Argumentative Writing in All Subjects

Tucson Unified School District
Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development, & Assessment
Curriculum & Student Engagement: MODULE 3
Grades 6-12
August 28 and 29, 2014
Quick Write

“Beginning as early as the latter elementary years, schools should offer -- no, require -- age-appropriate cross-cultural studies that would, in effect, introduce us to us.”

-- Leonard Pitts

Jot down your thoughts to this claim. Clarify your response.
Outcomes

- Explain the key elements for argumentative writing
- Write a short argumentative essay with a claim, evidence and interpretation
- Identify at least two culturally responsive (CR) strategies that promote effective critical thinking among all learners, particularly African American and Latino students.
Agenda

- Critical Elements and Characteristics
- Strategies for Argumentation
- Application of Argumentative Writing
Norms

- Equity of Voice
- Active listening
- Respect for all perspectives
- Safety and confidentiality
- Respectful use of technology
1. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational

3. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
Basic Elements

- Claim
- Evidence
- Interpretation (Warrants)
- Counterclaim
- Rebuttal
Definitions

- **Claim**—The main point you will argue
- **Evidence**—Supporting facts, figures, statistics, and/or observations
- **Interpretation**—Logical explanation showing how the evidence supports the claim
- **Counterclaim**—A different claim negating the original
- **Rebuttal**—Evidence negating the counterclaim
Annotate the Text

- Highlight the claim. Put a C
- Underline the evidence. Put an E
- Circle the interpretation. Put an I
- Find the counterclaim. Put a CC
- Identify the rebuttal.
C—”Schools should offer...cross-cultural studies.”

E—”Unconscious biases have real impact...Michael Brown lying dead in the street...[yet] 7 white Hispanic teens questioned, released.”

I—”Black kids are strangers to benefit of the doubt.”

CC—”You might consider this Utopian.”

R—”A mile in another man’s shoes [may] inoculate you against bias.”
The requirements shift from writing opinions to writing **arguments**. Students need to make a **claim**. They must effectively introduce, support, and organize their claims and evidence. They must use **credible sources**, and they must maintain a **formal style**.

Now, students not only introduce, support, and organize their own claims, but they also **acknowledge alternate/opposing claims**. In addition, they must gather evidence by using **accurate**, credible sources. They need to maintain a formal style.

Students not only acknowledge alternate claims, but they also **distinguish** these claims from their own. The other requirements from grades 6–7 still stand.

Once they are in high school, students make more **precise claims** in an analysis of **substantive topics or texts**, using **valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence**. They develop claims and counterclaims **fairly**; they **anticipate the audience’s knowledge level and concerns**; and they maintain a formal style and **objective tone** while attending to **norms and conventions** of the discipline in which they are writing.

In addition to meeting the above requirements, students now make precise and **knowledgeable claims**; they establish the **significance** of their claims; they acknowledge the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, **values**, and **possible biases**; and they must use **varied syntax**.
“It’s clear from observing student writing in various contexts that although adolescents may intend to write an argument, they often see no need to present evidence or show why it is relevant; they merely express (usually vague) opinions.”

George Hillocks, Jr.
2 Strategies for Argumentation

- C-E-I graphic organizer for prewriting
- They Say / I Say template

V-257, p. 13
## C-E-I – Looking at Evidence 1st

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence (Facts, Examples, Definitions, Statistics, Expert Ideas)</th>
<th>Interpretation (What does the evidence mean? Why is it important?)</th>
<th>Claim (My conclusion that pulls the argument together)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Example:** From paragraph 2  
"Only a fraction of Americans have ever set foot in the state of Missouri, much less in Ferguson." | **Example:**  
The author implies that we need not concern ourselves about things that happen in places where we don’t reside. | **Example:**  
Small towns need to take care of their own business. |
They Say...I Say

2-Paragraph Template

The general argument made by author X in her/his work, ________________, is that _________________. More specifically, X argues that _________________. She/he writes, “______________.” In this passage, X is suggesting that ________________. In conclusion, X’s belief is that _________________.

In my view, X is wrong/right, because _______________. More specifically, I believe that _________________. For example, _______________. Although X might object that ________________, I maintain that ________________. Therefore, I conclude that _________________.

Graff and Birkenstein, 2012
Let’s Practice

Do you agree that “beginning in the latter elementary years, schools should… require age-appropriate cross-cultural studies that would… introduce us to us?”

- Referring to the Op Eds by Pitts and Geraghty, use the C-E-I chart or the They Say / I Say template.

- Write a mini argumentative essay supporting your stance.
Resources for Teaching Argumentative Writing

- Achieve the Core. ELA/Literacy for Grades 6-12. http://achievethecore.org/dashboard/300/search/1/1/0/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12 Lessons and Student Samples.


Resources for Teaching Argumentative Writing

  Shows students how to engage in argumentative writing; offers many useful templates

- Hillocks, Jr., George. *Teaching Argument Writing: Grades 6-12*. 
  Elements of argument writing and strategies for teaching it

- ProCon.org  http://www.procon.org/  Resources for critical thinking and argumentation across multiple content areas

- Smekens Education Solutions, Inc. “Persuasive vs. Argumentative Writing Samples.” 
  http://www.smekenseducation.com/argumentative-v-persuasive-w riting.html  
  2 samples showing difference between persuasive and argumentative essays

  Argument via debate
Resources for Teaching Argumentative Writing

- TC Reading and Writing Project “Teaching Students to Examine Craft Moves and Author’s Intent in Mentor Persuasive Essay in Order to Support Revision”
  [http://vimeo.com/album/2192388/video/56066196](http://vimeo.com/album/2192388/video/56066196) Fifteen-minute video of middle school teacher and students analyzing a mentor text for its persuasive/argumentative features as preparation for revising drafts

- The Online Writing Lab at Purdue. “Argumentative Essays”
  [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/) Description of argumentative essays and explanation of the structure

- Tucker, Caitlin. “Common Core Standards: Teaching Argument Writing”

- 2011 Utah ELA Core Academy. “The 7 C’s of Argumentation”
Outcomes

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EXIT SLIP:
What do you need to implement argumentative writing?

Write:
- 3 new things you learned today
- 2 concerns or questions
- 1 thing you will implement right away or change right away based on AZCCRS.