. Goals, research constructs, curriculum features, and assessments

Goals	Research Constructs	Curriculum Features	Assessments
1.Students will synthesize and analyze evidence from multiple texts about a single issue	• Critical thinking • Critical thinking and writing • Scaffolding	• Graphic organizers • Group discussions • Group presentations • Academic summaries • Direct teaching of writing strategies • Peer feedback	• Student work • Rubrics • Excerpts from essays
2. Students will formulate their own response to an issue, based on their synthesis and analysis of different texts	• Critical thinking • Critical thinking and writing • Scaffolding	• Graphic organizers • Group discussions • Group presentations • Academic summaries • Mentor texts • Direct teaching of writing strategies • Peer feedback	• Student work • Rubrics • Excerpts from essays
3. Students will use writing strategies to independently compose text	• Critical thinking • Critical thinking and writing • Genre Pedagogy	• Peer feedback • Essential question brainstorm • Individual writing conferences • Writing plans	• Student work • Rubrics • Excerpts from essays • Student interviews • Student writing tips

Texts

To promote student interest and engagement, students read texts and watch videos

based on current issues of interest to the students. For example, for the juvenile justice unit,

our inquiry was based on a current rape case in Steubenville, Ohio involving teenagers.

Students read and watched news articles about the case, in addition to reading a research

article about adolescent brain development. Because the unit was based on a current issue,

students were interested in related research articles, as well as opinion-editorials about different aspects of the case. If students are interested in the topics and activities, they are more willing to engage in academically challenging tasks. I chose the topics for the first two units and then students chose their own research topic for the final unit.

Additionally, students interact with various text genres such as video clips, opinion-editorials, and research articles. Internet tools, such as the calorie-counting site that my students used for our food unit, also increased student engagement. While it is time-consuming to continually update units based on contemporary issues and current texts, this aspect is a crucial component of fostering student engagement. Promoting higher level thinking skills requires encouraging the dispositions of critical thinking, which is the inclination to use higher order reasoning skills in response to a problem, dilemma or situation in which a choice must be made (Giancarlo, Blohm, Urdan, 2004). Providing students with relevant topics and diverse text genres helps foster this attitude.

Students rely on texts to use as models for their own writing. These texts are referred to as "mentor texts" because students use them as guides for composing their own texts. Using texts in this way gives students the support to create texts based on authentic, published pieces of writing, as opposed to relying on formulaic structures.

Graphic Organizers

Students use graphic organizers to analyze the various texts throughout the units. These charts include analysis of the content, such as the author's main claim and supporting details, as well as the students' responses to the author's argument. Students also use graphic organizers to collect evidence for the culminating writing tasks or as organizational structures from which to compose essays. Thus, students use teacher-generated graphic organizers to

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reorganize their thinking about existing texts and eventually create their own charts for independent writing and research.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning activities are used to promote student engagement and to help students access difficult concepts and texts. Collaborative learning allows students to practice higher-level thinking skills that may not possible when working independently (Vygotsky, 1970). In addition, collaborative work may aid in creating an academically rigorous classroom culture, which helps foster critical thinking dispositions, such as the willingness to engage in critical thinking.

Students participate in collaborative learning activities throughout the first two units, and in writing response groups (WRG) for all of the units. For the first two units, students engage in collaborative activities. These activities help them formulate and refine their opinions while interacting with various texts. The initial activities for the first two units include *Block Party* and *Forced Choice*. *Block Party* is a protocol that gives students the opportunity to respond to questions related to the topic in small groups that rotate with each question. *Forced Choice* is a protocol that requires students to formulate an opinion about statements related to the unit topic. Students respond to statements, then justify their stance. These activities help students formulate their initial opinions about the issue, which they then refine throughout the unit.

The final unit entails independent research based on topics of their choice. Students participate in collaborative groups to determine and narrow their topics. They engage with writing response groups for peer feedback after they have composed their initial draft.

Other collaborative projects include small group discussions about texts and group presentations. For the culminating writing tasks for all of the units, students provide feedback

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for other students. They assemble in their Writing Response Groups (WRG) for the first draft of their essay, using questions to guide their discussion:

- Is there a clear claim?
- Does the author support their claim with evidence?
- Does the author connect their evidence to their claim?
- What does the author need to add, delete or clarify?

Every student reads each essay and makes comments directly on the papers. Groups discuss each paper and make recommendations. Students ask for feedback or suggestions. They use the peer feedback to make revisions and submit the second draft for teacher feedback. Students receive a rubric between the second and third draft. The third and final draft is graded with a rubric.

Participating in small discussion groups gives all students the opportunity to articulate their opinions, as opposed to whole group discussions that are often dominated by the same four or five students. These opportunities are especially important for English language learners, Special Education students and struggling students who may be more reluctant to speak up in whole class discussions.

Assessments and Data Collection

Formative and summative assessments are used throughout the units. The formative assessments include article analysis charts, academic summaries, short writing assignments and "exit slips" (short answer responses at the end of the daily lesson to determine student understanding and mastery of the targeted skill or concept). Formative assessments include group presentations and culminating writing tasks. The data that was collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of BTF included examples of student work, excerpts from final draft essays, essay rubrics, student-generated writing steps and student interviews.

Summary

The Beyond the Formula curriculum provides students with the support to compose thought-provoking texts, based on evidence and reasoning, that demonstrate evidence of critical thinking. Tsui (1999) determined that writing assignments had the highest correlation with promoting critical thinking skills. The BTF curriculum includes scaffolds to support students of all levels and abilities practice critical thinking skills through writing. Ultimately, the goal is to create a classroom culture that maintains high expectations for writing achievement by stimulating intellectual curiosity and fostering high levels of student engagement.

School Setting

The purpose of the Beyond the Formula (BTF) is to provide all students access to writing instruction that promotes critical thinking. Often, struggling students do not receive writing instruction that gives them the strategies to produce the sophisticated writing that is required in certain workplaces or in higher educational institutions (Brannon et. al., 2008). The intention of this curriculum is to provide scaffolds that make writing instruction equitable, rigorous and accessible for all students.

BTF was implemented in an urban high school in a large city in Southern California. The site was once a comprehensive high school, but it now houses five small schools. It is designated as a Title 1 and every student on campus is eligible for free breakfast and lunch, which means that at least half of the student population is categorized as low-income. Each school has its own staff and students and they operate as separate entities, except for a shared bell schedule, the Associated Student Body (ASB) and all the sports teams. Each school has a theme and a specific curricular focus. My school, Medical Careers High School (all names are pseudonyms), has a science and technology focus.

The ethnic composition of students at Medical Careers High School (MCHS) is 13.5% African-American, 76.7% Latino/Hispanic, 7.4% Caucasian and 1.3% Asian. Many of the students at MCHS are second-language learners, and 32% are classified as English learners, which indicates that they are not yet proficient in reading, writing and speaking English. To be re-designated as English proficient, students must score at a certain level on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) that they take annually. Consequently, reading and analyzing difficult texts may be even more challenging for these students because

they are navigating second-language issues while they are trying to learn content matter and master skills.

Classroom Context

My students were twelfth graders and they reflected the racial demographics of the school. They were not, however, representative of the academic level of all our students. We offered a twelfth grade Advanced Placement (AP) English class for the first time this year. Most of the students who scored advanced or proficient on the California Standards Tests (CST), the statewide standardized test, enrolled in the AP course. Most of our college-bound seniors were in that course. As a result, most of my students did not plan to go to four-year universities immediately out of high school. Some of them were planning to go to community colleges with the intention of transferring to universities after a few years. MCHS operates on the quarter system, which means that students earn a class credit every eight weeks. My students were in my English class for a total of sixteen weeks.

Teacher-Researcher Background

I have been a teacher for fifteen years. My first teaching experience was in Mauritania, West Africa where I taught English as a second language to high school students. When I returned to the United States I taught Special Education, English Language Arts and Peer Education for six years at a middle school in Oakland, California. Subsequently, I took a break from teaching to be the director of a violence prevention program in Oakland for two years before I moved back to San Diego, my hometown. I taught Special Education at a middle school for three years before transferring to the high school, where I currently teach. For the first four years, I taught ninth grade English, and then I transitioned to twelfth grade English four years ago. I also implemented a Peer Education program in which my grade 12 students write and present lessons about teen social issues to younger students. Because of my

experience with students from diverse backgrounds, I recognize the need for pedagogy that serves and engages all students. I also discovered, through my Peer Education program, that students will attempt challenging tasks if the topic is relevant to their lives.

Throughout my career, I have chosen to work with students who have been marginalized for a variety of reasons. These students may not have had the most successful experiences in school. It is because of my experiences with these students that I have become committed to the tenets of critical pedagogy, which advocates empowering all students, especially those who are traditionally outside of the dominant power structures. It is easy to remain committed to these ideals in the abstract, but it is often quite challenging to operationalize them in a real classroom. My intention and my hope is that this curriculum will give teachers support to continue giving all students access to the academically rigorous and challenging tasks that will build the skills that they need to become thoughtful, empowered citizens.

Curriculum Overview

The implementation for the BTF curriculum covered almost the entire semester, which was sixteen weeks long. It included three out of the four units that I completed with my students throughout the course. Every unit addressed the first two goals, and the final unit addressed the 3rd goal. The goals for the curriculum were:

> **Goal #1**: Students will synthesize and analyze texts from multiple sources about a single issue.

> **Goal #2**: Students will formulate opinions based on the synthesis and analysis of texts from multiple sources.

> **Goal #3**: Students will independently compose text.

The first unit was about the connection between Americans' eating habits and health issues. Our second unit was about juvenile justice, based on a current rape case that involved

teenagers. The final unit was an independent inquiry project that required each student to choose and research their own topic. In the culminating unit, students were required to independently apply the strategies that we had been practicing together throughout the semester. I chose the topics based on the units in the ERWC curriculum (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) because I thought that I would be able to use some of the activities and the texts in those units. However, most of the texts in the curriculum were outdated and I wanted to use more current texts. The curriculum features for each unit are outlined in table 3. All the texts, charts and materials that were used in the curriculum units are included in the Appendices.

Table 3. Curriculum units

Units	Curriculum Activities
Food and Health: The connection between America's eating habits and health issues.	• Group discussions • Food diaries • Text charting: summary, synthesis, analysis of content and author's style • Article annotations • Academic summary and response to articles • Ethos, pathos, logos charts: evaluating author's rhetorical choices • Analyzing text structure charts: deconstructing text to examine the structure to use as a model • Peer Feedback: Writing Response Groups • Final writing task: persuasive essay
Juvenile Justice: Analysis of current juvenile criminal case (The Steubenville rape case).	• Group discussions • Academic summary and response to articles • Article annotations • Group project: digital presentation of article synthesis • Analyzing text structures and features: Opinion-editorial (op-ed) texts • Final writing task: Opinion-editorial
Independent Inquiry: Students compose and answer an essential question about a topic of their choice.	• Brainstorm: essential questions • Writing plan • Annotated bibliography • Academic summary and response • Text outline for essay • Final writing task and presentation: essential question essay

The writing lessons for the BTF curriculum included specific writing lessons, such as using mentor text to compose introductions, as well as activities to facilitate inquiry about the topics we studied. I considered lessons that helped students formulate opinions and responses

as part of the writing component even if it was a discussion group because generating ideas is the foundation of writing an effective text.

My intention was to expand the traditional understanding of writing instruction. For example, many teachers conceptualize writing instruction as lessons that focus on the organizational structure and grammatical components of a text. When I first started my research project I was focused solely on using text boxes to improve student writing. Text boxes are a strategy to map out the organizational structure of a text based on the purpose of each paragraph or section (Bernabei, 2005). However, what I discovered was that the guiding component of writing instruction should be inquiry about the topic and generating ideas and responses, not the organizational structure. Effective writing instruction begins with facilitating critical thinking and actively engaging students in vigorous inquiry so they have substantive and robust ideas as a foundation for composing their own texts. With this perspective, our focus shifts from seeing writing instruction as the final culminating piece of a unit to understanding it as the foundation of a unit, from the beginning to the end. Additionally, we can understand the importance of active inquiry as a crucial piece of improving student writing.

First unit: The connection between food and health.

The first unit was based on the Expository Reading and Writing (CSU Task Force, 2005) Module "Fast Food." I chose this topic because I thought it was relevant to my students' lives and it could give them information about how to make healthy choices for themselves. When I was teaching in Mauritania, West Africa I provided lessons that gave my students skills as well as important information, such as how to respond to life-threatening dehydration. I wanted to do the same for my students here, and health and nutrition seemed like a relevant topic that could have an impact on their lives. I expanded the unit to include

other topics related to unhealthy eating habits, such as portion sizes, as well as adding current articles. In addition, I added collaborative activities and digital assignments. Lastly, I created lessons to provide support for writing.

Forced choice: formulating an initial opinion.

The initial activity for the unit was "forced choice." This activity entails posting a statement on the board and asking students to go to one side of the room if they agree with it and the opposite side if they disagree. The statements that I chose were based on articles that we were going to read throughout the unit. Some of the statements were:

- Students' weights and Body Mass Indexes (BMI's) should be included on report cards
- Soda machines should be banned on campus
- Fast food restaurants should not be allowed near schools
- It is a person's own fault if they are overweight or obese

I asked the students to stand up and go to the middle of the classroom and then I showed them the first statement. They moved to the "agree" side or the "disagree" side, depending on their opinion. Students from each side explained why they chose that side, and they could switch sides if they changed their minds. Students generally enjoyed this activity, and they had some strong opinions about the statements. I told them that we would be reading articles about these topics and that they should notice if they changed their minds as they acquired more information. Typically, when I conducted this activity in the past I insisted that my students choose a side instead of staying in the middle. This time, however, I realized that letting them remain in the middle exemplifies the idea that complex issues usually do not have clear-cut answers and that we can sometimes hold multiple opposing perspectives.

In addition to engaging the students in the topic, this activity also demonstrated that grappling with diverse viewpoints is one way we discover our own perspectives. Recognizing

alternative perspectives is one of the key components of critical thinking (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004). Beginning a unit with this kind of activity helps students start practicing that process in a way that is less daunting than doing a writing task that requires addressing multiple perspectives. With this activity, students did not have to speak in front of the whole class unless they wanted to, but everyone had to at least think about the topics because they had to choose a side. Even if a student did not speak at all, they were still engaged in the process because they had to move based on their opinion. Beginning our unit like this helped to establish my classroom expectation that students were engaged, active participations in shared inquiry, instead of passive recipients of information. One of the critical thinking dispositions, cognitive integrity, entails considering opposing viewpoints (Giancarlo, Blohm, Urdan, 2004), which is the purpose of this activity. A fundamental component of fostering critical thinking skills is encouraging the behaviors and attitudes that support these skills, such as the inclination to gather information and to consider differing viewpoints (Giancarlo, Blohm, Urdan, 2004). These components combine to create an atmosphere that requires students to be active thinkers and participants.

Personal food diaries.

To help my students personally connect to the topic, I asked them to keep a food diary for a week. They recorded what they ate, when and why. I told them that they would not be sharing their food diary with anyone, including me. I wanted them to be able to be completely honest and to not feel self-conscious about their eating habits. At the end of the week they analyzed a couple of their most typical meals. They found the calories and fat grams for each complete meal, as well as calculating how much exercise they would have to do to burn off all the calories. They used the website "calorieking.com" to complete this activity.

After they had analyzed their diets I asked them to write a journal reflection about what they discovered about their eating habits and if they would like to change anything about their diets. In their journals and in our class discussions many students reported that they were surprised about how unhealthy their eating habits were. This activity helped foster a connection to the unit because they wanted more information after looking at their own habits. We also discussed how having more information gives you more power over your own life because you can make better decisions when you know more. Quite a few students reported throughout the semester that they had made changes to their diet. One student, Jeremy (all names are pseudonyms), worked at McDonald's and he reported that he typically ate hamburgers every shift. After learning more in our food unit he changed his behavior and only ate hamburgers once a week. Students made comments about people's food choices throughout the semester when they saw people bringing fast food bags to class. It remained a topic of informal conversations throughout the semester.

Summarizing and analyzing texts.

To access information, we read texts from the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) module, as well as current texts related to the topic, such as newspaper articles about the proposed soda ban in New York. We also watched videos like Jamie Oliver's Ted Talk "Teach Every Child About Food" (2010). After reading a text or watching a video clip, my students analyzed the piece by charting the author's main ideas and evidence and then evaluating the effectiveness of the author's argument.

In addition to analyzing texts, my students practiced writing academic summaries. I gave them a summary checklist to provide parameters for their summaries. The checklist is presented in Figure 2.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                          Summary Checklist                                    │
│                                                                               │
│  ✓  Do you introduce the title, author and main idea? (Use a sentence frame)  │
│  ✓  Is the tone of the summary neutral? (No opinion, bias or attitude comes   │
│     through)                                                                  │
│  ✓  Does the summary reflect the right proportion of coverage for different   │
│     points?                                                                   │
│  ✓  Does the summary use attributive tags?                                    │
│  ✓  The author states….                                                       │
│  ✓  The author demonstrates…                                                  │
│  ✓  According to….                                                            │
│  ✓  The author shows…                                                         │
│  ✓  The author asserts….                                                      │
│  ✓  The author argues….                                                       │
│  ✓  Will the summary stand alone as a unified and coherent piece of writing?  │
│     (Are you left with unanswered questions or are you confused?)             │
│  ✓  Does the summary use quotes sparingly?                                    │
│                                                                               │
│  (Adapted from Bean, Chappell & Gillam, 2011).                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 2. Summary checklist

Weekly homework assignments entailed writing a summary of an article that we had read and discussed in class and composing a response based on their reaction and opinion ("one-pagers"). The purpose of these assignments was to give students practice summarizing and responding to the authors' arguments. We dissected the articles in class so students who might not have been able to independently read the text were able to access the information. My students used their "one-pagers" as the basis for their small group discussions.

For some of the articles, students listed the main points in a chart on the left-hand side after we had read the texts together in class. After they completed the chart and discussed the main points, they wrote a response on the right-hand side of their charts. Figure 3 is an example of a chart that a student completed to identify the author's claims or examples that they wanted to respond to.

Analysis: "Don't Blame the Eater"

Claims/Examples	Response: This makes sense because… I disagree because… What about…… Another example is….
1. By Age 15 I had packed 212 pounds of torpid teenage teenage tallow on my once lanky 5'10" frame	This stood out to me because he is speaking from personal experiance.
2. CDC and Prevention estimated that diabetes accounted for 100b in heathcare cost Alone	This was shocking because that Amount is how much the government paid out to help stoop diabetes!
3. Chicken salad 150 calories but the noodles that come with it are listed seperately & are an additional 190 calories	This was surprising to me b/c fast Food restarants are being sneaky & are trying to make their food look "Healthy" with weezle words
4. Drive through any throughfare in America. & I agree you will see one of Americas 13,000 mcdonalds.	This number is ridiculously high & even got me thinking that the mc.D corporation is everywhere & realy is a reading factor in not only childhood obesity but in obesity in General!

Figure 3. Student work sample: article analysis

Comparing articles, analyzing authors' style.

After we read several articles in the same genre, my students completed a chart that compared the ideas and rhetorical moves of three different articles. This helped them start recognizing different rhetorical choices within the same genre. The texts that they compared were all editorials about why Americans' eating habits are so unhealthy, but they all had different approaches and styles.

Public service announcements: Formulating a stance.

After we had analyzed multiple texts about the issue I wanted my students to start formulating a stance. I asked them to create Public Service Announcements (PSA) that

addressed one aspect of healthy/unhealthy eating that they thought was particularly relevant

and important. They worked in groups and most of them used "Animoto," a website that is a

free, user-friendly movie-making tool. They presented their videos to the class, and students

evaluated their peers' use of evidence and persuasive techniques. This activity helped students

refine and defend their point of view, as well as giving them other perspectives to consider.

The assignment for this activity is included in Figure 4.

Counter Ad: Food Advertising

Directions: Make a PSA that gives your audience relevant information about
healthy/unhealthy eating. Use facts, statistics and information from the articles and videos
that we have used in class. Use the following guidelines:
- **Audience**: Teenagers
- **Specific issue**: Make sure that you focus on one specific issue- sugar, portion control, better fast food choices….
- **Define the problem**: Use statistics and facts to define the problem. Choose information that teenagers would care about.
- **Call to Action**: What do you want your audience to do? Only eat fast food once a month? Make better fast food choices? Eat more vegetables?
- **Audience**: Choose visuals, slogans and music that target your specific audience

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Figure 4. Counter ad: Food advertising

Culminating writing task.

The culminating writing task required my students to explain the connection between

poor diets and health issues, establish the reason for our unhealthy diets and then propose a

solution. My students considered the different texts that we had analyzed and then determined

their own opinions based on their analysis and evaluation of all the information. Some

students determined that access to fast food and advertising was the problem, while others

argued that lack of parental control and portion sizes were the problem. They had to consider

a possible solution based on what they thought was the cause. For example, if they said that

the amount of soda that people drink was the reason that Americans are so unhealthy, then

their proposal might suggest regulating soda, like they attempted to do in New York. With this kind of prompt, my students could not simply list several contributing factors, which would have just entailed summarizing several articles or points of view. Instead, they were required to consider all the evidence and arguments and then determine their own stance. This gave my students the opportunity to practice using critical thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Using transitions to explain and connect the evidence to the argument.

After reading the second draft of their food essays I realized that my students needed explicit instruction about connecting their evidence to their claims. They needed to understand that simply citing sources did not prove their point and that they had to provide the logical connections to their claim to construct their argument. I gave them sentence frames from *They Say, I Say* (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010) so they had the linguistic structures that would help them clarify their argument. They wrote sentences using these structures and practiced using transitions to construct the argument, rather than transitioning from topic to topic.

Writing response groups.

Students met in their writing response groups (WRG) throughout the semester for small group discussions, as well as for providing peer feedback for culminating writing tasks. Critiquing other student's work may help students revise their drafts, as well as promote critical thinking skills as students attempt to offer effective feedback, based on careful analysis (Tsui, 2002). Because I wanted my students to feel comfortable sharing their writing and opinions with each other, they stayed with the same group for the whole semester. To create the groups, I asked my students to choose four people that they wanted to be in a group with, and they wrote each name in the corner of an index card, with their own name in the middle. Additionally, I told them to write the names of anyone who they did not feel

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comfortable with on the back of the index card. I said that I would make groups that had at least one person that they had requested, and not include anyone that they did not feel comfortable with. Each group had at least four students and not more than five. While it was time-consuming to form the groups like this, it was important to ensure that my students would feel safe sharing their written work and expressing their opinions. This feature seemed especially important for struggling students who might be more reluctant to share their writing, and their opinions with their peers. Creating a safe, non-judgmental environment is an important component of fostering an academically rigorous atmosphere in which all students feel comfortable taking intellectual risks.

My students met in their writing response groups to receive feedback from each other on their first draft essays. Each group arranged their desks in a circle and passed their papers to the person next to them. Students silently read and wrote comments, and then passed the paper to the next person, continuing until everyone had read and written comments on all the essays. I gave them questions to help them formulate their responses, such as:

- Does the author define the problem?
- Does the author have a clear claim?
- Does the evidence support the author's claim?
- Does the author connect the evidence to the claim?
- Is the solution based on the causes?
- What do they need to add, delete or clarify?

Students could choose to answer each question or to write comments based on what they thought would be most helpful. I asked students to minimize their feedback about grammar mistakes and focus on content feedback because students can be overwhelmed with fixing grammar mistakes at the expense of content revisions (Truscott, 1996). After they had critiqued each other's papers they discussed each essay as a group and gave the authors additional feedback.

Lastly, each student completed an exit slip explaining what revisions they intended to make, based on reading other students' papers and receiving feedback themselves. Reviewing the exit slips allowed me to quickly evaluate if every student had a clear idea how to revise their drafts, and I also asked if any students needed more feedback. Almost all my students knew how to proceed, except for the most proficient writers. Their group did not know how to give them feedback because they thought their essays were already proficient. I met with these students individually to provide feedback.

Text boxes.

When I told my students that I did not want them using a five-paragraph model for writing their essays throughout the semester, they initially said that they were open to trying something new and they did not complain. However, when they actually started writing, it was challenging for all of us. Many of them wanted to resort to using the five-paragraph format when I gave them the writing prompt for the food essay because they needed a structure for their essays. As a response, I presented Bernabei's idea of text boxes to help them organize their writing (Bernabei, 2005). Bernabei explains that every text can be divided into main concepts, and that people can use this technique to analyze text as well as compose it. Some examples of this are presented in Figure 5.

Basic Informational Structures

Description

| **What** it is | **Kinds** of it | **Where** you can find it | **Parts** of it | One thing **almost all of them** do |

!

Sequence

| This is about the **process** of ____. | **Prior to** ____, this happens. | **After** ___, this happens. | **When it's time** for ____, | **Finally,** ____. |

!

Cause and Effect

| What happens | This happens because ___. | That makes ____ happen. | This happens for several reasons: ____ | As a result, _____. |

!

Compare and Contrast

| ___ **and** ___ are very much **alike**. | They **both** ____ **and** ___. | **However**, there are some **differences** between the two. | **For one thing**, ____. | **Another way they are different is** ____. |

!

Problem and Solution

| ___ is happening. | This is a **problem** because _____. | This is happening **because** _____. | Another thing **contributing to the problem** is _____. | We must stop this **so that** _____. |

!!!!!

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Figure 5. Sample text boxes

    I showed them many different examples of the text boxes to demonstrate that there are many ways to structure a text. We discussed how different articles have different structures, even if they are the same genre, and that effective writers organize their writing based on the task and purpose and audience, not by using a formula. Then, based on this idea, I mapped out the major concepts in an article, "Don't Blame the Eater" (Zinczenko, 2002) that we had

already read and analyzed so that my students could see the structure of the text. I included the major concept for each section, as well as the purpose. Figure 6 is an example of this text analysis. Bernabei's structures are relatively simple, and so I added more components to provide more guidance for my students, such as stating the purpose of each section.

Text Structure: "Don't Blame the Eater"

Topic: Reference to lawsuits about customers suing McDonald's for making them fat

Purpose: Introduce topic, anticipate reader's reaction (outrage)

Rhetorical Moves: Rhetorical questions aligning with audience reaction:

"Isn't that like middle-aged men suing Porsche for making them speed? Whatever happened to personal responsibility?"

Topic: Personal narrative about author being overweight as a child because his single mother worked and he only had access to fast food in his neighborhood

Purpose: Establish credibility with audience (ethos), introduce author's perspective

Rhetorical Moves: Narrative

Topic: Statistics about diabetes, obesity and fast food

Purpose: Establish problem, connect it to prevalence of fast food

Rhetorical Moves: Questions directed at the reader to draw logical conclusions:

"Shouldn't we know better than to eat 2 meals a day in a fast food restaurant? That's one argument. But where, exactly, are consumers-particularly teenagers- supposed to find alternatives?"

Topic: Lack of accurate food labeling on fast food packaging

Purpose: Demonstrate that people don't know that what they are eating is   unhealthy because the labels are inaccurate

Rhetorical Moves: Specific example taken directly from a fast food restaurant that does not accurately represent the nutritional information of the food

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Topic: Conclusion- Argument that fast food companies market unhealthy, harmful produce to children with no warning labels

Purpose: Demonstrate that the fast food industry is responsible for customer's health issues

Rhetorical Moves: Reasoning based on evidence

Figure 6. Text boxes for "Don't blame the eater"

Beyond the text boxes.

When I first started my project, I was very narrowly focused on using text boxes, and that was going to be the major component of my implementation. What I discovered during this first unit, however, is that most of my students used the same outline that I gave them for "Don't Blame the Eater" to organize their own essays. That was a problem because it seemed like I had just given them another template to replace the five-paragraph model. Using text boxes was less constrictive and more responsive to different writing tasks, but the format remained at the forefront of writing instruction, instead of ideas being the guiding force.

I realized that creating a structure that is not formulaic depends on the evidence and ideas for each individual text, and that gathering that information is the crucial piece in composing a text. Before students can determine how to organize their texts, they must have content to guide the structure. Consequently, gathering information and thinking about how to respond to it became the foundation for our work. They still used text boxes as a strategy for structuring their ideas, but the central aspect of our writing focus became gathering ideas, not creating the structure.

I also realized that an important connection between collecting evidence and drafting an essay is having an effective graphic organizer. I gave my students a graphic organizer to organize their research for their essays. However, it was not very useful and many of my students did not use it. I knew that my students still needed guidance to organize their information so they could effectively structure their essays, and so I revised the graphic organizer (see Figure 7). The revised version helped my students formulate their arguments because it required them to choose the evidence that supported their claim and to connect the solution to that evidence. It is important for teachers to design graphic organizers based on

each specific task to help students formulate their argument and provide guidance for the structure of their texts.

Evidence/Examples: Unhealthy Eating		
Directions: Find specific pieces of evidence for each category. Use your texts from class and any other sources you find. Make sure you cite your sources.		
Define the Problem	Explain the Causes	What is the solution?
• What evidence demonstrates that America has a food-related health problem?	• What is the cause of Americans' poor diet? • You can address as many causes as you would like.	• This should be connected to the causes. You will probably use mostly reasoning and logic in this section. You may also include examples to support your point.

Figure 7. Revised graphic organizer for food essay

Using mentor text to respond to writing dilemmas.

Composing the introduction was an area that many students found challenging when they began composing their texts. The typical five-paragraph essay introduction includes generalized statements culminating in a three-pronged thesis statement. For example, a typical thesis statement might be "Americans are unhealthy because they eat too much fast food, drink too much soda, and portion sizes are too big." The sentences leading up to the thesis could be vague generalizations, like "Americans are getting more and more unhealthy every

year. They have bad eating habits and there are many reasons why." This is what my students were used to writing, and as I read their papers during our individual writing conferences I saw that many of them were still writing these kinds of introductions.

Jose is one of the students who asked me to help him with his introduction. After I read his introduction my first inclination was to give him a handout with a list of how to write introductions. I hesitated though, because I knew that my students had been getting those lists since elementary school and they did not seem to help. Finally, I just asked Jose if he wanted to read an essay that began in this way, and he said no. Then I asked him if he wanted to keep writing an essay that started in this way, and he said no again. After thinking about how to respond, I decided to give my students some examples of introductions from the texts that we had read. I asked my students to use the structures as models for their own paragraphs. Figure 8 shows the three different introductions that I gave them to use as model.

If ever there were a newspaper headline custom-made for Jay Leno's monologue, this was it. Kids taking on McDonald's this week, suing the company for making them fat. Isn't that like middle-aged men suing Porsche for making them get speeding tickets? Whatever happened to personal responsibility?

I tend to sympathize with these portly fast-food patrons, though. Maybe that's because I used to be one of them.

(Excerpted from : NY Times 11/23/02: Don't Blame the Eater- David Zinczenko)

It was probably inevitable that one day people would start suing McDonald's for making them fat. That day came last summer, when New York lawyer Samuel Hirsch filed several lawsuits against McDonald's, as well as four other fast-food companies, on the grounds that they had failed to adequately disclose the bad health effects of their menus.

One of the suits involves a Bronx teenager who tips the scale at 400 pounds and whose mother, in papers filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, said, "I always believed McDonald's food was healthy for my son."

(Excerpted from: The Washington Post 11/29/2002: It's Portion Distortion That's Making Us Fat-Shannon Brownlee)

A public health group called last week for Governor Gray Davis to declare childhood obesity a state emergency and take immediate steps to reduce it. But while the California Center for Public Health Advocacy proposes some worthy ideas, the foundation might be aiming at the wrong target.

Parents, not state government, are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children in our schools.

(The Sacramento Bee 12/17/02: The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home-Daniel Weintraub)

Figure 8. Mentor texts: Sample introductions

I asked them to use the examples as a guide and spend time crafting their responses. Using mentor texts gave them ideas not only about structure but tone and voice as well, and many of them wrote interesting and engaging introductions after seeing the examples. For example, a student wrote this introduction based on the sample:

If there ever were healthy nutritional standards in schools, they have been completely forgotten about now. School lunches contain the same amount of calories as fast-food-isn't that like eating junk food every day?

Using mentor texts provided models for authentic writing for my students. I noticed that they seemed more invested in producing interesting, engaging texts when they used models as a guide. After practicing writing introductory paragraphs, they shared them in their writing groups and I asked each group to share the most engaging introductions with the whole class. They were genuinely excited to discover interesting writing amongst their peers, and it felt like they were a class of real writers honing their craft. This kind of activity helps create an academically rigorous environment because students are motivated to generate high-quality writing to meet their own high expectations, not just get the assignment completed for a grade.

Using formative assessments to guide instruction.

When I first started this implementation, I thought I had a clear idea of how it would unfold. However, as I progressed through the activities I realized that I had to adjust my curriculum to respond to what my students needed at each point throughout the process. This is an important element to be aware of because it is quite different than when we teach writing with a template or as a linear process, such as with the 6+1 traits of writing (Culham, 2005), which entails progressing through each component. It is a straightforward process to teach the components of a formula or a process, but it is not as clear how to teach writing without these methods.

If we ask our students not to use templates or formulas, we need to be thoughtful and reflective about what scaffolds they will need as they practice a new way to write. The focus of our pedagogical practice becomes carefully analyzing student work as they are learning so that we can effectively respond to their needs and consider what further instruction they

actually need, as opposed to just trying to progress through all of the curricular material. I frequently used exit slips to quickly assess my students' understanding of a specific concept or skill. For example, I asked students to give an example of how they would paraphrase a source and use it as a direct quote after I presented a lesson on using evidence. I could quickly look through their responses to see if they could apply the strategy that I had taught. They could then incorporate these practice moves into their essays because I asked them to use sources that they were already using for their essays. I also used exit slips during the writing process to ask them where they felt stuck and what they needed help with. In response, I would either conduct whole class lessons or individual conferences for specific issues, depending on the students' needs. This type of practice shifts the focus of assessment from measuring growth at the end of the learning process to using it as a tool to inform teachers how to adjust the curriculum to optimize learning for our students. It is not a new concept to use formative assessment to guide instruction, but it becomes even more imperative when we are teaching writing as an authentic, recursive process instead of simply using a formula or a rigid step-by-step process.

Second unit: Juvenile justice

Our second unit about juvenile justice was based on a unit from the ERWC (CSU 12th Grade Expository Reading and Writing Task Force, 2005) curriculum. I focused on a current issue, the Steubenville rape case, that was in the news at the time that we were doing this unit. The case was about a teenage girl from Steubenville, Ohio who was allegedly raped by two of the high school's star football players while she was drunk at a party. Other students who were at the party subsequently posted pictures and videos of the assault on social media. Some people contended that the football coach helped cover-up the crime and it was a very polarizing issue for the entire town. We read articles and watched news articles to prepare for

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the culminating writing task, which was an opinion-editorial about some aspect of the case. My students were interested in the issues that were raised by this incident, which helped foster their engagement in the activities. I used many of the same activities for this unit that I introduced in the first unit, such as charts for text analysis, one-pagers, and small group discussion protocols.

Block party: Small group discussions.

The first activity for the juvenile justice unit was called "Block Party." For this activity, I wrote four statements on the board and gave my students time to write a response for each statement on index cards. The four statements were:

- If someone commits a crime while they are drunk they are less responsible than a sober person who commits the same crime
- People who take pictures of a crime and then put them on social media should be charged with being accessories to a crime
- If you witness a crime it is your responsibility to try and stop it or report it
- Teenagers who commit adult crimes should be tried as adults

After they had written their responses they stood up and formed groups of four or five and discussed the first question in their small groups. They formed different groups for each subsequent question and then wrote a reflection at the end of the activity.

This activity gives more students the opportunity to express their opinions because they are in small groups, which is less intimidating for some students who do not like speaking in front of the whole class. Additionally, students gain a deeper understanding of the topic by discussing it with each other. This is an example of how collaborative learning helps students co-construct knowledge, as well as creating an inclusive environment of active inquiry in which all students can participate.

Synthesis and analysis of multiple texts.

For this unit, we read current news articles about the Steubenville incident and two other similar cases, research about adolescent brain development and opinion-editorials about the incident. In addition, we examined texts about bullying and being an "upstander," someone who intervenes in a bullying situation. My students completed various charts about the articles, which they then used as the basis for their small group discussions.

Group project: Synthesis.

As we were reading texts for this unit I noticed that my students could summarize and respond to various texts, but that they still did not understand how to synthesize information from multiple texts. In response, I assigned each group a different aspect of the case, such as: jock culture perpetuating rape culture, social media and bullying, and teens and alcohol. I provided each group with an article to read together about their specific topic and then each group member was required to find an additional article to summarize and share with the group. After each member had shared an article, the group made a digital presentation for the class that explained the different facets of their topic. To compose presentations that synthesized information from the articles instead of simply summarizing each text, I asked my students to determine categories for their topic and then organize the information according to each category. This helped my students find the main points of each topic and then organize the information from different sources according to each category, instead of summarizing each article individually.

The culminating writing task: Opinion-editorials.

For the culminating writing task, my students wrote an opinion-editorial piece based on some aspect of the case that they found compelling. To determine the topic for their opinion-editorial, my students considered all the texts and class activities, and chose an aspect

of the case that needed to be addressed. To formulate their own opinion, students evaluated the evidence and determined what aspect of the case deserved a response. This case provoked strong emotions and opinions, which facilitated a high level of engagement in the culminating activity. Because students were interested in the topic, they were motivated to engage in challenging critical thinking tasks, such as analyzing an article about adolescent brain research, to effectively communicate their ideas.

The scaffolding for the writing task included using graphic organizers to analyze the rhetorical elements and organizational structures of the op-ed pieces that we read. In addition, I provided an outline of the typical organizational pattern, text boxes, of an opinion-editorial. My students could use it as a guide for the structure of their texts. Newkirk (2009) identified this as a common pattern for opinion editorials based on his analysis of published pieces. Students also used this structure to dissect the structure of the op-ed pieces that we read. This outline is presented in Figure 9.

Text Template: Op-Ed Piece

Issue in the news that deserves our attention

The reaction to this event is X

These are the problems with X

A much more logical response is Y
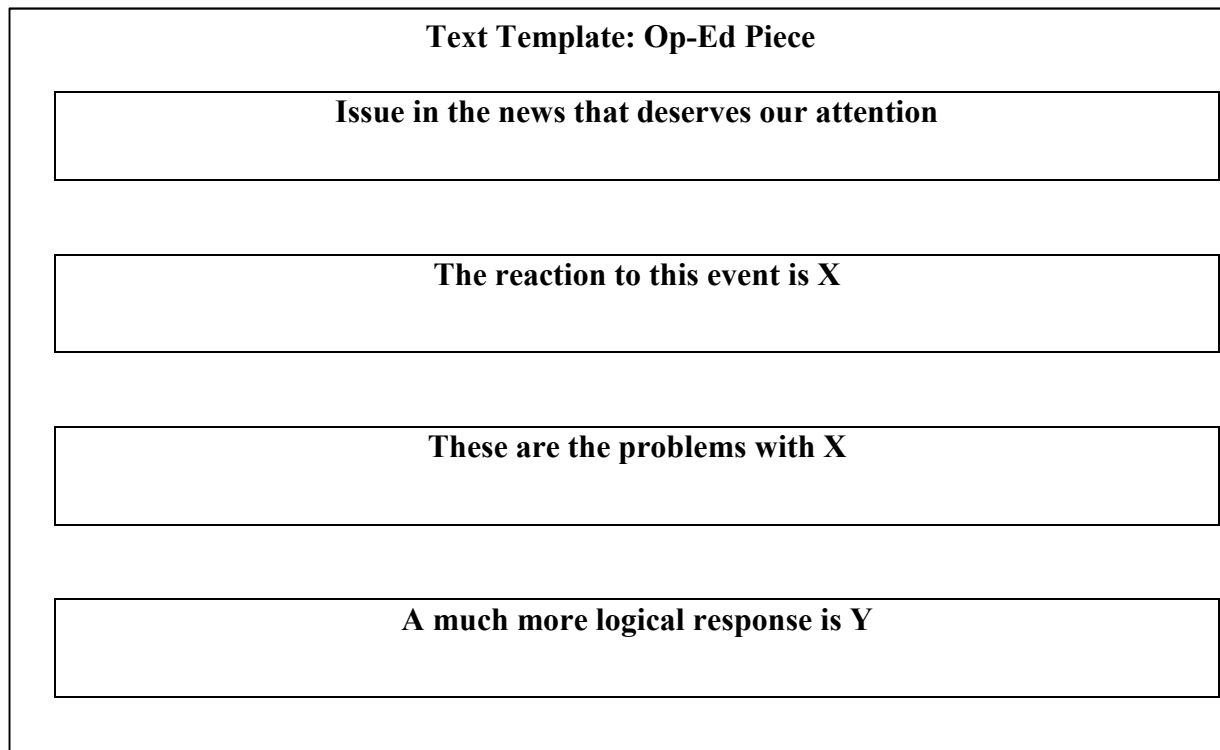
Figure 9. Typical format of an op-ed piece (Newkirk, 2009)

For the final unit, my students chose their own research topic based on an essential question that they had formulated. They chose from a range of topics. Some examples include:

- What makes people violent?
- Does hip-hop music negatively influence teenager's behavior?
- Was John F. Kennedy killed by the CIA?
- What causes apathy?
- What are some people angrier than others?
- How does racism impact the victims?

All of my students participated in introductory activities to generate ideas for their research. Subsequently, they independently worked on their texts, using the strategies that they had been practicing throughout the semester. The first activity entailed brainstorming a list of topics that they were interested in and then they shared their lists with their writing groups. Sharing their responses in their groups helped students who were having difficulty

finding a topic. They then chose their topic and found an article and wrote a summary and a response. If students had difficulty finding credible sources for their topic for this initial activity, they chose another issue for their inquiry. After they had written their "one-pager," they wrote a "What I Know, What I Wonder" chart. For this chart, they wrote down everything they already knew about their topic and then generated questions about what they were curious about. This helped them focus their research and determine if they were really interested in their topic. If they discovered at this point that they were not very interested in their topic, they could find another one. Lastly, they wrote supporting questions that they would need to research and answer to respond to their essential question.

In previous units, I provided most of the texts. In this assignment, my students found their own articles. In addition, they chose which strategies they wanted to use to compose their pieces. I gave them a week and a half to compose their first drafts and then they received feedback in their writing groups. They completed revisions based on the peer feedback and then they turned in the second draft. I provided written feedback and then they completed a third and final draft. I gave them five full days in class to work on their final draft after they had received feedback from me, and during this time I conferenced with individual students. If I found that multiple students struggled with a particular skill, I presented a lesson on that specific skill. For the most part, I responded to the struggles of individual students, one-one-one.

Each student created a presentation stating their research question and response, with an outline of their argument and supporting evidence. They created the presentation after they had completed their first draft and presented to the class. Students provided feedback for each other about the clarity and effectiveness of their arguments. I offered minimal feedback to

most of the presenters since my students offered effective critiques. The purpose of this activity was to help my students explain their argument to an audience, so they could discern if they needed to clarify or strengthen their response. One student, Thomas, had a particularly incoherent argument, but he would not make revisions when I gave him feedback in an individual conference. However, when he presented in front of the class, several students offered very similar feedback to what I had previously given him, and he then made the revisions. As in the writing groups, students benefitted from receiving feedback as well as seeing both effective and ineffective models. The presentation assignment is presented in Figure 10.

Digital Presentation: Essential Question Essay

Directions: Create a digital presentation that explains the most important aspects of your essay. Use the following guidelines:

- State your essential question.
- Explain or define your topic, if necessary.
- Explain your evidence. Be sure to include a variety of perspectives in response to your question.
- State your response to your question: What is your answer, based on your research?
- Add graphics to your slides.
- Bullet point your information- do not use paragraphs on your slides!
- Make sure that your slides are clear and easy to read- check the font color and text size! Do not put words over pictures.
- Practice your presentation out loud several times before you present.

Figure 10. Digital presentation format for essential question essay

At first I felt uncomfortable giving my students so much time to write in class, but the conferences seemed more effective in addressing student needs than whole-class revision lessons. Also, I noticed that they started conferencing with each other while they were waiting for me to help them. I overheard them saying things that I would say, such as, "You need

more evidence here," or "You didn't connect your evidence to your claim." The conferences seemed to help students internalize the revision process, which enabled them to independently critique their peers' papers, as well as their own.

Summary

The initial focus of my project was using text boxes as an organizational strategy to compose texts, based on the rhetorical demands of each specific writing task. However, as I began my research I realized that this approach still maintained the organizational structure as the focus of the writing process, not the content. Consequently, the scope of my project became much broader as I attempted to make formulating and refining ideas the central focus of our writing process. As a result, the components of my research project expanded from just using text boxes to incorporating all the strategies and activities we used for formulating an opinion. There are many aspects to this project and the evaluation chapter offers an analysis of these different components.

Methodology

The Beyond the Formula *(*BTF*)* curriculum is a compilation of activities and strategies intended to give students the skills to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources so they can formulate their own substantiated opinions. The curriculum consists of three separate units: food and the connection to health, juvenile justice and an independent research project. The activities for the first two units entailed practicing reading and writing strategies, as well as participating in group discussions and projects. The final goal was for students to independently produce their own texts.

For the first essay, food and the connection to health, I gave my students the texts and we read, watched and analyzed them together. They participated in small group and class discussions about the information throughout the whole unit. They were also allowed to independently find related texts if they chose to. At the end of the semester I took my classes to McDonald's after a field trip and I heard them talking about their menu choices in terms of calories and fat grams while they were ordering. I passed out menus with nutrition information while they were eating and most of them were interested in the calorie and fat content of their food. We discussed if their eating habits had changed at all and many of them reported they still ate fast food, but not as much. They also said that they still made unhealthy food choices more often than they would have liked, but they now had an awareness that helped them make small changes.

The second unit, juvenile justice, was also conducted with the whole class with similar activities that were used in the first unit. For the final unit, however, my students progressed through the process independently, including choosing their own topic and texts. For the last unit, they designed an essential question about a topic that they were interested in, and then

they independently conducted their own research. The data from the final rubric measures their writing ability with minimal scaffolding and support. A total of 51 students turned in an essay for the food unit and 43 students turned in essential question essays. I started implementing BTF at the beginning of the semester and finished at the end of the semester, a total of 14 weeks for the implementation. The whole semester was 16 weeks, but one unit was not included in the research study.

Data Collection

The data collection included scores from the students' rubrics for the culminating writing tasks for the first and final units. I did not use the rubrics for the writing task for the second unit because that assignment was not similar enough to compare to the other texts with a common rubric. I also analyzed excerpts from student essays for all of the units. In addition, I compared the writing process steps that students wrote at the beginning and the end of the semester to examine how their concept of the writing process had changed over the semester. Lastly, I conducted interviews with three students of varying academic levels at the end of the course. The goals and data collection methods are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Data collection strategies

	Essay Rubrics/Excerpts	Interviews	Writing Steps
Goal #1: Students will synthesize and analyze evidence from multiple texts	X		X
Goal #2: Students will formulate their own responses to an issue, based on their synthesis and analysis of different texts	X	X	
Goal #3: Students will use writing strategies to independently compose texts	X	X	X

I chose essay excerpts from three students to closely analyze. These were the students that interviewed at the end of the semester as well. The students were categorized according to skill levels: below grade level, at grade level and proficient. I grouped the students according to their scores from the English Language Assessment and the level of proficiency that they demonstrated, based on my observation and evaluation. Background information on the students is presented in Table 5. In addition, I used excerpts from other students to add to the discussion and analysis of the findings. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 5. Student background information

Academic Levels	Student Names	Academic background
Below basic skills	Ramses	Ramses transferred to MCHS his senior year after the sixth school on campus was closed. Most of the students at his previous school spoke English as a second language. He was a second language learner and his skills were far below basic. Ramses was initially in the Advanced Placement English class, but the teacher transferred him to my class after he demonstrated a lack of effort, in addition to having below grade level writing skills. He was not motivated at the beginning of the semester, however, by the end of the course he was actively engaged in his studies.
Basic skills	Marta	Marta was a second language learner and her skills were at the basic level. She had some attendance issues that were representative of our student population. She was motivated throughout the course.
Proficient	Alejandro	Alejandro was classified as a Special Education student under the Learning-Disabled designation. His skills were at the proficient level. At the beginning of the course he struggled with his work because of motivation, not skill level. This was the case for his other classes as well. By the end of the first unit he was producing very high-quality work.

Rubrics

I used rubrics that were developed from workshops with the California Writing Project as a guide to compose my own rubrics to evaluate my students' essays. My students wrote a first draft of each essay and received feedback from their Writing Response Groups (WRG), which were small groups of their peers. Some students gave helpful feedback, but many students wrote vague comments, such as "good job" or "fix" that did not give substantial guidance. However, most students said that critiquing other students' essays helped them see what other students did correctly, as well as the mistakes that they made, which gave them guidance for their own revisions. Essentially, they used their peer's essays as mentor texts. It would be useful to create a protocol that helps students provide more effective feedback.

After they revised their first drafts I evaluated the second drafts with written comments, in addition to individual writing conferences. Then they wrote a third draft, which I graded based on the rubric. This was the final grade unless students chose to keep revising to improve their grade. I used scores from the rubrics for the final draft essays from the 1st and 3rd unit for my data collection. For the second unit, my students wrote an opinion-editorial, which was a different format than the other essays. I did not use the rubric for the opinion-editorial to compare with the other essays. Instead, I used essay excerpts for the second unit evaluation to review their stance about the issue. I used a similar rubric to compare the first essay with their final essay, which was an essential question that they formulated about a topic that they wanted to research. I modified the rubric categories addressing evidence from the first essay for the final draft essay to accommodate the different topics that my students chose.

Writing Process Steps

At the beginning of the semester my students wrote a list of steps for the writing process. After they had written their essential question essay at the end of the semester I asked them to again write the steps of the writing process. I compared the lists from the beginning and the end of the semester to determine how their perception of the writing process had changed over the course of the class. My intention was to examine if the BTF curriculum had given my students a more expansive understanding of the writing process so they did not have to rely on a formula.

Findings

The findings are organized according to their correlation with each goal. Each section restates the goal. This is followed by the findings for that particular goal.

Goal #1: Students will synthesize and analyze texts from multiple sources about a single issue.

Finding #1: Students used multiple pieces of evidence to compose their essays.

There were two categories of evidence on the food essay rubric because my students used evidence to define the problem and the causes. This part of the rubric is presented in Table 6. The entire rubric is included in the Appendix.

Table 6. Portion of food essay rubric

	4: Above Standards	**3: Meets Standards**	**2: Approaching Standards**	**1: Below Standards**
Evidence and Examples: What is the problem?	The author effectively chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a very clear and accurate understanding of the problem.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a clear and accurate understanding of the problem.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader somewhat of an understanding of the problem.	The author does not effectively choose evidence and examples. The reader does not have a clear and accurate understanding of the problem.
Evidence and Examples: Causes	The author effectively chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a very clear and accurate understanding of the causes.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a clear and accurate understanding of the causes.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader somewhat of an understanding of the causes.	The author does not effectively choose evidence and examples. The reader does not have a clear and accurate understanding of the causes.

For the final essay, I only used one category for the type of evidence. It had to be more general since my students had different topics, but I added a category about connecting the evidence to the claims. I added this category after I evaluated their food essays because I realized that many of my students were citing enough evidence, but they were not connecting

it to their claim and explaining how it supported their argument. So, for the final essay, one category addressed if there was sufficient and reliable evidence and one category addressed if the author explained how it supported their topic. This section of the rubric is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Essential question essay rubric

	4: Above Standards	3: Meets Standards	2: Approaching Standards	1: Below Standards
Evidence and Examples	There is enough evidence to very thoroughly and effectively address the essential question.	There is enough evidence to thoroughly and effectively address the essential question.	There is some evidence, but not enough to fully substantiate or support the author's position.	There is not enough evidence to effectively address the essential question.
Explanation and Significance	The author very clearly introduces the evidence and explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author clearly introduces the evidence and explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author may introduce the evidence and somewhat explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author either does not introduce the evidence or does not explain how it addresses the essential question.

Out of fifty-one students, forty-three students used three or more pieces of evidence for their food essay. I provided the texts for the food unit, and they could find additional sources as well, but it was not required. For the essential question essay, only eight students out of forty-three used less than three citations. I counted the number of citations instead of the sources because many students did not attribute their evidence to a source, so I could not determine if they used different sources. Figure 11 shows the number of citations students used for each essay.
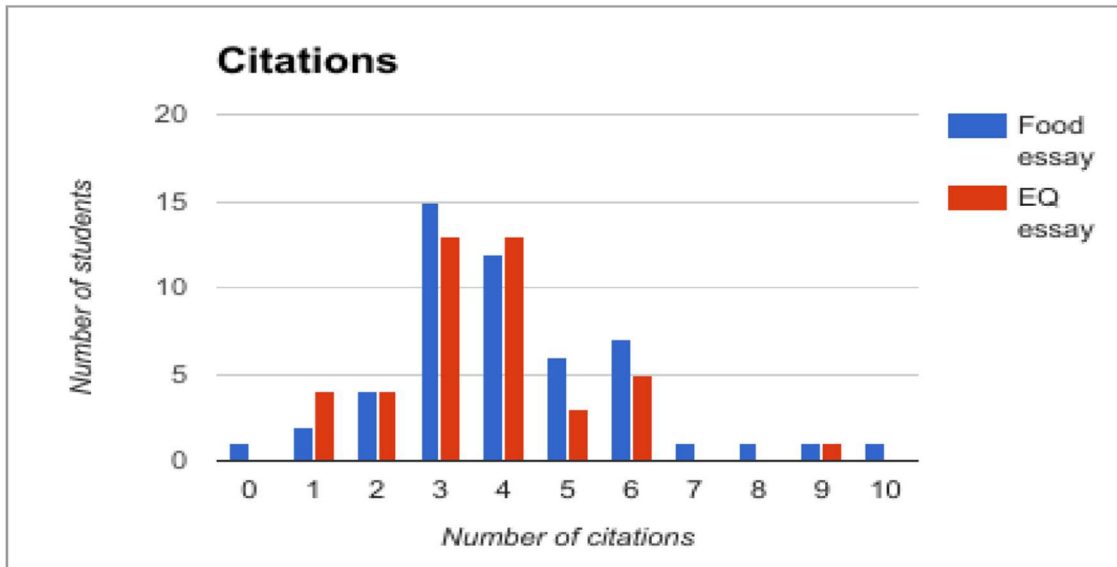
Figure 11. Number of citations used for food (n=51) and essential question (EQ) (n=43) essays

In addition to using multiple pieces of evidence, almost half of my students met the standards to explain the problem or the cause for the food related essays, based on the rubric results. Figure 12 shows the results from the categories on the food essay rubric. This rubric evaluated their choice of evidence to demonstrate that Americans have food-related health issues and to explain the causes.
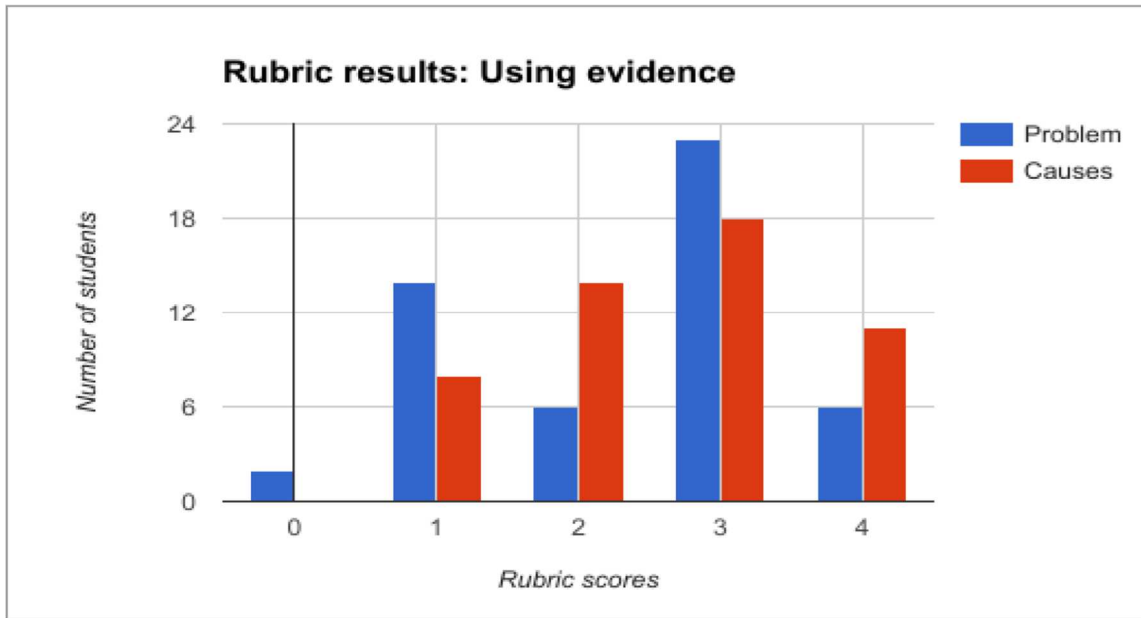
Figure 12. Rubric results regarding explaining the problem or the cause for the food essay (n=51)

Approaching standards meant that they used some evidence but not enough to fully substantiate their argument, or they did not effectively connect their evidence to their claim. The first column represents the category for evaluating their choice of evidence. The second column represents the category for evaluating how well they connected their evidence to their claims or thesis. The rubric was a four-point scale, and each number is represented in the graph with a different color. The y-axis represents the number of students.
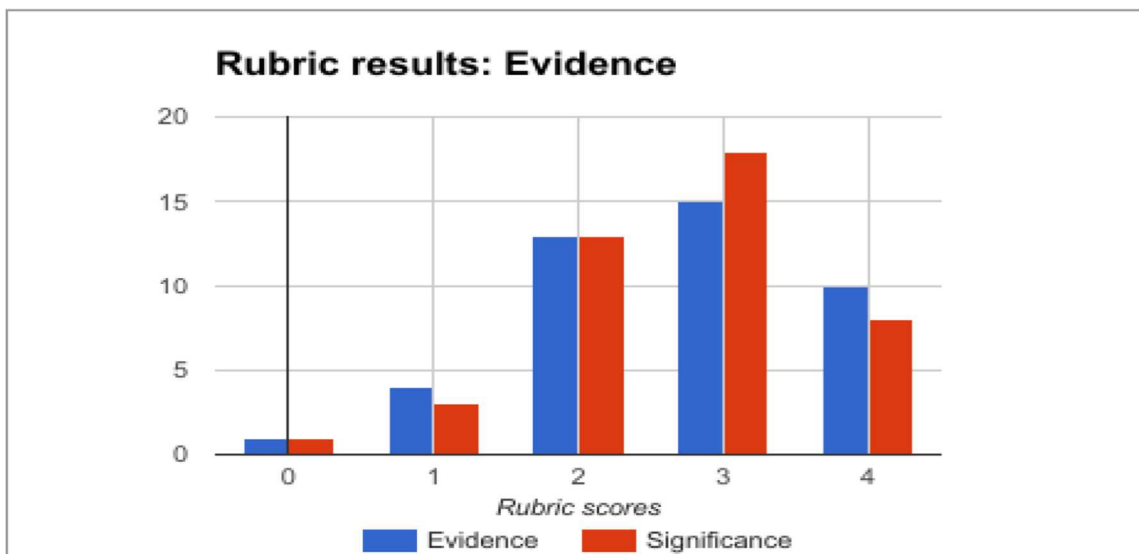
Figure 13. Rubric results for evidence categories for the essential question essay (n=43)

Student samples: Using evidence

I chose three different students, based on their academic levels, to conduct a more thorough analysis. Ramses and Marta represented the academic level of most of my students. Alejandro was more academically proficient than the majority of my students, but his low motivation was representative of many of students' attitudes toward their academics.

Below Basic: Ramses Ramses struggled with the academic expectations in my class. He was a second-language learner and he had previously received "A's" in his ESL classes. Because of his grades in his ESL classes he was placed in an Advanced Placement (AP) English class. However, he transferred to my class from the AP class because the teacher determined that he did not have the skills or the motivation to be successful in the AP class. He received an "F" for the first quarter in my class. This was in part because he initially refused to do any revisions on his first essay, even though I had given him extensive feedback. He complained to the counselor when he got an "F" in my class and we had a conference. I explained that he had to keep revising his papers to improve because that is an essential component of writing, especially for students with below grade level skills. He said

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that he was confused and did not know what to do, so we set up a schedule for him to come in after-school several times a week for writing conferences. After receiving one-on-one help, Ramses revised his food essay and received "approaching standards" or "meets standards" in all the categories. After regularly coming in for tutoring, his motivation and his attitude improved and he continued to make progress throughout the semester.

For the food essay, Ramses cited a study that states that 68% of Americans are overweight. He also cited a study stating 37% of skinny kids have one or more signs of pre-diabetes. Both studies helped define the problem of food-related health issues. For the causes, he used statistics citing the number of fast food restaurants and the number of people being served daily. He also used his personal experience of working in a fast food restaurant and seeing the same families frequently eat fast food as an example of fast food being a cause of food-related health issues. He used a total of four pieces of evidence, not including his personal experience, but he only attributed one statistic to a source. In addition, all the citations he used were not properly integrated into the text, with either grammatical or punctuation mistakes. For example, he stated, "As in 3.19.2012 number of fast food restaurant in America is 160,000. Number of American kids and adults served daily is 50 million." However, his data was relevant and it did support his opinion.

In his final essay, Ramses' essential question was "What makes people violent?" He used a news article about Adam Lanza, the Sandy Hook shooter, and a research article about the connection between genes, the environment and violence, which I helped him find. He did not correctly cite either source. In addition, although he used relevant data, he did not rely on his data to answer his essential question.

At the end of the semester he stated that he had never had a teacher who had given back his work and told him that he had to revise it, and that at first it made him upset but then he really appreciated that I pushed him. A crucial component of helping Ramses progress in his academic skills was not only providing the academic scaffolds, but also fostering the critical thinking dispositions, as discussed in the literature review. Cultivating productive work habits is an essential element of requiring students to engage in more rigorous academic tasks because these tasks require more effort, energy and time than more rote activities. When Ramses started developing more effective work habits he began making progress with his writing skills.

Basic: Marta. Marta is a second-language learner with basic writing skills. She demonstrated high motivation throughout the course, but she struggled with attendance issues. She did not complete the essay for the second unit because of her absences, but by the end of the semester she was attending school more regularly. She maintained a high level of engagement and a positive attitude throughout the course.

For her food essay, Marta cited three sources and used her personal experience. She presented evidence about unhealthy school lunches, statistics about childhood obesity and information about the "Farm-to-school" lunch program.

Marta chose effective and relevant evidence to support her point of view that school lunches are a significant problem in terms of childhood obesity. For example, she analyzed the nutritional information for a typical school lunch, a fried chicken sandwich and tater tots. She compared the nutritional data between the school lunch and a Big Mac and fries. She states:

> A typical school lunch can be a chicken patty with tater tots and milk. According to myfintnesspal.com a chicken patty is about 350 calories, the serving size of 10 tater

tots is about 150 calories and chocolate milk is about 200 calories. That adds up to 700 calories. That is equivalent to a big mac with small fries. It's like they're eating a fast food meal. Might as well serve the fast food meal to the children.

Using the data, Marta concluded that eating school lunches was the same as eating fast food, in terms of nutrition. She also cited a study that stated that one in three students who eat school lunches are overweight or obese.

For her final essay, Marta asked, "Does it matter what shows kids watch on TV?" She cited five different sources and she used her own personal experience to demonstrate that watching educational TV can help children learn basic concepts. She states:

According to "TV Can Be Good for Kids!" by Carey Bryson she states the through media, kids can explore places, animals, or things that they couldn't see otherwise. Studies also show how that children that watch educational shows are more likely to know how to read and count by when they start preschool.

She also cited a study, conducted by a pediatrician, that explained what shows in particular have a positive effect on learning. Additionally, she cited a quote from Princeton University about the positive connection between educational television and academics for children. She also recounted the story of her two-year-old cousin who has learned her colors, her vowels and how to count by watching educational shows.

Proficient: Alejandro. Alejandro has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) because he has a learning disability. He scored proficient on the ELA CST. However, even though he had a high level of academic ability, he had underperformed throughout most of his academic career. Alejandro was in my Peer Education class for the first semester, and he almost failed because he did not complete his assignments. I knew that he had the academic skills to complete the work, but he seemed unmotivated and disengaged. I frequently communicated with his special education case manager and she said that it had been very difficult to get him to complete assignments in any class. However, I noticed a change in my

English class second semester and he finished assignments and turned them in on time. He was very interested in the topic he chose for the final essay and he completed his research and writing with minimal support.

In his first essay, Alejandro had five citations, but only two were correctly cited. He used evidence about how portion sizes have increased to support his conclusion that portion sizes are the reason Americans have become so unhealthy. For example, he states, "McDonald's introduced their first supersized option in 1993 and the other fast food chains quickly followed suit." He included a graph to illustrate how much portion sizes have increased since the 1950's for soda, French Fries and hamburgers.

For his final essay, he used evidence to compare government space programs with private industry space programs to determine if the space program should be privatized. He included six citations. He did not include an attribution for his sources except for two direct quotes. He chose relevant evidence to support his inquiry. For example, to illustrate the danger of outsourcing NASA projects to private agencies he explained how a Mars satellite exploded because Lockheed Martin used thruster software that was not compatible with NASA software. He explains:

> For example, the Mars Climate Orbiter or MCO, it was designed to be a satellite around mars that was going to study the Martian atmosphere and relay radio signals from two surface probes back to the earth. It did not work because of a small mistake, which was made huge due to the extreme precision required. What happened is that the NASA subcontract, Lockheed Martin created the thruster software, but it was programmed with the Imperial Units which the standard for the British, but at the time NASA was using the metric system. No one thought to check, and when the satellite got to Mars, it hit the atmosphere and burnt up.

He countered this example with a statistic illustrating that even though there are incidents like this, overall the space industry is very safe and this has resulted in the proliferation of private industry space programs. An excerpt from this segment is presented below:

> The dangers of space are great, but even with that great risk only 18 people have died because of space programs, adding up to only 0.9% of all people launched into space dead, a higher percentage of people have died in the attempt of living and working deep under the sea than people living and working in space. And because the advantages outweigh the risks the private space industry has taken off.

There are some grammatical problems with the first sentence. It is a run-on sentence, which makes it difficult to understand. However, Alejandro has effectively presented and explained evidence to use as a counter-argument. He also included opposing viewpoints from James Lovell, commander of Apollo 13, Eugene Cernan, Commander of Apollo 17 and Neil Armstrong, Commander of Apollo 11. He refuted their stance by providing examples of successful private industry space projects.

Discussion

Students of all levels could use multiple sources and multiple pieces of evidence to support their claim. However, most students needed more practice correctly integrating citations and citing sources, especially students with below basic writing skills. Providing ongoing practice with finding, citing, quoting and paraphrasing sources throughout every unit would benefit all students. Struggling students and second-language learners would especially benefit from more frequent and more guided practice citing sources. It would have been helpful to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice using sentence frames throughout the unit, not just at the end when they were composing their essays. For example, giving students several sentence frames for every writing task, even just exit slips, would give them the opportunity for repeated practice with skills such as correctly citing sources. Additionally, most students needed more practice with connecting their evidence to their claim.

An additional challenge with students with below grade level reading skills is finding sources that they can access. This was especially problematic with the essential question essay

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because they had to find their own sources and they would choose sources that they did not understand. A response to this is to help students annotate articles to find the parts that they do understand and to disregard the parts that they cannot comprehend. Oftentimes students will get overwhelmed with the words and concepts that they do not understand, and they will give up on using that text altogether. However, they can still use relevant components of a difficult text even if they do not understand all of it.

Lastly, students of all levels needed to improve their work habits to successfully produce these kinds of essays. This is especially true for under-performing students. With the five-paragraph essay format, students did not necessarily have to take a stance. They could list three different examples. However, with the writing tasks that I assigned, my students had to analyze the research and formulate an opinion that they could then substantiate. This kind of task requires more time and effort, which requires time management and organizational skills. My students commented that they could produce a five-paragraph essay in one night, but that they could not do the same with the essays in my class. Therefore, they needed to cultivate more effective work habits to complete the essays.

Finding #2: Students created the organizational structure for their essays without using a formula.

My assumption when I began this project was that the organizational structure would be the most problematic part of the essay for my students because they did not use a template. However, this proved to be the least problematic part of the essay, based on results from the rubrics and analysis of student essays. The criteria for meeting standards was that the essay was organized in a way that clearly and coherently conveys the author's ideas. This rubric category was the same for both essays.
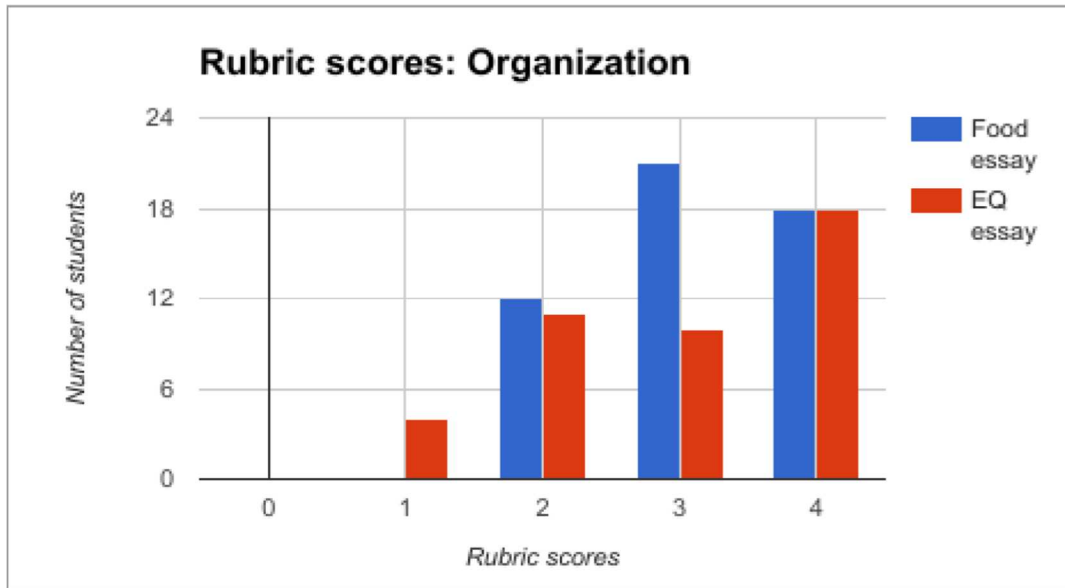
Figure 14. Rubric scores for organization for food essay (n=51) and essential question (EQ) (n=43) essay

For both essays, no students received a zero for organization. Twelve students did not meet standards for the first essay and fifteen students did not meet standards for the final essay. This increase in below standard scores for organization may be explained by the fact that I gave them charts to collect their evidence for their food essay that provided a clear method to organize their texts. Additionally, many students used the text boxes that I provided as a template for their own essays instead of developing their own structure for the food essay. With the final essay, it was necessary for students to independently categorize their evidence and then determine how to present it in their essay. I did not provide templates or charts to help them organize their argument. Students scored higher on the category measuring organization than any other category.

Student Samples: Organization

Ramses: Below basic. Ramses' food essay contained four paragraphs. The first paragraph introduced the topic with his personal experience working in a fast food restaurant.

The second paragraph was a narrative about what he thought about fast food when he was a child and how he views the obesity epidemic now. The third and fourth paragraphs included evidence defining the problem and the cause, and the fourth paragraph provided the solution based on the causes. The organizational structure was based on a logical progression of his argument.

For his juvenile justice opinion-editorial, Ramses wrote a total of three paragraphs. The first paragraph explained the incident in Steubenville. The second paragraph contained more details about the case, rhetorical questions explaining his stance and brain research and his refutation of that research. The third and final paragraph offers a solution. Again, the organizational structure was based on a logical presentation of the details of the case, his opinion and the solution.

Ramses essential question essay was a total of seven paragraphs. The first and second paragraphs introduced the topic with a summary of a video he watched that piqued his interest about the nature of violence and a rhetorical question addressing the issue of the causes of violence. The third paragraph summarizes the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. In the fourth paragraph Ramses makes a claim about how growing up in a violent home makes people more violent, but he did not cite any research. The fifth paragraph summarizes research about the connection between hereditary, environment and violence. The sixth and seventh paragraphs offered concluding statements about how to prevent violence. Ramses did not effectively connect the evidence he presented with his concluding statements that answered his inquiry about violence, but the organizational structure was clear and coherent.

Marta: Basic. Marta's food essay was a total of eight paragraphs. The first paragraph introduced the topic by comparing school lunches with fast food meals. The second paragraph

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explains that school food is processed and compares school hamburgers to McDonald's hamburgers. The third, fourth and fifth paragraphs described the school lunches at the school site and throughout the district and gave calorie counts for a typical school lunch. The sixth paragraph accuses the school board of having a lack of concern for school lunches and the final paragraphs address solutions.

Marta's essential question essay was a total of nine paragraphs. Her essential question was "Does it matter what shows kids watch on TV?" The first paragraph introduced the topic with examples and a rhetorical question. The second, third and fourth paragraphs explain which shows are beneficial, in addition to which shows are detrimental and why. The fifth paragraph presents evidence about how much TV children watch. Paragraph six explains some of the benefits of educational TV. Marta offers a personal example with her niece in paragraph seven and presents an opposing view in paragraph eight. The final paragraph offers recommendations to parents. The structure of the essay was clear, although it may have been more logical to include the opposing view before she explained the benefits of educational television.

Marta did not turn in an opinion-editorial because she had a high number of absences during this unit due to family issues. This is a common situation for our students and it seems probable that these frequent absences have a negative impact on their academic progress. However, even though Marta had many absences, she was motivated and engaged in her studies. Her absences declined by the end of the semester, and by the end of the semester she would request missed assignments and complete her missing work.

Alejandro: Proficient. Alejandro's food essay was a total of seven paragraphs. The first paragraph introduced the topic with rhetorical questions. He states, "If there ever were a

time to look back and reflect on how far we've come as a country, this is it. Big portions are quickly fattening the United States; we went from healthy small portions to unhealthy big portions. Isn't that like quitting cigarettes but taking up heroin? Whatever happened to a healthy United States?" Paragraphs two through six included evidence and reasoning. The final paragraph presented the solution based on the evidence.

Alejandro's opinion-editorial was five paragraphs long. The first two paragraphs provided a summary of the event. The third paragraph offered an analysis of the incident and the fourth paragraph summarized research about brain development in teenagers. The final paragraph presented a solution.

Alex's final essay was a total of seven paragraphs, like his food essay, but it was one page longer because the paragraphs were longer. The first two paragraphs explained private and government space programs. Paragraphs three through four included evidence and examples. The fifth paragraph offered opposing views, which he refuted in paragraph six. The final paragraph provided the response to his question about whether the space program should be privatized. All his essays were effectively organized based on his argument for each topic.

Discussion

The organizational structure turned out to be the least problematic part of their writing for all levels of students and for all the different writing tasks. This was perhaps the most crucial finding in terms of expanding my understanding because it shifted my entire perspective of how I should teach the writing process. Previously, I had considered the writing component of my curriculum beginning when my students started composing their essays. My focus, in terms of writing instruction, was always the structure and organization of the text. For my project, my initial focus was using text boxes as an alternative to a formulaic writing structure. What the results from the first essay demonstrated, however, was that the

writing component of the curriculum should begin when students are collecting evidence and formulating their stance, and that this should be the foundational part of their writing, not the structure. If they have a clear argument and stance then they can determine the organizational structure of their writing based on that, and not some prescribed structure. The ideas become the foundation of their writing, and the writing instruction then centers on collecting information and formulating and refining a stance, not on learning or adhering to a specific structure or template.

After seeing the results of the first essay, I changed the scope of my project to collecting information and formulating a stance as the foundational component, instead of using text boxes as an organizational tool. I still used text boxes, but I considered them an additional strategy, not the foundation of my writing instruction.

Goal #2: Students will formulate opinions based on synthesis and analysis of multiple texts.

After my students gathered information from various sources, they formulated their own responses based on their evaluation of the evidence. To evaluate their responses, I compared the results from rubric scoring the first and last essays and examined essay excerpts from the essays of all three units.

For the food essay, students were required to use evidence to explain why Americans have such unhealthy eating habits and then they proposed a solution based on their explanation. They had to use research information to decide which factor they thought was the most problematic and explain a solution. For example, if a student stated that school lunches are the "problem," they had to provide evidence to support their claim and offer a solution. For this essay, I examined their solution to the problem that they explained in their essay.

The second unit was based on the Steubenville rape case that was in the news at the time. The inquiry for this unit entailed analyzing news accounts and opinion-editorials about the case. We read one research article about teenage brain development. The culminating writing task was an opinion-editorial. My evaluation for this task involved examining essay excerpts to determine their stance about the case. Some excerpts are listed in Figure 15.

Excerpt 1: When CNN correspondent Poppy Harlow sympathized about the suspects, she basically normalized sexual violence. There were probably teens watching it live and got the ideology that raping someone was nothing or exceedingly normal, especially if you're "big" in your community or city.

The whole "raping culture" needs to be deteriorated completely. The media needs to start broadcasting unbiasedly. Awareness campaigns about sexual violence are essential. Teens need to start thinking about the consequences of their actions. We need to obliterate this barbaric culture instead of promoting it.

Excerpt 2: Society has forgotten that it is not okay to rape. Just because a girl is too drunk and dresses provocatively doesn't mean that she deserves to be sexually assaulted…We have come to a point where we cross our arms and question the victim rather than the rapist. Where is our integrity? Aren't we supposed to be doing the right thing to each other.

Excerpt 3: If these young men do not suffer appropriate punishment then eventually the nation will start to find rape as just a misdemeanor, rather than a felony. Trent Mays said "no pictures should have been taken" which means he doesn't feel guilty; he's mad that he messed up and took pictures of the girl's unconscious body.

Excerpt 4: Furthermore, adults are another factor that collaborated in this case. Their fellow coach Reno Saccocia knew about the problem yet he did not bother to determine the seriousness of the problem. He even joked about it! With their admiration and respect toward this person, when they heard Reno joke about this, he just contributed to their previous feeling that what they did was alright.

Except 5: The adults involved with the case need to be prosecuted. If the adults that owned the houses that the teens went to that night would have done something more than just kick them out or even if the coach would have told the authorities of the rape then there most likely would have been a different outcome. The teenage boys would not have done anything because they would have been stopped. Since nobody did anything about the situation including the bystanders and adults, people were hurt and lives were ruined. Not only are the teenage boys at fault for the situation, but the adults and coach are at fault, too.

Figure 15. Excerpts from op-ed essays on the Steubenville rape case

For the essential question essay, my students formulated a research question about a topic that they wanted to study. After they researched information about their topic, they answered their question, based on the evidence they compiled. For each unit, students were required to analyze multiple texts as a foundation for taking a stance on each issue.

Finding #3: Students formulated opinions based on evidence.

To assess my students' proficiency in this category I examined the rubric results that measured their position from the food essay and the essential question essay. The rubric for this category, for each essay, are presented in Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8. Rubric for position statements for food essay

	4: Above Standards	3: Meets Standards	2: Approaching Standards	1: Below Standards
Position Statement: Solution	The author clearly and strongly states their position with valid reasoning and arguments solidly based on evidence.	The author clearly states their position with valid reasoning and arguments based on evidence.	The author states their position with reasoning and arguments somewhat based on evidence.	The author states their position, but it is not connected to evidence or it is not clear.

Table 9. Rubric for position statements for essential question essay

	4: Above Standards	3: Meets Standards	2: Approaching Standards	1: Below Standards
Conclusion	The author gives an insightful, meaningful concluding statement, based on the evidence, that clearly and thoroughly answers the essential question.	The author gives an insightful, meaningful concluding statement, based on the evidence, that answers the essential question.	The author gives a concluding statement, based on the evidence, that somewhat answers the essential question.	The conclusion does not give the reader insightful final thoughts or is not connected to the evidence.

The scores from the rubrics indicate that the majority of students are not meeting standards in terms of formulating a stance. These results are presented in figure 10. However, for the final essay, fewer students were below grade level in terms of their stance than for the food essay. In addition, more students met or exceeded standards for this category for the final essay than for the first essay.
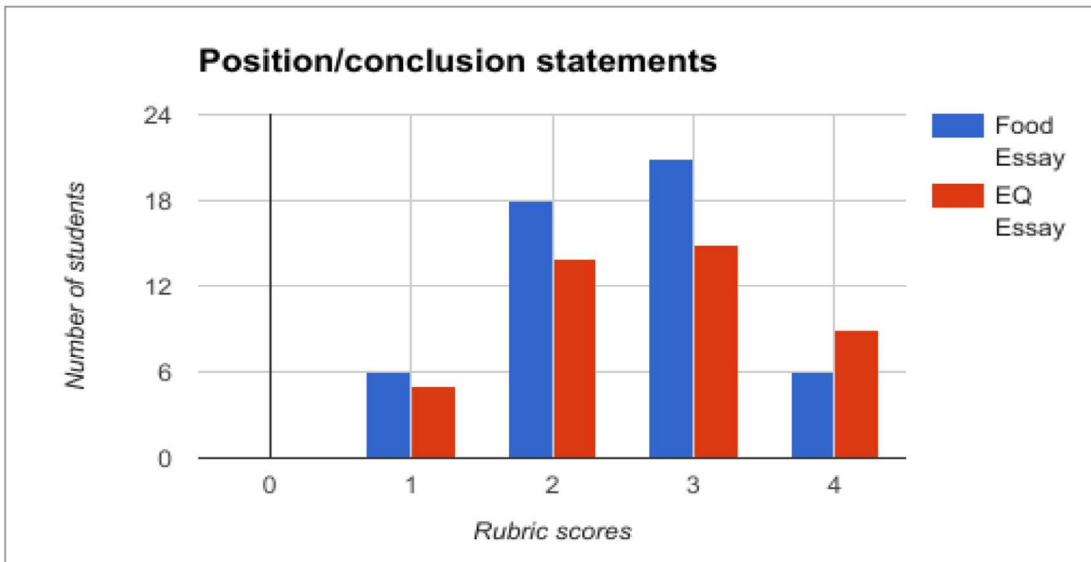
Figure 16. Rubric scores for position statements (food essay) and conclusion statements (essential question essay)

An example of a position statement for the food essay that met standards is excerpted below:

> In conclusion, parental responsibility should start before kids begin to get the idea that eating fast food is good and healthy for them. If parents don't take this responsibility then their kids are going to have health problems in the future. The statistics don't lie when it comes to the obesity rates in America. To control this situation parents need to limit how much television their kids should watch. Remember, the more TV you watch the more pounds you gain and the unhealthier choices you make when it comes to food. Commercials shouldn't be targeting young children since they are barely developing their food habits. If parents can teach their children the evil in fast food then America won't have a lot of unhealthy children.

In her essay, Brenda presented evidence about the connection between fast food commercials and higher consumption of fast food, which results in higher rates of obesity in

children. She based her solution, that parents should monitor their children's television consumption, on this evidence. She mentions commercials in her conclusion, but she does not connect them to parental supervision, which would have made her position statement stronger. However, overall, she effectively connects the evidence she presented in her essay to her concluding statement.

On the other hand, Martin is an example of s student who did not meet standards for his position statement. Martin is a second-language learner with below grade level academic skills. He is also classified as learning-disabled. Martin included information in his essay about how children prefer food with fast food wrappers and information about how much TV children watch, which exposes them to a large amount of fast food advertising. His argument was that fast food advertising is the cause of our health crisis and that the industry should be regulated. He states:

> Fast food advertising is making our population being the unhealthiest in the entire world however this fight has not been over yet we can still fight by making fast food companies to serve only healthy food or also to regulate TV advertising and stop them from targeting our children because they are the future of this country and if they are going the wrong way, what kind of future is waiting for us? One where people lives just last few years and where being overweight will be a normal thing so, we need to stop this and teach our people how to eat healthy and be healthy.

Martin begins his statement by asserting that the advertising industry needs to be regulated and that fast food restaurants need to serve healthier food, but he does not expand his argument any further. Additionally, he did not include evidence in his essay about the connection between fast food advertising and childhood obesity or examples of communities that reduced childhood obesity by restricting advertising, which was provided in some of the texts that we read in class. However, even though his position statement is not meeting standards, he did demonstrate an understanding of the concept of formulating an argument based on evidence, even though he did not execute it successfully.

Martin's reflection of a block party activity from the beginning of the unit is included in Figure 17. He misspelled the word "with" and made several grammatical errors. His writing might indicate that he needs remediation before participating in higher-order thinking tasks. However, he considered differing viewpoints in his group to facilitate his own argument, which is a complex critical thinking skill. So, while his writing may be below grade level, that did not prevent him from participating in activities requiring higher level thinking skills. He was also able to clearly articulate how hearing other viewpoints strengthen his own argument. Zohar and Dori (2003) found that struggling students often did not receive the same access to rigorous curriculum because teachers adjusted their instruction based on the level of academic achievement of their students. However, this student's responses seem to indicate that struggling students do have the ability to participate in activities that require higher-order thinking skills, even if they still need support with basic writing skills. This is a crucial factor to recognize because students like Martin are often not exposed to rigorous curriculum. Instead, many of their teachers believe that they need remediation before they can engage in more academically advanced activities (Raudenbush et al., 1993). Martin does need support with basic writing conventions, but this can be achieved while he is participating in cognitively demanding tasks.
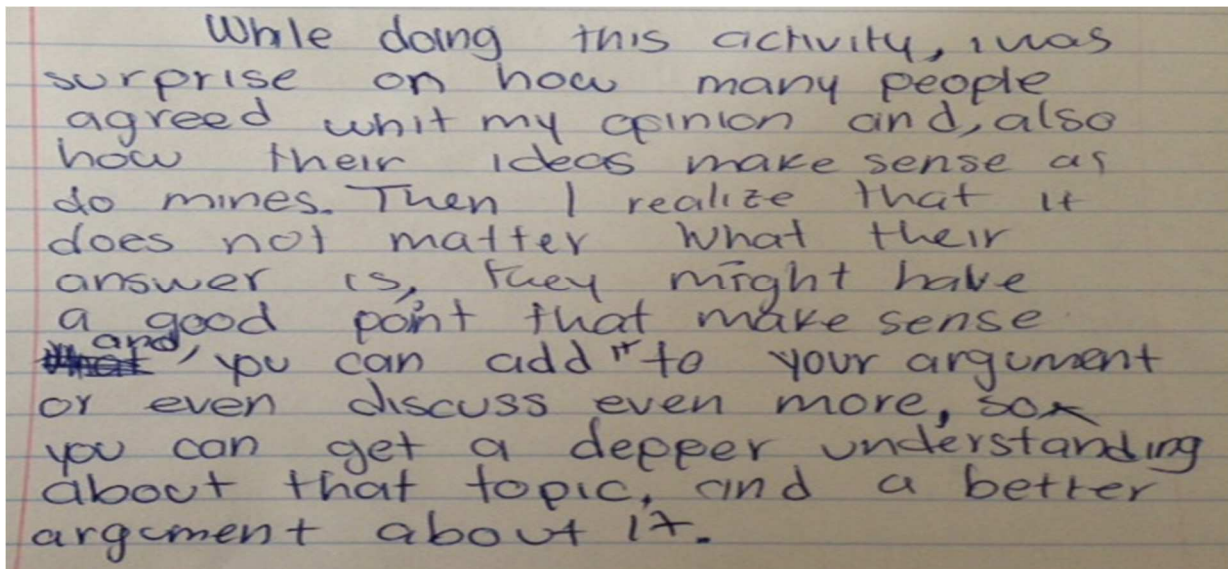
Figure 17. Martin's reflection for block party activity

Student samples: Formulating a stance.

I analyzed each student's stance for each essay. The evaluation is based on excerpts from every essay.

Below Basic: Ramses. In his food essay, Ramses based his stance on fast food statistics and his personal experience working in a fast food restaurant watching the same families consume fast food multiple times a week. In his final paragraph he stated:

> Ultimately I believe the reason why Americans teenagers eat such unhealthy food is because their parents are not taking the time and effort to cook at home and not teaching them how to eat healthy. So parents need to be responsible for their kids, or take classes for cooking and how to feed your family healthy. If not America won't stop being the fattest country, also not the healthiest and happiest kids.

He used statistics and his personal experience to inform and substantiate his opinion.

In his opinion-editorial, Ramses examined the details of the Steubenville rape case and acknowledged that while the victim should have made better choices about drinking, the perpetrators should be held accountable for their crimes. He states:

> Don't you think she should have listened to her friends? Or stopped drinking at the point when she knows that she is going over the limit? However, this doesn't give them the right to rape a fifteen-year-old girl, just because she was drunk and

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defendless. If they were man enough to commit the crime they should man up and take the punishment."

He also cites and refutes the study about teenage brain development to support his stance.

Lastly, for his essential question essay, Ramses conducted an inquiry about the causes of violence. His conclusion was that the government needs to monitor people with violent genes and that parents need to properly raise their children. He did answer his essential question, but he did not effectively present evidence that would support his stance. One issue may have been that the texts that were relevant to his topic were research articles, which were more difficult to access and understand.

Basic: Marta. In her food essay Marta argued that school lunches were nutritionally equivalent to fast food and that the school board needed to improve school lunches:

> A way for the school board to give more healthy meals is to include more fresh fruit and vegetables. Make more salad varieties that are more delicious to the students. Have there be more options of meals with fruits and vegetables…Schools can look at other school lunch programs that have healthier school lunches to get ideas…Sometimes, schools don't know what they're giving as vegetables are overly processed and frozen food. The school board needs to start giving fresh food to serve. The lunches are causing the students to be overweight.

Marta connected her evidence about unhealthy school lunches to her solution that the school board provide healthier meals for students. She suggested that they include more fresh fruit, vegetables and salad options for students. She cited an article about an elementary school that started a farm-to-school program as an example for the school board to follow. She states: "Schools can look at other school lunch programs that have healthier school lunches to get ideas. For example, in the article by Huffington Post on Katherine Finchy Elementary School, they started the program 'Farm-to-School' program where fresh food that is grown on a farm is sent directly to serve the students." She recommended that the school board upgrade the school lunches and do what is best for students.

For her essential question essay, Marta asked, "Does it matter what shows kids watch on TV?" She cited five different sources and she used her own personal experience to demonstrate that watching educational TV can help children learn basic concepts. She states:

> According to "TV Can Be Good for Kids!" by Carey Bryson she states the through media, kids can explore places, animals, or things that they couldn't see otherwise. Studies also show how that children that watch educational shows are more likely to know how to read and count by when they start preschool.

> *Proficient: Alejandro.* Alejandro presented evidence in his food essay to demonstrate that Americans are unhealthy because portion sizes have dramatically increased. His concluding statement asserted that restaurants need to serve healthy portions and that people need to read labels and reduce consumption:

> We have stuffed our faces with food that we don't require and calories that only widen our belts and empty our wallets. …We need to stop eating so much and start paying attention to what we consume. Restaurants and corporations need to start selling us food in reasonable portion sizes. Some people might think that it is impossible to eat right, but they are just making excuses. Restaurants must supply you with nutritional information, all you need to do is read it. If you are obese and consuming over 450 calories in one sitting the chances are that you are eating too much. It may be a hard thing to make life changing choices that go outside of your norm, but like all hard things you just have to take it one step at a time. The choice is in everyone, you just have to make it.

In his opinion-editorial, Alejandro analyzed the details of the case and concluded that the adults were responsible for what happened and that they need to ensure that young people make the right decisions. He states:

> When looking at the rape, there is one thing that everyone should notice: the second house, instead of calling the police or parents of adolescents they decided to just kick one completely passed out girl and two boys out, allowing the boys to take her. This is the key part, if that person had instead called the girls parents and got them to come pick her up rather than letting her be carried away by two teenage boys all of this could have been avoided." He then explains that the frontal lobe is not developed in teenagers. He asserts that "…this is why it is the parents, adults and educator's responsibility to make sure that teens make responsible choices and stop them from doing bad things. And the blame for this rape rests on the adults for being bystanders and not doing something the help the victim. Adults need to take responsibility for

what happened, and they need to make sure that it never happens again by being more responsible for the actions of their children and teaching them right from wrong.

For the final essay, Alejandro presented evidence about the space industry and concluded that private corporations and the government should work together to advance space exploration. In all of Alejandro's essays he effectively formulated an argument based on his evidence. He still needed some practice with writing conventions, but he constructed a valid argument for all his essays.

Finding #4: Students valued considering other opinions to formulate their responses.

One of the dispositions of critical thinking, as discussed in the literature review, is cognitive integrity, which means that students are inclined to consider different viewpoints to come to a fair conclusion (Giancarlo et al., 2004). Participating in these activities provided students multiple opportunities to practice considering other perspectives before taking a stance on an issue. Because I wanted to cultivate the dispositions of critical thinking, as well as the skills, I wanted to determine if my students valued considering other perspectives. This was an important component because my students needed to not only understand how to consider multiple perspectives, they needed to recognize the importance of it, or else they would not do it. So, after they completed the juvenile justice unit, I asked my 1st period class to write a response to two questions:

1. Is it important to look at an issue from several different perspectives when you are forming an opinion? Why or why not?
2. What things (texts, discussions, presentations, personal experiences) did you use to formulate your opinion about the Steubenville case?

Out of the 23 students who responded, 21 of them said that it was important to look at an issue from several different perspectives. Two of them said that it was not important. In response to the first question, Martin, one of the students who replied that it was not necessary

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to consider multiple perspectives stated, "I don't think that it's important to look at an issue from different perspectives when I make an opinion because I believe that it is my own opinion and I can't look for different perspectives." However, in response to the second question about what sources he used to form his opinion, he responded, "I used discussions, articles to form my opinion about the Steubenville case."

Alfredo, the second student who said that he did not need to take other people's perspectives into account answered the second question by explaining, "I used texts and discussion to formulate my opinion because I think that it's more easy to make an opinion." So, even when the students said that it was not important to consider multiple perspectives, they still did so to form their own opinions.

The remaining students replied that they believed that they did need to consider differing perspectives. Some student responses are shown in Figure 18.

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- I think that it is important because you need to learn all of the facts before making your decision on something…It is better to know all the information and make the right decision than to know only a little bit of information and make the wrong decision.
- It is important to have different perspectives from different people in order to have more evidence to the problem.
- When you form an opinion you are looking for a conclusion. Observing several perspectives helps you form a valid conclusion.
- We need to know the full story from every angle to analyze and come to a conclusion of what your opinion is.
- The opinion you might have at first might be based on your emotion rather than facts. Looking at different resources will give you a different understanding of an issue, and after looking at them, you could then decide which perspective makes the most sense to you.
- It is important to look at an issue from multiple perspectives because if you only look at it one way then you will never know the full truth, only what you see, like the blind men and the elephant.

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Figure 18. Student responses to "considering multiple perspectives" activity

In response to the second question about what they used to formulate their opinions, 18 students reported that they used the texts we read in class and/or the class discussions. Five students reported that personal experiences were the sole factors that shaped their opinions about the case. When we had a class discussion about how they formulated their opinions, Christopher, a typical student with basic skills offered his opinion. He explained that even though the brain research demonstrated that adolescent brains are not yet developed, he was a teenage boy who had been in similar circumstances as the boys in the case and he would never make those same decisions. He explained that he concluded that the boys were guilty based solely on his own opinion because he personally understood the circumstances. However, he did use different perspectives to shape his ideas. For example, when we read the brain research he was adamant that that the boys should not use their "underdeveloped brains" as an excuse for their behavior because he had one of those "underdeveloped" brains" and he would never commit those kinds of acts. He ultimately concluded that they boys were guilty because not even legitimate brain research would excuse their behavior. Responding to the evidence in the article helped him formulate an argument, even though he reported that he came to that conclusion entirely on his own.

Discussion

Students with proficient writing skills more effectively used evidence to formulate their arguments, but students of all levels needed more practice with connecting evidence to their stance. Students with below grade level literacy skills needed more practice and support with all aspects of the writing task, from citing evidence to connecting it to the claim. However, even students with very problematic writing skills attempted formulating opinions based on evidence. It is important to remember that a student's reading or writing level is not their thinking level, and all students need access to tasks that require critical thinking skills.

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To promote these critical thinking skills, writing assignments need to be open-ended enough to allow students to participate in authentic inquiry. Having students produce texts does not necessarily foster critical thinking, as discussed in the literature review (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004). Writing tasks should be designed to require certain skills to give students the opportunity to practice writing texts that demonstrate critical thinking. Educators can use resources such as the WSU Guide or the list of critical thinking skills, which are included in the Appendix, to compose these kinds of writing assignments.

Goal #3: Students will independently compose texts.

For the final unit, my students independently conducted their own research and composed their essays after they had participated in brainstorming activities to formulate and refine their essential questions. At this point, my role was essentially as a consultant and I individually responded to student needs. My support ranged from helping students find credible sources to offering feedback about grammar conventions to discussing the organizational structure of their text. My students also had access to all the handouts and templates for our lessons throughout the semester on my class website, so they could find information on specific topics or strategies. After they composed their initial drafts they participated in their writing response groups to provide feedback to each other. After they had composed their second draft they presented their research and findings to the class so they could receive additional feedback.

Finding #5: Students independently composed essays.

To evaluate their progress, I compared the overall percentages from scoring writing based on use of the rubric from the food essays and the essential question essays. The results are presented in Figure 19. The y-axis represents the number of students and x-axis represents

the total percentage from the rubrics. I determined the number of students in each category

and calculated the percentage based on the total number of students.
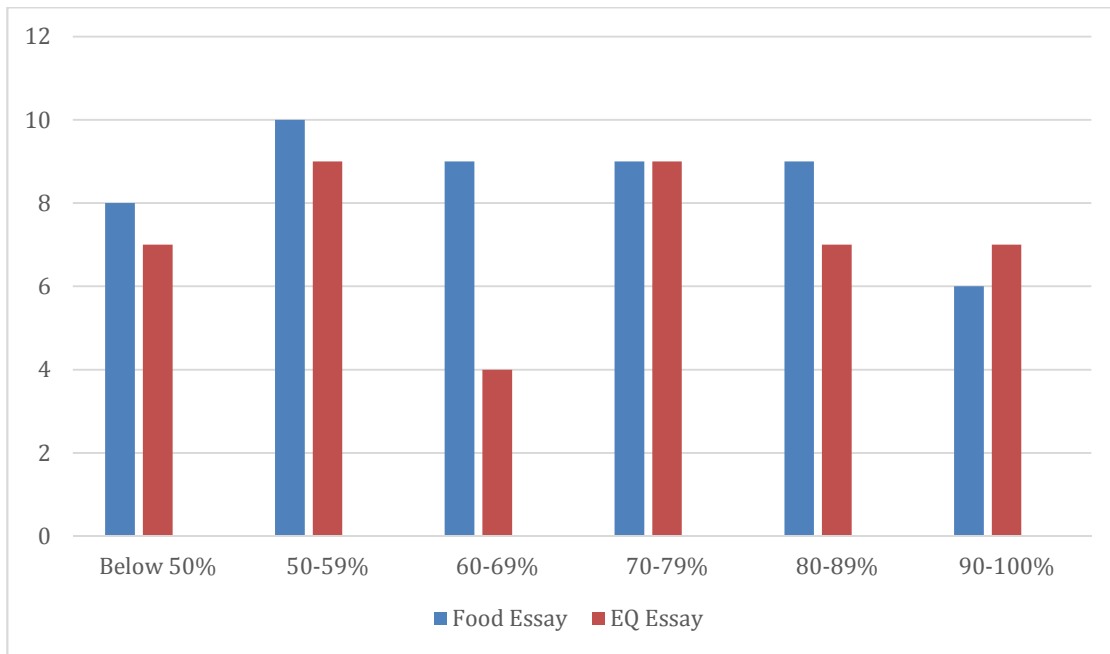
Figure 19. Overall scores for the food and essential question essays

A total of 43 students submitted essays for the essential question essay. Students who

did not turn in essays were not eligible for graduation due to credit deficiencies, so they did

not complete the work for the course. The results for both essays appear to be similar,

however, the essential question measures their ability to compose an essay independently.

This included finding the texts to support their topic.

Almost all the students who scored less than 70% on their essays had below grade

level writing skills, but there were exceptions. Salvatorre scored a 53% on his essential

question essay but he had proficient writing skills, as evidenced by his other writing samples

and test scores on standardized tests. This was an improvement from the 41% he received on

the food essay, but both scores are far below his capability. He underperformed throughout

the semester due to lack of motivation, and he chose to research why people are apathetic for

his essay. His final essay was one of the few assignments that he completed, and he stated that he wanted to understand his own apathy and that motivated him to conduct the research. He used his research to effectively support his conclusion, but his lack of effort in composing his essays resulted in not meeting standards because of problems with conventions and the overall composition of his argument.

On the other hand, some students with below grade level writing skills and high motivation achieved a passing score. For example, Martin did not have grade level writing skills, but he demonstrated a high level of motivation throughout the semester and he received a 71% on his final essay. The students who scored above 90% had both high skills and high motivation.

Students Samples: Independently composed essays.

For this section, I analyzed the essays of the targeted students from the final unit. They chose their own research topics and independently conducted their research, with varying degrees of support from me or other students.

Below Basic: Ramses. Ramses scored a 70% on his final essay. Although this was an independent process, I did provide a significant amount of support, such as helping him search for resources and helping him compose an outline for the structure of his essay. The most problematic component of his final essay was using the evidence to respond to his inquiry. Ramses' cited evidence in his essay, but he did not connect the evidence to his concluding statement.

Even though Ramses' writing was still below grade level at the end of the semester, he did develop an understanding of the basic components of an essay, such as using evidence to formulate a stance. I think that he became engaged in the process when we started meeting one-on-one for the food essay because he began to understand how to address each

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component. He came to my class with below grade level work habits as well as below grade level academic skills. However, as Ramses' work habits improved he made notable progress with his writing. I would speculate that he would have continued to make progress if he were not at the end of his high school career.

At first, I thought that Ramses was a student who was not motivated, but as we continued working together I realized that he needed more guidance to be able to make progress. Working closely with Ramses was a reminder that many of our students are disengaged not because they do not want to learn, but because they might not know how to learn. It is up to educators to determine what our students need, especially when we are asking them to do challenging assignments. This is especially crucial for students who do not exhibit grade level academic skills or strong work habits.

For his final essay, Ramses chose to research why humans are violent. Even though Ramses writing was still far below grade level at the end of the semester, he did develop a basic understanding of the components of an argumentative essay.

Basic: Marta. Marta received a 79% on her final essay. She was excited about researching her topic and she was genuinely interested in her inquiry. Marta was motivated throughout the semester; however, she did have some attendance issues that impacted her ability to complete her essay for the second unit.

For the final essay, Marta used the strategies that we had practiced throughout the semester, such as using an annotated bibliography to gather evidence and making text boxes to organize her ideas. She did not need much direction or guidance because she was able to identify what scaffolds she needed as she progressed through the writing process.

Although her final draft essay still needed some improvement with conventions and grammatical structures, she had strong evidence to support her claims. She chose to research the effect of TV on young children and she found evidence that demonstrated that educational shows can have a positive impact while other shows can have a negative impact, and that it is important for parents to monitor their child's viewing habits.

Proficient: Alejandro. Alejandro earned a 94% on his food essay and a 95% on his final essay. According to his case manager, Alejandro had under-performed in most of his classes and I observed this behavior during the first semester in my Peer Education class. However, by the end of the initial unit in my English class, Alejandro was actively engaged in our class activities and he was producing high quality work. He explained that he hated being confined by the five-paragraph essay format, and I would speculate that being able to compose his essays without a constraining template could have been a motivating factor in his work habits. He used the strategies that I gave them, such as text boxes, even when I did not specifically assign them.

Finding #6: Students gained a broader perspective of the writing process.

At the beginning of the semester I asked my students to list the steps of their writing process and how they determine the structure of their texts. They mostly offered general comments about brainstorming and revising, and including a beginning, middle and an end. Some excerpts are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Student reflections on writing process at the start of the semester

Prompt	Student Responses

What is your writing process?	- Introduction
	       Support
	       Support
	       Conclusion - Think of what I am going to say. Order my ideas (sometimes). Start typing. - My writing process is writing the begging, middle and the end. Three body paragraphs and at the end write the conclusion. - I look for the main idea and the main points. - First I brainstorm then I put all my ideas together and start writing. - My writing process, I don't think I have one. I honestly believe I write differently when I'm happy and write worse when I'm not happy. - Writing process? Well, I always start off with a brainstorm to get ideas. The simple outline of what I would write about then I start my rough draft. - I first write the main points or ideas that will be used as topics in my paragraphs or my essays, and then I put all of the relating ideas together into the same categories. Then I do an outline of the topics that I chose to answer with. Finally, I write an introduction and then a draft essay. - I think about it and things that relate to it. Bullet points to organize and not forget ideas. Think a little more. Then I start to write about topic.

How do you figure out the structure for your writing?	- I write my hook in the introduction, use concrete details and support with my opinion. Then at the end I repeat my intro with different words, which is a conclusion. - I don't know; whichever way it looks better without jumping around too much. - I organize my writing structure by writing and re-read it again so I can fix my mistakes. - I don't have a certain structure, I just go with the flow. - I just write a rough draft and I see what I want to change. - I just put everything where I think it goes. I try to put everything in order. - I always use the intro, body (# of paragraphs depends on the assignment), conclusion method of essay structure

At the end of the semester, students generated more expansive lists that had specific, useful

information about the writing process. To analyze the data, I looked for common themes

across their papers, and then categorized their responses. I excerpted comments and organized

them according to each category in Table 11.

Table 11. Student reflections on writing process at the end of the semester

Category	Comments
Research	• Research, research, research • Always look at different articles that way you will get different points of view • Analyze your research and look for information you can use • Have sources in your essay to back up your claims • Read, highlight and annotate • It's good if you have a lot of research because it's what makes your argument stronger • Once you are done with research you can formulate an opinion • Start analyzing the arguments of the essays you're reading. Clearly define the claims, write out the reasons, the evidence. Look for weaknesses of logic, also strengths
Outlines/ Structure	• Do an outline to analyze your ideas • Play with the essay's order. When you're done writing out your ideas, start structuring it • List what you are going to talk about in each paragraph so you can stay on track with your research • Make a chart to organize your information • The outline will help you know how to make transitions to help make your essay more smooth • Use your chart to look at your topics and purpose for each paragraph • Have different text structures so you won't lose your reader's attention
Mentor Text	• Look at similar articles to get ideas of structure • Find text examples so you know what your paper is supposed to look like • Look at how other real-world articles are structured and model the structure of your essay from that • Get help from different structures, look at how other articles are written • See the formatting in other articles to help you organize your essay • Look at similar essays to help come up with the idea of an outline • Learning how to write an essay begins by learning how to analyze essays written by others

The writing steps indicate that my students have some clear ideas about what strategies they can use to compose an essay. They listed steps that they were not using at the beginning of the semester, like using the structure from other articles as a guide to write their own text. They gave strategies, such as having a specific purpose for each paragraph, that indicate a deeper understanding of text structures and functions.

After they had finished writing their writing process steps, I asked my students to write a few sentences about how comfortable they feel now about writing essays without using the five-paragraph formula. Thirty-nine students responded, and six indicated that they still do not feel confident writing an essay like this on their own. The remaining 33 responses ranged from feeling somewhat comfortable to very comfortable. I chose excerpts that represented the responses from the majority of my students. Excerpts from their responses are included in Table 12.

Table 12. Student comments regarding comfort with essay writing

- Honestly, at the beginning I was really scared in writing this paper. But I feel a little more comfortable in doing it because I know that in order to write a paper you need to have a lot of research to write it. It is hard but you can do it.
- I feel comfortable writing essays like this now. I just need to learn that with every essay I need to have tons more research than I would normally put.
- I'm still not comfortable, but that's just me. I overthink too much which causes me to stress and do everything at the last minute.
- I feel more comfortable writing this essay because I now understand what it takes to write a strong and powerful essay that people will understand.
- I feel somewhat comfortable and I feel that I could get a good grade on my essays now that I have a proper procedure to write my essay correctly and efficiently.
- Compared to the beginning, now I feel more comfortable doing these types of essays because I know exactly what are the steps that I need to follow and I can do it without any problem.
- It feels more comfortable to write this type of essay now. I think practice makes better and in this class I sure did get a lot of practice and time to improve my writing.
- I feel comfortable with this kind of essay because I've encountered different strategies and tactics to help me write an overall essay.
- I feel comfortable because gathering sources helps a lot by extending your thoughts and ideas. Now it would be easier to me because we don't have to write a five-paragraph essay.
- I feel like it is 50-50. I still find it kind of difficult because I am, or was, so used to writing the same five-paragraph or persuasive essays. I like these essays better, though, because there are different ways to start it and write it. Also, because I learn more of the topic I'm writing about. And it isn't the same outline. It's challenging, which makes it better even if it's frustrating sometimes.

The comments seem to indicate that many of my students now feel at least somewhat comfortable composing essays without using a template or formula. This was an important finding in terms of my perspective as a teacher because most of my students were initially uncomfortable with trying a different approach to writing. This made it even more challenging for me as a teacher to remain committed to trying new pedagogy. However, seeing their responses about how they felt at the end of the semester reinforces the idea that educators must be able to withstand discomfort to persevere with providing challenging curriculum to our students. It is easier to teach writing with a template, and it is less difficult for students to learn. However, it is crucial that educators venture beyond their comfort zone

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in order to give students access to curriculum that truly promotes critical thinking and critical literacy.

Interviews

At the end of the semester I conducted individual interviews with Ramses, Marta and Alejandro about their writing throughout the semester.

Ramses.

I asked Ramses how his writing had changed over the semester and he said, "Before I started just writing off my mind and now I collect evidence and if I get ideas from another place, if I read someone else's essay, and I want to put that in my essay I know how to give them credit." He said that the audience wants to hear the truth, not just his opinion and that he now uses evidence in a way so that his reader can understand. When I asked him if it helped his thinking to write this way he said, "Yes, it gets larger, bigger, deeper." He also stated that a teacher had never asked him to revise a paper before. He explained that at first it made him really frustrated when I made him revise his essays, but then he appreciated it because it helped him improve his writing.

Marta.

I asked Marta if her writing improved over the semester. She said that at the beginning of the year she did not know how to write an essay, but that using the text boxes helped her learn how to structure her writing. She said that now she knows that she has to have transitions and an outline for her ideas and that she has to create the structure for her writing.

I asked her if she missed using the five-paragraph formula and she said that she did not because "you cannot explain your ideas using a template because it has to be five paragraphs and a certain number of sentences." She said, "You basically have to shorten your

ideas and can't expand them." Without the formula she said, "I feel like I can explain more and more."

Alejandro.

I asked Alejandro to tell me about his writing this semester and if it had changed and he said, "I feel it's improved quite a bit. It's more easier for me to form the ideas that I am going to write in my paper. It seems a lot easier now." I asked him how he would account for the change and he replied that it could be because it was a different way of writing or that he had just grown up. He said that he would continue to use the text boxes to create the structure after he had found sources for his topic. I asked him if he missed using the five-paragraph essay and he said:

> No. It was always shoved down my throat and all the teachers always said you have to write it like this. And I pretty much hated writing back when they were teaching that so I always hated it. You had to have the three body paragraphs and conclusion and introduction and I never really liked being told what to do so I never liked writing essays. It made it harder like you had to fit what you wanted to write into there.

There were several realizations that I took away from these interviews. First, it is important to recognize that shifts in thinking and perspective constitute an important part of learning. All three students made shifts in their thinking about writing, and even though Alejandro is the only student who is graduating with proficient writing, they all made progress in their writing and their approach to writing. A shift in attitude and perspectives can be just as important as changes in outcomes, perhaps even a necessary component of internalizing and transferring skills. I think these students will now approach writing with a different perspective than at the beginning of the semester.

From the students' own accounts, they all seemed to have made some progress in terms of their approach to writing. Ramses and Marta were able to benefit from rigorous curriculum even though they still need more practice with conventions and basic skills.

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Alejandro had proficient skills, but he demonstrated a lack of motivation at the beginning of the semester. His motivation improved by the end of the semester and he independently incorporated many of the writing strategies in his final essay. Based on his negative comments about five-paragraph essays, I would speculate that one of the reasons he was more motivated was that he did not have to adhere to that kind of structure.

Additionally, this curricular approach can benefit students of all levels. Ramses is the type of student who would traditionally receive remediation because of his skill level, which could lead to a lack of exposure to curriculum that fosters critical thinking. However, with this approach, he was able to report that his thinking had gotten "larger, bigger and deeper." At the same time, a proficient student like Alejandro was also able to make progress. More differentiated scaffolding would have helped Ramses and Marta in particular, but students of all levels could engage in and benefit from the curricular activities. Lastly, I think it would be helpful to have students reflect more on their learning process. This may help them recognize and internalize the progress that they are making.

Discussion.

Because my students were second-semester seniors, I wanted to prepare them to independently compose essays by the end of the course. I decided to make our final unit an independent research project because I thought that my students needed independent writing practice before they graduated. However, many of my students still needed more intensive support. I think that it would have been beneficial to conduct a guided unit with the lowest-level students instead of requiring them to be completely independent. Given the scope of the writing tasks and the new skills I asked my students to incorporate into their writing process, in addition to the fact that many of my students had below grade level writing skills, they may not have been ready for that level of independence. I think that the more proficient students

benefited from both choosing their own topics and working independently, but not all students were at this level. Differentiating instruction, by offering different assignments, could have given students that were ready the freedom to choose their own topic. At the same time, other students could have received more support. Students with proficient writing skills could have independently researched their topics and composed their essays and I could have given the remaining students more guided support, perhaps with a common topic so I could provide the texts and graphic organizers.

However, it is important to recognize that although most students did not produce proficient essays, they did compose essays that required critical thinking and higher-level writing skills. I think that my students would have produced more polished essays if they had used the five-paragraph formula, but those kinds of essays would not have necessitated an authentic inquiry that required critical thinking skills. As explained in the literature review, writing proficiency can decline as students practice more complex thinking skills (Haswell, 1991). Educators obviously want students to compose proficient texts, however, this should not come at the expense of critical thinking.

Summary and Discussion

My intention when I started my project was to provide my students with a specific strategy, text boxes, to organize their essays so they would not be constrained by a five-paragraph template or other similar formula. I assumed that the organizational structure would be the most problematic component of their essays since they did not use a formula. However, the rubric results and excerpts from student essays from the first unit indicated that students of all levels could determine the structure for their essays based on the logical progression of their ideas, instead of using a template. Students used scaffolds, such as graphic organizers, for collecting evidence and text boxes to create these structures.

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Because of the findings from the first essay assignment, I completely shifted my perspective about writing instruction and put gathering evidence and formulating a stance at the forefront, not creating the structure. This changed the entire scope of my project and it became quite comprehensive to include all aspects of formulating an argument. Consequently, there are many implications to evaluate given the broad scope of my project. However, there are several outcomes that seemed especially important to consider in terms of writing instruction.

First, students can use content to guide the structure of their essays instead of adhering to a formula. Scaffolds such as graphic organizers for collecting evidence based on a specific claim and mapping out the purpose of each section can provide support for creating organizational structures. With this approach, students of all levels, but especially struggling students, need ongoing, guided practice with citing sources and using transition words and phrases to formulate their argument. Not adhering to a structure necessitates using rhetorical strategies to create an effective argument because the structure is based on the argument itself. This approach requires writing instruction that provides students with multiple opportunities to practice using rhetorical tools, such as transitional phrases, to craft an argument. The findings from the rubrics and essay excerpts indicate that all students, except for students with high motivation and proficient writing skills, needed more practice citing sources and using them to support claims. In addition, struggling students needed more practice with using transition words and phrases to formulate their arguments. With the five-paragraph essay format students can use transition words such as first, then, next and finally to simply list a progression of related examples. However, when students use their argument as the basis for their organizational structure they need to use transitional words and phrases such as

"consequently," "even though," "as a result," and "however." These transition words are used to construct the argument, not just list related ideas. This is a much more complex task than just presenting related ideas, and most students needed more practice with using these more complicated rhetorical structures. Additionally, it is important to create graphic organizers based on the specific demands of each individual writing task. Students can use their graphic organizers to collect evidence in a logical way that responds to the writing task, and they can then use these charts as a guide to create the organizational structure of their essay.

Another important finding is that students of all levels can participate in writing activities and tasks that foster critical thinking. The findings indicate that most students with below-grade level writing skills produced writing that did not meet grade-level writing standards. However, these students participated in activities that required critical thinking skills and they produced essays that demonstrated evidence of critical thinking, such as using evidence to formulate a stance. It is important to provide all students with opportunities to practice critical thinking skills and writing with a template does not necessarily foster higher-level cognitive skills. Consequently, to promote these critical thinking skills, as well as foster proficient writing, struggling students especially need multiple and ongoing opportunities to practice writing conventions. It may have been more beneficial for my struggling students to write fewer full-process essays in order to have more opportunities to practice writing conventions.

In addition to ongoing practice with targeted writing skills, lower-performing students also need support with improving work habits, such as time management. Because the writing process for this kind of essay was more complex than writing a five-paragraph essay, students needed help with the demands of a more complicated task. Many students reported that they

were accustomed to writing their essays the night before they were due when they were assigned five-paragraph essays. However, with these more demanding writing assignments they could not complete all the tasks the night before. A five-paragraph essentially entails listing related ideas, but the assignments that I gave my students required that they carefully analyze their sources to determine their stance, and then use that evidence to support their point of view. Writing essays like this requires more time and more effort, and lower-performing students may be more likely to have poor work habits. Consequently, students need support creating an organizational and time management plan to meet all the demands of the writing assignments.

Lastly, the data seems to indicate that students with low skills, but high motivation, produce more proficient essays than students with high skills and low motivation. This could be due to the fact that all students, regardless of skill level, must spend time composing these kinds of essays. Analyzing the research and formulating and supporting a stance is more time-consuming and requires more effort than a formulaic five-paragraph essay. Even struggling students can participate in these activities with supportive, explicit scaffolds. However, if students are unwilling to put the forth the time and effort than it is not possible to produce a proficient essay, even if they are proficient writers.

Ultimately, perhaps the most important consideration for educators is to remain cognizant of the fact that a student's reading and writing level is not necessarily their thinking level. Students with below-grade level academic skills need access to rigorous, thought-provoking curriculum. Composing texts that are grammatically correct is an essential piece of writing effective pieces because the writer must convey their ideas in a manner that is clear and coherent. However, students do not need to wait until they are proficient with basic

writing structures to write more advanced pieces. When I asked my students to use introductions of the articles we read as a guide for their own texts, they could use the grammatical structures to craft more complex sentences, which fostered more sophisticated thinking. Essentially, giving students scaffolds to improve their writing skills helps elevate and expand their critical thinking skills as well. Students can practice basic writing skills within the context of academically rigorous reading and writing tasks, and access to pedagogy that fosters critical thinking for all students is the foundation for an equitable classroom.

Because the scope of my project was so broad, there are many areas to consider for further research. Some of these questions are:

1. What kind of professional development do teachers need to implement a more comprehensive writing program beyond formulas and templates?
2. How does writing without a template impact student engagement?
3. How does writing about current topics affect student motivation? How does giving students a choice about topics impact motivation and engagement?
4. How can students learn how to give effective feedback in writing response groups?
5. How can mentor text be used to: help students organize their texts, develop tone and voice and provide practice for complex grammatical structures?
6. How does this kind of writing instruction impact struggling students' perspectives of their academic abilities?
7. How can collaborative groups be used to foster critical thinking skills? And, how can teachers facilitate the transfer of these skills to written tasks?

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

When I started this project, I focused on equity: I wanted my students to have access to college and high-paying jobs. Those are important goals certainly, but it is also so much deeper than that. Traditionally disempowered students need to have access to *everything*--institutions, information, people in power--and they need to be able to critically think about the world around them to have that access. Teaching writing like this is challenging, and teaching is demanding enough already, but we do not have a choice if we want to truly serve our students. We owe it to them to do the *right* thing, not the easy thing or the comfortable thing or the "everybody does it like this, we've always done it this way" thing. They need more from us, and we can give them more. We just need to be brave and willing.

This project was not radically different from what I have been doing in my classes for the past couple of years because of my work with the San Diego Area Writing Project, but situating my curriculum within a body of research elevated my pedagogy to a new level. This year I trusted what I was doing even when it was very uncomfortable because I had research to support my decisions, rather than just having to rely on my instincts. Because I based my pedagogical decisions on research I had the confidence to withstand the challenging moments, whereas before I would have done something different because it would have felt like I was doing the wrong thing.

For example, when I was discouraged about trying to have my students write without a template and I was tempted to give up and let them use the formula, I thought of the research that demonstrated that that model does not benefit students, especially struggling students. And when I thought about critical pedagogy and how I wanted to make choices that promoted "freedom" for my students, I could not, in good conscience, revert to pedagogy that limited my students in any way. Considering the research gave me the support to continue

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implementing writing curriculum that entailed more academically challenging tasks. Now when I feel unsure about taking pedagogical risks, the research gives me a community of support to make pedagogical decisions that truly promote learning. The focus of my instruction is not merely about meeting objectives, but considering whether each activity and lesson promotes the critical thinking and real learning that will ultimately prepare my students to be critical thinkers throughout their lives. In the initial implementation stage of my project, I put the organizational structure at the forefront of my writing instruction. As the project unfolded, I discovered that I needed to put greater emphasis on student opportunities for generating ideas and responses.

At the beginning of this project, many of my students had below grade level skills and poor work habits. Asking them to participate in higher-level academic tasks was arduous for all of us. But what I know now is that my students have the capacity to engage in rigorous academic tasks, even if they have below grade level literacy skills, and it is imperative that all students have access to this kind of learning. Doing these kinds of activities with struggling students can be particularly challenging. They may feel less comfortable about taking academic risks because they may not have had very successful educational experiences. Therefore, it is essential to build a community where students and teachers feel comfortable and safe enough to push themselves past their comfort zones. In classes where I feel more connected to my students, I am more willing to be innovative because I feel safe enough to take risks and to make mistakes. In a supportive classroom, everyone has the freedom to push themselves to new levels of learning, including teachers.

Many teachers believe struggling writers need a formula to give them direction. This approach does not ultimately serve students because it does not give them the skills to think

critically. When their writing routine is simply adhering to a formula they are not getting

practice persevering with challenging academic tasks. Additionally, students are disengaged

with formulaic writing. It does not encourage them to critically engage with topics and instead

they practice rote, boring tasks, like filling in a template. If we broaden our perspective about

what writing is and what purpose it serves, we can give our struggling students a foundation

of strategies and skills that will aide them in higher-level tasks. For example, instead of

starting with how to organize their writing, we can begin with having them analyze and

respond to ideas in a text. After students generate ideas and responses, they can then learn

how to organize their thoughts to effectively communicate with an audience. It is a much

more purposeful and motivating endeavor to learn an organizational strategy for

communicating ideas when students actually have something meaningful to say.

I know that these kinds of activities were more engaging for my students because they

were more engaging for me to teach. One day my students were working on their food essays

in class. I asked them to raise their hands if they were writing something that I was going to

be interested in reading. Almost the entire class raised their hands, and it turned out that their

essays really were interesting, much more so than most of the writing that I had seen

throughout my teaching career.

I found myself changing my own perspective about each issue that we studied when I

read my students' writing or listened to their discussions. I truly was learning with them and

from them. I want to give my students the kind of learning experience that honors what they

are capable of instead of keeping them constrained by their limitations. It is not always

evident what this approach actually looks like in the classroom. But if we want to teach with

integrity then we must remain committed to the ongoing quest for pedagogy that gives our

students the courage, the confidence and the support to embrace their potential.

Beyond the Formula: Using Strategic Scaffolding to Foster

Critical Thinking and Authentic Writing

Letter to Teachers

Dear fellow teacher-revolutionaries,

This project doesn't seem like it would require taking a lot of risk, but it does. Trying to teach a new approach to writing is messy, confusing, frustrating, disconcerting and uncomfortable. Throughout my implementation, especially at the beginning as I was stumbling my way through, I seriously considered giving up. My students were confused and wary about trying something new. I had to keep encouraging them, when I felt precisely the same way. After the first few days of teaching (or at least trying to teach) my students how to construct their own text structure in response to the prompt and their own inquiry, one of my students asked if she could go to another teacher's classroom to get a template. I looked at her blankly for a few seconds because, for one, I was stunned, and I didn't know what to do, and secondly, I desperately wanted to ask her to bring back 35 copies so everyone else could just use the template as well.

I didn't let her go (she had one the next day, though) and we soldiered on together (well, most of us) as we explored new territory together. I gave my students a lot of time to write and plan in class because I wanted to encourage them to grapple with their ideas and responses, and I wanted them to experiment with their writing. When some of them asked me to read the beginnings of their essays during one of our writing days I noticed that they had insanely boring introductions. You know what I am talking about: the 5- paragraph triangle introduction that goes from general statements to the thesis statement. You start reading and you automatically think, "What is the rest of the paper going to look like and how am I going to read a 100 of them like this?!" I panicked because I knew that I did not want my students producing texts like that, but at the same time I didn't know how to guide them to something different. What I finally did after I read one of these introductions is turn to that student and simply ask, "Do you want to read a paper that begins like that? Are you interested in this essay? Are you excited about writing something that starts like that?" He said no, and then we talked about how to get started. As a result, I gave my students mentor sentence introductions and some examples, and they spent time experimenting with their ideas and their writing. It was certainly not as easy as giving them a list of ways to introduce a topic, or giving them a template, but it did force my students to more deeply engage with their own writing process.

This process is not perfect, and the products are not perfect, but the texts that my students are writing are more much more interesting and much more thoughtful than what they would have produced if I had just given them a template. I am pushing them to the edge, just as I am pushing myself to the edge, and we are making some progress. I am having to live with some deep discomfort every day as I try out these new ideas, but I am committed to making my students really think and engage with their texts, because what I ultimately want is for them to walk into the world knowing how to express their own ideas and thoughts and opinions.

So, what I want to say to you, fellow teacher-soldiers, is: Be brave and come join the rest of us in the fight to liberate our students and lead them to the gifts of their own minds. Let's give our students the tools to not just survive and get through, but to react and respond

and make a change and make a difference and make their mark. Teaching writing might not seem revolutionary, but it is: Authentic writing gives our students the tools to speak up and speak out, and when they have the power to use their voices they have the power to change their lives- and the world.

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth Lonnecker

Guidelines for Implementation

The context for the units in Beyond the Formula was current, relevant issues that students would be interested in researching and discussing. If students find topics compelling then they are often more engaged in their learning and more willing to attempt challenging activities, such as annotating a text that is above their reading level. The units in Beyond the Formula included the following: Food and health, juvenile justice and an independent inquiry based on a research question

With this approach, the topic for each unit changes over time to address current issues, but the structure for the unit remains the same. For example, for the juvenile justice unit I could not use the same texts and writing prompt again because we studied a case that was in the news at that time and it would not be relevant for future use. However, the structure for the unit activities remains the same: introductory activities, analyzing texts, formulating a stance and writing support. I will briefly discuss each component to provide some guidelines for replicating this approach.

Introductory Activities

The purpose of these activities is to stimulate interest and help students connect to the topic. These activities can include things such as anticipation guides, small group discussions with guided questions, news clips about the specific issue or journal prompts with thought-provoking questions. I would suggest using activities that promote student engagement but do not have challenging academic requirements so that students can participate without feeling intimidated. For example, for the food unit I started with a *forced choice* activity. This activity entails posting a statement on the board that students either agree or disagree with and then they walk to the "agree" side or the "disagree" side of the room where the signs are posted. Students on either side share their opinions and students can

change their minds and walk to the other side if their perspective shifts after listening to their classmates' opinions. I chose statements such as, *student's weights or BMI's should be included on report cards* and *soda should be banned on campus.* Students had strong reactions to these statements and so that helped build interest in the topic, but it was a low stakes activity because they did not have to speak out if they did not want to. Additionally, it was not a challenging academic task, so students of all levels could participate. However, every student was actively participating and beginning to think about the topic even if they did not speak out because they had to move to the side of the room that aligned with their response. So, the intent of the introductory activities is to foster interest in the topic without creating apprehension or anxiety about the demands of the tasks.

Analyzing Texts

After students have developed an interest in the topic, they can start conducting their inquiry. This entails interacting with different types of texts, including digital texts such as TED talks or news clips. These activities range from annotating articles to participating in small group discussions to completing charts analyzing the claims and evidence in the text. The purpose of these activities is twofold: Students gather evidence to formulate and support their stance about the topic and they analyze the rhetorical elements of the texts to provide guidance for composing their own texts.

Formulating a Stance

Students begin formulating a stance right at beginning of the unit when they participate in an introductory activity like *forced choice* or *block party*. As they gather information throughout the unit they continually refine, clarify and modify their point of view. Students formulate their stance by responding to the claims and evidence in specific texts and

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discussing and defending their developing point of view. In addition, they create products, such as journal responses or public service announcements (PSA's), to express their opinions.

While students are analyzing multiple texts, they are formulating a stance, and they will probably continue finding relevant research as their opinions continue to emerge and change. So, as an example, perhaps students compose PSA's about an issue related to food and health. By this point students have gathered their evidence and they are solidifying their stance. However, as they watch their classmates' presentations they may modify or completely change their opinion as they consider new evidence, and they would therefore need to find more texts to analyze. Consequently, they would shift between gathering evidence and formulating a stance. Because of this recursive process, I organized the *analyzing texts* activities and the *formulating a stance* activities in the same section.

Writing Supports

In terms of writing support, students should be practicing writing conventions throughout the entire unit and not just at the end when they start composing their final pieces. This is especially important for struggling students who need ongoing and repeated practice with writing conventions, such as citing sources within the text. These practice activities could entail paraphrasing a quote from an article or using transitions to introduce their response to a specific section of the text. Incorporating these kinds of activities throughout the unit will not only help students compose a more proficient final product, but it will also help them more closely analyze the texts. For example, practicing paraphrasing the text will help students correctly cite evidence in their essay, and it will also help them better understand the text.

Writing supports for the final product include graphic organizers for collecting evidence. The format of these charts is based on the requirements and components of the

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writing task. Students can use these charts, as well as text boxes, as guides for the organization of their essays.

Unit 1: Food and Health Unit

Introductory Activities	• Forced choice • Food diary
Analyzing Texts/Formulating a Stance	• Charts • Fast food analysis: F.A.C.T.S • Academic summaries • Response to articles • Texts • Journal prompt • PSA
Writing Support	• Writing task • Graphic organizer for evidence • Text boxes • Sample introductions • *They Say, I Say*: Transitions

Introductory Activities

- Forced Choice
- Food Diary and analysis

Forced Choice

Directions: Display a statement on the board and post "agree" and "disagree" signs on opposite sides of the classroom. Ask students to stand up and go to either the "agree" side or the "disagree" side. Students from each side should explain why they chose that side. If students change their minds as they listen to different perspectives they can move to the other side.

Statements:

- Fast food restaurants should not be allowed near schools
- Students' weight and body mass index (BMI) should be included on report cards
- Soda should be banned on campus
- If a person is overweight it is entirely their own fault

Student Handout: Food Diary

Directions: Track what you eat for 5 consecutive days. Include all your meals and snacks for each day.

Date/Day/Time	Food	Estimated Portion	Why did you eat? (boredom, hunger, socializing, had a craving…)

Student Handout: Exit Slip, Diet Analysis

Directions: Choose several meals and snacks from your food diary that represent your typical eating habits. Use the website http://www.calorieking.com/foods/ to analyze your meals and then respond to the questions.

1. What did you find out about the nutritional quality of your diet?
2. What positive habits do you want to continue?
3. What things do you want to change or modify? Why?
4. Did anything surprise you? Explain.

Analyzing Texts and Formulating a Stance

- Article Analysis: Charts
- Questions: Response to texts
- Fast food analysis: F.A.C.T.S
- Academic Summaries/responses (one-pagers)
  - ➢ Guidelines
  - ➢ Checklist
- Public Service Announcement
- Texts

Student Handout: Analysis: "Don't Blame the Eater"

Claims/Examples	**Response:** This makes sense because… I disagree because… What about… Another example is…
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Student Handout: Article Analysis

	"If They Pitch It……."	**"Portion Distortion"**	**"Don't Blame the Eater"**
Prediction			
Main Claims			
Examples/ Evidence			
What worked?			
What did the author need to add, delete or clarify?			

Student Handout: TED Talks, "Ron Finley: A Guerilla Gardner"

(https://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la)

Directions: Answer the following questions. You will discuss your responses in your discussion groups.
1. Is Ron Finley credible? Why or why not?
2. Who is his audience? Are there people who may not connect with him? Explain.
3. What emotions did Finley elicit from you while you were watching this presentation? How did he do this?
4. What is his purpose? What does he want us to do and how is he trying to convince us to do it? (What is his argument?)
5. Is this an effective presentation? Why or why not?

Student Handout: Fast Food F.A.C.T.S: Analysis

(http://www.fastfoodmarketing.org/)

Directions: Answer the questions based on information from the website.

1. Is this a credible site? Why? (Hint: Who did the study?)
2. What does F.A.C.T.S stand for?
3. What is the overall conclusion of the report? (Hint: Look at the press release)
4. Go to the consumer tab, click on *Fast food marketing briefs* and choose two topics to research. Summarize the main findings for each one (you can use bullet points).

Title:	**Title:**

5. List one example of the best fast food meal and one example of the worst.   Best:

Worst:

6. List seven important statistics.

7. Go to the press release and choose one article to skim. Bullet point the main ideas.

8. Find one other section to browse. Summarize the information (7-8 bullet points).

<u>**Student Handout: Guidelines for writing a *SUMMARY***</u>

(http://academics.smcvt.edu/cbauer-ramazani/AEP/EN104/summary.htm)

By: <u>Christine Bauer-Ramazani</u>

   The purpose of a summary is to give the reader, in a about 1/3 of the original length of an article/lecture, a clear, objective picture of the original lecture or text. Most importantly, **the summary restates only the main points of a text or a lecture without giving examples or details**, such as dates, numbers or statistics.

  Before the summary:
1. For a text, **read, mark,** and **annotate** the original.
     - highlight the topic sentence
     - highlight key points/key words/phrases
     - highlight the concluding sentence
     - outline each paragraph in the margin

2. Take notes on the following:
     - The source (author--first/last name)
     - the main idea of the original (paraphrased)
     - the major supporting points (in outline form)
     - major supporting explanations (e.g. reasons/causes or effects)

  Writing your summary-Steps:

1. Organize your notes into an outline which includes main ideas and supporting points **but no examples or details** (dates, numbers, statistics).
2. Write an introductory paragraph that begins with a frame including an **in-text citation of the source** and the author as well as a reporting verb to introduce the main idea.
     - ARTICLE:

In his speech "The Causes of Poverty," Pres. Johnson claims that everyone needs an opportunity to overcome poverty.
Example: In his article "Michael Dell turns the PC world inside out," Andrew E. Serwer (1997) describes how Michael Dell founded Dell Computers and claims that Dell's low-cost, direct-sales strategy and high-quality standards account for Dell's enormous success.
     - BOOK:
In his book *The Pearl*, John Steinbeck (1945) illustrates the fight between good and evil in humankind.

Reporting Verbs:

Argument:	Neutral:	Counterargument	Suggestion:	Criticism:
argue	state	refute the claim	suggest	criticize
claim	report	argue against	recommend	
contend	explain			
maintain	discuss			
insist	illustrate			
	posit			

Other examples of frames:

According to _____ , _____.
             (author's last name)   (main idea)

_____'s article on _____ discusses the _____.
(author's last name)   (topic)   (main idea)

_____, in his/her article, "_____" argues that_____.
(author's last name)   (title)   (main idea)

3. The main idea or argument needs to be included in this first sentence. Then mention the **major** aspects/factors/reasons that are discussed in the article/lecture.
   a. For a **one-paragraph summary**, discuss each supporting point in a separate sentence. Give 1-2 explanations for each supporting point, summarizing the information from the original.

   b. For a **multi-paragraph summary**, discuss each supporting point in a separate paragraph. Introduce it in the first sentence (topic sentence).

Example: The first major area in which women have become a powerful force is politics.

4. Support your topic sentence with the necessary reasons or arguments raised by the author/lecturer but omit all references to details, such as dates or statistics.

Student Handout: Summary Checklist

- **Do you introduce the title, author, main idea? (Use a sentence frame)**
- **Is the tone of the summary neutral? (no opinion, bias or attitude comes through)**
- **Does the summary reflect the right proportion of coverage for different points?**
- **Does the summary use attributive tags?**
  - ➢ **The author states….**
  - ➢ **The author demonstrates…**
  - ➢ **According to….**
  - ➢ **The author shows…**
  - ➢ **The author asserts….**
  - ➢ **The author argues….**
- **Will the summary stand alone as a unified and coherent piece of writing? (Are you left with unanswered questions or are you confused?)**
- **Does the summary use quotes sparingly?**

-adapted from *Reading Rhetorically* (Bean, Chappell & Gillam, 2011)

    In his book*, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1950), Dee Brown demonstrates that the settlers continually broke treaties with the Native Americans in order to take back the land that had gold in it. For example, in 1842 the settlers gave the Native Americans the Black Hills and……

    In his TED Talk, "America's Prisoners of War" Aaron Huey argues that the United States should give the Black Hills back to the Native Americans because it is their land that we took illegally. He explains that…..

Titles and Names to Italicize	Titles to Put Into Quotation Marks
- A novel - A ship - A play - A film - A painting - A sculpture or statue - A drawing - A CD - A TV Series - A cartoon series - An encyclopedia - A magazine - A newspaper - A pamphlet	- Poem - Short story - A skit - A commercial - An individual episode in a TV series - A cartoon episode - A chapter - An article - A newspaper story

Student Handout: One Pager, "New York Plans to Ban Sale of Big Sizes of Sugary Drinks"

Directions: Write a summary of the article and a response. You can use the following questions as a guide for the response:

- Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the problems?
- How does this relate to the public health triangle?
- Does this infringe upon people's individual rights?
- Does the government have a right to regulate people's eating habits?
- Do you think that we should do this in San Diego?

Typed, 12-point font, single-spaced

Student Handout: Public Service Announcement

Directions: Make a PSA that gives your audience relevant information about healthy/unhealthy eating and persuades them to do something. Use facts, statistics and information from the articles and videos that we have used in class. Use the following guidelines:

- **Choose your audience**: Teenagers, parents, legislators, school board…
- **Define the problem**: Use statistics and facts to define the problem. Choose information that your audience would care about.
- **Call to Action**: Give your audience a specific action step. What do you want your audience to do? Only eat fast food once a month? Make better fast food choices? Eat more vegetables? Understand the link between soda and diabetes? Eat smaller portions? Provide a clear, coherent message.
- **Persuasive techniques**: Choose visuals, slogans and music that will be effective in persuading your target audience.

Texts: Food and the Connection to Health

<center>**"The Battle Against Fast Food Begins at Home"**</center>

<center>By Daniel Weintraub
The Sacramento Bee, Tues., December 17, 2002</center>

A public health group called last week for Gov. Gray Davis to declare childhood obesity a state emergency and take immediate steps to reduce it. But while the California Center for Public Health Advocacy proposes some worthy ideas, the foundation might be aiming at the wrong target.

Parents, not state government, are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children in our schools.

It is parents -- not the government, not the fast-food companies, not the video-game manufacturers -- who are responsible for teaching kids healthy eating and exercise habits. Can they use some help? Sure. But they are the ones who need to step up to the plate, so to speak.

Child fitness is getting more and more attention these days, and rightly so. But the danger in well-meaning studies and, even more, in lawsuits against the fast-food industry, is that they send a message to parents and kids alike that obesity is somebody else's fault.

It's not. It's the fault of parents who let their kids eat unhealthy foods and sit in front of the television or computer for hours at a time. The sooner we face up to that fact as a society, the sooner we are going to be able to do something about it.

Last week's report from the Center for Public Health Advocacy took data already published by the state Department of Education and crunched it to make it more relevant to politicians. The center presented the data by state Assembly district, so that members of the Legislature could see where their communities ranked on the fat index.

Statewide, the center said, 26 percent of schoolchildren are overweight. The numbers ranged from a low of 17 percent in a wealthy Orange County Assembly district to a high of 36.8 percent in an inner-city Los Angeles district. More boys (32 percent) than girls (21 percent) were overweight. And more minorities than white children were overweight, though the study's authors said the data didn't allow them to draw any conclusions as to why that was so.

The center blamed the problem on the increasing consumption of fast food and soft drinks, larger portion sizes in restaurants, the availability of junk food on campus, advertising of junk food to children and their families, and the lack of consistent physical education programs in the schools.

The authors recommended that the state enforce an existing law requiring an average of at least 20 minutes per day of physical education, implement a state law outlining nutritional standards for elementary schools, and ensure that water fountains are present and working on every campus.

Many of the report's long-term recommendations focused on the fast-food industry: hearings to examine the impact of advertising on kids; a study to examine the prevalence of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores near schools; and incentives for communities that ban fast food outlets near schools or that ban advertising for junk food on campus.

Of the 20 recommendations put forward by the center, only one focused on parents. The authors suggest that schools be required to provide parents with fitness test results on their children and information about the importance of daily physical activity for learning and

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lifelong good health.

But none of the center's other ideas are likely to do much good until parents understand and accept their role in fighting the problem. We have laws against parents' leaving a loaded weapon where their children can find it and use it to hurt themselves or others. But no one seems to want to tell parents that they need to protect their children from unhealthy foods and from sloth.

It's not easy, especially when both parents are working, or there is only one parent in the home. Fast food is fast. It can also seem cheap, at least before you start adding the fries and sodas and desserts. And a television or video game can be like an opiate that quiets a restless child so a weary parent can get some rest of his own.

My own home is by no means a fast-food-free zone or a shrine to physical fitness. But we've tried to take a few modest steps to give our kids a fighting chance. We don't stock soda in the kitchen or serve it regularly at home; it's a treat saved for special occasions.

We try to cook as many meals at home as possible on the theory that even the least-healthy home-cooked meal is probably better for our children than the healthiest fast-food serving. We limit television time and encourage our boys to get out of the house, either to participate in organized sports or to ride their bikes, skateboards or roller blades.

If the health-care foundations did more to encourage these kinds of simple policies in the home, they might make some progress against the purveyors of fat and cholesterol, whether they are pushing their wares on the street a block from the school, in the cafeteria or even in the classroom. Before we start talking about banning fast food, let's do more to encourage personal responsibility.

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"It's portion distortion that makes America fat"
By Shannon Brownlee

The Sacramento Bee, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2003

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It was probably inevitable that one day people would start suing McDonald's for making them fat. That day came last summer, when New York lawyer Samuel Hirsch filed several lawsuits against McDonald's, as well as four other fast-food companies, on the grounds that they had failed to adequately disclose the bad health effects of their menus.

One of the suits involves a Bronx teenager who tips the scale at 400 pounds and whose mother, in papers filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, said, "I always believed McDonald's food was healthy for my son."

Uh-huh. And the tooth fairy really put that dollar under his pillow. But once you've stopped sniggering at our litigious society, remember that it once seemed equally ludicrous that smokers could successfully sue tobacco companies for their addiction to cigarettes.

And while nobody is claiming that Big Macs are addictive – at least not yet – the restaurant industry and food packagers have clearly helped give many Americans the roly-poly shape they have today. This is not to say that the folks in the food industry want us to be fat. But make no mistake: When they do well economically, we gain weight.

It wasn't always thus. Readers of a certain age can remember a time when a trip to McDonald's seemed like a treat and when a small bag of French fries, a plain burger and a 12-ounce Coke seemed like a full meal. Fast food wasn't any healthier back then; we simply ate a lot less of it.

How did toady's oversized appetites become the norm? It didn't happen by accident or some inevitable evolutionary process. It was to a large degree the result of consumer manipulation. Fast food's marketing strategies, which make perfect sense from a business perspective, succeed only when they induce a substantial number of us to overeat. To see how this all came about, let's go back to 1983, when John Martin became CEO of the ailing Taco Bell franchise and met a young marketing whiz named Elliott Bloom.

Using so-called "smart research," a then-new kind of in-depth consumer survey, Bloom had figured out that fast-food franchises were sustained largely by a core group of "heavy users," mostly young, single males, who ate at such restaurants as often as 20 times a month. In fact, 30 percent of Taco Bell's customers accounted for 70 percent of its sales.

Through his surveys, Bloom learned what might seem obvious now but wasn't at all clear 20 years ago – these guys ate at fast-food joints because they had absolutely no interest in cooking for themselves and didn't give a rip about the nutritional quality of the food. They didn't even care much about the taste. All that mattered was that it was fast and cheap. Martin figured Taco Bell could capture a bigger share of these hard-core customers by streamlining the food production and pricing main menu items at 49, 59 and 69 cents – well below its competitors.

It worked. Taco Bell saw a dramatic increase in patrons, with no drop in revenue per customer. As Martin told Greg Critser, author of "Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World," when Taco Bell ran a test of its new pricing in Texas, "within seven days of initiating the test, the average check was right back to where it was before – it was just four instead of three items."

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In other words, cheap food induced people to eat more. Taco Bell's rising sales figures – up 14 percent by 1989 and 12 percent more the next year – forced other fast-food franchises to wake up and smell the burritos. By the late '80s, everybody from Burger King to Wendy's was cutting prices and seeing an increase in customers – including bargain-seeking Americans who weren't part of that original hard-core group.

If marketing strategy had stopped there, we might not be the nation of fatties that we are today. But the imperatives of the market place are growth and rising profits, and once everybody had slashed prices to the bone, the franchises had to look for a new way to satisfy investors.

And what they found was …super-sizing.

Portion sizes had already been creeping upward. As early as 1972, for example, McDonald's introduced its large-size fries (large being a relative term, since at 3.5 ounces the '72 "large" was smaller than a medium serving today). But McDonald's increased portions only reluctantly, because the company's founder, Ray Kroc, didn't like the image of lowbrow, cheap food. If people wanted more French fries, he would say, "they can buy two bags." But price competition had grown so fierce that the only way to keep profits up was to offer bigger and bigger portions. By 1988, McDonald's had introduced a 32-ounce "super size" soda and "super size" fries.

The deal with all these enhanced portions is that the customer gets a lot more food for a relatively small increase in price. So just how does that translate into bigger profits? Because the actual food in a fast-food meal is incredibly cheap. For every dollar a quick-service franchiser spends to produce a food item, only 20 cents, on average, goes toward food. The rest is eaten up by expenses such as salaries, packaging, electric bills, insurance, and of course, the ubiquitous advertising that got you in the door or to the drive-through lane in the first place.

Here's how it works. Let's say a $1.25 bag of French fries costs $1 to produce. The potatoes, oil and salt account for only 20 cents of the cost. The other 80 cents goes toward all the other expenses. If you add half again as many French fries to the bag and sell it for $1.50, the non-food expenses stay pretty much constant, while the extra food costs the franchise only 10 more pennies. The fast-food joint makes an extra 15 cents pure profit, and the customer thinks he's getting a good deal. And he would be, if he actually needed the extra food, which he doesn't because the nation is awash in excess calories.

That 20 percent rule, by the way, applies to all food products, whether it's a bag of potato chips, the 2,178-calorie mountain of fried seafood at Red Lobster or the 710-calorie slab of dessert at the Cheesecake Factory. Some foods are even less expensive to make. The flakes of your kid's breakfast cereal, for example, account for only 5 percent of the total amount Nabisco or General Mills spent to make and sell them.

Soda costs less to produce than any drink except tap water (which nobody seems to drink anymore), thanks to a 1970s invention that cut the expense of making high-fructose corn syrup. There used to be real sugar in Coke; when Coca-Cola and other bottlers switched to high-fructose corn syrup in 1984, they slashed sweetener costs by 20 percent. That's why 7-Eleven can sell the 64-ounce Double Gulp – half a gallon of soda and nearly 600 calories – for only 37 cents more than the 16-ounce, 89-cent regular Gulp. You'd feel ripped off if you bought the smaller size. Who wouldn't?

The final step in the fattening of America was the "up sell," a stroke of genius whose origins are buried somewhere in the annals of marketing. You're already at the counter,

you've ordered a cheese burger value meal for $3.74, and your server says, "Would you like to super-size that for only $4.47?" Such a deal. The chain extracts an extra 73 cents from the customer, and the customer gets an extra 400 calories – bringing the total calorie count to 1,550, more than half the recommended intake for an adult man for an entire day.

When confronted with their contribution to America's expanding waistline, restauranteurs and food packagers reply that eating less is a matter of individual responsibility. But that's not how the human stomach works. If you put more food in front of people, they eat more, as studies have consistently shown over the last decade.

My personal favorite: The researcher gave moviegoers either a half-gallon or a gallon bucket of popcorn before the show (it was "Payback," with Mel Gibson) and then measured how much they ate when they returned what was left in the containers afterward. Nobody could polish off the entire thing, but subjects ate 44 percent more when given the bigger bucket.

The downside, of course, is that 20 years of Big Food has trained us to think that oceanic drinks and gargantuan portions are normal. Indeed, once fast food discovered that big meals meant big profits, everybody from Heineken to Olive Garden to Frito Lay followed suit. Today, says Lisa Young, a nutritionist at New York University, super-sizing has pervaded every segment of the food industry. For her PhD, Young documented the changes in portion sizes for dozens of foods over the past several decades.

M&M/Mars, for example, has increased the size of candy bars such as Milky Way and Snickers four times since 1970, Starbucks introduced the 20-ounce "venti" size in 1999 and discontinued its "short" 8-ounce cup. When 22-ounce Heinekens were introduced, Young reported, the company sold 24 million of them the first year, and attributed the sales to the "big-bottle gimmick."

Even Lean Cuisine and Weight Watchers now advertise "Hearty Portions" of their diet meals. Everything from plates and muffin tins to restaurant chairs and the cut of our Levi's has expanded to match our growing appetites, and the wonder of it all is not that 60 percent of Americans are overweight or obese, but rather that 40 percent of us are not.

Where does it end? Marketers and restauranteurs may scoff at lawsuits like the ones brought this summer against fast food companies, and they have a point: Adults are ultimately responsible for what they put in their own mouths.

But maybe there's hope for us yet, because it looks as if fast-food companies "Omnipresence" – the McDonald's strategy of beating out competitors by opening new stores, sometimes as many as 1,000 a year – "has proved costly and self-cannibalizing," say author Critser. With 13,000 McDonald's units alone, most of America is so saturated with fast food there's practically no place left to put a drive-through lane. Now, fast-food companies are killing each other in a new price war they can't possibly sustain, and McDonald's just suffered its first quarterly loss since the company went public 47 years ago.

The obvious direction to go is down, toward what nutritional policymakers are calling "smart-sizing." Or at least it should be obvious, if food purveyors cared as much about helping Americans slim down as they would have us believe. Instead of urging Americans to "Get Active, Stay Active" – Pepsi Cola's new criticism-deflecting slogan – how about bringing back the 6.5 ounce sodas of the '40s and '50s? Or, imagine, as Critser does, the day when McDonald's advertises Le Petit Mac, made with high-grade beef, a delicious whole-grain bun and hawked by, say, Serena Williams.

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"If You Pitch It, They Will Eat"
By David Barboza

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The New York Times, August 03, 2003

THE McDonald's Corporation wants to be everywhere that children are.

So besides operating 13,602 restaurants in the United States, it has plastered its golden arches on Barbie dolls, video games, book jackets and even theme parks.

McDonald's calls this promotion and brand extension. But, a growing number of nutritionists call it a blitzkrieg that perverts children's eating habits and sets them on a path to obesity.

Marketing fast food, snacks and beverages to children is at least as old as Ronald McDonald himself. What's new, critics say, is the scope and intensity of the assault. Big food makers like McDonald's and Kraft Foods Inc. are finding every imaginable way to put their names in front of children. And they're spending more than ever -- $15 billion last year, compared with $12.5 billion in 1998, according to research conducted at Texas A&M University in College Station.

"What really changed over the last decade is the proliferation of electronic media," says Susan Linn, a psychologist who studies children's marketing at Harvard's Judge Baker Children's Center. "It used to just be Saturday-morning television. Now it's Nickelodeon, movies, video games, the Internet and even marketing in schools."

Product tie-ins are everywhere. There are SpongeBob SquarePants Popsicles, Oreo Cookie preschool counting books and Keebler's Scooby Doo Cookies. There is even a Play-Doh Lunchables play set.

While the companies view these as harmless promotional pitches, lawyers are threatening a wave of obesity-related class-action lawsuits. Legislators are pressing to lock food companies out of school cafeterias. And, some of the fiercest critics are calling for an outright ban on all food advertising aimed at children.

"The problem of obesity is so staggering, so out of control, that we have to do something," says Walter Willett, a professor of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health. "The vast majority of what they sell is junk," Mr. Willett says of the big food makers. "How often do you see fruits and vegetables marketed?"

The increase in food marketing to children has closely tracked their increase in weight. Since 1980, the number of obese children, has more than doubled to 16 percent, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

School districts in New York and Los Angeles have responded by banning the sale of sugary beverages and snacks in school vending machines.

Most big food companies, despite some promises to offer healthier foods and in some cases to limit marketing in schools, deny that they are to blame for the epidemic of excess weight. They insist that sedentary behavior, a lack of exercise and poor supervision and eating habits are responsible.

Food companies say their commercials don't encourage overeating, that the foods they advertise are meant to be "part of a balanced diet," and that some foods are meant to be only occasional treats.

"We talk about offering carrot sticks," says Karlin Linhardt, the director of youth marketing at McDonald's. "And we have parents come in and say, 'We offer them carrot sticks at home. When we come to McDonald's we want a treat, french fries."

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Why would companies take aim at children so energetically? Because they, increasingly, are where the money is.

"It's the largest market there is," says James McNeal, a professor of marketing at Texas A & M and an authority on marketing to children. "Kids 4 to 12 spend on their own wants and needs about $30 billion a year. But their influence on what their parents spend is $600 billion. That's blue sky."

In toy stores, children can become accustomed to food brands early by buying a Hostess bake set, Barbie's Pizza Hut play set or Fisher-Price's Oreo Matchin' Middles game. And, for budding math whizzes, there is a series of books from Hershey's Kisses on addition, subtraction and fractions.

Schools are also a major marketing site. With many school districts facing budget shortfalls, a quick solution has come from offering more profitable fast food from outlets like McDonald's, KFC and Pizza Hut.

SOME schools have contracts to sell fast food; others have special days allotted for fast food.

The Skinner Montessori school in Vancouver, Wash., for instance, has "McDonald's Wednesdays" and "KFC Fridays."

There are McDonald's McTeacher's Nights in Jefferson City, Mo., and Pizza Hut Days in Garden City, Kan.

"It's awesome. They love it," Tracy Johnson, director of nutrition for the 7,500-student school district in Garden City, Kan., says of the Pizza Hut food. "We also serve vegetables. We try to make it into a healthy meal."

According to a survey by the C.D.C., about 20 percent of the nation's schools now offer brand-name fast food.

Vending machines now dominate school corridors. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo have "pouring rights" contracts in hundreds of schools nationwide.

Lawyers and consumer advocates have harshly criticized educators for "commercializing the schools" and sending poor dietary messages to children.

"It seems very clear it's a breach of duty," says John Banzhaf, a professor of law at George Washington University in Washington and one of the lawyers pressing for class-action lawsuits against big food companies. "Schools get paid a kickback for every sugary soft drink or burger sold."

Some food companies heatedly defend their promotions, and their products. "I think our communication with children is appropriate; we're not shoving it down their throat," says Ken Barun, director of healthy lifestyles at McDonald's, adding, "To make a general statement that McDonald's food is unhealthy is wrong."

Industry officials concur. "These foods and beverages are safe, and consumers -- in some cases parents -- have to be the one to make the decisions about how much should be eaten," says Gene Grabowski, a spokesman for the Grocery Manufacturers of America, which represents the nation's biggest food companies. "The industry is trying very hard to be responsible in the way it markets these foods."

Still, legislators and school districts are rethinking school marketing. There are more than 30 bills before state legislatures around the country proposing to ban certain snacks and beverages from school vending machines, according to the Commercialism in Education Research Unit at Arizona State University in Tempe.

TELEVISION, of course, remains the most powerful medium for selling to children.

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These days there is no shortage of advertising opportunities with the emergence of the Walt Disney Company's Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, which is owned by Viacom, and the Cartoon Network, a unit of AOL Time Warner's Turner Broadcasting.

Marketers know that children love animals and cartoon characters, and industry observers say they have used that knowledge not just to create new shows, but to produce a new generation of animated pitchmen.

Some critics say children often can't differentiate the programs from the commercials and that food companies and producers of children's shows have helped blur the line by creating characters that leap back and forth, from pitchman to program character.

SpongeBob SquarePants has his own show. But he also sells Kraft Macaroni & Cheese, Popsicles, Kleenex, DVD's, skateboards, fruit snacks and dozens of other products.

In fact, a series of big marketing alliances has bound food companies and television show producers like never before. Disney, for instance, has teamed up with McDonald's on movies and product tie-ins. Disney and Kellogg collaborate on a line of cereals that includes Disney Chocolate Mud & Bugs. And Nickelodeon has struck marketing deals with the Quaker Oats Company and General Mills Inc.

"The programs have become advertising for the food, and the food has become advertising for the programs," says Professor Linn of Harvard.

During Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" 30-minute cartoon last week, more than half the commercials were about food. The spots showed that children who consume "Go-gurt," the new yogurt-on-the-go, loved skateboards and danced on the walls.

A child who poured milk on his Post Honey Comb cereal was transformed into the raffish Honey Comb monster named the Craver. Children walked into walls after seeing other youngsters' tongues tattooed with Betty Crocker's Fruit Roll-Ups. And two others reveled in having so much sugar on their Kellogg's Cinammon Krunchers cereal that even the tidal wave of milk that washed over their treehouse couldn't wipe off the sugary flavor.

But do these commercials really resonate with children? Marketing experts say yes; the children do, too.

Nicky Greenberg, who is 6 and lives with her parents in Lower Manhattan, often spends her afternoons watching Nickelodeon. She can sing the theme song from "SpongeBob SquarePants," and she says her parents buy her Kellogg's Cinnamon Toast Crunch because she loves the commercials.

"On the commercial," she says, "there's a captain that goes on a submarine, and there's an octopus, and three kids. And then the girl says, 'Just taste this pirate.' And the pirate says, 'Ayyy, Yummy!' "

The reaction was no different last week at a supermarket on the South Side of Chicago.

Tatanisha Roberson, who is 8, was riding on the front of a shopping cart pushed by her mother, Erica, 24, heading toward the cereal aisle.

The question was posed: What kind of food is Tatanisha interested in? "Anything that comes on the TV, she'll get," her mother said, rolling her eyes. "Rugrats Fruit Snacks; Scooby Doo Fruit Snacks; Flintstone's Jell-O."

In private, some company executives complain that when parents go to the grocery store they don't buy the healthy products that are offered. Professor McNeal at Texas A & M says the companies are a scapegoat.

"I don't think they should be singled out," he says. "Mom blames everyone but herself.

There's an abdication of the parents' role. You've got 70 percent of moms who are working, so when they're home they try to please their kids."

The big food companies say they follow a set of guidelines for television advertising enforced by the Children's Advertising Review Unit, which was set up and financed by advertisers to regulate themselves.

The companies say their ads don't show overeating or make false health claims.

Officials at the Children's Advertising Review Unit acknowledge that they don't look at the collective message food companies send to children. "We're not nutritionists," says Elizabeth Lascoutx, a spokeswoman for the unit. "We're not in the position to say this food item cannot be part of a healthy diet."

Sensing a backlash to advertising and promotion, especially in schools, Kraft said last month that it would end all in-school marketing efforts. And General Mills, the maker of Cheerios, says that in-school marketing is wrong.

"We just view it as inappropriate," says Tom Forsythe, a spokesman for General Mills. "There's no gatekeeper; they're a captive audience."

Some marketing deals have come under pressure. For example, last week, the British Broadcasting Corporation said it would no longer allow its children's television characters to be used in fast-food sponsorships with companies like McDonald's after consumer groups criticized the public broadcaster for helping promote junk food.

Some companies deny that they even market to children. Both Coke and Pepsi insist that they direct their products only to teenagers and adults. And Yum Brands, which operates KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, says it does not market to children or have operations in schools.

But sometimes the evidence would seem to contradict those statements. Coke signed a multimillion-dollar global marketing deal tied to the Harry Potter character in 2001, and many schools, like the one in Garden City, Kan., have contracts to serve food from Pizza Hut.

Amy Sherwood, a spokeswoman for Yum Brands, says, "That must be a local deal with the franchisees and those schools because we don't do that on a national level."

Kari Bjorhus, a spokeswoman at Coke, said: "We absolutely don't market to children. Our feeling with Harry Potter is it really appeals to the whole family."

YET with regulators, lawmakers and others mounting campaigns that seek to make big food companies look like big tobacco companies, which have been sued over marketing campaigns geared toward youths, something is bound to change, industry experts say. The World Health Organization and even Wall Street analysts are calling on big food companies to rein in their marketing campaigns and change the way they do business.

"The food industry will have to review its marketing practices and transform itself, in our view, regardless of potential regulation or litigation," Arnaud Langlois, an analyst at J. P. Morgan, wrote in a report last April.

There is a need to set specific standards on what is marketed to children, according to Professor Willett at Harvard. "We don't sell children guns, alcohol or drugs, but we do allow them to be exploited by food companies."

Even some influential marketing experts are beginning to think their clients might come around.

Dan Acuff, a leading children's marketing consultant, says that when profits are at stake, companies listen.

"If it's going to hit the bottom line, they'll listen," he says. "You'd like them to have a conscience, but conscience and bottom line are not in the same paradigm in the corporate world."

"New York Plans to Ban Sale of Big Sizes of Sugary Drinks"
by Michael M. Grynbaum

The New York Times, May 30, 2012

New York City plans to enact a far-reaching ban on the sale of large sodas and other sugary drinks at restaurants, movie theaters and street carts, in the most ambitious effort yet by the Bloomberg administration to combat rising obesity.

The proposed ban would affect virtually the entire menu of popular sugary drinks found in delis, fast-food franchises and even sports arenas, from energy drinks to pre-sweetened iced teas. The sale of any cup or bottle of sweetened drink larger than 16 fluid ounces — about the size of a medium coffee, and smaller than a common soda bottle — would be prohibited under the first-in-the-nation plan, which could take effect as soon as next March.

The measure would not apply to diet sodas, fruit juices, dairy-based drinks like milkshakes, or alcoholic beverages; it would not extend to beverages sold in grocery stores or convenience stores.

"Obesity is a nationwide problem, and all over the United States, public health officials are wringing their hands saying, 'Oh, this is terrible,' " Mr. Bloomberg said in an interview on Wednesday in City Hall's sprawling Governor's Room.

"New York City is not about wringing your hands; it's about doing something," he said. "I think that's what the public wants the mayor to do."

A spokesman for the New York City Beverage Association, an arm of the soda industry's national trade group, criticized the city's proposal on Wednesday. The industry has clashed repeatedly with the city's health department, saying it has unfairly singled out soda; industry groups have bought subway advertisements promoting their cause.

"The New York City health department's unhealthy obsession with attacking soft drinks is again pushing them over the top," the industry spokesman, Stefan Friedman, said. "It's time for serious health professionals to move on and seek solutions that are going to actually curb obesity. These zealous proposals just distract from the hard work that needs to be done on this front."

Mr. Bloomberg's proposal requires the approval of the Board of Health, a step that is considered likely because the members are all appointed by him, and the board's chairman is the city's health commissioner, who joined the mayor in supporting the measure on Wednesday.

Mr. Bloomberg has made public health one of the top priorities of his lengthy tenure, and has championed a series of aggressive regulations, including bans on smoking in restaurants and parks, a prohibition against artificial trans fat in restaurant food and a requirement for health inspection grades to be posted in restaurant windows.

The measures have led to occasional derision of the mayor as Nanny Bloomberg, by those who view the restrictions as infringements on personal freedom. But many of the measures adopted in New York have become models for other cities, including restrictions on smoking and trans fats, as well as the use of graphic advertising to combat smoking and soda consumption, and the demand that chain restaurants post calorie contents next to prices.

In recent years, soda has emerged as a battleground in efforts to counter obesity. Across the nation, some school districts have banned the sale of soda in schools, and some cities have banned the sale of soda in public buildings.

In New York City, where more than half of adults are obese or overweight, Dr. Thomas Farley, the health commissioner, blames sweetened drinks for up to half of the increase in city obesity rates over the last 30 years. About a third of New Yorkers drink one or more sugary drinks a day, according to the city. Dr. Farley said the city had seen higher obesity rates in neighborhoods where soda consumption was more common.

The ban would not apply to drinks with fewer than 25 calories per 8-ounce serving, like zero-calorie Vitamin Waters and unsweetened iced teas, as well as diet sodas.

Restaurants, delis, movie theater and ballpark concessions would be affected, because they are regulated by the health department. Carts on sidewalks and in Central Park would also be included, but not vending machines or newsstands that serve only a smattering of fresh food items.

At fast-food chains, where sodas are often dispersed at self-serve fountains, restaurants would be required to hand out cup sizes of 16 ounces or less, regardless of whether a customer opts for a diet drink. But free refills — and additional drink purchases — would be allowed.

Corner stores and bodegas would be affected if they are defined by the city as "food service establishments." Those stores can most easily be identified by the health department letter grades they are required to display in their windows.

The mayor, who said he occasionally drank a diet soda "on a hot day," contested the idea that the plan would limit consumers' choices, saying the option to buy more soda would always be available.

"Your argument, I guess, could be that it's a little less convenient to have to carry two 16-ounce drinks to your seat in the movie theater rather than one 32 ounce," Mr. Bloomberg said in a sarcastic tone. "I don't think you can make the case that we're taking things away."

He also said he foresaw no adverse effect on local businesses, and he suggested that restaurants could simply charge more for smaller drinks if their sales were to drop.

The Bloomberg administration had made previous, unsuccessful efforts to make soda consumption less appealing. The mayor supported a state tax on sodas, but the measure died in Albany, and he tried to restrict the use of food stamps to buy sodas, but the idea was rejected by federal regulators.

With the new proposal, City Hall is now trying to see how much it can accomplish without requiring outside approval. Mayoral aides say they are confident that they have the legal authority to restrict soda sales, based on the city's jurisdiction over local eating establishments, the same oversight that allows for the health department's letter-grade cleanliness rating system for restaurants.

In interviews at the AMC Loews Village, in the East Village in Manhattan, some filmgoers said restricting large soda sales made sense to them.

"I think it's a good idea," said Sara Gochenauer, 21, a personal assistant from the Upper West Side. Soda, she said, "rots your teeth."

But others said consumers should be free to choose.

"If people want to drink 24 ounces, it's their decision," said Zara Atal, 20, a college student from the Upper East Side.

Lawrence Goins, 50, a postal worker who lives in Newark, took a more pragmatic approach.

"Some of those movies are three, three and a half hours long," Mr. Goins said. "You got to quench your thirst.

<p style="text-align:center">"How the Food Industry Eats Your Kid's Lunch"
by Lucy Komisar</p>

<p style="text-align:center">The New York Times, Dec. 3, 2011</p>

An increasingly cozy alliance between companies that manufacture processed foods and companies that serve the meals is making students — a captive market — fat and sick while pulling in hundreds of millions of dollars in profits. At a time of fiscal austerity, these companies are seducing school administrators with promises to cut costs through privatization. Parents who want healthier meals, meanwhile, are outgunned.

Each day, 32 million children in the United States get lunch at schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program, which uses agricultural surplus to feed children. About 21 million of these students eat free or reduced-price meals, a number that has surged since the recession. The program, which also provides breakfast, costs $13.3 billion a year.

Sadly, it is being mismanaged and exploited. About a quarter of the school nutrition program has been privatized, much of it outsourced to food service management giants like Aramark, based in Philadelphia; Sodexo, based in France; and the Chartwells division of the Compass Group, based in Britain. They work in tandem with food manufacturers like the chicken producers Tyson and Pilgrim's, all of which profit when good food is turned to bad.

Here's one way it works. The Agriculture Department pays about $1 billion a year for commodities like fresh apples and sweet potatoes, chickens and turkeys. Schools get the food free; some cook it on site, but more and more pay processors to turn these healthy ingredients into fried chicken nuggets, fruit pastries, pizza and the like. Some $445 million worth of commodities are sent for processing each year, a nearly 50 percent increase since 2006.

The Agriculture Department doesn't track spending to process the food, but school authorities do. The Michigan Department of Education, for example, gets free raw chicken worth $11.40 a case and sends it for processing into nuggets at $33.45 a case. The schools in San Bernardino, Calif., spend $14.75 to make French fries out of $5.95 worth of potatoes.

The money is ill spent. The Center for Science in the Public Interest has warned that sending food to be processed often means lower nutritional value and noted that "many schools continue to exceed the standards for fat, saturated fat and sodium." A 2008 study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that by the time many healthier commodities reach students, "they have about the same nutritional value as junk foods."

Monica Zimmer, a Sodexo spokeswoman, said that "much has changed" since those studies, pointing to the company's support for "nutrition education to encourage young students to eat more fruits and vegetables."

Roland Zullo, a researcher at the University of Michigan, found in 2008 that Michigan schools that hired private food-service management firms spent less on labor and food but more on fees and supplies, yielding "no substantive economic savings." Alarmingly, he even found that privatization was associated with lower test scores, hypothesizing that the high-fat and high-sugar foods served by the companies might be the cause. In a later study, in 2010, Dr. Zullo found that Chartwells was able to trim costs by cutting benefits for workers in Ann Arbor schools, but that the schools didn't end up realizing any savings.

Why is this allowed to happen? Part of it is that school authorities don't want the trouble of overseeing real kitchens. Part of it is that the management companies are saving money by not having to pay skilled kitchen workers.

In addition, the management companies have a cozy relationship with food processors,

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which routinely pay the companies rebates (typically around 14 percent) in return for contracts. The rebates have generally been kept secret from schools, which are charged the full price.

Last year, Andrew M. Cuomo, then the New York State attorney general, won a $20 million settlement over Sodexo's pocketing of such rebates. Other states are following New York and looking into the rebates; the Agriculture Department began its own inquiry in August.

With the crackdown on these rebates, food service companies have turned to another accounting trick. I found evidence that the rebate abuses are continuing, now under the name of "prompt payment discounts," under an Agriculture Department loophole. These discounts, for payments that are often not prompt at all, are really rebates under another name. New York State requires rebates to be returned to schools, but the Sodexo settlement shows how unevenly the ban has been enforced.

The food service companies I spoke with denied any impropriety. "Our culinary philosophy, as a company, is to promote scratch cooking where possible and encourage variety and nutritionally balanced meals," said Ayde Lyons, a Chartwells spokeswoman. "We use minimally processed foods whenever possible."

There are economic and nutritional consequences to privatization. School kitchen workers are generally unionized, with benefits; they are also typically local residents who have children in public schools and care about their well-being. Laid-off school workers become an economic drain instead of a positive force. And the rebate deals with national food manufacturers cut out local farmers and small producers like bakers, who could offer fresh, healthy food and help the local economy.

Children pay the price. Dr. Zullo found that privately managed school cafeterias offered meals that were higher in sugar and fats and made unhealthy snack items — soda, cookies, potato chips — more readily available. The companies were also less likely to use reduced-sugar recipes. Linda Hugle, a retired school principal in Three Rivers, Ore., told me that when her district switched to Sodexo, "the savings were paltry." She added, "You pay a little less and your kids get strawberry milk, frozen French fries and artificial shortening."

Advocates who fight for better food face an uphill battle. Dorothy Brayley, executive director of Kids First, a nutrition advocacy group in Pawtucket, R.I., told me she encountered resistance in trying to persuade Sodexo to buy from local farmers. (Sodexo says it does buy some local produce and has opened salad bars in many schools.) Donna D. Walsh, a former school board president in Westchester County, N.Y., told me she worked with a supportive superintendent to get Aramark to stop deep-frying food and to open a salad bar. But after a new superintendent came in, she said, the company went back to profit-driven menus of pizza and bagels.

The federal government could intervene. The Agriculture Department proposed new rules this year that would set maximum calories for school meals; require more fruits, vegetables and whole grains; and limit trans fats.

Not surprisingly, the most committed foes of the rules are the same corporations that make money supplying bad food. Aramark, Sodexo and Chartwells, as well as food processing companies like ConAgra, wrote letters arguing, among other things, that children may not want to eat healthier food.

Any increase in fruit and vegetables might result in "plate waste," wrote Sodexo. A protein requirement at breakfast, Aramark said, would hamper efforts to offer "popular

breakfast items." Their lobbying persuaded members of Congress to block a once-a-week limit on starchy vegetables and to continue to allow a few tablespoons of tomato sauce on pizza to count as a vegetable serving. Thanks to that cave-in, children will continue to get their vegetables in the form of potatoes for breakfast and pizza for lunch.

One-third of children from the ages of 6 to 19 are overweight or obese. These children could see their life expectancies shortened because of their vulnerability to diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Unfortunately, profit, not health, is the priority of the food service management companies, food processors and even elected officials. Until more parents demand reform of the school lunch system, children will continue to suffer.

<center>**"A TV Show and Congress Tackle School Lunches"**
By Kim Severson
The New York Times, March 30, 2010</center>

IT'S been an unusually tough month for the people who make school lunches.

Friday night, more than seven million viewers watched the premiere of "Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution," an ABC reality series in which the British chef storms the kitchens of Huntington, W.Va., to improve the town's collective diet.

That only the N.C.A.A. Division I men's basketball tournament pulled in more viewers signals that the nation has an appetite for the kind of wholesale food reform Mr. Oliver is pushing.

To the chagrin of cafeteria workers everywhere, his star villains are the town's lunch ladies — or the "lovely girls" as he calls them. They ended up looking so bad that the national School Nutrition Association followed up with a press release in their defense.

That wasn't the only recent public thrashing for the people who make school food. Students in Chicago showed up at a Board of Education meeting to protest the quality of their midday meals. And members of the national news media discovered the "Fed Up with Lunch" blog, written by an anonymous school employee in the Midwest who is spending a year eating and publishing photos of awful-looking food at her school cafeteria.

In Washington, where Michelle Obama's anti-obesity campaign continues to point a finger at the school lunch line, a Senate committee on March 24 cut by more than half a proposal by President Obama to spend a record $10 billion more on child nutrition programs over 10 years, including school food.

Although school food directors and the growing ranks of those seeking to improve what is served in the lunchroom are disappointed with the numbers coming out of Washington, people who have been working with the Agriculture Department and Congress to improve school food say the bill's $4.5-billion increase is an historic improvement.

"We'd all like to do more and we're going to try, but we've got to get started," said Senator Blanche Lincoln, Democrat of Arkansas, the chairwoman of the Senate committee on agriculture and the architect of the bill. The legislation proposes the first real increase over inflation that the school food program has had in several decades. And, she said, in the current economic climate, any money is a victory.

The Child Nutrition Act comes up for financing every five years. It pays for school food and other nutrition programs for lower-income children. It's also the mechanism legislators can use to change the rules that govern those programs. The bill headed to the Senate floor would increase by about 6 cents the $2.68 that schools can get for each lunch — far less than the $1-a-lunch increase that a coalition of groups seeking to change school food programs have been campaigning for.

Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group, said the bill was still worth supporting.

"This is the strongest child nutrition reauthorization bill I have ever seen," said Ms. Wootan, who has worked to improve school nutrition standards for 17 years. "We can't go from candy bars to apples in one fell swoop."

In addition to the increase in financing, Agriculture Department staff members said a number of less obvious changes in nutritional rules and financing for special programs will improve what is served in schools as soon as next year.

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For example, milk is the biggest single source of saturated fat on the lunch line. The bill would allow only skim and 1 percent milk to be offered, banning whole and 2 percent milk. And schools will be required to ensure that children have water with their meals.

At least $40 million would be spent on farm-to-school programs and school gardens. Another $10 million would go toward adding organic food. And millions more have been included to train cafeteria workers.

One of the biggest changes involves food sold in places other than the cafeteria, like vending machines, sporting events and hallway fund-raisers. The law would give the Agriculture Department power to set limits on nutrients like sodium and fat in all food sold on campus, and it would set limits on the number of bake sales and other food-based fund-raisers.

"We want to make sure there's consistency," Senator Lincoln said. "This is not only about providing nutritional food for our children but teaching them good life skills and what the right choices are."

The Agriculture Department is also overhauling all school nutritional guidelines in an effort that is separate from the Child Nutrition Act, but which is intended to work in concert with the changes it will bring about.

The meal standards, which haven't been changed for 15 years, are now being updated by the Agriculture Department. Based on a report from the Institutes of Medicine, the new standards will require more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and, for the first time, limit the amount of calories in each meal.

"Look at the regulations now," said Renee Hanks, food service director for the South Colonie School District in Albany. "The U.S.D.A. requires so many carbohydrates that we're throwing whole-wheat bread at them. We're throwing extra crackers at them. If they aren't out and active, they can't handle all those calories."

But, she warned, adding new requirements for more expensive foods like fresh fruit must come with more money.

Changes to the bureaucratic process might free up some money in school budgets, analysts said. For example, the amount of paperwork needed to assure that some lower-income children qualify for a free lunch will be reduced, and the cost of a meal for children who pay full price will likely increase. Extra training money should also help school kitchens operate more efficiently.

Whether more money will be added before the final bill is approved later this year is in question. Even if more money for the bill does appear, it will likely go toward the parts of the act that pay for hunger programs, not school lunch, Agriculture Department officials and overhaul advocates agree.

That doesn't mean the conversation is necessarily over, said Rochelle Davis, the founding executive director of the Healthy Schools Campaign, a national nonprofit organization. The new nutritional requirements mean nothing if school districts cannot pay for them. Accepting the small increase in school food financing and calling it a victory lets Congress off the hook, she said.

"Look at the agony our country is going through over health care and the struggle to handle a sick nation," she said. "We just have to connect the dots and get people eating right and get people moving. Healthy school food is a logical part of that."

An earlier version of this article referred incorrectly to the varieties of milk that would be allowed in school cafeterias under legislation in the Senate. Skim and 1 percent milk would

be available, not just skim milk.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: April 7, 2010   An article last Wednesday about school nutrition legislation now in the Senate omitted one type of milk the bill would allow in cafeterias. Besides skim, 1 percent milk could be sold.

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"U.S. Seeks New Limits on Food Ads for Children"
by William Newman

The New York Times, April 28, 2011

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Will Toucan Sam go the way of Joe Camel?

The federal government proposed sweeping new guidelines on Thursday that could push the food industry to overhaul how it advertises cereal, soda pop, snacks, restaurant meals and other foods to children.

Citing an epidemic of childhood obesity, regulators are taking aim at a range of tactics used to market foods high in sugar, fat or salt to children, including the use of cartoon characters like Toucan Sam, the brightly colored Froot Loops pitchman, who appears in television commercials and online games as well as on cereal boxes.

Regulators are asking food makers and restaurant companies to make a choice: make your products healthier or stop advertising them to youngsters.

"Toucan Sam can sell healthy food or junk food," said Dale Kunkel, a communications professor at the University of Arizona who studies the marketing of children's food. "This forces Toucan Sam to be associated with healthier products."

The guidelines, released by the Federal Trade Commission, encompass a broad range of marketing efforts, including television and print ads, Web sites, online games that act as camouflaged advertisements, social media, product placements in movies, the use of movie characters in cross-promotions and fast-food children's meals. The inclusion of digital media, such as product-based games, represents one of the government's strongest efforts so far to address the extension of children's advertising into the online world, which children's health advocates say is a growing problem.

The guidelines are meant to be voluntary, but companies are likely to face heavy pressure to adopt them. Companies that choose to take part would have five to 10 years to bring their products and marketing into compliance.

"There's clearly a demand hidden behind the velvet glove of the voluntary language," said Dan Jaffe, an executive vice president of the Association of National Advertisers, a trade group that represents marketers like Kraft Foods and Campbell Soup.

By explicitly tying advertising to childhood obesity, the government is suggesting there is a darker side to cuddly figures like Cap'n Crunch, the Keebler elves, Ronald McDonald and the movie and television characters used to promote food. It also raises the question of whether they might ultimately share the fate of Joe Camel, the cartoon figure used to promote Camel cigarettes that was phased out amid allegations that it was meant to entice children to smoke.

"Our proposal really covers all forms of marketing to kids, and the product packaging and the images and themes on the cereal boxes have tremendous appeal to kids," said Michelle K. Rusk, a lawyer with the trade commission. "The goal is to encourage children to eat more healthy foods because obesity is a huge health crisis."

The F.T.C. said that in 2006, food companies spent nearly $2.3 billion to advertise to children.

The food industry immediately criticized the proposal, saying that it had already taken significant steps to improve recipes and change the way it advertises to children.

Kellogg, the company that makes Froot Loops, said in a statement that it would review

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the proposal and that it was committed to improving "the nutrition credentials" of its products. "We have very specific criteria, based on a broad review of scientific reports, that determine how and what products we market to children," the company said. The company has already reduced sugar and added whole grains in many cereals.

Scott Faber, a vice president of the Grocery Manufacturers Association, a group that represents food makers, said that ads for packaged foods on television shows aimed at children 2 to 11 had dropped significantly since 2004, and that the ads more often showed healthier types of foods. He said companies had also changed many recipes to reduce salt, sugar and fat and add healthful ingredients like whole grains. "The rate of reformulation is going to increase, not as a result of the principles that were announced today but because consumers are demanding changes in the marketplace," Mr. Faber said.

Many food companies participate in an industry-led effort, the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, to restrict some marketing activities. But each company that takes part is allowed to set its own nutritional criteria, which critics say undermine the program's effectiveness.

Regulators said it was important for the entire industry to adhere to a uniform set of standards.

The guidelines were created at the request of Congress and written by the commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the Agriculture Department and the Centers for Disease Control. Regulators said they would take comments and consider changes before submitting a final report to Congress.

The guidelines call for foods that are advertised to children to meet two basic requirements. They would have to include certain healthful ingredients, like whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, or low-fat milk. And they could not contain unhealthful amounts of sugar, saturated fat, trans fat and salt.

The sugar requirement would limit cereals to eight grams of added sugar a serving, far less than many popular cereals have today. Froot Loops and Cap'n Crunch, for example, contain 12 grams of sugar a serving.

The salt restrictions are particularly stringent, and many packaged foods on the shelves today would have a hard time meeting them. In an initial phase-in period, the guidelines call for many foods to have no more than 210 milligrams of sodium a serving, while main dishes and meals, including both restaurant food and packaged food, could have no more than 450 milligrams. Today, a 15-ounce can of Chef Boyardee beef ravioli has two servings, with 750 milligrams of sodium per serving. The sodium restrictions would get tougher over time.

The federal agencies acknowledged that a "large percentage of food products currently in the marketplace would not meet the principles."

The guidelines would apply to both young children and teenagers. The industry has said it should have greater leeway for teenagers, and Ms. Rusk said the agencies would consider those arguments.

Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group, predicted that the guidelines would force many companies to accept great restrictions and improve recipes.

"With all the concern about childhood obesity, I think there's a lot of pressure on companies to do the right thing and follow these standards," she said.

Jeffrey Chester, executive director for the Center for Digital Democracy, a group that focuses on Internet marketing to children, said the F.T.C. proposal had broader implications.

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"The youth obesity issue has placed all digital marketing in the regulatory cross hairs," Mr. Chester said.

Matt Richtel contributed reporting.

"What if we regulated junk food the way we do alcohol?"
By Rosie Mestel

Los Angeles Times, August 14, 2012

Junk food is everywhere. We're eating way too much of it. And we're getting fat. Most of us know what we're doing and yet we do it anyway.

So here's a suggestion offered by two researchers at the Rand Corp.: Why not take a lesson from alcohol control policies and apply them to where food is sold and how it's displayed?

"Many policy measures to control the obesity epidemic assume that people consciously and rationally choose what and how much they eat and therefore focus on providing information and more access to healthier foods," note Dr. Deborah A. Cohen and Lila Rabinovich of Rand. (Yes, and tell that to the Wheat Thins box in my kitchen trash, emptied last night in a feeding frenzy.)

"In contrast," the authors continue, "many regulations that do not assume people make rational choices have been successfully applied to control alcohol, a substance -- like food -- of which immoderate consumption leads to serious health problems."

The paper, published in the CDC's "Preventing Chronic Disease," references studies of people's behavior with food and alcohol and results of alcohol restrictions, then lists five regulations that the authors think might be promising if applied to junk foods. Among them:

Density restrictions: licenses to sell alcohol aren't handed out willy nilly to all comers but are allotted based on the number of places in an area that already sell alcohol. These make alcohol less easy to get and reduce the number of psychological cues to drink that people encounter as they go about their lives.

In a similar way, the authors say, being presented with junky food stimulates our desire to eat it. So why not limit the density of food outlets, particularly ones that sell food rich in empty calories? And why not limit sale of food in places that aren't primarily food stores (think chocolate bars at checkout counters in places like bookstores and hardware stores.)

Display and sales restrictions: California has a rule prohibiting alcohol displays too near the cash registers in gas stations, the authors write, and in most places you can't buy alcohol at drive-through facilities. At supermarkets, food companies pay to have their wares in places where they are easily seen. One could banish junky food to the back of the store and behind counters and ban them from the shelves at checkout lines, currently heavy on candy bars and potato chips and other snack items. Prohibit drive-throughs. You'd have to get out of your car to go get the fries and burgers and shakes.

The other measures are to restrict portion sizes, to tax and prohibit special price deals for junk foods; and to place warning labels on the products.

Measures like these can work, the authors argue, and point to the Temperance movement of the 19th century as an example. The movement attacked drinking through an array of measures: reduced numbers of taverns serving alcohol, subsidization of alcohol-free taverns, discouraging alcohol in the workplace and passing out lots of information about the evils of the demon drink. Alcohol consumption dropped in half between 1830 and 1840.

That's alcohol. But *food*? "Compared with mortality attributed to alcohol

consumption, death rates attributable to overconsumption of food and poor diet are considerably higher," the authors write.

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"Don't Blame the Eater"
By David Zinczenko

The New York Times, November 23, 2002

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If ever there were a newspaper headline custom-made for Jay Leno's monologue, this was it. Kids taking on McDonald's this week, suing the company for making them fat. Isn't that like middle-aged men suing Porsche for making them get speeding tickets? Whatever happened to personal responsibility?

I tend to sympathize with these portly fast-food patrons, though. Maybe that's because I used to be one of them.

I grew up as a typical mid-1980's latchkey kid. My parents were split up, my dad off trying to rebuild his life, my mom working long hours to make the monthly bills. Lunch and dinner, for me, was a daily choice between McDonald's, Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken or Pizza Hut. Then as now, these were the only available options for an American kid to get an affordable meal. By age 15, I had packed 212 pounds of torpid teenage tallow on my once lanky 5-foot-10 frame.

Then I got lucky. I went to college, joined the Navy Reserves and got involved with a health magazine. I learned how to manage my diet. But most of the teenagers who live, as I once did, on a fast-food diet won't turn their lives around: They've crossed under the golden arches to a likely fate of lifetime obesity. And the problem isn't just theirs -- it's all of ours. Before 1994, diabetes in children was generally caused by a genetic disorder -- only about 5 percent of childhood cases were obesity-related, or Type 2, diabetes. Today, according to the National Institutes of Health, Type 2 diabetes accounts for at least 30 percent of all new childhood cases of diabetes in this country.

Not surprisingly, money spent to treat diabetes has skyrocketed, too. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that diabetes accounted for $2.6 billion in health care costs in 1969. Today's number is an unbelievable $100 billion a year.

Shouldn't we know better than to eat two meals a day in fast-food restaurants? That's one argument. But where, exactly, are consumers -- particularly teenagers -- supposed to find alternatives? Drive down any thoroughfare in America, and I guarantee you'll see one of our country's more than 13,000 McDonald's restaurants. Now, drive back up the block and try to find someplace to buy a grapefruit.

Complicating the lack of alternatives is the lack of information about what, exactly, we're consuming. There are no calorie information charts on fast-food packaging, the way there are on grocery items. Advertisements don't carry warning labels the way tobacco ads do. Prepared foods aren't covered under Food and Drug Administration labeling laws. Some fast-food purveyors will provide calorie information on request, but even that can be hard to understand.

For example, one company's Web site lists its chicken salad as containing 150 calories; the almonds and noodles that come with it (an additional 190 calories) are listed separately. Add a serving of the 280-calorie dressing, and you've got a healthy lunch alternative that comes in at 620 calories. But that's not all. Read the small print on the back of the dressing packet and you'll realize it actually contains 2.5 servings. If you pour what you've been served, you're suddenly up around 1,040 calories, which is half of the government's recommended daily calorie intake. And that doesn't take into account that 450-calorie super-

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size Coke.

Make fun if you will of these kids launching lawsuits against the fast-food industry, but don't be surprised if you're the next plaintiff. As with the tobacco industry, it may be only a matter of time before state governments begin to see a direct line between the $1 billion that McDonald's and Burger King spend each year on advertising and their own swelling health care costs.

And I'd say the industry is vulnerable. Fast-food companies are marketing to children a product with proven health hazards and no warning labels. They would do well to protect themselves, and their customers, by providing the nutrition information people need to make informed choices about their products. Without such warnings, we'll see more sick, obese children and more angry, litigious parents. I say, let the deep-fried chips fall where they may.

"Fat and getting fatter: U.S. obesity rates to soar by 2030"
by Sharon Begley

Reuters, Tue, Sep 18 2012

NEW YORK (Reuters) - If Americans stick to their eating and exercise habits, future historians will look back on the early 21st century as a golden age of svelte.

Using a model of population and other trends, a new report released on Tuesday by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation projects that half of U.S. adults will be obese by 2030 unless Americans change their ways.

The "F as in Fat" report highlights the current glum picture of the U.S. obesity epidemic, in which 35.7 percent of adults and 16.9 percent of children age 2 to 19 are obese, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported earlier this year.

But for the first time, the report builds on state-by-state data from the CDC to project obesity rates. In every state, that rate will reach at least 44 percent by 2030. In 13, that number would exceed 60 percent.

Obesity raises the risk of numerous diseases, from type 2 diabetes to endometrial cancer, meaning more sick people and higher medical costs in the future, the report said.

It projects as many as 7.9 million new cases of diabetes a year, compared with 1.9 million new cases in recent years. There could also be 6.8 million new cases of chronic heart disease and stroke every year, compared with 1.3 million new cases a year now.

The increasing burden of illness will go right to the bottom line, adding $66 billion in annual obesity-related medical costs over and above today's $147 billion to $210 billion. Total U.S. healthcare spending is estimated at $2.7 trillion.

That projection supports a study published earlier this year in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine that found that by 2030, 42 percent of U.S. adults could be obese, adding $550 billion to healthcare costs over that period.

'A TALE OF TWO FUTURES'

As with all projections, from climate models to Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," human actions can prevent the worst of the scenarios, according to health policy experts.

"This is a tale of two futures," said Jeffrey Levi of George Washington University and the executive director of Trust for America's Health. "We're at a turning point where if we don't do something now to mitigate these trends, the cost in human health and healthcare spending will be enormous."

Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) above 30. Overweight means a BMI of 25 to 29.9. BMI is calculated by taking weight in pounds and dividing it by the square of height in inches, and multiplying the result by 703. For instance, someone who is 5 feet, 5 inches tall and weighs 185 pounds (84 kg) has a BMI of 30.8.

Obesity rates among U.S. adults have more than doubled from the 15 percent of 1980. In that same time, they have more than tripled among children.

Since the CDC found that the percentage of obese children and adults was essentially unchanged between 2008 and 2010, some experts question whether the "F as in Fat" model overstates future obesity by assuming past trends continue in a straight line.

"This is a strong assumption," said economist Justin Trogdon of RTI International in North Carolina. "Recent evidence from other surveys suggest obesity rates may be leveling off."

Mathematician Martin Brown of Britain's National Heart Forum, a nonprofit group, who led development of the model, said it takes a longer view by design.

"You have to take trends over a number of years," he said. "In the age groups that matter, there just isn't much evidence of a leveling off in obesity rates."

EDUCATION AND INCOME

Obesity has long been associated with education and income. The report found that about one-third of adults without a high school diploma were obese, compared with about one-fifth of those who graduated from college or technical college.

And one-third of adults who earn less than $15,000 per year are obese, compared to one-quarter of those who earned $50,000 or more per year. The obesity-poverty connection reflects such facts that calorie-dense foods are cheap and that poor neighborhoods have fewer playgrounds, sidewalks and other amenities that encourage exercise.

As a result, many states projected to have the most obesity in 2030 do now, too. In 2011, 12 states had an adult-obesity rate above 30 percent, with Mississippi the highest at 34.9 percent. Colorado was the lowest at 20.7 percent.

The report projects that in 2030 in Mississippi, 66.7 percent of adults will be obese, as will 44.8 percent in Colorado, which will still be the thinnest state.

More surprising are projections for states such as Delaware, now ranked 19 for obesity with a rate of 28.8 percent. The model uses 1999 as a baseline, explained Brown. "So if a state had a low rate of obesity in 1999 and is fairly high now, that indicates a steep rate of increase, which we believe will not go away." Result: an obesity rate of 64.7 percent in Delaware in 2030, making it the third-most obese state.

States facing the greatest percentage increase in obesity-related medical costs are now in the middle of the pack.

New Jersey faces the largest increase in costs, 34.5 percent, as its obesity rate is projected to climb from 23.7 percent today to 48.6 percent in 2030. Eight other states could see increases of 20 percent and 30 percent, including New Hampshire, Colorado and Alaska.

Trust for America's Health sees room to change that trajectory with the right interventions.

"We have learned that with a concerted effort you can change the culture of a community, including its level of physical activity, eating habits, what foods are offered in schools, and whether families eat together," said Levi.

In New York City, for instance, obesity for elementary and middle-school students dropped 5.5 percent from the 2006-07 school year to 2010-11, thanks mostly to healthier school lunches, public health experts said.

"A lot of this is about making healthy choices easier and not mandating healthier lifestyles," Levi said.

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"It's portion distortion that makes America fat"
By Shannon Brownlee

The Sacramento Bee, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2003

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1 It was probably inevitable that one day people would start suing McDonald's for making them fat. That day came last summer, when New York lawyer Samuel Hirsch filed several lawsuits against McDonald's, as well as four other fast-food companies, on the grounds that they had failed to adequately disclose the bad health effects of their menus.

2 One of the suits involves a Bronx teenager who tips the scale at 400 pounds and whose mother, in papers filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, said, "I always believed McDonald's food was healthy for my son."

3 Uh-huh. And the tooth fairy really put that dollar under his pillow. But once you've stopped sniggering at our litigious society, remember that it once seemed equally ludicrous that smokers could successfully sue tobacco companies for their addiction to cigarettes.

4 And while nobody is claiming that Big Macs are addictive – at least not yet – the restaurant industry and food packagers have clearly helped give many Americans the roly-poly shape they have today. This is not to say that the folks in the food industry want us to be fat. But make no mistake: When they do well economically, we gain weight.

5 It wasn't always thus. Readers of a certain age can remember a time when a trip to McDonald's seemed like a treat and when a small bag of French fries, a plain burger and a 12-ounce Coke seemed like a full meal. Fast food wasn't any healthier back then; we simply ate a lot less of it.

6 How did toady's oversized appetites become the norm? It didn't happen by accident or some inevitable evolutionary process. It was to a large degree the result of consumer manipulation. Fast food's marketing strategies, which make perfect sense from a business perspective, succeed only when they induce a substantial number of us to overeat. To see how this all came about, let's go back to 1983, when John Martin became CEO of the ailing Taco Bell franchise and met a young marketing whiz named Elliott Bloom.

7 Using so-called "smart research," a then-new kind of in-depth consumer survey, Bloom had figured out that fast-food franchises were sustained largely by a core group of "heavy users," mostly young, single males, who ate at such restaurants as often as 20 times a month. In fact, 30 percent of Taco Bell's customers accounted for 70 percent of its sales.

8 Through his surveys, Bloom learned what might seem obvious now but wasn't at all clear 20 years ago – these guys ate at fast-food joints because they had absolutely no interest in cooking for themselves and didn't give a rip about the nutritional quality of the food. They didn't even care much about the taste. All that mattered was that it was fast and cheap. Martin figured Taco Bell could capture a bigger share of these hard-core customers by streamlining the food production and pricing main menu items at 49, 59 and 69 cents – well below its competitors.

9 It worked. Taco Bell saw a dramatic increase in patrons, with no drop in revenue per customer. As Martin told Greg Critser, author of "Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World," when Taco Bell ran a test of its new pricing in Texas, "within seven days of initiating the test, the average check was right back to where it was before – it was just four instead of three items."

10 In other words, cheap food induced people to eat more. Taco Bell's rising sales

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figures – up 14 percent by 1989 and 12 percent more the next year – forced other fast-food franchises to wake up and smell the burritos. By the late '80s, everybody from Burger King to Wendy's was cutting prices and seeing an increase in customers – including bargain-seeking Americans who weren't part of that original hard-core group.□

11 If marketing strategy had stopped there, we might not be the nation of fatties that we are today. But the imperatives of the market place are growth and rising profits, and once everybody had slashed prices to the bone, the franchises had to look for a new way to satisfy investors.

12 And what they found was ...super-sizing.

13 Portion sizes had already been creeping upward. As early as 1972, for example, McDonald's introduced its large-size fries (large being a relative term, since at 3.5 ounces the '72 "large" was smaller than a medium serving today). But McDonald's increased portions only reluctantly, because the company's founder, Ray Kroc, didn't like the image of lowbrow, cheap food. If people wanted more French fries, he would say, "they can buy two bags." But price competition had grown so fierce that the only way to keep profits up was to offer bigger and bigger portions. By 1988, McDonald's had introduced a 32-ounce "super size" soda and "super size" fries.□

14 The deal with all these enhanced portions is that the customer gets a lot more food for a relatively small increase in price. So just how does that translate into bigger profits? Because the actual food in a fast-food meal is incredibly cheap. For every dollar a quick-service franchiser spends to produce a food item, only 20 cents, on average, goes toward food. The rest is eaten up by expenses such as salaries, packaging, electric bills, insurance, and of course, the ubiquitous advertising that got you in the door or to the drive-through lane in the first place.□

15 Here's how it works. Let's say a $1.25 bag of French fries costs $1 to produce. The potatoes, oil and salt account for only 20 cents of the cost. The other 80 cents goes toward all the other expenses. If you add half again as many French fries to the bag and sell it for $1.50, the non-food expenses stay pretty much constant, while the extra food costs the franchise only 10 more pennies. The fast-food joint makes an extra 15 cents pure profit, and the customer thinks he's getting a good deal. And he would be, if he actually needed the extra food, which he doesn't because the nation is awash in excess calories.□

16 That 20 percent rule, by the way, applies to all food products, whether it's a bag of potato chips, the 2,178-calorie mountain of fried seafood at Red Lobster or the 710-calorie slab of dessert at the Cheesecake Factory. Some foods are even less expensive to make. The flakes of your kid's breakfast cereal, for example, account for only 5 percent of the total amount Nabisco or General Mills spent to make and sell them.□

17 Soda costs less to produce than any drink except tap water (which nobody seems to drink anymore), thanks to a 1970s invention that cut the expense of making high-fructose corn syrup. There used to be real sugar in Coke; when Coca-Cola and other bottlers switched to high-fructose corn syrup in 1984, they slashed sweetener costs by 20 percent. That's why 7-Eleven can sell the 64-ounce Double Gulp – half a gallon of soda and nearly 600 calories – for only 37 cents more than the 16-ounce, 89-cent regular Gulp. You'd feel ripped off if you bought the smaller size. Who wouldn't?□

18 The final step in the fattening of America was the "up sell," a stroke of genius whose origins are buried somewhere in the annals of marketing. You're already at the counter, you've ordered a cheese burger value meal for $3.74, and your server says, "Would

you like to super-size that for only $4.47?" Such a deal. The chain extracts an extra 73 cents from the customer, and the customer gets an extra 400 calories – bringing the total calorie count to 1,550, more than half the recommended intake for an adult man for an entire day.

19 When confronted with their contribution to America's expanding waistline, restauranteurs and food packagers reply that eating less is a matter of individual responsibility. But that's not how the human stomach works. If you put more food in front of people, they eat more, as studies have consistently shown over the last decade.☐

20 My personal favorite: The researcher gave moviegoers either a half-gallon or a gallon bucket of popcorn before the show (it was "Payback," with Mel Gibson) and then measured how much they ate when they returned what was left in the containers afterward. Nobody could polish off the entire thing, but subjects ate 44 percent more when given the bigger bucket.

☐**21** The downside, of course, is that 20 years of Big Food has trained us to think that oceanic drinks and gargantuan portions are normal. Indeed, once fast food discovered that big meals meant big profits, everybody from Heineken to Olive Garden to Frito Lay followed suit. Today, says Lisa Young, a nutritionist at New York University, super-sizing has pervaded every segment of the food industry. For her PhD, Young documented the changes in portion sizes for dozens of foods over the past several decades.☐

22 M&M/Mars, for example, has increased the size of candy bars such as Milky Way and Snickers four times since 1970, Starbucks introduced the 20-ounce "venti" size in 1999 and discontinued its "short" 8-ounce cup. When 22-ounce Heinekens were introduced, Young reported, the company sold 24 million of them the first year, and attributed the sales to the "big-bottle gimmick."

☐**23** Even Lean Cuisine and Weight Watchers now advertise "Hearty Portions" of their diet meals. Everything from plates and muffin tins to restaurant chairs and the cut of our Levi's has expanded to match our growing appetites, and the wonder of it all is not that 60 percent of Americans are overweight or obese, but rather that 40 percent of us are not.☐

24 Where does it end? Marketers and restauranteurs may scoff at lawsuits like the ones brought this summer against fast food companies, and they have a point: Adults are ultimately responsible for what they put in their own mouths.

☐**25** But maybe there's hope for us yet, because it looks as if fast-food companies "Omnipresence" – the McDonald's strategy of beating out competitors by opening new stores, sometimes as many as 1,000 a year – "has proved costly and self-cannibalizing," say author Critser. With 13,000 McDonald's units alone, most of America is so saturated with fast food there's practically no place left to put a drive-through lane. Now, fast-food companies are killing each other in a new price war they can't possibly sustain, and McDonald's just suffered its first quarterly loss since the company went public 47 years ago.☐

26 The obvious direction to go is down, toward what nutritional policymakers are calling "smart-sizing." Or at least it should be obvious, if food purveyors cared as much about helping Americans slim down as they would have us believe. Instead of urging Americans to "Get Active, Stay Active" – Pepsi Cola's new criticism-deflecting slogan – how about bringing back the 6.5 ounce sodas of the '40s and '50s? Or, imagine, as Critser does, the day when McDonald's advertises Le Petit Mac, made with high-grade beef, a delicious whole-grain bun and hawked by, say, Serena Williams.☐

27 One way or another, as Americans wake up to the fact that obesity is killing nearly as many citizens as cigarettes are, jumbo burgers and super-size fries will seem like less of a

bargain.

<center>**"7 Highly Disturbing Trends in Junk Food Advertising to Children"**
by Laura Gottesdiener</center>

AlterNet, November 29, 2012

Ever wonder why one-third of all children in the United States are overweight, if not dangerously obese? According to a slew of recent reports, the cornucopia of junk food advertising to children plays a substantial role in creating this public health crisis. From bribing children with toys and sweepstakes to convincing them to eat a "fourth meal," the industry is glutted with examples of perverse, profit-chasing schemes to capitalize on children's appetites at the expense of their long-term health. Here are 7 most perverse trends in junk food advertising to children.

1. Bombarded!

Junk food marketing to children and adolescents has become billion-dollar industry. According to 2006 data, the most recent numbers available, kids experience at least $1.6 billion worth of food advertising a year--the vast majority of the ads geared toward pushing high-calorie and low-nutrition snacks down kids' throat.

According to data [4] compiled by the nonprofit health organization Food & Water Watch, children see more nearly 5,000 TV food ads every year, and teenagers get bombarded by almost 6,000 annually.

The vast majority of these ads are specifically geared towards children, using tricks like cartoon characters and sweepstakes prizes to make the sugary cereals and fatty hamburgers all the more attractive. As children's online activity has risen, massive corporations like McDonald's have also designed child-focused websites, complete with video games that teach children brand recognition, that are getting hundreds of thousands of young visitors a month. In the month of February 2011, for example, 350,000 children under the age of 12 visited McDonald's two main websites, HappyMeal.com and McWorld.com.

Most disturbingly, the amount of this advertising is steadily increasing. According to a report from Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, the advertising increased dramatically in only two years, between 2007 and 2009. Children between the ages of 6 and 11 saw a staggering 56 percent more ads for Subway [5], and 26 percent more ads for McDonald's. African American children were disproportionately targeted by this advertising, seeing 50 percent more advertisements for fast food than white children of the same age.

2. The ads, not the TV, are what's making kids fat

While many have complained that sedentary television culture is causing the childhood obesity crisis, new studies suggest that the real culprit may be the constant ads for junk food that children are viewing during commercial break--not the television programs themselves.

A 2006 Institute of Medicine government report stated, [4] "It can be concluded that television advertising influences children to prefer and request high-calorie and low-nutrient foods and beverages."

Even clearer evidence comes from a long-term study in Quebec, where fast food advertising geared specifically toward children has been banned both online and in-print for the last 32 years. There, researchers discovered that the province has the least childhood

obesity of anywhere in Canada, and that the ban decreased children's consumption by an estimated <u>two to four billion calories.</u> [6]

In Britain, the president of the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Heath, has also <u>advocated for the state to ban junk food advertisements</u> [7] on television until after 9 pm, when the majority of children are already asleep.

3. Ten extra pounds--a year

How fat are these television advertisements making kids? According to one recent study, their effects are surprisingly heavy. <u>The experiment compared</u> [4] children's food consumption while watching television programs with food commercials, versus programs that ran straight through without any ads. It concluded that kids consumed almost 50 percent more calories while watching the 30-minute program with commercials--a total of almost 100 calories in only a half an hour. Over the course of a year, that would lead to a 10-pound weight gain.

4. Children clueless while industry cashes In

One of the biggest problems with child-specific advertising is that young kids aren't even able to recognize the commercials for what they are: short segments intended to sell them things. <u>As the Food and Water Watch Report explains</u> [4], children under the age of four can't even recognize the difference between a television show and the commercials--the line between content and advertising is completely invisible to them. Children between four and eight may understand that advertisements are different from the T.V. program, but they still don't recognize that ads are paid commercials intended to convince them to buy something.

However, just because children can't recognize the ads for what they are doesn't mean that these commercials don't affect them. Studies show toddlers are able to accurately identify brand logos and that young children prefer food wrapped in McDonald's packaging.

5. A fourth meal?

A study of one child-geared advertising campaign, launched by Taco Bell, demonstrates how perverse this marketing really is. In 2006, Taco Bell launched a campaign to convince children to eat a "Fourth Meal," which is after dinner and before breakfast. (Essentially, the fourth meal is at the time of night when children should be sleeping or doing their homework.)

<u>The campaign kicked off</u> [8] with a website showing children in their pajamas wandering around outside and eating nachos, tacos and other late-night snacks offered by Taco Bell. The foods being marketed often had more than 400 calories, placing them squarely in the meal category. But the goal isn't just to sell more tacos; it's actually to carve out an entire new post-dinner market where the consumer base is young children.

6. Holding schools hostage

Increasingly, these types of ads aren't only on television and online; they are also in schools where the child-marking focus is even more obvious. As budget cuts and austerity measures have swept the nation, schools are increasingly relying on money from vending machine contracts and corporate partnerships. These revenue streams rely on how much food the students buy, meaning that the school earns more money if it stocks these machines with junk food.

7. Industry's idea of self-regulation: happy meals with apple slices

Due to increasing criticism from the public health community and the federal government, the fast food industry undertook the ambitious task of self-regulation in 2006, launching the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative. Under this initiative, companies pledged to market "better-for-you" foods to children.

Here are selections from the menu they came up with:

Burger King Kids Meals with "Fresh Apple Slices" and fat-free milk or apple juice
Assuming the meal is a plain hamburger, the offering has nearly 400 calories.

McDonald's Happy Meals with fries, apple slices and fat-free chocolate milk
Assuming the meal is a plain hamburger, the offering has more than 550 calories

Kid Cuisine Meals Primo Pepperoni Double Stuffed Pizza
480 calories, with 15 grams of fat

Chef Boyardee Pepperoni Pizza Ravioli
290 calories

Sometimes the industry's definition of regulation, is the best argument for government intervention.

Source URL: http://www.alternet.org/food/7-highly-disturbing-trends-junk-food-advertising-children

Digital Texts/Resources

Title/source	Description
Calorie King http://www.calorieking.com/foods/	Website for analyzing the nutritional content of food
Teach every child about food https://www.ted.com/talks/jamie_oliver	TED talk by Jaime Oliver about the connection between food and health in America. Offers solutions to address the issue
Fast food F.A.C.T.S http://www.fastfoodmarketing.org/	Website that provides research about fast-food advertising. The site was developed by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University
Animoto https://animoto.com/	Free website for creating simple videos
The Fourth Meal https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-yEgJ1ZihQ	Video explaining how fast food companies created a fourth meal to entice customers
A guerilla gardener in South Central LA https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/ wecan/portion/documents/PD1.pdf	TED talk by Ron Finley promoting urban gardening
Portion Distortion **https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/** **nal/** **wecan/portion/documents/PD1.pdf**	Power point by the Department of Health and Human Services to demonstrate how much portion sizes have increased

Writing Support

- Writing Assignment
- Sample Introductions
- Graphic organizer: Evidence
- Text boxes
- Writing Response Groups (WRG)
- Incorporating Evidence
- *They Say, I Say*: Using transitions

Student Handout: Writing Assignment: Food and Health

     Writing Prompt: Why do American's have such unhealthy eating habits? What are the consequences and what is the solution?
     Explain some of the health issues facing American children/teenagers
     Describe some of the reasons for the prevalence of these unhealthy eating habits (accessibility of fast food, school lunches, advertising, inaccurate food labeling, lack of health education, self-regulation of the food industry, portion sizes….)
     Propose a solution (ban on soda, regulation of the food industry, mandated smaller portions, mandatory health education…)

Make at least one reference to one of the following texts from class:	Choose at least two more texts of your choice to cite. Your sources may include:
- Articles: *Don't Blame the Eater* *7 Highly disturbing Trends* *The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home* *New York Bans Soda* *It's Portion Distortion That's Making Us Fat* - TED Talks: Jamie Oliver - HBO Documentary: *The Weight of the Nation*	- Relevant movie (*Fast Food Nation, SuperSize Me,* Forks Over Knives…) - Credible Website - Research Article - Interview - News Article or Video Clip

Typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman font

Student Handout: Sample Introductions

Directions: Choose one introduction to use as a guide to write your own introduction. If you do not like any of the following introductions you can choose another one from any of the texts that we have used.

If ever there were a newspaper headline custom-made for Jay Leno's monologue, this was it. Kids taking on McDonald's this week, suing the company for making them fat. Isn't that like middle-aged men suing Porsche for making them get speeding tickets? Whatever happened to personal responsibility?

I tend to sympathize with these portly fast-food patrons, though. Maybe that's because I used to be one of them.

(Excertped from : NY Times 11/23/02: Don't Blame the Eater- David Zinczenko)

It was probably inevitable that one day people would start suing McDonald's for making them fat. That day came last summer, when New York lawyer Samuel Hirsch filed several lawsuits against McDonald's, as well as four other fast-food companies, on the grounds that they had failed to adequately disclose the bad health effects of their menus.

One of the suits involves a Bronx teenager who tips the scale at 400 pounds and whose mother, in papers filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, said, "I always believed McDonald's food was healthy for my son."

(Excerpted from: The Washington Post 11/29/2002: It's Portion Distortion That's Making Us Fat-Shannon Brownlee)

A public health group called last week for Governor Gray Davis to declare childhood obesity a state emergency and take immediate steps to reduce it. But while the California Center for Public Health Advocacy proposes some worthy ideas, the foundation might be aiming at the wrong target.

Parents, not state government, are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children in our schools.

(The Sacramento Bee 12/17/02: The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home- Daniel Weintraub)

Student Handout: Text Structure, "Don't Blame the Eater"

Topic: Reference to lawsuits about customers suing McDonald's for making them fat
Purpose: Introduce topic, anticipate reader's reaction (outrage)
Rhetorical Moves: Rhetorical questions aligning with audience reaction:
"Isn't that like middle-aged men suing Porsche for making them speed? Whatever happened to personal responsibility?"

Topic: Personal narrative about author being overweight as a child because his single mother worked and he only had access to fast food in his neighborhood

Purpose: Establish credibility with audience (ethos), introduce author's perspective
Rhetorical Moves: Narrative

Topic: Statistics about diabetes, obesity and fast food
Purpose: Establish problem, connect it to prevalence of fast food
Rhetorical Moves: Questions directed at the reader to draw logical conclusions:
"Shouldn't we know better than to eat 2 meals a day in a fast food restaurant? That's one argument. But where, exactly, are consumers-particularly teenagers-supposed to find alternatives?"

Topic: Lack of accurate food labeling on fast food packaging
Purpose: Demonstrate that people don't know that what they are eating is unhealthy because the labels are inaccurate
Rhetorical Moves: Specific example taken directly from a fast food restaurant that does not accurately represent the nutritional information of the food

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Topic: Conclusion- Argument that fast food companies market unhealthy, harmful produce to children with no warning labels

Purpose: Demonstrate that the fast food industry is responsible for customer's health issues

Rhetorical Moves: Reasoning based on evidence

Student Handout: Text Box Template for Essay Outline

Topic/content (what is the actual subject?):

Purpose (what are you trying to do-introduce the topic, connect with the reader, establish the problem, determine the cause, propose a solution…?)

How did you do this? (evidence, statistics, narrative, research…)

Topic/content (what is the actual subject?):

Purpose (what are you trying to do-introduce the topic, connect with the reader, establish the problem, determine the cause, propose a solution…?)

How did you do this? (evidence, statistics, narrative, research…)

Topic/content (what is the actual subject?):

Purpose (what are you trying to do-introduce the topic, connect with the reader, establish the problem, determine the cause, propose a solution…?)

How did you do this? (evidence, statistics, narrative, research…)

Student Handout: Evidence Chart

Directions: Find specific pieces of evidence for each category. Use your texts from class and any other sources you find. Make sure you cite your sources.

Define the Problem	Explain the causes	What is the solution?
• What evidence demonstrates that America has a health problem related to diet and exercise? • Find statistics and data that show that Americans are unhealthy.	• Based on the texts that we have read, what do you think is causing these health issues? • Find evidence that supports your viewpoint.	• This should be connected to the causes. You will probably use mostly reasoning and logic in this section. You may also include examples to support your point.

Student Handout: Evidence Chart: Example

Directions: Find specific pieces of evidence for each category. Use your texts from class and any other sources you find. Make sure you cite your sources.

Define the Problem	Explain the causes	What is the solution?
• What evidence demonstrates that America has a health problem related to diet and exercise? • Find statistics and data that show that Americans are unhealthy.	• Based on the texts that we have read, what do you think is causing these health issues? • Find evidence that supports your viewpoint.	• This should be connected to the cause that you identified. This section may be mostly reasoning and logic or you can use examples and research to support your point.
• One in three Americans is overweight or obese (It Pays to Advertise, 2012) • This current generation will have a life span that is 10 years shorter than their parents because of obesity related diseases (TED talk: Jaime Oliver, Let's Talk to Kids About Food) • Diabetes has increased by 128% from 1988 to 2008 in the United States. 85.2% of people with type2 diabetes are overweight or obese. Diabetes kills more Americans annually than AIDS and breast cancer combined. By 2050, 1 in 3 Americans will have diabetes according to current trends (Fast Facts, American Diabetes Association) • Healthcare related to obesity now costs $190 billion annually. This is higher than healthcare costs for smoking related	**Cause: Unhealthy Food Advertising** • In 2004, children saw an average of 15 TV food ads per day, most of which were for junk food, fast food, desserts and sugary drinks (It Pays to Advertise, 2012) • A 2006 study found that TV advertising influences children to request high calorie, low nutrient food (Institute of Medicine, 2006) • The Centers for Disease Control assert that advertising unhealthy food is one important factor in the rise of obesity (It Pays to Advertise, 2012) • According to one recent study, kids consumed 50 percent more calories while watching a TV show with commercials as compared to watching one with commercials. This would lead to a 10 lb weight gain in a year	**Solution: Junk food and fast food advertising should be regulated.** • Self-regulation in the industry has not resulted in a significant reduction of unhealthy foods being marketed to children(It Pays to Advertise, 2012) • The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended a ban on junk food advertising. The American Psychological Associated has recommended restricting TV ads for children under eight years old (It Pays to Advertise, 2012). • A long-term study in Quebec determined that the ban on fast food advertising decreased children's calorie consumption by two to four billion calories (7 Highly Disturbing Trends in Junk Food Advertising).

diseases (Forbes: Obesity Now Costs…2012)	(7 Highly Disturbing Trends in Junk Food Advertising)	

Student Handout: Incorporating Evidence into Your Paper

(Adapted from: "UNC Writing Center Handouts: Quotations")

1. Provide a context for each quote (or paraphrased quote). Give enough information so that your reader understands the situation.
2. Attribute each quote to its source if there is a speaker (exclaimed, declared, criticized…).
3. Explain the significance of the quote: Why is this piece of evidence important? What does it mean? What are the implications? (This is the "so what" part of your explanation).
4. Provide a citation, including for a paraphrase. Put the citation outside of the quotes, inside of the period.

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Downloaded from:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/

For example:
Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Practice:
Use the quotation guidelines to write a paragraph using the following quote as evidence. You can use it as a direct quote or paraphrase it. You can use a summary sentence frame to introduce the article and the author.

"….20 years of big food has trained us to think that oceanic drinks and gargantuan portions are normal" (Brownlee).

Student Handout: WRG: Food Essay

1. Write the topic next to each paragraph (can be a sentence fragment)
2. What is the author's response to the following question: Why do American kids eat such unhealthy food? (or, why are they so unhealthy?) Your response will be something like: parents don't take care of their kids, advertising influences kid's eating habits, food portions in fast food restaurants….
3. What is the author's proposal or solution to the issue?
4. Mark where any sentences are unclear. Mark where the author needs more evidence (statistics, data…).

Food Essay Rubric

	4: Above Standards	3: Meets Standards	2: Approaching Standards	1: Below Standards
Introduction	The introduction clearly introduces the topic and very effectively engages the reader.	The introduction clearly introduces the topic and effectively engages the reader.	The introduction vaguely introduces the topic and kind of engages the reader.	The introduction does not clearly introduce the topic or it does not engage the reader.
Evidence And Examples: What is the problem?	The author effectively chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a very clear and accurate understanding of the problem.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a clear and accurate understanding of the problem.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader somewhat of an understanding of the problem.	The author does not effectively choose evidence and examples. The reader does not have a clear and accurate understanding of the problem.
Explanation And Examples: Causes	The author effectively chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a very clear and accurate understanding of the causes.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader a clear and accurate understanding of the causes.	The author chooses evidence and examples that give the reader somewhat of an understanding of the causes.	The author does not effectively choose evidence and examples. The reader does not have a clear and accurate understanding of the causes.
Position Statement: Solution	The author clearly and strongly states their position with valid reasoning and arguments	The author clearly states their position with valid reasoning and arguments based on evidence.	The author states their position with reasoning and arguments somewhat based on evidence.	The author states their position, but it is not connected to evidence or it is not clear.

	solidly based on evidence.			
Transitions	The transitions clearly and effectively show how the ideas are connected. (They Say, I Say)	Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety. (They Say, I Say)	Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy. (They Say, I Say)	The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent. (They Say, I Say)
Conventions	There are very few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors.	There are a few grammatical or spelling errors.	There are quite a few grammatical or spelling errors.	The grammatical or spelling errors make it difficult to understand the content.
Organization	The paper is organized in a way that conveys the author's ideas very clearly and coherently.	The paper is organized in a way that conveys the author's ideas clearly and coherently.	The paper is organized in a way that conveys the author's ideas somewhat clearly and coherently.	The organization of the paper detracts from or does not clearly convey the author's ideas.

Juvenile Justice Unit: Opinion-Editorial

Introductory Activities	• Block Party • Exit slip
Analyzing Texts/ Formulating a Stance	• Charts • Synthesis: Group project • Opinion-editorial analysis • Journal response
Writing Support	• Text boxes: Opinion-editorial

I. Introductory Activities

- Block Party: Small group discussion
- Exit Slip

Block Party

Directions: Give each student two index cards. Present each statement one at a time and ask them to write down each statement at the top of the index card, using the front and back of each index card. After they have written down each statement, give students 10-15 minutes to write their responses. After they have written their responses on the index cards, ask students to stand up and form groups of four at various locations around the room. You can ask for students to volunteer as their group's leader and they can remain at each location instead of moving around when it is time to change groups. The leaders are responsible for keeping the discussion on track.

After the students are divided into small groups of four around the room ask them to discuss the first statement. The teacher should walk around the room to help students stay focused on the topic and to offer guiding questions if a group is stuck. After students have discussed the first statement, ask them to move to different groups to discuss the second statement. The student leaders should remain in their location and help facilitate the new group. This process is repeated with each subsequent question. After students have completed their discussion they can write an exit slip to evaluate their participation in the activity and to respond any ideas that resonated with them.

Statements:

- If someone commits a crime while they are drunk they are less responsible than a sober person who commits the same crime
- People who take pictures of a crime and then put them on social media should be charged with being accessories to a crime
- If you witness a crime it is your responsibility to try and stop it or report it
- Teenagers who commit adult crimes should be tried as adults

<u>Student Handout: Exit slip</u>

1. Evaluate your participation in this activity. What did you do well? What will you improve on next time?
2. What ideas or concepts resonated with you? What sticks out in your mind?

II. Analyzing Texts and Formulating a Stance

<u>Student Handout: Steubenville Op-ed: Analysis</u>

<u>Directions:</u> Choose 4 different opinion-editorials about the Steubenville case. You can use the ones that are attached to the class website or you can find your own. Formulate a response to each article.

Title:	Title:
Main Idea:	Main Idea:
Do you agree or disagree?	Do you agree or disagree?

Title:	Title:
Main Idea:	Main Idea:
Do you agree or disagree?	Do you agree or disagree?

<u>Student Handout: Journal: Responsibility to other human beings</u>

What is our responsibility to other human beings? Is it enough to just not do harm to another human being or do we have to actively help them if we are able? Explain your responses and relate them to the cases that we have been reading about.

It is important…

Even though….

For example…

This relates to x because…

Consequently….

As a result….

Student Handout: Juvenile Justice: Articles

Title			
What Happened? (You can bullet point the details)			
What was the outcome?			

What was the main problem or cause? Whose fault was it?			
What do you think should have happened to the people involved?			

Student Handout: Article Synthesis: Steubenville Case

Directions: Your group is going to make a digital presentation that explains the aspect of the case that you have researched and discussed. Include all the following elements:

- Information from each person's source as well as the original article (each person should have a slide or section)
- Synthesize the content- do not just explain everyone's article!!!!
- A heading for each section or slide that explains the contents. This can be a phrase or a question.
- Graphics that correlate with the content.
- **Your group's response to the content: What is your reaction to your topic?**
-

Make sure that your slides are clear and easy to read! Check your grammar and spelling and font color. Do not put too many words on each slide.

Texts: Juvenile Justice

What Is Steubenville Still Hiding?

Nobody knows exactly what investigators were looking for when they raided Steubenville High School in Ohio this week. But as the grand jury kicks off next week looking for charges, all signs point to something big. And guess which Big Red football coach decided to speak out again?

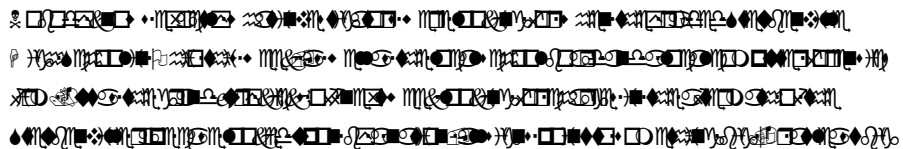**ALEXANDER ABAD-SANTOS**

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enough to bring another social media uproar about rape, cover-ups, and big-time high school football. And guess which Big Red football coach decided to speak out again?

The Secret Search Warrants: A Digital Trail at School?

(Investigators leaving Steubenville High School on Thursday with documents, servers, and computers. Photo by Jennifer Abney/WXPI, via Facebook.)

Toward the end of the school day Thursday, more than eight months after a Steubenville Big Red pre-season game turned into a serious of house parties and a series of attacks on a 16-year-old girl, local police and investigators showed up — as if out of nowhere — at Steubenville High. They stayed on campus into the night, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine told the Associated Press, executing search warrants that were either new or unheard of — and certainly fascinating. "Steubenville Police assisted the Attorney General in the search warrants," said William McCafferty, the local police chief who "begged" for evidence when the initial crime was reported. Officials for Steubenville city schools, who have been publicly silent (save for one brief statement) since that fateful August night that brought a social media and judicial storm upon the Ohio town, confirmed the search in a a statement released Friday reading in part that "we have been from the beginning and are continuing to fully cooperate with the authorities in this investigation."

But this is a new investigation, and this week's search appears to have an urgency of its own, as DeWine's grand jury prepares to convene on Tuesday. The attorney general said the searches at Steubenville city schools were "just part of that effort" — an effort he announced after two Steubenville High students and football players, Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond, were

found guilty of rape. "We cannot bring finality to this matter without the convening of a grand jury," DeWine said at the time. "I anticipate numerous witnesses will be called. The grand jury, quite frankly, could meet for a number of days."

Grand juries, by their nature, are conducted in secret, and the warrants executed on Thursday remain sealed — and so it remains unclear whether investigators were searching computers, paperwork, or physical evidence. DeWine has said the grand jury will be looking for, among other things, at the crimes of failure to report a felony, tampering with evidence. DeWine explained that "indictments *could* be returned and additional charges *could* be filed" in light of the jury, the nine members of which were seated last week but will begin hearing testimony and reviewing evidence on April 30. He also called the grand jury "a very good investigative tool as well as a very deliberative body," which makes the timing of the school search all the more interesting.

The attacks happened on the night of August 11, and Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond were arrested on August 22, the first day of school. Many students were at the parties that night, but key witnesses were granted immunity in the rape trial, and DeWine has said it would take extraordinary circumstances for that not to apply in any grand jury findings. As to who might be in trouble next, attention may shifting to adults, both educators at Steubenville High and the parents involved in the parties. Could electronic records at the school and elsewhere provide evidence for charges?

The search on Thursday, after all, wasn't limited to the school: The AP reports that the offices of the city school board were also searched, along with "Vestige Ltd., a digital evidence company in northeastern Ohio." According to its website, Vestige aspires to be "the leading provider of Computer Forensic services for the use in civil litigation, law enforcement, criminal proceedings and corporate policy administration." In short, they help their clients and attorneys with digital data. That could point to possible Internet correspondence or smartphone usage, which became a signature of a rape trial full of tweets, text messages, and lurid videos. Specifics will be hard to come by in the week ahead, and while DeWine has dismissed rumors of a police cover-up, his grand jury investigation may now turn to focus on policed finding new details about other adults — perhaps the most famous one in all of Steubenville.

The Powerful Coach Speaks: A Centerpiece of the New Investigation?

Steubenville head football coach Reno Saccoccia (right; by WTRF-TV), fresh off a two-year renewal of his contract in a secondary role as Steubenville High's director of administrative services, granted a rare (if brief) interview this week to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*'s

two other players who filmed and photographed the rape of the 16-year-old girl, but not until eight games into Big Red's 10-game regular season. Saccoccia also served as a character witness for Mays and Richmond during a pretrial hearing.

The national spotlight will shine on Steubenville again next week, however secret the grand jury proceedings remain. The 135,000-plus signatures on a petition for the school to fire Saccoccia may grow. Saccoccia will also have a chance to clear his name. "No one is a target at this point," DeWine said after calling the grand jury. But he added: "We are not excluding anyone, either." Indeed, whatever is in those boxes at Steubenville High — or the untold text messages and emails the nine members of the new jury are about to review — will only make the spotlight shine brighter. Stay tuned to our Steubenville coverage for the latest.

This article is from the archive of our partner The Wire.

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The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/RLrBTL

SundayReview | OP-ED COLUMNIST

Is Delhi So Different From Steubenville?

Nicholas Kristof   JAN. 12, 2013

IN India, a 23-year-old student takes a bus home from a movie and is gang-raped and assaulted so viciously that she dies two weeks later.

In Liberia, in West Africa, an aid group called More Than Me rescues a 10-year-old orphan who has been trading oral sex for clean water to survive.

In Steubenville, Ohio, high school football players are accused of repeatedly raping an unconscious 16-year-old girl who was either drunk or rendered helpless by a date-rape drug and was apparently lugged like a sack of potatoes from party to party.

And in Washington, our members of Congress show their concern for sexual violence by failing to renew the Violence Against Women Act, a landmark law first passed in 1994 that has now expired.

Gender violence is one of the world's most common human rights abuses. Women worldwide ages 15 through 44 are more likely to die or be maimed because of male violence than because of cancer, malaria, war and traffic accidents combined. The World Health Organization has found that domestic and sexual violence affects 30 to 60 percent of women in most countries.

In some places, rape is endemic: in South Africa, a survey found that 37 percent of men reported that they had raped a woman. In others, rape is institutionalized as sex trafficking. Everywhere, rape often puts the victim on trial: in one poll, 68

percent of Indian judges said that "provocative attire" amounts to "an invitation to rape."

Americans watched the events after the Delhi gang rape with a whiff of condescension at the barbarity there, but domestic violence and sex trafficking remain a vast problem across the United States.

One obstacle is that violence against women tends to be invisible and thus not a priority. In Delhi, of 635 rape cases reported in the first 11 months of last year, only one ended in conviction. That creates an incentive for rapists to continue to rape, but in any case that reported number of rapes is delusional. They don't include the systematized rape of sex trafficking. India has, by my reckoning, more women and girls trafficked into modern slavery than any country in the world. (China has more prostitutes, but they are more likely to sell sex by choice.)

On my last trip to India, I tagged along on a raid on a brothel in Kolkata, organized by the International Justice Mission. In my column at the time, I focused on a 15-year-old and a 10-year-old imprisoned in the brothel, and mentioned a 17-year-old only in passing because I didn't know her story.

My assistant at The Times, Natalie Kitroeff, recently visited India and tracked down that young woman. It turns out that she had been trafficked as well — she was apparently drugged at a teahouse and woke up in the brothel. She said she was then forced to have sex with customers and beaten when she protested. She was never allowed outside and was never paid. What do you call what happened to those girls but slavery?

Yet prosecutors and the police often shrug — or worse. Dr. Shershah Syed, a former president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Pakistan, once told me: "When I treat a rape victim, I always advise her not to go to the police. Because if she does, the police might just rape her again."

In the United States, the case in Steubenville has become controversial partly because of the brutishness that the young men have been accused of, but also because of concerns that the authorities protected the football team. Some people in

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both Delhi and Steubenville rushed to blame the victim, suggesting that she was at fault for taking a bus or going to a party. They need to think: *What if that were me?*

The United States could help change the way the world confronts these issues. On a remote crossing of the Nepal-India border, I once met an Indian police officer who said, a bit forlornly, that he was stationed there to look for terrorists and pirated movies. He wasn't finding any, but India posted him there to show that it was serious about American concerns regarding terrorism and intellectual property. Meanwhile, that officer ignored the steady flow of teenage Nepali girls crossing in front of him on their way to Indian brothels, because modern slavery was not perceived as an American priority.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has done a superb job trying to put these issues on the global agenda, and I hope President Obama and Senator John Kerry will continue her efforts. But Congress has been pathetic. Not only did it fail to renew the Violence Against Women Act, but it has also stalled on the global version, the International Violence Against Women Act, which would name and shame foreign countries that tolerate gender violence.

Congress even failed to renew the landmark legislation against human trafficking, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The obstacles were different in each case, but involved political polarization and paralysis. Can members of Congress not muster a stand on modern slavery?

(Hmm. I now understand better the results of a new survey from Public Policy Polling showing that Congress, with 9 percent approval, is less popular than cockroaches, traffic jams, lice or Genghis Khan.)

Skeptics fret that sexual violence is ingrained into us, making the problem hopeless. But just look at modern American history, for the rising status of women has led to substantial drops in rates of reported rape and domestic violence. Few people realize it, but Justice Department statistics suggest that the incidence of rape has fallen by three-quarters over the last four decades.

Likewise, the rate at which American women are assaulted by their domestic partners has fallen by more than half in the last two decades. That reflects a

revolution in attitudes. Steven Pinker, in his book "The Better Angels of Our Nature," notes that only half of Americans polled in 1987 said that it was always wrong for a man to beat his wife with a belt or a stick; a decade later, 86 percent said it was always wrong.

But the progress worldwide is far too slow. Let's hope that India makes such violence a national priority. And maybe the rest of the world, especially our backward Congress, will appreciate that the problem isn't just India's but also our own.

I invite you to comment on this column on my blog, On the Ground. Please also join me on Facebook and Google+, watch my YouTube videos and follow me on Twitter.

A version of this op-ed appears in print on January 13, 2013, on Page SR1 of the New York edition with the headline: Is Delhi So Different From Steubenville?.

"The Upstanders"
By Cindy Waitt

The Huffington Post, April 2, 2013

Three nights ago, I watched the home-made video of the aftermath of the horrific Steubenville, Ohio rape of a 16-year-old girl. I can't describe it. Nothing I can say here can match the lack of humanity and decency I heard in the words coming out of that piece of rough film. The starring character, the one that found the whole episode amusing, encounters one faint voice of protest, a voice that wasn't loud enough. The loudest voice ruled. I kept turning it off. But then I decided to go the distance and watch the whole 12 minutes and 29 seconds. As a violence prevention supporter for 20 years, and a social worker for almost 10 years before that, I told myself I should have been better prepared. I wasn't. I had trouble sleeping.

When I woke up the next morning, I suddenly remembered watching a "scenario" that had an eerie similarity to the prelude of what led up to the events in Steubenville.

It was about ten years ago, in a middle school gymnasium in Sioux City, Iowa. I watched a scene where an intoxicated teenage girl, who was barely able to walk, was being led out of a party by a teenage boy. The scene was set up to illustrate the tension of that moment. Suddenly a girl, and another boy she knew, sensing the danger, approached and intervened to take her to safety. It wasn't real, it was a scenario from a program called Mentors in Violence Prevention and acted out by high school future "mentors" in an all-day training.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Model was co- founded by internationally-known speaker, author, and activist Jackson Katz 20 years ago at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society 20 years ago. It's an innovative gender violence, bullying, and school violence prevention program that uses the "bystander" model to give students choices in how to approach potentially dangerous situations by creating real life scenarios like the one above.

MVP asks both young girls and young boys to be what is called "an active bystander." Another word being used today is "upstander," a term that became better known when the movie *Bully* premiered, and one used frequently now as part of the movement that grew out of the 2012 documentary. Now, more than ever, we need to create more "upstanders" and not only among our youth, but in partnership with parents, school staff, and finally, the whole community. Can we prevent every incident of violence, bullying, or sexual assault? I think not. But changing the power of the old message that "boys will be boys' and "kids will be kids" and implementing bystander or "upstander" programs in schools nationwide is a step in the right direction.

Both terms make sense when you are asking kids to go outside their comfort zone and have the courage to stand up for their peers to prevent the violence we hear about too often in this country. The term "bystander" isn't that new but we are gathering more data on how it works. Dr. Alan Heisterkamp, a violence prevention consultant and trainer at the University of Northern Iowa, says, "Today, we know more about the impact that active bystanders, sometimes referred to as "upstanders," have on reducing the frequency of harmful or abusive behaviors among youth and adults alike."

He's right. *Newsweek* wrote in 2009 about studies he did at a pilot high school in Iowa over 10 years ago,

"One study found that after the Sioux City School District in Iowa implemented the MVP program, the number of freshman boys who said they could help prevent violence against women and girls increased by 50 percent. The number of ninth-grade boys who indicated that their peers would listen to them about respecting women and girls increased by 30 percent."

New data can be found here.

As a consultant to Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention, Dr. Heisterkamp was one of the first trainers to work with MVP in high schools in combination with an outstanding curriculum we've used for many years called "Coaching Boys into Men' (CBIM). This Futures Without Violence program, piloted in 2005, uses the power of adult mentors, particularly athletic coaches with young male athletes, in changing cultures to prevent gender violence and sexual assault. A three-year evidence-based CDC study in 16 Sacramento, California high schools showed that student athletes who participated in CBIM were more likely to call out abusive behavior among their peers than those outside the program. Dr. Heisterkamp found that using both programs together was vital in challenging old and dangerous social norms that allowed incidents like Steubenville to happen. CBIM is now used in dozens of locations across the country and plans on expanding their map, as does Mentors in Violence Prevention, and they're doing it together in high schools across the country. See morehere.

In the past ten years, we've had many young people who've worked with both Mentors in Violence Prevention and Coaching Boys into Men approach us with stories of "standing up," not standing by. The*Bully Project* has seen hundreds, if not thousands, of kids talking about what the power of a voice, a gesture, or a supportive intervention can do. Listening to those kids, and hearing those stories, I have hope.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cindy-waitt/the-upstanders_b_2994409.html

"Lesson From Steubenville Trial: How Jock Culture Morphs Into Rape Culture"
By: Bob Cook
Forbes, March 17, 2013

In Steubenville, Ohio, in a trial featuring all sorts ofcringe-inducing, jaw-dropping testimony about everyday teenage behavior, perhaps the most galling aspect was that 17-year-old Trent Mays and 16-year-old Ma'lik Richmond, two high school football players convicted on juvenile charges, and the young people around them did not recognize that the violation of a 16-year-old, very intoxicated girl counted as rape, and that sharing photos of what happened that night compounded the crime. Mays was also convicted on charges related to just that, giving him one extra year on the one-year sentence both he and Richmond received on what were called "delinquency" charges.

The story of the Steubenville rape is hardly over. Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said a grand jury will be called to see if anyone else should face charges. But more than the legal machinations, there is a question that continues to linger over the case: Was there a so-called rape culture in Steubenville that allowed football players to believe they would not be held accountable for any wrongdoing? And does that rape culture exist elsewhere in youth sports, anywhere that athletics is held in high esteem in a community?

The answer from the trial was, yes, in Steubenville, there was. And what's clear from the trial, too, is that a rape culture can be created when adults send a signal that athletes are to be held in high esteem, and the athletes absorb the belief that as long as they are loyal to the team, the adults surrounding that team will look away from anything they do that can hurt it. A rape culture doesn't require a rape to happen. (And when I say rape, I include the many gruesome cases of team-member-on-team-member violation often dismissed as "hazing.") It merely is a culture ingrained into sports-playing youth that they get to do whatever they want, to whomever they want, with impunity. Rape culture is one gruesome step beyond jock culture.

A jock culture exists anywhere in which athletics is held on a pedestal — basically, every high school in America. The adults don't necessarily have to propagate it. If the football players date the hottest girls, if the basketball players get invited to all the best parties, then there is a jock culture. A jock culture can be built innocently and unwittingly. No doubt, my son gets asked much more about how it's going on the football team than he does about his chess team. America itself has a jock culture, as any look at the number of cable networks devoted to sports can attest. I'm not going to go on a screed about how we should pay as much attention to the mathletes as we do the athletes. That's just how it is, and that doesn't mean we're giving young jocks inherent permission to be jerks. Athletics can be celebrated, and yet athletes can get the message that playing is a privilege that requires them to be better people than they would be without sports.

However, where jock culture starts morphing into rape culture is when coaches start asking for grade changes to keep a player eligible, or parents overvalue their basketball-playing child compared to their violin-playing child. Or, the message is sent to athletic boys that getting girls, who they want, when they want, is an essential part of their experience. That partying hard after the game on Friday is what makes a man.

I don't know all the ins and outs of how my son's high school does things, but I feel good at least that when I go for parent athletic meetings, the athletic director emphasizes grades, good conduct, hanging out with upstanding people, avoiding alcohol and drugs. The

athletic director generally expresses the message that athletics as a privilege for kids who have their heads together. Does that always play out in practice? I don't have statistics or access to all the juiciest high school gossip, but it's safe to say, probably not. But at least they're trying. For example, my son's football team plays on Friday night — and has to be back at school at 8 a.m. Saturday for a film session. If nothing else, as a player you've got to think twice about going out and causing mayhem when you have to get up so stinking early the next morning.

What became abundantly clear in the run-up to the Steubenville trial, and during the trial itself, is that Big Red high school football had grown to such a stature that jock culture had become rape culture. One person whose reputation took a major hit was Steubenville is football coach Reno Saccoccia, whom, as testimony during the trial showed, Mays figured would take care of any fallout from the Aug. 11, 2012, incident and the photos that surfaced from it. (Saccoccia has not commented on the testimony to that effect, which was based on text messages Mays sent.) And if he didn't try to do that, Saccoccia didn't exactly cover himself in glory as the story unfolded — and, to be fair, neither did his bosses at the school, or anyone in town who didn't want the two-time state champion coach and his program to come under attack. As a Dec. 16, 2012, New York Times story detailed, Saccoccia didn't suspend the players who posted online photographs and comments about the girl the night of the parties in part, he told the principal and school superintendent, because the players hadn't thought they had done anything wrong, so there was no basis for suspending them. When a Times reporter tried to talk to Saccoccia about it, he didn't react well.

"You made me mad now," he said, throwing in several expletives as he walked from the high school to his car.

Nearly nose to nose with a reporter, he growled: "You're going to get yours. And if you don't get yours, somebody close to you will."

Two players who testified at a court hearing in early October to determine if there was sufficient evidence for the prosecution to proceed were eventually suspended from the team, eight games into the 10-game regular season.

Saccoccia also testified as a character witness for Mays and Richmond at a preliminary hearing.

At this point, Saccoccia is still the football coach at Steubenville. Superintendent of Schools Michael McVey said he would not comment on Saccoccia or his status until the trial was over, and as of this writing, McVey had not issued any statement.

It seems inconceivable that Saccoccia would remain as football coach, given the revelations at trial. It wasn't just that two football players committed a heinous crime against a drunken, passed-out 16-year-old girl. It's that many teammates saw what happened, and did nothing, or worse, spread around nasty messages and photos about it. It's that one player believed his coach would smooth things over. It's that adults who should know better did not hold Saccoccia accountable when he failed to hold his players accountable.

Then again, if Saccoccia figured other adults would overlook anything he did as long as the football team won, what incentive (other than being a good person) did he have to do anything else? And that is where jock culture morphs into rape culture. When a sports program gets the message that it's allowed to do anything — and I mean anything — in the name of victory and a town's reflected glory, then anything — and I mean anything — can happen. Certainly, Mays and Richmond, both first-time criminal offenders, expressed their apologies as they cried upon hearing that they were found guilty. Will the rest of Steubenville

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— and anywhere else that has given its athletes too much rope — feel the same remorse? Will they do something about it?

http://www.forbes.com/sites/bobcook/2013/03/17/lesson-from-steubenville-rape-trial-how-jock-culture-morphs-into-rape-culture/pri

Juvenile Justice Center

Cruel and Unusual Punishment: The Juvenile Death Penalty

Adolescence, Brain Development and Legal Culpability

"[They] frequently know the difference between right and wrong and are competent to stand trial. Because of their impairments, however, by definition they have diminished capacities to understand and process mistakes and learn from experience, to engage in logical reasoning, to control impulses, and to understand the reactions of others…. Their deficiencies do not warrant an exemption from criminal sanctions, but they do diminish their personal culpability."

Atkins v. Virginia, *536 U.S. 304, 318, 122 S.Ct. 2242, 2250 (2002)*

I n 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court banned the execution of mentally retarded persons. This decision, *Atkins v. Virginia*, cited the underdeveloped mental capacities of those with mental retardation as a major factor behind the Justices' decision.

Adolescence is a transitional period during which a child is becoming, but is not yet, an adult. An adolescent is at a crossroads of changes where emotions, hormones, judgment, identity and the physical body are so in flux that parents and even experts struggle to fully understand.

As a society, we recognize the limitations of adolescents and, therefore, restrict their privileges to vote, serve on a jury, consume alcohol, marry, enter into contracts, and even watch movies with mature content. Each year, the United States spends billions of dollars to promote drug use prevention and sex education to protect youth at this vulnerable stage of life. When it comes to the death penalty, however, we treat them as fully functioning adults.

The Basics of the Human Brain

The human brain has been called the most complex three-pound mass in the known universe. This is a well deserved reputation, for this organ contains billions of connections among its parts and governs countless actions, involuntary and voluntary, physical, mental and emotional.

The largest part of the brain is the *frontal lobe*. A small area of the frontal lobe located behind the forehead, called the *prefrontal cortex*, controls the brain's most advanced functions. This

part, often referred to as the "CEO" of the body, provides humans with advanced cognition. It allows us to prioritize thoughts, imagine, think in the abstract, anticipate consequences, plan, and control impulses.

Along with everything else in the body, the brain changes significantly during adolescence. In the last five years, scientists, using new technologies, have discovered that adolescent brains are far less developed than previously believed.

New Technology, New Discoveries

Scientists are now utilizing advances in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to create and study three-dimensional images of the brain without the use of radiation (as in an x-ray). This breakthrough allows scientists to safely scan children over many years, tracking the development of their brains.[1]

Researchers at Harvard Medical School, the National Institute of Mental Health, UCLA, and others, are collaborating to "map" the development of the brain from childhood to adulthood and examine its implications.
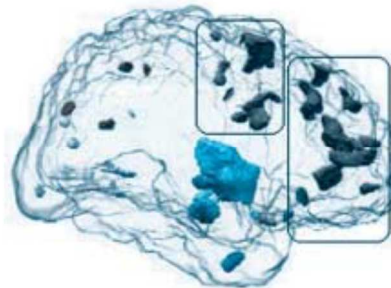
A three dimensional "map" showing portions of gray matter "pruned" from the brain between adolescence and adulthood. The dark portions in the two boxes indicate sections that will be discarded from the **frontal lobe**. The box on the far right indicates the **prefrontal cortex**, a subsection of the frontal lobe that controls judgment.

Image adapted from *Nature Neuroscience.*

Lobes of the Brain:
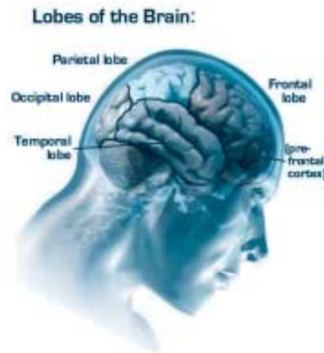
©2002 Hybrid Medical Animation

The scientists, to their surprise, discovered that the teenage brain undergoes an intense overproduction of *gray matter* (the brain tissue that does the "thinking"). Then a period of "pruning" takes over, during which the brain discards gray matter at a rapid rate.[2] This process is similar to pruning a tree: cutting back branches stimulates health and growth.

In the brain, pruning is accompanied by *myelination*, a process in which *white matter* develops. White matter is fatty tissue that serves as insulation for the brain's circuitry, making the brain's operation more precise and efficient.[3]

Researchers have carefully scrutinized the pace and severity of these changes and have learned that they continue into a person's early 20s. Dr. Elizabeth Sowell, a member of the UCLA brain research team, has led studies of brain development from adolescence to adulthood. She and her colleagues found that the frontal lobe undergoes far more change during adolescence than at any other stage of life.[4] It is also the last part of the brain to develop, which means that even as they become fully capable in other areas, adolescents cannot reason as well as adults: "[m]aturation, particularly in the frontal lobes, has been shown to correlate with measures of cognitive functioning."[5]

Biology and Behavior

Jay Giedd, a researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health, explains that during adolescence the "part of the brain that is helping organization, planning and strategizing is not done being built yet…. It's sort of unfair to expect [adolescents] to have adult levels of organizational skills or decision making before their brain is finished being built."[6]

Dr. Deborah Yurgelun-Todd of Harvard Medical School has studied the relation between these new findings and teen behavior and concluded that adolescents often rely on emotional parts

of the brain, rather than the frontal lobe. She explains, "one of the things that teenagers seem to do is to respond more strongly with gut response than they do with evaluating the consequences of what they're doing."[7]

Also, appearances may be deceiving: "Just because they're physically mature, they may not appreciate the consequences or weigh information the same way as adults do. So we may be mistaken if we think that [although] somebody looks physically mature, their brain may in fact not be mature."[8]

This discovery gives us a new understanding into juvenile delinquency. The frontal lobe is "involved in behavioral facets germane to many aspects of criminal culpability,"[9] explains Dr. Ruben C. Gur, neuropsychologist and Director of the Brain Behavior Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania. "Perhaps most relevant is the involvement of these brain regions in the control of aggression and other impulses…. If the neural substrates of these behaviors have not reached maturity before adulthood, it is unreasonable to expect the behaviors themselves to reflect mature thought processes.

"The evidence now is strong that the brain does not cease to mature until the early 20s in those relevant parts that govern impulsivity, judgment, planning for the future, foresight of consequences, and other characteristics that make people morally culpable…. Indeed, age 21 or 22 would be closer to the 'biological' age of maturity."[10]

Other Changes in the Body

In addition to the profound physical changes of the brain, adolescents also undergo dramatic hormonal and emotional changes. One of the hormones which has the most dramatic effect on the body is testosterone. Testosterone, which is closely associated with aggression, increases tenfold in adolescent boys.[11]

> "Just because they're physically mature, they may not appreciate the consequences or weigh information the same way as adults do. So, [although] somebody looks physically mature, their brain may in fact not be mature."
>
> Deborah Yurgelun-Todd, PhD
> Brain Imaging Laboratory,
> McClean Hospital
> Harvard University Medical School

Emotionally, an adolescent "is really both part child and part adult,"[12] explains Melvin Lewis, an expert in child psychiatry and pediatrics at Yale University School of Medicine. Normal development at this time includes self-searching, during which the adolescent tries to grow out of his or her childlike self. This change is complicated by the conflict between an adolescent's new sense of adult identity and remaining juvenile insecurities.

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The behaviors associated with this process include self-absorption, a need for privacy, mood swings, unique dress, and escapism, such as video games, music, and talking on the phone, as well as riskier behaviors, such as drug use or sexual activity.[13]

Childhood Abuse and Violence

In addition to this context of change and volatility, research shows that abusive childhood experiences can trigger violent behavior. The American Academy of Pediatrics has identified several risk factors that can spark violence in adolescents, including being witness to domestic violence or substance abuse within the family, being poorly or inappropriately supervised, and being the victim of physical or sexual assault.[14]

Researcher Phyllis L. Crocker of Cleveland-Marshall College of Law has written that "the nexus between poverty, childhood abuse and neglect, social and emotional dysfunction, alcohol and drug abuse and crime is so tight in the lives of many capital defendants as to form a kind of social historical profile."[15]

> **"The evidence now is strong that the brain does not cease to mature until the early 20s in those relevant parts that govern impulsivity, judgment, planning for the future, foresight of consequences, and other characteristics that make people morally culpable...."**
>
> Ruben Gur, MD, PhD
> Director, University of
> Pennsylvania Medical Center

Dr. Chris Mallett, Public Policy Director at Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau in Ohio, recently completed the most comprehensive study of traumatic experiences in the lives of death row juvenile offenders to date.[16] He found that:

- 74% experienced family dysfunction[17]
- 60% were victims of abuse and/or neglect[18]
- 43% had a diagnosed psychiatric disorder[19]
- 38% suffered from substance addictions[20]
- 38% lived in poverty[21]

More than 30% of death row juvenile offenders had experienced six or more distinct areas of childhood trauma with an overall average of four such experiences per offender. Most children and adolescents do not face even one of these defined areas of difficulty.[22] Mallett also found that such mitigating evidence was presented to juries in fewer than half of the offenders' trials.[23]

Mallett's research confirmed findings in previous studies. In 1992, researchers found that two-thirds of all juveniles sentenced to death had backgrounds of abuse, psychological disorders, low IQ, indigence, and/or substance abuse.[24]

Dr. Jay Giedd of the National Institute of Mental Health. Image courtesy of PBS Frontline report *Inside the Teenage Brain*.

In 1987, an investigation into 14 juveniles on death row[25] (40% of the total at the time) revealed that nine had major neuropsychological disorders[26] and seven had psychotic disorders since early childhood.[27] All but two had IQ scores under 90.[28] Only three had average reading abilities, and another three had learned to read only after arriving on death row.[29] Twelve reported having been physically or sexually abused, including five who were sodomized by relatives.[30]

Delinquency Link

The turmoil often associated with adolescence can result in poor decisions and desperate behaviors. For example, studies have found that 20 to 30% of high school students consider suicide. Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among teenagers, occurring once every two hours, or over 4,000 times a year, according to the U.S. Surgeon General.[31] Approximately 30% of youths reported using an illicit drug at least once during their lifetime, and 22.2% reported using an illicit drug within the past year.[32]

Conclusion

New discoveries provide scientific confirmation that the teen years are a time of significant transition. They shed light on the mysteries of adolescence and demonstrate that adolescents have significant neurological deficiencies that result in stark limitations of judgment. Research suggests that when compounded with risk factors (neglect, abuse, poverty, etc.), these limitations can set the psychological stage for violence.

These discoveries support the assertion that adolescents are less morally culpable for their actions than competent adults and are more capable of change and rehabilitation. The ultimate punishment for minors is contrary to the idea of fairness in our justice system, which accords the greatest punishments to the most blameworthy.

This fresh understanding of adolescence does not excuse juvenile offenders from punishment for violent crime, but it clearly lessens their culpability. This concept is not new; it is why we refer to those under 18 as "minors" and "juveniles"— because, in so many respects, they are *less than adult*.

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Notes

[1] For an excellent overview, see Elkhonon Goldberg, *The Executive Brain: Frontal Lobes and the Civilized Mind,* Oxford University Press (2001).

[2] Sowell, Elizabeth R, Paul M. Thompson, Colin J. Holems, Terry L. Jernigan and Arthur W. Toga. *In vivo evidence for post-adolescent brain maturation in frontal and striatal regions.* 2 Nature Neuroscience 10 (1999), also Paus, Tomas, Jay Giedd, et. al. *Structural maturation of neural pathways in children and adolescents: in vivo study.* Science, 283 (1999).

[3] Id.

[4] Id.

[5] Sowell, Elizabeth R, Paul M. Thompson, Kevin D. Tessner and Arthur W. Toga. *Mapping continued brain growth and gray matter density reduction in dorsal frontal cortex: inverse relationships during postadolescent brain maturation,* 21 Journal of Neuroscience 22 (2001), at 8819, also Reiss, A.L., et. al., *Brain development, gender and IQ in children, a volumetric imaging study.* Brain, 119 (1996).

[6] PBS Frontline, *Inside the Teen Brain.* See *Interview with Jay Giedd,* online at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/.

[7] Id, at *Interview with Deborah Yurgelun-Todd.*

[8] Id.

[9] Gur, Ruben C. Declaration of Ruben C. Gur., PhD, *Patterson v. Texas.* Petition for Writ of Certiorari to US Supreme Court, J. Gary Hart, Counsel. (Online at: www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/patterson.html)

[10] Id.

[11] See Adams, Gerald R., Raymond Montemayor, and Thomas P. Gullota, eds. *Psychosocial Development during Adolescence.* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications (1996).

[12] Lewis, Melvin. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: A comprehensive textbook,* Lippincott Williams and Wilkins (2002).

[13] See id, and Cobb, Nancy J. *Adolescence: Continuity, Change and Diversity.* Mayfield Publishing, CA (1998).

[14] American Society of Pediatrics, *Policy Statement,* 1 Pediatrics, 103 (1999).

[15] Phyllis L. Crocker. *Childhood Abuse and Adult Murder: Implications for the Death Penalty,* 77 NC L. Rev. 1143 (1999).

[16] Mallett, Chris. *Socio-Historical Analysis of Juvenile Offenders on Death Row,* 3 Juv. Corr. Mental Health Report 65 (2003).

[17] Id., at 77.

[18] Id., at 78.

[19] Id., at 77.

[20] Id., at 78.

[21] Id.

[22] Id.

[23] Id.

[24] Robinson, DA and Stephens, OH; *Patterns of mitigating factors in juvenile death penalty cases,* 3 Criminal Law Bulletin 28 (1992).

[25] Lewis, DO, Pincus, Bard, Richardson, Prichep, Feldman, Yeager. *Neuropsychiatric, psychoeducational, and family characteristics of 14 juveniles condemned to death in the United States,* 5 Am. J. of Psychiatry 145 (1988).

[26] Id.

[27] Id.

[28] Id.

[29] Id.

[30] Id.

[31] Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, *At a Glance, Suicide Among the Young:* Online at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/fact3.htm

[32] White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Juveniles and Drugs, at www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/juveniles/index.html

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<u>Writing Supports</u>

- Writing Assignment
- Opinion-editorial text boxes

<u>Student Handout: Opinion/Editorial: Steubenville Case</u>

<u>Writing Task:</u> Write an op-ed piece about the Steubenville case based on the articles we have read and the activities that we have done in class. Choose a specific aspect of the case that you would like to address. Use the following guidelines:

- Create a clear tone: think about how you want to come across in your piece. Do you want to be conciliatory, respectful, sympathetic, supportive, defensive….? Consider your audience when you think about your tone
- Briefly and clearly explain the issue
- Choose one or two aspects of the case to focus on. What issue do you think most needs to be addressed? (jock culture and rape culture, parent supervision, social media bullying, alcohol and teenagers….)
- Take a clear stand and offer an opinion about what should be done (this can include a change in thinking)

   Typed, 12-point font

Student Handout: Text Template: Op-Ed Piece

Issue in the news that deserves our attention

The reaction to this event is X
• **Many people think…**

These are the problems with X
• **However…** • **Even though…**

A much more logical response is Y

(Adapted from: Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones by Thomas Newkirk)

Essential Question Unit

Introductory Activities	• Brainstorm essential questions • Essential Question Questions • "What I Wonder, What I Know" Essay
Analyzing Texts/ Formulating a Stance	• Independent Research • Presentations
Writing Support	• Text boxes • *They Say, I Say*: Transitions

Student Handout: Essential Question Essay

   Essential questions are relevant, thoughtful and ambiguous: they should not have one clear answer. Theories can be developed from good essential questions. The questions often involve a moral or ethical dilemma and/or address issues of bias or perspective. All significant aspects (including opposing viewpoints) can be supported by evidence.

   The purpose of this essay is to answer the question that you have designed. You will use research to support your position, as well as addressing opposing viewpoints. In order to construct a coherent, convincing argument you need to decide how to organize your information so that your message is clearly conveyed to your readers.

Guidelines for the essay:

- 3-4 pages long
- Use at least 4 different sources
- MLA Format
- Bibliography of sources
  12-point font, Times New Roman

<u>Student Handout: Brainstorm: Essential Questions</u>

<u>Directions</u>: Review the list of essential questions to help generate your own ideas. Write at least 4-5 of your own questions that you would be interested in researching. You will be sharing your questions with your group.

- Why do people get angry and how can they control it?
- Can gaming improve a child's life?
- How does the death of a parent affect a child?
- How does the media affects teen's body image?
- How has the internet changed education?
- Why do kids drop out of high school?
- Why do some people have a conscience and others do not?
- Why do kids join gangs?
- Was 9/11 an inside job?
- Why do teens get pregnant?
- Why is a high school diploma important for your future?
- Should the death penalty be allowed?
- Does hip-hop influence violence?
- Is graffiti art or vandalism?
- How are men and women different?
- Should we use green energy?
- Why are humans violent?
- Can Americans really improve their economic status?
- Should teens be tried as adults?
- Should education be privatized?
- How can people find happiness?
- What effect does racism have on the victims and perpetrators?

Student Handout: Essential Question Questions

Directions: Brainstorm a list of at least 4 or 5 questions that you will investigate to answer your essential question.

For example:

Essential question: Should we use green energy?
> ➢ What sources of energy do we currently use?
> ➢ What are the different types of green energy?
> ➢ What countries are currently using green energy and how effective is it?
> ➢ What the benefits/consequences of green energy?

Essential Question: Why do kids join gangs and what can we do about it?
➢ What is the definition of a gang?
➢ What is the impact of joining a gang (for an individual)?
➢ What is the profile of a typical gang member?
➢ How do gangs impact the community?
➢ What anti-gang programs are effective? Ineffective?

Text Boxes Template

Topic/Main Idea:

Purpose:

Resources/Information (add a quote or paraphrase and cite the source):

Topic/Main Idea:

Purpose:

Resources/Information (add a quote or paraphrase and cite the source):

Topic/Main Idea:
Purpose:
Resources/Information (add a quote or paraphrase and cite the source):

Topic/Main Idea:
Purpose:
Resources/Information (add a quote or paraphrase and cite the source):

Opinion (this is when you answer your essential question):

Student Handout: Digital Presentation: Essential Question Essay

Directions: Create a digital presentation that explains the most important aspects of your essay/research. Use the following guidelines:

- State your essential question
- Explain or define your topic, if necessary
- Explain your evidence. Be sure to include a variety of perspectives in responding to your question
- State your response to your question: What is your answer, based on your research?
- Add graphics to your slides
- Bullet point your information- do not use paragraphs on your slides!
- Make sure that your slides are clear and easy to read- check the font color and text size! Do not put words over pictures.
- Practice your presentation out loud several times before you present.

Essential Question Rubric

	4: Above Standards	3: Meets Standards	2: Approaching Standards	1: Below Standards
Evidence And Examples	There is enough evidence to very thoroughly and effectively address the essential question.	There is enough evidence to thoroughly and effectively address the essential question.	There is some evidence, but not enough to fully substantiate or support the author's position.	There is not enough evidence to effectively address the essential question.
Explanation/ Significance	The author very clearly introduces the evidence and explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author clearly introduces the evidence and explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author may introduce the evidence and somewhat explains how it addresses the essential question.	The author either does not introduce the evidence or does not explain how it addresses the essential question.
Conclusion	The author gives an insightful, meaningful concluding statement, based on the evidence, that clearly and thoroughly answers the essential question.	The author gives an insightful, meaningful concluding statement, based on the evidence, that answers the essential question.	The author gives a concluding statement, based on the evidence, that somewhat answers the essential question.	The conclusion does not give the reader insightful final thoughts or is not connected to the evidence that the author presented. It may not answer the essential question.
Transitions	The author very effectively uses transition words and phrases to link paragraphs and connect ideas.	The author effectively uses transition words and phrases to link paragraphs and connect ideas.	The author uses some transition words and phrases to link paragraphs, but sometimes the connection between ideas is unclear.	Author does not effectively use transition words and phrases to link paragraphs and show the connection between ideas.

Organization	The essay is very well-organized and it is very easy to follow the author's argument.	The essay is well-organized and it is easy to follow the author's argument.	The essay is kind of organized, but it is somewhat difficult to follow the author's argument.	The essay is so disorganized that it is difficult to follow the author's argument.
Conventions	Author makes very few grammatical or punctuation errors.	Author makes several grammatical or punctuation errors.	Author makes many grammatical or punctuation errors that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes excessive errors in grammar or punctuation that make it difficult to understand the content.

Critical Thinking Resources

- Major scales of the California Measure of Mental Motivation (CM3)
- Critical Skills and Subskills: The Delphi Project
- The Guide to Rating Critical Thinking: Washington State University

Major Scales of the California Measure of Mental Motivation (CM3)

<u>Learning Orientation</u> A disposition toward increasing one's knowledge and skill base. Valuing the learning process as a means to accomplish mastery over a task. Interested in challenging activities. Uses information seeking as a personal strategy when problem solving.

<u>Creative Problem Solving</u> A disposition toward approaching problem solving with innovative or original ideas and solutions. Feeling imaginative, ingenious, original, and able to solve difficult problems. Desire to engage in activities such as puzzles, games of strategy, and understanding the underlying function of objects.

<u>Mental Focus</u> A disposition toward being diligent, systematic, task oriented, organized, and clearheaded. Feeling at ease with engaging in problem solving. Feeling systematic and confident in ability to complete tasks in timely way. Feeling focused and clearheaded.

<u>Cognitive Integrity</u> A disposition toward interacting with differing viewpoints for the sake of learning the truth or reaching the best decision. The expression of strong intellectual curiosity. Valuing the fair-minded consideration of alternative perspectives.

Giancarlo, C. A., Blohm, S. W., & Urdan, T. (2004). Assessing secondary students' disposition toward critical thinking: Development of the California Measure of Mental Motivation. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 64*(2), 347-364.

Critical thinking skills and sub-skills: Delphi Project (Facione, 1990)

Skills	Sub-skills
1. Interpretation	• Categorization • Decoding Significance • Clarifying Meaning
2. Analysis	• Examining Ideas • Identifying Arguments • Analyzing Arguments
3. Evaluation	• Assessing Claims • Assessing Arguments
4. Inference	• Querying Evidence • Conjecturing Alternatives • Drawing Conclusions
5. Explanation	• Stating Results • Justifying Procedures • Presenting Arguments
6. Self-Regulation	• Self-examination • Self-correction

Guide to Rating Critical Thinking
Washington State University
2004

1) Identifies and summarizes the **problem/question at issue** (and/or the source's position).

Emerging	*Developing*	*Mastering*
Does not identify and summarize the problem, is confused or identifies a different and inappropriate problem.	Identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem, and identifies them clearly, addressing their relationships to each other.	
Does not identify or is confused by the issue, or represents the issue inaccurately.	Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue.	

2) Identifies and presents the STUDENT'S OWN **perspective, hypothesis or position** as it is important to the analysis of the issue.

Emerging	*Developing*	*Mastering*
Addresses a single source or view of the argument and fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own. Fails to establish other critical distinctions.	Identifies, appropriately, one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from *assigned* sources.	

3) Identifies and considers OTHER salient **perspectives and positions** that are important to the analysis of the issue.

Emerging	*Developing*	*Mastering*
Deals only with a single perspective and fails to discuss other possible perspectives, especially those salient to the issue.	Addresses perspectives noted previously, and additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information.	

4) Identifies and assesses the key **assumptions**.

Emerging	*Developing*	*Mastering*
Does not surface the assumptions and ethical issues that underlie the issue, or does so superficially.	Identifies and questions the validity of the assumptions and addresses the ethical dimensions that underlie the issue.	

5) Identifies and assesses the **quality of supporting data/evidence** and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue.

Emerging	_Developing_	_Mastering_
Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth, or denies evidence without adequate justification. Confuses associations and correlations with cause and effect. Does not distinguish between fact, opinion, and value judgments.	Examines the evidence and source of evidence; questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness. Observes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences Clearly distinguishes between fact, opinion, & acknowledges value judgments.	

6) Identifies and considers the influence of the **context *** on the issue.

Emerging	_Developing_	_Mastering_
Discusses the problem only in egocentric or sociocentric terms. Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts—cultural, political, etc.	Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an **assessment of the audience** of the analysis. Considers other pertinent contexts.	

7) Identifies and assesses **conclusions, implications, and consequences.**

Emerging	_Developing_	_Mastering_
Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences of the issue or the key relationships between the other elements of the problem, such as context, implications, assumptions, or data and evidence.	Identifies and discusses conclusions, implications, and consequences considering context, assumptions, data, and evidence. Objectively reflects upon the their own assertions.	

Contexts for consideration

Cultural/social Group, national, ethnic behavior/attitude	**Scientific** Conceptual, basic science, scientific method
Educational Schooling, formal training	**Economic** Trade, business concerns costs
Technological Applied science, engineering	**Ethical** Values
Political Organizational or governmental	**Personal Experience** Personal observation, informal character

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