Big Idea/Topic

The Power of Argument Writing: How to Build Confidence Using CCW Technique
Lesson Eight: Collaborative Writing: Body Paragraphs – Let’s Get to the Body of the Things

This is the eighth lesson of a 10-segment lesson series on the “Power of Argument Writing.” This lesson primarily works to introduce students to various methods/strategies they can use when writing body paragraphs, focusing on gathering evidence and constructing a counterclaim.

**Essential Questions:**
- How can I empower myself through my writing?
- How can I show growth in my argumentative writing proficiency this year?
- What is the “Color Coded Writing Technique” and how does it work? How can I make it work for me?

**NOTE:** This learning plan uses specific texts (e.g., written, performed, illustrated) as concrete examples of standards-based learning activities. These texts are not endorsements. The selection of classroom texts is completely a local decision and subject to local approval processes.

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| I can connect to something I know to help me understand something new. | Body paragraphs | • Argumentative Essay  
• Rubric for Scoring |
| I can use the color-coding technique for better understanding the structure of my writing. |  |  |
| I can research to find evidence to support my argument. |  |  |
| I can rebut a counterclaim. |  |  |
| I can craft body paragraphs with a topic sentence. |  |  |
| I can integrate relevant RDFQs into my body paragraphs. |  |  |
| I can connect the RDFQs to my claims in a way that strengthens my argument. |  |  |
| I can transition between paragraphs and ideas. |  |  |
### Standard Alignment

- **ELAGSE11W1** (Introduce precise claims and organize claims, counterclaims, reason, and evidence; develop claims and counterclaims; create cohesion; establish and maintain formal tone; provide appropriate conclusion)
- **ELAGSE1W4** (Produce clear and coherent writing.)
- **ELAGSE11W5** (Develop and strengthen writing through planning revising, editing, etc.)
- **ELAGSE11SL1** (Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions…building on others’ ideas.)
- **ELAGSE11SL3** (Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence/rhetoric.)
- **ELAGSE11L1** (Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing; use parallel structure.)
- **ELAGSE11L2** (Demonstrate the command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.)
- **ELAGSE11L3** (Make effective choices for meaning or style.)
Instructional Design

For more information regarding daily routine practices and/or additional information on the unit framework (including materials), please see the Power of Argument Writing Unit Overview.

Various evidence-based practices (EBPs) are identified throughout the lesson below; however, we believe good teaching can be eclectic, “...thoughtfully, intentionally taking some of the best of different teaching methodologies, while always holding onto some research-based, core beliefs, we can help our students flourish in ways that teaching only one way will not” (Roberts, 2018, p. 6). Always feel free to adapt the lesson to meet your professional needs with your specific student population. Ideas for student supports and enrichments can be found in the “Student Learning Supports” section.

This mini unit is written for synchronous distance learning or face-to-face learning that utilizes various technology resources. Everything listed as synchronous can be utilized with little to no change in a face-to-face (f2f) environment. However, guidance is provided for modifications, including ideas for supporting students who are learning asynchronously and those with little or no access to technology (unplugged / offline).

Materials
Teacher—virtual whiteboard (shared document), debatable prompts, Teacher Slide Deck
Students—reader & writer’s notebooks, digital or physical annotation tools, Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Eight Handout (Unplugged). Unplugged/offline students will need provided materials for research on selected topic in advance [books, print articles, etc.]

Engage Opening: [Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning [Moderate evidence] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].

Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Whole group warm-up: Reminder of what the colors mean. Using Pear Deck or alternative platform (even just slides), present the graphic for the body paragraph colors. Use this time to invite students to guess, based on the thesis statement, what the first body paragraph should be about. Students may call out answers or type on the Pear Deck slides, and when ready, the teacher can present students’ ideas.
Body Paragraphs

• Transition
• What is the topic sentence/Mini-claim #1?

• What is RDFQ 1?

• Explain it.

• What is RDFQ 1?

• Explain it.

Unplugged/Offline

• Have students read Part I of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Eight Handout (Unplugged)
• If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

Explore

Synchronous or Asynchronous

• Via live discussion or pre-recorded video, guide students through the process of evidence hunts.
• Evidence Hunts: This is when students do a little research. Provide links to possible sources based on your previously identified topic(s) and encourage students to find their own links to upload to a Padlet, the Pear Deck slide, or a shared document. This process is recursive; students will complete it three times to find two pieces of evidence for each body paragraph. You could allow 10-15 minutes per evidence hunt (30-45 minutes total). Come back together after each hunt, and have students post the evidence they found on a Padlet board or on the Pear Deck slides.
See the sample slides below regarding an evidence hunt on standardized tests. You can review the samples. However, the emphasis should be on slides based on your class-selected topics. Making it a live process with their identified topic will help to encourage them to dig for the evidence; however, explicitly modeling the process for identifying relevant pieces of evidence will help them to understand what they need to do.

Evidence Hunt!

Claim 1: Results of standardized tests can be misleading for many reasons.

Democracy Now. “How standardized tests were designed by racists and eugenicists.” *YouTube*, 13 Aug. 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwYiOrg5c8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwYiOrg5c8s)


Our Evidence:

- For 100 years tests have hidden a secret agenda to prove white superiority
- Teachers can teach to the test.
- Parents that support testing like them because their kids are high achievers-they like what they see.
- Stand. tests can measure the wrong things (literacy instead of numeracy on a word problem.)
- Analogy of the ruler being used to weigh an elephant.
- Students only get one chance to show what they know.
- Transcripts are a better measure of what kids know.
Body Paragraph 1

To start with, results of standardized tests can be misleading for many reasons. Standardized tests can measure the wrong things. For example, if a student is taking a math test and trying to solve a word problem but has reading difficulties, the test could actually be highlighting that lower reading skill instead of showcasing any math strengths. Furthermore, in an interview, author and professor Ibram Kembi reveals that for over 100 years, there has been a secret agenda behind standardized testing to attempt to prove white male supremacy. Standardized tests like the SAT, ACT, and other nationally normed exams are grounded at least in part by IQ tests developed by those eugenicists, making them inherently biased against minorities, women, and poor people.
Evidence Hunt!

Claim 2: **Standardized tests take up too much instructional time that is better used in other ways.**

**News station article with video**
https://www.kcra.com/article/study-reveals-how-much-time-students-spend-on-standardized-testing/6237214#

**Obama on standardized testing**
https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/are-children-taking-too-many-tests/3052273.html

**Board meeting clip**

**NC news article**
https://www.wbtv.com/2019/01/15/nc-superintendent-wants-remove-standardized-testing-schools-across-state/
Culling the Evidence

- We read and viewed each source and tried to find at least one piece of evidence (RDFQ) from each.
- We evaluated the evidence and selected 2 RDFQs for each paragraph.
Evidence Hunts for BP 2 and 3

Standardized tests take up too much time.
- 20-25 hours a year on testing
- 112 tests from pre-k to 12th
- Obama worked to reduce tests.
- Students can use testing time in more meaningful ways
- language, instrument, coding
- Teachers feel learning has to be too data-driven
- 78% of teachers and 76% of parents say there are too many tests.

Standardized tests harm students.
- Studies show individualized learning has greater impact than stand. testing
- Testing takes away kids’ desire to learn
- In past 10 years there has been an $80 million decrease in funding for enrichment programs.
- $20 million increase in testing
- “double scooping” academics vs enrichment
- “Most tested generation in history”
- Cuts in support services

[EBPs: Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle [Strong evidence]. (Graham, et al., 2016); Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning [Moderate evidence] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].

Unplugged/Offline
- Have students complete Part II of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Eight Handout (Unplugged)
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

Apply
Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Come together after round two and remind students that we need to include a counterclaim. Go back to the thesis graphic and look for evidence to support your counterclaim.
- For more information, see the sample slides below.
Counterclaim???

If we wanted to really bump up our argument, we would include a counterclaim, aka counter argument.

• Look back at pro/con list. What would you say is a pro worth addressing?

• My advice is to do this is the last body paragraph and then refute it with strong evidence!
Counterclaim

But what about....?

Rebuttal

I see that, but...

Students, draw anywhere on this slide!
Body Paragraphs

While many proponents of standardized testing claim they are valuable for collecting data, they do not address how harmful that data collection can be for students. A recent Harvard study reports that today’s students are the “most tested generation in history.” This has caused teenagers’ stress and anxiety levels to increase anywhere from 60-80%. Not only are kids more anxious and stressed, but also they have less access to support services due to increased testing. In the past ten years there has been an increase of over $20 million in testing, which has cut funding for counselors, nurses, social workers, and media specialists. This is a dangerous way to spend educational funds.
Unplugged/Offline

- Have students complete Part III of the Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Eight Handout (Unplugged).
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

[EBP: Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle [Strong evidence]. (Graham, et al., 2016)].

Reflect

Synchronous or Asynchronous

- Students should finish drafting paragraphs for homework, including evidence and a counterclaim. If using the online outline in the digital learning platform, teachers should be able to monitor students’ progress. Have students question how their understanding of research practices/counterclaim has impacted the strength of their body paragraphs.
EBP: Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning [Moderate evidence] (Kamil, et al., 2008).

Unplugged/Offline

- Have students complete Part IV of the **Power of Argument Writing: Lesson Eight Handout (Unplugged)**
- If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

### Evidence of Student Success

As this is the eighth lesson in the *Power of Argument Writing* unit, the formative assessment of students’ discussions and writings will serve as evidence of student success in this lesson.

Students’ participation in the lesson and submitted body paragraphs will inform instruction regarding readiness to proceed through process.

**Formative Assessment**

**“More of What’s Meaningful”: Formative Assessments** (Serravallo, 2013)

Formative assessment can occur in two ways:

- Conferring [Guidance: Tips for Conferring to Maximize Student Engage]
  
  **“Supercharge your Conferring: Focus on Goals, Strategies, and Feedback”** (Serravallo, 2018)
Student Learning Supports

At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies are designed to support students who are either struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

Supports/Scaffolding

- **Conceptual Processing**: Allow additional processing time. Review this content prior to the lesson occurring so that the student will have additional time to formulate responses. Summarize each lesson segment and keep summary accessible for students. Implement scaffolds identified below for various circumstances.
- **Language**: Prior to beginning of the lesson, explicitly teach vocabulary required to engage with the content. [EBP: Explicit vocabulary instruction [strong] (Kamil, et al., 2008)].
- **Visual-spatial Processing**: Provide opportunities for students to engage with visual representations and/or manipulatives (virtual or concrete) as they explore concepts of power and communicate ideas.
- **Organization**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments as necessary. Help students bookmark frequently utilized sites (such as Flipgrid) or how to group tabs in Chrome to assist with organization.
- **Memory**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments, as necessary.

Scaffolds

- If you are using Google classroom or Canvas, it is possible to upload a color copy of an outline for students to complete. This is great scaffolding for struggling learners.
- For additional practice with transitions [if students need it now that they are immersed body paragraphs], see this resource from https://www.mdc.edu/kendall/collegeprep/documents2/transitional%20words%20and%20phrasesrevised815.pdf

Acceleration/Extension

ELAGSE9-10W8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
• Discuss the importance of crafting ethos with students as a rhetorical feature. Then, have students embed citations into their body paragraphs to bolster their ethos.
• **Purdue’s OWL** can be an excellent resource to share!

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**Engaging Families**

Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families. At the secondary level, much of the communication occurs with the student serving as a liaison.

• Encourage students to have discussions with their families about what makes reliable evidence? What makes them believe a story they see on television or online? How does everyone determine credible facts?

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**References**


