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(Re)designing Argumentation Writing Units for Grades 5–12

By Kathy Tuchman Glass

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *(Re)designing Argumentation Writing Units for Grades 5–12* by Kathy Tuchman Glass. *(Re)designing Argumentation Writing Units for Grades 5–12* guides teachers in providing consistent units of study that equip students to engage in any persuasive or argumentative writing task.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Examining the Fundamentals of Argumentation

1. How does a persuasive writing piece differ from an argument, and how do writers' roles differ for the two types of writing? Describe a writing piece that you have encountered in the classroom that straddles persuasion and argumentation.
2. How does a claim relate to an argument? What five types of claims will a writer be likely to make when forming an argument?
3. In your own words, describe what you believe are the central elements of writing style.
4. What question does evidence answer? Briefly describe the four general categories that many types of evidence fall into.
5. What do you do to provide students new to argument writing with scaffolded support as they begin to explore this genre? How could you improve on the sense of structure you provide to students new to argument writing?

Chapter 2

Building an Argumentation Unit Map

1. What points should educators keep in mind as they work on a unit map?
2. How might you interweave English language arts and subject-specific standards with KUDs and guiding questions to reflect the content and order of what you seek to teach?

Consider table 2.2, an excerpt of a unit map, as an example of how this can be done.
3. Review the textbook or curriculum that you use with students. Which parts of these resources best match your unit’s goals and what you want students to know, understand, and be able to do? Why is this the case?
4. Try your hand at making changes to an existing unit map using table 2.1. Why do you make the changes that you do to the existing map for your teaching situation?
5. Using figure 2.2, create your own unit map from scratch. What does your unit map teach you about your perceptions of your teaching situation and your students’ needs?

Chapter 3

Formulating a Pre- and Culminating Assessment and Establishing Criteria for Success

1. What purposes do curriculum-embedded and complex project performance assessments serve? Why should students constantly be immersed in acquiring skills throughout a unit in response to these performance assessments?
2. Consider the argument writing checklist in figure 3.3 and how you could use it with an argument writing activity in your classroom. What substitutions would you make for categories and line items, and why would you make these alterations?
3. Briefly describe the six steps that educators can take to review the elements of argument writing with students.
4. Why can translating a rubric score into a letter grade prove difficult, and how does Susan Brookhart suggest teachers approach doing this when they have to do so?
5. What can preassessments diagnose and address about students to help them better engage in the schoolwork ahead of them?

Chapter 4

Writing Engaging Introductions Using Gradual Release of Responsibility

1. In your own words, what is the purpose of the gradual release of responsibility framework? Describe the four parts that compose gradual release of responsibility.
2. List the three components that make up the introduction to an argument.
3. Take a look at the cards for modeling engaging introductions featured in figure 4.1. Based on these cards, provide an example of an engaging introduction appropriate to a classroom activity that you use with students.
4. What in-class independent practice activity can teachers engage students in so students can demonstrate their understanding of argumentation strategies and the strength of an argument?
5. Of the eight options for engaging readers in an argument that figure 4.3 offers, which would best provide context for an argument you focus on in your classroom? Why is this the case?

Chapter 5

Designing Lessons

1. What should a writer aim to achieve in presenting a thesis statement? What may happen if a thesis is weak or nonexistent?
2. How can the concept attainment strategy support students' self-discovery, and why can teachers apply concept attainment as they teach skills in all content areas? Name a few skills that you teach to students, and describe why you could apply concept attainment when teaching these skills.
3. Why must writers provide elaboration together with evidence? What kinds of questions should writers answer as they elaborate on their evidence?
4. Why can the term *prewriting* be considered a misnomer for what prewriting actually entails? What should writers accomplish before they start writing the first draft of an argument?
5. What do revision sheets enable students to examine? Describe a purpose for which you currently use or would in the future use revision sheets to gain data for improvement.