**Affecting Change through Academic Discourse**

**Subject area:** English/Language Arts, Composition 1

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**INSTRUCTOR PROCEDURES**

1. **Task overview**:

Students should have a firm grasp of rhetorical reading and writing; identifying, analyzing, and establishing rhetorical situations; and conducting research as conversational inquiry. The purpose of this task is to give students real-world practice in conducting purposeful research and adding their voices to an existing discourse. This assignment requires students to consider their audience, compare and contrast perspectives, frame and define issues as well as their own perspectives, and describe and explain the overall rhetorical situation of a political, social, or economic issue of their choice.

1. **Prior knowledge required:**

Students need to know and have practice with the following:

* Rhetoric (a basic, first-level study will suffice).
* Rhetorical situations (including purpose, appeals, audience, rhetoric, historical context, and constraints).
* The concept of “research as conversational inquiry” (Stuart Greene, in his essay, *Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument* provides a great definition for this concept).

Students must also be able to:

* Seek and recognize academic sources (they should be proficient in using the school library and online academic databases such as JSTOR).
* Read and write rhetorically (this assignment will give them practice in this, but they should have at least some experience in doing both before starting this assignment).
* Take excellent notes in class and from class readings.

1. **Common Core State Standards aligned to this task:**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/2/) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/5/) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/7/) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/8/) Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/9/) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/2/) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/3/)Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/6/) Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/8/) Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/9/) Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

1. **Time requirements**:

Students will need 3 to 5 weeks to complete this task, including multiple drafts of the paper. They should plan on spending several hours (3-4) out of class finding sources, and as much time as they need to read and analyze them (10-15 hours most likely). Instructors can give them time in a computer lab (perhaps two 1-hour class periods) to work on their papers in class. During that time, instructors can provide them with any support they need. In addition, instructors might consider devoting 1-3 one-hour classes discussing articles in class so that students can witness examples of how to analyze a larger academic text rhetorically. Also, many of the lessons during those 3 to 5 weeks should be designed to support them in better understanding the task as they’re conducting their research and writing their papers.

1. **Instructor materials to use during administration**:

**Downs, D. &Wardle, E. (2011). *Writing about Writing: A College Reader.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.**

This book provides great frameworks for rhetoric, rhetorical situations, and research as conversational inquiry. The article mentioned above, *Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument* by Stuart Greene, is in this book.

**The Purdue OWL, on Rhetoric:**

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/625/01/

This web site provides teachers and students with a great basic overview of rhetoric and rhetorical situations.

1. **Instructor procedures during administration:**

* Hand out the assignment, read it aloud, and ask if there are questions.
* Give students 5 to 10 minutes to brainstorm potential topics (issues).
* Have an in-class discussion of different issues. Write various issues on the board and ask students to identify the multiple sides to the issues; have them use these multiple perspectives to guide their research.
* Give the students multiple assignments building up to the final paper. One recommendation is to assign:

1. one draft that asks them to annotate each of their three academic sources and to describe the rhetorical situation of each;
2. one draft that serves as a very rough draft of their essay (allow students to share this draft with other students to get peer feedback);
3. and the final draft to be submitted for grading.

If you do this, give specific instructions to students for each draft.

* Remind students that they can visit with you during office hours, etc., and ask you questions at any point.
* Several class periods before the final draft is due, give students an opportunity to discuss their research and discoveries with multiple classmates. This exercise could be completed in addition to the peer review connected to the drafts and would allow students to have conversations about their ideas, arguments, and writing processes. The atmosphere for this activity should be more like a casual gathering at an academic conference, where researchers come together to informally discuss their ideas. This activity helps students to discuss and clarify their ideas.
* After students have submitted their essays, devote a class period to discussing what they learned about rhetoric, research, and writing.

1. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide students with the rubric to be used to score their final product.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer- or teacher-edit of their papers before final submission.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend class time in review of what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work time.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Students could present the results of their research to the class via an oral or multi-media presentation.
* A panel could be organized where students discuss their views on academic discourse, providing examples from their research and personal experiences.

1. **Scoring and assessment considerations**

EPIC developed the *College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric* to accompany this task. If your school or department uses a standardized rubric that would fit the content and requirements of this task, you may choose to use your existing rubric. The following notes and suggestions are meant to clarify the intent of the rubric and include considerations for the assessment of student work.

* When assigning the task, provide students with the rubric that will be used to score their final product and discuss it as a class.
* Unlike some rubrics, the *CCR Task Bank Rubric* does not predetermine “point values” for the scoring criteria. The rubric thus allows for flexibility with different instructors’ scoring systems and individual determination of the “weight” of each criterion.
* Student work that scores at the *Accomplished* level is considered to be entry-level college work.
* The *Exceeds* category on the rubric provides an example of how a student can go above and beyond the *Accomplished* level. These examples are intended to be only ONE way a work product can exceed expectations, thus allowing room for your professional judgment.
* If needed, consider including task-specific criteria as an additional scoring category to the rubric or providing a checklist of requirements for the task.