ASSIGNMENT 3: ARGUMENTATIVE SYNTHESIS

THE PURPOSE:
This assignment requires you to use your research and investigation skills. You will be required to learn about the topic in order to analyze it critically so you can build a clear argument that is based on reason/logic; uses Rogerian techniques to engage the audience; addresses the counterarguments; and synthesizes source information as evidence.

The writing purpose is to argue a logical and reasoned solution to a specific problem affecting higher education in America.

TOPICS:
You will argue a solution that will improve American higher education. Some possible ideas might include:
- How can we better prepare students for college?
- How can we make college more affordable?
- Is it beneficial for our country for more students to attend college?
- How can we ensure students who start college finish with a degree?
- How can we ensure students are learning what they need to learn while in college?

THE AUDIENCE:
The intended audience is college-educated adults, who may or may not agree with your position.

THE WRITING PROCESS:
You must choose a debatable, reasoned position to argue. Please focus on one possible solution—as we’ve learned this semester, the problems are complex, and it would be difficult to solve all the problems in only one essay. You may want to consider what you have learned about higher education in other countries: should the US adopt a practice used elsewhere? Once you’ve chosen your topic, you will need to write out a Research Proposal. This should be about 500-750 words long and should answer the following questions:
- What problem will your essay focus on?
- What are some possible solutions to this problem?
- Which possible solution would you like to focus on?
- Why do you think it's a good solution?
- What are possible counterarguments to your proposed solution?

You will then investigate and research their topic and position to ensure they understand the issue in depth, critically thinking about and analyzing what you read, including the positions of those who disagree with you. After your research is complete, you will complete an Annotated Bibliography (MLA Works Cited entry, a brief summary, and an explanation of how you intend to use the source) to organize your research and a plan to organize your ideas.

After writing your draft, you will complete peer reviews.

The final essay will be about 1500-1750 words and will require students to synthesize at least five outside sources (at least three of which have been found through the Virtual Library’s databases). All sources must use correct MLA documentation—in text citations and a Works Cited page. You will need to attach copies of any research they completed.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment 1 (Research Proposal) (500-750 words)</th>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Plan</td>
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<td>Draft/Peer Reviews</td>
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<td>Argumentative Synthesis (1500-1750 words)</td>
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How To Better Prepare Students For Higher Education

Preparing students for college is an extremely important aspect of our education system—one that is failing many of our country’s high school graduates. It seems that today more than ever, there is an emphasis on obtaining some sort of higher education. It’s getting more difficult to get a job out of high school and be successful without a college degree in hand. So it’s very important that our nation’s schools focus on preparing students for college specifically, but this isn’t necessarily the case. While many students successfully bridge the gap between what they learned in high school and what is expected of them in college, many are not able to transition so smoothly. It is the responsibility of our education systems to prepare students to go to college and to give them the tools they need. One solution to this problem is to provide more opportunities for students to be tested before they graduate high school. This provides better retention of information than merely studying. Also, providing students with a “gap year”—a year between high school and college to gain knowledge and applicable skills would be quite beneficial to students (High). Being prepared for higher education is critical for future success; to ensure that students are prepared to attend college they need to be tested more frequently in school and have a gap year after attending high school.

The first aspect of this argument is that students should be tested frequently in grade school and high school to prepare them for college. In an article by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, students were asked to memorize foreign words and definitions and then recall them for a test. One group was continually retested over the information, while the others merely studied and were tested once. Those who were frequently tested did significantly better on later tests than those who were not tested often, even when they did not study (“Testing”). This proves that by testing many times, students retain information better and
longer. Incorporating this practice into mainstream education would definitely help students’ future success in college. Not only would they learn helpful study habits, but they also would retain information that would be necessary to do well in college.

It can be argued however, that frequent testing is not beneficial because many students do not perform well on tests, compared to what they actually know about a subject. However, if tests were more frequent in the school systems, then having a test in a particular subject would not be nearly as daunting. Testing frequently would also provide students with practice to help combat test anxiety and poor performance. It also would help this because with many tests, each test would not affect the student’s grade as significantly as fewer, large tests would. This gives students practice to work out their test issues without affecting their overall grade significantly. Also, while many students do struggle with tests, it’s an unfortunate necessity in our current education system. Even if students were not tested very often in high school and grade school in order to avoid “unfairness”, the fact is that students need to learn to perform well on tests because they will be tested in college and those tests will be a significant factor in their grades. Until there are no longer exams in college, students must have the skills to perform well on them. These skills should be taught early on so that students can be the as prepared for college as possible.

The second facet to this argument is that students can benefit greatly from having a gap year. A “gap year” is “a break between high school and college in which a student travels or simply takes a break from academics” (“Students”). This practice is quite popular in Europe and Australia, but is just now gaining some popularity in the states. The idea that going straight to college is more important than having time off or financial factors both influence American students to not partake in the gap year experience. Some parents are also concerned that once
their child has time off school, they will never go back. However, studies show that 9 out of 10 students who take a gap year do return to school, and that 60% of these students report that by taking the time to have a gap year, they were able to confirm or choose their area of study (“Students”). Another benefit of the gap year is that it allows students to regroup, clear their minds, and have some time to reenergize after having been in school for the last 13 years. It really is the first time for most students to be able to take a break and finally start making adult decisions that will affect their lives. Having this time also helps many students return to school with a better attitude, increased maturity, and a better sense of focus. It can help students confirm that they do in fact want to continue their education, so instead of simply continuing straight on to college and floundering in their studies and their decisions, students can start off on the right foot with the firm decision that they are doing the right thing for themselves. Having a year off also allows students to work part or full-time in order to save up money to help pay for college once they do begin (“Pros”). Working, traveling, or whatever the student decides to do (as long as they are doing something worthwhile) will help them to gain world knowledge, applicable skills, and be sure of their decisions before beginning college.

It can be argued that taking a gap year is not at all beneficial to students. While some students may be completely prepared for college after graduating high school, it seems that taking a gap year could help the majority of students. A gap year can quickly become a year of making no progress and living on parents’ couches if the student is not ambitious and prepared. To avoid this, students must thoroughly think through their plan for their time off and be sure to have ideas that are realistic and will help them in their futures. Simply graduating and then trying to decide what to do during the next year will not help prepare students for college. Students must engage in something that will help them prepare. Another counterargument is that after
having a year off and living in the “real world” students are not likely to return to school. However, this is very rarely the case as most students who have a gap year do return to school and earn their degree (“Pros”). The risks opposed to the benefits of the gap year weigh heavily in the favor of students taking a year off: learning skills, gaining knowledge, maturity, experience, and renewing their academic vigor.

The problem of students not being prepared for college is one than is agreed upon by many. It is clearly becoming more of an important issue at the same rate that a college degree is becoming valuable. Many schools simply are not preparing students for college in the best way possible. There is a movement to help improve this issue, but every state needs to be on board and the issue needs to be addressed by both high schools and even earlier school systems. Requirements for both need to be standardized and methods of preparing students must be agreed upon (Cohen). Specifically, high schools and grade school need to implement plans to test students more frequently. Not only will this help them retain necessary information for their future success, but it will also give them the necessary skills to perform well on tests they will encounter in college. Students will be able to combat test anxiety and be able to routinely perform well on assessments. They will also learn good study habits early on, which will pay off once they get to college. Secondly, students should be encouraged to take a year off in between high school and college. They can use this opportunity to work, travel, or explore their interests. However, they must have a plan of action and pursue activities that will be beneficial to their academic success. Taking a gap year not only provides students with time to reenergize and become more mentally prepared for college, but it also provides them with a chance to gain applicable skills, earn money, decide on an area of study, and confirm their future plans. Preparing students for their future success in college is an issue that must be addressed, as it
affects all the youth in our country. By implementing plans of frequent testing throughout school and encouraging a gap year, students will be much more prepared to face the type of environment they will be in at college. They will also waste less time and money on schooling because they will be sure of what they want to do and to study before they step foot on campus.

Works Cited


EXAMPLE 4, ARGUMENTATIVE SYNTHESIS (UNACCEPTABLE)

At one point in every person's life, they have had to go through some kind of formal schooling. When students went through grade school, some say they were not given material challenging enough to prepare them for college. There was a report done on student's report cards in the United States since the year 2000. It claimed that all 50 states earned mostly C's, and the average grades remained largely unaffected since the 2000 report, though performance in two categories fell off: affordability dropped from C- to D, and benefits, a measure of what a state gains by having an educated population, fell from B- to C+. The report was done in an article by Jonathan Margules (Chronicle of Higher Education). People ask themselves now a days, 'How do we know students at the college level are learning what they need to learn while in college?' The answer to this question is that teachers need to undergo more rigorous training to better prepare for their career. Teachers need to find ways to reach each students style of learning. Therefore, much has to be done to the higher education program, and this all starts with the schooling of our teachers.
There are many problems with the way some teachers in college are trying to convey the information to their students. Teachers need to interact with their students more, trying to engage them in discussion and class activity. Teachers at every level, even in grade school, need to realize that not every student learns the same way. Teachers must involve their students more. They need to be able to adapt to each student's style of learning and fully understand each individual student's personality, in order to successfully ingrain the information into each student. The possible causes of this problem are not only in the higher education training programs for teachers, but also the will of the learning student to acquire the knowledge. In an article done by Katherine Schulten from the New York Times, she states that student's parents are to blame. It quotes, "Teachers are fed up with being blamed for the failures of American education, and legislators are starting to hear them. A spate of bills introduced in various states now takes aim squarely at the parents. If you think you can legislate teaching, the notion goes, why not try legislating parenting?" (The Learning Network). The teachers must be willing to do their best to learn the most efficient to reach the young adults they will be teaching in the future. Many college professors do not get paid to teach their students correctly. In an article from "The Chronicle of Higher Education", "Faculty rewards have nothing to do with the ability to assess student learning," says Adrianna Kezar, an associate professor of higher education at the University of Southern California. "I get promoted for writing lots of articles, not for demonstrating learning outcomes." (The Chronicle of Higher Education) This type of situation is not

Which source is this?
getting through: Students seldom think out of teacher-education programs. The Chronicle of Higher Education (May 15, 1969) noted that some teachers have it easy in college to get in a teaching position. In an article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "A colleague of mine once remarked that any good teacher was never taught to be in the teaching position."

The other side of the coin is that some teachers have it easy in college to get in teaching. Studies show that some teachers were never even suited to be in the teaching position. In an article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "A colleague of mine once remarked that any good teacher was never taught to be in the teaching position."

Some of the so-called "teachers" we have today were never even suited to be in the teaching position. In an article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "A colleague of mine once remarked that any good teacher was never taught to be in the teaching position."

Many institutions seem reluctant to engage in upgrading teacher-education programs at the graduate level. But in retrospect, students are not getting the proper education. Thus, the reason why America's colleges aren't seeing improvement at the academic level.

Teachers need to undergo two more years of training just to receive their bachelor's degree. In the article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "If the students are not getting the proper education, then the reason why America's colleges aren't seeing improvement at the academic level.

Student teaching and leaves students needing only 12 more hours of course work to receive the bachelor's degree. In the article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "If the students are not getting the proper education, then the reason why America's colleges aren't seeing improvement at the academic level.

The institution also needs a four-year undergraduate program continuing in student teaching and a B.S. in education. A graduate program that includes a year-long internship is needed. Students needing only 12 more hours of course work to receive the bachelor's degree. In the article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "If the students are not getting the proper education, then the reason why America's colleges aren't seeing improvement at the academic level.

The institution also needs a four-year undergraduate program continuing in student teaching and a B.S. in education. A graduate program that includes a year-long internship is needed. Students needing only 12 more hours of course work to receive the bachelor's degree. In the article done by Ted Hopes, he said, "If the students are not getting the proper education, then the reason why America's colleges aren't seeing improvement at the academic level.
work to earn an M.S. in education." This will ensure that teachers are getting the proper training needed to make students understand the criteria being taught to them. To pay for the two extra years, I believe students that aren't on scholarship should not have to pay for the extra two years of college. The extra two years would be paid by our taxpayers' money or a government program in which the teacher must pay back within five years of completing this program from their future job's salary. In these two years, these courses would be focused on understanding the criteria and how to finish the states standards where the teacher plans on teaching at. These classes will also help learn the psychology of students, which have different motivational levels. There must be bills passed at the legislative level of the U.S. Government for this to happen. People may see this proposal and think it is not possible, but no one ever said change would be easy. Without change and taking risks, things will stay the same in every possible situation. Not every student is at a four-year institutional college for themselves, many students are at college to get approval from their respected families. Teachers should have to undergo a test to measure their skills, in order to properly place them where they are best suited to teach different children with different styles of learning.

Studies show that students are visual learners, auditory learners, or kinesthetic learners (Teacher Test). There are tests available to see students best way of learning for them. I propose teachers should take a similar test’s on their ways of teaching. If a teacher was more adapt to teach to auditory learners, they could be assigned to classes that teach these students. At the end of a

How would colleges be able to divide classes so that all auditory learners were together?
teacher's college career, they could go into an extensive two-year teaching program. There could be tests given that involve personality traits, teaching methods, and interests to place them in classes that help students best. If the students take a similar test right before their college entry, they could be placed more compatible with their teachers. This should help the students become more eager to learn and to thirst for knowledge from their teachers. Teachers would also enjoy teaching students in a way that they enjoy learning. For instance, a teacher and student relationship in which they teach and learn by a visual learning setting, could provide pictures and slides instead of extensive readings. I found an article that discussed this issue with professors elaborating on the students preferred way of learning. One professor said, "What matters to them is learning, not lectures; inspiring, not processing; exploring and not just explaining," said John Lippincott, president of the council (The Chronicle of Higher Education). Teachers that teach better by kinesthetic teaching could be placed in athletic teaching environments. Their students could learn by doing physical activities. These teachers would be good in strength training, aerobic exercise, and bodily functions. Even teachers within higher educational classes such as master's classes could teach future physical therapists. Auditory teachers could specialize in teaching classes that give students listening exercises. College and universities could invest in readings that are spoken to students. These students could do daily listening through headphones than teachers could elaborate in class on a certain subject.
In order for this to be achieved, it will be a difficult process and will involve the alteration of the teaching programs throughout the country. Reform needs to happen for America to be where it needs to be in higher education. The points above point clearly lay out a possible the solution to the problem at hand. Yes, much could be changed to make it more precise, but there is always room for tweaking and improvement. We are competing with other nations that are experimenting with different styles of learning to reach their students. They are looking at every different avenue that could be taken. Our students at the collegiate level are a good representation of what is to come for the United States. Higher education is more important now than ever with the expanding economic conditions and advances in science, and therefore, we should seek to further the education of our teachers in order to reach the ultimate goal. We must improve the education of our teachers, in order to improve that of our students.

To me, this essay represents why time management and the work with your professor are so important. There is a good idea here but, as I commented on your draft, this seems to blend sources on K-12 teaching with claims about WE teaching and the paths to these two careers are extremely different. I wish you would have come spoken to me about this or attended your conference.

"Different Types Of Teaching Methods." Rev. of *Teacher Test*. *Teacher Test*. Teacher Test. 2012. Web. 6 Apr. 2012. <http://www.bcera.org/different-types-of-teaching-methods.htm>. This website worked very well for me. It gave me information on the different methods of learning there are. It shows how a teacher can give a student different methods for teaching the material.