*English Instructional Plan – Crowd-Sourcing Thesis Writing*

**Primary Strand: 10.6, 11.6, 12.6**

**Integrated Strand/s: 10.7, 11.7, 12.7**

**Essential Understanding:**

* Understand the necessary components of a thesis
* Understand that an effective thesis makes a claim supported by evidence

**Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes:**

* Identify and evaluate the necessary components of a thesis
* Create a thesis that contains the necessary components
* Identify and evaluate claims
* Create an example of a claim
* Identify and evaluate the quality of evidence
* Create a thesis that is supported by evidence.
* Provide feedback on writing based on specific parameters.

**Primary SOL: 10.6, 11.6, 12.6**

* Compose a thesis statement for persuasive writing that advocates a position.
* Analyze the writing of others and give feedback.

**Reinforced (Related Standard) SOL: 10.7, 11.7, 12.7**

* Students will self- and peer-edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

**Academic Background/Language:**

* Thesis
* Claim
* Evidence
* Feedback

## Materials

* Pens/pencils
* Index cards
* Paper
* Sample thesis statements
* ReadWriteThink peer feedback sheet
  + <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson261/peer.pdf>

## Student/Teacher Actions: What should students be doing? What should teachers be doing?

* Teacher provides students with a prompt, provocation, or topic of debate as long as it can be divided into a for/against format. Prompts can either be sourced from current events, texts the class is currently reading, or student’s own experiences, as long as all the students in class have the same prompt.
* Students have one minute to pick their side, write their answer, and provide any justification on an index card.
* Teacher asks students to form two lines based on whether they were for or against the idea proposed in the prompt.
* Students line up and face each other in their two lines with their index card.
* Teacher keeps time and allows students 30 seconds to debate the person across from them. After the timer ends, students slide down in order to debate the next person.
* After students have had three debates, they return to their seats and write down any new ideas, information, or perspective they gained after the debate rounds on their index card.
* The teacher should emphasize this time should be used for reflection.
* The teacher can repeat this process until all students have debated or shorten as needed.
* After the debate has finished, the teacher asks students to return to their seats with their index card.
* Teacher first explains that their “for/against” statement is a claim and the information they wrote after is evidence for that claim. Then they display examples of effective theses on the board and asks students to reflect upon the similarities and differences between what they wrote on their index card and the model they provided.
* Students think-pair-share and discuss the similarities and differences.
* Teacher facilitates a class discussion and guides students to the understanding that effective theses are more formal, structured, and evidence supported than their examples.
* Teacher provides students with resources to conduct research to support the claim on the index card. These resources could be students’ phones, class technology, or pre-printed articles.
* Students have twenty minutes to research their claim and turn it into a well-structured thesis modeled after the one provided on the board. This is to be written on a separate sheet of paper.
* The teacher asks students to switch theses with another student who was on the “same side” of the for/against topic.
* Students peer edit each other’s theses and provide suggestions as needed following the ReadWriteThink “Peer Editing Guide.” Additionally, they should evaluate if the thesis makes a clear claim and is based on evidence.
* Students switch back and revise their thesis statement based on their peer feedback.
* Teacher asks students switch again with a new student who was on the “opposing side” of the for/against topic.
* Students conduct another peer edit based on the ReadWriteThink “Peer Editing Guide.”
* Teacher asks students to switch papers back to the original writer.
* Students draft a final thesis that they turn in to the instructor.

**Assessment (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative)**

* Diagnostic: Teacher will be circulating the room and reading/conferencing with students during the mini-debates and index card writing
* Formative: Depending on how this activity is used, teachers could use the thesis statement from the activity as a formative check for understanding of the construction of a thesis statement.
* Summative: If the teacher is not using their thesis as the beginning of a broader writing assignment, it can be used as a summative to assess their mastery of evidence based thesis statements.

**Writing Connections:**

* Students will be writing their claims, evidence, and thesis statements.
* For added continuity, this activity could be used to begin a longer form argumentative or persuasive writing activity. Teachers should have students revise their thesis during the essay writing process and can model examples/non-examples from resources like Understanding Scoring.

**Extensions and Connections (for all students)**

* Students could begin collecting more evidence to support their claims.
* Students could explore different, more complex ways to structure and organize thesis statements.
* Students could be asked to create thesis statements about increasingly complex problems.
* Sites for support:

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/developing-thesis>

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/thesis-statements/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/basicreadingandwriting/chapter/outcome-thesis/>

* Examples of text titles:
  + “April and Paris” by David Sedaris <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/april-paris-by-david-sedaris/>
  + “She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D.” by Perry Klass

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/shes-your-basic-l-o-l-in-n-a-d-by-perri-klass/>

* + “Disability,” by Nancy Mairs

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/disability-by-nancy-mairs/>

* + “Friending, Ancient or Otherwise,” by Alex Wright <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/>
  + “A South African Storm,” by Allison Howard

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/a-south-african-storm/>

* + “Cultural Baggage,” by Barbara Ehrenreich

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/cultural-baggage-by-barbara-ehrenreich/>

* + “Women in Science,” by K.C. Cole

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/women-in-science-by-k-c-cole/>

* + “The Case Against Torture,” by Alisa Soloman

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/case-against-torture-by-alisa-soloman/>

* + “The Case for Torture,” by Michael Levin

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp1v2xmaster/chapter/the-case-for-torture-by-michael-levin/>

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* If students are more comfortable speaking than writing, the mini debate will allow them to explore their ideas in an easier mode.
* For students who are more comfortable writing than speaking, they can perform a written “chalk talk” instead of engaging in an spoken debate.
  + <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/genia-connell/chalk-talks-engage-all-students/>

*Note: The following pages are intended for classroom use for students as a visual aid to learning.*