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Special Focus: Using Sources

Introduction

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The new synthesis question offers teachers an opportunity to review and revisit how using sources and research in general manifests itself in our classrooms. This publication follows the inauguration of the new synthesis question on the AP° English Language & Composition Exam, where students are asked to demonstrate conversance with reading and writing about a variety of sources, including nonverbal text. Yet the new exam question is more a manifestation of how our information superhighway has influenced language arts classrooms. How do we fulfill the time-tested objectives of teaching language, literature and rhetoric, with the increasingly sophisticated types of sources out there? Is research a separate unit, or is it articulated in the same way we articulate areas such as argumentation, composition, or tone?

This publication presents a range of responses to these questions in an effort to provide English teachers new ideas and approaches toward using sources in the accelerated or standard-level English classroom. In the Mike Rose interview, conducted by College Board Adviser Renee Shea, Rose provides a realistic and instructive context for the task of using sources. Rose's insights reveal how research serves as both a window into the outside world as well as a mirror for our own lives, and Shea follows the interview with a classroom application of Rose's perspective. Next Gary Hatch, professor of rhetoric at Brigham Young University and Chief Reader for the AP English Language & Composition Exam, presents "Synthesis as Curriculum Design." Hatch approaches the synthesizing of sources as a natural offshoot of curricular units; he also provides clear insights into the various directions that synthesizing information can take the student. Complementing this piece is AP English Language & Composition instructor and AP Exam Table Leader John Brassil's piece entitled "Developing a Synthesis Question." In addition to providing explicit ideas about sources that engage each other, Brassil's work provides another sample synthesis question—on the nature of truth and memoir—that teachers may use.

AP English Language & Composition Exam Reader Ellen Ryan's "Footnotes and Endnotes: The Rhetoric of Documentation" explores not only the practical and legal aspects of correct documentation—also debuting as part of the multiple-choice portion of the exam in 2007—but also the rhetorical reasons we read and write with correct documentation. Such a skill, along with using sources in general, is acquired over many years of a secondary education; David Noskin describes the process of vertically articulating research in Adlai E. Stevenson High School, where he chaired a school-wide research committee. This alignment also includes those research experiences outside of the English classroom. Indeed, using sources is a skill that students in AP U.S. History have developed for many years, and Jason Stacy, a professor of American history and former AP U.S. History teacher, outlines the

fundamental similarities and differences between the synthesis question and AP U.S. History's document-based question (DBQ) prompt.

The publication concludes with "Synthesizing Visual Rhetoric," a piece devoted to the ways we not only read visual text but also incorporate such text into our written responses. I'd like to extend a special note of gratitude to all of our authors, as well as our advisory board: Kathleen Bell, Bernie Phelan, Renee Shea, and Brett Mayhan. All of these individuals have made integral contributions to this publication, and they enhance the work of English classrooms through their efforts.

Destabilizing the Writing Life: An Interview with Mike Rose

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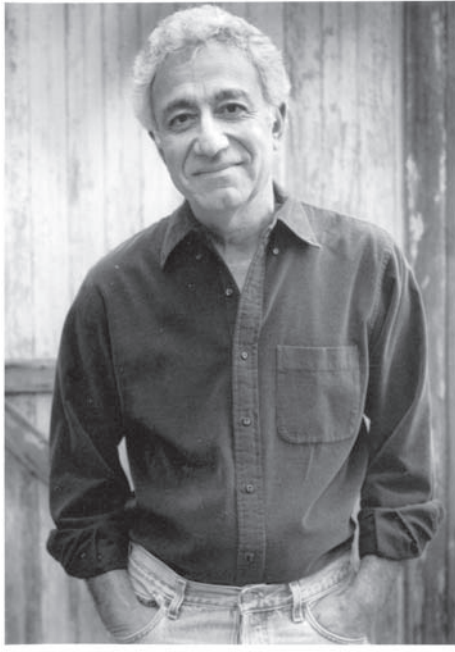
An accomplished writer and researcher, Mike Rose is currently a professor at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California in Los Angeles. He has published widely in both academic journals and the popular press and with both university presses and commercial publishing houses. His most recent book is a collection of his writings called An Open Language: Selected Writing on Literacy, Learning, and Opportunity *(2006). He is also the author of* The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker *(2004) and* Possible Lives: The Promise of Public Education in America, *which won the Grawemeyer Award in Education and the Commonwealth Club of California Award for Literary Excellence.* Lives on the Boundary *(1989) is an award-winning autobiography and study of remedial education. Dr. Rose describes his nonfiction as a "hybrid, this fused way of writing that retains the systematic inquiry that comes from the academic disciplines, but [is rendered] with details of people's lives, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces" (UCLA Magazine 2006). In the following interview, he discusses the dynamic of sources and audience.*

RS: When you are asked to write a piece for a newspaper or magazine or if you are targeting a specific journal, how deliberately does your thinking about the type and amount of sources enter into your decisions during the writing process?

MR: A course that I created in the Graduate School of Education, one that I teach every other year for doctoral students, is on writing the opinion piece and the popular magazine article. So the questions you're asking emerge all the time there. What I am trying to do is to give these students—who really want the research they do to make a difference in the world—a sense of the various types of audience out there and how you change not just your method of documentation but your voice, the language you use. Audience is foregrounded in these decisions.

When you're thinking about sources, you're really thinking about the question of authority. What do sources provide? What does documentation provide? Well, one thing is a kind of

assurance to the reader of your authority. But let's say you're writing an opinion piece where you can't have any footnotes; you can't embed in the text any kind of reference. The most you can do is to say something like, "As a recent report from the National Institute of Health suggested," or "As Thomas Ricks in his recent book *Fiasco: The American Adventure in Iraq* writes…." That's probably the most citation you would have; you can't rely on the traditional ways to establish your authority. So you have to establish that authority in other ways—by the persona you've created, the assurance with which you write. Of course, at the bottom of the piece, there'll be something that says who you are and where you're affiliated, which certainly helps establish your authority.

RS: One of the composition textbooks features three pieces by Deborah Tannen about "the argument culture," all making similar points. But one was for the *Washington Post* newspaper, another the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the third a linguistics journal. The way she used sources set very different tones. Is that your experience?

MR: When I'm limited in the statistics, sources, and quotations that I can cite, I have to ask myself what is the most powerful single statistic, the most powerful single source. Whereas I imagine in Deborah Tannen's linguistics article, she might cite five people to back up the points she makes. But in the newspaper opinion piece she'd be limited to one short and quite powerful quotation or one single statistic that really knocks it out of the park. So you're right: When I'm writing an opinion piece, I'm looking for that one powerful quotation or one single statistic or a really telling example or powerful metaphor or analogy to drive my point home.

But let me say one more thing. By the time I write that opinion piece, I've already done all the work that goes into the academic article. The key thing to remember is that the opinion piece is not just empty opinion but is drawing from a whole rich background of research and sources and inquiry—so the opinion piece is built on the same foundation of knowledge found in the academic article, but it is written for a different purpose with a very different set of constraints and conventions.

RS: In an interview for the UCLA magazine, you point out that you combine "systematic inquiry" with "details of people's lives." Do we teachers define "sources" too narrowly? How important is this "primary research" to college freshmen and advanced high school students who are learning the tools of the research trade? How do we get away from worrying that something is "too personal" or "just personal"?

MR: That's a really interesting question because, first of all, it is my bread and butter and the bread and butter of a lot of professions to be able to use sources from the traditional, established vehicles—from books, articles, manuscripts, and now off the Web, which brings up a whole other set of questions about authenticity and legitimacy. When we talk about "using sources" in a traditional disciplinary way, then we are talking about what most folks talk about in school—finding appropriate material in libraries or online, knowing the

mechanisms of quotation and how to weave quotations into your own writing. That's all supremely important. I think teachers realize that, and we come up with all sorts of ways to help our students learn how to do it. I certainly would not want to downplay or criticize the importance of that fundamental task, one central to most of the writing I've done in my life.

But in holding to that definition of sources, we can sometimes be too narrow and forget that when journalists, for example, talk about sources, they're talking about things people say. Or when anthropologists or social psychologists talk about their sources, they're talking about people doing things and saying things. In some of the work I've done where I've spent time in classrooms, at workplaces, or in communities observing what people do, interviewing them, trying to get a sense of how they make meaning out of the work they do, my sources become the things I observe and what they tell me. So, I think it would be terrific to start thinking about sources more broadly. There might be assignments where students go out and observe things going on in their community, in their church, where they live, or in their places of recreation. Their observations and their notes on their observations become a source. If they interview people in those places, their interview becomes a source. If students devise a questionnaire, then go out and do a survey in their neighborhood about a local political or community issue, then that survey becomes a source.

RS: The skill of working with this kind of primary research is not necessarily easy. I think about Clifford Geertz's concept of "thick description" as a research technique.

MR: You raise an important point here because I think we all agree about the kinds of skills that go into using traditional sources. I think we also, though, need to think hard about what skills are involved in good observing and good interviewing. If we do become more catholic and admit the legitimacy of this wider range of sources, what I would hate to see happen is that we use a rigorous set of definitions about sources in traditional texts and then are very loose about the use of other kinds of sources. Wouldn't it be terrific for teachers to have a conversation with their students about what makes for good observing, what makes for an interview that has a kind of weight to it, what gives a survey validity? The teacher could bring in materials from people who have done this kind of work and who talk about what it takes to observe or interview well. A powerful instructional conversation could emerge around using these other kinds of sources.

RS: How do we persuade students that sources are necessarily helpful, that an "informed argument" is the best argument? I remember last semester when Truman, one of my students, asked with real frustration, "Why do we have to use sources? Why can't I be an expert? If I'm writing on teen violence, and I'm a teen, aren't I an expert?" How can we persuade students to get out of this binary that either they're writing about what they believe *or* what other people believe?

MR: What I would do, first, is to acknowledge the legitimacy of Truman's experience: "You do know something about this, and I'm really curious about what you know and think, but,

Truman, do you believe that your experience in urban Baltimore is exactly the same as that of someone in rural Idaho? Or if we want to move beyond the U.S., would it be the same as someone living in Guadalajara? Or what about another time? Would you be comfortable saying that what you know and feel about teen violence today is the same as in your parents' generation?"

The second thing I would say—drawing on my own experience—is that you'd be surprised by the kind of power you can get if you're able to make a connection between your experience and something quite different. So maybe Truman could look at a scholarly study of teen violence, someone's historical account, or someone's memoir, like the wonderful *Fist Stick Knife Gun*, Geoffrey Canada's personal memoir about youth violence. Sometimes readers can be moved by a connection you make between something you've seen and experienced and what someone else has experienced or studied.

The third thing I would offer, again drawing on my own experience, is that you might be surprised by how your own understanding can be deepened or changed as you poke around and do other reading. In *The Mind at Work*, I wanted to write about my grandfather Tony who immigrated here from southern Italy and worked as a laborer in the Pennsylvania Railroad. He had a terrible injury there and was crippled for the rest of his life. I had heard these stories since I was a little boy, and I wanted to tell Tony's story, but I was also curious to see if there was another way to think about it. I found this remarkable book by historian David Montgomery called *The Fall of the House of Labor*, a study of labor from the mid-1800s to about 1930. There's a long chapter about the basic laborer during the period of time when my grandfather Tony was working at the Pennsylvania Railroad. The statistics Montgomery offered, the portraits of the migration routes, and the condition of the laborers were so amazingly helpful to me in understanding Tony's case in a larger economic and social context. That research helped me to tell his story, I hope, in its own right but also as part of a much larger picture.

RS: It seems that many students approach outside sources as a way to affirm what they already know or support a position they already hold—that is, with preconceived notions. So many of mine seem to write their own opinion on a topic and then kind of "inject" sources to appease a requirement. How do we help them approach sources as possibilities for expanding, deepening, or even changing their view, as you just described?

MR: We have to tell them that our opinions and our own experiences are very powerful, and we want to honor them. But we can get so committed to our own worldview that we can be blinkered by it. We might ask them to think back to some previous opinions about a person or activity that they held when they were two, three, or four years younger—opinions that have now changed. So, even though at any particular moment we hold to the absolute truth of an opinion, we can gain a lot of wisdom as well as rhetorical power—that is, the power to persuade—by going a little outside of our own box, even just to talk to other people to get other opinions. [Other sources] might be able to provide some ammunition

for your opinion, if that's what you want, but can also contribute to your own growth and development, can enrich what you say, or even get you to rethink your ideas.

RS: A question related to how we use sources has to do with style. On the book jacket of *The Mind at Work* I read a comment by Studs Terkel that began, "This is an eloquent—as well as scholarly—tribute to our working men and women." He seems to be making the point that it's a surprise for something to be both eloquent and scholarly. Do you think we are teaching our students to perpetuate this dissonance between what is well said and well researched? How can we avoid this dissonance in student work as well as our own?

MR: I think that a lot of academics and professionals would be shocked to find out what people in mass media think about disciplinary writing. I remember when I was writing my first trade book, *Lives on the Boundary*, I had an agent who was trying to sell it, and he told me this story. Talking to an editor, he said, "Well, this person is someone who has a really good reputation in his field," and the editor's response was, "Yeah, but can he write?" That said it all to me: You can have a bibliography as long as your arm, but the common perception is that the bibliography doesn't guarantee anything about the ability to write for an audience beyond a narrow one.

RS: *The Mind at Work* is a good example of complex, layered writing that is research based, yet the chapters proceed with the ease of a novel not only because of your fluent writing but also because the notes are at the back, available but not a part of the narrative. This practice is common for "commercial nonfiction" these days. Do you think we in the academic world could take a page from this book, so to speak, and leave all the endnotes and footnotes and notes of notes more in the background?

MR: Well, first, let me thank you for your characterization of my writing. What happens with a book like *The Mind at Work* is that the evidence is there, but it's put in the back. The fruits of the evidence are in the text but the support is in the back of the book so it doesn't stop the flow of the story.

But I want to open the lens here because there's a bigger point to be made. One of the foundational questions that you are asking through much of this interview is what happens to us as writers, thinkers, students, scholars, waitresses, plumbers, etc., as we start to open the borders in which we live? What happens as we look outside the immediacy of our own experience? For me as a writer this has happened again and again and not without a little bit of jarring as I have moved from one kind of writing to another to another. Before I wrote academic articles, I wrote poetry. But then as I moved to writing academic articles, I had to unlearn, modify some of what I had learned through the poetry. Then I moved to writing a textbook, and that brought with it a whole other set of audience requirements and conventions that made me think about writing in a different way. With *Lives on the Boundary*, I was trying yet a different kind of writing—for a trade publisher. There's been a continual destabilization in my writing life! It hasn't been without its moments of frustration,

but it has taught me a powerful, powerful lesson about audience. All the conventions that have to shift and change as you move from one kind of writing, from one audience to another—that's the big point. That's why I am such a fan of thinking with students about how to inch ourselves outside of our little, comfortable sphere.

That's the larger point. Let me now try to answer your question. *Lives on the Boundary* combines autobiography with accounts of teaching. And it's all geared toward a larger argument about how we think about intelligence, the way we think about achieving in school, and the way we understand failure. These are the framing questions that run throughout the personal, memoir-ish section and the teaching vignettes. I wanted to write the book in a way that would invite the reader into neighborhoods and classrooms, and the last thing you want to do at a dramatic moment is to stop the text with a parenthesis and somebody's name or a book title. It became very clear very earlier on that the editors did not want me footnoting things and inserting citations to support personal experience or [to provide] asides about, say, the psychology of learning. When I would make those moves, my automatic tendency was to provide the citation, the footnotes, or embed in the text a parenthesis with someone's name and page number. But of course the editor would have none of this because it disrupts the narrative flow. I learned different technical ways that you could provide scholarly support even though the format was very different. And folks who aren't interested [in the sources] can just read the book as a story.

RS: Do you think that ultimately a traditional research paper on a textbook topic such as gun control, euthanasia, or Internet privacy should have a central role in freshman composition or an advanced high school course designed on that model?

MR: I'm glad you asked this question at this point. What I just said about *Lives on the Boundary* is an illustration about what happens when we shift from one kind of writing to another. I don't by any means want to say that we should have our students write and document everything this way. Genre, audience, purpose—all these determine style, documentation, etc. So of course there could be a role for the traditional research paper—or, let me put it like this, a role for the kinds of things the traditional research paper is supposed to teach: finding and synthesizing sources, documenting them, learning the conventions of disciplinary inquiry, and so on. The big question, I suppose, is how well does the traditional research paper assignment achieve these goals? The answer, of course, depends on how it is taught and incorporated into the curriculum. And there are lots of teachers who have for some time been experimenting with alternative ways to achieve these goals: getting students to learn about research without the research paper.

RS: My final question is not exactly about sources, but the teacher in me can't resist asking about your high school teacher Jack McFarland. I remember him well from *Lives on the Boundary*, and I saw in the endnotes to *The Mind at Work* that he read the manuscript with pencil in hand! By this point, surely your education and publication record far exceed his. What does he offer you as a critic/reader of your work so that you continue turning to him?

MR: I can't tell you how powerful it was for me to see that handwriting on the manuscript of *The Mind at Work*. It meant so much on so many levels as well as the obvious one of getting that feedback because he has such a keen intellect.

But let me preface my response again with the broader picture. As a writer, I find it absolutely essential to get feedback from a range of readers. We have a tendency—it's just human, I guess—to stick within our own little community. That can be devastating for a writer, especially for someone like me trying to reach a broader readership. I don't want to be unpleasantly surprised by negative reactions because I didn't think in advance to cast my reader net wide enough. So, as an example, everyone from my Uncle Joe, to waitress friends of mine, to Jack McFarland, to some of the most noted educational psychologists in the world read that manuscript. And I value every one of those reactions equally because each is telling me something different. If we're really serious about this business of writing for more than one tight little circle, we need to get as wide a range of readers as possible.

Yet, what I'm going to say now is paradoxical. As you develop as a writer—whether of poetry, or journalism, or scholarly articles—you want to cast your net wide. But, on the other hand, you want to start to find readers who are sympathetic to what you are trying to do and will be honest with you. That's hugely important because you can get really confused if people reading your work want to completely rewrite it for you; they're using your piece of writing as a springboard to do their thing. You want a range of readers, but you want to zero in on those people who really get what you're trying to do, and within the boundaries of what you are trying to do are willing to give you legitimate criticism.

I went to Jack McFarland because, yes, of course, he knows me. He's also a sympathetic reader who's very smart. He's so learned in politics, history.… And he is, in fact, a terrific writer himself. The final thing is I trust him. He would tell me in a heartbeat if something's not working, if it's a big flop. He never had any reluctance to do that from high school on!

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Afterword

As I interviewed Mike Rose via telephone and e-mail over several weeks, I began thinking about his comments as well as his work and the research possibilities in the reality of my freshman composition classes. Specifically, in a unit on fast food, my English 101 students watched the documentary film *Super Size Me,* read excerpts from Eric Schlosser's book *Fast Food Nation*, and examined newspaper articles on current topics such as efforts to make school lunch programs more healthful and proposals to use zoning restrictions to limit the number of fast food restaurants in low-income neighborhoods. Although they were also doing some research on the Internet and in the library, I decided to offer the students an opportunity to do some of their own primary research.

As a group project, they did just that. Most wanted to survey peers about their knowledge and attitude about fast food choices (e.g., whether a Quarter Pounder with Cheese or the yogurt parfait with granola has more calories, what the "healthy choices" are at fast food restaurants, what the incidence of hypertension and diabetes is in the African American population versus the entire population). We agreed on a cohort of a minimum of 25 questions, they developed questionnaires that went through several drafts, and then they had to analyze the data and report it to class. The result was a series of excellent charts, tables, and graphs—visual displays of quantitative data—that reflected primary research on a group they really cared about: peers.

A few interviewed parents, siblings, friends, or professors. Again, we developed questions that did not lend themselves to yes/no responses, discussed how to arrange the interview (face-to-face versus email), and analyzed and brought the findings to present to the class, usually in a series of talking points that the group expanded on. One group actually visited and observed a McDonalds that they say is the "Starbucks model," with plug-ins for laptops and furniture to encourage staying a while rather than getting a burger on the run. They wrote descriptions of this environment and contrasted it with the usual McD's.

We talked about how to use this information in their own essays, particularly how to document it—and our conversation was as meaningful as Dr. Rose suggested it might be. We agreed that the interview could be quoted and documented using the name of one of the group members with the information following the MLA format in their textbooks (e.g., Williams, Jasmine. Interview with Eileen Hankinson on 3 November 2006 in Laurel, Maryland). We also discussed the fact that if this were a more formal paper, such as a thesis, a transcript of the interview would be included as an addendum. For the survey research, we looked up entries for unpublished research and developed a similar format using the name of one of the group members.

As with most new ventures, this one was not perfect, but it was a start. It added a dimension to my students' research that they reported on their reflection sheets was interesting and gave them more ownership of the research process. They paid attention to documentation and rather enjoyed seeing one another's names on the References page. In a recent talk with

a group of AP teachers about my efforts to include more primary and student-centered research, they suggested taking these ideas further with multigenre research papers and cited the book *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers* by Tom Romano (Boynton/Cook 2000) as a good resource. I look forward to further exploration of how to support students' understanding of using sources in broader contexts and settings than the traditional research paper, while at the same time learning the nuts and bolts of that academic genre. I think that when my students connected the readings and ideas of our class work with the experience of their peers, they were making a step toward what Mike Rose calls "the kind of power you can get if you're able to make a connection between your experience and something quite different." (RHS)

Synthesis as Curriculum Design

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The development of the new synthesis question type for the AP English Language & Composition Exam presents instructors with the difficult task of trying to incorporate instruction in "synthesis" into an already busy course schedule. At first glance, instructors may think of synthesis as a new unit that must be added somewhere in the course and that must culminate in a major assignment such as a research essay. But the skills required of students to succeed on the exam's synthesis question are not that much different from what most instructors are probably already teaching. So rather than seeing synthesis as a set of concepts and skills that must be added on to the content of the course, instructors could see synthesis as a natural extension of other skills measured by the exam, such as argumentation and analysis.

Synthesis is the process of bringing together information from various sources to form a new whole. The word comes from a Greek root that means "to put together." So whenever students draw evidence from various sources to support a point—whether it's their reading, observation, or experience—they are synthesizing. In the context of the AP English Language & Composition Exam, however, synthesis refers to engaging three or more sources, which could be written or visual texts, to develop a position on a particular topic. The exam also requires that students cite these sources accurately, a skill necessary whenever students are writing from sources.

Types of Synthesis

In their textbook *A Sequence for Academic Writing*, Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen distinguish between two types of synthesis: explanatory and argumentative. The explanatory synthesis aims to inform, to make sure that readers understand the parts of a topic. In writing the explanatory synthesis, writers bring together information from various sources to illustrate a subject (Behrens and Rosen 89). The explanatory synthesis manifests itself in encyclopedia articles, textbooks, informative brochures, museum guides, music performance notes, or reviews of research. In the popular media, an explanatory synthesis might result in a news analysis of a complex current issue or a documentary film. An argumentative synthesis, on the other hand, aims to persuade, to convince readers to adhere to a particular claim. In writing the argumentative synthesis, writers also bring together information from various sources, but in this type of synthesis some of the information is provided as evidence to support the claim, while other sources may be included to represent views that the writer rejects. According to Behrens and Rosen, the explanatory synthesis "emphasizes the sources themselves, not the writer's use of sources to persuade others" (128). They offer the following as an example of a thesis statement for an explanatory synthesis on the subject of computer-mediated communication (CMC):

> While many praise CMC's potential to bridge barriers and promote meaningful dialogue, others caution that CMC is fraught with dangers (128).

This example shows that in the explanatory synthesis, the writer still develops a position, but it is a position regarding what the sources as a whole say about the topic, not a position about which side the readers should believe. Here is an example of a thesis for an argumentative synthesis on the same subject of computer-mediated communication:

> CMC threatens to undermine human intimacy, connection, and ultimately community. (Behrens and Rosen 128).

This example shows that the writer is trying to persuade readers to adopt a particular belief about the harmful effects of computer-mediated communication. But this particular thesis would lead to a pretty one-sided argument. Here is a revision of that thesis that shows how opposing views can still be synthesized within an argument:

> Although many praise the potential of CMC to bridge barriers and promote meaningful dialogue, in practice CMC threatens to undermine human intimacy, connection, and ultimately community.

This particular thesis would naturally lead to an essay in which the author explains the views some hold about the possible benefits of CMC but then challenges these views by demonstrating how the potential harms outweigh the benefits.

Some topics lend themselves more readily to either an explanatory or argumentative synthesis, but students could actually develop both types of essays from the same source materials. Drawing upon several different sources, students could write an explanatory synthesis *informing* readers of the various positions people hold on a subject or could write an argumentative synthesis *persuading* readers that some of these positions are more valid than others.

Of the two sample synthesis questions provided to teachers prior to the 2007 exam, one question would lead to an argumentative synthesis, and one would lead to more naturally to an explanatory synthesis.[1] The first sample asks students to consider the effect of television on presidential elections since the 1960s. The prompt for this question asks them specifically to "defend, challenge, or qualify the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections." Students then need to engage at least three of the sources that follow this question to take a position on this subject. They could use some sources as evidence to support a claim, or they might use sources to illustrate views that they would challenge. In either case, they are synthesizing, because they are integrating other sources into their argument.

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1. These samples can both be downloaded from AP Central® (http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/51474.html).

The second sample synthesis question asks students to consider the effect of introducing new species into an ecosystem and the potential problem of invasive species. Although students do need to develop a position on this topic, the task required is not the same as "defending, challenging, or qualifying" a position. In this case, they are stepping back and informing their readers of the various issues they would need to consider in introducing a new species. This task requires more of an explanatory synthesis.

It's easy to see, however, that the tasks required by these two samples could easily be reversed. In writing about the effects of television on presidential elections, students could be asked to evaluate what issues the Federal Elections Commission would need to consider before developing a series of televised presidential debates. This task would call for more of an explanatory synthesis. And in writing about the potential effects of invasive species, students could be asked to defend, challenge, or qualify the position that the U.S. government should restrict the importation of species from other countries. This prompt would lead to an argumentative synthesis.

Argument

Although the synthesis question is new to the exam, the skills required for synthesis are closely related to argumentation and analysis, skills that are already well established in the AP English Language & Composition curriculum. One could, for example, see the argumentative synthesis as the traditional argument question with sources. On the traditional argument question, students might be asked to "develop a position" or "defend, challenge, or qualify" a position on a particular subject. In the argument question, students are typically asked to "use appropriate evidence" and are often encouraged to draw on their "reading, observation, or experience." The synthesis question may ask students to do the same kind of argumentative task but as part of that task to engage at least three of the sources provided as part of the question. Students could use these sources in many different ways: to support a claim, to represent various views, or to present arguments that they then challenge.

One way, then, to integrate synthesis into the existing course is to add sources to argument questions. The traditional argument question type usually includes a prompt to introduce students to an issue. Sometimes the prompt includes a brief quotation to get students thinking about the complexity of the issue. But ultimately, students are required to provide their own evidence. Instructors can move students from argument to argumentative synthesis, however, by providing students with some sources to work with. In fact, students could practice writing to the same prompt, initially without the sources and then a second time with some sources. Such an approach would help students learn the nuances of incorporating source material into an essay. For example, Form B of the 2006 AP Released Exam includes a question that asks students to take a position on compulsory voting, encouraging them to draw upon their "reading, experience, or observations."[2] Since there

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2. The questions from the 2006 operational exam and Form B can be downloaded from AP Central ((http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/exam/exam_questions/2001.html).

will continue to be such questions on the exam, it would be useful for students to write an argument in response to this question. But then teachers could provide students with several documents related to the same issue: statistics on voter turnout in the past several election cycles, a photograph of Iraqis voting in their national election in 2005, written arguments for and against compulsory voting, or a list from the CIA World Factbook of countries that have compulsory voting (https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/2123.html). Teachers could then ask students to reflect on the differences between responding to the same prompt with and without evidence.

Analysis

Since students also need to evaluate sources provided in the synthesis question, analysis provides another way into the synthesis question. I tell my students that "to analyze" means "to identify and explain." And I tell them that analysis is one of the most useful skills they will learn in college. In a geology class, they may be asked to identify the layers of the Earth's crust and explain how they relate to one another. In an anatomy class, they might identify the parts of the human body and explain how these parts work together. In a history class, students might need to identify and explain the causes of the United States war with Mexico. These are all examples of analysis. In my writing class, I ask them to identify and explain means of persuasion or the parts of an argument. An evaluation is simply an analysis with the force of judgment. To evaluate a source, students identify features of that source and then make a judgment about its usefulness as evidence based on that analysis.

One could, for example, evaluate sources according to the criteria recommended by many libraries: authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency, and coverage.

Authority: Is there an author? What qualifications or expertise does the author have?

Accuracy: Is the information in the source reliable? Can it be verified or corroborated with other reputable sources?

Objectivity: Is the source free from bias? Does it present more than one side of a complex issue?

Currency: Is the source recent enough to account for changes or developments in the subject area? (Currency is more important in some areas than others. Books on neuroscience are out of date even before they're in print. But books on ancient history might be current for many years.)

Coverage: Does the source adequately cover the range of issues related to the topic?[3]

Teachers can prepare students well to demonstrate their skills in analysis, argumentation, and synthesis by teaching them many ways to evaluate sources, but for the purposes of the synthesis question itself, it may help for teachers to remind students that the sources provided are not meant to be misleading or unreliable. There are no "red herrings" or

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3. New Mexico State University provides an example of how these criteria can be used to evaluate online sources (http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html).

illegitimate sources on the synthesis question, as there might be on the Document-Based Question (DBQ) for AP U.S. History. Every source on the synthesis question is meant to be useful, but some sources may be more useful than others for the particular position the student wants to develop. In teaching skills in evaluation for this particular question, teachers may want to encourage students to evaluate the usefulness of the source for their rhetorical purpose, reminding them that a source may be useful because it supports a position they want to take but it may also be useful because it represents a position they wish to challenge.

Comparison/Contrast

In many cases, analysis only involves one source, but there are examples from past exams of analysis questions that ask students to compare two sources. Since the synthesis question requires students to engage three sources, the comparison/contrast essay provides a step from analysis towards synthesis. Comparison/contrast is a sustained analysis of the similarities and differences between two texts. To avoid mere "side-by-side" description, students need to first identify those features or elements the two texts share. Then they need to select those features that are the most significant for their purpose. Finally, they need to examine each text in relation to these features and determine the extent to which these texts are similar or different. For example, Stephen Heller, a teacher at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Ill., recommended to me an activity where students compare the representations of African Americans in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "We Wear the Mask." This assignment could very easily lead into a synthesis essay on the status of blacks during the Great Depression. (The Library of Congress provides photographs and historical documents on this subject at http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/depwwii/race/race.html.) Even though a synthesis question derived from a literary topic may not reflect the kind of subject matter that often appears as an argument or analysis question on the exam, it would still provide students with opportunities to practice the skills within an existing curriculum.

Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation

Analysis also provides students with a way into synthesis because analysis, comparison/contrast, and synthesis all require students to engage with source material and develop skills in quotation, paraphrase, and summary. Analysis, like synthesis, also requires students to develop the difficult metalinguistic skills of orienting readers to a text and incorporating evidence from a text into a commentary on that text. (By "metalanguage" I mean language that refers to language *as* language.) For instance, if students are going to analyze Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream," they need to represent this absent text in such a way that readers can reconstruct in their minds the essential features of King's speech.

These skills should be familiar to students who have written analyses of literary works. In her article "Implicit and Explicit Documentation: Teaching Students to Write from Literature,"

Sylvia Sarrett describes how to use quotation, paraphrase, and summary to incorporate information from a literary source into an analysis of that source. (This article is found in the AP English Literature & Composition section of AP Central: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/45740.html.) She provides the following example from a student analysis of Fleur Adcock's poem, "The Man Who X-Rayed an Orange":

> As Adcock tells the tale of the man's attempt at superhuman strength, the final judgment comes over the level of success of the act. The man starves himself and reaches a plane of power in which he sees through and suspends an orange. The audience recognizes the accomplishment ["For surely he lacked nothing, / Neither power nor insight nor imagination." (29-30)], but to the Man "It was not enough" (20).] Though her audience certainly expresses a deep respect for the man, Adcock shares the opinion of the man himself and builds to the ultimate disappointment of the attempt to be a god-like creator. The last line of the poem, "His only fruit from the Tree of Life" (35), describing the "light-filled" (34) orange, shows the closest level a man can get to God. The actual orange, the "golden globe" (33) itself, represents the man's ultimately impossible attempt at reaching divinity.

In this example, the student is able to make general claims about the poem ("Adcock shares the opinion of the man himself and builds to the ultimate disappointment of the attempt to be a god-like creator") and then incorporates information from the literary source to illustrate these claims. The writer also uses metalanguage to direct the readers to the parts of the poem where this evidence can be found ("The last line of the poem . . . shows the closest level a man can get to God.").

The following example illustrates how a student might refer to a text while completing a rhetorical analysis. The text here is Ronald Reagan's "A Time for Choosing," a speech in support of the nomination of Barry Goldwater, delivered at the 1964 Republican National Convention:

> To begin his speech, Ronald Reagan provides statistics to illustrate the government's poor ability to manage its money. He points out the high tax rate at that time (around 33%) and states that no nation in history has survived a tax rate that high. To illustrate the carelessness of government, he then shows how government spends 17 million dollars more a day than it takes in. This example provides logical evidence to support his point and encourages a sense of outrage in his audience. Reagan then provides a second example to prove his point by focusing on the problems with programs set up to help farmers. He shows that farms that are part of various organized government plans have been less productive than other farms. For example, farms in the feed grain program spent 43 dollars for every one dollar bushel of corn. Reagan uses these examples to support Barry Goldwater's idea of less government control.
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> A few paragraphs later he tells about the hungry and needy in America. Through welfare, these people should receive enough money to be well off and out of poverty. However, out of the 4,600 dollars a year they should be receiving, they only get 600. This is another instance where Reagan uses statistics along with emotions to affect his readers.

In this passage, the student uses several strategies to orient readers to Reagan's speech. The phrases "To begin his speech…" and "a few paragraphs later" give the reader a general sense of where these examples come in the speech. And the writer uses summary and paraphrase to present Reagan's evidence. And most importantly, what distinguishes this passage from mere summary is the writer's comments on the rhetorical strategies Reagan is using. The student writes, "This example provides logical evidence to support his point and encourages a sense of outrage" and "This is another instance where Reagan uses statistics along with emotions to affect his readers." These comments show that the student is referring readers to the speech in order to explain how Reagan's rhetoric works.

The synthesis question on the exam requires similar techniques, but with three or more sources. A student might refer to a source as evidence to support an argument or as an example to illustrate a point. Or a student might refer to a source in order to illustrate the positions various people might take on an issue or to represent a position that the student would then challenge. In any case, the student needs to use the same kinds of skills in referring to a source using summary, paraphrase, and quotation. Here is an example of how these skills might be used in writing a response to the sample synthesis question on the effect of television on presidential elections:

> Much has been made of the Kennedy–Nixon debates as an example of the power of the media in an election. In his article for *The Encyclopedia of Television*, Angus Campbell cites this as an example of television's "novel contribution to the political life of the nation" (Source A). In his discussion of these debates, Louis Menand believes, along with historian Theodore White and even Kennedy himself, that television gave Kennedy the election (Source B). Menand repeats the familiar example of how people who saw the debate on television thought Kennedy had won, but those who had heard it on the radio thought that Nixon had won (Source B).

> However, despite the obvious impact of television on the 1960 election, the broadcasting of presidential debates has had less of an impact on elections since that time. As the table in Source C illustrates, during the difficult years of the Vietnam War, no one wanted to debate on television. And even when the televised debates resumed in 1976, the number of people watching debates steadily declined from a peak in 1980, even though the number of channels has expanded (Source C), as have the number of televisions and viewers. Perhaps there was something about the novelty of the first televised debates that made them more influential than they would be in our time when television has become more commonplace.

Conclusion

Without doubt, the introduction of the new synthesis question type will require teachers to reconsider how they teach their courses. One approach, of course, is to add a "research essay" unit (if there isn't one already) that focuses on how to find and evaluate sources and how to integrate them into an informative or argumentative research essay. This is certainly the curriculum model used in many first-year writing courses at universities throughout the country (including, until recently, my own). Because the synthesis question builds on skills of argument and analysis, a unit that focuses on synthesis would likely come later in

the school year, closer to the date of the actual exam. But by teaching "synthesis" as a set of discrete skills tied only to the research essay, teachers may be missing an opportunity to provide students with a more integrated view of writing. By introducing elements of synthesis into earlier units, such as units on argument or analysis, or by including synthesis in thematic units—even units that focus on literary works—teachers can help their students see that synthesis is a natural extension of skills students are already developing and not a discrete set of skills that must be added on top of what the course already requires.

Until recently, the first-year writing course at Brigham Young University had discrete units devoted to writing about personal experience, critical analysis, research writing, and argumentation, with little consideration of how the skills in these units might relate to one another. But recently, the first-year writing course has gone through a course redesign in which all of the assignments in the course are organized around a set of readings on one of four common topic areas: religion in America, globalization, the environment, and the mass media. (I taught a course organized around environmental issues related to water resources and water quality.) In addition to a rhetoric handbook, the course includes a topic-oriented reader from the *Opposing Viewpoints* series published by Greenhaven Press. Students write critical analyses of the sources in the reader, and some of these sources are then incorporated, along with sources from their own research, into an argumentative synthesis. Focusing on one topic area in this way requires students to explore issues in much greater depth and brings some unity to the skills taught in the course. Teachers of a high school AP course may not have as much freedom to devote an entire semester to one topic, and there is wisdom in exposing students to a lot of different subjects, but students may still benefit from readings that engage one another around common themes. By doing this, rather than being an additional burden to teachers and students, the skills required by the new synthesis question may actually provide students with a more integrated understanding of rhetoric and writing.

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Developing a Synthesis Question

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In my mentoring work with new AP English Language & Composition teachers as well as in my department, I've found that many colleagues enjoy building their own AP free-response questions. Writing "homegrown" prompts invites AP teachers to consider (and when necessary reconsider) not only the essentials of the AP English Language & Composition course as set forth in the AP English Course Description and made real on past examinations, but also the shape, thrust, and content of their own courses. We also come together as a community to exercise vital curriculum development skills and share our efforts.

Some teachers consider the lineup of essays, speeches, or letters in their courses, then select and surround passages from particular texts with the apparatus of a task related to rhetorical analysis. Other teachers consider the range of argumentative tasks associated with corresponding introductory college courses and fashion argument questions of their own. Teachers are not, of course, left entirely to their own devices, since the wide range of released free-response questions serve as models.

With the advent of significant examination changes involving source-based writing and image-based texts, nearly all AP teachers can improve their course by creating synthesis essay assignments for their students. Of course, there is no bulging inventory of released AP free-response synthesis questions. And while we will soon begin seeing released synthesis tasks on AP Central, they will appear at the rate of two each year.

Thus, new or experienced AP teachers face the prospect of building their own synthesis questions. How to proceed? Initially, take stock and consider instructional context, recognizing that success on synthesis questions involves many of the same academic skills and habits of mind that students are already developing in AP English Language & Composition. After examination changes were announced, my AP and Pre-AP teaching colleagues and I sat down to conduct such a review of our curriculum.

We recognized that synthesis questions would require our students to consider texts in light of each other. We knew that they already analyzed several pairs of texts, comparing/contrasting rhetorical features and arguments: Eudora Welty's nostalgic "The Little Store" was paired with E.B. White's subtle "Once More to the Lake"; William Hazlitt's enthusiastic account of a 19th-century boxing match was juxtaposed with Norman Mailer's harrowing report from ringside of the fatal Benny Paret–Emile Griffith fight; Annie Dillard's "Living Like Weasels" was set beside Henry David Thoreau's "Why I Went to the Woods." However, we also realized that synthesis activity required more complex moves than just generating

an account of the rhetorical differences between a pair of sources. We knew that synthesis questions asked our students to consider an array of 6–8 texts in light of each other, thus adding dimension and shape to their reading and writing activity. The synthesis conversation would involve the kind of calm, considerate regard that comes with listening to and thinking about many voices before making up and speaking one's own mind. Thus, beyond working with clusters of source texts associated with synthesis assignments, students would need to develop a patient approach, appreciating the multiple forms, viewpoints, and tactics presented in such source arrays, gathering perspective prior to arriving at their own positions and writing their own essays. Significantly, students would have to develop more contemplative habits, thoughtfully evaluating multiple sources and arguments before fashioning their own messages. We found we were already asking our students to go beyond writing researched reports by assigning source-based arguments around controversial issues. In teaching both rhetorical analysis and argument, we had previously developed study clusters involving teacher-selected texts that demanded close reading and evaluation of multiple sources associated with facets of a variety of subjects such as "beauty" and "war photography."

But while all these assignments require students to analyze and evaluate multiple texts before writing an informed essay of their own, they have extended time periods to address the assignments, not a mere 55 minutes as with the synthesis question on the AP exam. The on-demand reading and writing context is much more urgent; students need to develop "on-demand patience" as an academic habit. Questions offered in the classroom setting can, of course, vary available response time as students develop the skills associated with reading sources, engaging in discourse with each one, synthesizing several in support of their argument. We knew we would need to give students practice working with multiple texts over increasingly limited time periods, culminating in some 55-minute reading/writing sessions. As we gradually cut the available reading and writing time, we would have to limit the size and number of the sources.

Before writing my first synthesis question, I consulted with veteran AP teacher and former AP English Language & Composition Development Committee member Kathy Puhr, who suggested I look at the Hazelwood prompt from the 1990 examination. This prompt asks students to read six "items" carefully, "then write an essay presenting a logical argument for or against the Supreme Court decision" that settled a controversial question: "How much freedom…should (or must) student newspapers" have? Even though the Hazelwood task does not present students with multiple texts that would consume 15 minutes of reading time or offer an image-based text for consideration and analysis, it does ask students to consider multiple viewpoints on a controversial situation. Students have to patiently *read* and consider each of those viewpoints in light of each other before moving forward and writing their own essay in response to a prompt. Certainly, the Hazelwood prompt highlights key features seen in a unique free response-argument question that further suggests important elements of synthesis questions.

So what's involved in building a synthesis question?

Follow the AP Central Model.

Look at official models or released synthesis questions and identify the fundamentals of the form. Use wording that is consistent with, but not necessarily identical to, that found in these tasks. The task page will:

- Identify particular time constraints for student reading and writing;
- Offer general directions;
- Concoct an introduction to the subject, one that provides an appropriate context for the reading and thinking that precedes and accompanies writing;
- Present the assignment itself, the particular task that must be addressed through writing; and
- Refer to the sources, in presentation order.

The "Directions" portion of the task lays out instructions for reading and writing; it tells students what they have to do. Directions should convey to students the total number of sources that will inform their investigation into the question. They should remind students to read the various sources carefully, cite them accurately, and write their own essays purposefully. Finally, directions should emphasize that synthesis of sources involves making apt source references in service of their own essay's argument. Mere source summary won't do.

The introduction is the students' friend…or is it?

The "Introduction" segment of the task page creates a context for thinking about the "Assignment," allowing students to enter the ongoing discussion around a topic, issue, or problem. This important portion of the synthesis task helps your students approach the assignment by stimulating initial thoughts and providing a frame of reference. Whether the task is narrowly focused or more broad, the introduction should let students know something about what people are already talking and writing about. While this segment ought to be helpful, it can be dangerous; if too extensive or provocative it can distract students by posing questions or raising issues that command such heavy attention that they write in response to the introduction instead of the assignment.

Chicken or eggs: What comes first, the question or the sources?

While it appears orderly to first settle on a question, then look for worthy sources, that's not necessarily what ought to happen. Writing a question and selecting sources is an organic activity. The question and the sources interact, and the entire task is subject to revision throughout the development process. As the whole task takes shape, the assignment and its introduction can evolve during the search for and work with the sources. Although the question appears on the task page and thus precedes the sources, it doesn't necessarily come first in the making of a synthesis question. A good question can spring into being from one or two engaging sources just as a good question can spark a search for sources. When considering a subject area that might yield a viable question, the focus of the synthesis

cluster as suggested by sources and shaped by the particular task can evolve and often gain definition in the process.

Determine the character of the assignment.

The opening sentence of the "Assignment" portion of the task page almost always tells students to read the sources with care. The directions for writing follow. Will students be required to respond to a controversial issue by defending, qualifying, or disputing a particular claim associated with one side? Will they be asked to provide a definite viewpoint, a particular way of looking at an issue or other matter of importance? Will they need to evaluate sources from a particular perspective or with a particular audience in mind? Will they need to explain and identify relevant issues? It's also worthwhile to remember that a viable homegrown synthesis task can take advantage of regionally prominent issues or other more immediate concerns that are more controversial, topical, or narrowly focused than students are likely to encounter on the exam. For example, while the Educational Testing Service might consider a question about the ethics of stem cell research or the appropriateness of military activity as too hot for the general examination audience, such a question might offer a suitable instructional opportunity in an individual classroom.

Selecting sources.

Source collection is vital; expect to gather many more than you need. Sources need to be functional: varied, distinct, and certainly not redundant. Each selected source should represent a viable viewpoint on the question at hand and should not merely repeat the viewpoint of another source. There is no place for sources that distract. Since time is a factor for the student, sources need to be sufficiently succinct to allow for discourse to occur in the allotted time. Sources will differ in character while still affording quality opportunities for student engagement. When gathering possible sources, expect significant issues involving the character, balance, length, sequence, and chemistry of sources to arise. Teacher-selected sources ought to suggest the complex dimensions of most important matters and not simply present a lineup that conjures up "two sides" of an issue. Despite the polarization evident in popular media coverage, issues are rarely as simple as "it's either this or that" debates. Thus, the array of sources needs to be appropriately broad as well as balanced. Sources also should authentically challenge, perplex, and even surprise students. A good source may be sufficiently ambiguous to invite different interpretations. And different students will, of course, identify different portions of a source as important. While some sources may seem more accessible than others, each source should bring value to the array, and contribute unique, important elements to a virtual discussion involving the student and the other sources. Taken together, the sources you select will suggest a range and capture some tension around the issue at hand. Be prepared to discard sources that, while they may appeal to you, just do not fit or serve a function in the synthesis task.

In light of the foregoing, here are some comments on the construction and character of the finished synthesis essay task at the end of this article. The task is one I have administered

to my AP class during the first semester, following completion of the year's opening unit. The context of my students was foremost in my mind: As part of their movement from English courses that highlighted imaginative literature into one that features nonfiction, they had read two memoirs for summer reading (Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood* and Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life*). Subsequently they wrote their own purposeful "mini-memoir" modeled upon Donald M. Murray's autobiographical commentary "The Stranger in the Photo is Me." The question had its roots in a paper a student in one of my non-AP classes had written that wondered why James Frey had been roasted for "making up" details in connection with *A Million Little Pieces* while Tim O'Brien was celebrated for deliberately blurring the line between "happening truth" and "story truth" in *The Things They Carried*.

At one time, I had collected 16 potential sources, more than double the number of sources that appear in the task here. I cut sources for lots of different reasons. For example, I fell in love with a quotation from *When Memory Speaks* by Jill Ker Conway, but it was a bit long, and it echoed ideas that were prominent in the Patricia Hampl excerpt. While I lined up two pertinent comments by Annie Dillard, my students were too familiar with her work; one Dillard source passage came from a text used in class and would have certainly and immediately drawn many students into response.

The image-based texts considered for this prompt were almost all cartoons, although I did examine a photograph of Oprah berating James Frey. I nixed the Oprah–Frey photo, as it tilted the question too much toward Oprahland: I simply did not want to read clever references to Tom Cruise's couch exploits. The cartoon by Bill Amends was actually selected from a series of four on the subject. While I pondered using three of the four, I felt that, given the time constraints, students would either get too caught up in reading each of the cartoons or treat the three texts (which featured slightly different arguments) as one and fail to do justice to the analysis of one text.

In looking for balance and chemistry, I knew that the prominence of the Frey case and the content of his quasi-*mea culpa* statement propelled his text into the mix, but not in the leadoff position. I led with comments from William Zinsser due to the breadth of his remarks concerning the larger category of nonfiction—he does not specifically address memoir in the source. Despite the importance of The Smoking Gun's accusations, I was drawn to the weblog of Mark Roberts, an author who not only made his thinking on the Frey matter quite clear but also drew a powerful comparison. In addition, he raises a surprising issue: publisher ethics. Amend uses a child's activity to satirize the situation and get at the financial motivations; the cartoon source raises issues that are raised nowhere else in the array. Canada's Joseph Kertes offers a strong and particular defense of invention; in stark contrast, Patricia Hampl's final remarks imply that twisting or forgetting the truth is a dark act. Finally, Lee Gutkind shares some content knowledge with Kertes but uses that knowledge in connection with a different argument.

Finally, after settling upon the MLA format for the source entries I made final adjustments to the introductory information that precedes each source. In addition to including basic statements characterizing each source, I decided to provide students with some information concerning each author, thus generating additional context.

What's the Truth About Memoir?

Synthesis Essay
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Writing Time: 40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying seven sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction: Memoir remains a popular genre and form of nonfiction. Some memoirists, however, have been accused of misrepresenting certain events of their lives to suit their goals, be they aesthetic or commercial. To what extent, if at all, should a memoirist, in Russell Baker's words, be able to "invent the truth"? How absolute a label is "nonfiction"? What constitutes the standard for "truth" in a text that is presented to its potential audience as a memoir?

Assignment: Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that a memoirist's commitment to the truth is of absolute importance in memoir writing.**

Refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

Source A (Zinsser)
Source B (Frey)
Source C (Roberts)
Source D (Amends)
Source E (Kertes)
Source F (Hampl)
Source G (Gutkind)

Source A

Zinsser, William. *Writing About Your Life*. New York: Avalon Publishing Group Incorporated, Marlowe and Company, 2005.

The following is an excerpt from a book that provides guidance to writers of memoir. Its author is a noted writer and teacher of writing.

> When nonfiction is raised to an art, it's usually because the writer imposed on the facts an organizing shape or notion—an *idea*—that hadn't been attached to them before.

> I think of Tom Wolfe's book *The Right Stuff*, an account of the astronauts who pioneered America's space program. Wolfe's reporting throughout is solid; he hasn't embellished the facts. The value he adds is to attribute the astronaut's success to certain traits of character that he analyzes and defines as "the right stuff." That raises the book to an art, lifts it above other books about the space program, and gives us an intellectual mechanism for pondering what it takes to be an explorer and to leave the known world behind—a mystery as old as the Phoenicians. Beyond all that, Wolfe's postulation is enjoyable. It's fun to tag along on his ride.

Source B

Frey, James. "A Note to the Reader." Statement dated January 2006 and inserted into copies of *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey. New York: Anchor Books, 2005.

In January 2006, "The Smoking Gun" Web site documented what it called numerous instances of misrepresentation by James Frey in his bestselling memoir A Million Little Pieces. *The following statement is an excerpt from an insert included with copies of James Frey's book soon after widespread public comment developed over his alleged use of invented details in his memoir. His book offers a personal account of his rehabilitation from drug and alcohol abuse.*

> I believe, and I understand others strongly disagree, that memoir allows the writer to work from memory instead of from a strict journalistic or historical standard. It is about impression and feeling, about individual recollection. This memoir is a combination of facts about my life and certain embellishments. It is a subjective truth, altered by the mind of a recovering drug addict and alcoholic. Ultimately, it's a story, and one that I could not have written without having lived the life I lived.

> I never expected the book to become as successful as it has, to sell anywhere close to the number of copies it has sold. The experience has been shocking for me, incredibly humbling, and at times terrifying. Throughout this process, I have met thousands of readers, and heard from many thousands more, who were deeply affected by the book, and whose lives were changed by it. I am deeply sorry to any readers who I have disappointed and I hope these revelations will not alter their faith in the book's central message—that drug addiction and alcoholism can be overcome, and there is always a path to redemption if you fight to find one. Thirteen years after I left treatment, I'm still on the path, and I hope, ultimately, I'll get there.

Source C

Roberts, Rev. Dr. Mark D. "Oprah, James Frey, and the Question of Truth" markdroberts. com. 30 January 2006. <http://www.markdroberts.com/htmfiles/resources/oprahfrey.htm>.

The following is excerpted from an online article at the author's Web site. Rev. Dr. Mark D. Roberts is a pastor, author, speaker and blogger. Since 1991 he has been the senior pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church in Irvine, Calif. He has had several nonfiction books published by WaterBrook Press which, like A Million Little Pieces *publisher Anchor Books, is an affiliate of Random House, a major publisher.*

> [My] experience as a non-fiction writer working with a Random House company was almost completely different from that of James Frey when it comes to the matter of truthfulness. His publisher was willing to accept his account at face value, even when he claimed to have experienced things that were truly incredible and seemed to beg for additional evidence. But there was no fact checking, no corroboration. Just blind trust.
>
> When WaterBrook Press edited my first manuscript with them, it almost seemed to me as if I were guilty of falsehood until being proven innocent. For every single quotation in the book I was asked to submit, not only the precise bibliographical reference, but also a photocopy of the original or an Internet link. When I protested that I didn't have some of this information, I was encouraged to go to the library and get it, which I did. WaterBrook, I was told, wanted to make sure that every jot and tittle was correct, without exception. . . .
>
> Why, I wonder, would one subsidiary of Random House have such a high commitment to truthfulness, while another does not? I'm tempted to say that this can be explained, in part, by the Christian values of the WaterBrook staff. They do not think that truth is merely a matter of personal perception. Rather, they tend to think in more objective terms. . . .
>
> Yet it's not only Christian publishers that have high regard for the truth. Last year I was mentioned briefly in a *New Yorker* article on Hugh Hewitt, my friend and fellow blogger. I recall, I was included in one sentence of an article of several thousand words. Before that *New Yorker* story ran, I received a call from a magazine staff person. He was checking facts. He and I spent at least five minutes on the phone together. He asked about many things that never appeared in the article, concerning me and concerning Hugh. I mentioned that he was thorough. His answer was something like, "At the *New Yorker* we are committed to getting everything right." I was impressed.

Source D

Amend, Bill. "Foxtrot." Comic strip. *Portland Press Herald* 23 Jan. 2006: B6.

Foxtrot *is a syndicated comic strip that appears in daily and Sunday newspapers in North America.*
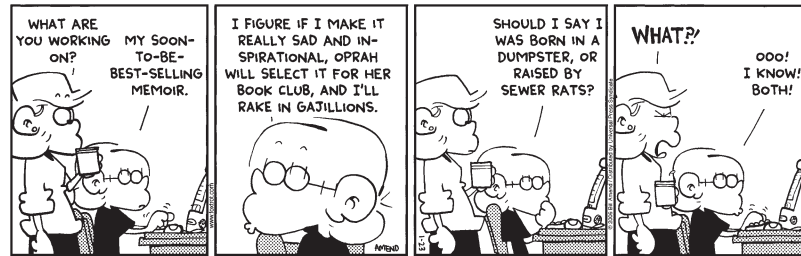
Source E

Kertes, Joseph. "The Truth About Lying." *The Walrus*, June 2006: 39–40.

The following is excerpted from an essay. Joseph Kertes is an author and the dean of the School of Creative and Performing Arts at Humber College in Toronto. The Walrus *is a monthly Canadian journal.*

As its name implies, memoir depends for its accuracy on memory. Tobias Wolff, author of the grim memoir *This Boy's Life*, writes, "Memory has its own story to tell. Memoirists are not writing proper history but rather what they remember of it, or, more accurately, what they can't forget."

So if James Frey did not tell an absolute truth but rather told his version of drug addiction and recovery, of hell and redemption, if he made up some details or embellished the facts, it was in the service of a higher truth about death and resurrection. It was his truth and therefore it was genuine. Otherwise, millions would not have believed him. After all, even after Frey was exposed, his book remained on the bestseller lists for months.

He may have been lying but he was not faking. There is a difference, and it is the salient difference. There is no trickery or fakery in the book, just the experience of a man who has endured much and lived to tell the tale—or his take on it. Before I picked up the book, I watched my daughter and wife—both discriminating readers—stay up late into the night to get through it. The book is compelling precisely because Frey knew what was required to fill out the narrative. Even the life of a drug addict must have slow bits, and Frey was smart enough to leave those bits out. Is that a form of deception?

If so, Frey is not the first memoirist to massage the facts to sculpt his narrative, and the company he keeps might surprise some purists. Henry David Thoreau, for instance, pretended in his great non-fiction work *Walden* that he slept under the stars and cherished the universe as it was created. He didn't. He slept in a house in Concord, often at his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson's place. But he needed *Walden's* non-fiction narrator to masquerade as a woodsman. Being at one with nature allowed the narrator to transcend the self more successfully than being a sleeper in a plush bed in town.

Source F

Hampl, Patricia. *I Could Tell You Stories.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

The following is excerpted from a book. Patricia Hampl is Regents' Professor of English at the University of Minnesota. I Could Tell You Stories *is her exploration of the genre of memoir.*

Memoir must be written because each of us must possess a created version of the past. Created: that is, real in the sense of the tangible, made of the stuff of a life lived in place and in history. And the downside of any created thing as well: We must live with a version that attaches us to our limitations, to the inevitable subjectivity of our points of view. We must acquiesce to our experience and our gift to transform experience into meaning. You tell me your story, I'll tell you mine.

If we refuse to do the work of creating this personal version of the past, someone else will do it for us. That is the scary political fact. "The struggle of man against power," Milan Kundera's hero in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* says "is the struggle of memory against forgetting." He refers to willful political forgetting, the habit of nations and those in power to deny the truth of memory in order to disarm moral and ethical power.

It is an efficient way of controlling masses of people. It doesn't even require much bloodshed, as long as people are entirely willing to give over their personal memories. Whole histories can be rewritten. The books which now seek to deny the existence of the Nazi death camps now fill a room.

What is remembered is what becomes reality. If we "forget" Auschwitz, if we "forget" My Lai, what then do we remember? And what is the purpose of our remembering? If we think of memory naively, as a simple story, logged like a documentary in the archive of the mind, we miss its beauty but also its function.

Source G

Gutkind, Lee, ed. "The Creative Nonfiction Police?" Introduction. *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2004. xix-xxxiii.

The following is excerpted from the editor's introduction to a collection of nonfiction pieces. Lee Gutkind is writing program professor at the University of Pittsburgh and a prominent promoter of "creative nonfiction," as founder of the journal Creative Nonfiction.

The ethical boundaries of the narrative are not . . . a new dilemma or debate. Henry David Thoreau lived for two years on Walden Pond while documenting only one year. Which part of the two years did he choose, and how often, in his painstaking process of revision, did he combine the two or three days—or even four weeks—into one? This technique that Thoreau evidently employed, by the way, is called "compression"—meaning that multiple incidents or situations are combined or compressed in order to flesh out the narrative—allowing a writer to build a more compelling, fully executed three-dimensional story.

Student Samples

Sample A does the best job of highlighting her own argument. Her argumentation is particularly cogent. She raises her position with questions at the end of her first paragraph then punctuates her view at the end of her essay, after seasoning her argument with apt references to the sources.

Sample B is workmanlike but subtle. He uses the sources in order to find his way through the question toward his argument, which does not really emerge until the last two paragraphs of his response.

Sample C's author knows what she thinks, and musters support for her views throughout her response. Her essay lurches a bit, and her language choices are not always ideal, but she certainly conveys her thinking. Her strongest moments, however, come at the end with an illustration drawn from a film's message.

SAMPLE A

How much embellishment can a memoir contain and still represent the genre of memoir? At what point does a memoir become a work of fiction? Some writers argue that anything but the truth and the whole truth is a lie. But in all honesty, few readers could care about the author's breakfast choices; dull recollections of insignificant past events are not much more enticing. Besides, it is the character of what one remembers of an event that directs him towards one path instead of another and alters who he becomes. Isn't conveying the essence of the truth the purpose of most memoirs? Shouldn't an author illustrate how he or she has arrived in a place and use those engaging illustrations to convey a message, advice, or warning?

Most writers agree that there is some point where a memoir with excessive exaggeration or embellishment becomes a fictional story, perhaps even one that could effectively convey the intended message. For example, in one panel of Bill Amends's comic *Foxtrot*, a character in the process of writing a "memoir" asks which story line would be most helpful in "raking in gazillions": being "born in a dumpster, or raised by sewer rats?" when, obviously, neither optional memory is close to the truth.   When large events and ideas such as this are entirely fabricated, the book crosses the line into the fiction category (Source D). The debate, however, is over how many and what sort of exaggerated or omitted details would constitute such a switch.

James Frey, author of the bestselling memoir *A Million Little Pieces*, was heavily criticized for his use of invented details. In a statement, he expresses the hope that "these revelations will not alter [the reader's] faith in the book's central message" (Source B). One could argue that some details need not be entirely accurate as long as the basic story line is based upon truth and any embellishments aid in conveying the memoir's message, in this case encouraging the idea that "drug addiction and alcoholism can be overcome" (Frey). In addition, as Joseph Kertes comments about Frey, "even the life of a drug addict must have slow bits, and Frey was smart enough to leave those out" (Source E). What reader cares about every mundane detail of life? Such a memoir may turn off readers entirely out of sheer dullness, and no message, even an important one, can reach anyone if it is not published or read. Even Henry David Thoreau knew this; according to Lee Gutkind, professor at the University of Pittsburgh, in *Walden*, Thoreau only wrote of one year of his two-year stay at Walden Pond, leaving out mundane details and combining the events of multiple days into one, a technique called "compression" (Source G).

Memoirs are not supposed to be history books but, like history books, they need to adhere to standards of truth even as they interpret what events or occurrences are meaningful, significant, or even just entertaining. In memoir, the author writes what he remembers to be important, regardless of whether or not his recollections are entirely accurate. Memoirs are

supposed to be a purposeful, engaging *version* of one's life as thoughtfully *recalled*, not just a compilation or invented, exaggerated rendition of events. After all, "what is remembered becomes reality" (Hampl). For this reason, the memories should be "true enough" so that the author's message conveys truths that are significant.

SAMPLE B

Among the different genres of writing, the memoir is the one in which the ideal of truth is least clear. The memoir sits somewhere between texts like historical documents and laboratory reports, in which the whole, objective truth is expected, and the various fictions, which are held to a much less rigorous standard. There is much disagreement about how accurate the facts of a memoirist must be, and how much he or she is "allowed" to bend the truth. All agree that to consider a text a memoir, there must be a palpable degree of "absolute" truth—the controversy is over how much.

The root of memoir is memory, which suggests the degree of truth that should be expected. We all have memories which are vague, ones which are clear, ones which are in one of the categories but seem as if they should be in the other. Sometimes memories change as we look back on them, sometimes we see that they were just wrong. This allows a degree of flexibility with the truth, but it must be remembered that it *is* still the truth. It may have different views of emphasis from another's truth, but truth it remains.

Obviously, a memoir does not adhere to the exact historical truth—that is the realm of autobiography. What makes a memoir special is its ability to mold the truth which springs from its subjective viewpoint. Looking back, memoirists often attach meaning or emphasis to things which didn't have them before—this is what makes memoir more than a history (Zinsser). Events which, at the time they took place, are not thought of as "prominent" can grow more important in the revised memory. The writer "[imposes] on the facts an organizing shape or notion—an idea— that hadn't been attached to them before." (Zinsser). This is not deception—this is analysis and evaluation.

Similarly, bringing dull memories from a life together is not lying or even deception. Combining memories is called "compression" and has been a staple of memoir for years—it allows what may or may not have been an interesting experience to be worth reading (Gutkind). Such a tactic allows us to draw some value from the work, perhaps something we could not have discovered had it not been used.

What you may not do, in a properly conceived memoir, is make up facts to suit your purpose. Thoreau and Frey are memoirists who, in trying to transfer their message, left the realm of memoir by fabricating the facts (Kertes). False memories that are simply remembered incorrectly are on thing, but "retrospective" memories that never existed are another.

When writers become so distracted by their intent that they fail to preserve the truth in their work, then the work ceases to be a memoir. These works deserve a more accurate label: historical fiction.

SAMPLE C

William Zinsser says in Source A "When nonfiction is raised to an art, it's usually because the writer imposed on the facts an organizing shape or notion—an *idea*—that hadn't been

attached to them before." In other words, if a story is to have meaning and significance it must have an underlying theme. This theme is absent in biographies and history books because of the need to adhere to the strict truth, which results in merely laying out the cold, hard facts and leaving the theme to self-interpretation or even nonexistent. However, in a memoir (which is generally known as "creative nonfiction"), an underlying theme is a necessity, and therefore, the truth may or may not be stretched to fit this theme.

Source D shows what is clearly fictional writing. There is a difference between embellishing the truth and blatant lying. It is highly improbable that the character writing the memoir was actually born in a dumpster or raised by sewer rats. This is not a memoir. What James Frey did in his book *A Million Little Pieces* was nowhere near as drastic as what the boy in *Foxtrot* is trying to do. As Kertes writes about Frey in Source E, "He may have been lying but he was not faking."

Memoirs like James Frey's deserve credibility because they "transform experience into meaning," as is said in Source F. Memoirists write "in the service of a higher truth" (Source E) in order to convey meaning to their life experiences when they embellish the truth. Sometimes, it may even be necessary. For example, in Tobias Wolff's memoir *This Boy's Life*, I am certain that not every word spoken in dialogue actually happened. However, it makes the story more believable and interesting, to keep the reader tuned in. After all, isn't it critical to keep the reader interested when writing a story? It's not selfishness, it's good writing skills.

However, if the reader is constantly thinking, "There's no way this happened," then the writer has gone too far. The writer might as well take up inspirational fiction.

All in all, the most important element of a memoir is not to stick to black-and-white, 100% fact, but to convey a message. The complete truth of a memoir is merely a technicality.

In closing, I want to mention the story related in the movie *Big Fish*. The main character, whose life is recounted through flashbacks, uses real events in his life but dresses them up into wild tales that are barely believable. His son resents these "lies" but after his father's death he views then realizes that parts of his father's stories are from fact. The son's eventual insight into the "truth" of his father's "lies" gives the whole story a mystical and inspirational tone. And isn't the effect of a story what stays with the audience longest?

Footnotes and Endnotes: The Rhetoric of Documentation

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Is documentation the Gordian knot designed to perplex and bewilder even the most diligent of our students? It would seem so at times. As English teachers we must cut away and reframe what sometimes appears to be an arbitrary system of archaic rules. We must instead endeavor to present documentation as a foundation upon which scholarship is built and also connect the rhetoric of documentation to the work our students already do in their classrooms. Each day we ask our students to annotate, to read closely, to infer and to make connections. Our students develop rhetorical strength as they converse with the text and in its margins. From that proving ground, they will be ready to engage in a more formalized type of conversation—a conversation that requires precision and knowledge of sources, as well as scholarly application. If we then go beyond the concrete functions of citation and "call upon students to enter into conversation with scholarship on an issue" (Jolliffe), our students will begin to understand the dynamic nature of documentation and how it functions in the rhetorical mode.

A conversation about conversation will open many doors. Of course, we must direct our students' attention toward the different types of documentation they may encounter with nonfiction literature, while also showing them how and why MLA is the preferred format in the humanities classroom. But we also want them to develop an understanding of how the more subtle, workmanlike aspects of scholarship contribute to meaning and purpose in writing. We will show our students how scrupulous scholarship establishes and strengthens a writer's ethos; conversely, scholarship that is less exacting will not only lessen the ethos of the author but will also weaken the logos of the argument. And, lastly, we will show our students how footnotes and endnotes function as an organic rhetoric of documentation as well as serve as the "foot soldiers" in the bulwark of serious scholarship.

Beyond this, we might also acknowledge the sometimes confusing gray areas in citation, as well as illuminate the differences among those discourses that require documentation and those that do not. Our conversation in the classroom must also incorporate the ways in which a conversation fails. When, how, and why does that happen? Our students must be instructed in ways to avoid those failures and their subsequent consequences. Students must learn what we know: that inaccurate or incomplete documentation results in shoddy scholarship, weakened ethos or logos, or worst of all, plagiarism. The discussion may then become a lesson in the ethical component of accurate documentation. Embedded in the footnotes is a "Give credit where credit is due" ethos. But how do we explain this to students when we have national dialogue that may suggest otherwise?

As an example, we might discuss with our students the recent controversy generated with the release of Bob Dylan's album *Modern Times.* Lines from the Civil War poet Henry Timrod were used in some of his lyrics, yet no reference was made to Timrod in Dylan's liner notes; some believe he did not "give credit where credit is due." We might use Bob Dylan's research methodology as a red flag for our students: "I crammed my head full of as much of this stuff as I could stand and locked it away in my mind out of sight, left it alone" (Rich). Many educators would be less than forgiving with students than the singer-songwriter Suzanne Vega is with Dylan. Vega, in an op-ed contribution to the *New York Times*, defends him, while acknowledging a difference in what's required from an academic as opposed to a creative artist: "But I am trying to imagine a Bob Dylan album with footnotes, asterisks, ibid.'s and nifty little anecdotes about the origins of each song. It's not going to happen. He's never pretended to be an academic, or even a nice guy."

Popular culture aside, some of us, like Suzanne Vega, may be willing to give Dylan poetic license, although it's hard to argue, due to Timrod's relative obscurity (himself a minor footnote of American literature), that Dylan might have assumed his audience would consider his Timrod references to be literary allusions. Perhaps it goes without saying that creative artists may be held to a less exacting standard than are academic scholars (not withstanding the litigation over the melodic correspondences between "My Sweet Lord" and "She's So Fine"). Vega also says, "It's modern to use history as a kind of closet in which we can rummage around, pull influences from different eras, and make them into collages or pastiches." But perhaps, as Vega suggests, citation concerns may be irrelevant when one is referencing literature, lyrics, or other creative endeavors that are not logos-dependent. And perhaps this is where the distinction can be made. Dylan is not establishing his logos through his lyrics. Those inclined to listen to Dylan will most likely be looking for something other than the elements of rhetoric. Therefore, it may be instructive to teach our students about not only the kind of writing that necessitates precise rigor in citation but also about writing that does not. However, it is always best to avoid conflagration or even the mere spark of controversy when it comes to the ethical dimensions of who said what. Our interests may instead be best served by, "When in doubt, cite."

Once we have established a baseline for when and where documentation must be used, we can then begin to instruct students in how documentation operates as an organic, functioning rhetoric among academics. As teachers we need to consider how citations occur in works of scholarly importance as a cause, not as an effect, and how their "form follows function." Kathleen Bell, in her book *Developing Arguments,* says, "In argument, the audience expects the writer to be a knowledgeable source of information. Using documentation demonstrates the extent of your knowledge, builds the reader's trust in your opinions, and increases your ethical appeal. Accurate documentation of sources is the backbone of your logical and ethical appeal" (402). How does a writer demonstrate the extent of his or her knowledge? Diligent research is a primary persuasive element in the development of argument; the manifestation of that diligence is in the documentation.

However, we must also understand documentation as something more than rhetorical elements that will contribute to the persuasive nature of argument. It is through careful scrutiny of citations that we see the building blocks of academic discourse; indeed, they are supporting structures upon which all intellectual inquiry begins, continues, and does not end. If the question is worthy of inquiry it will be open to ongoing consideration, interpretation, and revision. Through the study of footnotes and endnotes students will learn that scholarship engages in thought that traverses the boundaries of time. Through the study of footnotes and endnotes students begin to understand the prismatic nature of intellectual inquiry, narrow enough to allow illumination but open-ended enough to spread light onto other possibilities, intellectual or otherwise.

A place to start our study of the rhetoric of documentation might be with the practice multiple-choice questions from the College Board Web site. We will examine the questions to determine the skill areas students will need to answer documentation questions, and then we will look at a secondary-source sample passage with citations that teachers can use in the classroom with their students. We will see how a close reading of a citation leads to understanding the nature of academic discourse, something students need to learn in order to become effective researchers as well as writers. Through analysis of footnotes students will discover that substance, as well as style, is essential in the interpretation as well as the development of the nonfiction essay. In order to persuade, as well as to meet the requirements of scholarship, invention must coexist in near equal measure with well-conducted and thorough research in the nonfiction essay.

There are three sample multiple-choice questions that address the footnoted nonfiction passage "taken from a contemporary book about engineering and technology." A brief glance at footnotes 1, 2, and 3 is instructive in pointing students toward an understanding of what constitutes reliable sources of information. Let's look at the first multiple-choice question, which asks students to interpret footnote 2 in the passage. The corresponding question follows the footnote.

Footnote 2:

"Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition," *Engineering* (26 May 1876), p. 427, cited by Kasson, see note 1 above.

48. Which of the following is an accurate reading of footnote 2?
   A. An article by John F. Kasson appears on page 427 of *Engineering*.
   B. "Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition" was published in New York.
   C. The article "Engineering" can be found on page 427 of "Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition."
   D. "Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition" is an article published in the May 26, 1876, issue of *Engineering*.
   E. *Engineering* is an article cited by John F. Kasson.

These choices ask the students to be deliberate in their recognition of specific elements of documentation. Students must also understand that "cited by" does not mean authorship. Choice A is incorrect because the article is "cited by" Kasson, not written by Kasson. Choice B is incorrect because the citation does not refer to the place of publication. Choice C is incorrect because *Engineering* is not an article, it is a publication. We know this because *Engineering* does not have quotation marks in the footnote but instead is italicized. Choice E is incorrect because, once again, *Engineering* is a publication, not an article. This is a literal question that expects students to know that there is a difference between a publication and an article. It also expects students to know that those differences will be conveyed through italics and quotation marks. Answer D correctly identifies "Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition" as an article, as well as *Engineering* as a publication, which can be presumed through the use of the word "issue" as well as the use of italicized text.

The next documentation question is question #52, which refers to footnote 4.

Footnote 4:

Richard Guy Wilson, Dianne H. Pilgrim, Dickran Tashjian, *The Machine Age in America 1918–1941* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), p. 85.

52. The purpose of footnote 4 is to inform the reader that the quotation in line 49

    A. has been attributed to three different designers

    B. was first cited in 1918

    C. was the inspiration for an exhibit at The Brooklyn Museum

    D. is in an article in *The Machine Age in America 1918–1941* written by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

    E. appears in a book written by Wilson, Pilgrim, and Tashjian and published in 1986

Once again the student is expected to know the difference between an article and a publication, this time a book. Choices A, B, and C can quickly be eliminated. Choice D refers to *The Machine Age in America 1918–1941* as an article, which is incorrect. It also incorrectly assigns authorship to Harry N. Abrams. Students again must know that italics are used to identify a publication. They must also understand that an "article" is something found in a publication, whether it be a magazine, a book, a journal, or other publication.

The last documentation multiple-choice question is #55, which requires a holistic understanding of the footnotes. It also directs the reader into the rhetorical features of documentation.

55. Taken as a whole, the footnotes suggest that

    A. the author of the passage wants the text to present highly technical material

    B. the author of the passage relies heavily on Kasson's book

  C. very little was written about the topic of machinery and ornamentation prior to 1976

  D. engineering magazines are an essential source for technical writers

  E. except in rare cases, it is best to use the latest published work when documenting an idea or concept

Choice A can be eliminated because we know from introductory remarks that "the passage is taken from a contemporary book about engineering and technology." Because the topic is highly technical we can presume the text will present highly technical material with or without the footnotes. Choice C is incorrect because the footnotes clearly indicate that much was written about the topic prior to 1976. Choice D is too limited in its scope. Engineering magazines are secondary sources and therefore would not necessarily be "essential" sources. Choice E is incorrect because one would most likely want the latest published work if it involves research, but it is not necessary when documenting an idea or concept. Three of the four footnotes reference Kasson; therefore, choice B is the correct answer.

We can see from question #55 that documentation must be understood as a rhetorical action. Footnotes and endnotes direct us into the ongoing academic discourse about a topic worthy of discussion. Students will be led to understand that the author of the passage did not solely invent his content but instead relied upon other sources of information. These sources can be used, perhaps, to support his own argument regarding the theories of changes in the aesthetics of machine design. The elements of invention coexist with, and are bolstered by, these evidentiary footnotes. Even before a reader is directed to the footnote, the other voices are noted in the text of the passage itself when the author refers to "a writer in the British periodical *Engineering*" and also to "an exasperated critic for *Scientific American*." The author has "demonstrated the extent of his knowledge," both in the passage and in the corresponding footnotes. The result of these references reaffirms the author's diligent scholarship, adding to the ethos as well as the logos of his argument.

This is what is in the "deep nature" of footnotes and endnotes. It is necessary for students to understand the dialogic nature of academic discourse and how that dialogue propels inquiry in an ongoing process meant to refine and delineate the finer points of intellectual inquiry. As mentioned in the passage, "form follows function" in machine design. We need to teach our students that "form follows function" as well in the design of documentation. Footnotes and endnotes are more than the mechanical features of documentation. We must present opportunities for our students to learn how to engage with documentation as academic discourse.

Let's consider how a pairing of primary and secondary sources can be used in the classroom to support a student's understanding of how academic discourse is generated. One essay I use in my classroom when I teach the Declaration of Independence is "The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence" by Stephen E. Lucas. The endnotes for this essay are voluminous and instructive. To pair a primary source document, the Declaration

of Independence, with a secondary source, "The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence" teaches students, at its most basic level, the fundamental difference between a primary and a secondary source. But it also goes well beyond that into a much deeper understanding about the rhetorical functions of documentation. The essay in its entirety may be found at the National Archives Web site (www.archives.gov). We will look at two excerpts from the essay as well as the accompanying footnotes. We will then consider the ways in which these footnotes contribute to the rhetoric of documentation.

In this essay, the author argues that the Declaration is a document not only of immense historical significance, but also one that should be considered a work of literary significance as well. This excerpt is followed by corresponding footnotes.

Excerpt # 1 from "The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence."

The Declaration of Independence is perhaps the most masterfully written state paper of Western civilization. As Moses Coit Tyler noted almost a century ago, no assessment of it can be complete without taking into account its extraordinary merits as a work of political prose style. Although many scholars have recognized those merits, there are surprisingly few sustained studies of the stylistic artistry of the Declaration. (1) This essay seeks to illuminate that artistry by probing the discourse microscopically—at the level of the sentence, phrase, word, and syllable. By approaching the Declaration in this way, we can shed light both on its literary qualities and on its rhetorical power as a work designed to convince a "candid world" that the American colonies were justified in seeking to establish themselves as an independent nation. (2)

The text of the Declaration can be divided into five sections—the introduction, the preamble, the indictment of George III, the denunciation of the British people, and the conclusion. Because space does not permit us to explicate each section in full detail, we shall select features from each that illustrate the stylistic artistry of the Declaration as a whole. (3)

NOTES

c 1989 by Stephen E. Lucas
Stephen E. Lucas is professor of communication arts at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI. The present essay is derived from a more comprehensive study, "Justifying America: The Declaration of Independence as a Rhetorical Document," in Thomas W. Benson, ed., *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (1989).

(1) Moses Coit Tyler, *The Literary History of the American Revolution* (1897), vol. 1, p. 520. The best known study of the style of the Declaration is Carl Becker's "The Literary Qualities of the Declaration," in his *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (1922), pp. 194–223. Useful also are Robert Ginsberg, "The Declaration as Rhetoric," in Robert Ginsberg, ed., *A Casebook on the Declaration of Independence* (1967), pp. 219–244; Edwin Gittleman, "Jefferson's 'slave Narrative': The Declaration of Independence as a Literary Text," Early American Literature 8 (1974): 239–256; and James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (1984), 231–240. Although most books on the Declaration contain a chapter on the "style" of the document, those chapters are typically

historical accounts of the evolution of the text from its drafting by Thomas Jefferson through its approval by the Continental Congress or philosophical speculations about the meaning of its famous passages.

(2) As Garry Wills demonstrates in *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (1978), there are two Declarations of Independence: the version drafted by Thomas Jefferson and that revised and adopted on July 4, 1776, by the Continental Congress sitting as a committee of the whole. Altogether Congress deleted 630 words from Jefferson's draft and added 146, producing a final text of 1,322 words (excluding the title). Although Jefferson complained that Congress "mangled" his manuscript and altered it "much for the worse," the judgment of posterity, stated well by Becker, is that "Congress left the Declaration better than it found it" (*Declaration of Independence*, p. 209). In any event, for better or worse, it was Congress's text that presented America's case to the world, and it is that text with which we are concerned in this essay.

(3) Nothing in this essay should be interpreted to mean that a firm line can be drawn between style and substance in the Declaration or in any other work of political or literary discourse. As Peter Gay has noted, style is "form and content woven into the texture of every art and craft. . . . Apart from a few mechanical tricks of rhetoric, manner is indissolubly linked to matter; style shapes and is in turn shaped by, substance" (*Style in History* [1974], p. 3).

It is interesting to note that the text of the excerpt is shorter in length than the footnotes that it generates. Students might be directed to imagine why that might be the case. Astute students will begin to discover that amassed evidence makes it easier to prove one's case. It is most helpful to have many other "experts" support what it is a writer has to say; footnotes will be seen as proofs or evidence for a writer. Essentially, citations propel and support the argument the writer wishes to make. Once a writer establishes his or her credibility, he or she has earned the trust of the reader and, indeed, will be in a better position to persuade or perhaps move the discussion in a different direction. Students will begin to see the incremental nature of scholarship and discourse. Students will also need to understand the importance of not letting the content of the text wander too far from its course and that the effective writer controls the content as well as the flow of information. We might direct our students to think about the decisions an author makes when determining content that remains in the passage as opposed to content that is relegated to the footnote or endnote. The following questions could be used to focus their attention to the rhetoric of documentation that occurs in this essay.

1. What is the purpose of listing the many references in the first footnote? How does this information contribute to the author's credibility as a source of information?

2. How do these footnotes confirm the dialogic nature of academic discourse?

3. Locate the sentence that directs you to footnote 2. What important piece of information can be found in this footnote regarding the author's attribution of authorship for the Declaration of Independence? Why and to whom might this be surprising? Why might the author's commentary be relegated to the footnote rather than the text of the essay?

4. What objection from the reader might the author anticipate and address through his use of footnote 3? How might this add to the logos of the argument he presents?

5. Create AP-style multiple-choice questions using footnote 1, making careful note of the differences between publications and articles.

It is interesting to note how quickly the author establishes credibility in this essay. It should be pointed out that if our students were to engage in scholarship on this topic, they also would need to read the sources cited by the author. Our students will see the scrupulous nature of academic scholarship, as well as the thorough engagement of other scholarship and how that establishes logos for the author's argument. The author is also, from the beginning of the essay, introducing the other voices that will take part in this discussion. Careful analysis of footnote 2—"In any event, for better or worse, it was Congress's text that presented America's case to the world, and it is that text with which we are concerned in this essay"—introduces a perhaps revolutionary interpretation of authorship of the Declaration of Independence. The author introduces an interesting but peripheral topic in the footnote. It will be important to note that although authorship is a topic of compelling interest, the thesis of this essay is concerned with whether or not the Declaration of Independence is a document of stylistic artistry, regardless of authorship. Students may also see how footnotes open up lines of inquiry for future research. Regarding footnote 3, the author anticipates an argument from readers as to how style might be defined. He acknowledges that the terminology is open to interpretation. By so doing, he validates a careful reading, but he also skillfully redirects the attention of the reader back to the topic he wishes to pursue in this essay. A reader is also reassured that the writer is precise as well as thorough in thinking through the more subtle aspects of the topic.

In the next excerpt, which comes from the conclusion of the essay, students will see that the author maintains an academic discourse using some of the same references engaged in the introduction of his essay. Because the voices he introduces in footnote 1 are still heard in the concluding paragraphs of his essay, they must therefore be voices a reader should note. In this second excerpt we can ask our students to look closely at the interplay between text and footnote. They will begin to note how a researcher engages the ideas of others with his or her own voice, a skill they will need as they develop the use of synthesis in their own writing. And they will begin to appreciate a chorus of voices that will enhance, support, and develop the ideas they wish to express.

Excerpt # 2 from "The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence."

> This final section of the Declaration is highly formulaic and has attracted attention primarily because of its closing sentence. Carl Becker deemed this sentence "perfection itself":

> It is true (assuming that men value life more than property, which is doubtful) that the statement violates the rhetorical rule of climax; but it was a sure sense that made Jefferson place "lives" first and "fortunes" second. How much weaker if he had written "our fortunes, our lives, and our sacred honor"! Or suppose him to have used the word "property" instead of "fortunes"! Or suppose him to have omitted "sacred"! Consider the effect of omitting any of the words, such as the last two "ours"—"our lives, fortunes, and sacred honor." No, the sentence can hardly be improved. (27)

Becker is correct in his judgment about the wording and rhythm of the sentence, but he errs in attributing high marks to Jefferson for his "sure sense" in placing "lives" before "fortunes." "Lives and fortunes" was one of the most hackneyed phrases of eighteenth-century Anglo-American political discourse. Colonial writers had used it with numbing regularity throughout the dispute with England (along with other stock phrases such as "liberties and estates" and "life, liberty, and property"). Its appearance in the Declaration can hardly be taken as a measure of Jefferson's felicity of expression.

What marks Jefferson's "happy talent for composition" in this case is the coupling of "our sacred Honor" with "our Lives" and "our Fortunes" to create the eloquent trilogy that closes the Declaration. The concept of honor (and its cognates fame and glory) exerted a powerful hold on the eighteenth-century mind. Writers of all kinds—philosophers, preachers, politicians, playwrights, poets—repeatedly speculated about the sources of honor and how to achieve it. Virtually every educated man in England or America was schooled in the classical maxim, "What is left when honor is lost?" Or as Joseph Addison wrote in his Cato, whose sentiments were widely admired throughout the eighteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic: "Better to die ten thousand deaths/Than wound my honour." The cult of honor was so strong that in English judicial proceedings a peer of the realm did not answer to bills in chancery or give a verdict "upon oath, like an ordinary juryman, but upon his honor."(28)

By pledging "our sacred Honor" in support of the Declaration, Congress made a particularly solemn vow. The pledge also carried a latent message that the revolutionaries, contrary to the claims of their detractors, were men of honor whose motives and actions could not only withstand the closest scrutiny by contemporary persons of quality and merit but would also deserve the approbation of posterity. If the Revolution succeeded, its leaders stood to achieve lasting honor as what Francis Bacon called "*Liberatores* or *Salvatores*"—men who "compound the long Miseries of Civil Wars, or deliver their Countries from Servitude of Strangers or Tyrants." Historical examples included Augustus Caesar, Henry VII of England, and Henry IV of France. On Bacon's five-point scale of supreme honor, such heroes ranked below only "*Conditores Imperiorum*, Founders of States and Commonwealths," such as Romulus, Caesar, and Ottoman, and "Lawgivers" such as Solon, Lycurgus, and Justinian, "also called Second Founders, or *Perpetui Principes*, because they Govern by their Ordinances after they are gone." Seen in this way, "our sacred Honor" lifts the motives of Congress above the more immediate concerns of "our Lives" and "our Fortunes" and places the revolutionaries in the footsteps of history's most honorable figures. As a result it also unifies the whole text by subtly playing out the notion that the Revolution is a major turn in the broad "course of human events."(29)

At the same time, the final sentence completes a crucial metamorphosis in the text. Although the Declaration begins in an impersonal, even philosophical voice, it gradually becomes a kind of drama, with its tensions expressed more and more in personal terms. This transformation begins with the appearance of the villain, "the present King of Great Britain," who dominates the stage through the first nine grievances, all of which note what "He has" done without identifying the victim of his evil deeds. Beginning with grievance 10 the king is joined on stage by the American colonists, who are identified as the victim by some form of first person plural reference: The king has sent "swarms of officers to harass *our* people," has quartered "armed troops among *us*," has imposed "taxes on *us* without *our* consent," "has taken away *our* charters, abolished *our* most valuable laws," and altered "the Forms of *our* Governments." He has "plundered *our* seas, ravaged *our* coasts, burnt *our*

towns . . . destroyed the lives of *our* people," and "excited domestic insurrections amongst us." The word "our" is used twenty-six times from its first appearance in grievance 10 through the last sentence of the Declaration, while "us" occurs eleven times from its first appearance in grievance 11 through the rest of the grievances. (30)

Notes:

(27) Becker, *Declaration of Independence*, p. 197.

(28) For the importance of fame and honor to the revolutionaries, see Douglass Adair, "Fame and the Founding Fathers," in *Fame and the Founding Fathers*, ed. Trevor Colbourn (1974), pp. 3–26; Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (1984), pp. 109–148; Bruce Miroff, "John Adams: Merit, Fame, and Political Leadership," *Journal of Politics* 48 (1986): 116–132. The quotation about Jefferson's "happy talent for composition" is from John Adams to Timothy Pickering, Aug. 6, 1822, *The Works of John Adams*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (1850), vol. 2, p. 511. The statement about peers of the realm is from *Blackstone, Commentaries* 1: 40.

(29) Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* . . . (1625), pp. 313–314. See Adair, "Fame and the Founding Fathers," pp. 114-115, for the importance of Bacon's essay on honor among the revolutionaries.

(30) Cf. Ginsberg, "The Declaration as Rhetoric," p. 228.

As we observed in the passage on engineering and technology, documentation as rhetoric is apparent as the author engages in dialogue from beginning to end with the scholarship of others. Becker as a source is referenced in footnotes 1, 2, and 27. Discerning students will notice how the footnotes/endnotes show us the points of argument. The effective essayist establishes his logical and ethical appeals through, at times, anticipating and possibly addressing the counterarguments in the context of the footnotes and endnotes as well as in the text of the passage. Close reading of footnotes 2 and 3 introduces a question regarding authorship of the Declaration as well as a pre-emptive dismissal of a discussion of style and substance. Yet in this excerpt of the passage Lucas references "Jefferson's 'happy talent for composition' Becker's description of the closing sentence as "perfection itself." Students who engage in a sustained, as well as careful reading of the footnotes and the text of the passage will have the opportunity to question this dichotomy, and as such it may provide a point of entry for the dialogic discourse we wish to develop in our students.

We might have students consider the following questions to lead them into a close study of the way "voices" enter into and out of the conversation, as well as how notes and text interact and contribute to the organic nature of academic discourse. In order to differentiate instruction in the classroom for our many different types of learners, we might offer our students a menu of questions from which to choose, or divide the questions among groups and then have them share their answers through a jigsaw movement of their expertise to other groups. Teachers may want to tailor the questions to the group or have them develop their own questions about the text and the corresponding footnotes. I am always surprised at how often students may discern something I have never noticed.

A straightforward comparison between the introduction and concluding citations highlights the importance of the voices we've heard throughout the essay, in both the text as well as the footnotes. Students will note continuity in rhetorical choices that contribute to the development of the essay.

1. What evidence from the footnotes (1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, and 30) shows that Lucas relies heavily upon Becker as a resource?

The following questions refer to the paragraph in the text which begins with "It is true…" and ends with "can hardly be improved." These questions will direct the students to note how the author transitions from his own voice into the voice of his references. We also want to direct our students to notice the formatting aspects that convey the scope and sequence of documentation.

2. Why has this passage been set apart from the rest of the text? Whose voice is in this passage? In addition to making reference to the footnote, in what other way does the author identify this voice?

3. What other information is provided by footnote 27?

4. Where in the text does the author's voice resume? How do we know we're hearing the author again? What are the identifying markers?

5. The voices of other people, when incorporated into one's paper, must be set apart in some way. Look closely at the Becker passage; where is Jefferson's voice in this passage? What device does Becker use to distinguish a different voice from his own?

The next set of questions refers to the paragraph which begins with "Becker is correct in his judgment . . ." and ends with "upon oath, like an ordinary juryman, but upon his honor." (28) The questions direct students to notice how an author weaves the words and ideas of others into his or her own writing. It also demonstrates how the author parses and analyzes the words of others through close textual interpretation.

6. Why does the author put "sure sense" in quotes?

7. Why is "happy talent for composition" in quotes and to whom is this phrase attributed? Is irony implied through the author's use of putting the words "happy talent for composition" in quotes? Explain.

8. Footnote 28 includes lengthy references. Locate the sentence from the preceding text which the footnotes serve to support. Explain how the footnotes support the sentence you've identified.

9. Whose paraphrased ideas are expressed by the author in the paragraph that begins with "By pledging . . ." and ends with "course of human events."? How many voices are there in this passage?   You may wish to use a colored marker to identify each voice you find and develop a color-coded key for each of the voices.

10 What do you notice about the way in which Lucas adds other voices to his writing? What precedes and then follows the introduction of other voices? How does the author transition in and out of his own voice into the voice of another?

If students are ready, willing, and able, you may want to introduce these challenging questions for their consideration. I often find it's necessary to have an enriched activity for the students who move more quickly than the others.

11 How might the text of this second excerpt contradict information found in footnote 2? What from the text in this second excerpt may serve to support footnote 2?

12. When juxtaposing these two excerpts and their corresponding footnotes, what questions remain open to interpretation? Upon what point(s) might a discerning reader enter into the dialogue?

Through close examination of documentation students will be ready to move beyond listening. They will become participants in the conversation, beyond the margins of the annotations, and perhaps into the discourse itself. Through close attention to the documentation, students will begin to discern the relevance and reliability of voices that are included in the ongoing academic dialogue. They will begin to see how academic discourse functions across time, through past, present, and the implied future. They may perceive the multiple perspectives that define and refine the parameters of an argument. Footnotes and endnotes help to moderate the discussion and remind the audience that others have already thought about this topic, and that we, too, are invited to participate in scholarly discourse. They offer implicit reassurance that a reasonable voice (our own) also has a place in future dialogue. Footnotes and endnotes show us where these voices come from; they are the implements through which we learn the landscape of academic discourse, essential skills for students across the disciplines.

The multiple-choice questions on the AP English Language & Composition Exam require students to understand the evocative nature of this discourse. Students are asked to take "note" of the citations, and in so doing are directed to observe the quality, timeliness, and relevancy of the sources that are incorporated as part of the discussion. This is one of the ways in which documentation functions as rhetoric. As Ben Franklin so keenly observed in *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1757), "for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost." Footnotes and endnotes are the "nails" of the nonfiction essay. Far better to be found than lost, and the lowly footnote leads the way.

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Vertically Aligning Research: Leading to *the* Research Paper

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From 2001 through 2007, I served as director of Communication Arts at Stevenson High School, a large comprehensive school about 30 miles north of Chicago. The school is committed to helping students master their literacy in traditional venues, such as reading and writing. Three years ago, our teachers saw a need to help students be more proficient in the twenty-first-century area of information literacy, an observation shared by many educators nationwide (Appel, 2006). Sophomores in a required health course, for instance, lacked the requisite skills to search for and cite sources. Some juniors found the research project in their college prep–level English course to be overwhelming. And some AP English Language & Composition students could not complete their junior research paper while studying a novel. At our strategic planning meeting in August 2003, several administrators suggested the formation of an information literacy task force to address the needs of our students.

This essay will describe our school's articulation of information literacy skills in targeted, cross-content courses in grades 9 and 10, culminating in the grade 11 research paper. It will explain how our task force first grappled with the theoretical underpinnings that comprise this important element of literacy. And it will leave the reader with a more complete understanding of what a high school curriculum can do to help its students be prepared to write that dreaded research paper in junior or senior English and beyond.

Defining the Skill of Research

In Fall 2003 I was asked to chair this task force. Called "The Research Committee," we initially met in September to determine our goals and map out our action steps. By the end of the first meeting, I realized that we could not proceed until we understood better why students needed to be literate in the area of "research." I also realized that we needed to unpack the meanings behind the word "research."

Thanks to our librarians who were on the committee, we quickly contextualized our work in a theoretical foundation: The Big6 (Eisenberg and Berkowitz, 1988). We learned that the act of "doing research" only constituted part of the process. The Big6 identifies six skills that shape the problem-solving that students need in order to be proficient in information literacy: (1) definition of task, (2) information-seeking strategies, (3) location and access, (4) use of information, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation. (See Appendix 1.)

We devoted the next two meetings to understanding better what "researching" really means. We realized that information literacy or information problem solving would be a more

appropriate descriptor for our work than the word "research." Consider some of the questions a student asks while defining the task: "What is the purpose of the task"? and "What are the key questions?" Students who are proficient in information literacy need higher-order thinking skills to identify the purpose, articulate the parameters of the task, postulate questions for contemplation, and determine what resources will answer the questions. These important skills all occur *before* the student "does the research." Semantics aside, the term "research" captures only part of the process. However, semantics carry weight, so we decided to keep the term "research" with the understanding that it encompasses much more.

Vertical Curriculum Design

The remainder of 2004 was devoted to creating a scope and sequence of skills in targeted cross-curricular grade 9 and 10 courses to help students gather the prerequisite skills. The committee met to identify the core projects and skills that would ensure students' success not only in the given course but in subsequent ones, too. (See Appendix 2).

Careful study of the ninth-grade science project, for example, reveals an authentic purpose for problem solving. Students in Biology Accelerated grapple with a genetic disease. They must consider what their role is in the hypothetical situation of the assignment. They must understand what they are being asked to do. They must generate questions that illustrate their ability to see cause-and-effect relationships. They must determine which online sources the librarians have demonstrated will best answer their questions. They must also use books and periodicals and distinguish the purposes of the multiplicity of sources.

By the end of ninth grade, students at Stevenson demonstrate the skills to find sources to address the questions postulated by themselves and their teachers. They are expected to know how to cite sources; in fact, the rubrics for grade-nine English and world history require a works-cited page.

Beginning in grade 10, students use two (or more) text citations and locate sources in specialized databases. The tenth-grade health project, for instance, relies on students' knowledge of how to access sources and cite them correctly. The nature of authentic projects requires the problem-solving skills inherent in The Big6. Because students are taking on the role of a personal trainer, they need to make deliberate choices regarding how they will present the information, taking into consideration audience and purpose. Health students doing the research become personal trainers with the goal to create a portfolio for a client who needs to improve his or her health through exercise and a better diet. Here we see the beginning steps of triangulation of sources to create a health plan. Students use multiple sources, such as an article with statistics and factual evidence, along with an article on a more generally related topic that addresses an implication or cause. A third source may be an advertisement or cartoon; alternative texts such as these expand the rhetorical framework and broaden our students' emerging literacy development. Moreover, students' work in grade-10 English helps them to evaluate electronic sources, especially Web sites, to determine credibility of the authors or validity of the material. The requirement of in-text

citation for both health and English projects serves as a very important scaffolding skill to prepare students for the high-stakes junior research paper.

At Stevenson, students write a significant research paper during their junior year. Teachers of junior English can be certain that students enter class knowing how to define a research assignment, locate sources, select appropriate sources, cite correctly, and present information to respond to a specific research assignment. However, while our students understand that "doing research" does not mean compiling information into a "report," they still do not have the proficiency to analyze and organize information so that it substantiates a claim or creates new knowledge (synthesis).

But how do you get students to know how to revise or add to initial research questions? How do you get students to extract information and organize it effectively? How do you get students not to lose sight of their ideas and let the information become their ideas?

Juniors come to their English classes ready to dig more deeply in the process of information literacy (see Appendix 1). Do we teachers help them to dig? That has been the question facing our English department for the past two years. We have learned these three lessons:

1. sources need to be seen as a means of support versus a means of filling space;
2. research ought to be transformative; and
3. teachers need to scaffold instruction.

Lesson 1: Access Sources to Support Ideas, not to "Be" the Information

Traditionally, students experience the high-stakes junior research paper as a unit. They receive an assignment packet complete with do's and don'ts as well as every step and due date. Teachers take great pains to include all information so students will be informed and so students can experience the process of writing the paper. Unfortunately, students often become overwhelmed by the magnitude of the assignment: all those steps, all those due dates, and all those note cards! Too often, students cannot see the forest for the trees. They miss the point.

The point, of course, is to have a passion for a topic, consider the complexity of the topic, find sources to support ideas and discredit others, and transform one's thinking by the very act of reading the sources.

Thus, we teachers of research papers need to consider the following:

- encourage students to begin writing informally on a potential research paper topic weeks if not months before the "big paper";
- support ongoing informal writing by encouraging students to maintain a journal to explore key issues with the topic;
- establish a dialogue with the students during this prewriting phase by asking questions, proffering personal reactions, and giving suggestions for additional pathways of thinking;

- encourage students to think and talk about their initial thinking of the topic;
- work with students who seem to be hitting a dead end during the prewriting phase—is it just writer's block or is it a topic that just won't work for that particular student?
- have students take a brief break after sufficient early drafting; and
- support students to continue informal writing to discover key issues with the topic and areas for further contemplation.

By experiencing these activities, students will approach the research paper with a better understanding of their purpose for writing and the next steps for exploration. When they begin the process of locating sources, they will enter that stage with a clear objective: to find sources that will help define a problem, provide essential background information, support claims, proffer counterpoints, and/or explore solutions. They will not enter that stage with a feeling of desperation: *In three days I must find five sources and accumulate 40 note cards.* Whether the student takes note cards is irrelevant. What is relevant is whether the student sees the process of locating sources as necessary to finding helpful support and background information.

In sum, we want to help students to view the research paper as an opportunity to explore ideas by defining problems, considering hypotheses, and identifying key questions. We want to help them to determine what they already know and what they want or need to know. We want to help students learn that it is at this point that they should locate sources that may provide them with answers to their questions and inquiries.

Lesson 2: Research Ought to Be Transformative

As students find and read sources, they hopefully will be able to answer key questions, affirm hypotheses, and gather essential information to define problems. But a major goal for us as teachers is to help students to explore the complexities behind their topics. We want students to analyze and evaluate their ideas as well as the information found in the sources not only to support their claims but also to synthesize knowledge. For example, students approach their topic to find answers: Gun control is wrong; the sources confirm this. But as they locate sources, they also need to discover the complexity of the issue: Why were gun control laws enacted? When do they work? When don't they work and why? What does "work" mean? Is the issue just about gun control or about other issues emblematic of cracks in the social structures of our society?

How do students become inquisitive? How do we help them to engage in a transformative version of research? Part of the answer lies in helping students to see the reading of secondary and even primary sources as fulfilling two purposes: to substantiate claims and to add depth and breadth to the process. As long as students go into the process of research with claims, positions, questions, hypotheses, and so forth, then purpose one should be fulfilled. To help students be persuasive as they build their arguments, we introduce students to the rudiments of argumentation. Beginning in sophomore English, students learn the

basics of persuasion (e.g., logos, pathos, and ethos), study emotional appeals, and work with rhetorical strategies in their reading and writing. For instance, sophomores study Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" to analyze the use of repetition, concrete examples, and rhetorical questions. Students map out the text's organizational plan and discover how effectively Dr. King refutes the clergymen's criticism. The students also reflect upon the emotional power of King's personal stories of his children facing discrimination. Finally, students understand that King uses allusions to establish credibility as a theologian since his audience consists of clergymen. This focus on rhetoric serves as a foundation for students as they write their research paper in junior English. The final draft of the research paper or argument ought to feature an application of these rhetorical strategies.

Moreover, it is important to note that this important work of vertically aligning the curriculum begins in the freshman year. The work done in grades 9 and 10 makes students proficient in supporting main points with evidence from literature. Specific research projects in 9th and 10th grade require students to use sources, ranging from books and periodicals to Web sites, to support their contentions (e.g., a persuasive speech in sophomore English) or describe the courageous acts of a famous person (e.g., an informative speech in freshman English).

Thus, a student understands that an article with statistics not showing a decline in gun violence may support his or her claim that gun control is unhelpful to society. But what about the second purpose of reading sources—to add depth or breadth to the process? How does the student understand that reading sources on the topic may help him or her to consider additional aspects of the issue? That student might happen upon a source that suggests other reasons gun control does not seem to have a direct effect on the violent crimes in our society. What started as a simple plan—find evidence to support three reasons gun control does not work and refute the opposition—morphs into a study of why our society searches for easy answers to complex problems.

However, what typical 17-year-old is going to want to "muddy the waters"? Muddy waters mean more work. Thus, it is up to the teacher to turn the focus away from quantity to quality. If we focus too much on the process of turning in a specific number of note cards, if we stress proper MLA citation at the expense of inquiry, if we make students fit their thinking into an outline with an "a" *and* a "b," then how can we expect students to experience a transformative research experience? At some point in the process, we need to pause so students can just read. And we need to model how that looks. We need to take the entire class through an article, for example, and conduct a think-aloud by pausing to share our questions. The questions should reveal inquiry and discovery: *I wonder if this author is being too simplistic; It seems to me that a law banning the sales of guns is only part of the answer; What is the difference between cause and effect?* Then, the teacher needs to show the class how the additional inquiry transforms either the thesis or part of the body to reflect a more complex approach to the topic. Time, of course, should be given for guided practice where students can read to contemplate hidden issues that might make the topic more interesting

and multi-dimensional. They will find this difficult, so they will need a lot of guidance and support.

In sum, the student who has several sources that support her contention that gun control is not helpful to society has begun to organize her "research" by plugging in statistics, case studies, and expert testimonials into the body of her paper. She may even have found counterarguments, which she can either refute or concede. Most likely, however, she has not considered how being for or against gun control is only part of the solution. In her reading, other dimensions of the issue, which shape the matter into something much more complex, have arisen. But if her task is to have 30 note cards and write a six-page paper, for instance, then why would she want to address the fact that the topic is not so cut and dried? That mess does not serve her needs. Thus, it is our task as teachers to build that discovery into the process.

Lesson 3: Teachers Need to Scaffold Instruction

Teachers, in general, do a good job of delineating the steps in the process of a research assignment. These teachers try hard to provide their students with the steps, the due dates, the feedback, and the models. That is part of the picture. To scaffold instruction, though, includes the rest of the picture.

The rest of the picture takes place at the beginning of the school year, possibly months before the research paper unit begins. As I stated earlier, it includes having students write about and talk about potential topics well before the formal assignment begins. Other ways to scaffold include the following:

- help students to become proficient with in-text citations during the preceding grades;
- introduce students to using multiple sources (two or more) within one shorter (shorter than a research paper) paper;
- introduce the need for a works-cited page when two or more sources are used;
- expose students to models of the type of writing you would like them to produce (nonfiction);
- expose students to more nonfiction; and
- sequence the skills for the research paper over several months.

As early as grade 9, students in English class write about literature. Teachers like their students to support their ideas with quotes from the literature. By the end of grade 9, students should be able to write a two- or three-page literary analysis essay using textual evidence from the piece of literature studied in class. Are students taught explicitly how to integrate quotes into their writing? Are they taught how to punctuate and include page numbers? Are they taught how to use the quotation to augment and enrich their own thinking? If a teacher scaffolds instruction during the year, then students should be proficient in these areas going into grade 10. By the 11th grade, when students at our school write the research paper, they should not be overwhelmed by the task.

Assuming the above makes sense, then in grade 10 students could be asked to add another source to their writing. In a literary analysis, for example, students write about literature. They know to use the text to support their claims. What if they read another piece of literature, such as a short nonfiction article that shares similar ideas with the theme in the fiction text? What if they included textual evidence from the nonfiction text to help develop the ideas in their initial essay? If students could be given practice and support in this endeavor, they would become comfortable with the skills of writing papers with in-text citations of two or more sources. They could be taught how to add the author's name in the parenthetical within the text and how to create a works-cited page well over a year before the junior-year paper.

Student models and professional models provide excellent examples for students to emulate and evaluate. Many teachers know the value of using models like these during the writing process. But how often are students exposed to the type of writing we want them to produce as an outcome of *the* research paper? For instance, if students need to write a literary research paper, how regularly are they exposed to that type of writing? If students need to write an argumentative paper on a social issue, how regularly are they exposed to position papers or op/ed pieces? Students need to be exposed to the type of research paper they are expected to write well before they begin the process. They need practice understanding the semantic and stylistic features of the text. They need access to the discourse community of the genre. Thus, it would behoove many English teachers to include more nonfiction. Most of what we have our students read is fiction, but most of what we ask students to write is nonfiction.

In short, the research paper should be a comfortable culminating experience for students if the skills and activities are delineated in a carefully organized scope and sequence. *This involves a cross-curricular scope and sequence of research skills, a departmental scope and sequence of skills, and, equally important, a deliberate progression of skills and assignments within the course (e.g., junior English).* The research paper cannot be a unit in and of itself. It has to be a culmination of the information literacy skills, reading experiences, and writing opportunities that the students have throughout their high school experience.

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Noskin Appendix 1:

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

(Based on the Big Six Information Problem Solving Skills, by Eisenberg and Berkowitz)

I. DEFINE THE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Always start your research by analyzing the assignment and making sure you understand it completely.

a. Understand the purpose of the assignment

b. Clarify the requirements of the project (format, length, components, required sources)

—What is the format? (written report, oral presentation, PowerPoint, etc.)

—How long or detailed does it have to be?

—What pieces does it have to include? (outline, text, graphs, maps, works cited, etc.)

—Are certain types of resources required by the teacher?

c. Formulate, identify, and define key question(s) that need to be researched.

—What do you already know about the topic? What do you need to know?

d. Identify the type(s) of information needed (current, historical, facts, opinion, analysis, reviews, primary sources, etc.)

II. LOCATE RESOURCES THAT HAVE POTENTIAL INFORMATION

Once you have formulated essential questions, you are ready to determine where to find the answers.

a. Brainstorm best possible sources of information for the type of information you will need

—books?

—periodicals (magazines, journals, and newspapers)?

—online databases?

—Web sites?

—television or other media?

—personal interview?

—museum, historical society, etc.?

b. Know where and how to access these resources, (e.g., school or public library, computer lab, classroom, home, community, or other)

c. Identify appropriate search tools to access sources of information

—library online catalog for reference books and other books in print (available on library home page)

—magazine and newspaper indexes for periodical articles (EBSCO, Proquest, Newsbank, First Search, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, SIRS, other) (available in library and on library home page)

—other Subscription Online Database Services for general reference material, subject-specific material or literature online such as Grolier or Britannica encyclopedias, Gale Literature Resources, ABC-CLIO Social Studies, SIRS, Facts.com, CQ Library, Li, etc. (available on library home page)

—Internet search engines, directories, portals, etc, for websites (Google, Yahoo, Librarians Index to Internet, Ask, Excite, Vivisimo, other)

—print indexes for specialized materials (available in library)

d. Develop search strategies to search for relevant information

—brainstorm relevant keywords or subject headings relating to topics

—choose best available search method (keyword, subject headings, browse, etc.)

—use boolean phrases to connect keywords ("and," "or," "not," etc.) and proper electronic search syntax appropriate to search tools.

—use indexes and tables of contents to look for information within print material

—cross-reference subject headings

III. SELECT AND ANALYZE INFORMATION

a. Select relevant information from resources

b. Evaluate information for credibility and quality

c. Reject or accept information obtained

d. Determine if more information is needed

e. Continue to locate, select, and analyze until all information has been gathered

f. Extract information from sources appropriately by noting, quoting, highlighting, paraphrasing, or summarizing

IV. ORGANIZE AND SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

a. Systematically organize information by using such methods as outlines, concept maps, note cards, listing, flowcharts, storyboards, databases, etc.

b. Keep track of information sources for appropriate citation (use MLA or other)

V. CREATE/PRESENT INFORMATION

a. Create original presentation using required or appropriate format

b. Produce or communicate information in an effective manner (attention to order, good writing or oral communication style, grammar, spelling, creativity, appropriateness of graphics to text, using visual displays or technology effectively, etc.)

c. Compose, edit, and revise as necessary for polished final product

d. Include in-text citation and/or works cited page if required (use MLA unless teacher requires a different style refer to standard style manuals)

VI. EVALUATION

   a. Evaluate effectiveness of your completed assignment or project

     —Did you meet the requirements?

     —How did the target audience (teacher, other students, parents, etc.) react? Comments? Criticisms?

   b. Evaluate your research process. Consider what worked well and what didn't. How could you have made it better? Some questions to ask yourself:

     —Did you answer the questions or fully complete all components of the assignment?

     —Did you have enough information? Too much?

     —Were you able to find information easily?

     —Examine the quality of the information you used: variety, accuracy, consistency, currrency, authority, objectivity, etc.

     —Was your information well-organized?

     —Did you avoid plagarism?

     —Did you present information in an interesting and effective style?

     —Was your citation complete and correct?

  c. Reflect on what you learned from this research experience

  d. Determine what you would change in future research opportunities

Noskin Appendix 2:

9th Grade

Freshman English Library orientation/research process in the first semester - a four day project centered on a research topic chosen by the English teacher. Students fill out worksheets to demonstrate ability to access various types of materials and evaluate them. Students are given a fill-in-the-blank worksheet to record the citation for each source used.	**Skills Taught:** • Use online book catalog (PAC) to locate books • Use periodical database (EBSCO) to access magazines and teach search strategies • Select and use appropriate internet search tools • Evaluate a web site according to specific criteria • Use in-text citation • Require MLA citation of each resource used—book, magazine, and internet site in a works cited page
Science (Natural Science, Accelerated Biology) Natural Science students have a national parks and/or astronomy project in second semester. Biology Students have a first semester project on a bio-tech issue such as a genetic disease, and a second semester project to research background information to design an experiment.	**Skills Taught:** • Use newspaper database and science-specific databases (science digests in Newsbank) • Use science/medical reference online (Grolier's New Book of Popular Science) and in print—using table of contents and indexes **Skills Reinforced:** • Use periodical database (EBSCO) to access magazines • Require a multiplicity of types of resources • Require identification of own search strategies • Select and use appropriate Internet search tools • Evaluate a Web site according to specific criteria • Require MLA citation of each resource used—book, magazine, and Internet site

World History World History students have a required research project in the second semester on a post-World War II topic.	**Skills Taught:** • Use history reference materials - using table of contents and indexes • Distinguish primary sources versus secondary sources • Would like to show students a history database (ABC-CLIO), world news database (FACTS.com), and newspaper archives (NY Times in PROQUEST; Chicago Tribune in Newsbank) **Skills Reinforced:** • Require a multiplicity of types of resources • Require outline for research project • Require in-text citation, end notes, or footnotes • Require an annotated works-cited page

10th Grade

Sophomore English Sophomore English students are expected to complete one research assignment. Projects using research vary, but most do this in conjunction with a persuasive unit on a current events topic (i.e. speech presentation).	**Skills Taught:** • Use specialized current issues-based resources in print (nonfiction book series), and subscription databases (PROQUEST, CQ Researcher, SIRS, and Issues and Controversies/FACTS.com) • Use two text citations **Skills Reinforced:** • Brainstorming to define task and formulate questions to research • Use of issues-based and statistical reference materials with tables of contents and indexes • Use online catalogue to find appropriate print resources • Evaluate a Web site according to specific criteria • Require annotation and note-taking • Require in-text citation • Students are given a fill-in-the-blank worksheet to record the citation for each source used • Require an MLA-style works cited page

10th Grade (continued)

Health Students do two required projects. In the personal trainer project, they create a portfolio on a client and map a fitness and nutrition plan. In the disease unit, students research all aspects of a particular disease.	**Skills Taught:** • Use specialized health databases (Health Source/EBSCO) **Skills Reinforced:** • Use science and medical print reference materials • Use general periodical and newspaper databases (PROQUEST and Newsbank) • Require a multiplicity of types of resources - reference, nonfiction books, magazines, and newspapers • Distinquish primary sources versus secondary sources • Require in-text citation • Require an MLA-style works-cited page
Science (Accelerated Chemistry) Accelerated Chemistry students have two research projects - a black smoker project and an Oscars project - that rely on teacher-supplied Internet sites and catalogues. Students work in groups to answer focus questions, with ongoing analysis and evaluation of sources and information.	**Skills Reinforced:** • Brainstorming to define task and formulate questions to research • Select and use appropriate Internet search tools • Evaluate Web sites based on usefulness in answering focus questions • Require a multiplicity of types of resources • Require MLA citation of resources

11th Grade

Junior English Junior English students write an argumentative research paper, which relies on a logical, well-developed argument for a point of view, supported by specific types of evidence, and which refutes the opposition.	**Skills Taught:** • Expand use of specialized databases for more scholarly sources (First Search) • In-text citation of multiple sources **Skills Reinforced**: • Use periodical and newspaper databases (EBSCO, PROQUEST, CQResearcher, SIRS, and Issues and Controversies/FACTS.com) • Use online catalogue to find appropriate print resources • Require a multiplicity of types of resources - reference, nonfiction books, magazines, and newspapers • Require an MLA-style works-cited page

Strangers Across The Hall: Comparing the DBQ and Synthesis Questions

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For AP U.S. History teachers, there is something suspicious about those AP English Language and Composition teachers. It is not that we are impolite in the teachers' lounge. Or that we suspect some sinister design on our curriculum or, heaven forbid, our maps of Westward Expansion or Civil War Battles in the East. It is just that we are not really sure what they teach over there across the hall. When our students fill their document-based questions (DBQs) with grammar and spelling errors we usually pass them over with a sigh: "Not my job. That's why they have English teachers."

The suspicion is mutual. Denise Foster, an AP English Language and Composition teacher at Adlai Stevenson High School, writes that upon learning that the new synthesis question for the AP English Language & Composition Exam will include questions on current events many of her colleagues exclaimed: "Current events? History teachers – not English teachers – should be responsible for that."[1]

The attitude of both sides of the hallway reflects our occasional misunderstanding of each other's work. For some AP U.S. History teachers, AP English Language & Composition is primarily about grammar and a student's skill with "flowery" language. A hackneyed understanding of U.S. history considers the class merely one old thing after another. However, with the addition of the synthesis question to the AP English Language & Composition Exam, history and English teachers have a rare opportunity to commune over the similarities and differences between the DBQ on the AP U.S. History Exam and the new synthesis question on the AP English Language & Composition Exam. In this case, we have a reason to cross the hall.

THE PROMPT ITSELF

There are some seemingly important differences between a DBQ and a synthesis question. For example, the introduction to the draft sample question for the AP English Language & Composition Exam reads:

> Television has been influential in the United States presidential elections since the 1960s. But just what is this influence, and how has it affected who is elected? Has it made elections fairer and more accessible, or has it moved candidates from pursuing issues to pursuing image?

This introduction is followed by this assignment:

> Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources, take a position that defends,**

> **challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections.[2]**

This question immediately demands an opinion. It states television's influence since the 1960s as historical fact and requires the student to accept it as such. Thereafter, the student is asked to consider the effect of this fact and to consider to what extent it has elevated or debased the American political process. Compare this question to the 2006 AP U.S. History DBQ:

> Discuss the changing ideals of American womanhood between the American Revolution (1770s) and the outbreak of the Civil War. What factors fostered the emergence of "republican motherhood" and the "cult of domesticity"? Assess the extent to which these ideals influenced the lives of women during this period. In your answer, be sure to consider issues of race and class.[3]

Though this question also makes certain historical assumptions (the ideals of American "womanhood" changed) it is much less open ended in its directions to students. Whereas the synthesis question follows its historical assumption with questions that ask for personal responses ("But just what . . . ?", "Has it made . . . ?"), the DBQ has specific directives ("What . . . fostered . . . ", "Assess . . . ", " . . . be sure to consider . . . ").

Even the names of each question reflect this difference. The "synthesis" question refers to a process that should begin when the student first reads the question and the documents. The student will be judged by his or her ability to synthesize the documents into a thesis-driven essay of his or her own creation. On the other hand, the "document-based" question is named for the type of question it is: a question based on documents. The process is not evident and the imperative nature of the question's directives (assess, consider) further points to a very different product. On the surface, the synthesis question seems to ask for a creative and personal student response. On the surface, the DBQ seems to ask for the right answers.

Beneath the surface, however, there are some important similarities. For example, both the DBQ and the synthesis question ask a student to incorporate documents into his or her opinion. Specifically, in addition to writing a traditional thesis-driven essay, a writer must also incorporate sources from the documents into his or her own viewpoint. Instead of proving a claim with logical arguments alone, a writer of a synthesis or document-based essay must wrestle with a wider world of arguments, many of which are contradictory to the writer's own, and some of which are unfamiliar in diction and context.

David Jolliffe, the Chief Reader of the AP English Language & Composition Exam, recommends that students follow a process by which they "converse" with the sources and "incorporate" them into their argument. According to Jolliffe, a successful student should use the 15 minutes provided to read each document closely and then analyze these documents with an eye to discovering the authors' claims and the means by which they prove these claims. In effect, Jolliffe asks the student to think like a *reader* before acting like a *writer*.

This, itself, is a valuable tactic because it requires students to practice what we teachers preach: Good readers are good writers.

In analyzing the documents, the student must evaluate the quality of the author's data and consider what assumptions and beliefs may have been brought to bear. According to Jolliffe, the student must ask herself, "What claim is the source making about the issue? What data or evidence does the source offer in support of that claim? What are the assumptions or beliefs (explicit or unspoken) that warrant using this evidence or data to support the claim?" This creates a fruitful analytical hierarchy for young writers because they must understand an author's arguments and evidence before they generate their own subjective argument and prove it with evidence, both their own and that of the sources provided. Students must literally understand the arguments of others before they join the argument themselves.[4]

This is a process that any history teacher can love. It is, in fact, exactly the process I ask of my students when they write their DBQs. Unfortunately, they usually do so—at least initially— with only mixed results. Many of my juniors engage document-based questions as an exercise in cutting and pasting. They seek answers to the question prompt in the documents themselves rather than in their own understanding of the question, and drop the documents (usually with an inappropriate amount of quoting in lieu of good analysis) into an essay that is more of a patchwork quilt than an argument. However, as the AP U.S. History Course Description notes, "the emphasis of the DBQ will be on analysis and synthesis, not historical narrative." To successfully write a DBQ response, my students must actively engage the documents. When my students acquire this skill, they often do so by using Jolliffe's method of conversation and incorporation. But it is the conversation that is hardest to create. Instead of conversing with the documents, my students want to *listen* to the documents. This is modesty on their part. After years of listening to teachers and textbooks, my students have no experience engaging a source actively. For them, conversing with a document is bad form. One's elders are to be listened to (at least when one is trying to get a good grade).

To help them break this respectful but ultimately detrimental habit, I use a method that slightly refines Jolliffe's approach. Instead of sending my students to the documents after reading the question, I ask them to generate a rough thesis before they look at the documents. In fact, I think both the synthesis and document-based questions implicitly ask students to do so. For example, in the arched-eyebrow tone of the synthesis question, "But just *what is* this influence…" (my emphasis), lies the demand that the reader accept or reject the effect of television on politics. Furthermore, in juxtaposing "issues" with "image" the question has no pretensions to presenting two viable options (who would pick image over issues, the question implicitly and rhetorically asks). Instead, the question demands that the student define the nature of television's influence on the electoral process in a positive or negative light. Does it make elections fairer? Does it make them shallower? This invites the student to take a stand upon first reading. It is this stand, formed in the seconds between reading the question and analyzing the sources, which allows the student to create a voice with which to converse with the documents. Also, although a successful DBQ response must

include "outside" information or historical evidence beyond the sources themselves, I suspect that a good synthesis essay might include the same. For example, the synthesis question provided by the College Board requires a student to understand, at least unconsciously, television as a "hot" medium as opposed to the "cold" communication offered by radio and newspapers. A student who is not cognizant of this difference might ask himself, "Television, as opposed to what?" and, therefore, be unable to answer the question on its own terms.

In this regard the document-based question appears much more constraining. The difference, however, is rhetorical. After a second or even a third reading of the question, a student should start to see the areas where he or she has room to move. Students should look for the "gaps" in the question. In fact, these gaps are the most important part of the question because it is within them that a student finds her or his voice.

For example, while the 2006 DBQ assumes that the ideals of womanhood changed between the Revolution and the Civil War, and also directs the students to discuss "republican motherhood" and the "cult of domesticity," it does not judge any of the values or social ramifications of these ideals. Here lies the space that a student can fill with his or her own opinions. Though a writer will have to know what republican motherhood was to thoroughly answer this question, he or she is free to trace a trajectory from the Revolution to the Civil War, from republican motherhood to the cult of domesticity, and define and establish value in the historical record. Was there very much difference between republican motherhood and the cult of domesticity, or were both forms of repression that reflected the overarching values of their time? Or were there changes that were, in fact, to women's advantage? Was the domestic ideal of the 19th century, with a woman at its center, a means by which women could empower themselves? And, to what extent were these changes affecting all women equally regarding race and class? The Readers of the AP U.S. History Exam have no preconceived arguments that they are sanctioned to apply to the rubric. Their directive is only to judge factual accuracy and logical consistency. Therefore, as long as a student proves his or her opinion with a reference to the historical record, all argumentative bets are on.

By generating a thesis before reading the documents, a student prepares for a conversation with the other authors. Ideally, the writer-as-reader will thereafter engage the sources with mental statements like, "What does this guy think?", "I disagree", "She has a good point", and "Well of course *he* would say *that*." The conversation is fueled by the student's own opinion. Before first putting pen to paper, the writer performs the civic process modeled by the synthesis question itself. Engaged citizens have opinions, and know that defending them requires listening thoroughly to other arguments. Also, engaged citizens have opinions, but are willing to revise them in the face of more compelling arguments. Most importantly, engaged citizens *listen* because they *believe in something*. By generating a thesis before reading the documents, students practice this process.

Even though the DBQ seems more imperative in wording, it is in fact as conceptually open as the synthesis question. Though the question demands that students recognize the changing

ideals of womanhood, it allows them freedom to move authentically within the topic: How did these changes affect women? Furthermore, by asking the students to consider race and class, the question opens up areas of analysis that are often overlooked, namely the lives of working-class women and ethnic minorities. In a question like this, I require my students to take five minutes to brainstorm the facts they have immediately at hand and to generate a thesis that answers the question. Thereafter, they engage the documents with their own opinion in mind and must converse with the sources. Even my weaker students ask themselves, "Does this source agree with me or not?" Answering this demands engagement, at the least.

At the risk of breaking down some of the hall space between us, I suggest that AP English Language and Composition teachers generate synthesis questions for their colleagues who teach AP U.S. History. Likewise, I suggest that AP U.S. History teachers take some of their DBQs, either those they have created or those generated by the College Board, and walk them across the hall to their peers who teach AP English Language & Composition. This is not without precedent.

In the summer of 2006, Steve Heller, an AP English Language & Composition teacher at Adlai E. Stevenson High School, and I facilitated an institute at Loyola University Chicago that sought just such cross-fertilization. Over the course of one week, 21 English and U.S. history teachers wrestled with the similarities and differences of our two disciplines with an eye specifically to the DBQ and synthesis questions. We read and discussed books that encouraged this process and, in the end, generated questions that could function as *both* DBQs and synthesis questions.[5] Jennifer Conlon wrote one of the more successful:

> Throughout U.S. history, the migration of labor . . . has provided economic opportunity, but at a price. Personal identity, family relationships, and community have been negatively affected. To what extent will Congressional elections address these problems and improve conditions for immigrants?

Ms. Conlon's prompt begins with two premises that must be accepted by the student. In this, her form follows that of both the synthesis question and the DBQ. Then, the prompt opens up ("To what extent . . . ") and demands that the student form an opinion. In fact, Conlon has broadened the academic palette by creating a question that might be appropriate in a government course as well as in U.S. history and English language courses. For documents, Conlon provided sections from Nicholas Lemann's history, *The Promised Land,* on African American migration to Chicago in the early twentieth century; John Steinbeck's fictional account, *The Grapes of Wrath*, of the Okies' trek to California in the 1930s; T.C. Boyle's novel, *The Tortilla Curtain,* which explores Mexican immigration in the 1990s; and contemporary sources that include maps of the spread of illegal immigration in the early 2000s and an Associated Press article on the congressional debate over immigration legislation from the summer of 2006. These sources, coupled with material from Democratic and Republican Web sites, make for a rich collection of voices: fictional, nonfictional, contemporary, historical, all with arguments for students to consider and biases for them to uncover.

The addition of the synthesis question to the AP English Language & Composition Exam opens up a wealth of possibilities to communicate with our colleagues. Whereas interdisciplinary classes usually require complicated scheduling and affected units, DBQ/synthesis questions can be shared informally, easily, and for mutual benefit. If AP English Language & Composition teachers are looking for good synthesis questions with documents, they should cross the hall and ask the AP U.S. History teacher for a few. Though the English students might not bring any specific outside information to bear, they can still generate an opinion and test it against the historical documents provided. If AP U.S. History teachers are looking for interesting sources, English teachers are our best resource for literary documents whose significance resonates in historical context. History teachers know that Steinbeck belongs in their history class (he even appears in their textbook). They just need someone to lead them to his writing.

I like the idea of a student of mine someday saying, "I already answered this question in my English class!" I think the implicit lesson to them would be that the classes they take, at least in history and English language, have things to say to each other and that, perhaps, the two disciplines are not so estranged as they might seem.

Notes

1. Denise Foster, "Entering the Synthesis Conversation: Starting with What We're Already Doing," http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/51948.html.
2. Draft Synthesis Question, AP English Language Exam, 2006, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap05_englang_synthesi_46827.pdf.
3. Document-Based Question, AP U.S. History Exam, 2006, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/_ap06_frq_us_hist_51757.pdf.
4. David Jolliffe, "Preparing for the 2007 Synthesis Question: Six Moves Toward Success," AP Central, 2006, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/51307.html.
5. T. C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain* (New York: Penguin Books), 1996; Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics), 1998 Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land* (New York: Vintage Books), 1992 David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso), 1991.

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Synthesizing Visual Rhetoric

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While a traditional approach toward integrating information literacy into the curriculum is to present students with more nonfiction, our highly visual world suggests that all forms of media be considered fair game when students are asked to use sources. As we teach students to become more conversant in both developing and analyzing argument, how we present visual rhetoric becomes an integral feature of this instruction.

In asking students to synthesize visual text with verbal text, the challenge we face is in how to get our students to (a) analyze the visual rhetoric of a piece, and (b) synthesize this knowledge with other sources. How do teachers get students to extend their use of visual sources beyond an affirmation of what other sources already say or beyond what we already believe? Put less elegantly, how does the visual element in developing an argument extend beyond a child's first encounters with picture books, where the picture affirms or even creates meaning?

At first glance, the rhetorical contexts of visual and verbal text resemble each other, with two noteworthy exceptions, italicized in the table below:

Figure 1: Aristotelian Triangle
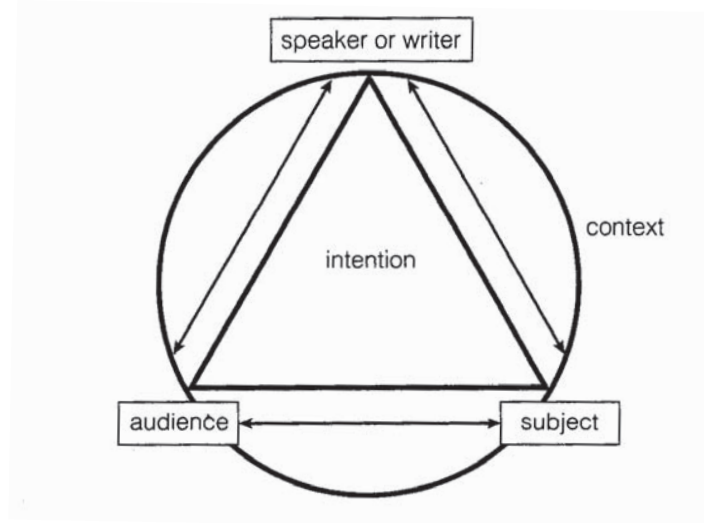
Rhetorical focus	Verbal text	Nonverbal text
Who is sending the message?	*Writer/Receiver*	*Point of view*
Who is receiving the message?	Audience	Audience
What appeals does the text employ?	Emotional, Logical, Ethical appeals	Emotional, Logical, Ethical appeals
What is the message?	Subject(s)	Subject (s)
What is the sender's intent?	Bias	Bias
What does the message look like?	*Style*	*Style*

What does the visual (or nonverbal) text provide that the traditional text cannot? One major difference is determining the point of view of a visual text; visual media broaden the perspective and can provide multiple viewpoints, consistent with much of our postmodern fiction. A Faulkner novel, for example, has many characters' views, but the multiplicity of these perspectives allows readers to synthesize these views into the author's overall position. More contemporary authors with similar objectives include Ernest J. Gaines' *A Gathering of Old Men*, Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (which also features pictures), and the new genre of the graphic novel. Most dramas in our literary canon serve a similar goal. Yet even such ventures into multiple perspectives ask readers to comprehend text in a linear manner, as opposed to visual text, which presents such views simultaneously and addresses the more spatial, visually oriented learner.

Tied directly to point of view are the choices that the sender (creator, photographer, statistician, film editor, advertiser, etc.) makes in the presentation of text, not unlike what authors will determine in their own choices, as noted below:

Figure 2: Stylistic Choices: Terms and Manifestations, adapted from *English Vertical Team Guidebook* published by The College Board

Verbal Text: Stylistic Devices	Nonverbal Text: Stylistic Devices
Diction or Syntax	Numbers, captions, headings
Juxtaposition	Placement
Structure	Organization (of images, data)
Motifs	Recurring elements
Emphasis	Exaggeration, repetition
Incongruity or Irony	Contrast
Tone	Tone

Of all the stylistic devices reflected above, *tone* is arguably the most important, for to understand tone is to understand purpose. The challenge with multiple perspectives is to determine how multiple tones coexist.

In an effort to avoid a separate unit for each of the myriad types of media that exist, consider the following set of questions to determine the rhetorical context of a visual piece:

 a. What are the messages?

 b. What choices in composition has the creator made? What has been omitted?

 c. What is the creator's intention?

 d. In what way(s) does the visual medium present the message that a written text message could not?

 e. In what ways(s) does the visual medium present a message that would enhance the written text message?

For example, we note Alfred Stieglitz's famous photograph, *The Steerage*.

Figure 3: *The Steerage*

In answering the questions above, students can explore this photograph as one that both condemns and celebrates the immigration movement. Responses to the questions above are presented below:

What are the messages? Stieglitz communicates the paradoxical nature of immigration. The crowds on board exhibit the masses' exodus to the New World; the living conditions are rife

with squalor. We can note the multiple tones present within this one phograph: the optimism exuded by the sheer energy of the movement towards a new world; the pessimism presented by the subjects on board who gaze downward; Stieglitz's own cynicism toward what arriving in the New World really proffers.

Choices in Composition: The photographer's use of contrast establishes a type of heaven and hell, celebrated by geometric, harsh lines of a ladder or platform. Yet within each side of "Elysium" are elements that suggest otherwise; those in heaven gaze downward, while the white linen below presents optimism and commitment to a better life. **Omitted**: What are the people on the upper deck thinking? Are they more optimistic than those on the lower deck, who are gazing upwards? Is there already a hint of classism on board?

Creator's intention: To presume to know the intention of a piece of art is an act of hubris, especially if we are not familiar with the subject or artist. In light of the rhetorical context, however, "intent" asks us to determine the relationship between sender, receiver, and subject; thus, intent becomes a matter of inference. Perhaps the photographer's intent was only to capture a day in the life of a ship; but when we synthesize this data with other knowledge, we may use this data to note Stieglitz's ability to demystify some of the glamour of the New World, and to reveal the irony of the sacrifices those immigrants made to pursue a better life.

Enhancements to Verbal Text: Anzia Yaziersken's *The Breadgivers*, or even the final paragraphs of *The Great Gatsby* (published in the same year), both present the misgivings and sacrifices of émigrés, yet they do so in the context of the pursuit of something greater than what they knew in the old country. The fictional texts present a greater bias, given our dispositions about characters up until this point; the photograph, by contrast, is Everyman.

What the Visual Provides that Regular Text Cannot: The major addition here is multiple points of view. The visual synthesizes these various viewpoints—whether biased or neutral— at the same time. With *The Steerage*, especially after reading an account of immigration to this country, we have lost neutrality in exchange for knowing a character's life. Stieglitz's photograph *juxtaposes* multiple perspectives, including the photographer's.

Writing About Visual Rhetoric

Visual texts can be analyzed individually; this is a recommended first step in the process of working with media. The next step is to integrate the analysis into the overall argument. It is incumbent upon teachers to look for various media to complement existing curricula to give students opportunities to use visual texts as part of developing arguments. We may incorporate written text to complement media, so that students may see that visual media is more than supporting data for what we read.

There are two main objectives to consider when synthesizing visual rhetoric with verbal rhetoric:

1. The integration of visual rhetoric into a written response *expands* the argument, rather than merely affirming it.

   The reason we synthesize is to explore multiple points of view, and in so doing, to determine our final position. If the use of visual text in a student argument serves as an affirmation of a point made by a different source, the synthesis resembles what Margaret Wise Brown adroitly accomplishes in *Goodnight Moon*, where the picture illuminates what the verbal text has to say. Rather, if students discern the multiple perspectives that visual media provides, this source serves as a dispatch center for the other verbal taxicabs communicating the message.

   Jolliffe and Roskelly advocate the student's willingness to explore the *complexity* of an issue. The act of *redefining* is consistent with not only our philosophical forbears, but numerous AP language prompts: Hazlitt's perception of the "want" of money is the latest example of this (2006).

2. The integration of visual rhetoric into a written response *raises additional issues*. Paradoxically, synthesis appears to ask students to reduce divergent responses into a single opinion. Public debate is rife with either/or approaches to argument: Either you're for us or against us, post 9/11; gay marriage is/is not protected by the United States Constitution; guilty or innocent.

Synthesis, by contrast, asks students to consider related issues in an effort to fully understand an issue. Socrates knew this in *Meno*: prior to knowing whether virtue is something we're born with or can be taught, we must also consider the many factors related to virtue as well (justice, opinion, and knowledge, to name a few). Students are likely to need some assistance in understanding how to incorporate multiple views in writing. Graff and Birkstein's text *They Say/I Say* recognizes the necessity of having texts engage in dialogue with each other, (2005) and they have provided a partial list of these templates, presented below:

Templates for Introducing an Ongoing Debate

(Note: These templates are selected for their ability to entertain multiple perspectives. There are other categories that may work well with visual text. These include templates under the heading of "Capturing Authorial Intent" and "Introducing Something Implied or Assumed.")

*In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____. My own view is _____.

*When it comes to the topic of _____, most of us will agree that _____. Where the agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _____. Whereas some are convinced that _____, others maintain that _____.

*In conclusion, then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of _____ can't have it both ways. Their assertion that _____ is contradicted by their claim that _____.

Sample 1: The Television—Election Prompt

The initial synthesis sample provided by the College Board provides an interesting exercise in exploring how visual rhetoric can be successfully synthesized with verbal text. The prompt asks for students to agree, disagree, or qualify the assertion that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. A review of Source D, reproduced below, suggests—on the surface—that presidential elections have *not* had a positive impact on elections, because fewer people are watching television.

Figure 4: AP English Language & Composition Sample Synthesis Question, Source D

Source D

Adapted from *Nielsen Tunes into Politics: Tracking the Presidential Election Years (1960-1992)*. New York: Nielsen Media Research, 1994.

TELEVISION RATINGS FOR PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES: 1960-1996

Year	Networks	Candidates	Date	Rating	Homes (millions)	People (millions)
1960	ABC CBS NBC	Kennedy-Nixon	Sept. 26	59.5	28.1	N/A
1964 1968 1972		NO DEBATES				
1976	ABC CBS NBC	Carter-Ford	Oct. 6	52.4	37.3	63.9
1980	ABC CBS NBC	Anderson-Carter-Reagan	Oct. 28	58.9	45.8	80.6
1984	ABC CBS NBC	Mondale-Reagan	Oct. 7	45.3	38.5	65.1
1988	ABC CBS NBC	Bush-Dukakis	Sept. 25	36.8	33.3	65.1
1992	ABC NBC CNN	Bush-Clinton-Perot	Oct. 11	38.3	35.7	62.4
1996	ABC CBS NBC CNN FOX	Clinton-Dole	Oct. 6	31.6	30.6	46.1

SAMPLE QUESTION ONLY: DRAFT FORMAT

Numbers presumably present a syllogism: During the 1980's, more people watched television; recently, fewer people watch television during presidential elections; therefore, television has not had a positive impact on presidential elections. By noting what *choices* the statisticians have chosen to include or omit, we can discern a degree of bias. For example, does the information include the number of people who voted in presidential elections? Does the information acknowledge the number of people who monitored the debate over other media? And just because fewer people are watching television, especially given that television arguably distorts our image of the campaign, does this support the assertion that television has a negative impact?

Given the creative dissonance between a qualitative (often verbal) account of an issue, versus a quantitative (often statistical) account, we can consider these questions in determining the multiple perspectives that a chart provides:

1. What are the boundaries, indices, or variables selected? What has been excluded in this process?

2. Do the trends, assertions, or claims presented by the chart remain consistent? Does the chart account for variations in the data?

3. In addition to the more logical evidence of numbers, what other information, especially written text, may be considered to obtain a fuller picture of what the evidence means?

A Sample Response that Expands

To say that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections begs the question of what we mean by a "positive impact." If we mean that more people are watching candidates and gaining an understanding of who they are voting for, then we fail to take into account that the voting public has become a more informed one. Indeed, given the image-based approach that televised debates present, at stake is not just a question of image versus issue, but also one of access. Indeed, television provides the access, which for many people may be enough; further, television has never purported itself to be an agent of education, for it is by nature a more passive method of engagement. Yes, TV has done what it has set out to do, but the failure of television to impact elections positively has less to do with who watches or even how many are watching, but rather what happens to the electorate in between the act of viewing and the act of voting.

The lack of attention span in the American electorate promotes image over issues. Ted Koppel clearly understands this in his declaration of television as a "joke" in monitoring public debate, given the reduced amount of time viewers even have to watch candidates (Source F). Such sentiment is also supported by Sources B and D, respectively, where those who do watch television, note Roderick and Hart, combine the "serious and sophomoric" and convolute a President's underwear with the impression that they understand the candidate; similarly, such fatigue with candidates themselves who cater to this superficiality is manifested by the reduced number of viewers who watch the elections on television, noted in Source D.

Decreased viewership, however, fails to acknowledge the related issue of access to presidential candidates. Louis Menand articulates the power of the Kennedy–Nixon debates as commensurate with the highest peak in television debate ratings (Sources C, D). But frankly, the novelty had worn off by the 1980s, with the advent of cable television and now the Internet. Candidates are scrutinized more closely than ever; to decry Clinton's wardrobe as a reflection of his presidential potential is as absurd as believing that Kennedy's virtue was intact; Source D also fails to reflect how many Americans actually voted in Presidential elections.

Sample 2: Memoir As Truth Prompt, Authored by John Brassil

John Brassil, whose article on writing a synthesis question appears in this publication, provides a sample that encourages exploration of the related issues. While the prompt itself asks students to agree, disagree, or qualify—per the traditional argument stem—the question focuses on the extent to which a memoirist is committed to "absolute truth." Already one can anticipate clearer exploration of what "absolute truth" means, invoking Jolliffe's and Roskelly's focus on noting the "complexity" of an issue.

Unlike the television prompt, this piece features a cartoon, which invokes key terms associated with traditional studies of satire. Most of these terms fall under the general heading of **distortion**: *exaggeration, caricature, hyperbole, mockery, and overstatement.* In writing and in graphics, we explore the following questions:

1. What is being distorted and why?
2. What is the implicit thesis of the graphic?
3. What are the target<u>s</u> (emphasis on plural) of this distortion?
4. What effect does the juxtaposition or placement of imagery and/or text have on the overall purpose?

Figure 5: *Foxtrot*
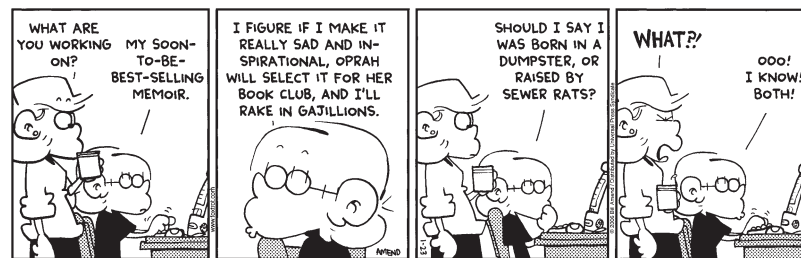
Bill Amend. *Foxtrot*, January 23, 2006. E-mail billamend@mac.com or contact Mary Suggett at Universal Press Syndicate for pricing and options. Call (816) 932-6600 or e-mail msuggett@amuniversal.com.

Foxtrot is a syndicated comic strip that appears in daily and Sunday newspapers in North America.

An initial reading of the cartoon affirms Frey's notion that memoir is as much about story as it is about truth, and the text itself, coupled with the coffee-cupped characters seriousness, suggests that the more horrific the story, the better the sales. Yet, the buffoonish demeanor and appearance of the characters suggests that the cartoon is, indeed, satirizing not just the authors of memoir, nor just the public who consumes such memoir, but also the casual process of inventing truth.

A Sample Response That Affirms

Without question, it is appropriate, even necessary, for a memoirist to be able to distort the truth. America is as much about story as it is about facts; further, fiction can and should be about the truth. Sometimes, the truth itself is too hard to swallow, and the memoirist can provide an important message through a well-told story.

Numerous sources support this assertion as well. The "Foxtrot" magazine presents characters who fully support this method (Source D). James Frey concurs with this notion as he writes: "I believe, and I understand others strongly disagree, that memoir allows the writer to work from memory instead of from a strict journalistic or historical standard" (Source B). And William Zinsser himself also believes fully in the necessity of having memoir be raised to an "art" form (Source C).

By encouraging our students to move beyond the determination of a single position, we can also develop student writing that does more than what I call "treading water," or having writing stay in the same place. Suppose a student did draft the above two paragraphs. What would she/he say next? Perhaps a well-coached student would acknowledge the other side, thereby noting the complexity of the issue in some form. But even the concession/refutation approach has its limits in argument, because the concession/refutation bears the same either/or stamp. Yes, we do want students to see the other side, but the synthesis prompt—with particular attention to the visual power of multiple perspectives—*allows for numerous points of view*. We return to another series of templates from Graff and Birkenstock:

Making Concessions While Still Standing Your Ground

*Although I grant that _____, I still maintain that _____.

*Proponents of X are right to argue that _____. But they exaggerate when they claim that _____.

*While it is true that _____, it does not necessarily follow that _____.

*On the one hand, I agree with X that _____. But, on the other hand, I still insist that _____.
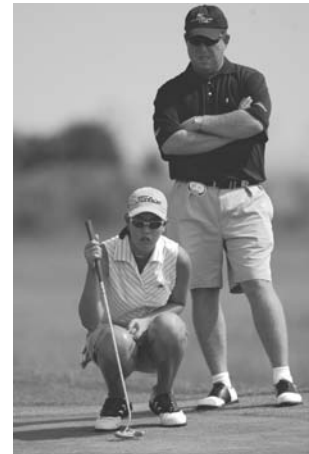
Sample 3: Women and Sports

Gertrude Ederle

Jackie Joyner-Kersee

Michelle Wie

All pictures can be found at: http://pro.corbis.com/search/searchFrame.aspx

Teachers of AP English Language & Composition must be careful to remember that we are still a course about language, and that we teach students the relationship of what is being said to how it is being said. That said, teachers may consider having a greater percentage of text devoted exclusively to visual media. The emergence of the graphic novel speaks to this issue, as does the inclusion of multimedia technology in the development of original memoir. Rather than presenting visual text as ancillary to what the verbal material states, we can take this opportunity to explore the merits of pictorial essays and/or synthesis of images alone.

In addition to asking students to determine the implicit or explicit thesis of each photograph, teachers may direct students to generate original questions as they synthesize these pictures. Such questions may include:

a. What do these photographs have in common?
b. What choices have the artists made in terms of how to present a superior female athlete?
c. Of the three, which seems to be the most/least effective in its presentation?
d. Rank the pictures in order of importance.

Note that the last two questions will ask students to determine the parameters or definitions of what we mean by "importance" or "effective." Once students have had the opportunity to process these images, then provide the prompt. With the samples provided, few students, if any, would know who Gertrude Ederle was (the first woman to swim across the English Channel); they may likely not know about Jackie Joyner-Kersee as well. Teachers may provide a caption that would help, or we could even give the prompt ahead of time. A fruitful exercise would be to explore students' comprehension of pictorial text prior to and after providing more background information. For these four photographs, one prompt is:

To what extent do successful female athletes reduce gender bias?

Conclusion: The Integration of Visual Rhetoric into Curriculum

An ancient Greek frieze of Odysseus returning shows Penelope with her head down, despondent, despite Odysseus' presence before her or her suitors' presence behind her. Once my ninth-grade students have finished *The Odyssey*, they note that her despair may exist for a variety of reasons: the suitors' constant harangue, her unawareness of Odysseus' true identity, or even her awareness that her husband has returned and is not the man she remembered. Well-chosen visual media will establish multiple points of view, and teachers are encouraged to continue to integrate this more expansive media into their existing units, as opposed to visual text whose primary purpose is to document or confirm. Indeed, visual text that affirms bears resemblance to Sparknotes, where the students' tasks remain at the summary level of Bloom's taxonomy. In teaching complex texts with multiple points of view, for example, Sparknotes will help some readers, but the analytical thinking—including the entertainment of multiple perspectives—may be better reflected in visual text, which produces similar challenges. For example, Picasso is the contemporary (in both time and style) of Faulkner; therefore, his work complements Faulkner's intentions.

Musicians, artists, playwrights: These original synthesizers have also provided additional text for us to explore how different voices talk to each other. Indeed, at the heart of successful synthesis is an interdisciplinary approach toward learning—not in the curricular sense, as in the coupling of content—but in the pedagogic sense, where we can look at the types of literacy that students employ from one discipline to another. Students do not become more or less creative given the different class periods of the day. The student who does well

in English likely employs similar strategies to her/his other classes. What changes is the medium through which that creativity or insight is expressed.

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