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Instructional Design

Composition Mini-Unit: Appeals and POV in Persuasive Writing

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RATIONALE

Students are constantly inundated with opinions from peers, parents, teachers, social media, the news, TV, movies, music, and so on. Also, teenagers by their very nature love to argue. They are learning to develop their own opinions and assert independence. On the other hand, experience has taught me that high school students tend to take things at face value, especially when the author is someone older or more educated than they. In my case, all of my students are at least ethnically Korean and currently live in Korea where Confucian culture still predominates. In the Confucian system, young people are trained to trust adults and figures of authority without question.

This interesting confluence of age and culture, combined with Common Core State Standards which identify persuasive writing as a key skill to be developed in ELA classes, is at the heart of this lesson sequence. It is designed as the introductive subunit to a persuasive writing unit in a high school composition course. The unit in its entirety is meant to help students learn to effectively write persuasive pieces. This subunit will help them to identify the key elements of effective persuasive writing and to evaluate the use of those elements by professional writers so that they are able to analyze the authors’ messages and be better equipped to write well themselves.

The first two lessons focus on the building blocks of persuasive writing: appeals and point of view (or bias). The pre-assessment provides the teacher with an idea of the students’ previous understanding, but also, by using Google Docs, provides a tool for analyzing responses and generating class discussion without putting any individual student on the spot. The second lesson gives students a chance to begin analyze their own points of view in anticipation of writing their own persuasive pieces. The subunit wraps up with an activity that analyzes how authors address counter claims. Since this skill is specifically targeted in the CCSS, I think it is fair to assume that my students are not the only ones who struggle with this. Their tendency is to take a firm stance on an issue and ignore the opposing argument, thinking that it will weaken their own. Of course, the opposite is true—failure to address counter claims actually makes any argument less effective as it opens one up to criticism from the opposition. By evaluating how professional authors address counter claims, students can be more confident in applying this skill to their own writing.

The model for this lesson is, by nature, constructivist, as the students are learning to interpret and there may be multiple answers and room for disagreement and debate. Also, while the basic concepts are taught by the teacher, students then are assigned to work in groups to analyze works to apply the concepts and develop understanding. The actual articles or essays for the subunit were selected to be relevant to the students, but since the unit is focused on concepts and skills, the actual readings can easily be swapped out with other works that are applicable to a different population or to a different time.

I have opted to follow a basic model in which a teacher introduces a skill, gives students an opportunity to develop the skill, and then those skills are followed up with practice and reflection on the topic and the process. In my opinion, this model is the most effective for an ELA classroom.

Finally, while this is designed for a high school composition course, as previously stated, it could also be modified to fit a standard ELA class for either middle or high school. Also, I have designed the lesson activities for a class of fewer than ten students, as per my current teaching situation. Some of the activities might need to be slightly modified to accommodate a larger class, as indicated in the lesson sequence.

OUTCOMES

*Students will*

* Read and interpret examples of persuasive writing including: Newspaper editorials, political speeches, advertisements, and reviews. (Knowledge, Comprehension)
* Define bias/Point of View and identify examples in professional examples (Knowledge, Comprehension)
* Explain three types of persuasive appeals: logical, emotional, and ethical/moral (comprehension)
* Categorize examples of persuasive techniques in a variety of persuasive pieces (analysis)
* Evaluate the effectiveness of persuasive techniques in a variety of persuasive pieces (evaluation)
* Identify claims and counterclaims in a variety of persuasive pieces (analyze)
* Analyze persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, from a variety of texts (analysis)
* Write persuasive combinations that use appropriate evidence to develop claims and counterclaims, and use a variety of persuasive techniques to defend a position or advertise a product. (synthesis)

PRE-ASSESSMENT

The Pre-assessment for this subunit will be conducted via Google Docs. Students will complete the survey at:

* <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v7tEGXXtRf3ObqO4FQPyp8fok-4Kw3aquAgo_uP5P6A/viewform?usp=send_form>

LESSON 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lesson Objective | * Explain three types of persuasive appeals: logical, emotional, and ethical/moral (comprehension) * Explain three types of persuasive appeals: logical, emotional, and ethical/moral (comprehension) * Read an example of a newspaper editorial and analyze the appeals used * Evaluate the effectiveness of persuasive techniques in a variety of persuasive pieces (evaluation) |
| Materials | * Link to the pre-assessment survey <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v7tEGXXtRf3ObqO4FQPyp8fok-4Kw3aquAgo_uP5P6A/viewform?usp=send_form> * Copies of Appeals Chart for students * Document camera * Computers & internet access * Copies of the Wall Street Journal article for close reading * Highlighters in three different colors (pink, yellow, blue) |
| Procedure | Introductory Activity   * Pre-assessment (10 minutes)   Developmental Activity   * Hand out matrix or have students copy in notes (as an alternative, this could be made into a Google Doc that students could then complete on their computers. I use a notebook system, so I prefer hard copy). * Ask: What are the three types of appeals? (Logical, emotional, moral). Briefly discuss. Have students create a symbol in their charts. **(5 minutes)** * Instruct students to brainstorm some ways authors appeal to these areas (in “What do authors use to make this appeal? “ row of charts) **(3 minutes)** * Time-Pair-Share… Pair students up and assign each students a letter, A or B. students will have 45 seconds apiece to share responses (use timer!). While their partner is sharing, students should be adding to their lists. **(2 minutes)** * Discussion—Use the analytical tools on Google Docs to chart student responses to the pre-assessment. Where was there disagreement? Why? Give students a chance to explain responses. Do any of the sentences fit more than one category? Why? **(10 minutes)** * Hand out copies of the article. This may be any Op-Ed piece on a current issue. I have chosen a recent article from The Wall Street Journal about student loan debt. * Use the document camera to model how to highlight different types of appeals. Work through the first 2-3 paragraphs of the article as a class. **(5 minutes)** * Have students read the remainder of the article out loud with a partner. As one student reads, the other will highlight types of appeals. Instruct students to stop after every other paragraph, discuss what the one partner highlighted and why, have the reader copy the highlighting, then switch roles. **(15 minutes)**   Wrap-Up/Exit Ticket   * Students will write a response to article 1:   Did the author use a balance of different types of appeals? How do you think this impacts his or her argument? Do you think he or she is right? Why or why not. **(5 minutes)**  Extension:   * Students will find a recent op-ed article online (suggest sites such as The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.) about a topic that interests them. They will read and highlight the article as done in class, and complete the Article 2 response in the handout. |

**Composition**

**Appeals and POV**

**Types of Appeals Chart:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **An Appeal to** | **Logic (yellow)** | **Emotions(pink)** | **Morals (blue)** |
| Draw a symbol |  |  |  |
| What do authors use to make this appeal? |  |  |  |
| Examples from Article 1  Title:  Source: |  |  |  |
| Article 1 Response:  Did the author use a balance of different types of appeals? How do you think this impacts his or her argument? Do you think he or she is right? Why or why not. | | | |
| Examples from Article 2  Title:  Source: |  |  |  |
| Article 2 Response:  Did the author use a balance of different types of appeals? How do you think this impacts his or her argument? Do you think he or she is right? Why or why not. | | | |

**Composition KEY**

**Appeals and POV**

**Types of Appeals Chart:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **An Appeal to** | **Logic (yellow)** | **Emotions(pink)** | **Morals (blue)** |
| Draw a symbol | (a head or something else logical) | (a heart, a tear, a stick family, etc.) | (a scale, a religious symbol) |
| What do authors use to make this appeal? | * facts * statistics * research * expert opinions * etc. | * feelings * loaded words—words with strong emotional connotations * e.g. family, love, child, | * what’s fair * legal or religious arguments * community or cultural values |
| Examples from Article 1  Title:  Source: |  |  |  |
| Article 1 Response:  Did the author use a balance of different types of appeals? How do you think this impacts his or her argument? Do you think he or she is right? Why or why not. | | | |
| Examples from Article 2  Title:  Source: |  |  |  |
| Article 2 Response:  Did the author use a balance of different types of appeals? How do you think this impacts his or her argument? Do you think he or she is right? Why or why not. | | | |

# ARTICLE #1

# How Student Debt Harms the Economy: In 2010-13, the percentage of younger people owning part of a new business dropped to 3.6% from 6.1%.

By Mitchell E. Daniels

Jan. 27, 2015 6:34 p.m. ET

To the growing catalog of damage caused by the decades-long run-up in the cost of higher education, we may have to add another casualty. On top of the harm high tuition and other charges are inflicting on young people, and the way their struggles are holding back today’s economy, we must add the worry that tomorrow’s economy will suffer, too.

Ever-escalating tuitions, especially in the past dozen years, have produced an explosion of associated debt, as students and their families resorted to borrowing to cover college prices that are the only major expense item in the economy that is growing faster than health care. According to the Federal Reserve, educational debt has shot past every other category—credit cards, auto loans, refinancings—except home mortgages, reaching some $1.3 trillion this year. Analyses in The Wall Street Journal and by Experian in 2014 show that 40 million people, roughly 70% of recent graduates, are now borrowers. In the class of 2014, the average borrower left with an average load of $33,000.

Even though the debt balloon is a fairly young phenomenon, several damaging results are already evident. Research from the Pew Research Center and Rutgers shows that today’s 20- and 30-year-olds are delaying marriage and delaying childbearing, both unhelpful trends from an economic and social standpoint. Between 25% and 40% of borrowers report postponing homes, cars and other major purchases. Half say that their student loans are increasing their risk of defaulting on other bills. Strikingly, 45% of graduates age 24 and under are living back at home or with a family member of some kind.

Now comes evidence that it’s not just consumer spending that these debts are denting, but also economic dynamism. A variety of indicators suggest that the debt burden is weighing on the engine that has always characterized American economic leadership—and the factor that many have assumed will overcome many structural and self-imposed challenges: our propensity to innovate and to invent new vehicles of wealth creation.

For instance, the U.S., despite its proud protestations about how creative and risk-taking it is, has fallen in multiple world-wide measures of entrepreneurship. A drop in such activity by the young is playing a part. From 2010 to 2013, the Journal reported on Jan. 2, the percentage of younger people who reported owning a part of a new business dropped to 3.6% from 6.1%. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of businesses started by someone under 34 fell to 22.7% from 26.4%. Common sense says that the seven in 10 graduates who enter the working world owing money may be part of this shift.

New data strengthens this hypothesis. Working with the Gallup Research organization, Purdue scholars devised last year’s Gallup-Purdue Index, the largest survey ever of U.S. college graduates. Among its findings: 26% of those who left school debt-free have started at least one business. Among those with debt of $40,000 or more, only 16% had done so.

Controlling the cost of higher education, and expanding access to its undeniable benefits, is first of all a social and moral obligation of those in a position to affect it. Purdue is midway through what is so far a three-year tuition freeze. Coupled with reductions in the costs of room and board and textbooks, these actions have brought down our total cost of attendance for each of the last two years, for the first time on record.

Aggressive counseling of students about the dangers of too much borrowing, and the alternatives available to them, has also helped, as total Purdue student borrowings have dropped by 18% since 2012. That represents some $40 million these superbly talented young engineers, computer scientists and other new workers will have to spend, or perhaps invest in their own dreams of enterprise. At Purdue, where we give students the ownership of any intellectual property they create, and support their attempts to give birth to new products and companies, a significant number of such dreams are likely to become real.

Today’s young Americans have a very legitimate beef with previous generations. A pathetically weak recovery has left millions of them unemployed, underemployed and with falling incomes, not the rising ones their predecessors could expect. And, never forget, they are already saddled with a lifetime per capita debt of some $700,000 (to date) to pay not for debts they incurred, but for those run up in entitlement programs such as Social Security, Social Security Disability and Medicare, explicitly designed to tax the young to subsidize their elders.

For future generations to enjoy the higher living standards America has always promised, nothing matters more than that the U.S. remains a land where miracles of innovation and entrepreneurship happen consistently. As a matter of generational fairness, and as an essential element of national economic success, the burden of high tuitions and student debt must be alleviated, and soon.

Mr. Daniels, the former governor of Indiana (2005-13), is the president of Purdue University.

Daniels, M. (2015, January 27). How Student Debt Harms the Economy. Retrieved April 1, 2015, from http://www.wsj.com/articles/mitchell-e-daniels-how-student-debt-harms-the-economy-1422401693

LESSON 2

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| Lesson Objective | * Define bias/Point of View and identify examples in professional examples (Knowledge, Comprehension) * Analyze persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, from a variety of texts (analysis) |
| Materials | * POV Window handouts or PPT * Yesterday’s handouts (in student notebooks) |
| Procedure | Introductory Activity   * What is your POV? Have students complete the POV Window for the average American (or Korean, or British…I will likely have all three nationalities in this class). If students are stuck, give them some examples (family, religion, etc.) **(5 minutes)**   Developmental Activity   * Project POV window on the white board. Have students come up and write responses on the board. (I will likely have fewer than 10 students, but with a larger class, you would probably have to find a way to limit the number of students who come to the board). Use responses to generate a discussion as a class. **(5 min)** * Define POV and bias (similar…POV is the “window” through which we see the world, our experiences and familial, cultural, historical context. Bias is how we apply that background to issues) **(5 min)** * Have students fill in their POV window. Ask them to be specific—they will not have to share if they don’t want to. **(5 min)** * As a class, discuss how their POV windows affect them. For example, how might a Korean-American student in an international school in Korea deal differently with the Sewol news last year than either a Korean student in Korean school or an American student in the US? (**10 min)** * Have students go back to yesterday’s article (it will be in their notebooks). With a partner, students will find the author information for the article and create a “POV window” for him/her. (**5 min)** * Once the window is complete, partners will work together to write a paragraph explaining how that person’s POV might impact his/her treatment of the issue (for example, the author of the WSJ article is the president of a major US university. Why might that background make him concerned about student loan debt). **(15 minutes)**   Wrap-Up   * Ask for a spokesperson from each group to share responses. If there are differences, discuss why. (5 min)   Extension   * For homework, students will write a POV window and impact statement for their chosen article |

Composition

Appeals and POV

WHAT IS YOUR POV?

Part I: What influences the average American/Korean/British teenager?

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Part I: What influences YOU? Be as specific as possible (you won’t have to share these with the class if you don’t want to!)

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LESSON 3

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| Lesson Objective | * Identify claims and counterclaims in a variety of persuasive pieces (analyze) |
| Materials | * Warm up PPT * Claims and Counterclaims handout * Copies of the essay, “Don’t Blame the Eater” * yellow and green highlighters |
| Procedure | Introductory Activity   * Warm up: Read the following statement carefully. What is the problem?   The evidence against man’s involvement in climate change is so comprehensive that there is now no debate on the issue.  **(5 minutes)**  Developmental Activity   * Time-Pair-Share with a partner, 1 minute each **(2 min)** * Discuss as a class. Does this statement seem absurd? Why? (it leaves no room for counterarguments/counter claims). * Ask: why is it important for an author of a persuasive piece to discuss counter claims? (students should be able to explain that it leaves the piece open to criticism as it is one-sided. A stronger argument is made by identifying counter claims and refuting them). **(3 minutes)** * Divide students into partnerships and assign each partner an A or B * Have students read the essay, “Don’t Blame the Eater” and highlight his claims (what’s his point?) in yellow and counterclaims in green and jot them down in their Claims and Counterclaims charts. **(10 min)** * Create two new groups (A and B) and have students compare what they highlighted (Again, I have very small classes. With a larger class, the teacher will have to divide the class differently or the groups will be too large). (**5 min)** * In the new groups, have students underline any “evidence” (appeals) the author uses to refute the counter claims and write into charts. **(5 min)** * Have students return to original partnerships and compare responses. **(5 min)** * Give students time to respond to the final question in the chart, then discuss as a class. Was he effective in refuting the counter claims? Why or why not? **(10 minutes)**   Wrap-Up/Exit Ticket   * Discuss the author of the essay. What do you know about him (there is a brief biography included)? How would his background, as per the essay and bio, impact his view on the issue of fast food and obesity?   Extension   * For homework, students will find another persuasive essay (speech or op-ed) on a topic that interests them, read it, and complete the claims/counterclaims handout for “Article 2” |

**Composition**

**Appeals and POV**

**Arguments and Counterarguments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Article 1  Title:  Source: |
| **What is the author’s main point? (Summarize in 2-3 sentences)** |  |
| **What counter claims does he/she mention?** |  |
| **How does she/he refute these counter-claims?** |  |
| **In your opinion, does the author effectively neutralize the counter-claims? Why or why not?** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Article 2  Title:  Source: |
| **What is the author’s main point? (Summarize in 2-3 sentences)** |  |
| **What counter claims does he/she mention?** |  |
| **How does she/he refute these counter-claims?** |  |
| **In your opinion, does the author effectively neutralize the counter-claims? Why or why not?** |  |

POST ASSESSMENT

* Students will locate two articles that take opposing views of an issue
* They will complete a comparison matrix chart and one paragraph POV statements for each.
* They will write a 1 page analysis that:
  + compares how author deals with the topic
  + evaluates the impact of the author’s background on his or her opinion, and
  + compares the overall effectiveness of each article. Who has the stronger argument and why?
  + The response will not:
    - analyze the topic
    - take a side on the issue
* The response will be evaluated using the KFS writing rubric (as found on the Curriculum Design)

References

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