**“MAKING INFORMAL ARGUMENTS”**

by Cindy Miller

Modifications by Debbie Jones

**Objective:**  Use data collected from layering to settle on a claim, support the claim with evidence, then write a short argument.

GET OUT:

1. writers notebook
2. pens

**LAYERING W/ TEXT SETS *–*** See Strategy Index, page 17. It is important to provide multiple text sets to help students “think.” They need experience in thinking across text and not just using one text to get ideas. Use layering to “join the conversation” and experiment with developing a claim about the topic of reality TV.

**Arguments in Response To a Text Pair or Text Trio:** Introduce students

to multiple perspectives in authentic arguments by stretching a pair or trio of texts (videos, infographics, articles) centered on the same topic across a week or multiple days. This daily argument writing helps students practice the hard skills of noticing various perspectives, beyond pro and con, and juggling more than one source in writing. One way this process might look is through Layering. Each day, students read a new piece of text in the series and add to their reading and writing with information they gather each day. This writing has multiple uses as students can practice creating claims, using source material, choosing appropriate internal text structures, synthesizing information, and as they write they are making lots of decisions about organization, source material, and even revision. *Taken from NWP/College Ready Writers Program*

**Use your voice to interact with and write through a text.** Reading is thinking. As we read, whether in or out of school,we think. Sometimes these thoughts distract us from the text because we are reminded of an event from our own lives. So we leave the text for just a bit to enjoy that memory.These distracting pauses may not help us understand the text. However, reading as a knower and claim-maker achieves two things: 1] you interact with the ideas in the text and 2] you join the conversation when you stop and jot down your thoughts. So, **take time to interact with a text by stopping and jotting down your thoughts connected to the text. This way of reading will slow you down, but you will not read like this all the time.** *Taken from NWP/College Ready Writers Program.*

Teachers should help students work through their opinions or reconsider different angles. They must learn to CONNECT rather than summarize the text.

Students may be good at stating a claim and finding a source for evidence or even reading different texts summarizing the text, BUT they often cannot connect the text together.

In Writer’s Notebook, go to a new sheet and write *Reality TV* at the top of the page.

Now, take 2 minutes to write from this idea. *What comes to mind? Questions? Comments? Ideas? Thoughts? Etc?*

STOP! SHARE! We will return to this later.

**Graphic Text Response** - See Strategy Index page 3

Graphic Text: Dance Moms/Duck Dynasty

IMAGE WORDS

Students make chart, labeling only *Images* at the top. Jot down words or phrases that name or describe the images in **one** of the pictures. Examples: scowl on face, girls and moms in white, lady in the front is in black, everyday guys (golfers) at the bottom and bearded guys at the top, clothing made from American Flag.

WRITE: 2 Minutes

Label the other side of the T-chart with *Words*. Jot down words/phrases that come to mind when looking at the words written about the images. Examples: scowl on face, *this lady is mad because the team did not get first place*; girls and moms in white & lady in the front is in black, *the girls and moms are good (dressed in white) and the lady is evil (dressed in black)*; everyday guys (golfers) at the bottom and bearded guys at the top, *these used to be ordinary guys, are they putting on a show?;* clothing made from American flag, *they are showing disrespect for the American Flag.*

WRITE: 2 Minutes

**Now I Am Thinking**- See Strategy Index page 25 Now, go back to where you left off with Reality TV, and use what we just saw with Dance Moms. You may begin with –

Now, I’m thinking… or

This text makes me wonder… or

Just like I was thinking… or

Different from what I was thinking…

WRITE: 2 Minutes

STOP! SHARE!

Look back at graphic text of “Dance Moms/Duck Dynasty”

Include a detail from the text: (for ex.)

The image reminded me of…

The woman’s expression…

The girls in the background…

WRITE: 2 Minutes.

STOP!

**CODING THE TEXT** (See strategy index page 13) *Read through the Girl Scouts research article, “Real to Me: Girls and Reality TV.” Code interesting things you find in the article.*

Use:

**F** (for facts)

★ (for really interesting)

Suggested questions before reading:

1. Have you ever taken a survey?
2. What is the purpose of people taking a survey?
3. What is the difference in a fact and an opinion?
4. What are some strategies we use before we begin reading a new passage?

* Read the title (sub title) and headings
* Reflect/predict after reading the title and headings
* Fiction or nonfiction?
* What are some differences in how we read a nonfiction passage, as opposed to reading a fiction passage?

Define: genres (kinds/types), benign (nonthreatening), findings (what was discovered)

Code: 10 Minutes. This may be done one section at a time.

STOP! SHARE!

Now, jot a thought down from the article. It could be a fact that’s a little disturbing, something intriguing, just something you find interesting.

WRITE: 1 Minute.

Now, go back and add: (for ex.)

Well, I was thinking this, but…

I haven’t thought about this,…

I’m still thinking…”

WRITE: 2 Minutes.

STOP! SHARE!

Add something specifically from the text: (for ex.)

The article points out…

The author believes…

WRITE: 2 Minutes

STOP! SHARE!

Next Text “Why Reality TV is the New Reality TV”

**CODE**

Use:

**F**  (facts)

**O** (Opinions)

**Underline** (statements of opinions, positions, or beliefs)

★(if really interesting)

CODE: 1-2 Minutes

*You are now just tracing the “thinking”*

Now, find a line or two – something that CLARIFIES or CHANGES your thinking, etc.

WRITE: 1 Minute

Now, add to writing with: (for ex.)

I haven’t considered this, but…

I was wondering…

Here’s my question…

Etc…

WRITE: 2 Minutes.

STOP!

Now, add again by writing: (for ex.)

This text I challenging me to…

I am now considering…

WRITE: 2 Minutes.

STOP!

*Meandering through text sets is a way to get somewhere.*

Where are you right now on Reality TV? Take a minute to write your opinion/claim as of now. It may be the same, or it may be different now.

WRITE: 1 Minute.

STOP!

If students are ready…

Written Text: “Forget Sex Ed.-Reality TV May Hold the Key to Curbing Teen Pregnancy”

We are going to CODE it! See the box below:

**CODE {looking for a claim & counter claim}**

* **Underline sentences** that state a position the writer is taking on the topic. **Double underline the sentence** that seems to be the writer’s claim. If you find a counter claim, code it **CC.**

Q> What is a Counter Claim?

Ans> There are two sides to every argument – Your side and someone else’s side. A **counterclaim** is just the opposite of a claim/ arguments against your claim.

* **Code for evidence that seems convincing**: Define evidence

**F**=Facts

**A**=Authorities

**S=Statistics**

★=Evidence that seems to connect to claim; pushes you to revise your claim, or seems interesting

BEFORE you begin CODING, jot down what you’re thinking from the title of this article, “Forget Sex Ed.-Reality TV May Hold the Key to Curbing Teen Pregnancy” itself. (30 seconds)

CODE: 7-10 Minutes

STOP!

Write 3-5 minutes focused on evidence that seems most convincing on what you are thinking about when you consider this evidence. Does it add to your claim or change your beliefs? If the text took you to teen pregnancy, that’s OK, but bring it back to Reality TV, since our topic is reality TV.

Do You Have a WORKING CLAIM??? You need one for us to continue.

**WORKING CLAIM AND BULLETED EVIDENCE**

WRITE: your original claim or a new claim for Reality TV.

(examples: Reality TV reflects our culture; Reality TV provides opportunities/open doors for us; I didn’t think too much about Reality TV until I read these articles; Is Reality TV the only reality some kids get?; Is reality “real”?; etc.)

STOP!

SHARE Claims

Underneath your claim, make a quick list of the evidence you have now or the reasoning behind your claim. This can be a bullet list, a jot down, a code, anything you want to use as a point of reference to go back and pick up for your evidence when writing your argument. Look for some of the reasoning we found to help us get to our claim or support it.

(3-5 minutes)

STOP!

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**ORGANIZING OUR ARGUMENTS**

You can look at mentor texts and see how other writers organize their writings. Just chunk what the writer does by breaking it down as to what they did first, second, third, etc. Some start with a claim, or a narrative, or facts, or counter claims, etc.

KERNEL ESSAYS (by Gretchen Barneibei) handout!

Look at the kernels and decide which one follows your pattern of thinking for your claim. Take 1-2 Minutes to Choose that structure.



Now, timed writing again.

2-4 Minutes: Take 1st box and write

2-4 Minutes: Take 2nd box and respond

2-4 Minutes: Take 3rd box and respond

Continue…

Let students go back and look at their thinking. Which “kernel” did their thinking of their claim follow most closely? You might decide on a couple of structures and let students choose.

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**Sample Student Writings**

Reality TV doesn’t excite me. Beauty can have a lot of negative ways to affect you personally. You really won’t catch me watching Reality TV shows because of stereotype.

Later I read an article about reality TV and in the article it stated people who watch reality TV shows rather be recognized by their outer beauty than their inner beauty. Not only that, it also said they lie to get what they want, being mean earns you more respect than being nice, and you have to be mean to others to get what you want. I found these facts quite disturbing.

As a Mexican American we are usually labeled for being ghetto, and reality TV shows give off an image of black African Americans being ghetto. By this image gets us judged. That’s why I’d rather not watch reality TV shows. Along with the facts I learned about reality TV shows build my opinion stronger about reality TV shows. Watching these shows can have a huge negative impact on your life.

At first I thought reality television was always positive. I thought reality TV never affected who you are or changed your personality. I also thought reality TV, no matter what show, was always real. I always believed that reality stars were paid to act like themselves.

Then I learned something about reality television that would cause me to change my opinion of it. In the text is says \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When I first saw reality TV I said to myself, “Why is this even on TV?” I thought it was horrible. Why would they get people just to act selfish. I really don’t get it. Reality TV is supposed to give people a glimpse of the real world. But everything they do is fake. It’s like telling toddlers Santa Claus is real. Television is really getting out of hand.

I learned so much about what reality TV does to females.

At first I thought reality television was pretty entertaining. The ideas of the shows were great and creative. Every show had me sitting on the edge of my seat rying to figure out what was going to happen next. Others also agree with me. In the text of “Real to me: Girls and Reality TV” it states that 1,100 people think the same.

Then I learned some things that changed my mind. The shows were starting to change to more competition and drama-based. I began to dislike the shows for all the drama it had began. However, the people who like the reality shows that I like were favoring the drama based reality TV shows. According to the article 75% of the people who watch the drama reality TV like that more than the kind I like.

Now I think that the drama and \_\_\_\_.

Mini-Unit: Making Informal Arguments

Sample Text Set: Reality TV  
Grade: Unknown

Writing Conditions: Unknown  
1021

“Reality” tv?

Many people love reality tv. Many families probably watch it together every night. I say reality tv is bad, fake, and harmful to us. Comment: The writing presents a claim that is debatable and defensible.

I’ve never been a big fan of reality tv. After I learned from an article about girl scouts and reality tv that these young veiwers thought it was necessary to lie and be mean to others to get what you want I knew it was horrible for kids. Comment: Developing use of evidence from a source to support the claim. If these shows are teaching kids to lie why are we allowing them?

First these shows are staged. According to “Reality Bites.” Bites.” Comment: Beginning steps of authorizing. Many of the “reality” shows we watch are fakes, like “The Hills”. The stars of the shows are told what to say and who to date. Jess Csincsac, a winner of “The Bachelorette”, said “the producer casts people into roles they are not aware of until they see the show. Their public image is ruined for life. People hate them for how they were falsely portraid.”

A former member of “Storage Wars”, Dave Hoster, filled a $750,000 lawsuit agains A&E claiming the show was staged. According to John D. Thomas, Comment: Distinguishing between source idea and student’s idea – developing these shows are lying and the audience even if they subconsciously know it is not real will get angry. I think more people should be angry that these shows are lying about what they are and what is happening.

Still, many people enjoy these shows. Many families watch them together. There are plenty of veiwers that don’t care that the shows are fake and they have that right. These show make a lot of money and can be entertaining at times.

In conclusion, I don’t like these shwos because they lie. Even the actors on these shows are calling them out. Sure they entertain plenty of people but they shouldn’t be allowed to lie, mabey it is time for a name change.