ENGAGING HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH ARGUMENTS

NESA FALL TRAINING INSTITUTE
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“Can I call you back? We're having our favorite argument.”
Principles of a Structured Process Approach

1. Instruction allows students to develop procedures for how to compose in relation to particular tasks. The processes that students use to write argumentation essays, for example, are different from those used to write fictional narratives.

2. Because different tasks require different procedures, writing instruction cannot rely on general strategies. Rather than simply learning “prewriting” as an all-purpose strategy, students learn how to prewrite in connection with a specific genre – argument, for example, in which case small groups of students might interpret a data set or assume a number of competing points of view.

3. With writing instruction focused on specific tasks, students work toward clear and specific goals with a particular reader or community of readers in mind.

4. Even with clear and specific goals, thinking and writing are open-ended.

5. Composing is a highly social act rather than the work of an individual. Students discuss their compositions with peers at every stage of development. In a structured process approach, people learn to write by talking as well as by writing. The oral exchanges in which students try out their arguments and evaluate the arguments of others are rehearsals and opportunities to generate ideas for their written arguments.

6. The teacher identifies the criteria used to assess the writing. Students often help develop these evaluative criteria by discussing what they value in the writing they read.

7. The teacher scaffolds students’ learning of procedures by designing activities and providing materials that the students may manipulate. Instruction begins with simple, manageable aspects.

8. When possible, the teacher provides additional readerships for students’ writing, such as having the students post their writing…on a classroom wikispace or submit their writing to a contest, the school newspaper, the school literacy magazine, and so on.

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1 From Smagorinsky, Johannessen, Kahn, and McCann’s Teaching Students to Write Argument (Heinemann, 2012)
# The Inquiry Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURAL (HOW DO WE DO THIS?)</th>
<th>DECLARATIVE (WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE CONTENT? THE FORM? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBSTANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 From Smith, Wilhelm, Fredricksen's *Oh, Yeah?! Putting Argument to Work Both in School and Out* (Heinemann, 2012)

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At five-feet-six and a hundred and ten pounds, Queenie Volupides was a sight to behold and to clasp. When she tore out of the house after a tiff with her husband, Arthur, she went to the country club where there was a party going on. She left the club shortly before one in the morning and invited a few friends to follow her home and have one more drink. They got to the Volupides’ house about ten minutes after Queenie, who met them at the door and said, “Something terrible happened. Arthur slipped and fell on the stairs. He was coming down for another drink – he still had the glass in his hand – and I think he’s dead. Oh, my god—what shall I do?”

The autopsy conducted later concluded that Arthur had died from a wound on the head and confirmed that he had been drinking.

Can we believe what Queenie says?

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3 From George Hillocks’ Teaching Argument Writing, pg 16 -17.
“To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; credible we must be truthful.”

-Edward R. Murrow

Hazing: Who’s Responsible?4

If you wanted to play varsity basketball, you knew what was in store for you during summer practice: the initiation. At the end of preseason practice, each new team member was taken out by three or four more experienced teammates to be “toughened up.” Sometimes that took the form of being left alone in the woods in nothing but underwear. Sometimes it took the form of being made to eat the grisly kind of stuff people have to eat on “Survivor.” Sometimes it took the form of more physical things, like being hit with a paddle. And it seems, that the better the young player, the worse the situation. It might be tough, but the kids on the team say that it helps the team bond.

And it’s hard to argue with success: the team has made the state tournament each of the last 5 years. This year, however, the administration said that it was cracking down on hazing. They said they had a zero tolerance policy and that anyone who was caught hazing would be expelled. Even before the new policy, Devin, one of the team’s best players and the only senior on the team, had decided that this year, he wouldn’t participate, though he didn’t tell anyone. But the other lettermen thought it was up to them to continue the tradition.

Devin did go last year, though. He didn’t make the new players do anything, but he had to admit that he thought it was funny when the others made the new players run to the coach’s door wearing only their jockstraps and ring the doorbell. Devin was glad he wasn’t going this year. He was a bit worried about one of the kids who was initiated last year, a kid named Chris. Chris was something of a bully and he had been talking all year about what it was going to be like for the new kids once he had a chance to do the initiating. Chris said he wasn’t letting any policy stop him.

On the night of the initiation Devin got a call from the coach. The coach told Devin that he was going to kick one of the new players off the team because the kid had been found by police passed out in a drunken stupor. The coach said the kid was so drunk that he had to be taken to the hospital but that the kid would make it.

When Devin saw Chris the next day, Chris just smirked and said, “I guess some people just can’t hold their liquor.” Devin wondered about the other kids who were initiated. And he wondered if was just coincidence that the kid who had been found drunk played the same position that Chris did.

Who’s responsible for what happened to the new kid?

Devin___  Chris ___  The new kid___  The coach___  Other___

4 From Michael Smith, Jeff Wilhelm, and Jim Fredrickson’s Oh, Yeah? Putting Argument to Work Both in School and Out (Heinemann, 2012)
## Research Based Writing Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Writing Element</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Ultimate goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing strategies (.82)</strong></td>
<td>Explicitly and systematically teaching: planning, drafting, revising, and editing</td>
<td>-Generating ideas through brainstorming and discourse; completing a 4 square chart; naming claims and counterarguments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Collaborative Writing (.75)** | Involves peers writing as a team. | Tutor: Tutoree
Could involve feedback like peer response groups; co-writing a piece; collaborating on an electronic project | |
| **Specific Product Goals (.70) and study of models** | Provides students objectives to focus on particular aspects of their writing. | -Specifically address what students are going to be writing & knowing what the product looks like. This involves feedback that includes targeted goals for whole group, small group, or individuals.

Other goals include:
- counterarguments, rebutting counter arguments, warrants, types of appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)

Examples: rubrics, mentor text | |
| **Sentence combining (.50)** | An alternate approach to traditional grammar. It involves teaching students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence. | Examples: combining simple sentences into a compound sentence, combining sentences with an adjective or adverb, etc. (See Harry Nodens Image Grammar; William Strong’s Sentence Combining, or http://jonsenglishsite.info/Sentenccombo.htm; | |
| **Inquiry Activities (.32)** | Students examine the data to determine credibility and draw inferences; students determine if evidence is sufficient, accurate, and the best possible to support a claim. | Examples: could include scaffolding to examine mystery analysis (Hillocks); i-search paper, research, literary analysis using textual evidence to form and support an interpretation, or studying historical or scientific data to form an argument. | |

Based on the work of Annie Patterson and Stevi Quate with PEBC. Effective Writing Elements are based on *Writing Next*.  

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# Four-Square Argument Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your view...</th>
<th>Put yourself in someone else’s shoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the main points of your argument?</td>
<td>What are the main arguments of your parents/friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the counterarguments you will hear from your parents/friends?</td>
<td>What are the counter arguments you would present to your family/friends?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thanks to Kelly Gallagher, *Write Like This*
STRUCTURED CONTROVERSY

Preparation
1. Select a controversial issue, and craft it into a declarative statement. For instance, high school students should not hold a full time job.
2. Collect resources on both sides of the issue, or have students collect the resources.
3. Move students into groups of four. Then assign one pair of the group into Team A and the other Team B.

Position Presentation
4. Assign a position to each of the pairs: pro or con.
5. Each pair studies the resources and prepares a “best case” argument that they will present to the opposing team.
6. The pairs meet.
   a. Side A presents their argument using the strongest evidence possible.
   b. Side B summarizes A’s argument.
      i. Side A needs to determine if the summary is adequate.
      ii. If A isn’t satisfied with the summary, then B needs to redo their summary.
   c. Side B presents their argument.
      i. Side A summarizes the argument.
      ii. Side B determines if the argument is adequate. If so, move on to the next step.⁵

Arriving at Consensus
7. Have the students drop their roles.
8. Considering the arguments offered by both sides, students now work at arriving at consensus.
9. Together they write an argument utilizing the most convincing and relevant evidence.

Additional resources:
Structured controversy in science:
http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/sac/examples.html
Structured controversy in history:
http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21731

⁵ Alternative process: before arriving at consensus, have students switch pro and con roles, develop a new argument supporting the new position, and then presenting and summarizing.
THE 6 Cs OF MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring classroom community</th>
<th>Do students know each other well? Does the teacher know the students’ well? Are norms of respect alive and well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Are students adequately challenged to do important, relevant work? Is the level of challenge just right, not too easy or too hard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking in/checking out</td>
<td>Is the teacher regularly checking in on students to see what they understand? Are students checking out their learning against a clear standard and exemplars/mentors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Are students working effectively together? Do students know what effective collaboration looks and sounds like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Are students able to have voice over their work? Do students choose topics, positions, genres, or formats for their writing? Is there the appropriate level of autonomy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Is celebration a regular routine and ritual in the classroom? Are students recognized from their growth, their effort, and their quality of work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more resources on argument writing, check out [http://www.scoop.it/t/argument-writing](http://www.scoop.it/t/argument-writing)

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6 From McDermott and Quate’s book, ClockWatchers: Six Strategies for....

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Why evolution may favor irrationality
--Sharon Begley

Women are bad drivers, Saddam plotted 9/11, Obama was not born in America, and Iraq had weapons of mass destruction: to believe any of these requires suspending some of our critical-thinking faculties and succumbing instead to the kind of irrationality that drives the logically minded crazy. It helps, for instance, to use confirmation bias (seeing and recalling only evidence that supports your beliefs, so you can recount examples of women driving 40mph in the fast lane). It also helps not to test your beliefs against empirical data (where, exactly, are the WMD, after seven years of U.S. forces crawling all over Iraq?); not to subject beliefs to the plausibility test (faking Obama’s birth certificate would require how widespread a conspiracy?); and to be guided by emotion (the loss of thousands of American lives in Iraq feels more justified if we are avenging 9/11).

The fact that humans are subject to all these failures of rational thought seems to make no sense. Reason is supposed to be the highest achievement of the human mind, and the route to knowledge and wise decisions. But as psychologists have been documenting since the 1960s, humans are really, really bad at reasoning. It’s not just that we follow our emotions so often, in contexts from voting to ethics. No, even when we intend to deploy the full force of our rational faculties, we are often as ineffectual as eunuchs at an orgy.

An idea sweeping through the ranks of philosophers and cognitive scientists suggests why this is so. The reason we succumb to confirmation bias, why we are blind to counterexamples, and why we fall short of Cartesian logic in so many other ways is that these lapses have a purpose: they help us “devise and evaluate arguments that are intended to persuade other people,” says psychologist Hugo Mercier of the University of Pennsylvania. Failures of logic, he and cognitive scientist Dan Sperber of the Institut Jean Nicod in Paris propose, are in fact effective ploys to win arguments.

That puts poor reasoning in a completely different light. Arguing, after all, is less about seeking truth than about overcoming opposing views. So while confirmation bias, for instance, may mislead us about what’s true and real, by letting examples that support our view monopolize our memory and perception, it maximizes the artillery we wield when trying to convince someone that, say, he really is “late all the time.” Confirmation bias “has a straightforward explanation,” argues Mercier. “It contributes to effective argumentation.”
Another form of flawed reasoning shows up in logic puzzles. Consider the syllogism “No C are B; all B are A; therefore some A are not C.” Is it true? Fewer than 10 percent of us figure out that it is, says Mercier. One reason is that to evaluate its validity requires constructing counterexamples (finding an A that is a C, for instance). But finding counterexamples can, in general, weaken our confidence in our own arguments. Forms of reasoning that are good for solving logic puzzles but bad for winning arguments lost out, over the course of evolution, to those that help us be persuasive but cause us to struggle with abstract syllogisms. Interestingly, syllogisms are easier to evaluate in the form “No flying things are penguins; all penguins are birds; so some birds are not fliers.” That’s because we are more likely to argue about animals than A, B, and C.

The sort of faulty thinking called motivated reasoning also impedes our search for truth but advances arguments. For instance, we tend to look harder for flaws in a study when we don’t agree with its conclusions and are more critical of evidence that undermines our point of view. So birthers dismiss evidence offered by Hawai’ian officials that Obama’s birth certificate is real, and death-penalty foes are adept at finding flaws in studies that conclude capital punishment deters crime. While motivated reasoning may cloud our view of reality and keep us from objectively assessing evidence, Mercier says, by attuning us to flaws (real or not) in that evidence it prepares us to mount a scorched-earth strategy in arguments.

Even the sunk-cost fallacy, which has tripped up everyone from supporters of a losing war (“We’ve already lost so many lives, it would be a betrayal to withdraw”) to a losing stock (“I’ve held onto it this long”), reflects reasoning that turns its back on logic but wins arguments because the emotions it appeals to are universal. If Mercier and Sperber are right, the sunk-cost fallacy, confirmation bias, and the other forms of irrationality will be with us as long as humans like to argue. That is, forever.
The Miami Herald
Posted on Wed, Jun. 24, 2009

The world witnessed the killing of Neda

By LEONARD PITTS JR.

Maybe you were there when Neda died.

If you were, you saw a tragedy, of course -- a 26-year-old Iranian protester gunned down in the streets. But I am convinced you also saw the future -- a profound change in the way you and I will henceforth comprehend the world.

Many of us -- your humble correspondent prominent among them -- have been less than impressed with the ubiquity of social-networking websites. Spurred by reports of congresspersons who tweet banalities during a presidential speech, of cyber-bullying and flash mobs, we have regarded them as an engine of vanity and inanity, a mirror reflecting the utter vapidity of much of American life and culture.

In this judgment, we have been exactly right. And also exactly wrong.

This is not to say that social-networking media have not been guilty of dumbing down the discourse. But it is to admit the obvious lesson of recent days: They can facilitate higher purposes as well. For this reality, the cause of human freedom can be grateful.

After all, when angry Iranian voters took to the streets to protest a stolen presidential election last week and were clubbed and shot in retaliation, the events could easily have been a non-story in the rest of the world, given that Iran had placed heavy restrictions on foreign reporters. But what the theocratic regime had not counted on was that ordinary Iranians armed with camcorders, laptops and cellphones would document the unrest or that it would make its way to YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other web places where people connect.

International furor

If the world could not come to the outrage, they would bring the outrage to the world. The result has been an international furor that has caught Iran's government in an awkward dance of backpedaling (it now admits to election irregularities but claims they did not impact the outcome) and bluster (warnings that protesters face a harsh crackdown). The world did not force the regime to that point. Its people did. Neda did.
There is something . . . electrifying in watching Neda Agha-Soltan, blood-streaked and prostrate on the sidewalk, dying on camera and knowing this moment has not been framed and contextualized for you by a blow-dried network news reporter but is, rather, the grief cry of some unknown person with a cellphone camera who is desperate for you to see what is happening, desperate for you to know. It is a raw, person-to-person connection, and one is hard-pressed to imagine its equal in any other medium.

No, this is not the first time people have used social networks for this purpose, but it is certainly among the more dramatic and compelling.

As such, it presents a stark argument that the way we receive and process information is changing and even more fundamentally than it did 18 years ago when cable network news came of age in its coverage of the Gulf War. That moment represented the ascension of a new medium.

**A medium unto ourself**

This one recognizes that each of us has become a medium unto ourself, that each of us can now reach the rest of us. If tweeting banalities during a presidential address represents the nadir of that potential, if a cyberspace filled with unfactual "facts" that undermines reasoned and informed discourse represents its threat, then the death of Neda represents its promise: henceforth, you are not alone. We all stand witness, one for another.

Were I at the head of some repressive regime, I would watch with trepidation. Once upon a time, it was easy to impose the darkness necessary for evil deeds.

But in a world where people now have means of linking to each other beyond government strictures and structures, darkness is much harder to come by.

As you doubtless know if you were there when Neda died.
Prompt

In his famous “Vast Wasteland” address to the National Association of Broadcasters in May of 1961, Newton Minow, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, spoke about the power of television to influence the taste, knowledge, and opinions of its viewers around the world. Carefully read the following, paying close attention to how timely it is today, especially in light of the worldwide Internet.

Minow ended his speech warning that “The power of instantaneous sight and sound is without precedent in mankind’s history. This is an awesome power. It has limitless capabilities for good—and for evil. And it carries with it awesome responsibilities—responsibilities which you and [the government] cannot escape . . .”

Using your own knowledge and your own experiences or reading, write a carefully constructed essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Minow’s ideas.

The following are two sample student essays.

Student A

When Newton Minow ended his speech in May, 1961, he warned that, "The power of instantaneous sight and sound is without precedent ... and it has limitless capabilities for good and evil." I wholeheartedly agree with both Minow's position about modern technology, especially about how it relates to the Internet today and the responsibility facing its users.

Scene One—Pre-1980's. Big project. Long haul to the library, gazing despondently until your eyes resemble those of a zombie. Too many books, too little time, in short, just TOO much. Scene Two—mid-1990's. A two-foot walk to the computer, and Voila! All the information you’d ever need is at your fingertips. The Internet has truly revolutionized how people can obtain their information. Now, more than ever, it is easier and quicker to access all types of information from "Exactly what IS that fungus growing on my toe?" to "What are the names of every major river system in the continental United States?" The plethora of information enables people to almost cease the burdensome trip to the library and halt the overwhelming feelings of dread they find as they stare blankly at a stack of books. With the schedule of the typical American today, there’s hardly enough time to breathe, nevermind attempting to fit that hour-long trip to the library in the time frame. With the birth of the Internet, people with access to a computer can locate information faster than ever. But, how are we to judge the acceptability of that information?

The awesome power of these new technological inventions, such as computers and the Internet, do not always produce, however, grade-A products. People have begun to utilize the Internet to recruit new cult members, to teach people how to build
bombs, to teach hate. Basically, anything and everything evil can be posted on the "Net." Scene Three. Mr. Parker, a 75-year-old man from rural Indiana is in severe pain with abdominal cramps. Instead of attempting a two-hour drive to the nearest hospital, he makes it to his computer, logs on to the Internet in hopes of finding out what is wrong with him and in hopes of finding a quick remedy. Following the www's advice, he treats himself for stomach pain. Scene Four. Poor Mr. Parker dies hours later of acute appendicitis.

The Internet has the power to give birth to both good and evil. Today, as our society becomes more and more advanced, we rely more and more on anything that promises to make our busy lives less hectic. The easy way out, it seems, is always the right way in. Call it our American laziness, or call it our penchant to make learning easier, either way you slice it, the Internet has the potential for both positive and negative effects on society. Our responsibility is to find ways to exhibit our ability to distinguish between that which is beneficial and that which is destructive.

**Student B**

In his now famous address to the National Association of Broadcasters in May, 1961, FCC chairman Newton Minow spoke of the unprecedented power that those who control television's programming have over the American public, and how the mass media should be controlled and censored by the government, for it could wield awesome amounts of either good or evil. This assertion, that "television is a vast wasteland" rings true throughout the modern history of American society, especially in light of the global Internet.

There is no doubt that television has greatly altered the very psyche of Americans countless times since Minow's speech. From patriotic events like Neil Armstrong's first step on the moon and the "miracle on the ice" American victory over the Soviet Union in the 1980 Olympic hockey semi-finals, to historical events like Tienemmen Square, the assassination of JFK, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Television has provided Americans with triumph—the Persian Gulf War—and tragedy—the Columbine massacre. Most importantly, however, it is entertainment for the masses, and is affordable to the point that 95% of Americans watch at least once a week, and this is where it goes awry.

Americans, due to the overwhelming economic prosperity and technological revolution of the last forty years, have become slovenly. We can get almost anywhere in the world within 24 hours via airplane and expect to be waited on while flying there. We drive to work everyday. We have every type of cuisine imaginable less than twenty minutes away, contrasting with several countries which don't have food, period. We have secure incomes, capital growth, and all of the material comforts of the day. We have the Internet, the new mass media which allows for anyone to learn about anything at anytime, anywhere. We are inactive,
obese, materialistic, boring people, and television has adapted itself to fit our collective personas. Or possibly, we changed for television.

The nightly news is filled with images of death, suffering, pain, agony, misery, and other horrors that we gobble up because we as middle-class Americans have an infinitesimal chance of ever seeing it. The most popular TV shows are either irreverent comedies like "Seinfeld" and "Friends" with no actual cultural impact, or worse game shows like "Weakest Link" or "Survivor" that reward, in pride and prizes, ruthlessness, emotional warfare, and pointless competition that reinforces those attributes in the 30 million viewers they get every Monday and Wednesday night. The sensationalistic television programming caters to every evil desire we have, so it makes them grow inside us and want more, making us fervent to tune in next week for the next fantastic episode. God forbid they show a rerun.

Television has become a wasteland, and it's turning Western culture into one, too. One has to believe Newton Minow knew what he was talking about. In a classic quote from Catch-22, Joseph Heller writes that "There was a general consensus that the platitudes of Americanism were horsesh-t." I wholeheartedly agree.

For analysis of essays
go to: http://www.education.com/study-help/article/sample-student-essays4/?page=2