

## **Research-based Strategies for Teaching Argument Writing: Cognitive, Sociocognitive-Sociocultural, and Design-Based Lenses**

Paper 1: Research-based strategies for teaching arguments of literary analysis in ELA (Carol Booth Olson & Huy Q. Chung)

Paper 2: Research-based strategies for teaching arguments of opinion for civic engagement (Tanya Baker)

Paper 3: Research-based strategies for teaching argument writing in history (Jenell Krishnan & Jacob Steiss)

An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating the writer's position, belief, or conclusion is valid. In English language arts, students make claims about the worth or meaning of a literary work or works. They defend their interpretations or judgments with evidence from the text(s) they are writing about. In history/social studies, students analyze evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources to advance a claim that is best supported by the evidence, and they argue for a historically or empirically situated interpretation. In science, students make claims in the form of statements or conclusions that answer questions or address problems. Using data in a scientifically acceptable form, students marshal evidence and draw on their understanding of scientific concepts to argue in support of their claims.

CCSS (Appendix A)

## **Common Core College and Career Ready Anchor Standards for Reading**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from text.

## **Common Core College and Career Ready Anchor Standards for Writing**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



“Argument is not simply a dispute, as when people disagree with one another or yell at each other. Argument is about making a case in support of a claim in everyday affairs – in science, in policy making, in courtrooms, and so forth”

Hillocks, 2011



Studies find that secondary students have difficulty:

- Writing clear and arguable claims
- Generating and critiquing evidence
- Explaining how evidence supports their claims
- Learning particular argumentative structures
- Anticipating potential criticisms of their positions
- Evaluating the quality of their argument

Kuhn, 1991; Chamblis & Murphy, 2002; Langer 2002; Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005; Salah-Din, Persky & Miller, 2008; Ferretti & Lewis, 2013

## Three Lenses

- Cognitive
- Sociocognitive
- Design-Based



## Arguments of Literary Analysis



## Arguments of Opinions



## Designing for Argument Writing



## **Paper 1: Research-Based Strategies for Teaching Arguments of Literary Analysis in ELA**



**PATHWAY**  
**TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

# EIR Pathway Project Goal

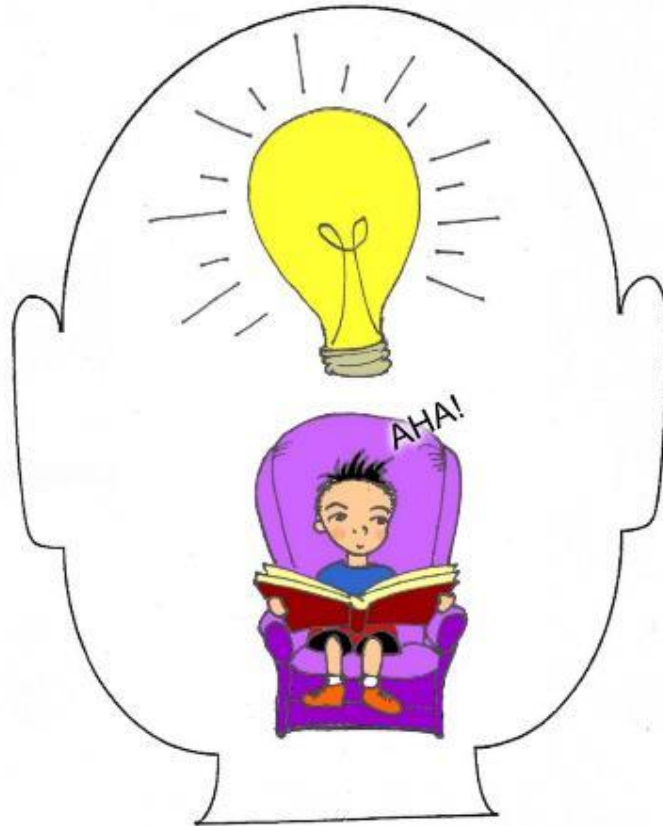
- The Pathway Project takes a cognitive strategies approach to enhance the text-based analytical writing of mainstreamed English Learners (ELs) to help them complete courses in core academic subjects, meet rigorous Common Core/ State Standards for ELA, and become college-bound.



# A Reader's and Writer's Tool Kit



### Forming Interpretations



Open Mind

### Reflecting and Relating



Open Mind

# Three Types of Knowledge

- Declarative Knowledge
- Procedural Knowledge
- Conditional Knowledge

## Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters

### *Planning and Goal Setting*

- My purpose is...
- My top priority is ...
- I will accomplish my goal by...

### *Tapping Prior Knowledge*

- I already know that...
- This reminds me of...
- This relates to...

### *Asking Questions*

- I wonder why...
- What if...
- How come...

### *Making Predictions*

- I'll bet that...
- I think...
- If \_\_\_\_\_, then...

### *Visualizing*

- I can picture...
- In my mind I see...
- If this were a movie...

### *Making Connections*

- This reminds me of...
- I experienced this once when...
- I can relate to this because...

### *Summarizing*

- The basic gist is...
- The key information is...
- In a nutshell, this says that..

### *Adopting an Alignment*

- The character I most identify with is...
- I really got into the story when...
- I can relate to this author because...



## Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters

### *Forming Interpretations*

- What this means to me is...
- I think this represents...
- The idea I'm getting is...

### *Monitoring*

- I got lost here because...
- I need to reread the part where...
- I know I'm on the right track because ...

### *Clarifying*

- To understand better, I need to know more about...
- Something that is still not clear is...
- I'm guessing that this means \_\_\_\_\_, but I need to...

### *Revising Meaning*

- At first I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I.....
- My latest thought about this is...
- I'm getting a different picture here because...

### *Analyzing the Author's Craft*

- A golden line for me is...
- This word/phrase stands out for me because...
- I like how the author uses \_\_\_\_\_ to show...

### *Reflecting and Relating*

- So, the big idea is...
- A conclusion I'm drawing is...
- This is relevant to my life because...

### *Evaluating*

- I like/don't like \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- My opinion is \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- The most important message is \_\_\_\_\_ because...



## “Sometimes the Earth is Cruel”

### **Writing Directions**

After reading “Sometimes, the Earth is Cruel,” select one important theme to write an essay about. Create a theme statement which expresses the author’s main point, lesson, or message in the article. Your theme statement will be the thesis of your essay—the claim you make about the writer’s message or main idea.

As you develop the main body of your essay, pay special attention to:

- Pitts’ description of the Haitian people’s actions after the earthquake
- The language Pitts uses to describe nature and the relationship between the Haitian people and nature (including similes, metaphors, symbols, personification, or other figurative language)
- Pitts’ response to the way the Haitian people deal with their tragedy

In your conclusion:

- Discuss Pitts’ purpose in writing “Sometimes, the Earth is Cruel.”
- Revisit the message he wants his readers to take away from reading his article and explain why it is especially significant.

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<b>Do</b>	<b>What</b>
select	one important theme
write	an essay
create	a theme statement
express	the author's main point, lesson or memory
pay	special attention to: Pitts' description the language Pitts' uses Pitts' response
discuss	Pitts' purpose in writing
explain	why the message is significant

# Color Coding

<b>Plot Summary</b>	<b>Supporting Detail</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
Yellow	Green	Blue
What is obvious Just the facts	Examples Evidence Quotes	Deeper thinking Interpretations Conclusions The so what? Insights Ahas Opinions

## Side-by-Side Comparison: Color Coded Essays by a Less Experienced and More Experienced Writer

### Student Paper: 123161

This essay is going to be about the story we read in class. The people in the story are a boy and his mom and their dad left them. Now the mom has to worry about taking care of the boy all by herself. She's really unhappy. The boy is very worried about her. Oh, the homeless man is another person in the story. The boy Willie is trying to learn the cure for unhappiness because his mom is depressed.

The relationship between the boy and his mother is OK at first. She does everything for him. Like she even walks him home from school every day. She worries about her kid just like most mothers do. The boy is always upsetting his mom by asking her a bunch of stupid questions.

How Willie and his mother react to the homeless man in front of their apartment building is different. She doesn't want to embarrass the homeless man so she tells Willie to not look at him. But Willie is curious of the homeless man. Plus Willie thinks the man looks very unhappy and must know alot about it. He thinks the man can give him a cure for unhappiness for his mother.

The symbol the author uses to show the changing relationship is the blind fish. The fish is a symbol of the boy's mother. Willie thinks his mother is just like the fish. She tells Willie, "I have eyes. I can see" but Willie doesn't think so. He thinks she lives in a cave. That means she doesn't want to face her problems. When the homeless man excepted the cake from Willie, that made Willie feel super happy. The homeless man tells him, "What a person needs is more than they say."

### Student Paper: 281130

Who could imagine that a homeless man, a man as unwanted as "some spat-out piece of chewing gum," would be the one to help a young boy better understand the needs of his mother? This is what happens in the short story "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?" by Avi. In the story Mrs. Markham, Willie's mother, has been deserted by her husband. She is struggling to maintain a home for herself and her only son. Willie realizes that his mother is withdrawn and unhappy. When Willie asks the homeless man if he knows the cure to unhappiness, the man tells him that "what a person needs is always more than they say." These words help Willie to comprehend that people are often ashamed to admit they need help, and that true happiness comes from recognizing others' needs and offering them a helping hand.

Willie and Mrs. Markham obviously care deeply for one another. However, neither seems able to assuage the other's pain. There is little meaningful interaction between them. She naps in the afternoon when he gets home from school and leaves him alone in the evenings when she goes to work at the convenience store. Whenever he spoke to her, Willie was "never sure his mother was listening. She seemed preoccupied with her own thoughts." Nevertheless, Mrs. Markham does worry about Willie's well-being, providing for him the best she can, guarding him from the many potential dangers of a harsh world. For example, she meets him faithfully every day to walk him home from school. However, the reader is surprised to learn that Willie is not a first or second grader, but in the sixth grade because the mother seems over protective for a boy that age. She also seems very controlling and regimented, slicing him exactly a half inch of cake. Mrs. Markham is a rule follower who does not think outside the box. Because she seems so depressed, keeping to herself, and sleeping a lot of the time, Willie likewise worries about his mother. In fact, his motive for talking to the homeless man is to perhaps find a way to take away his mother's unhappiness.

When Willie and Mrs. Markham see the homeless man for the first time, their reactions are quite different. Willie is curious to know more about the man, whereas Mrs. Markham wants to pretend he doesn't exist. She tells Willie, "Don't look that way." For Mrs. Markham who is struggling to keep a roof over their heads and some food in their bellies, the homeless man represents the hardships of life, the struggle just to survive. She wants to shelter Willie from this side of life. In contrast, like the innocent dog who does not judge the homeless man, Willie, too, is drawn to him. He doesn't seem to recognize the danger inherent for a child in talking to a strange man out on the mean streets of the city. Willie has seen the unhappiness on the homeless man's face and believes he must know a lot about it. Willie hopes the man will give him the cure so he can help his mother.

At the end of the story, Willie has learned that his mother is like the fish that lost the ability to see because they live in dark caves. Like the fish, Willie's mother hides away in their cave-like apartment. Her words reflect her attitude when she tells Willie, "There's much in the mind that need not be paid attention to." She has chosen to shut herself off from the world, to close her eyes to her problems. When the homeless man agrees to accept the gift of the cake, Willie also learns that happiness comes from being allowed to help those in need. He thinks, "It was as if the man had given him a gift." He knows that if his mother would face her problems and allow Willie to share in them, they both would be much happier. He recognizes that he can no longer be Willie, a name symbolizing a naive little boy, but must now be William, a young man, demonstrating that he is ready to share the burdens of reality with his mother.

Because his mother asks, "What do fish have to do with anything?" at the end of the story, we do not know if Willie will be able to get through to her. But he, at least, has opened his eyes and learned that if you face your problems and reach out for help as well as reach out to help others, both you and those who love you will be better off.

How do we know this works?



**EDUCATOR'S PRACTICE GUIDE**

A set of recommendations to address challenges in classrooms and schools

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

## Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively



NCEE 2017-4002  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**ies** NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
EDUCATION EVALUATION  
AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE  
Institute of Education Sciences

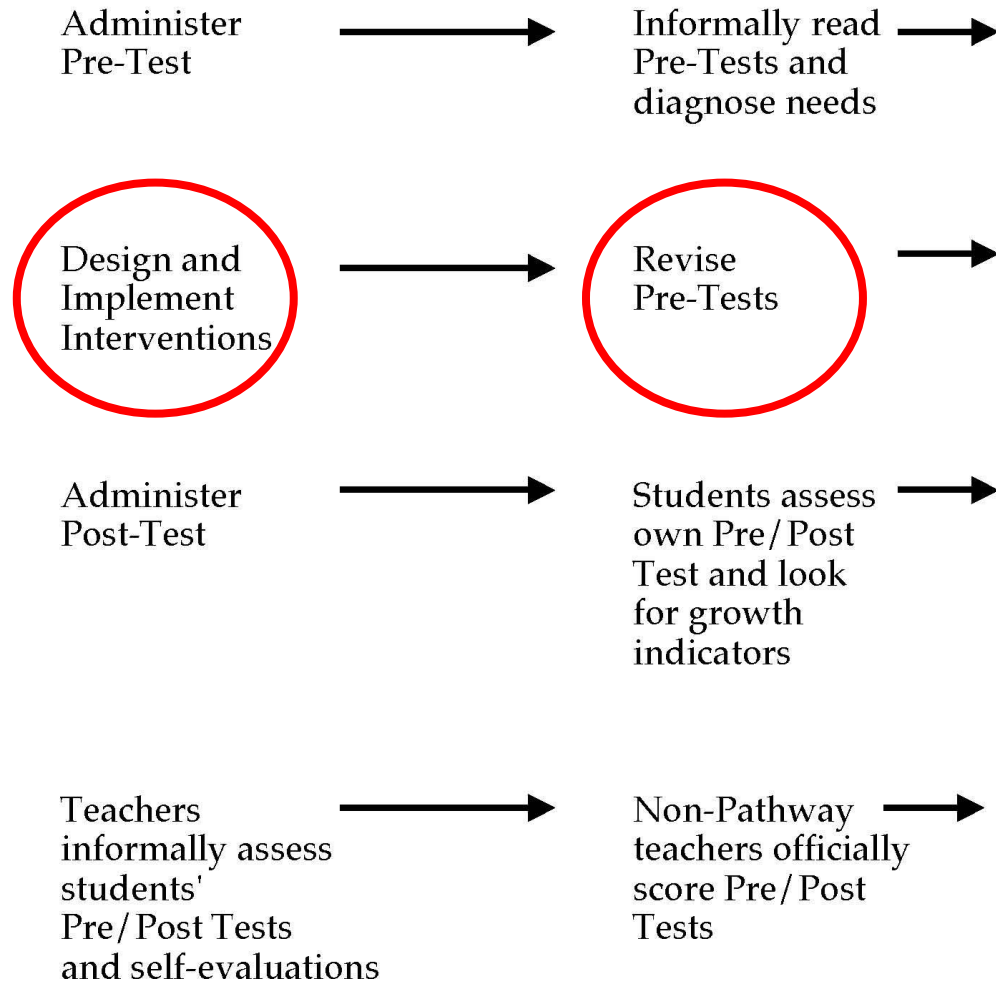
3400 studies  
55 vetted  
15 met WWC  
4 Pathway

Strong evidence for the  
Pathway Project from IES  
What Works Clearinghouse

Recommendation #1: Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies

“Teaching students to **use cognitive strategies** is one way to develop their strategic thinking skills, ultimately helping them to **write more effectively.**”

## Pathway Project Research Design



# Pathway Effect Sizes

SAUSD

.67

LUSD

.44

AUHSD

.60

NLMUSD

.48

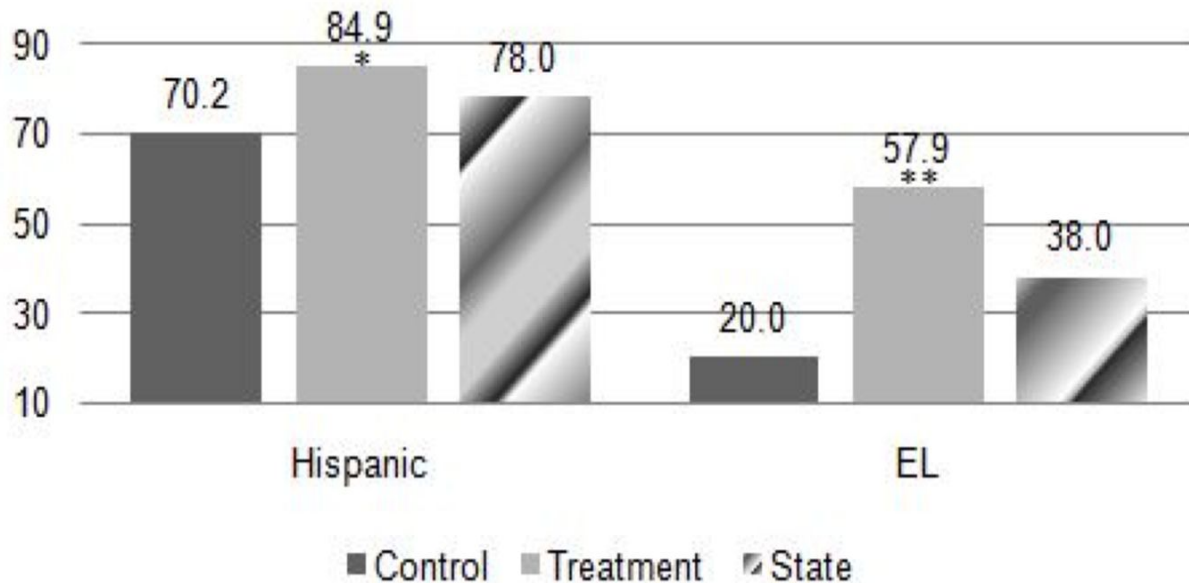
LBUSD

.26

## AUHSD Results

- Latino treatment students outscored their white peers in the control condition.
- Students on FRPL gained significantly more than non-FRPL
- ELs in the treatment scored at parity with EOs in the control

## CA High School Exit Exam Pass Rates for Year 2



† $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Figure 5.** CA High School Exit Exam Pass Rates for Hispanic and EL students as compared to the state averages (by percentage points) during AY 2013-2014. Stars indicate statistical significance in pass rates between Treatment and control groups. Percentages reported come from Table 8.



# i3 Year 1 Impacts in Effect Sizes

Holistic .32

Content .31

Structure .29

Fluency .29

Convention .32

s

The Pathway Project intervention helped to close the achievement gap in writing for Latinos and helped ELs to gain ground by narrowing the achievement gap between ELs and their native English speaking peers.

### **Implications for Practice**

- This study highlights the efficacy of using strategies that reflect the recommendations of the WWC Practice Guide to improve literacy outcomes for diverse students.
- A making student-thinking-visible scaffolding approach such as the color-coding strategy is useful in helping students visualize components of their paper that may need to be revised

# Thank you!

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