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# Student Engagement and Action in Classroom and Community: Place-Based Education and Social Action for the High-Achieving Student

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION IN CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY:  
PLACE-BASED EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION FOR THE HIGH-ACHIEVING  
STUDENT

By

Rachel Jank

A THESIS

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Under the Supervision of Professor Robert Brooke

Lincoln, Nebraska

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION IN CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY:  
PLACE-BASED EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION FOR THE HIGH-ACHIEVING  
STUDENT

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University of Nebraska, 2014

Advisor: Robert Brooke

This paper briefly discusses the work done in a college-preparatory, Senior English class to combat the disengagement present in many educational institutions. This disconnect does not allow for learning retention and, therefore, does not allow for students to apply the moment of learning to life outside of the secondary classroom. The work I do is based off of Jessica Singer Early, Bruce Bigelow, Linda Christensen, and many other master teachers who work with the educational designs of Place Consciousness and Social Action within their respective classrooms. The theories of John Dewey and Paulo Freire suggest that a non-traditional style of education – one that is participatory and more democratic in nature – can allow greater student ownership, engagement, and critical thinking. These theories also direct my curricular choices. I work to combine those theories and practices with the high standards set by the state in which I live, the dual credit program connected to the class, and the expectations of the administration in my school. A genuine experience within a community can engage a student in the learning of writing and reading skills, which will in turn allow for true learning retention to occur.

### **The Problem:**

The students I teach obsess over grades. They are stressed with all the activities in which they are involved, and they do not want their time to be “wasted.” I work in a private religious high school in a town of about 250,000. Though the demographics of the city are incredibly diverse, the students I teach are approximately 90% Caucasian and 95% middle to upper middle class. While greatly focusing on the religious aspect of the mission statement of our school, the administration also works to market the school as a college preparatory school. With 95% of student moving on to a 4-year institution after graduation, the work the students do largely focuses on their future self. They are interested in how their writing affects their grade, instead of them as an individual, for their GPA is what will affect their future. The only value they seem find in assignments is the potential future value, not the potential current value.

A little over a third stated they were motivated or highly motivated as students. The more telling stat is that a a whopping (70%) say that they are motivated or highly motivated by grades, based on a survey I gave in class:

Question: In general, how motivated of a student are you?

| Answer Choices –                   | Responses – Percentage (Number of Students) |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Highly Motivated                   | 13.46% (7)                                  |
| Motivated                          | 57.69% (30)                                 |
| Neither Motivated or Not Motivated | 26.92% (14)                                 |
| Not Motivated                      | 1.92% (1)                                   |

| Answer Choices –   | Responses – Percentage (Number of Students) |
|--------------------|---|
| Highly Unmotivated | 0% (0)                                      |
| Total              | 52  |

Question: How large of a part do grades play in your motivation in school?

| Answer Choices –   | Responses – Percentage (# of Students) |
|--|--|
| A huge part (the main motivator)   | 40.38% (21)                            |
| A decent part (other things motivate me, but grades are high on the list!) | 51.92% (27)                            |
| A small part (I think about them from time to time)                        | 7.69% (4)                              |
| No part (I don't usually think about my grades)                            | 0% (0)                                 |
| Total  | 52                                     |

When asked them to comment on why they have the level of motivation they do in school, several students responded with grade-based reasoning.

- “I value an education and good grades above most other things.”
- “For the classes that I don’t enjoy very much, I am motivated because I know that the outcome will affect my future.”
- “I know that I need to get good grades in order to receive scholarships for college and it makes me do my best and learn a lot.”
- “I have always been a student that really cares about my grades and succeeding in school.”
- “Some things I have I don’t want to try on but overall when it comes to a grade I want to get the best possible which drives me.”

- “I don’t settle for anything less than an A.”
- “I was motivated in school because my parents cared about my grades and I wanted to get good grades to go to college.”
- “I am pretty motivated because I need to get good grades so I can stay in sports.” “
- “I am motivated because I want good grades.”
- And the hilarious: “At this point, my grades are set so the next few days don’t really matter,” and “I have already been accepted into college so I only need to maintain what grades I had.”

This attitude, it tires me. I am tired of pressure from my administration in grading my students’ work. I am tired of putting a number on a paper, and that is the only thing my students look at. My energy drains when my students walk in with complete disinterest. No matter how passionate I get, no matter how much technology I use, no matter how many hands on classroom activities or high interest novels or hilarious anecdotes I incorporate, that look remains when they turn to write or read. And yet, the students I teach do well in their schooling! They score high marks, overall, on tests and turn in their homework and write in a very readable manner. From a strictly quantitative analysis, one would say that the students coming out of the school in which I teach are successful. As a “college preparatory school”, we’ve done our job. However, many of these students still struggle after graduation, when they move into a different context. Something is missing. I believe this is because the students have been told that the real world

exists outside of the classroom and that they will be able to start applying their learning at some elusive future moment. Students seem to only see how things could affect their future, and this constant future sight leaves them disconnected from their present self. The first challenge is to engage students with their present selves, so that they find value in the here and now, and they work they are doing in the here and now.

In a major way, schools are responsible for disconnecting youth from their current lives (the “now”) and the communities in which they live (the “here”) (Dewey *Experience and Education* 48-49). Current educational practices have students preparing for some arbitrary future instead of applying it to the life they currently live. However, in order for learning to stick, a student must be engaged in the material in the classroom and be able to find connections between that material and his/her world. When directly applying the learning to a present situation, a student forms what’s called an “episodic memory,” one which can more easily be revisited and reapplied to future situations (Uhrmacher 630). When learning is void of application and present context, a student then struggles to retain it for future use. An education that is disjointed and fragmented from the world in which student lives is an education that is, in and of itself, disjointed and fragmented. Without applying education to the student’s here and now, the knowledge does not stick well. The student does not learn to apply the information he/she is learning to the life he/she is living, and will therefore struggle to apply the learning in future situations when required (i.e. post-secondary education, the workplace, civil

scenarios). A student must learn how to view learning in the here and now, and be taught the process of application, of problem solving and relating the learning to the community in which they exist. This is the only way the student will be able to apply the learning in the future community.

So then, the crux of the problem at hand is the future focus of my students' culture and society. A major underlying value of the students I teach, and, more specifically, their families, is to get ready for college. If something prepares them for college, then – and only then – it is worthwhile in education. I must struggle to prove the future worth of my curricular choices at every turn. More frustrating than that, however, is that this future focus is a focus on the “end” and not the “means”. Their grade obsession is just a symptom of that underlying cause: being disconnected from a present self and a present purpose. This causes a disassociation with their work. In the same way, a focus on college or the future or the “real world starts after graduation” causes a disassociation with the community in which they live. If the value is only in the “future” and “elsewhere”, how is a student expected to retain the lessons taught in the “present” and in the “here and now”? This is the problem that I see in my teaching. This is the problem to which I must direct my attention.

### **Enter: My Classroom**

As the Senior English teacher, I am the last stop before college writing courses. In fact, the class I teach can be taken for dual credit through a local university, if the student so chooses. Since dual credit students are intermixed with students not taking the class for dual credit, the curriculum remains the same for



both. However, this means that, in addition to my standards for Senior English, I also have standards from the local university.

The standards, in fact, mirror many of the standards for the typical English curriculum. For Senior English, I am required to teach *Fahrenheit 451*, *Things Fall Apart*, *Hamlet*, and a number of short stories. For the writing component, I am required to teach an expository essay, narrative essay, multiple literary analysis essays, a 10-page research paper and writing in multiple genres. I of course have to meet the state standards, and insure that all this is done at the same level as collegiate composition and literature courses, which are as follows:

### **Goals and Objectives for Dual Credit Writing:**

Goals:

Students who successfully complete this course will ...

- Improve their ability to write clearly and concisely, in accordance with conventions of Standard English
- Refine their writing processes in ways that allow them to produce more effective texts through more efficient means
- Develop their writing abilities in multiple genres, including inquiry-based academic writing, analytic writing and creative writing
- Gain awareness of the conventions of language, including the ways in which languages evolve; the interrelations between language, culture and status; and the processes of standardization
- Improve their ability to use rhetorical strategies in a variety of communication

contexts

- Grow in their ability to give and receive helpful feedback on writing projects
- Improve basic information literacy skills

Objectives:

- Students will produce more than 5,000 words (approximately 20 pages) of polished writing, featuring a variety of genres and purposes, in a portfolio.
- Students will complete more than 8,000 words (approximately 32 pages) of unpolished writing (preliminary drafts of polished work and informal writing) over the course of the semester as a means of generating and developing ideas and revising their writing.
- Students will complete one or more projects that will require them to frame research questions; access, evaluate and integrate source material; and properly credit sources.
- Students will participate in writing groups, in which they give and receive feedback on preliminary and revised drafts.

**Goals and Objectives for Dual Credit Reading:**

Students who successfully complete this course in Literature will:

- Interact within the world of literature as it reflects the human condition
- Identify herself or himself as a reader and acknowledge and employ methods of responding to literature
- Understand the influence of culture, gender, race and individual background play in both the process of writing and reading

- Develop an awareness of the distinction between literary genres
- Develop and awareness of literary techniques
- Experience a wide variety of literature

I work to incorporated all of the above into my syllabus and utilize these goals and objectives to help shape my curriculum. However, they are, in some ways, just another set of “ends” that call our focus away from the here and now. It is my job to connect students to their learning, to move them toward ownership of it, and to actually teach them how to take ownership of it. This is so they may not only meet the objectives, but also carry the skills with them past the end date of the class and, most importantly, beyond the classroom walls.

Rather than being solely standards-based, a curriculum’s focus needs to be dedicated to the “here and now”, for students need context to engage in meaning making. (Standards don’t hold much meaning for the average teenager.) In working to solve the issue in my classroom, I dug into a few educational theorists who worked to change the mold of traditional education: Paulo Freire and John Dewey.

### **Searching for a Solution**

According to Dewey, schooling should create *an experience* as work and play come together and the student is completely engaged in the moment. This experience must be directed toward the student as a live creature, one whose past experiences can be fully realized in the present, and applied toward future experiences (*Art as Experience* 16-17). The live creature must not only be connected to his present time, but also his present place, for “when the linkage of the self with

its world is broken, then also the various ways in which the self interacts with the world cease to have a unitary connection with one another” (257). The student cannot be engaged to his/her education without being engaged to his/her past and present. In the same way, a student must be engaged with his/her world in the present to make connections and meaning for the future.

Paulo Freire agrees with Dewey that traditional education does not provide the experiences needed to form a critical consciousness. He argues that a traditional education is “disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness” (37). For a critical consciousness, education must enable students to “discuss courageously the problems of their context – and intervene in that context” (33). So Freire agrees with Dewey that curriculum must revolve around the here and now.

Therefore, teachers must offer students the opportunity to not only think, but to act. By placing the student in the here and now, the teacher creates opportunity for *an experience*. Through this experience, the student becomes an “integrated subject”, the self that takes the past into present and applies it to future, instead of the “adaptive person”, who becomes object by the traditional means of education (Dewey 4). Scripted curriculum often forces students to shed their past experiences to adapt to the current information they must take in. For example, a curriculum about weather patterns often asks for memorization of weather formations; it does not require application of that information to how one can track weather patterns in

his/her vicinity, or understand the direct impact of weather on the social and economical experiences of those in his/her community. An education of the here and now, however, asks the student to incorporate those experiences in the classroom and in the context of their communities, so that a critical consciousness may form.

Two recent movements in education encompass this need for students to attach their learning to their current lives and selves: Place Consciousness, often called Place-Based Education, and Social Action. Place Consciousness, encourages an individual to critically examine and celebrate his/her community and the impact it has on self-identity; this is essential to any student in his/her educational career. Social Action, the ability to identify problems within a community and work towards a self-constructed solution, allows a place conscious person to make a difference that is “an experience” for them, one that is educational and critical in nature. Both skills are needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world, especially as America becomes more multicultural. As I sought out master teachers who have worked to integrate these curricular models into their classrooms, I enjoyed the honesty and trial and error many of these authors described in their work (Berdan 2006; Bigelow 2001; Christensen 2000; Dyer and Robbins 2005; Early 2006; Winter and Robbins 2005).

However, the trial and error left me with more questions as I looked to my own classroom: how does a teacher go about integrating PBE and Social Action into the classroom setting? Will it actually motivate a student to engage in learning? Will PBE and SA create “an experience” for students, as Dewey postulates is necessary

for true learning? When allowing more student choice in an effort to increase student ownership, how does a teacher then navigate the exponentially more varied topics the students choose, all while holding standards high?

### **Working in the Classroom**

With these questions in mind, I began to formulate the year's curriculum, looking for areas in which students could meet the objectives set for the class, while at the same time looking for ways to make the classroom an extension of the community in which the students already existed. As students re-engaged themselves into their communities in a thoughtful way, I looked for ways to push the students towards an analysis of the injustices or social issues they saw as prominent in their communities. True Place Consciousness involves both a celebration and a critique of one's communities, and this type of awareness was the first step towards moments of engaged learning and Social Action within the communities. As I crafted the curriculum, I used assignments required in Senior English and redesigned them, and I took the ideas I'd seen from the aforementioned master teachers and their texts and reworked them in ways that fit with the needs of my students and classroom.

### **The Community Experience: Developing Interest and Excitement in the community.**

Before diving into Social Action with my students, I worked to apply some principles of PBE in getting them to celebrate their communities. Too often, I hear young people in Lincoln, Nebraska say, "There's just nothing to do around here." I

want to scream in protest! Lincoln has a vast number of interesting opportunities for involvement, if one would just look. The Community Experience assignment focuses on building student engaged with the community before and as a jumping off point for the writing. The details of this assignment undoubtedly mirror other similar assignments for community awareness. The University of Nebraska, Lincoln, currently has a “Writing in Communities” course. Regis University in Colorado has a course titled “Service/Community-Based Learning”. This type of work is being done in other places, and I wanted to see how it could apply to the grade-motivated student. I wanted to see how this application of PBE could create engagement for the student, which would then allow learning to stick and transfer beyond the classroom.

While determining how I could incorporate such theory into my classroom, I worked to examine the community in which the students lived, and consider what doors I could open, or which doors I could make aware to them, to facilitate a beginning to Place Consciousness. When encountering any curricular decision, I, like many other teachers, follow Dewey’s principles of looking at the materials in my world, encountering and applying a question, then proposing a possible solution. With this in mind, I created four different categories for students to “encounter” within their communities throughout the year: culture, local economy, art, and community-improvement.

I allow the word “community” to be somewhat flexible, as a community does not just include brick and mortar, but peoples and cultural norms. In fact, one of the

first things we did in the beginning of the school year involved working to define what a community is and to identify different individual roles within communities. Though the community experiences would focus primarily on the physical landscape of Lincoln, students would be encouraged to see what unseen elements form the physical communities. I asked students to consider what subgroups fill the community of their school or neighborhood. What values do these schools possess and what peoples fill the space? I wanted students to discuss the construction of communities before the celebration and criticism of the communities, so students could see the complications that exist within communities, instead of taking the communities at face value, which is often the reason for prejudices. During one class period, I asked the students to deconstruct their high school and examine how they fit in with the apparent constructed values of the space. This could have easily created an “us” and “them” mentality. To combat this, I asked them to examine how a person fills space in multiple communities at once. They then considered which community they think most strongly influences their identity. The deconstruction, then, lead to a discussion on how stereotypes are harmful because they negate the “wholeness” of a person. Asking students to consider how people could potentially stereotype them and how they felt about those words also aided in creating empathy.

With these ideas in mind, I set up four due dates throughout the year when students would come to class prepared to write about their community experiences. The in-class writing was set up very much like a writing workshop, with time in



class for drafting, mini-lessons on various nonfiction genres, revision practices, peer responses and one-on-one teacher conferences. One of the key elements during this process was “Examining the Genre”, where students took a previous student’s past Community Response that was the same genre in which they were writing. They looked for the structure, word choice, tone, etc., within that genre example. That way, the student could apply a common writing skill – reading the genre when attempting to write the genre – to the Community Response they composed. Usually, the Response to a Community Experience was due by the end of a marking quarter. Such a writing project also greatly improved the community of writers within the classroom. They were able to collaborate and share ideas during the process, and I asked them to share their final product, or at least part of it, the day that it was due.

I borrowed Christensen’s read around circle process on the day of sharing. Students moved tables into a circle and took some paper with them as they got settled. For each student who read, every other student would write a comment about what they enjoyed about the writing. I always add my comment during the sharing time, as a model, but the student praise is often better than any comment I could include on a piece of writing. In the spirit of celebrating community, the sharing validated students as writers. They, like Christensen’s class, broke out into loud spontaneous applause after each entry (as I instructed them to do) and then took a moment to write down a few lines on what they enjoyed about the writing, from the style of writing, to the topic, a specific phrase, how they approached the genre, etc. This type of focused, positive commenting allowed them to see all the

different components that go into writing (style, audience, purpose, syntax, genre requirements, word choice, tone, etc.) and allowed them to become more intuitive writers as well as readers. Also, more than any other sharing time in class, this time allowed students to get ideas for future Community Experiences and, by the end of the year, find mutual favorite eateries, shows, galleries and cultural centers within their shared community. Students inspired one another to experience what they experienced and this created a community within the seniors that was particularly interesting to behold.

Originally, I queried how such an experience might allow for a greater understanding of diverse populations. Most of the students in the dual credit class I teach exist in a very middle class white world, with some exceptions in the school's demographics. They have a difficult time seeing why homeless people are homeless or why certain cultures make certain decisions. Adolescents are often quick to think their way of life is correct above others. I thought that asking students to reach out into the community would automatically provide them with access and understanding to different perspectives. However, many students returned to very comfortable places when visiting the community. They remained in their comfort zones, which is fine for a time, but does not elicit the cultural growth that was part of my original outcomes.

Taylor's first community response shows some of this budding awareness. She works to creatively write about her experience of walking out of her comfort zone into an area of the city she rarely visits. Visiting a local restaurant downtown may not seem like an ordeal for many people, but for a person who almost never ventures into the urbanized sector of the city, it is a new experience. Taylor works to own up to her initial impressions in her writing:

Parking meters, parking garages, one-ways and locally owned restaurants are just a few items that represent Downtown Lincoln, an area of town that creates fear inside of me. Fears of going the wrong way on a one-way, getting lost or being attacked are a few I experience when going downtown. Although this area of Lincoln creates fear within me, it also houses a variety of shops and restaurants. The locally owned restaurant George's Gyros Gourmet Grill located at 14<sup>th</sup> and O in the midst bars and a pizza shop is a place known to the locals. The family-friendly atmosphere, delicious gyros and fantastic service drew me into Gourmet Grill on a chilly Saturday night.

With the assistance of a fork and knife I took my first bite, taking me to a whole other world for a moment, until I glanced up and noticed a man standing in the window. The man in his late fifties wore a camouflage top with an orange vest. He stared straight at me. I thought to myself, "Just look down, and don't look at him; he will leave."

Taking another bite I peaked up to see him standing there, and gesturing at me to come outside. Fear rushed through my body and I began to think of what to do if he came inside. I attempted to continue to stare at my food and eat. Voices around me began talking about the man staring at me. At which point I hear, "Do you know the man?" from the cook.

Uneasy about the situation, I responded with no and continued to look down. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed the cook begin to come out from behind the counter. Calming the fear, as I knew the cook would look out of me. Finally the man outside walked away. As

Taylor composes some very honest writing, especially in describing her emotion. Words like “uneasy”, “fear”, “lost” and “attacked” describe her experience well. She creates herself as a character out of place, “peaking” and “glancing” and “attempting”. She “looks down” and “out the corner of my eye.” Her active verbs show her as a person minimizing her own presence in the space, a place within her community with which she is unfamiliar. On the other hand, the other characters in her narrative – the restaurant owner, and “man” – are more set in their actions. The “man” stares – a bold gesture signifying his assertion of belonging in the space. The cook questions her and “comes out from behind the counter”, an action that shows he is claiming the space in the restaurant as his own, belonging to him. How interesting that Taylor’s subtext reveals the claiming of space that so frequently occurs in Place Conscious writing! Her adventure is relatable, rather than pitiful, because we have all been in moments of tentatively claiming space within our communities. We know what it is to approach the unknown.

However, not many students wrote in such an honest way. I see now that, as with any other new experience like an in-depth literary analysis or new genre of creative writing, I need to take students through the process of learning how to assess a new situation in a community. They need to understand the process of “claiming” that they will be going through. In order to get students to understand the values and centers of their learning community, the high school they attend, I took them around the school and asked them to look for clues as to what our values were. We looked at the way the school was structured, what money was spent on,

what was *not* present at our school, what was displayed in display cases, how people were dressed and how they talked. Afterwards, I asked students to evaluate the value system of their high school and discuss how they fit in with, or veered away from, that value system. In future years, I plan to take students on a short field trip to an unfamiliar location, so that they can apply a celebration and critique to a new place as well. I need to do something to help them break through the initial reaction of seeing stereotypes, so that they will be able to form a deeper understanding of the unknown.

Additionally, when I first began to plan this type of assignment, I knew I was offering a fair amount of autonomy to the students and that some students could choose to abuse this. Every teacher wants students to “do all the work” and “read all the pages”, so to speak. Some teachers are tempted to come up with elaborate measures (or punishments) to keep students from slacking off. I knew that there may be some students who chose to not do the assignment in full, or to completely make up some sort of experience in the community. I even considered requiring the students to send me some sort of video evidence that “proved” they completed the experience they claimed. However, I realized, as I dove in the first year of this project, that many students indeed took this as an opportunity to do something fun and use it for school. I was surprised by some responses in a mid-year survey, stating that they Community Response activity was one of the favorites they did first semester. Sure, there were a few students I had to speak with because it was obvious their work came from other sources (e.g. a pamphlet promoting the

community contained several reviews from the internet, rather than original reviews of their own composition). However, the vast majority of the students decided to take the task seriously, especially after the first read aloud. They had a real audience, their classmates and desired to meet the standard set by their peers, rather than by their teacher.

Originally, the students resisted the idea of going out into their communities. This was something they never did in English before and didn't quite see the use:

- I thought it would be ridiculously hard and annoying at first, because I didn't want to have to go through the effort of finding something to do to get my homework done.
- I reacted with frustration that I HAD to do another item for English class and get out of my comfort zone.
- I was confused and scared I guess. I think it's because I haven't done anything like that. After that, when I constantly did it, I got used to it and it became easier for me
- I was like what?!! You expect me to do something outside of school that might require time and money. I reacted this way because I already have regular homework and now she was piling on more that I didn't feel like doing. As I did more and more, I started to enjoy them. I gave me a sense of pride in my community and the ability to find new things to do.

At the end of the Semester, when asked which assignments they found valuable (via free response, not multiple choice), 16 out of 53 stated they thought

the Community Response was the most valuable. I was a little surprised by this, since the reaction at first was not pleasant, as shown above. When asked, "Which Writing Experience impacted you the most," 35% of students responded that the Community Experience was most impactful. The Literary Analysis essay, while good, only had 9% of the population of students find it valuable. When asked, "Which Writing Experience was most enjoyable," 35% of students also responded that it was the most enjoyable (more than any other writing assignment for the semester).

The writing done during the Community Response assignment allows the principles of PBE to integrate with the requirement of taking students through the writing process, and it meets the dual credit requirements for multi-genre writing. The students have ample choice in what their final draft will look like, but we spend time on each of the genres in class periods prior to the due date of their first piece of writing. This way, the students are able to get a gage on what nonfiction genres they can utilize to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. The object, then, is to build a toolbox of experiences and a tool box of writing skills that allows the students to consider and choose how to best present their findings to a community of people.

This assignment usually involves celebrating what the Lincoln community has to offer. Therefore, students still need to critique their community and to work with more analytical styles of thinking and writing to address other standards in the dual credit curriculum. For these needs, I worked to take the timeless play, *Hamlet*, and show its timelessness by applying it to present day communities.

***Hamlet: Connecting and Critiquing***

*Hamlet* is an example of something very traditional as far as a Senior English requirement. Even if a school doesn't read *Hamlet* as a Shakespearean play, chances are that Shakespeare is a required component of English classes, along with many other classics. There are so many options for teachers who must teach a "traditional" curriculum to integrate ideas of PBE and SA into such units. The critical thinking that can come from such mixing is really astounding to watch, and new and fresh to read in student writing. Especially with plays like *Hamlet*, students need a way to make the ideas in the text relevant and accessible to themselves as learners in their worlds. Integrating the community in which they live is a great way to do this.

Whenever teachers approach the topic of Shakespeare, along with singing his praises, they often discuss the accessibility of his text. Students simply struggle with it. I've worked with a variety of options to help facilitate understanding. The biggest part is allowing class time for students to ask questions and collaborate. This simple method, paired with *NoFear* Shakespeare, online "translators", and the actual watching of the play with commentary interspersed throughout the scenes, can help a student understand what he/she is reading. I did not want students to feel alone in trying to understand the play, or stupid for not understanding each and every part. If a student doesn't understand the basic plot, themes and characters, how is he/she going to genuinely think in a critical way during the summative assessment? So,



indeed, the bulk of work spent on Shakespeare is working to understand what he is trying to get across in his lines.

The point of focus in my class is the “center” problems that exist in each of the characters as they move through the play. Such simple things, such small issues, if left unattended, can drive a character to do terrible things. So I grouped students up and asked them to follow one character throughout the play, looking at what they believe drove that character’s actions. In other words, they were looking for the “center” of the character that caused him/her to act a certain way. As groups, they got together periodically to discuss key lines, and then moved into a fishbowl discussion to talk with me about what they found and inform the rest of the class. The other members of the class outside of the fishbowl kept notes on significant developments in the characters and their centers.

In Act 2 of the play, I asked students to focus on a center outside of the book: one in their community. We took the idea of “something is rotten in the state of Denmark” and applied it to the community at large, a sort of “something’s rotten in the state of Lincoln.” Throughout the play, we found various centers driving the actions of the characters: insecurity, loyalty, lack of identity, inaction, greed, perfectionism, etc. I asked the students to look for similar centers in their own communities, hitting up the “criticism” side of Place Based Education. This assignment also asked students to start looking for problems in their communities, for those injustices that could be approached during a Social Action Project. In critiquing communities for this project, students were able to choose a community

with which they were familiar with and analyze it in a different way, applying the principles learned in the classroom into their present day lives, making the learning relevant, applicable and more engaging.

Mimi Dyer, in *Writing Our Communities*, presents a project on photojournalism.. Students entered their communities, and took photos of sites that depict change, tension or historical significance (22). These photos provide the groundwork for further discussions on the elements that create the students' communities, and what issues may arise therein. Dyer notes that this lesson develops differently each year. However, each year, as she and her students move forward in the year, they find themselves continuing to go back to the pictures, and discussing them from different angles, adding different layers of complications to their communities. The recursive nature of this element of Dyer's curriculum shows that it is, by nature, *an experience*. Each ending point is merely a point of culmination that will be used as a starting point later in the year. The Hamlet final project is an adaptation for the purposes of my own classroom with a similar outcome.

In this assignment, the students looked to show that they were able to decode the text (something we already worked on), identify a center issue of human nature (something incredibly Shakespearean), and connect that issue visually to what they saw in their communities. The results were much more interesting than the 3-5 page literary analysis papers I'd read in the past on classic literature. As we moved through the project, students had a good deal of autonomy as far as which

social issue they wanted explore, and many re-entered the text to find quotes more suitable to their issues than ones they already had from going through the play the first time. We had a day or two where we worked on brainstorming and on connecting the quote to the issue to the community.

Some students really excelled in connecting major themes and characters from *Hamlet* to their own communities. As you can see in Trenten's introduction paragraph (in Appendix H) and one of his pages, he picked an idea that resonated with the character he followed, Claudius, and did a good job connected it to the community of Lincoln. Trenten's focus on power really captured the center of Claudius' character. His picture below of a golf course and country club, and the other pictures within his project, highlights the economical, religious and political power structures that reside within his community.

## **Hamlet Final Project**

### **POWER**

The city of Lincoln is not all too unique in many ways. In one way that it is similar to other cities it's size is the emphasis on power. In my community the goal is to strive for power of any kind. This power can be social, personal, economic, the list is massive. Many things in my community either require power, or can create a powerful individual. Power is at the core of all things. Power is often times a driving force behind many decisions; choosing to take a better job is driven by a sense of power. This better job provides one with more money and freedom, so they can act as they please thus giving them more power over their lives. In the story of Hamlet power seems to be the driving force behind almost every major action taken. The characters either want power, or to appear as if they already obtain the power. The story centers on the idea that power is everything.



### **The Club of Power**

*"And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?*

*You told us of some suit. What is 't, Laertes?*

*You cannot speak of reason to the Dane*

*And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, " (Act 1, Scene 2)*

In my community I see a situation in that those in power tend to stay that way. While those in the outer groups must work extra hard to obtain any shred of the power of a few men. This is seen most often at the classical country clubs. Only the most elite of the elite are welcomed into some of these places, and those who do not fit that bill are kicked, or it is made clear that they are in the wrong place. The club is a place for those with a lot of power to flaunt it to everyone else there. A place for the elite to "compare sizes" so to speak, where the successful can spend and live their lives excessively. For many power hungry individuals this is the end goal, to be the talk of a country club over a round of golf. This can be seen in Hamlet with Claudius and his obsession with showing off his new power as king. He implies that "any wish is his command... if he wants to do it". He sends a message that he is not only powerful, but also has the power to avoid or ignore things that are wanted. This is often seen now a days with greedy company CEO's doing as they want and stomping on the customers that made them, all for the power of it.

One of the requirements I try to emphasize is for students to take pictures of the actual issue from their own communities, and this is what proved difficult for some. They wanted to stage the issue, instead of finding something that could represent the idea. In the following example, Alex did a good job discussing some ideas in the play, and she had an interesting connection to the technology that occupies so much space within modern communities. However, as you will see in her full example (in Appendix I), she doesn't have the strongest thematic connection between her pictures. This showed me that perhaps she struggled to find an issue or "rotten center" that her community reflected from which she could create a thematic center in her project.

### Falling apart



**"And so have I a noble father lost,  
A sister driven into desperate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections. But my revenge will come." (Act 4, Scene 7)**

I chose the picture of the phone with the cracked screen because I felt like it fit this quote pretty well. Laertes lost his father and became very distraught about it because his father meant a lot to him. He wanted to seek revenge on whoever killed his father. I connected this to the phone because when it was dropped the first time it got its first set of cracks that made it become imperfect. Just like Laertes became very angry and revengeful after the death of his father. Then he lost his sister on top of it. Then he got very angry and really wanted revenge because someone caused his sister to do this to herself. I connected it to the phone because the second time it was dropped it gained even more cracks. And more space to let the anger and revenge out. Laertes really wants revenge now just like the person who broke their phone. They are very angry their phone broke so they want to take it back to the phone company so they can get a new one. Laertes wants to hunt down the person who did this and make them pay for what they did. Just like Laertes was perfect before and he had a great life with people around him who loved him very much and as he lost those people his outer shell started to break and he wasn't so happy anymore. Just like the phone. It started out perfect and as bad things happened to it, its hard outer shell broke and it wasn't so perfect anymore.

This showed me that I do need to spend more time on brainstorming with the students on *where* the issue that they want to cover exists in their communities. That way, the students can move into their communities with purpose, rather than feel as though the only way to ensure they get a photo is if they stage it with friends. This year, I saved examples of the type of creative thinking I'm looking for, so this will also help students.

*Hamlet* allows the students to critique their communities, but it doesn't provide much in the way of "what can we do now"? The title character wasn't the best example of how to properly address injustice within a society. As we move on from the *Hamlet* unit, we read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. During this unit, we focus on the idea of potentially continuing colonization in our efforts to "help" those in need. As they read, many students find the forcefulness of the church in the

village life upsetting. We discuss which parts of our own culture that come with community improvement efforts, and we comment on the lack of genuine relationship that too often exists during volunteering. We look at a few chapters of the book *When Helping Hurts* to discuss what relief workers actually bring to the equation when they meet with those “less fortunate” by monetary standards. Money, too often, brings paternalism, outside cultural structures, loss of hope and shame. During this unit, I also encourage students to start developing relationships with nonprofits in the area by highlighting several organizations during consecutive class periods. At my school, students are required to complete a certain number of “service hours” each year in order to graduate. These service hours may be completed by participating in a volunteering activity in the community, outside of their church and school. Since the students need these service hours for graduation, and also need to write about a community improvement organization for my class, several will start a final push of volunteering at this time. The focus on community engagement also works well for the next assignment in the curriculum.

### **The Social Issues Paper: Searching for the Source**

The Social Issue Inquiry paper has been a part of the Senior English curriculum for the past couple of years. Before I started teaching the class, students were required to take a deeper look at one aspect of society and culture, digging into the topic with peer-reviewed articles. I decided to refocus this project a little so it would build off of the learning that was already happening and lead into the Social Action project that would cap off the year. Students spent a few days brainstorming

their paper's topic through various questions and readings, reflecting on the issues they'd noticed during Community Experiences and their *Hamlet* project. They also wrote a little about different injustices they saw in various communities of which they were members. From that list, the students chose an issue that they wanted to look into more in depth. The idea that focused the research was finding the source of the problem, rather than only discussing the symptoms of the issue. The students were required to discuss how the problem manifests itself, but the main focus of this paper was that they would not stop there. They needed to consider the cause of the issue. This idea came from a Social Action principle Berdan discusses early on in *Writing for a Change*: that a person must approach the source of the problem, rather than only attacking the symptoms. This is probably the most difficult part of Social Action, because the symptoms are the most obvious and, consequently, easiest to handle.

In order to brainstorm questions, we did The Water Bottle Activity. Prior to this activity, I asked students to write down their inquiry question(s). This activity is meant to get students developing better inquiry questions. A "good" inquiry question is open-ended and looks to drive past the surface of an issue. In order to help the students along this path, teachers need to show them ways to look beyond the surface and help them develop a question that will get them interesting answers. For this activity, any ordinary object could work; it doesn't have to be a water bottle. The two rules in the activity are that no question can be repeated, and that the question must pertain to the water bottle. (As a clarification, the question must be



about the object, not the activity. For example, “Why are we asking questions,” doesn’t work.) The students gather into a circle, and the teacher gives the direction to pass the object around and ask a question about that object. The teacher starts the activity by passing bottle, or object, and writes down the questions that the students ask. The object is passed from one student to the next after the student asks a question pertaining to the object. Once again, the purpose is to look past the surface, or the immediate questions that come to mind, but I do not say this at first.

As the bottle is passed around the circle the first time, many students will ask questions that are a little simple, but some will try to push the envelope, asking questions that are not so obvious. At the end of the first round, the teacher shares the questions with the students (via overhead projector, iPad, or simply writing them on the board from the beginning). The students discuss what types of questions they asked, and what kinds of answers they would derive from the questions. They realize rather soon that the answers will be quite basic and not really ones that they can dig into and write about. So we pass the bottle around again, with the same rules: the questions have to pertain to the object and no repeats, even from the previous round. We discuss the questions again at the end of the round and go around a third time, much to the dismay of the students. However, by vocalizing their questions, students prompt questions in the mind of others around the circle and they play off of each other. It’s a great collaborative exercise. In the end, the final set of questions is placed for all students to see, and we discuss which ones would generate the most interesting research and writing. I then have

them re-write their initial questions, and we share, voluntarily, what our original questions were and where they now stand.

As an added part to this class period, I have the students, at the end of the activity, write a poem about their questions and topic. I tell them that this poem is meant to be “stream of consciousness”, or completely representative of their flow of thoughts, so that they can get down on paper what they are really considering for their topic. Afterwards, I ask students to go back and circle keywords and phrases, to see if they need to modify their questions by including some of these poetic musings. Sometimes, our true interest in the issue doesn’t come up until we mull it around a bit. For example, one student wanted to look into weight gain on college campuses. She started out with “Why do students gain weight?” and ended with “What is an institution, that is supposed to be promoting personal growth and health and intellectual rigor, actually doing that is causing the “freshmen 15”, and how is this affecting the intellectual ability of the student?” Other students found an opportunity to throw a fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters, and chose to cover various topics of child development, abuse and neglect, and positive parenting in their respective papers; their questions reflected this range of topics.

After this Inquiry process, I lead students through different ways to research scholarly articles. This type of teaching is necessary for complex research. To expect a student to know how to take their question and look for articles without instruction on how to access the best articles is a poor assumption on a teacher’s part. I utilized a handout from a research class I had taken, and pared it down to the

high school level. We have access to online databases like OmniFile, WorldCat and EbscoHost through our school, and have access to GoogleScholar, as does anyone with Internet access. The handout leads the students through truncations, Boolean principles, and the process of identifying good synonyms. I still had to help some students with their research, but overall, after the handout, students had a good hold on how to acquire articles that would give them some answers, or at least allow them to consider and discuss their questions in interesting ways.

Linda Stewart writes about real research, as she explains how research became method in making, in *Writing America*. Through her research projects, she questions the notion that education prepares students for “real life.” Stewart contends that engaging students with their communities engages them with “real life” and this in turn engages them in their education. As stated earlier, in order to encourage learning, teachers must see their students in the present, and connect them with the present situation in which students find themselves. This works with Dewey’s insistence of connecting “self” with “world.” Therefore, by utilizing the community as a means to obtain information for research projects, students begin experiences that create an interconnectedness that will serve them for the rest of their lives. Stewart sees research as an opportunity to “find out” what information is “out there” (83). Taking this into consideration, one thing I also work with the students is “real world” research – non peer-reviewed sources to help them gain knowledge. I ask them to consider taking appropriate surveys and interviews, and to include life experience as a narrative. Newspapers and local experts can also help

build a knowledge base. Through this process of discovery, students connect themselves to the here and now, which engages them in their learning. In order to properly discuss an issue, they must look for how it plays out in “real time.”

Even so, some students, after a few days, decided to change their topics since the ones they had chosen did not easily yield the research they expected. If a one-on-one research session with me still yielded poor results, I allowed students to do this. The choice to change topics mid-way through is an issue I would like to approach in the future, since I think it compromised some of the objectives of Social Action. Students decided to change their topic to one they knew something about, rather than one that they actually saw as a problem in their community. At this point, I really started to wonder if the way I set up the Social Inquiry paper would allow students to become engaged in their work, rather than just working for a grade. It seemed to me that when a student changed their topic to an “easier” one, he/she really just wanted to make sure he/she got a good grade. Something that may help with this is encouraging the students to determine different ways of “researching” besides the traditional, scholarly academic source. True research occurs in the present, and I need to further emphasize the ability to conduct present, place-based research on their issue. This way, students have an opportunity here to propose *how* they can identify the cause of the social issue, rather than being told they can only find the answers in peer-reviewed articles. This is a crucial step in learning, and one I will encourage and facilitate more in the future. Some topics are simply better researched in the community, rather than in a scholarly database.

After the students gathered and narrowed their research, I went through several styles of outlining an academic research paper. As this was their last major scholarly paper in English, right at the end of the third quarter of their Senior year, I wanted to give a flavor of what research writing could look like, besides the “thesis-support” model that structures the 5-Paragraph essay formula. I wanted the students to practicing choosing which style they would apply to their writing, so I discussed the traditional thesis support, then introduced the declamative style seen in public speaking and the “thinking-moves” style discussed by Kristin Dombek and Scott Herndon. I then asked the students to take a few minutes to try out the different outlines, to see where they felt their writing would work. My favorite question of the day was “Can we do some sort of combination of the different outlines?” To this, my answer was a resounding “Yes!” To have a student adjust a “formula” shows that they are taking ownership in their writing and want to choose what is best for their writing, not just what is best for their grade. Another activity that many students found helpful was called “Developing Your Argument”, based off of *Critical Passages* and *They Say, I Say*. I wanted them to consider how to thoughtfully and critically discuss a complex idea, rather than just showing one side of the issue. Both of these lessons took the idea of Social Action and tried to dig into the issue with the seniors in a critical way, which was required in the core objectives for seniors.

The purpose of this paper, in the end, was to give students the ability to find answers to tough questions that they developed from looking into issues in their

community. It was meant to be the bridge between Place Consciousness and Social Action, while simultaneously meeting a core aspect of the prescribed curriculum for Senior English of writing a scholarly research paper. I believe the students by and large met the latter goal. However, I think many students, caught up in writing a “correct” paper, took their eye off the learning that could happen in order to answer their question. I didn’t focus enough on the application they were about to do with the information they gathered.

### **The Senior Social Action Project: Doing Something About It**

As they were writing their Social Issue Paper, I asked the students to consider where they saw the issue they were writing about in their own community. This was key to initiating the transition from contemplation into action. The students needed to start combining Social Action and Place Consciousness in order to come up with projects that worked toward the betterment of their communities, or the solving of an injustice. Some students really latched onto this idea and came up with some thought-provoking ideas that seemed very actionable. Two girls decided to tackle the issue of elders being considered “disposable people” and educate others about the blessings of geriatrics, along with spend a couple months building relationships with several individuals at a local assisted living facility. Another senior tackled the injustice of bullying in the school with several projects with middle school students. There was also a project involving a food drive, trying to focus on the issue of a lack of healthy food for low-income families.

I did not expect the reaction that I received. The day I announced the project, I did some work in the school media center during my plan period. A few students had a study hall at that time, and one turned to me and said, “Mrs. Jank, I just want to thank you for actually making us do something. I know a lot of the seniors are complaining about it, but I think it’s really a neat opportunity.” From my perspective, I thought students would enjoy using class time on such a project, rather than wading through the murky metaphors and tough language of another “classic” like *Moby Dick*. (I have yet to meet a teenager who “gets” and enjoys that book.) Curious about their thoughts, I asked some students during class the next day what their reactions were to such a project.

“Well,” one said, “for those of us who are used to this, I think it won’t be a problem going out and helping others. But not everyone does this stuff with their family.”

I hadn’t thought of that. Some students were used to volunteering and finding issues that they wanted to address. Others, however, had no idea what to do. They thought I was asking them to solve world hunger, instead of asking them to find something within their sphere of influence regarding food insecurity. Some were caught in the weird spot where they worried that it was impossible to make a big enough impact on an issue, while simultaneously worrying that their issue was too big for them to handle. I think this feeling is actually quite common when one considers how one can better the world in which one lives. This year, when we watched Natalie Warne’s TedX Talk, I asked the students to journal on “Do you think

you could do something like Natalie did? Considering your natural abilities and current life demands, where in the process of her would do you see yourself?" This allowed students to consider how they could find, connect with, and aid the organizations that are already working to fix the social issue examined in their research papers.

Even so, students often fell into the trap of considering how "successful" their project could be by assessing only the final "product" of their work. Therefore, I realized that I needed to focus on a few principles of Social Action as I worked to guide students into and through the process of identifying an issue and working towards a solution. After an issue is identified, several things need to be remembered. First, the issue is often very complex, and often students may be able to address only one facet. Secondly, it would be very easy for teacher to take over the solution process, but another key idea of Social Action is that the students have to be the agents of change. Finally, the most terrifying aspect is that the solution might not work, and yet that failure is a natural part of the Social Action process. How would my grade-motivated students take this? How would I, as a teacher of a high stakes senior class, take the possible failure of the unit?

With these concerns in mind, I discussed these complexities with the students. I asked the students to start digging into their communities to solve the problem they were looking at. Some students did this very well, while others, once again, went to their comfort zones. However, we started in, going through a sort of drafting process on finding a project. We worked through a brainstorming handout



and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to get them started. I assigned checkpoints where students had to answer questions and give me a general idea of where they were in their projects.

The first post I asked them to respond to was at the very beginning, before we did any type of action plan. Online, I instructed them to react to the following:

A few thoughts of mine to perhaps help generate yours:

It would be quite easy to approach this project as something else you need to *do*, a job, instead of focusing on how your passions/abilities compel you to act, a work. Think about what needs there are in your communities. Consider the injustices - small or large - you've witnessed. Identify the issues that concern or frustrate you. Most importantly, consider what you are passionate about and what spheres of influence you already have. Discuss all these in your reflection. An opportunity to act may already be in your life; you just have to seize it.

I wanted them to focus on their own spheres of influence, as well as the different connections in the community they already made. Some students responded with the honest reply that they were still struggling with what to do. Others told me of two ideas they had started to pursue, and wanted to know my opinion on what they could do. The two following replies were typical in style and content of the majority of the class. At the early stages, students worked through their process as they wrote:

“...sometimes families just place their elders into a nursing home and then forget about them; they rarely visit them because they perhaps feel that they are none of their concern anymore. An impulse to go serve these people shot through me. However, the problem of not having enough time due to being swamped with homework brought my hopes down of doing this project. Two weeks was not enough time to take on this project. I decided that if I could not do it now, I would do it during the summer as my own special project. Now in English, we are starting this new project of going out into our community and fixing an issue. Here’s the issue that has been opened before my eyes: families are placing their relatives, my elders, into retirement homes or nursing homes and forgetting about them, causing them to feel lonely.”

Another stated:

“I have been passionate about the injustice of prejudice and hatred since the beginning of the year and I believe that since I am so invested in it already, I might as well use this project to be able to do something about the hatred everyone experiences constantly in their house, friend groups, school, community, and even our nation today. I think that there are many different things that I can do around Lincoln Lutheran or even Lincoln to stop the prejudice against people. Everyone feels prejudiced against in one way or another because of different lifestyle, social standings, religion, race, weight, etc. As I stated in my Social Issues paper, education is a large part of the

issue, because people never take enough time to get to know a person before they make a hasty judgment on that person.”

Since I had the students post their thoughts on a Friday or Saturday, online, I was able to both respond to them online by the next class period and create a list for myself of students I needed to touch base with in class the next day. Most student responses were pretty confident, even at this point, so I only had to remind them to contact a specific person, or, in some cases, discuss their project with a student from another class who was doing something similar. For later posts, I asked more specific questions, like requesting a list of what they were planning on doing the next week, or the progress they made. I also had one where they posted a calendar of when they would contact different people and accomplish different goals so I knew who to meet up with at different points, to follow up on progress.

The loose structure of a project like this can be very daunting, a feeling which some students emphasized in their responses. At the end of the project, some felt that on “this one I really had no idea what to do. I was really, really frustrated because the project was so vague and I had no idea what to do at all. So I tried to do something and all of my ideas got shot down.... This was the worst project of the year.” Or “you didn't really teach us anything. You just gave us the assignment and told us to go and do it. The thing was I didn't really learn anything so this wasn't that well thought out in my opinion.” It is this type of response that causes me to continue to revisit this curricular moment, even though only 3 out of 52 students felt this way. I need to figure out which students are frustrated by the lack of structure

early on, so I can better help them through the process. Some students are so results focused that a tangible end product is all they shoot for and all they see. When a project is more complicated, results are often not seen at all, at least for a time. Real change takes time, and not all results can be measured. These are points I need to emphasize more in the early stages, so that I can teach the students how to set process goals instead of product goals. After all, the true learning often occurs in the midst of the process.

In order to present, I asked students to do a mini TedX talk. We'd watched a few of these throughout the school year. I asked them to use whatever media/visual aid they thought would best display their project, and left that part largely up to their choice. As usual, I discussed the rubric I would use to grade. This ending presentation is one part that I would love to do differently. In other Social Action units from other master teachers, students have presented to a real audience of community members. One of my greatest frustrations with this project is that the ending presentation lacked an authentic audience. This will definitely change in the future. As I listened to these presentations, I also realized that some students still chose solutions that were "safe". This meant that for some of the students, they were comfortable with addressing the symptoms of a problem, so they continued to do that. Very few students were okay with having an uncertain outcome. I would like to work in the future more on ways to encourage students to be okay with open-ended projects.

In the end, I asked students what they thought about doing this kind of work within a Senior English classroom. I wanted to know if they found it valuable and how much ownership they took of their learning. In order to ask these questions, I found that I had to explain what it meant to “take ownership of learning.” This surprised me. Yet, I realized that just as students aren’t often given the opportunity to take ownership, they also aren’t often given an explanation of what “taking ownership” means, why they should take ownership and how this can be done. I definitely need to integrate this into future projects. When I give students choice, I need to explain that it is a chance to “take ownership of their learning” and follow that with an explanation of why such an opportunity is valuable to their learning. If I only explain the theory of engagement and ownership in a thesis, and neglect to convey the ideas to my students, then I am not doing my full job as a teacher.

As mentioned earlier, student responses were mixed, but generally in favor of what we did for the last quarter:

- There was definitely more ownership in the community responses and definitely the Senior Action Project because we had to motivate ourselves to do it. You couldn't fake these experiences like you can BS a paper or test. With these assignments, you can say that you actually took the time outside of school to go out and do something.
- At the end of the day, though, I got to learn about what I was interested in and what was applicable to me. That's worthwhile.
- It was nice to be able for English to apply to my life senior year.

- You made us look into the issues for ourselves as opposed to simply telling us what we should know, so probably more ownership.
- I think I had slightly more ownership because most assignments related directly to my everyday life.
- I would say this is the most valuable kind of learning there is, because you are applying previous knowledge to the real world.
- I doubt this applies to most people -- my project happened to be one with a pretty huge time and energy commitment -- but I was constantly amazed by how I kept learning and maturing throughout the months of this project.
- I also believe the social action project prepared me for the real world, and that was very useful I believe.
- My learning is valuable because I will use that knowledge with my life and future.

### **Reflections and Revisions:**

Based on that final feedback, the feedback of my students throughout the year and my own moments of self-reflection, there are several adjustments I am planning on making in my curriculum and practice next year. One is that I am planning on introducing the Action Project *much* sooner. Some of them need to try and fail earlier on, so they can adjust their end goals. Some of the students need to get connected to organizations sooner, so if they need to go through training, then they have the time. Some students simply need more time promoting their plan, so their events have greater attendance.

Two major revisions are necessary as I continue working with this curriculum. The first is the need to work to create a “real” audience, whether their peers, their school, or even outside the walls of the school, in order to move their perspective beyond the page. What I mean by that is this: so often students are focused on what is occurring in the classroom with writing, rather than seeing the world and their community as moments where both writing and change can occur. Once students start strengthening their ties to their respective communities, they found more purpose in their writing and were excited to share their experiences, through their writing, with the audience of their peers.

Secondly, I know I have more work to do in helping students into moments where they can challenge the way they think of “others”, those people and situations with which they are unfamiliar. Some of the strongest work we can do as educators is helping students see their fellow people on an individual basis, rather than as a lumped or labeled person. I know I need to create purposeful mini fieldtrips outside the four walls of the classroom, and off the school campus. A guided integration into the new elements of their community is essential to help young people in this area.

In the end, some of the assignments the students turned in still felt rushed. I know that perhaps more in-class brainstorming time could be spent to more deeply develop ideas, and I could do some guided writing as well. However, I also need to be aware of extracurricular moments that may cause a student to feel the need to rush. I know that there is only so much I can do in the classroom when busy schedules take over. As stated earlier, the students I teach are involved in a great

number of extracurricular activities. While increased ownership in the writing can help them prioritize their time better, when push comes to shove in another activity (like the fall musical, in which about 25% of my students are involved), I know they will put their writing on the back burner. As I approach each moment in the next year of my teaching, I must be alert to the pressures my students encounter, for those will affect how much they put into the process of writing.

At the very end of *Writing Our Communities*, Diana Mitchell encourages teachers to take their time in creating these lessons (97). This was an especially important moment during my discussion and collaboration with master teachers through their writing. The lessons these teachers present in their writing are exciting and relevant, and I hold high expectations when applying them to my classroom. When the students don't react as I expect, then I become discouraged. However, Mitchell emphasizes that the collaborative process she was a part of took years, as did developing the curriculum. As I work in my classroom to play with the notion of Place Consciousness and Social Action, and engage my students in their here and now, I must expect hard work for myself. The teachers whose narratives fill *Writing Our Communities* and *Writing America* worked years to form a Place Conscious curriculum, and admit that they are still tweaking the process. The end of a school year does not signify the end of their curriculum; it opens toward a new beginning for the next year's classes.

In addition, some of the objectives for the Social Action Project are tough to nail down; it is difficult to set standards based upon them, or track students'



progress in obtaining them. Yet, when teachers are given a strict formula for their curriculum, it becomes as mechanical as the formulaic 5-paragraph essays prescribed for the state writing assessment. Christensen, Dewey, and all the educators with whom I entered into conversation understand the forming and reforming method necessary for creating curriculum. There must be time, consideration and continued conversation. Moving forward, as I look to engage my students in the here and now, I must also engage them the conversation that is the curriculum in our classroom. Dealing with this type of real world mess and relational learning is what will continue to motivate and engage them far beyond the walls of the classroom and past their senior year of high school.

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## APPENDICES:

- A: Full Community Response Handout
- B: Examining the Genre
- C: Community Response Rubric
- D: Taylor's Full Community Response Example
- E: Hamlet Daily Work Handout
- F: Hamlet Final Project Handout
- G: Hamlet Final Project Rubric
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- O: Social Action Project Introduction
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## APPENDIX A: Community Response Handout

### Writing for Community Awareness

#### Focus:

True 21<sup>st</sup>-Century preparedness, and Multi-ethnic understanding comes from a combination of educational preparation and community involvement. In order to develop skills to help you succeed in after high school, it is essential to develop an awareness of “where you’re from.” Therefore, a chunk of our writing curriculum will be based on the community in which you live. Stepping out into the community is a way to interact with new people, ideas and cultures, and develop personal growth. Your projects will be based on the following categories:

**Art** (community theatre, art galleries and shows, local authors and poets)

**Business** (locally owned, entrepreneurs, family owned, etc.)

**Ethnicity** (heritage, diversity, food, values, community)

**Community Improvement** (non-profits, religious centers, community impact centers)

#### Learning Goals:

- Interact with other cultures, working to validate cultural differences, understand more what ideas different cultures have to offer, and realize what constitutes American culture
- Develop an awareness of place, to critique and praise what is present
- Work to compose and develop a piece of writing that considers purpose, audience, content, presentation, context and genre
- Establish and work through the writing process of drafting, revising, consulting, polishing and presenting

#### Procedure (I will be checking each step in your final turn in):

- Get into the community. This first step is the most important. Work to discover what your community has to offer in the area of art, business, ethnicity and community improvement.
- Consider what information exists in the community that possesses the potential for presentation. Consult with community members to gather information essential to your writing.
- Choose a genre and get a first draft completed
- Study at least two examples from the genre you’ve chosen
- Work revisions by applying several “Questions to Consider” to your piece, and asking a peer to comment on your piece, using one of our “Comments and Critiques” methods
- Final Draft

*In the end, your project should be the equivalent of a 3-5 page piece of writing.*

**Purpose:**

- Is your piece informational, persuasive, critical or celebratory?
- Does your piece focus on a small part of the community, or move toward the general, to discuss the community as a whole?
- How does your choice of genre relate to the purpose of your project?

**Audience:**

- Who is your primary audience?
- What is your relationship to your audience (age, gender, education level, cultural background)?
- What does your audience already know about your topic? What background information might they need? What additional information do they need?
- Will your audience need to be informed, persuaded, entertained?
- What tone should you take with your audience? Formal, informal, respectful, humorous? What language should you use?

**Content:**

- What information is necessary to fully develop your piece? What details do you need to include so your audience has a clear understanding of your point of view?
- Have you been redundant and repeated information unnecessarily?
- Have you given details where they will be helpful in highlighting the community?
- Do your details support your main idea?
- Do your details give a good picture of the community? If someone didn't live in your community, would they be left confused, or is your picture clear?
- Do your details focus on your purpose of entertaining, informing, celebrating, critiquing or persuading?

**Context:**

- Have you explored historical/background issues related to your topic?
- What elements of the community influence the information you were given?
- Did you find biases? Does your project represent those biases? Should it discuss those biases, bring them to light, or ignore them?

**Genre:**

- What are the components of the genre you've chosen?
- Have you met all of those components?
- Will your genre help you meet the audience you want to?
- How will your genre relay information to the reader?
- What tone is needed to fulfill the requirements of your genre?
- What formatting does your genre require? Have you formatted it properly?
- What type of language or phrasing does your genre require?

**Presentation:**

- Is your information presented in a clear, coherent and engaging way?
- Have you fixed mechanical and conventional errors?
- Is your presentation in line with the requirements of your genre?

## APPENDIX B: Examining the Genre

### **Examining the Genre: Where does the power lie?**

What content or facts does this genre contain? What general information? *In addition to answering the questions:* Label the content of each paragraph.

How much detail does this genre contain? Do descriptive phrases and in-depth explanations seem important to this genre? *In addition to answering the questions:* Mark where the author is more descriptive, and mark where he/she leaves out details.

What types of details does it contain? Pictures? Captions? Examples? Research? How are the details sequenced throughout the writing? *In addition to answering the questions:* Note/highlight significant details and where the author decides to put them in the writing.

How is the information organized? By story plot triangle? By focus on one event? By bullet points? Dialogue? Paragraphing? *In addition to answering the questions:* Note/Label the major topics.

How are sentences constructed? Are the short and to the point? Long and detailed? A mixture of the two? *In addition to answering the questions:* Mark where the author creates advanced/complex or unusual sentences.

What transitions does the genre utilize? Where are the transitions created? *In addition to answering the questions:* Mark the transitions.

What does the lead contain? Is it more descriptive or informative? Is it meant to shock, entertain or enlighten? Is it one paragraph, or many paragraphs?

What kind of ending does this genre have? Does it recap what has already been said? End on an important detail? End with an image? Dialogue? Does it end by creating a scene in the reader's mind? What idea do you end with after you get done reading?

How is this genre formatted? Will it work as a typed, double-spaced paper? Are images necessary? Does text need to change sizes? Be emboldened or italicized? Are the paragraphs indented? Are they short or long?

How formal or informal is the tone/voice of this genre? Can casual phrases be included? First person? *In addition to answering the questions:* Mark sections where you hear strong voice.

What audience is this genre set to reach? Persons of high education, average education or limited educational experience? What age group, gender group, ethnic history? Is the audience conservative or liberal? Hostile or biased in any way? *In addition to answering the questions:* Mark the sections in the piece that helped you develop this idea.

## APPENDIX C: Community Response Rubric

**Rubric for Community Response Writing:****Process:** \_\_\_\_/25

\_\_\_\_ Drafting/Brainstorming

\_\_\_\_ 2 Genre Examples

\_\_\_\_ First draft with revisions

\_\_\_\_ Draft with Peer Response writing/signature

**Final Draft: (100 points)****Purpose/Audience:** \_\_\_\_/25

Student has considered the purpose of the writing (informational, persuasive, entertaining, etc.). Writing consistently applies the proper tone for the intended audience; draws in the reader/viewer through text, color, exposition, etc. and causes the reader to ask him/herself questions; promotes understanding

**Genre:** \_\_\_\_/25

Student has considered the elements that comprise the genre of choice; chooses an ideal genre for the audience and purpose; carefully attends to genre specific conventions about structure, language, format, etc.; employs the unique qualities of the genre to reach identified audience(s) and achieve purpose.

**Content:** \_\_\_\_/25

Student has chosen to present information that is relevant to the reader, and interesting for the student. Content is well developed and explained using proper details for the genre.

**Presentation:** \_\_\_\_/25

Student has created a piece that is polished and professional. Writing does not contain conventional errors. Formatting adds to the writing. Visual elements are clean and well chosen.

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_/100**Teacher's Comments:**



## APPENDIX D: Taylor's Full Community Response

## Community Experience

## A Gateway to a New World

Parking meters, parking garages, one-ways and locally owned restaurants are just a few items that represent Downtown Lincoln, an area of town that creates fear inside of me. Fears of going the wrong way on a one-way, getting lost or being attacked are a few I experience when going downtown. Although this area of Lincoln creates fear within me, it also houses a variety of shops and restaurants. The locally owned restaurant George's Gyros Gourmet Grill located at 14<sup>th</sup> and O in the midst bars and a pizza shop is a place known to the locals. The family-friendly atmosphere, delicious gyros and fantastic service drew me into Gourmet Grill on a chilly Saturday night.

Sadness filled the streets of Lincoln with another Husker loss, with one step in the door of the restaurant the sadness disappeared. Being greeted with a smile and a hello, the restaurant made me feel safe. Windows lined the walls exposing the dangerous world outside. A small TV hung in the corner, exposing the unrealistic life of reality television. Tables and chairs filled the restaurant, and families enjoyed time together. A menu hung above the cash register consisting of seven options, all types of gyros with something special about each of them. Behind the counter stood a young boy at the age of about seven years old waiting to take my order. To the left of him stood a man, most likely his father, who cooked all of the food.

Glancing at the menu, with a blank stare, a little voice spoke up. "My favorite is the spicy gyro. You should get that."

Shocked at the maturity of the boy, my response was delayed. "I'm not a big fan of spicy food. What is the basic thing most people get?"

→ great & pulls me into you

Keaton

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He responded with the suggestion of a gyro plate consisting of a gyro and fries. Handing him a 20-dollar bill, I waited for my change and then took a seat. After taking a seat, two-college boys walked through the door. The boy at the register followed the same routine while his father cooked the food. While waiting for my food, I gazed out the windows into the world that existed outside. Couples holding hands, multiple groups of college aged women and bikers passed by the windows. Stoplights and an ambulance with red flashing lights controlled the flow of traffic. Horns honking, people talking and music fill the streets.

The cook approaches me with the gyro plate, "Here you go, let me know if I can get anything for you." and returns behind the counter. A large gyro with an abundance of lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream and meat lay on the plate with a pile of steaming hot fries. With the assistance of a fork and knife I took my first bite, taking me to a whole other world for a moment, until I glanced up and noticed a man standing in the window. The man in his late fifties wore a camouflage top with an orange vest. He stared straight at me. I thought to myself, "Just look down, and don't look at him; he will leave."

Taking another bite I peaked up to see him standing there, and gesturing at me to come outside. Fear rushed through my body and I began to think of what to do if he came inside. I attempted to continue to stare at my food and eat. Voices around me began talking about the man staring at me. At which point I hear, "Do you know the man?" from the cook.

Uneasy about the situation, I responded with no and continued to look down. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed the cook begin to come out from behind the counter. Calming the fear, as I knew the cook would look out of me. Finally the man outside walked away. As

I continued to eat, I worried about the man being outside when I left, causing me to eat slower, and stay in a place where I felt safe.

After some time, I decided I better head home. Leaving a world of comfort, I stepped back into the world outside. Fear rushed through my veins, as the man could be anywhere, and I had no one to protect me. Standing at the corner waiting to cross the street, I heard commotion to the left of me. Two men, who appeared to have just left the bar, were in an argument. One of the men began to grab the other by the shoulders and engaged in a conversation. Standing in fear, I wondered if the light would ever change. I just wanted to sit in my car with the doors locked. *we've all been there*

Frantically hurrying across the street, I scurried to my car. During the walk to my car, a police car sat at the right of me making me feel a safer, but the fear of the man who stared at me through the window continued. After the long walk to my car, I drove the through streets of Downtown Lincoln back to my house, a place of true safety.

## APPENDIX E: Hamlet Daily Work

**Hamlet Presentation/Actors Circles: Discovering the “Center” of the Individual****Characters for examination:**

Hamlet, Queen Gertrude, King Claudius, Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, Horatio

(Note: if your characters are not present for an act – some die – default to Hamlet)

**Roles:**

Playwright (*Determines lines*), The Speaker (*Says Lines*), Costume Designer (*Creates the appearance*), The Actor (*Determines the expressions and body language*)

**Playwright:** Choose lines/text support for the character to present to the class. The lines should be representative of the character and their state of being for that Act. Choose (three different lines/speeches) that somehow show the “center.” Write a paragraph that explains why you chose the lines and phrases for that character, and what about that character’s center is revealed.

Note: As you are watching/reading the play, notice where your character starts to show more emotion. This may be a HUGE clue as to a line that may show the character’s center.

**The Speaker:** Before you come to class, Pick three lines from the act that show your character’s emotional state. Discuss how those lines show reveal emotion, and what the character’s “center” is that is causing that emotion. What does the emotion reveal about him/her and his/her center? In class, read the line with the proper emotion and intonation, which you have already determined based on your pre-class work.

**Costume Designer:** Choose three lines that you think reveal what the character’s “center” is. Explain why those lines reveal the center. What clothing and props could represent those lines? Choose how the character is to be dressed. Explain your choices, and how those choices came from the lines, and how they represent the center of the character. Be sure to state what you think the character’s “center” is.

**The Actor:** Based on what you see and read, determine three key aspects of your character’s “center” for the act. Choose lines that support these three key aspects. In a paragraph, explain why you chose those lines, and what they reveal about your character. Explain what types of body movements and facial expressions you wish to utilize in revealing your character to the audience.

Note: In the same way as the playwright, you can note the intense moments for your character as you watch/read. Notice which lines are expressed in different ways, and what this could reveal about your character’s center.

On the day of presentation, your job is to participate in the actor's circle, which will take some courage. If you are confused when you watch/read the act, then talk with me. I am here before/after school to help you. Not finishing will result in a zero. If you are absent and have not sent your group members or me your work, you will get a zero, because you were in no way present for your presentation. If your character has few lines/is not present during the act, default to Hamlet.

Note: It would be easy to oversimplify in this project. For example, in Act 4, Ophelia goes crazy and runs around singing "random" songs. It would be easy to say, "Ophelia is feeling crazy in this scene because she sings, 'How should I true love know from another one? By his cockle hat and staff and his sandal shoon' (Act 4, Scene 5). The queen asked her how she was and she responded like this. Her center is now craziness."

Push your character analysis deeper than this. What drove her to madness? Has her center collapsed in some way? What about her center collapsed?

When looking at a character, don't just look at how they react to a situation, or what they say, but why they are saying it. What is the deeper issue going on in their lives?

Examples: Claudius

**Playwright:**

"Pray can I not.  
Though inclination be as sharp as will,  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect." (Act 3, Scene 3)

These lines show, finally, what is truly at the "center" of Claudius. It seems cliché to say that "sin" is at his center, because it's at the center for all of us. However, at this moment, his sin is greatly affecting him; his guilt is causing him to suffer. This moment is significant for understanding Claudius' center because we can see that he is aware of his sin, and the guilt at his center is causing him to reconsider his actions. He recognizes his sinful nature, showing that he is not just a power-hungry person. There is a battle going on, and he may start to change, now that he's admitted, to himself and Hamlet, his guilt.

**Actor:**

"In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice," (Act 3, Scene 3)

This quote has a lot to it. It would be easy to just take my hand and make a pushing aside motion for this line. However, I don't think it would show the true state and center of Claudius. The line says "gilded hand," which means covered in gold or riches. If the costume designer doesn't choose to have me wear jewelry or rings, I might suggest it, because, as this line states, money is at the center of Claudius. He states that a gilded hand may shove justice aside, or pass by it by pushing it. He is saying that money allows people to do what they want, and this greed is at Claudius' center. During my lines, I will try to show the greed by looking at my crown when I talk of what I've done, or staring at my rings.

## APPENDIX F: Hamlet Final Project Assignment

### Hamlet Final Project:

At this point, we've already done some thinking as to what our potential centers are, and the centers of our communities. Shakespeare always had some center of the human condition at the core of his plays (the true reason they've stuck around so long). Now it's your turn. Reconsider what you think the center of your community is, or the various aspects that make up its center.

Consider 5 different scenes within your community that could represent those aspects that make up the center. For example, in *V for Vendetta*, at the center of the community was order. Therefore, the novel opened with scenes showing everyone doing the same thing at the same time, and broadcasts that told everyone the same information in the same way, and told them what to do. Later, however, we got a picture of the oppression also at the center by Evey prostituting herself.

So, what is at the center of your community and how can you tell? Take some time to draft about it. Decide 5 different scenes that represent the center, or different "sides" of the center. There should be some sort of theme running through them.

You have followed characters all throughout the play and examined different sides to his/her center. You should have 15 different lines that represent your character's center, and your group members have even more. From those lines, choose 5 lines from your character that you think can apply to the "center" of your community. For example, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (Act 1, Scene 4). (Marcellus says this and since we aren't studying his character, it can't really be used for this project.) Your explanation could explain how you've shown the "rotten" center of your community. Try to stick with the original intent of the quote. You'd be going the wrong direction if you took a picture of the courthouse and use the line, "In the corrupted currents of this world/ Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice," (Act 3 Scene 3), because the line is about how money can push justice aside.

Your final project should be assembled like a booklet (I'll show you an example). The title page only has to have your name, my name, class and a title that captures the theme you follow in your pictures.

Page 1: In an introduction, start by briefly explaining your community, and why this place constitutes a community for you. Explain why you chose the order for your acts, and whom you see as the main "characters" of the play of your life. Who are the players that exist in your scenes? Expand on the theme you introduced in your title (i.e. the theme of the *V for Vendetta* community could be order).

Pages 2-6: Post your picture with a title, then a quote. Explain what part of the "center" the photo represents. This should be a full paragraph, with detail explaining your thinking moves and the connections (plural) between the quote and the picture.



**Inviting Inaction:** “Pray can I not.  
 Though inclination be as sharp as will,  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
 And, like a man to double business bound,  
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
 And both neglect.” (Act 3, Scene 3)

The irony of this picture is that it is actually titled “The Watchful Citizen.” This is a statue without eyes, without action and without purpose. Its only purpose is inaction. This represents the center of my community. There seems to be a push for action, but it only seems to be a mix of guilt and intent, just as Claudius’ intent was to take the throne, yet his guilt pulled him towards confession. He was stuck in the middle of both, and therefore, truly did neither. His intent did not allow him to openly confess, and his guilt weakened his actions as a king. He “stood in pause” just like the “fat man” in the Haymarket. My community seems to stand in pause, with a mix of guilt and intent, and ends up inactive, neglecting any issue. “The Watchful Citizen” also has an empty place next to him, inviting others to join in his inaction, just like Claudius, as the leader, invited others to follow his order of neglecting justice.





APPENDIX H: Hamlet Final Project Sample - Trenten Craig

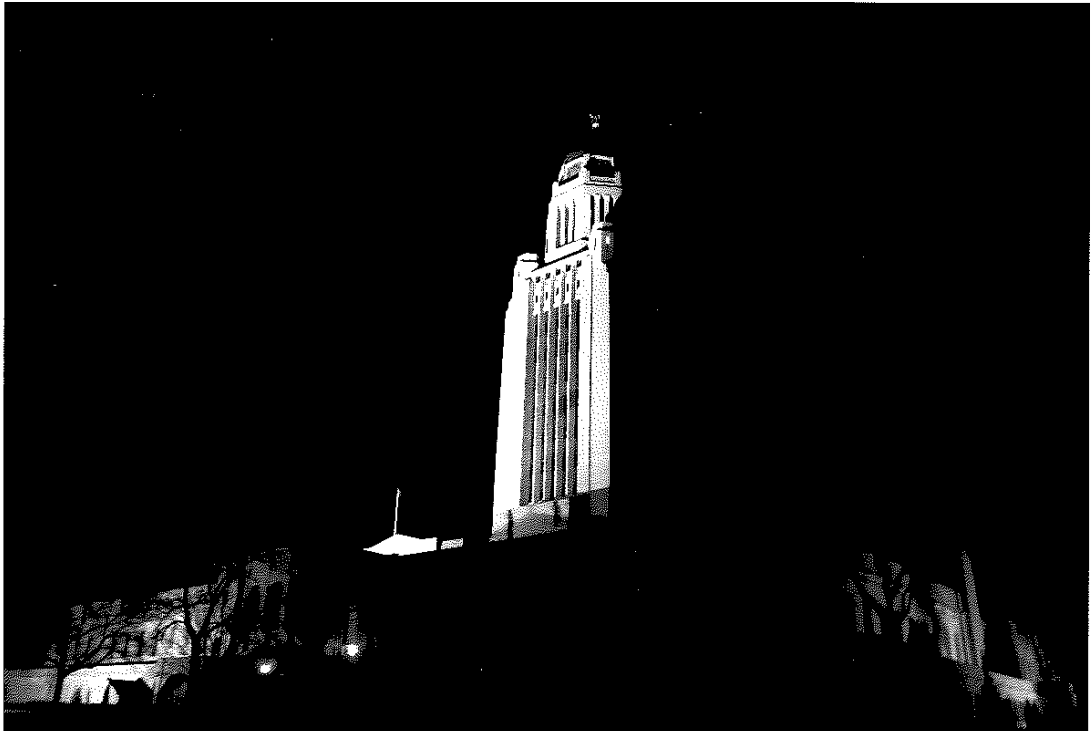
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Trenten Craig  
English 4  
Jank

## **Hamlet Final Project**

### **POWER**

The city of Lincoln is not all too unique in many ways. In one way that it is similar to other cities it's size is the emphasis on power. In my community the goal is to strive for power of any kind. This power can be social, personal, economic, the list is massive. Many things in my community either require power, or can create a powerful individual. Power is at the core of all things. Power is often times a driving force behind many decisions; choosing to take a better job is driven by a sense of power. This better job provides one with more money and freedom, so they can act as they please thus giving them more power over their lives. In the story of Hamlet power seems to be the driving force behind almost every major action taken. The characters either want power, or to appear as if they already obtain the power. The story centers on the idea that power is everything.



### The Church of Power

*“So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!” (Act 1, Scene 2)*

If an outsider were to come into our city one of the first things they would be bound to notice is the state capitol. Legally it is the largest building in the area, and there is clear vision of the building for miles around. The capitol shows a clear importance that people grant those in power. Those in power are rewarded for what they are doing with their power. The people can unintentionally perpetuate a community of power hungry individuals by showing that those in power get all the best life has to offer, including an amazing office. One could say that the building is a shrine to power, showing the emphasis that my community puts on those that are in a seat of power. This idea is very prevalent in the character of Claudius. Claudius will act in any way possible to get to power, he practically worships it. He murders his brother, and does not seem to care about that one bit, it is justifiable in his eyes to do so in the elusive search of his power. His “son” despises him going as far to call him a satyr (commonly affiliated with devil type characters) for his actions, this does not even phase Claudius. This is common in my community as well, with political candidates constantly acting less than admirably in an effort to obtain power. People often times want to elevate themselves above others, at any cost necessary.



**The Mask of Power:**

*“Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,  
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
 Do not forever with thy vailèd lids  
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
 Thou knowst ’tis common. All that lives must die,  
 Passing through nature to eternity.” (Act 1: Scene 2)*

Suits are not articles of clothing that are worn lightly. In today’s world if someone is wearing a full suit it is assumed that something important is happening. A suit is an outward sign of being a part of an important event, it is something that looks different and gives a person a very dignified look. Seeing a person downtown walking in a suit, I assume that they must have a well paying job and are probably someone important to the inner workings of some corporation. These things may not be true but a suit brings with it a dignification on importance and power, in the modern world a suit can convey dominance. Looking nice conveys a sense of put-togetherness much better than being put together actually does. That it is to say that if one is wearing a suit conclusions may be drawn that the person is on some kind of path. Looking like a slob sends a message that one is not prepared for anything but lazing around. This is very important to Claudius; he appears very upset at the fact that Hamlet never attempts to make himself presentable. Claudius realizes the importance of this outer shell being a mask of power. Those in power possess an obligation to appear their best, and if they do not appear this way they are looked down as less powerful. This sense of an image of power is seen everywhere in advertisements today as well.



### **The Club of Power**

*"And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit. What is 't, Laertes?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane  
 And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg," (Act 1, Scene 2)*

In my community I see a situation in that those in power tend to stay that way. While those in the outer groups must work extra hard to obtain any shred of the power of a few men. This is seen most often at the classical country clubs. Only the most elite of the elite are welcomed into some of these places, and those who do not fit that bill are kicked, or it is made clear that they are in the wrong place. The club is a place for those with a lot of power to flaunt it to everyone else there. A place for the elite to "compare sizes" so to speak, where the successful can spend and live their lives excessively. For many power hungry individuals this is the end goal, to be the talk of a country club over a round of golf. This can be seen in Hamlet with Claudius and his obsession with showing off his new power as king. He implies that "any wish is his command... if he wants to do it". He sends a message that he is not only powerful, but also has to power to avoid or ignore things that are wanted. This is often seen now a days with greedy company CEO's doing as they want and stomping on the customers that made them, all for the power of it.



### **The Movement is Power**

*“That hurts by easing.—But to the quick of th' ulcer:  
Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake  
To show yourself in deed your father's son  
More than in words?” (Act 4, Scene 7)*

A nice car is a fine luxury that can be afforded by few. This car is a statement on the state of the person and who they are. Much like a suit, a car is a statement that the person inside really is somebody. How the car functions is key; the main reason one owns a car is to go places, move forward. This is seen in Hamlet continually, moving forward is seen as a necessity and something that everyone must witness. Claudius puts it that action must be taken, and people must know about it. To remain still is to waste time, when things are not moving plans are being made to move forward. One must extend power over themselves to bring themselves forward and move. In Hamlet this can be seen as Hamlet refuses to get a hold over himself and sits in the sadness of his heart. His refusal to move forward leads to him losing more and more power not just over his situation but he also loses power over himself. Where as Laertes is seen to immediately try to move forward, in doing so he takes control of the situation at hand. Moving forward in today's world is just as important. If a company remains stagnant their stocks will fall and they will fail. Much in the same way as a person must move and work to get the power they feel they need or deserve.



**The Secrets of Power:**

*"O Gertrude, come away!*

*The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch*

*But we will ship him hence, and this vile deed*

*We must, with all our majesty and skill,*

*Both countenance and excuse.—Ho, Guildenstern!" (Act 4: Scene 4)*

A mansion is by definition a large, impressive house; the key thing here being the size of the estate. The size is important due to the fact that from the outside it is hard to see everything that is inside of the house. It is fairly easy to hide something that is not intended to be seen from the outside, deep inside the house. Among nearly all the characters in the play; Claudius is treating his life similar to a mansion, that is to say that he is trying to hide key unsightly aspects of it from those on the outside. Instead of actually dealing with the issues that he is having with others, he just sends it to somewhere where it is difficult to see. He could actually do the responsible thing and try and patch and help his son, instead he just shoves his son in the closet to try and hide his issues from the outside world. In both sets of situations this comes down to the deep settled idea that to be powerful there can not be anything unsightly to see. The idea that there can be no fault in a leader, so it is better to hide them away. The world can only see the strength, so other things are hidden away never to be seen, but also never to be solved.

## APPENDIX I: Alex's Final Hamlet Project

# Hamlet Final Project

By Alex Juengel  
English 12  
1-29-14

## Happily Unhappy

I am from Lincoln, Nebraska. A lot of people say that Nebraska is just corn fields and cows, but it does have some decent sized cities. Lincoln has a large diversity of people, backgrounds, personalities and cultural influences. I chose the theme *happily unhappy* because almost everyone in the play appear to be happy and perfect on the outside but on the inside they are unhappy due to actions of themselves and other people. Look at Gertrude for instance, she likes everyone to believe she has this perfect life and she's incredibly happy. But in reality she's falling apart from the inside out. Her son has gone crazy due to losing his father and figuring out who the killer is. I feel like this connects to my community of Lincoln, Nebraska because people think that there are a lot of jobs for people to get, and we have low crime rates. Lincoln looks good from the outside but Lincoln also has its fair share of problems. There are a lot of people who live in Nebraska that dislike it, a lot.

## Perfectly Broken



**"O Hamlet, speak no more.  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,  
And there u see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct." (Act 3, Scene 4)**

I chose the picture of a makeup department because a lot of people try to hide their flaws with makeup and they usually don't let people see them without make up. And in that quote Gertrude is telling Hamlet to stop making her look at herself because she knows she's not perfect. She won't admit in public, or to other people, that she's not perfect. She feels like she has to keep the image up to standards but she's realizing that slowly her true colors are coming out and she's becoming even more unhappy. She's coming to the realization that she can't keep doing things that make her perfect because people will figure the truth out. Just like with makeup, you can try to cover as much up as you can but as soon as you take the makeup off the flaws are still there. Another reason I chose this picture to fit with this quote was because she's trying to keep her sanity on the outside but on the inside the guilt is eating her up and she's realizing that she's not actually as perfect as she thought. It's like you can buy and put on as much makeup as you want but it's not ever going to make you the perfect person. There's no such thing as a perfect person. I think towards the end of the book Gertrude started to realize that.



## Beautifully Hurt



**“Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.” (Act 4, Scene 5)**

The first picture I chose is of my dog Max. He is a beautiful dog with an amazing heart and a look of innocence to him. Although he does have a mind of his own at times. Just like Ophelia, she played the role of an innocent young girl who always listened to her dad and brother but at the end she finally broke the innocence. She went crazy and ended up killing herself. She always had people to stick up for her and tell her what to do and how to feel. Just like Max, because he is a dog he is forced to listen to his owner (sometimes). But sometimes he does rebel and does what he wants. I chose the second picture because it shows the physical imperfection to Max. He gets that sore every winter and constantly licks it, even though I tell him no, so it gets worse. Just like Ophelia, people were telling her that she needed to get her act together and things were going to be okay. She didn't listen. She was still upset and was going to do what SHE wanted to do not what other people wanted her to do. It ties into the

theme because she was 'happy' until the people that told her how to live her life were gone then she lost it. So it makes you wonder if she was actually happy. She made the ultimate decision to end her life when she couldn't handle the hurt anymore.

## Insanely Jealous



**"I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers  
Could not with all their quantity of love  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?" (Act 5, Scene 1)**

I chose a picture of my sister and my mom's dog sleeping on the couch because the story behind it fits more. My sister was lying on the couch and Sammi (my mom's dog) got very jealous and starting crying until my sister called her up there to lay with her. So I thought it fit this quote because it's talking about how Hamlet can prove his love more than Laertes. So I connected by Sammi wanting to prove to my sister that she loved her and so she did by showing affection to my sister. Like how Hamlet said no one could ever love Ophelia the way he did, not even her brother. I also connected it because my sister loves Sammi but probably not as much as my mom so it's like she could prove her love but not the same way Sammi could. Sammi proved her love for my sister by wanting to cuddle and spend time together. Just like Hamlet showed his love by being with her at times and fighting for her. But my sister showed her love by just letting Sammi get up there with her. It wasn't anything significant but she proved it in a small way. Just like Laertes proved his love by wanting to get revenge on who did this to her.

## Falling apart



**“And so have I a noble father lost,  
A sister driven into desperate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.” (Act 4, Scene 7)**

I chose the picture of the phone with the cracked screen because I felt like it fit this quote pretty well. Laertes lost his father and became very distraught about it because his father meant a lot to him. He wanted to seek revenge on whoever killed his father. I connected this to the phone because when it was dropped the first time it got its first set of cracks that made it become imperfect. Just like Laertes became very angry and revengeful after the death of his father. Then he lost his sister on top of it. Then he got very angry and really wanted revenge because someone caused his sister to do this to herself. I connected it to the phone because the second time it was dropped it gained even more cracks. And more space to let the anger and revenge out. Laertes really wants revenge now just like the person who broke their phone. They are very angry their phone broke so they want to take it back to the phone company so they can get a new one. Laertes wants to hunt down the person who did this and make them pay for what they did. Just like Laertes was perfect before and he had a great life with people around him who loved him very much and as he lost those people his outer shell started to break and he wasn't so happy anymore. Just like the phone. It started out perfect and as bad things happened to it, its hard outer shell broke and it wasn't so perfect anymore.

## Protective Instinct



**“I will, my lord. I pray you, pardon me. (Drinks)” (Act 5, Scene 2)**

I chose this picture because it's of my dog watching over my nephew sleeping and making sure that nothing bad happens to him. He's protecting over someone he cares about. Just like Gertrude when she drank the drink after she was told not to. It's like she knew what she was doing and she wanted to make sure that Hamlet didn't drink the poison and die. She was protecting the only son she ever had. It also made me think about how sometimes Gertrude didn't seem like she was too worried about Hamlet and just made excuses for her son's behaviors. But when the time came she made the ultimate sacrifice for her son, even though he died too. It's like Max, when there were a lot of people at our house he always distanced himself from my nephew but when they were alone or only a few people were around Max always had an eye on my nephew. Whenever my nephew would cry or get really upset Max came running like it was his duty to make him better. I think towards the end of the book Gertrude realized that her son was the most important thing out there.

## APPENDIX J: Social Issue Inquiry Research Paper Handout

### Senior Social Issue Inquiry Research Paper

Inquiry is the practice of learning more about the world through guided questions. Many of you have utilized Inquiry in different classes before, and each one of you has used it to some degree in your daily lives. Good inquiry is guided by good questions, which we will work on. Inquiry is a much more independent form of problem solving than is usually found in a classroom.

Subtle ways we've used Inquiry this year: Community Response Writing, Semester 1 Final – Heroes Creative Writing Project, Hamlet Final Project, Choice Reading Selections.

In each of these, you've been presented with some sort of "problem" to solve. During your Social Issue Inquiry Research Paper, **you** will pose the problem, formulate the questions, and then detail your findings in your final paper.

A few initial notes to help guide your work:

Your final paper will be 2500+ words. This is 7 pages, without a Works Cited Page. You are required to dive into the history of the issue you look at, so some of your questions will be focused on that.

You are required to have at least 5 "peer-reviewed" articles in your sources.

You are required to have at least 2 "real world resources" in your sources.

Mrs. Jank will help you come up with good questions. She will help you research, find sources and organize your ideas. She will guide you in creating a more elevated thought process in your writing. Your job, to start, is to decide what problem you will cover in your paper.

## APPENDIX K: Basic Research Practices

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Research Assignment: Basic Research Practices***WorldCat*Path to WorldCat <http://nebraskaccess.ne.gov> > LOGIN > WorldCat > (password “redrawn8”)Keyword searches:First step: In the first Keyword box try a single term search [For example, I typed in **hamlet**.]

Your term: \_\_\_\_\_

*Jot down a couple of your observations about what kinds of results you got.***Find the HELP button on the grey bar. Click it and read about Boolean Searches.**Second step: Still using Keyword, try adding a second term to the second search box.[I tried **hamlet** and **psychology**.] Your terms: \_\_\_\_\_*What happened? (Hint: think about what you read about Boolean searches.)*Third step: Try limiting by Year, and/or by Language, and/or by Limit type to: books

Click on the title (underlined, in blue) and look at the full catalog record.

Click on one of the Descriptor links.

*Write a paragraph describing what you learned as you did these searches.*Fourth step: Now, find the Help button on the gray bar. Read the section about **Plurals, truncation, and wildcards**.Fifth step: **Write down a noun** \_\_\_\_\_

**Now do a search in WorldCat using the singular form and then redo the search by making the noun plural.** *What happened to the number and kinds of results?*

Sixth step: **Write down a different word—one that can be truncated.** : \_\_education\_\_  
(For example: if “truncation” is my original term, then “truncat\*” is the truncation I might choose to use.)

**Now do a search in WorldCat using the original version of the term and do it again with the truncated version of the term.** *What happened to the number and kinds of results? Did any unexpected variants show up?*

Seventh step: **Write down a word that you can use a wildcard with:** \_\_tire/tyre\_\_ (If your inspiration is flagging, just use one of the examples from the WorldCat Help Screen.)

**Now do a search in WorldCat on your word without a wild card and then do it again with a wildcard.** *What happened?*

### **OMNIFILE:**

**IMPORTANT STEP: Go back and get onto OMNIFILE** – Path to OmniFile:  
<http://nebraskacess.ne.gov> > LOGIN > OmniFile > (password “redrawn8”)

Eighth step: Now, find the Help button on the blue bar, all the way to the right. Read the sections about **Proximity terms**.

In Step two, you searched two terms in Keyword. (Mine were **hamlet** and **psychology**.) Now turn your two search terms into an “Adjacent Terms (proximity)” search.

**Here’s a cookie cutter to use: (type Term 1, the proximity, then Term 2 in the search bar)**  
(Mine will look like this: “hamlet n2 psychology” in the search bar)

Term 1 \_\_\_\_\_ **n2** Term 2 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ results.  
Term 1 \_\_\_\_\_ **n5** Term 2 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ results.  
Term 1 \_\_\_\_\_ **w2** Term 2 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ results.  
Term 1 \_\_\_\_\_ **w2** Term 2 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ results.

*Describe how this differs from what you got in Step Two with your original two term search. Address how a “w” search relates two terms and how an “n” search relates two terms.*

**Here's what I got, using the cookie cutter approach:**

Term 1 \_\_hamlet\_\_ n2 Term 2 \_\_psychology\_\_ = \_\_12\_\_ results.

Term 1 \_\_hamlet\_\_ n5 Term 2 \_\_psychology\_\_ = \_\_15\_\_ results.

Term 1 \_\_hamlet\_\_ w2 Term 2 \_\_psychology\_\_ = \_\_1\_\_ result.

Term 1 \_\_hamlet\_\_ w5 Term 2 \_\_psychology\_\_ = \_\_5\_\_ results.

Ninth step: When you are done with this search, take some time to write down some synonyms for your terms.

Example:

Term: Education

Truncation: Educat\*

Synonyms: School, Academic, Learning

Your Term: \_\_\_\_\_

Truncation: \_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Your Term: \_\_\_\_\_

Truncation: \_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Your Term: \_\_\_\_\_

Truncation: \_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Your Term: \_\_\_\_\_

Truncation: \_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Click Cancel and then Logoff.

Tenth step: Exit from OmniFile. Take a break.

**Final Step: Go onto Google Scholar and try the same techniques (Boolean terms, proximity terms, truncation, limitations). Write down potential articles (title, author, html, etc.) onto a Works Cited Page rough draft.**



## APPENDIX L: Potential Outlines

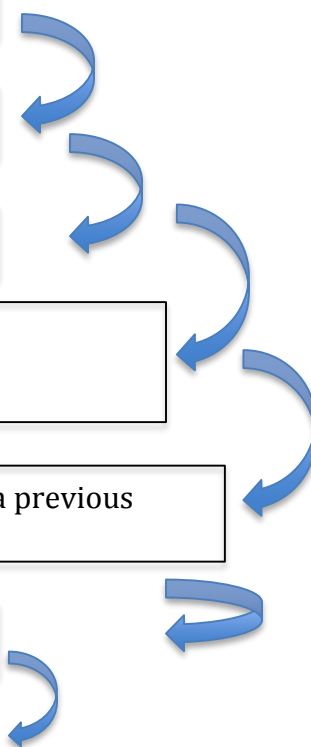
**Potential Outlines:****Thesis-Support** (also known as: The 5-Paragraph Essay Structure!)

|  |
|--|
| <b>Introduction</b> (make it creative) |
| <b>Historical Data</b>                 |
| <b>Research</b>                        |
| <b>Research</b>                        |
| <b>Research</b>                        |
| <b>Etc.</b>                            |
| <b>Conclusions</b>                     |

(Need I say more? You've done this one before.)

**Thinking Moves** (most free form and rewarding, most difficult)

|  |
|--|
| <b>Introduction</b> – What is going to most strongly introduce your ideas?   |
| <b>Idea 1</b> – Start developing your ideas, perhaps with the history here?  |
| <b>Idea 2</b> – Which idea or piece of research naturally flows well next?   |
| <b>Idea 3</b> – What thoughts does that research naturally lead you to? What questionings, musings, complications, etc. arise? |
| <b>Revisit of Idea 1</b> – This could really happen at any time, weaving back to a previous idea.                              |
| <b>Idea 4</b> – How does your other research come into the picture?  |



Etc. . . Repeat as necessary

**Potential Conclusions** – What is the end result of all your research and inquiry? Is there a place to stand? A line to draw in the sand? A complication you can't seem to rectify?

**Declamation** (Careful with this one. It has the potential to get moralistic)

**Introduction** – Draw the reader into your topic. Get him/her to relate, generate sympathy, amusement, or interest.

**Narration** – Show how your experience adds to the discussion of this topic. What do you already know because of your experiences? What has given you authority? What is your backstory?

**Historical Context** – What is the backstory of the issue? How did it get to the place it is at today? What pushed it forward? Where have efforts been made to curb it? (Ch. 1 of *When Helping Hurts* did this with the history of poverty relief in America.)

**Division/Proposition/Ideas** – Present the core of your ideas directly and clearly. Move from the history, and what other people have said to where you stand on the issue. This is short and sweet – two sentences max.

**Proof** – Ahh, the research. Now demonstrate (or provide reasons for) your previous statement or stance. Describe the essential parts of your idea, what makes it most acceptable, probable, and palatable to your audience.

**Refutation** – Now let the other side of the argument in. Cast doubt on other interpretations of the same issue. Show where there is a problem in logic, research, or bias. Discuss what complicates your issue.

**Conclusion** – Get the audience ready to act. Leave them with a burning question, a strong stance (without moralizing!) What really needs to happen where this issue is concerned?



## APPENDIX M: Developing Your Argument

**DIFFERENT WAYS OF ARGUMENTATION: Developing Your Argument****Ways to promote your argument:**

**Series of Questioning:** Build one question on another, almost as though you were stating a series of wondering.

**Either/Or:** Refusing the “double bind”

Which type of writing, then, will prepare students for college? A smattering of creative writing engages the brain in a way that lends to problem solving and critical thinking. Academic writing is most likely to apply directly to the student’s future. Though each is useful on its own, a writing curriculum that only focuses on one does not allow the type of growth necessary for collegiate level thinking.

**Reading the Levels:** Moving the thinking from point of “too simple” to “thoughtful”

Usually, we assume that we search for pleasure and strive to avoid pain. But the history of fashion and beauty industries makes it obvious that we are always searching for both – that part of the pleasure we seek is pain itself. And perhaps there’s something even more complicated. Going on here. When I wear heels to a club, perhaps I am touting my glory as a female – I can do it all, and I can do it in heels . . .

**Inversion and Contradiction:** Revealing the paradox

Perhaps participating in popular culture is not necessarily as detrimental as it first seemed, as it is in the process of mimicking that we lose ourselves, and it is only through this loss of self that we can gain self-identity.

**Drawing the Line:** What can be thought or done about the problem?

It is not that I do not understand that divisions between people are part of life, or that I don’t believe that they are often important and can be necessary to leverage power and make change. I accept that binary oppositions serve as a major way to categorize people and that they are deeply ingrained in our society. *My concern arises* when we invest more value in groups than they deserve.

**Weaving:** Returning to earlier evidence (See “Instant Karma”)

**They Say/I Say:** Incorporating outside ideas

“Of course some might object that \_\_\_\_\_. Although I concede that - \_\_\_\_\_, I still maintain that \_\_\_\_\_.”

“In discussions of \_\_\_\_\_, a controversial issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_. While some argue that \_\_\_\_\_, others contend that \_\_\_\_\_.”

After citing an argument: “This is not to say that \_\_\_\_\_.”

### **What are you trying to do?**

Imagine you are standing in a room full of people who are polarized about an issue (this is your audience). You are the presenter for the day, talking about the issue (this is your paper). How are you going to approach this group of people?

- Align yourself with one side of the room. Motivate the other side of the room to listen to your point of view.
- Stand in the middle of the room, and get both sides to come together.
- Invite the two sides to a table, where all points of view are heard, and propose possible solutions.

Taken from “Arguing Differently” (Kroll), “They Say/I Say” (Graff and Berkstein) and *Critical Passages* (Dombek and Herndon)

## APPENDIX N: Social Issues Inquiry Rubric

## English 4—Social Inquiry Paper Evaluation

| <u>Criteria</u>  | <u>Points</u> | <u>Comments</u>       |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|
|  |               | Appendix O:<br>Senior |
| Correct Header   | /5            |                       |
| Engaging Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correct capitalization</li> </ul>  | /5            |                       |
| Correct name & info<br>Double Spaced, 12 pt font   | /10           |                       |
| Correct in-text citations  | /10           |                       |
| Correct MLA Works Cited List   | /20           |                       |
| Fluency/Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TTT (Topic threaded transitions = thesis/topic sentences. <b>Bold.</b>)</li> </ul>   | /20           |                       |
| Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General spelling</li> <li>• General syntax</li> <li>• Homonyms</li> <li>• Subject Pronoun Agreement (SPAS)</li> <li>• Parallel Construction (PC)</li> <li>• Clichés/wordiness</li> <li>• Ditching useless words</li> <li>• Comma splices</li> <li>• Modifiers</li> <li>• Passive Voice</li> <li>• “so” “now” at the beginning of sentence</li> <li>• Personal pronouns</li> <li>• Apostrophes</li> <li>• No Dead verbs/ADVs (3 per page)</li> </ul>   | /30           |                       |
| Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three distinct sections as delineated on assignment sheet               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An explanation/definition/historical look (?) of the issue—no dictionary definitions</li> <li>2. A meaty section where you share with the reader the research out there on this issue.</li> <li>3. A synthesis of this information where you draw some conclusions—but not moralizations!</li> </ol> </li> <li>• ample and excellent use of current research</li> <li>• clear introduction—not persuasive—presents topic to be discussed</li> </ul> | /100          |                       |
| Total  | /200          |                       |

Comments:

## APPENDIX O: Social Action Project Introduction:

### Senior Social Action Project – Planning and Brainstorming

**Purpose:** We've spent a lot of the year discussing your communities, both the positive and negative aspects. For your last major project of the year, you will be addressing one of the issues you see in one of your communities. Why English? There will be a fair amount of writing and reading during the process of this project, so we will be using it to give your work some focus.

#### Procedure:

**1 – Brainstorm different options** for your action project. Consider all that we've discussed this semester: how you see things "falling apart", what "injustices" you see in the world, which "centers" are causing issues, what "movements" you can see yourself getting behind and what "issues" you are passionate about. OR you can think outside of this to a new issue you see present in one of your communities currently.

**2 – Consider your skill set.** What different organizations do you already have a connection with? What are your current spheres of influence? Is there anything you are doing currently that could address an issue in your community?

**3 – Narrow it down.** Based on your thoughts above, what projects actually seem doable?

**4 – Get specific.** With your narrowed list, try and flesh out the problem a bit more:

- What are the things you see and hear that made you aware of this problem?
  
- When and where does this problem take place?
  
- Who does this problem affect? In what way?
  
- What or who is at the cause of this problem?
  
- Who is already working to solve this problem?

## APPENDIX P: Action Planning

### **Action Plan:**

Briefly describe the issue that you want to approach (including the who/what/where/when):

What do you think is at the center of this issue? What is the cause? (how/why)

What are some potential solutions to help solve this issue? Remember, sometimes change has to start small. Don't overlook any part just because it seems too simple. Include the simple ideas as well.

What are some obstacles you will face as you work to solve this issue? Include personal weaknesses or opposition from others. How will you attempt to work past those obstacles?

What resources do you have at your disposal? Include your strengths, opportunities to get involved, people that will help, and organizations that you can plug into.

Explain where you're going next. What are the tangible next steps in working toward a solution? What will you do, and when will you do it

### **Action Plan - The Specifics!**

This next step in your Social Action Project can be turned in to me in a variety of formats. You will be presenting you Project the last week of school, just about three and a half weeks away. Today, we will be establishing what those three and a half weeks will look like. The end result will be a series of dates with corresponding plans for action. You will keep a copy of this, and you will give a copy to me **next class period**.

1. To complete this plan, please do the following: Pullout/up a calendar of sorts. This can be done via planner, electronic device or the class calendar you receive from Mrs. Jank.
2. Label the date of your actual project, or the culminating day of your project, after which you will be able to reflect on the results.
3. On a separate paper (probably your composition notebook) list some milestones that you will need to reach and actions you will have to accomplish to ensure this culminating day takes place. Leave space in between each one.
4. On your calendar, label the dates where each milestone will occur. Underneath each milestone, create a list of all the little details you will need to address in order to meet this milestone.
  - a. Ex. Milestone: Make phone calls to all the association churches to see if they would like to sponsor a table for WP.  
To Do: Locate list of assoc. churches, identify contact at the church, acquire phone numbers, write out script for phone call, practice script and revise, write out message (in case contact is unavailable), determine other callers (?)
5. On your calendar, label the dates when you will take care of each detail!

Now is the time where you need to start determining what your ending presentation will look like. In other words, what will you present to the class? Will you create a movie, photo collage, documentary, newspaper article, poster board, trifold, etc.? How will you judge the effectiveness of your project on the issue you are addressing? Brainstorm some thoughts and write down what you envision yourself presenting.



## Senior Action Project Presentation

Senior Action Project Presentation:

Present your Social Action Project and Social Issue Research with a process-oriented presentation to an audience larger than this classroom.

Format: Revisit Natalie Warne's TedX Teen Talk

Your presentation will have **five** parts:

1. Personal history/passions/etc. that got you to look at the issue
2. Information you learned while working on your paper and project
3. What project you decided to take up, and what role you wanted to take
4. Successes and obstacles as you worked to place your plan in action
5. Considerations about how you would do things differently in the future (and any future implications this project might hold)

The presentations must have some sort of visual aspect. This could be a handout. It could be a properly done PowerPoint presentation. Part of your presentation could have a film clip of sorts. The visual must be original and self-generated.

This presentation is a must. You will give it on May 4<sup>th</sup>, and be graded on that date. If you believe you have a conflict, talk with Mrs. Jank. Excused absences will be given on a case-by-case basis. Mrs. Jank holds the right to assign a 0 to anyone who is unable to attend.