EWP SAMPLE TEACHING MATERIALS: OUTCOME 3

OUTCOME 3: FORMULATING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS

key words: complex claims, argumentation, and organization

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- Initiating a Line of Inquiry
- Creating a Complex Claim
- Analyzing Evidence and Assumptions
- Making Persuasive Arguments
- Constructing Effective Organization

INITIATING A LINE OF INQUIRY

Lines of inquiry can arise from many different areas in our students' lives, such as personal experience and/or professional interests. Generally, there are a variety of ways to make the paths we explore to create arguments relevant and meaningful to our students. While it is important to consider a variety of in-class exercises to help students find their paths, brainstorming, pitch sessions, and critical reading strategies and reflections to name a few, it is also up to the instructor to explicitly explain the differences between an argument and an informed academic argument.

*Suggested skills/activities/exercises: argument vs. opinion exercises, brainstorming and sharing freewrites, understanding complexity*

HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- lesson plan and handout for developing a line of inquiry (LB1)
- handout for research question brainstorm (YR11)
- template for identifying issues p. 303, CoF (YR12)
- template for abstracts from UW undergraduate symposium (YR13)

LESSON PLANS

- lesson plan and handout for developing a line of inquiry (LB1)
- lesson plan for a proposal bidding game, ELL (XZ8)
- lesson plan for evaluating student proposals (AC01)

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- abstract prompt (YR14)
- proposal prompt (YR15)

TIPS/EXTRA READINGS/USEFUL LINKS

- researcher's notebook from Hubbuch

CREATING A COMPLEX, ARGUABLE CLAIM

One of the most important takeaways in English 131 is understanding how to create a complex claim---a statement that attempts to "persuade, convince, argue, prove, or suggest" a certain idea arising from previous literature to readers who may not initially agree with the idea (p. 4-8 in 131 Teaching Manual). When
teaching what a complex claim is and how to write one there are generally two main approaches---
exploratory and formulaic. Exploratory encourages students to inference the structure and expectations of a
complex claim from multiple examples, while formulaic is focused on giving students a template from which
to build their own complex claims. While both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, an
instructor knows their students best and whether one or a mix of either approaches would work for their
classroom.

Suggested skills/activities/exercises: appeals review, complex claim templates, evaluating complex claims in
current media, counterclaims brainstorm groups

HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- creating a claim handout or assignment prompt (NF5)
- making academic arguments about literature handout (CJ5)
- in-class activity and worksheet on producing counterclaims (EJ1)

LESSON PLANS

- lesson plan for workshopping claims in groups (AH4)
- lesson plan for claims using Lady Gaga video as a reference (A1)

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- creating a claim handout or assignment prompt (NF5)
- sequence of assignment prompts building a claim from research (LR9)
- assignment prompt for a letter to the editor in response to a peer’s argument (HA1)

TIPS/EXTRA READINGS/USEFUL LINKS

- sample student MP1 (AJ03)

ANALYZING EVIDENCE AND ASSUMPTIONS

Analyzing evidence and assumptions behind arguments is often a continual focus of composition instruction.
In introductory writing courses, students repeatedly analyze the arguments of others—established authors
and/or peers—but they are also often analyzing arguments of their own making. For this reason, establishing
a shared vocabulary for argument analysis early on can be important as that vocabulary will often play out
through lectures, mini-lessons, writing prompts, collaborative analysis activities and assignments, peer review
guidelines, and personal reflections. For example, when analyzing the arguments of others, students can
examine the assumptions (or warrants) on which arguments are built so that they can consider and be more
strategic about the warrants they use in their own and in their peers’ writing. For more information on
warrants (and the Toulmin method), please see pages 4-15 through 4-18 in the 131 Teaching Manual.

Suggested skills/activities/exercises: argument analysis, critical reflections, creating/countering warrants, use
of evidence, visual analysis

HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- tools for rhetorical analysis handout with lesson plan (AP1)

LESSON PLANS

- argument analysis lesson plan and handout using student writing (GC1)
- reverse-outlining self-review lesson plan (AP4)
- “all art is an argument” field trip lesson plan (AP5)
- lesson plan for building visual vocabulary and analyzing visual arguments (SM1)
- in-class worksheet and activity on reading for ethos, logos, and pathos (JR1)
- warrants (moral dilemma) lesson plan (SCH01)

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- anatomy of an argument assignment prompt and example (LR1)
MAKING PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS

While many of our students may understand persuasive as meaning to present only those aspects that support our arguments or ideas, in 131, students learn the importance of explicitly engaging with multiple ideas in order to construct not only an informed argument, but a persuasive one that is not selective but complicated and responsive to a broader conversation of ideas on the issue. Instruction in making a persuasive argument may begin with a focus on the three rhetorical appeals and types of claims; it may also start from a discussion of writing credibility across the disciplines, which can make for important connections to audience and genre awareness. Instruction can even begin with a line of inquiry by asking students to cultivate a question based on readings and their interests, which can prompt them to explore their way toward a complex, persuasive claim by asking questions, gathering evidence, imagining alternatives, and speculating about connections.

Suggested skills/activities/exercises: rhetorical appeals practice, logical fallacies, making parallels with visual arguments

HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS
- to be uploaded soon

LESSON PLANS
- teaching argument workshop (HANK1)
- identifying warrants (HANK2)

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS
- to be uploaded soon

TIPS/EXTRA READINGS/USEFUL LINKS
- to be uploaded soon

CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

Organization is as much a thinking skill as it is a writing skill. Working on organization, then, can involve students in creating complex, relevant relationships between their ideas and move them beyond the five-paragraph model. Well-organized writing often offers a compelling representation of pursuing a line of inquiry at the same time as it anticipates and fulfills readers' needs. Students may be familiar with transition formulas (“In addition to”; “However”), but they may be less familiar with using transitions to create and manage reader expectations, signpost major moves in an argument, and make explicit the relations that underlie the larger organizational scheme of a paper. Organization can be taught as a reading task (mapping another writer’s text), a writing task (imagining several organizational schemes for a single argument), and a revision task (creating reverse outlines of existing drafts). Finally, organization can be addressed at the microstructural level of paragraph or sentence construction.

Suggested skills/activities/exercises: reverse outlining, student paper reassembles, focused practice on transitions and sign-posts, introduction and conclusion activities

HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS
- introduction and conclusion powerpoint (YR8)

LESSON PLANS
- lesson plan for in-class activity to reassemble a student paper (CJ8)
- reassemble in-class activity and sample MP1 (AI04)
- reverse-outlining self-review lesson plan (AP4)
- lesson plan for in-class revision of student introductions (KWG2)
• lesson plan for understanding cohesion, using multiple texts (VQ1)
• lesson plan for developing a reverse outline (AH1)
• lesson plan for writing transitions (AH2)
• lesson plan for working with introductions (MH1)
• lesson plan for speed-dating introductions (YR9)
• lesson plan for focusing on transitions, a pair/individual activity (YR10)

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS
• to be uploaded soon

TIPS/EXTRA READINGS/USEFUL LINKS
• to be uploaded soon