

**The Landscape of Advanced Placement English Language & Composition:
An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam
through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau**

by

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Framingham High School
115 A Street, Framingham, Mass.
11th grade English AP class
July 2010

Title of Unit: The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
Name: Inna Kantor London
Duration of Unit: The entire unit will not be taught together. Typically, the rhetorical devices essay is introduced in Term I. That part of the unit will probably last two weeks. The persuasive essay is introduced in Term II. That part of the unit will probably last a week. The synthesis essay is introduced in Term III. That part of the unit will last about a week and a half to two weeks.
School: Framingham High School
School City and State: Framingham, Mass.
Number of Lesson in Unit: 13
Subject: English (Advanced Placement English Language and Composition)
Related Subjects: None
Grade Level(s): 11
Date: July 2010

Short Abstract of Curriculum:

Selections from Henry David Thoreau's writings will be used to introduce students to the three essays of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Exam: the rhetorical devices essay, the persuasive essay and the synthesis essay. Students will explore their sense of place in the projects and journals. These assignments reaffirm the concepts necessary for effectively writing these three essays. The unit will combine both analytical and creative work. Final assessments in the form of actual former AP essay prompts will be used. These final assessments will also implicitly address the notion of one's sense of place. These lessons will serve as an introduction to the essays; the essays will be practiced and revisited throughout the year using various other materials.

List of Reading Materials:

Approaching Walden. www.walden.org.

Cody, Anthony. "Obama calls for Richer Assessments, Teacher Involvement." Education Week Teacher. February 2010. 16 July 2010. blogs.edweek.org.

College Board: AP Central. www.apcentral.collegeboard.com

Gardner, Walt. "The 'crisis' of U.S. education." The New York Times. 14 January 2008. 16 July 2010. www.nytimes.com.

Johnson, Kirk and Krista Kafer. "Why More Money Will Not Solve America's Education Crisis." The Heritage Foundation. 11 June 2001. 16 July 2010. www.heritage.org/Research/Reports.

McKenzie, Jamie. "Learning the Script." Nochildleft.com. 2004. 16 July 2010.
NoChildleft.com/cartoon21.html.

National Education Association. "ESEA: It's Time for a Change." NEA. 2002-2010. 16 July 2010.
www.nea.org/home/13193.htm.

Rubenstein, Grace. "Outside In." Edutopia. March 2007. 24-27.

Thoreau, Henry David. [Civil Disobedience and Other Essays](#). New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993.

Thoreau, Henry David. [Walden. Concise Anthology of American Literature](#). Ed. George McMichael. New York: Macmillan, 1985. 682-791.

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. "Student Gains From Place-Based Education." November 2007. 16 July 2010. www.cudenver.edu/cye.

List of Equipment:

On certain occasions, students will go to the library or computer lab to look at outside sources.

Massachusetts State Standards:

Standard 1: Discussion
Standard 2: Questioning, Listening and Contributing
Standard 3: Oral Presentations
Standard 4: Vocabulary and Concept Development
Standard 6: Forman and Informal English
Standard 8: Understanding a Text
Standard 9: Making Connections
Standard 13: Non-fiction
Standard 15: Style and Language
Standard 19: Writing
Standard 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose

Introduction

The AP English Language and Composition exam is composed of 55 multiple choice questions and three essay questions. Students receive a 15 minute reading period for the synthesis essay and 40 minutes to write each of the three essays. The first type of essay is known as a *rhetorical devices essay*, in which a student is given a passage of non-fiction and is asked to analyze the various literary and rhetorical devices used to convey the author's purpose. The second type of essay is known as a *persuasive essay*, in which a student is given either a quotation or a statement, and the student must write a persuasive essay defending, challenging or qualifying the claim made by the quotation or statement. The student must use specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events or personal experiences to defend his or her response. The best essays are those that display an understanding of an opposing position with an efficient and clever challenge to that position. The third type of essay is known as a *synthesis essay*. It is similar to the persuasive essay in the sense that the student is asked to make an argument about a given topic, but, unlike the persuasive essay, the synthesis essay offers selections from various sources that must be synthesized in creating one's argument. At least one of the given sources is a visual text (map, illustration, painting, cartoon, chart, etc.). Students must refrain from summarizing the works and instead engage in a conversation with the sources, thereby presenting their own position on the given topic.

It is my overarching goal in this unit to offer the students an introduction to the three types of essays through Henry David Thoreau's works. At the same time, I want students to be inspired by the actual content of these works. Consequently, the students will be given an opportunity to consider and reflect upon their sense of place through the journal and project work that the unit offers. Ultimately, the AP English Language and Composition curriculum seeks the creation of an educated citizen. It is through one's learning of one's environment and place that one can become a truly educated and contributing citizen. Therefore, an individual's sense of place will be a guiding theme in all assignments. The final assessments will be in the form of actual former AP essay prompts; these essays will be done in class under actual testing conditions. All essays are graded on a 9-point scale, with 9 being the highest score (rubrics will be provided). I have specifically chosen former prompts that link into our theme and exploration of one's sense of place. The lessons will serve as an introduction to the essays; the essays will be practiced and revisited throughout the year using various other materials.

Brief Unit Outline:

- I. Rhetorical Devices Essay (6 lessons)
 - A. Analysis of various Thoreau passages
 - B. Journal writings about natural environment
 - C. Rhetoric on the Town Project
 - D. In-class essay

- II. Persuasive Essay (4 lessons)
 - A. Four Corner Activity
 - B. Socratic Seminar
 - C. Journal writings about local issues
 - D. Newspaper Activity
 - E. In-class essay

- III. Synthesis Essay (3 lessons)
 - A. Education Synthesis (including discussion of place-based education)
 - B. Synthesis research regarding environmental activism (research paper)
 - C. In-class essay

Name: Inna Kantor London
Unit Title: The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
Lesson #: 1-6
Lesson Title: The Rhetorical Devices Essay
Lesson Duration: Each lesson is a 60 minute class.

Abstract:

The rhetorical devices essay is probably the hardest essay for most students. It seeks not only an understanding and identification of various literary and rhetorical devices, but it also demands that students demonstrate an understanding of why the author chooses to use certain devices in conveying his or her purpose. On the AP Exam, students will have 40 minutes to complete this essay.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will define and identify the following literary terms: rhetoric, imagery, symbolism, detail, diction, simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, juxtaposition, syntax, and rhetorical questions.

Students will apply the various literary devices in their own writing.

Students will generalize their understanding of the various literary devices by exploring rhetoric in their own communities and settings.

Students will work in a collaborative setting.

Student will go outside to explore their natural surroundings.

Students will familiarize themselves with a variety of Henry David Thoreau's writings.

Students will practice writing an AP essay in a timed fashion.

Lesson 1:

The teacher will define the term rhetoric.

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: imagery, symbolism, detail and diction.

Students will read Thoreau's "The Ponds" from Walden. They will then receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau's "The Ponds," Walden.

The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description. It is a clear

and deep green well, half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference, and contains about sixty-one and a half acres; a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods, without any visible inlet or outlet except by the clouds and evaporation. The surrounding hills rise abruptly from the water to the height of forty to eighty feet, though on the southeast and east they attain to about one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet respectively, within a quarter and a third of a mile. They are exclusively woodland. All our Concord waters have two colors at least; one when viewed at a distance, and another, more proper, close at hand. The first depends more on the light, and follows the sky. In clear weather, in summer, they appear blue at a little distance, especially if agitated, and at a great distance all appear alike. In stormy weather they are sometimes of a dark slate-color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere. I have seen our river, when, the landscape being covered with snow, both water and ice were almost as green as grass. Some consider blue "to be the color of pure water, whether liquid or solid." But, looking directly down into our waters from a boat, they are seen to be of very different colors. Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view. Lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the color of both. Viewed from a hilltop it reflects the color of the sky; but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond. In some lights, viewed even from a hilltop, it is of a vivid green next the shore. Some have referred this to the reflection of the verdure; but it is equally green there against the railroad sandbank, and in the spring, before the leaves are expanded, and it may be simply the result of the prevailing blue mixed with the yellow of the sand. Such is the color of its iris. This is that portion, also, where in the spring, the ice being warmed by the heat of the sun reflected from the bottom, and also transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen middle. Like the rest of our waters, when much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface, and looking with divided vision, so as to see the reflection, I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air. It is well known that a large plate of glass will have a green tint, owing, as the makers say, to its "body," but a small piece of the same will be colorless. How large a body of Walden water would be required to reflect a green tint I have never proved. The water of our river is black or a very dark brown to one looking directly down on it, and, like that of most ponds, imparts to the body of one bathing in it a yellowish tinge; but this water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, still more unnatural, which, as the limbs are magnified and distorted withal, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

The water is so transparent that the bottom can easily be discerned at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet. Paddling over it, you may see, many feet beneath the surface, the schools of perch and shiners, perhaps only an inch long, yet the former easily distinguished by their transverse bars, and you think that they must be ascetic fish that find a subsistence there. Once, in the winter, many years ago, when I had been cutting holes through the ice in order to catch pickerel, as I stepped ashore I tossed my axe back on to the ice, but, as if some evil genius had directed it, it slid four or five rods directly into one of the holes, where the water was twenty-five feet deep. Out of curiosity, I lay down on the ice and looked through the hole, until I saw the axe a little on one side, standing on its head, with its helve erect and gently swaying to and fro with the pulse of the pond; and there it might have stood erect and swaying till in the course of time the handle rotted off, if I had not disturbed it. Making another hole directly over it with an ice

chisel which I had, and cutting down the longest birch which I could find in the neighborhood with my knife, I made a slip-noose, which I attached to its end, and, letting it down carefully, passed it over the knob of the handle, and drew it by a line along the birch, and so pulled the axe out again.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts." They will then receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? Students will write a short essay.

From Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts."

But it chanced the other day that I scented a white water-lily, and a season I had waited for had arrived. It is the emblem of purity. It bursts up so pure and fair to the eye, and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of this flower! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of Northern men. It suggests what kind of laws have prevailed longest and widest, and still prevail, and that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such is the odor which the plant emits. If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still young and full of vigor, her integrity and genius unimpaired, and that there is virtue even in man, too, who is fitted to perceive and love it. It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri Compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the water-lily. It is not a *Nymphoea Douglasii*. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts Governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that when we behold or scent a flower, we may not be reminded how inconsistent your deeds are with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality, and if fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man, the decay of humanity; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which are immortal.

Slavery and servility have produced no sweet-scented flower annually, to charm the senses of men, for they have no real life: they are merely a decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils. We do not complain that they *live*, but that they do not get *buried*. Let the living bury them: even they are good for manure.

Lesson 2:

We will go outside. Students will pick a natural object. In a journal, without naming the object, take two minutes to describe it. Use words, illustrations, or both. Make sure to look at things closely, to touch things, and to smell things. Now write a one page entry, using detail and imagery to describe your object based on your notes and drawings. Consider diction closely. Can your object transform into a symbol? Find a meaning in it.

Students will share journal entries in groups of four and then break into groups of two. In each pair, students will annotate each other's work for the terms we explored yesterday. Each student will write a response entry in the other's journal, where s/he will guess what the object is and then explore why the author used the various literary devices and what message the author was trying to establish through these devices. Students will reconvene in their groups of four and read each other's responses.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Read Thoreau's "Walking." Pick a paragraph or two to annotate for the literary devices we studied. How does Thoreau use these devices to convey his purpose? Write a paragraph.

Lesson 3:

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: rhetorical questions, syntax, metaphor, and personification.

Students will have read Thoreau's "Walking" as homework. They will receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau's "Walking."

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk? I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world; and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle,--varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for a thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the

prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia; but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they; "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read Thoreau's "Conclusion" of Walden and receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? Write a paragraph.

From Thoreau's "Conclusion," Walden.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is Eve or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the Highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

Lesson 4:

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: simile, allusion, and juxtaposition.

Students have already read Thoreau's "Walking." They will receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau's "Walking."

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveler asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character--will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labor robs the hands of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less; and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough--that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the laborer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of Platanes," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to Society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is--I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works--for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read "The Bean-Field" in Thoreau's Walden. Find a passage rich in the literary devices which we have studied and annotate it. Consider Thoreau's use of various literary devices in conveying his purpose. Make sure to clearly identify Thoreau's purpose in his essay. Write a paragraph of your findings.

Lesson 5

The class will go outside into the natural surroundings of our school. Kids will be divided into pairs. Each pair must find one element of nature (any element as long as each member of the pair writes about the same element) to write about in their journals. The students must employ the literary devices we covered (imagery, symbolism, detail, diction, simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, juxtaposition, syntax, and rhetorical questions) in a conscious and deliberate manner. Once students complete their entries, each pair will compare their entries and their various uses of the devices. We will discuss the various messages students tried to convey in their writings and consider the various devices used by the students to convey their individual messages.

Homework: (100 points test)

Assign "Rhetoric Out on the Town."

RHETORIC OUT ON THE TOWN

You are to spend a lovely few hours around town (or go somewhere else if you are allowed!), going to stores (you don't have to buy anything!), going to restaurants (you don't have to eat anything!), being on the roads, walking the downtown(s), visiting cemeteries, walking down streets or paths looking for examples of rhetoric (in pictures and/or writing). When you see a good example of rhetoric in action, take a picture and record when/where you found it. For each example (you will need 5) you'll then type up answers to the following questions (a paragraph for each question - no personal pronouns, watch your grammar and mechanics, present tense):

1. Why do you think this is an example of rhetoric?
2. What is the message being given by this example?
3. Who is the audience/target for this particular example?
4. What techniques did the creator(s) of this example use to get this message across (explain how these techniques were used)?
5. Could other techniques be used more effectively? If so, what would you have done differently (no personal pronouns!)?

You will need to add a cover sheet explaining who the partners are and the places you looked for examples. Make sure to provide a page for each example, including the digital picture you took and the answers to the questions (need not all fit on a single page).

Grading Criteria:

Correct Information: clearly, correctly explain and answers questions (no personal pronouns, watch your grammar and mechanics, present tense)

Completion: 5 pictures; answer all questions for each picture; follow directions

Organization: employ a logical, user-friendly organizational form

Neatness/Creativity: take pride in your project's appearance

Presentation: take pride in your project when you present; do NOT read the paragraphs – EXPLAIN them to the class instead!

Lesson 6

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with one's sense of place and close observation of one's surroundings. Because this is a compare/contrast essay, it builds on many of the journal activities we've done throughout the unit.

The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap05_frq_englishlang_45429.pdf.

See **Attachment A** for a copy of the essay prompt as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

Name: Inna Kantor London
Unit Title: The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
Lesson #: 7-10
Lesson Title: The Persuasive Essay
Lesson Duration: Each lesson is 60 minutes long.

Abstract:

The persuasive essay is usually the easiest essay for AP students to write, probably because the students get practice writing one for the SATs. The essay on the AP, however, requires more complex thinking. To receive a 7, 8, or a 9 on the exam, students must consider both sides of an argument. They must prove their argument with specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events and/or personal experiences. On the AP Exam, students will have 40 minutes to complete this essay.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will discuss central issues of Thoreau’s writings.

Students will debate their agreements or disagreements with Thoreau’s ideas and support their positions with specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events and/or personal experiences.

Students will explore local issues facing their town.

Students will consider actions for change.

Students will write persuasive pieces on various local and national issues.

Students will consider counterarguments.

Students will practice writing an AP essay in a timed fashion.

Lesson 7:

Four Corners Activity: Mark four corners of the room with the signs “Strongly Agree,” “Strongly Disagree,” “Somewhat Agree,” and “Somewhat Disagree.” Offer the students a list of Thoreau quotations. Read each quotation out loud. Students will disperse to the corner of the room that best represents their positions. Students in each corner will be called to support their positions. A debate/discussion will ensue.

All quotations were taken from Approaching Walden, <http://www.walden.org/Library/Quotations/>:

We do not learn much from learned books, but from true, sincere, human books, from frank and honest biographies.

He who cannot read is worse than deaf and blind, is yet but half alive, is still-born.

There is always room and occasion enough for a true book on any subject; as there is room for more light the brightest day and more rays will not interfere with the first.

The world rests on principles.

It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison.

The value of any experience is measured, of course, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it.

Men talk of freedom! How many are free to think? Free from fear, from perturbation, from prejudice? Nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand are perfect slaves.

I love my friends very much, but I find that it is of no use to go to see them. I hate them commonly when I am near them. They belie themselves and deny me continually.

To say that a man is your Friend means commonly no more than this, that he is not your enemy.

The rule is to carry as little as possible.

If we dealt only with the false and dishonest, we should at last forget how to speak truth.

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth.

Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe.

It takes two to speak the truth, — one to speak, and another to hear.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Select a quotation and develop your position in greater detail using support from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature. Write a short essay.

Lesson 8:

Socratic Seminar. Students will be given the following passage from Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts." Agree, disagree or qualify Thoreau's view of the press. We will debate this issue as a class. Make sure to provide specific examples in the course of our discussion from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature in order to thoroughly back up your position.

From Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts."

Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the press as has already been made, and with effect, on the church. The church has much improved within a few years; but the press is, almost without exception, corrupt. I believe that in this country the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the church did in its worst period. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper. At any meeting of politicians — like that at Concord the other evening, for instance — how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible! how pertinent to quote from a newspaper or from the Constitution! The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a Bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail,

and thousands of missionaries, are continually dispersing. It is, in short, the only book which America has printed and which America reads. So wide is its influence. The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent daily, and it costs nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner, as well as my own convictions, when I say, that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country. And as they live and rule only by their servility, and appealing to the worse, and not the better, nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit.

Rubric for Socratic Seminar:

A (18-20)... Socrates salutes you!

Conduct: Brings all seminar materials to class, sits up straight, contributes to a formal dialogue, speaks to all seminar students (not just to the teacher), invites quiet students to join in, does not giggle with friends or mock the seminar.

Speaking: Speaks often enough to make points but does not dominate the conversation, speaks consistently throughout the seminar, speaks clearly and loudly so that all can hear, uses formal language, and avoid repeating points made by others.

Reasoning: Understands the text, makes textual references, understands the question before answering, moves the conversation forward with new insight or questions, avoid repetition or statements of the obvious, avoids summary, considers others' viewpoints, expresses thoughts in complete sentences rather than "one liners."

Listening: Does not interrupt the speaker, looks at the speaker, flips to the page being referenced by the speaker, writes down questions or notes to refer back to, offers a response to the speaker's comments or builds upon what the previous person said but avoids repetition.

B (16-17)...Socrates smiles at you.

C (14-15)...Socrates looks at you amusingly.

D (12-13)...Socrates scowls.

F (10-11)...Socrates wonders if you've been playing with Play-doh! (Plato, get it?)

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Look through your local newspaper (*The Metro West* or another local publication). Pick an editorial. Write a short essay in which you agree, disagree or qualify the editor's position. Remember that you must back up your own argument with specific examples from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature.

Lesson 9:

As a class, discuss the various issues that students have commented on in their homework. Further debate the issues as a class.

Go to the library or computer lab to look at other newspapers. Pick an issue facing our state, our country or even the world. In a paper, (A) explore your position on the issue using specific examples from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature to develop your position. (B) In a separate paragraph, reflect on whether where you are from (namely, Framingham, but if you are an immigrant consider that in your response) affects your position on this issue. In what way(s)? Be specific. (C) In your last paragraph, consider what you can do for the issue? Once again, be specific. What steps will you need to take to ensure that your position ultimately "wins" or succeeds? Essays will be discussed in class. Students may work in pairs. This will be completed for homework. (100 points quiz)

Lesson 10:

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with one's sense of place, namely in terms of awareness of one's local issues. The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap04_frq_english_lang_35918.pdf.

See **Attachment B** for a copy of the essay as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

Name: Inna Kantor London
Unit Title: The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
Lesson #: 11-13
Lesson Title: The Synthesis Essay
Lesson Duration: Each lesson is 60 minutes long.

Abstract:

The synthesis essay is like a mini-research paper, where the research has already been done on the student's behalf and the student must now figure out a way to synthesize the sources and create a coherent and cogent argument using these sources. Unlike the persuasive essay, the synthesis essay requires no outside information to support one's argument. In fact, the essay is graded mostly on one's ability to synthesize and engage with the given sources. Students are encouraged to come up with their own position before reading the sources so that sources can be scrutinized with their own position in mind. The essays that do best must consider counterarguments and engage in conversation with the sources. On the AP Exam, 15 minutes are given to students for reading the sources. Then, students have 40 minutes to complete the essay.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will engage in researching various sources to support their arguments.

Students will evaluate various sources.

Students will employ visual sources to support their arguments.

Students will employ Thoreau's writings to support their own positions on modern issues.

Students will develop arguments that synthesize, rather than summarize, sources in establishing their own positions.

Students will explore the topic of place-based education and education in general.

Students will write an AP essay in a timed fashion.

Lesson 11:

In anticipation of this class, students will be given the following introduction and assignment as well as all the readings. These readings are much longer than the ones that will appear on the AP Exam. When students come to class, having read the readings and completed their essays, students will engage in a discussion and debate (much like a Socratic Seminar) using the sources to build and defend their arguments. This essay will not be graded.

Introduction:

The argument over what education in the United States should consist of has been a hotly debated topic in every presidential election. When President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Bill (NCLB), he was applauded by some and severely criticized by others. The debate as to the appropriate educational model for our country continues. Some continue to panic at low test scores, others believe that adjustments to the current system will be sufficient,

and yet a growing population urges the abandonment of traditional education in favor of place-based education.

Assignment:

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then write an essay in which you evaluate what the government needs to consider in reforming our education system and propose what you believe the education system should be in the United States. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.**

Refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

See **Attachment C** for the sources.

Source A (Thoreau)

Source B (Cody)

Source C (Johnson and Kafer)

Source D (Gardner)

Source E (McKenzie)

Source F (National Education Association)

Source G (Rubenstein)

Source H (Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design)

Rubric for Socratic Seminar:

A (18-20)... Socrates salutes you!

Conduct: Brings all seminar materials to class, sits up straight, contributes to a formal dialogue, speaks to all seminar students (not just to the teacher), invites quiet students to join in, does not giggle with friends or mock the seminar.

Speaking: Speaks often enough to make points but does not dominate the conversation, speaks consistently throughout the seminar, speaks clearly and loudly so that all can hear, uses formal language, and avoid repeating points made by others.

Reasoning: Understands the text, makes textual references, understands the question before answering, moves the conversation forward with new insight or questions, avoid repetition or statements of the obvious, avoids summary, considers others' viewpoints, expresses thoughts in complete sentences rather than "one liners."

Listening: Does not interrupt the speaker, looks at the speaker, flips to the page being referenced by the speaker, writes down questions or notes to refer back to, offers a response to the speaker's comments or builds upon what the pervious person said but avoids repetition.

B (16-17)...Socrates smiles at you.

C (14-15)...Socrates looks at you amusingly.

D (12-13)...Socrates scowls.

F (10-11)...Socrates wonders if you've been playing with Play-doh! (Plato, get it?)

Lesson 12:

This lesson will begin in the library and be completed at home. A time extension may be necessary.

We will go to the library or computer lab. Once there, identify a place that demands or needs your protection. You are to gather six (6) sources that help support your argument. One source must be a visual (map, illustration, chart, cartoon, painting). One source must be a piece of Thoreau's writings. This will be your research paper; more specific guidelines and dates will be provided at a later time. Use the sources to support and establish your position in a well-argued essay. (100 points test grade)

Research Paper Rubric:

8: Essays earning a score of 8 effectively develop a position on the topic. They support the position by successfully synthesizing¹ four different types of sources. The argument is convincing, and the sources effectively support the student's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of elements of effective writing and is close to flawless. The works cited is accurate and complete.

6: Essays earning a score of 6 adequately develop a position on the topic. They synthesize all four different types of sources. The argument is generally convincing and the sources generally support the student's position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear. The works cited is mostly accurate and complete.

5: Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on the topic. They support the position by synthesizing all four sources, but their argument and their use of sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent or uneven. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the student's position, but the links between the sources the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction and syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately. The works cited is relatively accurate and complete, though may contain some minor punctuation errors.

4: Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately develop a position on the topic. They attempt to present an argument and support the position by synthesizing at least three sources but may misunderstand, misinterpret, or oversimplify either their own argument or the sources they include. The link between the argument and the sources is weak. The prose of 4 may suggest immature control of writing. The works cited contains some errors.

2: Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in developing a position on the topic. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the topic tangentially or merely summarizing the sources. The prose often demonstrates consistent weakness in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control. The works cited contains numerous errors. The essay may have not many necessary components (MLA format, rubric, rough draft, paragraphs on sources).

¹ Synthesizing refers to combining the sources and the writer's position to form a cohesive, supported argument, and accurately citing source. Failure to accurately cite your sources (per MLA guidelines) will result in a grade deduction!

Lesson 13:

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with the environment and a sense of place.

The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/repository/ap06_englang_synthesisessay2.pdf.

See **Attachment D** for a copy of the essay (including the accompanying sources) as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

Attachment A

2003 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The two passages below, one by John James Audubon and the other by Annie Dillard, describe large flocks of birds in flight. Read the passages carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast how each writer describes the birds and conveys their effect on the writer as observer.

Passage 1

Line
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40

In the autumn of 1813, I left my house at Henderson, on the banks of the Ohio, on my way to Louisville. In passing over the Barrens a few miles beyond Hardensburgh, I observed the pigeons flying from north-east to south-west, in greater numbers than I thought I had ever seen them before, and feeling an inclination to count the flocks that might pass within the reach of my eye in one hour, I dismounted, seated myself on an eminence, and began to mark with my pencil, making a dot for every flock that passed. In a short time finding the task which I had undertaken impracticable, as the birds poured in in countless multitudes, I rose, and counting the dots then put down, found that 163 had been made in twenty-one minutes. I travelled on, and still met more the farther I proceeded. The air was literally filled with Pigeons; the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse; the dung fell in spots, not unlike melting flakes of snow; and the continued buzz of wings had a tendency to lull my senses to repose.

Whilst waiting for dinner at YOUNG's inn, at the confluence of Salt-River with the Ohio, I saw, at my leisure, immense legions still going by, with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beech-wood forests directly on the east of me. Not a single bird alighted; for not a nut or acorn was that year to be seen in the neighbourhood. They consequently flew so high, that different trials to reach them with a capital rifle proved ineffectual; nor did the reports disturb them in the least. I cannot describe to you the extreme beauty of their aerial evolutions, when a Hawk chanced to press upon the rear of a flock. At once, like a torrent, and with a noise like thunder, they rushed into a compact mass, pressing upon each other towards the centre. In these almost solid masses, they darted forward in undulating and angular lines, descended and swept close over the earth with inconceivable velocity, mounted perpendicularly so as to resemble a vast column, and, when high, were seen wheeling and twisting within their continued lines, which then resembled the coils of a gigantic serpent.

John James Audubon,
Ornithological Biographies, 1831-1839

Passage 2

Line
5
10
15
20
25

Out of the dimming sky a speck appeared, then another, and another. It was the starlings going to roost. They gathered deep in the distance, flock sifting into flock, and strayed towards me, transparent and whirling, like smoke. They seemed to unravel as they flew, lengthening in curves, like a loosened skein.¹ I didn't move; they flew directly over my head for half an hour. The flight extended like a fluttering banner, an unfurled oriflamme², in either direction as far as I could see. Each individual bird bobbed and knitted up and down in the flight at apparent random, for no known reason except that that's how starlings fly, yet all remained perfectly spaced. The flocks each tapered at either end from a rounded middle, like an eye. Over my head I heard a sound of beaten air, like a million shook rugs, a muffled whuff. Into the woods they sifted without shifting a twig, right through the crowns of trees, intricate and rushing, like wind.

After half an hour, the last of the stragglers had vanished into the trees. I stood with difficulty, bashed by the unexpectedness of this beauty, and my spread lungs roared. My eyes pricked from the effort of trying to trace a feathered dot's passage through a weft³ of limbs. Could tiny birds be sifting through me right now, birds winging through the gaps between my cells, touching nothing, but quickening in my tissues, fleet?

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 1974

¹ A length of yarn or thread wound in a loose, elongated coil

² An ensign, banner, or standard

³ The horizontal threads in a piece of weaving

END OF EXAMINATION

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2003 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read. If it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, ask your Table Leader for assistance. Always show your Table Leader books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. Do not assign a score of 0 or — without this consultation.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write: the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain that you reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such lapses should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should you score an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics higher than a 2.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, provide an especially full or perceptive comparison and contrast or demonstrate an impressive control of language.

8 Essays earning a score of 8 effectively compare and contrast how John James Audubon and Annie Dillard describe the birds and convey their effect on the authors. These essays refer to the texts, explicitly or implicitly, offering specific details to support their explanations of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but are distinguished by a more complete or more purposeful comparison and contrast or a more mature prose style.

6 Essays earning a score of 6 adequately compare and contrast how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. These essays refer to the texts, explicitly or implicitly, but offer less detailed and/or less convincing explanations. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 compare and contrast how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect, but these essays may provide uneven or inconsistent explanations. They may compare and contrast in a superficial way or demonstrate a limited understanding of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately.

4 Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt inadequately. They may have difficulty comparing and contrasting or explaining how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. The prose generally conveys the writers' ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

**AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2003 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 3 (cont'd.)

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in comparing and contrasting or less control of writing.

2 Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in comparing and contrasting how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. These essays may offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing, offer no explanation of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect, or offer descriptions of their own observations of birds. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic in content or weak in their control of writing.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

Attachment B

**2004 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Contemporary life is marked by controversy. Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar. Then, using appropriate evidence, write an essay that carefully considers the opposing positions on this controversy and proposes a solution or compromise.

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2004 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the papers you read. If it seems inappropriate for a specific paper, ask your Table Leader for assistance. Always show your Table Leader books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. Do not assign a score of 0 or – without this consultation.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the paper's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the paper, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the paper as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All papers, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into your holistic evaluation of a paper's overall quality. In no case should you score a paper with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics higher than a 2.

9 Papers earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their explanation and argument or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

8 Papers earning a score of 8 effectively characterize opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and clearly propose a solution or compromise. The evidence used is appropriate and convincing. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

7 Papers earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 papers, but provide a more complete explanation and argument or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6 Papers earning a score of 6 adequately characterize opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and propose a solution or compromise. The evidence used is appropriate. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Papers earning a score of 5 characterize opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and propose a solution or compromise. These papers may, however, provide uneven, inconsistent, or limited explanations of the issue, the opposing positions, and/or the solution or compromise. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas.

4 Papers earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt inadequately. They may have difficulty characterizing opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and/or proposing a solution. The evidence used may be insufficient. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

3 Papers earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4, but demonstrate less success in characterizing the opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and/or proposing a solution and less control of writing.

**AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2004 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 2 (cont'd.)

2 Papers earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in characterizing opposing positions on a local, national, or global issue and/or proposing a solution. These papers may misunderstand the prompt; fail to characterize opposing positions, and/or propose a solution or compromise; or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate evidence. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

1 Papers earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation and argument, or weak in their control of language.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

Attachment C

Source A

Henry David Thoreau, "Economy," Walden.

I will endeavor to speak a good word for the truth. At Cambridge College the mere rent of a student's room, which is only a little larger than my own, is thirty dollars each year, though the corporation had the advantage of building thirty-two side by side and under one roof, and the occupant suffers the inconvenience of many and noisy neighbors, and perhaps a residence in the fourth story. I cannot but think that if we had more true wisdom in these respects, not only less education would be needed, because, forsooth, more would already have been acquired, but the pecuniary expense of getting an education would in a great measure vanish. Those conveniences which the student requires at Cambridge or elsewhere cost him or somebody else ten times as great a sacrifice of life as they would with proper management on both sides. Those things for which the most money is demanded are never the things which the student most wants. Tuition, for instance, is an important item in the term bill, while for the far more valuable education which he gets by associating with the most cultivated of his contemporaries no charge is made. The mode of founding a college is, commonly, to get up a subscription of dollars and cents, and then, following blindly the principles of a division of labor to its extreme -- a principle which should never be followed but with circumspection -- to call in a contractor who makes this a subject of speculation, and he employs Irishmen or other operatives actually to lay the foundations, while the students that are to be are said to be fitting themselves for it; and for these oversights successive generations have to pay. I think that it would be better than this, for the students, or those who desire to be benefited by it, even to lay the foundation themselves. The student who secures his coveted leisure and retirement by systematically shirking any labor necessary to man obtains but an ignoble and unprofitable leisure, defrauding himself of the experience which alone can make leisure fruitful. "But," says one, "you do not mean that the students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?" I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that; I mean that they should not play life, or study it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly live it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living? Methinks this would exercise their minds as much as mathematics. If I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences, for instance, I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where anything is professed and practised but the art of life; -- to survey the world through a telescope or a microscope, and never with his natural eye; to study chemistry, and not learn how his bread is made, or mechanics, and not learn how it is earned; to discover new satellites to Neptune, and not detect the moles in his eyes, or to what vagabond he is a satellite himself; or to be devoured by the monsters that swarm all around him, while contemplating the monsters in a drop of vinegar. Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month -- the boy who had made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelted, reading as much as would be necessary for this -- or the boy who had attended the lectures on metallurgy at the Institute in the meanwhile, and had received a Rodgers' penknife from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers?... To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation! -- why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I should have known more about it. Even the poor student studies and is taught only political economy, while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges. The consequence is, that while he is reading Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Say, he runs his father in debt irretrievably.

Teacher Blogs > Living in Dialogue

Obama calls for Richer Assessments, Teacher Involvement

By Anthony Cody on February 6, 2010 12:46 PM | 5 Comments | No TrackBacks

This week President Obama held a town hall meeting in Nashua, New Hampshire. His main focus was jobs and the economy, but one of the six questions he took was from a woman named Judy Loftus, who is a teacher at Nashua South High School, Nashua, New Hampshire. Ms. Loftus asked the question that has been on our minds for months. She got a very intriguing response. (Click [here](#) to watch the exchange.)

0
tweets
tweet

Judy Loftus:

What are you going to do about No Child Left Behind? We have a lot of legacies from the last administration, and as an educator, I've seen the impact in my school, and it hasn't been a positive impact. We're focused more on testing and worrying about test scores than what's right for kids.

President Obama:

We used to have the best, and now we have pockets of the best, and then we have mediocrity, and then we schools that are just terrible. We've got to make sure EVERY child is getting a good solid education. And what that means is, we continue to invest in early childhood education, as my budget does, so our kids are prepared when they start school. It means we help schools with their basic budget, and the Recovery Act prevented a lot of layoffs, and really patched holes in a lot of budgets. It's not sexy, it doesn't get a lot of credit, but it made a huge difference. We've got to make sure though that the single most important factor in an elementary or secondary school education is fulfilled, and that is that we have got excellent teachers in the classroom, and that they are getting a good salary and the support that they need.

Traditionally, the debate between the right and the left over the schools has said, the Left just says "We just need more money in the schools, and everything will be ok." You know, for new equipment, new computers, smaller class sizes - that's been the argument on the liberal side. The conservative side says "The whole problem is bureaucracy, teachers unions, you gotta blow up the system." What my administration believes is, it's not an either or proposition - it's both-and. We need more money, but we need to spend the money wisely and we need to institute reforms that raise standards that push everybody in a school - principal, teacher, student, parent - to pursue excellence.

So last year we started with something called Race to the Top. It's a pretty simple proposition. We carved out a little bit of money that doesn't just go to general revenue - you know, Title 1, the general federal support for schools. And we said, "this money, this Race to the Top money, you get it only if you are working to make for excellent teachers, you're collecting good data, to make sure your students are actually making progress at the schools, you're dealing with the lowest-performing schools in the district, you've got ideas that are showing concrete results - in improvement - not in absolute test scores, but in the progress that that school is making, we're going to fund those improvements." And we've already seen reforms across 48 states, just because we incentivized reform. That's a good thing.

This year is when reauthorization for what's called No Child Left Behind would be coming up - as part of the broader education legislation that's up for reauthorization. And what we're saying there is, on the one hand, we don't want teachers just teaching to the test, on the other hand, we also want to keep high standards for our kids. And I think the best way to do that is to combine high standards, measurable outcomes, but have an assessment system that you work with teachers on, so that its not just a matter of who's fillin' out a bubble and you're also taking into account where do kid start, because not every kid is going to start at the same place, so you want to see where do they end up (applause) at the end of the year.

I just had a meeting with my team this week about this, trying to find ways that we can improve the assessment system, so we're still holding schools accountable, we're still holding teachers accountable, but we're not JUST holding them accountable for a score on a standardized test, but we have a richer way of assessing whether these schools are making progress. So that's the answer on the No Child Left Behind front.

Here is what I think: I think we are seeing the first sliver of hope for change. President Obama is calling for more authentic assessments of student learning, and he appears to be beginning to act on his promise to shift us away from standardized tests. He says teachers need to be involved in the process of developing these assessments. I think we need to take him up on this challenge and develop some clear proposals for the kind of assessments that would, in fact, be richer and more meaningful than our current tests. We will need to continue to organize and put pressure on every level and in every state, but there may be some room for our ideas to be heard.

Note: Our Facebook group, **Teachers' Letters to Obama**, now has 850 members, and active discussions are underway focused on our ideas about authentic assessment and other aspects of school change. Come join us!

Update: Arne Duncan warned 200 educators in North Carolina yesterday that they should not teach to the test! According to [this story in the Charlotte News Observer](#), he said:

"We want to give every child a chance to discover their genius, what they're best at."

Otherwise, Duncan said, the nation won't be able to keep up with technology advances being made in other countries. He also took aim at the emphasis on standardized testing as part of President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program.

This is the strong evidence that we are beginning to be heard! Of course this has HUGE implications for the many policies Duncan has been pursuing -- pay for test scores, closing down schools with low test scores, etc. So we will have to see how this plays out in terms of these actual practices. But this feels like a potentially significant shift from our leaders.

What do you think? Do the President's words offer us some hope? What sorts of assessments would you like to see used in place of the current tests?

Categories: Race to the Top, standardized tests

Tags: assessment, Duncan, no child left behind, Obama, Race to the Top, rttt, standardized tests



This is a Backgrounder On Education

Why More Money Will Not Solve America's Education Crisis

Published on *June 11, 2001* by Kirk Johnson, Ph.D. and Krista Kafer Backgrounder #1448

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Total federal, state, and local spending for education, both public and private, reached an estimated \$389 billion during the 1999-2000 academic year.¹ In inflation-adjusted dollars, this means that America is paying over 72 percent more today than it did in 1980. Yet academic achievement scores for students in elementary and secondary school do not reflect a similar increase. In fact, over the past 20 years, scores have remained flat, according to the nation's report card on education published by the National Center for Education Statistics.² America's students are also lagging behind many of their international peers.³ If America could spend its way out of this education malaise, it would have done so. What is needed is sound education reform, a new approach that--as President George W. Bush puts it--"leaves no child behind."

As education legislation reauthorizing some of the federal government's key programs (S. 1 and H.R. 1) moves toward conference committee,⁴ Members of Congress should recognize the mounting evidence that spending even more on the same programs will do little to change the status quo and raise achievement. The data and findings from research over the past 30 years on achievement, education programs, and spending trends continue to demonstrate that spending more money on the same programs, is simply not effective. Consider:

Total expenditures by the U.S. Department of Education for all K-12 students have nearly doubled, in constant dollars, just since the 1980s, from \$14.8 billion to \$27.1 billion;⁵ but

Reading and math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have changed relatively little over that same period, despite the enormous increases in spending at the federal, state, and local levels. Last year, for example, some 68 percent of 4th graders still could not read at a proficient level.⁶

Only structural reform--well beyond that which is likely to emerge from Congress this year--will improve

the nation's schools.

Last year, Congress appropriated \$18.7 billion for federal education programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA);⁷ this year, the budget agreement (H. Con. Res. 83) accommodates the President's request for a substantial 11.5 percent increase in spending. H.R. 1, the House bill to reauthorize the ESEA that was passed on May 23, 2001, calls for spending over \$23 billion in FY 2002. As of June 6, the Senate has added over \$10 billion in amendments to its base \$28 billion ESEA bill (S. 1), which is still under consideration. After six years, the authorization level would grow to over \$78 billion annually. Until the Senate passes S. 1, the level of spending may grow even higher.

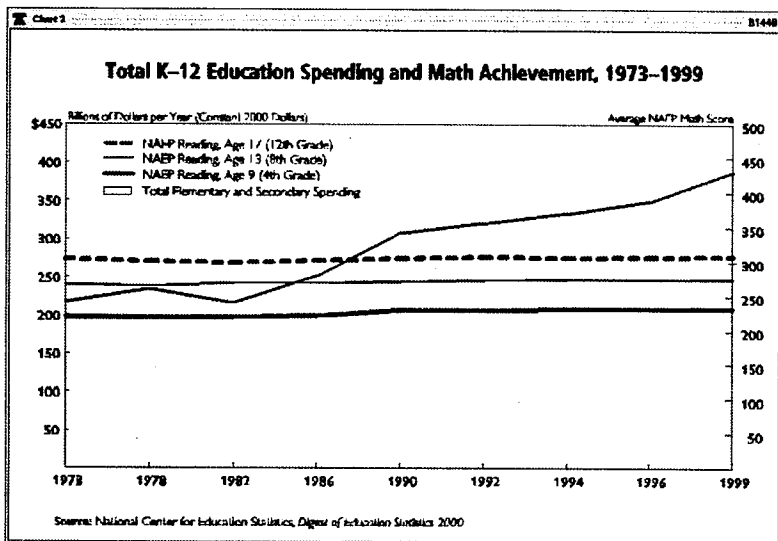
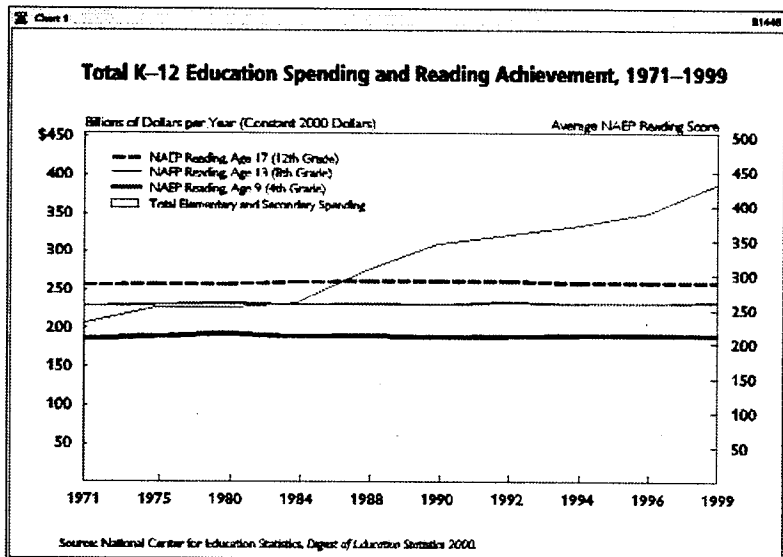
Members of Congress are in a bidding war to see who can spend the most money in a misguided contest that is diverting attention from true education reform. Funding old programs that fail to serve all children, especially poor children, does not demonstrate a commitment to education; rather, it reveals a commitment to the status quo. Instead of raising the price tag for education, Congress should support reforms that demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayers' money.

Funded programs should be required to demonstrate success, especially among disadvantaged children, before receiving additional funds from Congress or their state or local districts. Only successful programs and schools should receive funding through appropriations or through school choice initiatives. Enabling parents to move their children from schools repeatedly shown to be failing to schools that can meet their children's educational needs would mean that successful institutions--not their failing counterparts--would be rewarded for their competency.

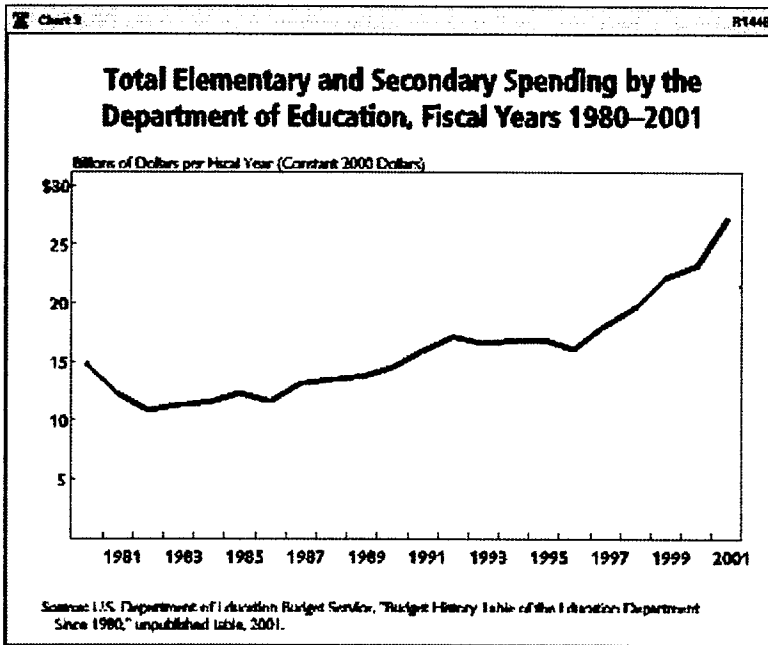
In addition to adding a choice component to the bill, House and Senate conferees should include regulatory flexibility combined with rigorous accountability. Such a provision would enable reform-minded state leaders to administer their federal education program dollars as they see best to raise achievement among their student populations. In exchange for flexibility, the states should be required to sign a contractual agreement specifying how their plans would increase achievement, and then be held accountable for achieving those results. Combining choice and accountability is the best way to ensure that no child is left behind.

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN SPENDING AND RESULTS

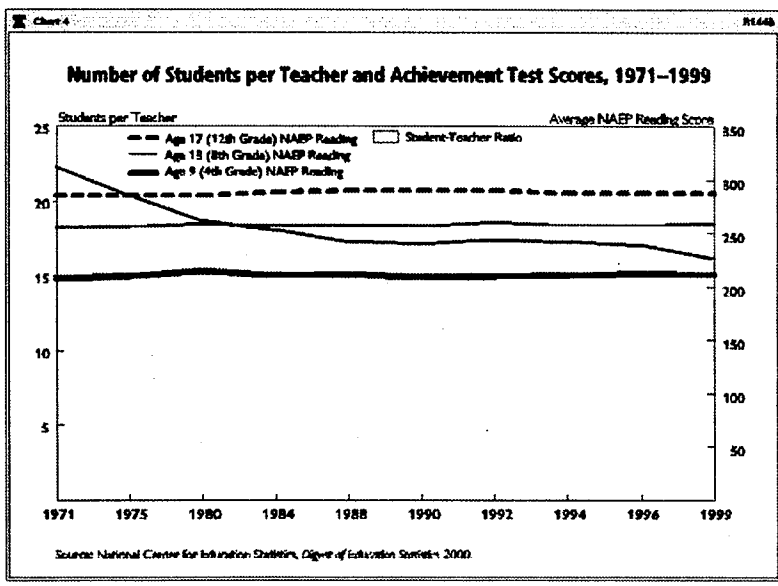
Increased education spending has failed to boost academic achievement. As Chart 1 and Chart 2 show, total elementary and secondary education expenditures at all levels (federal, state, and local) for public and private school students rose dramatically over the past decade, but academic achievement, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, remained flat.

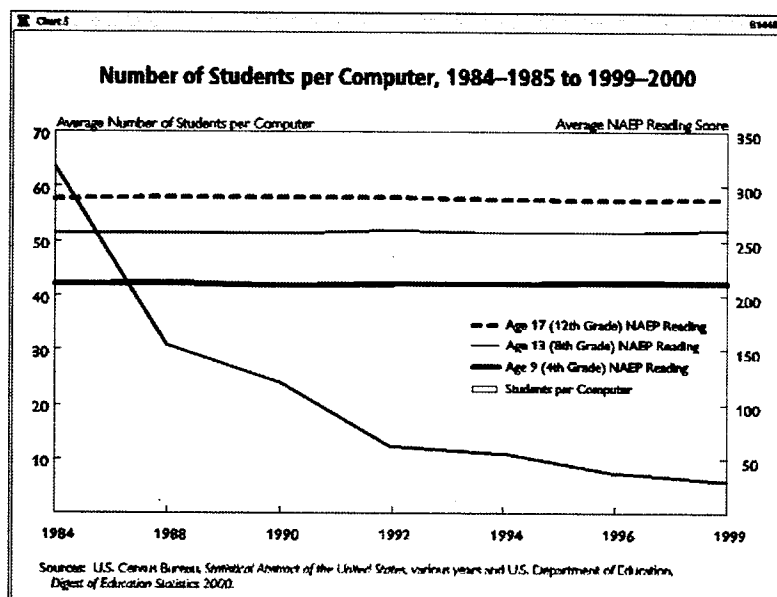


At the federal level, spending on elementary and secondary education programs rose steadily during most of the 1980s (in real inflation-adjusted terms) and then skyrocketed during the 1990s under the Clinton Administration (see Chart 3).⁸ Similarly, state and local initiatives increased average per-pupil expenditures.⁹ In fact, over the past three decades, total current per-pupil expenditures for elementary and secondary public school students nearly doubled nationwide in constant dollars--from \$3,367 in 1970 to \$6,584 in 2000.¹⁰ In return for this dramatic dedication of tax dollars to education, America received remarkably little in terms of academic gains.



Over time, education dollars have been used to fund and refund education fads promoted as cure-alls for lackluster educational achievement. These include the more recent public school initiatives to hire more teachers (Chart 4) and to purchase more computers (Chart 5). The number of students per teacher nationwide decreased from 22 in 1970 to less than 17 in 1999, and the number of computers in public elementary and secondary schools increased so that the ratio of over 63 students for every computer in 1985 fell to less than five per computer last year. Regardless of their intent, such programs are not required to show their effects on academic achievement before more money is allocated.





What the Research Shows.

The evidence suggests that there is little reason to expect that increasing funding for these programs will make them produce better results. The National Research Council summed up its findings in this regard in *Making Money Matter: Financing America's Schools*, a 1999 report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education. It concluded that "additional funding for education will not automatically and necessarily generate student achievement and in the past has not, in fact, generally led to higher achievement."¹¹ The fact that some 68 percent of 4th graders could not read at a proficient level on the NAEP exam last year reinforces this conclusion.¹²

Eric Hanushek of the University of Rochester has conducted several studies of the effects of spending on achievement and has concluded that there is no relationship.¹³ Yet politicians continue to approve and allocate more money for public education without proof that the larger school budgets are achieving their desired outcomes. Over \$120 billion in federal dollars has been spent on ESEA Title I programs for low-income students since 1965, yet the achievement gap between poor and non-poor students¹⁴ has not closed. For example:

A U.S. General Accounting Office review of the major studies of Title I questions the program's effectiveness in raising student achievement.¹⁵

A study on achievement from 1984 to 1997 published in *Education Week* finds little change despite an additional \$78 billion in spending during that period.¹⁶

Among 4th graders today, there remains a 15 percent gap in NAEP math scores¹⁷ and a 14 percent gap in

reading scores.¹⁸

Table 1 B1448

High Education Expenditures Do Not Mean High Academic Achievement

High Expenditures / Low Achievement	High Expenditures / High Achievement
<p>Washington, D.C. 3rd Highest in Expenditures Last in Achievement</p> <p>Delaware 8th Highest in Expenditures 26th out of 40 in Achievement</p>	<p>Connecticut 4th Highest in Expenditures 1st in Achievement</p> <p>Massachusetts 7th Highest in Expenditures 4th Highest in Achievement</p>
Low Expenditures / Low Achievement	Low Expenditures / High Achievement
<p>Mississippi 50th out of 51 in Expenditures 36th out of 40 in Achievement</p> <p>New Mexico 49th out of 51 in Expenditures 35th out of 40 in Achievement</p>	<p>Montana 25th out of 51 in Expenditures 2nd Highest in Achievement</p> <p>Colorado 31st out of 51 in Expenditures 8th Highest in Achievement</p>

Source: Heritage Center for Data Analysis using data from the U.S. Department of Education.

A state-by-state evaluation of NAEP scores provides compelling evidence that the level of spending on education does not correlate with increases in achievement. While some states are spending large amounts of money on education and have little to show for it, others are spending less and achieving more (see Table 1).

Montana spends only an average amount on education but achieved the second highest NAEP reading ranking out of the 40 states that administered the 1998 test.

Delaware has the eighth highest spending but scores in the bottom one-third of all states.

Washington, D.C., fares even worse; the District of Columbia has the third highest expenditure level, yet its students score last on NAEP exams.¹⁹

FOCUS FUNDING ON RESULTS

Instead of using a scattershot approach and funding every program in the hope that something will work, Congress should adopt a results-oriented approach. Currently, both ESEA reauthorization bills making their way to conference committee (H.R. 1 and S. 1) employ a conflicting approach: On one hand, they call for measurable results, reporting, and consequences for success or failure; on the other, they authorize unprecedented spending on programs that have yet to demonstrate their effectiveness in terms of achievement. From the multibillion-dollar Title I program to the multimillion-dollar programs for the arts, bilingual education, technology, and other initiatives, few programs, if any, can boast a solid track record of improving achievement.²⁰

Rather than merely reauthorizing old programs, the House and Senate conferees should incorporate

flexibility in the education spending bill to enable reform-minded state leaders to administer program funds as they see best to raise achievement. In exchange for this flexibility, the states should be required to sign a performance agreement with the U.S. Department of Education that spells out how their plans would increase academic achievement for all students across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Such a provision is part of the President's *No Child Left Behind* plan. "Charter states" and "charter districts," as they are called by the President, would enter into their own five-year contractual agreement with the Secretary of Education that establishes specific and rigorous goals for achievement. In exchange, they would receive full administrative flexibility over how to spend their federal education dollars. Students in a charter state would have to reach the specific academic achievement goals listed in the agreement, or the state would face the loss of funding and its charter status.

States could employ research-based methods to raise academic achievement for all students. They also could cut through the hundreds of pages of red tape that have accumulated over the past 30 years. Each federal education program has its own prescriptive rules, regulations, and paperwork--including an estimated 20,000 pages of application forms that states currently must fill out.²¹ Such a provision would substantially reduce that number. States would be able to focus resources and personnel on raising achievement rather than on administration and paperwork.

A charter states provision was included in the Academic Achievement for All Act (H.R. 2300), which the House passed in October 1999, and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee included such a provision in its ESEA reauthorization bill. This year, however, the provision was stripped from the original House ESEA reauthorization bill (H.R. 1), and only a weakened version remains in the Senate bill (S. 1). A robust charter states provision should be crafted in conference to give reform-minded states the option to innovate to raise academic achievement among their student populations.²² If other education reforms are substantially weakened or eliminated from the ESEA legislation, the charter states provision will be the only avenue for change.

House-Senate conferees should also consider reviving the President's school choice demonstration program, which had been included in the original H.R. 1 bill this year.²³ Demonstration programs that target disadvantaged children in failing schools would enable policymakers and educators to see what works best.

A mounting body of research shows that:

School choice raises achievement regardless of socioeconomic background. After taking into consideration a variety of family background and other socioeconomic characteristics, researchers have found that private school children nationwide continue to surpass their public school peers on achievement tests.²⁴

The increased competition from choice spurs traditional public schools to reform to improve achievement.²⁵ Florida's "A-Plus" program, for example, puts schools on a "failing" list if they do not succeed in educating their students. If the school continues to receive a failing grade, students can leave, making use of the state's voucher program. Failing schools have responded to this pressure; according to Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow Jay P. Greene, "Failing schools that faced the prospect of vouchers made improvements that were nearly twice as large as the gains displayed by other schools in the state."²⁶

Such findings supporting school choice intrigue many in the policy and academic communities. Even

the National Research Council, commissioned by the Clinton Administration to study school choice, recommended that the government fund a "large-scale" experiment to study the effects of choice on student performance.²⁷

Public schools gain additional funds to spend on their own students. A recent study found that the average private school tuition nationwide was \$3,116--less than half of the average per-pupil expenditures at public schools. Further, a full 67 percent of all private elementary and secondary schools charge \$2,500 or less. The average expenditure per public school student was \$6,857.²⁸ School choice reforms that enable some students to attend private school do not drain funds from public schools, but rather leave behind some of the per-pupil funds, which can then be used on public school students. As the Cato Institute recently estimated, choice programs in the form of an Arizona-like tax credit, which helps low-income students move from public to private schools, may yield billions in savings to states and school districts.²⁹

With many public schools continuing to receive failing grades and many choice experiments receiving good reviews, even The Washington Post has expressed its support for a choice demonstration program. In an April 28 editorial, it stated that

experiments in helping make private school an option for poor students in failed public schools are worth a try. There is no denying that years of attempted reform, particularly in urban areas, have produced dismal results. The students who are able to do so have fled from those situations; those who have no alternatives suffer terrible consequences. On this, as on other education issues, the ability of the federal government to solve the problem is limited, because the bulk of the money and the decision-making rests at the local level. But if lawmakers truly aim to help children rather than to protect the system and the adults who run it, they ought not shy away from reasonable efforts to test potential remedies, including competition.³⁰

CONCLUSION

Rather than bolster funding for programs that have failed to increase student achievement, House and Senate conferees on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act should target funding to results-oriented approaches, such as the President's proposal to establish charter states and school choice initiatives. Federal money should go toward real reforms that boost achievement.

American taxpayers have made a substantial investment in public education, and simply continuing to increase spending on the same lackluster programs will not raise children's test scores. Congress should reform the federal education system and demonstrate to the American people that its changes are successful before asking them to invest more of their hard-earned tax dollars. A stronger educational system is served well by good stewardship of taxpayer funds.

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Endnotes

1. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), Table 32, at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/digest/dt032.html>. The total includes all education spending on K-12 students.



A new one-hour documentary, "Two Million Minutes: A Global Examination," is being screened in states with presidential primaries this winter in the hope of making educational quality in America a marquee issue.

Ordinarily, the disinformation contained in the film could be written off as just another political strategy to mold public opinion. But the stakes are too high this time to let the matter rest.

"Two Million Minutes" focuses on the lives of six talented students, two each from the United States, India and China. It purports to show how the casual attitudes of the American students, compared with those of their overseas counterparts, pose a clear and present danger to America's economic future.

Both the Indian and Chinese students go far beyond their assigned school work to advance their future career plans, while the American students are unfocused and their parents disengaged.

But no evidence is presented to support the argument about the superiority of schools in India and China. The fact is that neither country has ever taken part in the tests of international competition that are routinely cited as proof of educational quality.

Nevertheless, the documentary has been enthusiastically embraced by "Ed in '08," an organization formed by Eli Broad and Bill Gates, two of the most important philanthropists in American public education, to push education high on the agenda of the 2008 presidential race.

The trouble with this alarmist view is that it's nothing new. To understand why, it's necessary to rewind to March 24, 1958, when Life magazine devoted its cover feature to an uncannily similar story. It showed side-by-side photos of two high school juniors - a dour Alexei Kutzkov in Moscow and a beaming Stephen Lapekas in Chicago. Their opposing demeanors were meant to exemplify their respective countries' contrasting state of education.

The Russian was shown involved in complicated physics experiments and reading aloud from Theodore Dreiser's "Sister Carrie," while the American was photographed rehearsing for the school's musical play and walking his girlfriend home after school. The contrast was supposed to

explain why the United States was headed for certain economic disaster. As simplistic as it was, it turned out to be amazingly successful in creating anxiety.

But it took the publication of "A Nation At Risk" in April 1983 to ratchet up the manufactured threat. The first page of the report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education engaged in scare tactics rarely seen in a government report when it proclaimed, "If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."

The report went on to warn that America's prominence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being threatened by competition throughout the world. It based its bleak view largely on scores on international standardized tests.

But this test score thesis failed to pass muster when Japan's economy tanked in 1990, while the U.S. economy in 1991 entered the longest period of economic prosperity in its history. If America's mediocre public schools were the culprit, then where did all the entrepreneurial talent come from during this era? And why did the vaunted Japanese educational system play an insignificant role in stemming the country's recession?

In fact, Japan's economy to this day is still lethargic and an increasing concern, according to a front-page story in The Wall Street Journal of Jan. 7. Yet its schools continue to be considered among the best in the world, even as fewer big companies now hire workers full-time upon graduation.

Singapore's Education Minister understood the difference between test scores and future success. In an interview last year in Newsweek, he said: "We both have meritocracies. America's is a talent meritocracy; ours is an exam meritocracy. There are some parts of the intellect that we are not able to test well - like creativity, a sense of adventure, ambition. Most of all, America has a culture of learning that challenges conventional wisdom, even if it means challenging authority."

Despite the disconnect between educational quality and economic health, the matter curiously draws little media attention. When criticisms of American schools are made, they are played up. But when rebuttals follow, they are played down.

In the final analysis, the only thing that has significantly changed in the gloomy scenario is the actors. In 1958, the villain was Russia. In 1990, it was Japan. In 2008, it is India and China.

That's why "Two Million Minutes" has to be viewed with a healthy skepticism. Its script is

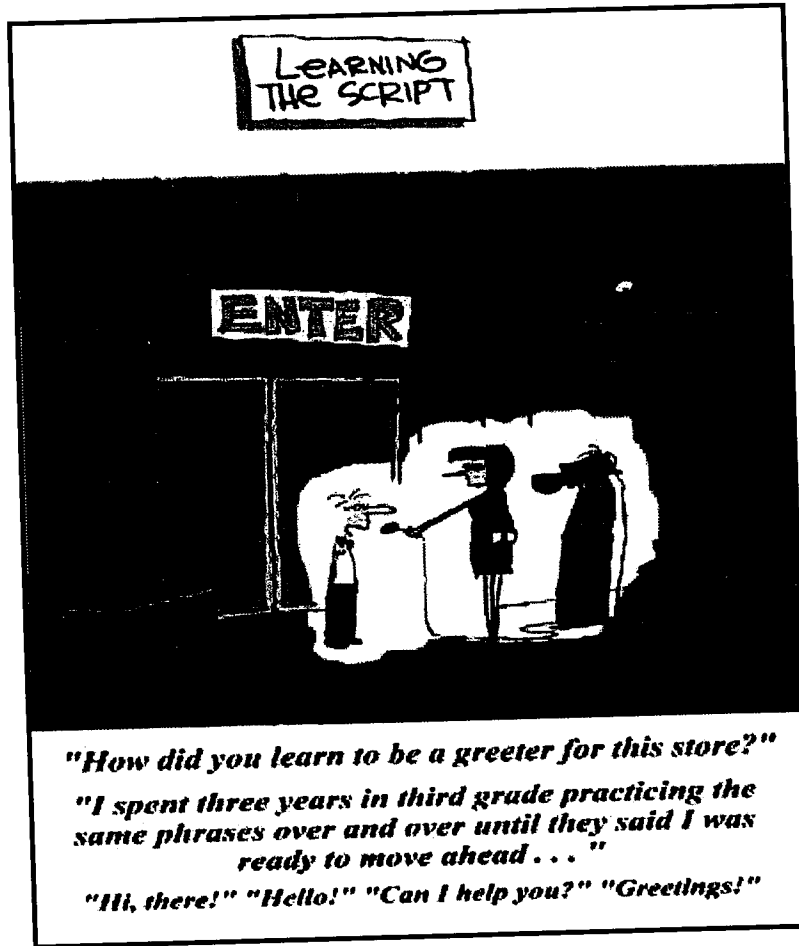
certainly intriguing, but it's little more than a modified rehash of what we've seen too often before. And like its predecessors, the latest version is over the top.

Walt Gardner taught for 28 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District and was a lecturer in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California.

Source D

© 2004, Jamie McKenzie

<http://nochildleft.com/cartoon21.html>



Source E

National Education Association, "ESEA: It's Time for a Change." NEA, 2002-2010.
<http://www.nea.org/home/13193.htm>.

ESEA: IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE!
NEA's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization
July 2006
Executive Summary

This Executive Summary of the Positive Agenda highlights the recommendations contained in the full report. The full report, starting on page 8, provides the rationale and additional background for each recommendation.

Great Public Schools Criteria

All children have a basic right to a great public school. Our vision of what great public schools need and should provide acknowledges that the world is changing and public education is changing too. Meeting these Great Public Schools (GPS) criteria require not only the continued commitment of all educators, but the concerted efforts of policymakers at all levels of government. We believe these criteria will:

- Prepare all students for the future with 21st century skills
- Create enthusiasm for learning and engage all students in the classroom
- Close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students
- Ensure that all educators have the resources and tools they need to get the job done
- These criteria form a basis for NEA's priorities in offering Congress a framework for the 2007 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The reauthorization process must involve all stakeholders, especially educators. Their knowledge and insights are key to developing sound policies.

Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn.

Students must have access to programs such as public school pre-K and kindergarten programs; afterschool enrichment and intervention programs; nutrition, including school breakfast and lunch programs; school-based health care and related services; counseling and mentoring programs for students and families; safe and efficient transportation; and safe and drug-free schools programs. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 8-11]

High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.

All students should have access to a rigorous, comprehensive education that includes critical thinking, problem solving, high level communication and literacy skills, and a deep understanding of content. Curriculum must be aligned with standards and assessments, and should include more than what can be assessed on a paper and pencil multiple choice test. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, page 12]

Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.

Quality conditions for teaching and learning include smaller class sizes and optimal-sized learning communities; safe, healthy, modern, and orderly schools; up-to-date textbooks, technology, media centers, and materials; policies that encourage collaboration and shared decisionmaking among staff; and the providing of data in a timely manner with staff training in the use of data for decisionmaking. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 12-13]

A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.

A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce in our schools requires a pool of well prepared, highly

skilled candidates for all vacancies; quality induction for new teachers with mentoring services from trained veteran teachers; opportunities for continual improvement and growth for all employees; working conditions in which they can be successful; and professional compensation and benefits. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 13-14]

Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.

Appropriate accountability means using results to identify policies and programs that successfully improve student learning and to provide positive supports, including resources for improvement and technical assistance to schools needing help. Schools, districts, states, and the federal government should be financially accountable to the public, with policymakers accountable to provide the resources needed to produce positive results. Accountability systems should be transparent so that policies are determined and communicated in an open, consistent, and timely manner. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, page 14]

Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.

Policies should assist and encourage parents, families, and communities to be actively involved and engaged in their public schools; require professional development programs for all educators to include the skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and community communication and engagement strategies; provide incentives or require employers to grant a reasonable amount of leave for parents to participate in their children's school activities. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 14-15]

Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding.

School funding systems must provide adequate, equitable and sustainable funding. Making taxes fair and eliminating inefficient and ineffective business subsidies are essential prerequisites to achieving adequacy, equity, and stability in school funding. ESEA programs should be fully funded at their authorized levels. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 15-16]

NEA's Priorities for ESEA Reauthorization

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 17-29]

A great public school is a basic right of every child.

NEA's priorities for the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA focus on a broad range of policies to ensure every child access to a great public school.

The current version of ESEA-the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)-is fundamentally flawed. It undermines existing state and school district structures and authority, and shifts public dollars to the private sector through supplemental educational services and takeovers of public schools by for-profit companies.

However, its stated goals -- to improve student achievement and help close the achievement and skills gaps that exist in our country -- are important to NEA and our society. We want to retain the positive provisions of ESEA, both those that existed prior to NCLB and those that were added by NCLB, in the 2007 reauthorization.

Congress must shift from the current focus that labels and punishes schools with a flawed one-size-fits-all accountability system and severely underfunded mandates to one that includes common-sense flexibility and supports educators in implementing programs that improve student learning, reward success, and provide meaningful assistance to schools most in need of help.

The following five priorities are crucial to realizing the goals of improving student achievement, closing the achievement gaps, and providing every child a quality teacher.

Accountability That Rewards Success and Supports Educators to Help Students Learn

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 19-22]

- Accountability should be based upon multiple measures of student learning and school success.
- States should have the flexibility to design systems that produce results, including deciding in which grades to administer annual statewide tests.
- States should have the flexibility to utilize growth models and other measures of progress that assess student achievement over time, and recognize improvement on all points of the achievement scale.
- Growth model results should be used as a guide to revise instructional practices and curriculum, to provide individual assistance to students, and to provide appropriate professional development to teachers and other educators. They should not be used to penalize schools or teachers.
- Assessment systems must be appropriate, valid, and reliable for all groups of students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and provide for common-sense flexibility for assessing these student subgroups.
- States, school districts, and schools should actively involve teachers and other educators in the planning, development, implementation, and refinement of standards, curriculum, assessments, accountability, and improvement plans.
- Accountability systems and the ensuing use of the results must respect the rights of school employees under federal, state, or local law, and collective bargaining agreements.
- Accountability systems should provide support and assistance, including financial support for improvement and technical assistance to those schools needing help, with targeted assistance to those schools and districts most in need of improvement.
- Assessment and accountability systems should be closely aligned with high standards and classroom curricula, provide timely data to help improve student learning, and be comprehensive and flexible so that they do not result in narrowing of the curricula.
- A federal grant program should be created to assist schools in ensuring all students access to a comprehensive curriculum.
- A comprehensive accountability system must appropriately apply to high schools without increasing dropout rates.
- Standards and assessments must incorporate the nature of work and civic life in the 21st century: high level thinking, learning, and global understanding skills, and sophisticated information, communication, and technology literacy competencies.
- Schools that fail to close achievement gaps after receiving additional financial resources, technical assistance, and other supports should be subject to supportive interventions.

If certain elements of the current AYP system are maintained, specific flaws must be corrected. These corrections include: providing more than one year to implement improvement plans before subjecting schools or districts to additional sanctions; designating schools or districts as "in need of improvement" only when the same subgroup of students fails to make AYP in the same subject for at least two consecutive years; targeting school choice and supplemental educational services (SES) to the specific subgroups that fail to make AYP; providing SES prior to providing school choice; and ensuring that SES providers serve all eligible students and utilize only highly qualified teachers.

Smaller Class Sizes To Improve Student Achievement

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 22-23]

Restore the Class Size Reduction program that existed prior to NCLB to provide an optimum class size of 15 students. Schools should receive federal support-through both direct grants and tax subsidies-for school modernization to accommodate smaller classes.

Quality Educators in Every Classroom and School

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 23-26]

- Provide states and school districts with the resources and technical assistance to create an effective program of professional development and professional accountability for all employees.
- Revise the ESEA Title II Teacher Quality State Grant program to ensure alignment of federally funded teacher professional development with the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards.
- Provide federally funded salary enhancements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification, with a smaller salary incentive for teachers who complete this rigorous process and receive a score, but do not achieve certification.
- Create a grant program that provides additional compensation for teachers with specific knowledge and skills who take on new roles to assist their colleagues.
- Expand opportunities for education support professionals to broaden and enhance their skills and knowledge, including compensation for taking additional courses or doing course work for advanced degrees.
- Provide federal grants that encourage districts and schools to assist new teachers by pairing them with an experienced mentor teacher in a shared classroom.
- Provide financial incentives--both direct federal subsidies and tax credits -- for retention, relocation, and housing for teachers and support professionals who work in schools identified as "in need of improvement" or high-poverty schools, and stay in such schools for at least five years.
- Provide hard-to-staff schools with an adequate number of well trained administrators and support professionals, including paraeducators, counselors, social workers, school nurses, psychologists, and clerical support.
- Provide paraeducators who are involuntarily transferred to a Title I school and who have not met the highly qualified standard with adequate time to meet the requirement.
- Grant reciprocity for paraeducators who meet the highly qualified standard when they move to another state or district, with different qualifications. Revise the definition of highly qualified teachers to recognize state licensure/certification, eliminate nonessential requirements that create unnecessary obstacles, and eliminate loopholes in the scope of coverage.
- Provide teachers who may not meet the highly qualified standard by the current deadlines, due to significant implementation problems, with assistance and additional time to meet the requirement.

Students and Schools Supported By Active and Engaged Parents, Families, and Communities

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 26-27]

- Provide programs that encourage school-parent compacts, signed by parents, that provide a clearly defined list of parental expectations and opportunities.
- Provide programs and resources to assist in making schools the hub of the community.
- Expand funding for the Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) program in ESEA.
- Include as a requirement for professional development programs funded through ESEA, training in the skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and family communication and engagement strategies.
- Provide incentives or require employers to provide parents a reasonable amount of leave to participate in their children's school activities.

Resources to Ensure a Great Public School for Every Child

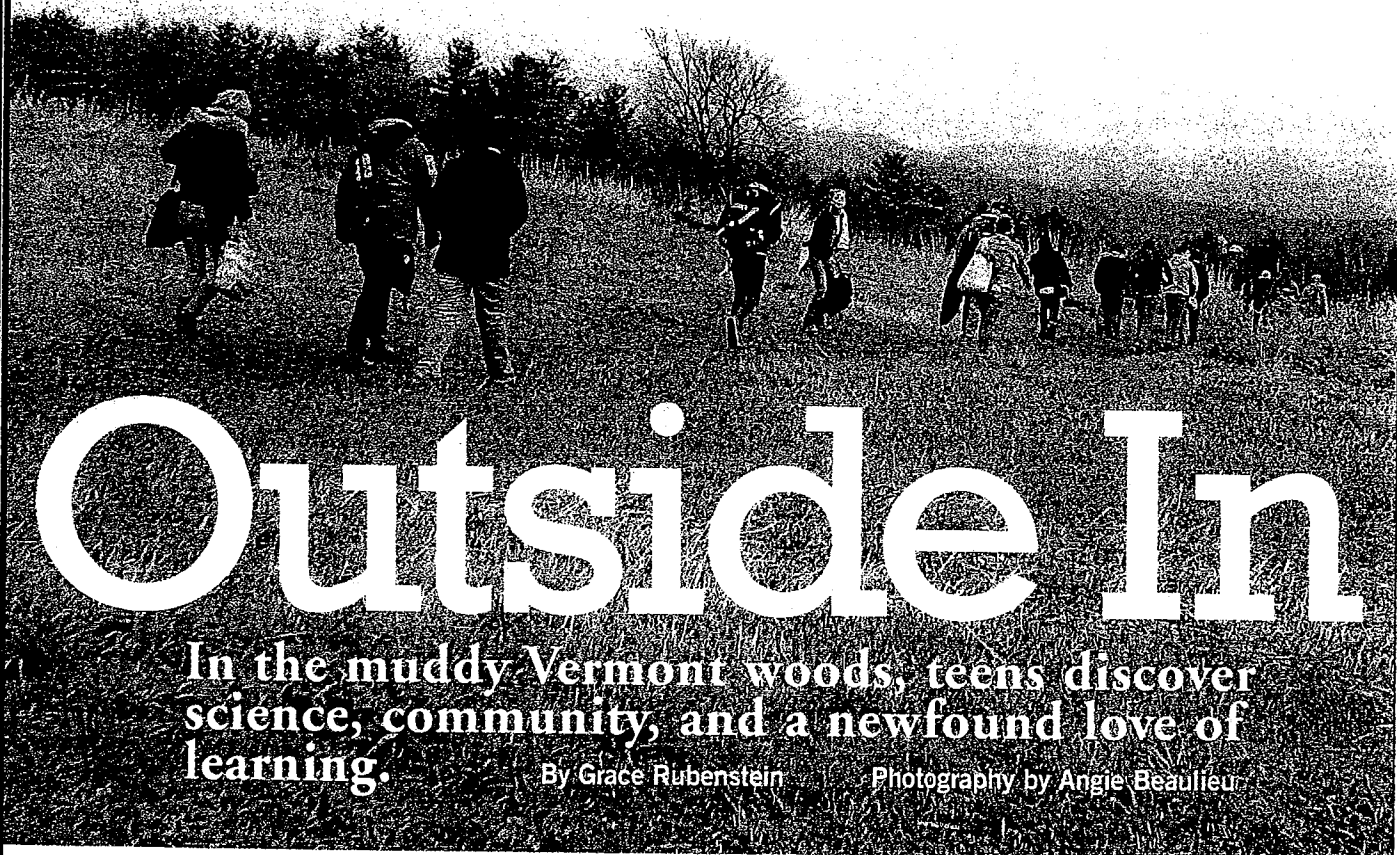
[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 27-29]

- Fully fund ESEA programs at their authorized levels.
- Enforce Sec. 9527(a) of NCLB, which prevents the federal government from requiring states and school districts to spend their own funds-beyond what they receive from the federal government-to implement federal mandates.

Protect essential ESEA programs by:

- Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for school improvement programs to assist districts and schools
- Providing adequate funding to develop and improve assessments that measure higher order thinking skills
- Establishing a trigger whereby any consequences facing schools falling short of the new accountability system are implemented only when Title I is funded at its authorized level
- Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for supplemental education services and school choice, if these mandates remain in the law
- Providing adequate funding to develop and improve appropriate assessments for students with disabilities and English Language Learner students
- Providing technical assistance to schools to help them use money more effectively
- Providing adequate funding to assist state and local education agencies in administering assessments, and collecting and interpreting data in a timely manner so it can be useful to educators
- Important children's and education programs outside of ESEA, including child nutrition, Head Start, IDEA, children's health, child care, and related programs, must be adequately funded.

Daily Constitution of Walden Project
Students tramp across open fields
to their outdoor classroom



Outside In

In the muddy Vermont woods, teens discover science, community, and a newfound love of learning.

By Grace Rubenstein

Photography by Angie Beaulieu

The clouds are still thick from recent rain as nineteen students board a bus outside Vergennes Union High School (VUHS), in rural Vergennes, Vermont. They leave cement-block walls and linoleum-tile halls that conjure images of *The Breakfast Club* and other movies about high school to ride for fifteen minutes past rolling green hayfields and stands of bare trees, sagging barns and modest ranch houses. When they get off the bus on a country highway, four of them stop to pull kale and tall leeks from a garden for the day's lunch. Then they follow the others 500 feet down a soggy trail to the grove of red cedars that is their classroom.

As they gather in a circle, teacher Julia Bunting suggests they introduce themselves to several guests by playing a name

game: The students will take turns telling what they want to be when they grow up. Jamison "Jamo" Bannister, a skinny sophomore in a black leather jacket, looks at her disbelievingly and says, "What do you think this is—school?"

The Walden Project is not school in the traditional sense. It is a community of nineteen students and two teachers who use this former farmland for what the founder calls a "great, living template for education." They spend three days a week outdoors, through fall, bitter winter, and spring. On Tuesdays, for Field Sociology class and writing, the students visit government offices, nonprofit organizations, and other institutions in Burlington, a college town of 40,000 located 20 miles away.

On Fridays, they work at internships in their areas of interest, such as Web design or photography.

Matt Schlein, who had taught English, drama, and psychology at VUHS for six years, founded the project in 2000 with a vision of authentic, student-directed learning based in nature. He created a small foundation, Willowell, and collected grants and donations to buy the 230 acres Walden Project participants call simply “the land”—a swath of sloping fields spotted with woods and ringed by the Green Mountains. About twenty to twenty-five students attend each year.

The educational model springs from Henry David Thoreau’s semihermetic experience at Walden Pond in the 1800s, when he abandoned conventional work for two years and immersed himself in the outdoors. “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,” Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, “to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”

**GET SMART
DURING THE TIME
HENRY DAVID THOREAU
LIVED AT WALDEN
POND, HIS MOTHER
DID HIS LAUNDRY.**

The point, Schlein says, is to step outside the chaos of everyday expectations to “think deeply about where I am right now and what’s essential,” searching nature and oneself for inspiration. Though he can name private programs that base their education in the local environment, such as central Vermont’s Mountain School and the Island School, in the Bahamas, he knows of none so rooted in Thoreau’s transcendentalism.

Schlein, who has a full red beard and an actor’s energy, covers the English and social science portions of the curriculum. Julia Bunting, the science teacher, has blue eyes and a gentle demeanor that belies her ruggedness; in summer, she leads whitewater-raft trips through Canada’s Yukon and Northwest Territories wilderness. Their program is a satellite of the 680-student VUHS, funded by the school within its regular per-pupil budget.

Starting in their sophomore year, students may choose to spend up to three years, depending on their level of interest, in the Walden Project. (For upper-level math, physics, or chemistry courses, which the curriculum omits, students must go to community college or return to the high school for those classes.) Some teens come here to escape the rigidity of regular school, while others just want the experience; all learn about environmental science and literature, and how to think for themselves.

On this morning, the teens amble over soft, needle-strewn ground to sit in a circle of rough benches, discarded office chairs, and an upholstered seat from a van. About 40 feet away stands an A-frame shanty built with the limbs of on-site trees lashed together with rope and covered in donated maritime sails. On the most frigid days, the group takes refuge inside.

Nick Cormier, a blond-bearded senior, starts class with a daily reading of an excerpt by Thoreau or other transcendentalists. Today, it’s from *Civil Disobedience*. A vigorous discussion follows on whether it is better to work with or against government to create change.

For another hour or so, the group continues with Foundations in Social and Systems Theory class, casually called “Newsy Notes,” in which students toss out topics from current events for discussion. An exercise that could unravel into chaos is kept cogent and purposeful by the teachers’ gentle steering and the students’ sophisticated arguments, which they lace with references to history, philosophy, and literature. Their voices mingle with the sounds of birds’ screeches and, less frequently, the gunshots of not-so-distant hunters.

Sitting in a circle in these woods, there’s no space for whispering or passing notes, only listening. There are no hall passes; when students need a break, they walk away. Sometimes this



freedom frustrates sophomore Kate Houskeeper, who feels it allows some of her classmates to be rude. Yet when you’re face-to-face with peers and teachers, who all know just how hard you’re working—or slacking—there’s no hiding in the back of the classroom, either.

“You can’t bullshit your way through this,” says senior Chris Newton.

Houskeeper at first felt overwhelmed by the flexibility at Walden, where students must invent their own projects and make progress on yearlong portfolios without daily assignments. Comparatively, she says, the structure of regular high school was familiar and comforting.

Indeed, a stranger visiting Walden could be dismayed by its seeming anarchy. Students rarely take notes. They curse. If one is distressed by personal problems, he or she may leave class to spend time in the woods alone. The teens have to combat perceptions among students and teachers at VUHS that Walden is a place where the “bad kids” go, or even, according to one of the most extreme rumors, where they sit around the fire smoking pot. However, Newton—speaking for many of his classmates—says, “From an outsider’s point of view, we don’t have a lot of structure, but we just have a different definition of structure, and I feel like we’re learning more by doing it that way.”

What they’re learning, students say, is as much about science and writing as self-direction and a love of learning. Given license to pursue his own interests, one boy several years ago built a dugout canoe. At least a half dozen students have

Nature and Nurture: Senior Chris Newton (left) cuts kindling for the campfire. Julia Walsh, also a senior, reads to her classmates from Dr. Seuss’s *The Lorax*.

entered Walden determined to write a novel, and the teachers have encouraged them; though none has finished more than a chapter or two, Schlein says, "to attempt to do something grand and fail—that's great learning."

Great enough, in fact, that despite Walden's unconventional approach, its students' performance on the SAT matches that of their peers at VUHS. And whereas just over half of the high school's graduates go to college, 80 to 90 percent of Walden grads do.

Alumna Kelsey Stetson, now an education major at the University of Vermont, says, "I joke that Walden saved my life from mediocrity. It allowed me to not just go for the grade but to also take full part in my education."

Nearing lunchtime, Newton cuts kindling from a log to start a fire while Bunting introduces the Wildlife Biology lesson. The course builds in literal levels from the geology of the rock underneath "the land" to the soils on top of that to the vegetation, wildlife, and atmosphere, culminating in a site-specific environmental restoration project of the teens' design. Each student must also do a land-management project. Bannister, for example, planted a field and a grove of trees and is making duck houses.

Today, it's Julia Walsh's turn to teach a class, about her bee-keeping project. Her classmates tramp out of the woods into a wet hayfield where the hives are and ask questions as she tries in vain to smoke the bees into submission. They stay back—way back—while Walsh pries out a wooden honeycomb frame, several dozen angry bees swarming around her. Then, standing safely 50 feet from the hive, the students crowd around her to eat gobs of gooey honeycomb off their fingers.

school." He's seen students with severe emotional disturbances, "state-of-the-art prep-school kids," and "square pegs in round holes" all flourish here. "They feel like they can breathe," he says. "They feel like they belong—not only to each other but to nature, too."

The strength of these connections attracts many teens grappling with trauma; past drug addiction and loss of a parent are common. Julia Walsh, for one, found in Walden her salvation from hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine. "You can't be a number here," she says. "You can't fall down and not have anybody notice and help you pick yourself up."

For students without serious traumas—and there are at least equal numbers of them at Walden—the intimate quarters still bring them close to peers they would otherwise never know. Like any family, the Walden denizens have their spats, but as Schlein points out, rivalries are hard to sustain when you're all cold and huddled around the same fire.

Returning to the cedar grove, the class digs into a smoky stew of potatoes, leeks, onions, black beans, and red peppers prepared by Schlein on the campfire. Students and teachers

"Students in the Walden Project feel like they belong—not only to each other but to nature, too."

alike eat from ceramic mugs and plastic cups and off pieces of cardboard or even strips of bark—whatever they can find.

Schlein begins Psychology/Philosophy/World Religions class while throwing kale into an iron pot on the campfire. He reviews the divide between Freudian and behavioral psychology before launching into the classic theories of child development.

"Kale's done," he says about ten minutes into the lesson. The teens eagerly pull leaves from the pot by hand and munch away while Schlein keeps teaching. The students take no notes, but they ask good questions. Chris Newton offers the critique that the theories of Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget are biased toward Western values. Lizzie Werner-Gavrin

asks why some people skip developmental stages due to trauma.

About forty minutes later, at 1:45, the students and teachers rise and start back up the muddy path to the yellow school bus, to heat and electricity and household chores. They leave their mugs hanging on trees for the next vegetable stew. A small pile of kindling also remains, ready to spark a campfire—and imaginations—when next they return.

Grace Rubenstein is a staff writer at Edutopia.

HOT www.vuhs.org/walden



Life Lessons: The vision of Matt Schlein (above) buzzes with life as student Julia Walsh (right) tends to her bee project. Classmate Kate Housekeeper stands by.

These hands-on science lessons partly explain why VUHS principal Ed Webbley is one of Walden's biggest fans. Through its inquiry-based approach, he says, Walden satisfies state content standards in greater depth than a conventional classroom could. The program also far surpasses the high school on teaching the state's "vital results" standards for personal growth, he adds. "Instead of reading sixteen chapters in a science textbook," says Nick Cormier, "we do science."

Beyond the curriculum, Webbley admires how the program nurtures kids who "bounced off the four painted walls in high

HOW TO: MAKE LEARNING LOCAL

Inner Circle:
Students in the
Walden Project
attend class
and eat lunch
around the fire
in this red
cedar grove.

As Walden Project graduate Kelsey Stetson says, it's almost as if the fields and trees outside Vergennes, Vermont, were waiting for a nature-based education program like Walden.

Yet educators anywhere can broker this marriage of location and learning, even without 230 acres of Vermont farmland. Emily Watson-Blagden, an AmeriCorps VISTA member who helps at Walden, included a case study of place-based education in her bachelor's thesis at Hampshire College. She says place exists everywhere when you are willing to stretch the concept beyond the physical environment to the community.

"It's a scale, starting with the small and immediate and close," she says, "like starting with the temperate forest that's right near your school as a way to understand a tropical rain forest," or using a shop down the street to comprehend the larger forces of commerce.

Watson-Blagden says the concept of place-based education has taken root over the past ten to twenty years, fueled, in part, by Annenberg Rural Challenge grants, launched in 1995 to improve rural schools by linking them more with their communities. The Rural School and Community Trust, which emerged from the Annenberg initiative, defines place-based education as learning grounded in "the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place." In this model, according to the trust administrators, "student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning."

This kind of education engages students, says Walden founder Matt Schlein, because the real, local connection helps answer the students' perennial question "Why are we learning this?"

Student Gains From Place-Based Education



Place-based or environment-based education uses the environment as an integrating context (EIC) across disciplines. It is characterized by exploration of the local community and natural surroundings, hands-on experiences of environmental discovery and problem-solving, interdisciplinary curricula, team teaching, and learning that accommodates students' individual skills and abilities. Research shows that this approach delivers many benefits to students.

Higher Test Scores and Grades

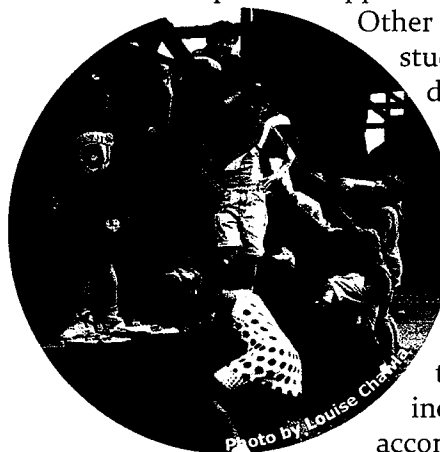
Students in schools and classrooms that use the environment as an integrating context for learning score higher on standardized tests in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Studies that have found higher test scores as a consequence of place-based education include: surveys of 40 schools across the nation with EIC programs, including comparisons of students in EIC versus traditional classrooms in 14 of these schools (Lieberman & Hoody 1998); a Washington study that matched 77 EIC schools with demographically equivalent schools without environmental education (Bartosh 2003); a California study that matched eight classes with EIC programs with equivalent classes without EIC (SEER 2000); and a national study that found improved test scores in seven schools that adopted EIC approaches (NEETF 2000).

Other results from these studies indicate that students in EIC programs tend to improve their overall GPA, stay in school longer, and receive higher than average scholarship awards. They are perceived by their teachers to exhibit increased pride in their accomplishments and

greater engagement and enthusiasm for learning. This last finding was replicated in a survey of 55 schools that represented four place-based education programs (Duffin et al. 2004) and an evaluation of ten middle schools in South Carolina that adopted EIC approaches (Falco 2004).

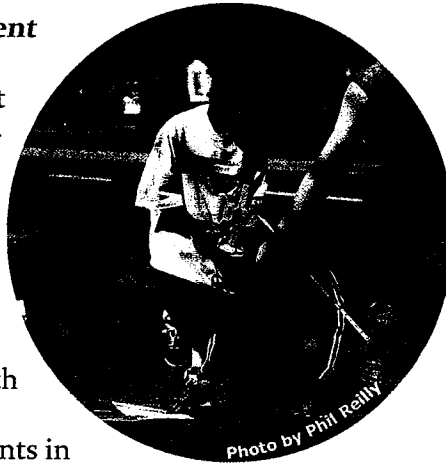
More Advanced Critical Thinking Skills

A Florida study of 400 ninth and twelfth graders in 11 schools compared students' critical thinking skills in EIC classrooms versus traditional classrooms (Ernst & Monroe 2004). At both grade levels, the EIC programs significantly raised students' scores on the Cornell Critical Thinking Test. Teacher interviews indicated that EIC programs require students to integrate multiple disciplines, formulate and test hypotheses, investigate issues, take responsibility for their own learning, reflect on what they learn, and connect their learning to their communities.



Greater Achievement Motivation

Greater achievement motivation is associated with greater engagement in schoolwork, which improves academic performance. In the Florida study of 400 ninth and twelfth grade students described above, students in classrooms with EIC programs and traditional programs filled out an Achievement Motivation Inventory (Athman & Monroe 2004). At both grade levels, students in the EIC classrooms scored significantly higher in achievement motivation compared with students in the control classrooms. Students and teachers attributed this gain to the use of the local environment, the application of learning to real-life issues, and the ability to tailor learning experiences to students' interests and strengths.



take students to environmental centers distant from their homes. A California study compared at-risk sixth graders who attended outdoor programs to study ecology and earth science with control groups from the same schools (American Institutes of Research 2005). Students in the outdoor programs significantly raised their science scores and maintained greater science knowledge in a 10-week follow-up. They also showed more cooperation and conflict resolution skills (student assessments and teacher ratings), more positive environmental behaviors (parents' ratings), and better problem solving, motivation to learn, and classroom behavior (teachers' ratings).

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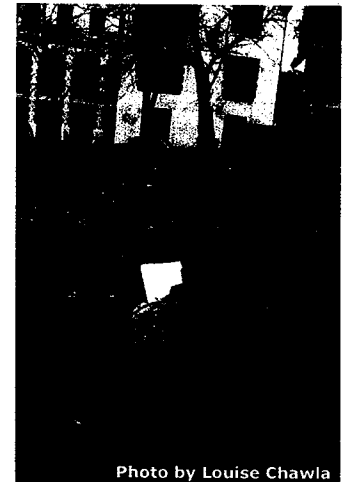
Lieberman, Gerald A. and Hoody, Linda. 1998. *Closing the Achievement Gap*. San Diego, CA: State Education and Environment Roundtable.

National Environmental Education Training Foundation (NEETF). 2000. *Environment-based Education: Creating High Performance Schools and Students*. Washington, DC: Author.

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American Institutes of Research. 2005. *Effects of Outdoor Education Programs for Children in California*. Sacramento: Author.

*Prepared by Louise Chawla and Myriam Escalante, November 2007, with contributions from Michael Duffin. For further details about these and other relevant studies and links to the full text of many of these citations, see <http://tinyurl.com/2kt3oj>



More Responsible Behavior and Environmental Stewardship

Students exposed to EIC programs display reduced discipline and classroom management problems (Falco 2004, Lieberman & Hoody 1998, NEETF 2000, SEER 2000), better attendance (SEER 2000), and more responsible behavior in their school and community (Bartosh 2003). The more exposure that students have to EIC programs, the more they report attachment to place, time spent outdoors, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship (Duffin et al. 2004).

Student Gains from Extended Stays at Outdoor Education Centers

In addition to place-based education which explores the local community and surrounding natural areas, some schools



Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center
www.cudenver.edu/cye



Attachment D

AP English Language and Composition

Suggested reading time—15 minutes

Suggested writing time—40 minutes

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying seven sources.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources you refer to them to develop your position and cite them accurately. *Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Avoid merely summarizing sources.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

Invasive species are nonnative plants and animals that thrive outside of their natural range and may harm or endanger native plants and animals. As producers and consumers in our global society, we affect and are affected by species introduced accidentally or intentionally to a region. Currently, some people argue for stricter regulations of imported species to avoid the possibility of unintended negative consequences. Others, however, claim that the economies and basic resources of poorer nations could be improved by selective importation of nonnative species.

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then write an essay in which you evaluate what a business or government agency would need to consider before transferring a hardy but nonindigenous species to another country. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.**

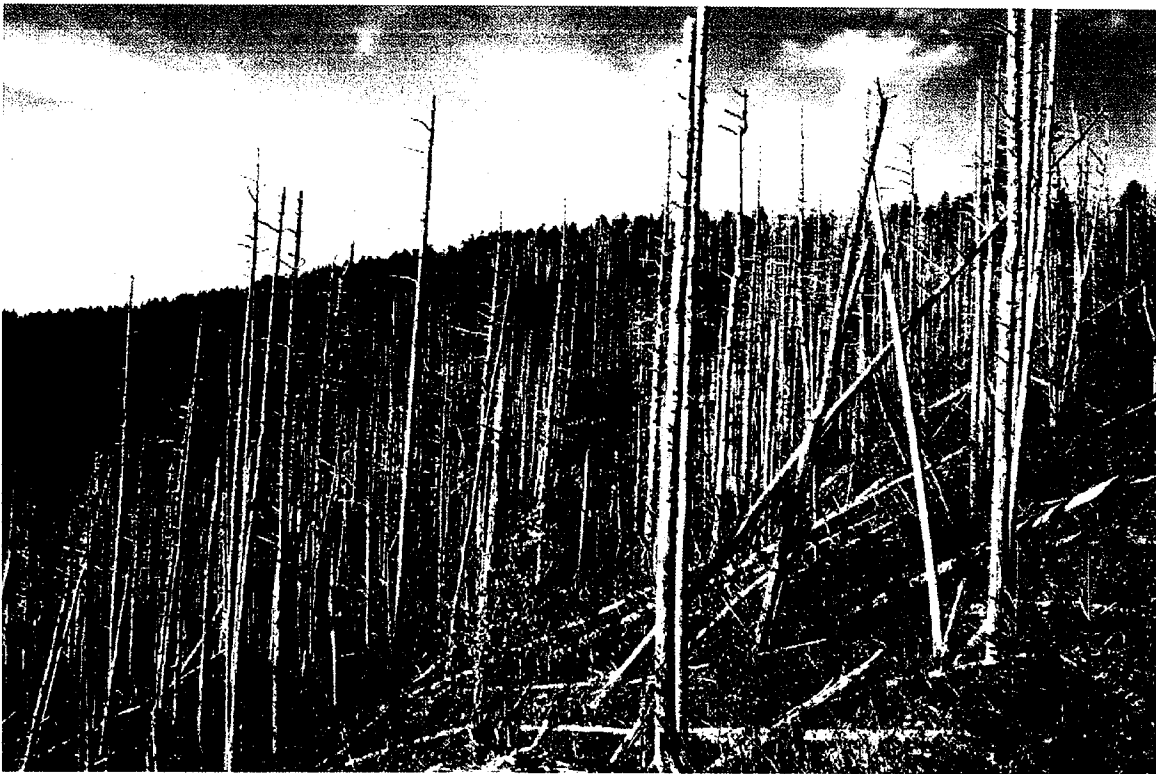
Refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

- Source A (Photo)
- Source B (Dybas)
- Source C (Aquaculture)
- Source D (Devine)
- Source E (Baskin)
- Source F (Spotts)
- Source G (Lost Crops)

Source A

Photo Archive. "Animal Invaders and Pathogens." The Global Invasive Species Initiative. The Nature Conservancy 2005. 28 April 2006
<<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/photos.html>>.

The following is a photograph of balsam fir trees killed by an infestation of balsam woolly adelgids, insects accidentally imported to the United States from Europe.



(c) John Randall

Source B

Dybas, Cheryl Lyn. "Invasive Species: The Search for Solutions." BioScience 54.7 (2004).

The following is an excerpt from a science journal.

SARS, a viral respiratory illness, is transmitted by person-to-person contact. First reported in Asia in February 2003, the illness spread over the next few months to more than two dozen countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. During the SARS outbreak of 2003, a total of 8098 people worldwide became sick, according to the World Health Organization; of these, 774 died. In the United States, there were 192 infected individuals, all of whom recovered. Public health officials used isolation and quarantine measures to control the outbreak of this infectious disease.

But the story doesn't end there. On 13 January 2004, the US Department of Health and Human Services banned import of civets—small catlike mammals related to the mongoose and native to Africa and the East Indies—whether alive or dead. Wild animal traders, it turns out, show a higher incidence of exposure to the SARS virus. If humans can acquire infection directly from animals like civets, scientists think, SARS may have been introduced to new areas by multiple routes. The suspects implicated in this case? An almost infinitely complex web of interactions among humans, animals, and continents—and an exponentially increasing number of routes bringing them together in unprecedented numbers. The means? Planes, trains, ships, and automobiles.

Source C

Hewitt, Chad L., Marnie L. Campbell, and Stephan Gollasch. Alien Species in Aquaculture: Considerations for Responsible Use. Gland, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 2006.

The following excerpt is taken from a work that examines the practice of farming oceans.

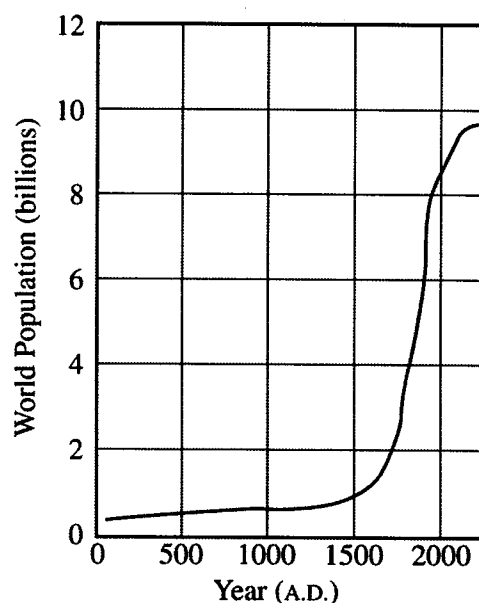
The human population has surpassed 6 billion people (Figure 1), with increasing pressures placed on infrastructure, food security and environmental resources (McMicheal, 2001). . . .

Expectations for aquaculture [fishing and farming the sea] to increase its contribution to the world's production of aquatic food are very high, and there is also hope that aquaculture will continue to strengthen its role in contributing to food security and poverty alleviation in many developing countries. Aquaculture offers opportunities to alleviate poverty, increase employment and community development, reduce overexploitation of natural coastal resources, and develop food security, specifically in developing countries.

Due to this worldwide increasing demand for aquatic food products, aquaculture is now one of the most important and fastest growing sectors within the fisheries sector, specifically for marine aquaculture activities. Most of global aquaculture output is produced in developing countries, and, significantly, low-income food-deficit countries. However, it is also recognized that aquaculture encompasses a very wide range of different farming practices with regard to species (including seaweeds, molluscs, crustaceans, fish and other aquatic species groups), environments and systems, often with very distinct resource use patterns, offering a wide range of options for diversification of avenues for enhanced food production and income generation in many rural and peri-urban areas.

In order to rapidly and cost-effectively develop and diversify aquaculture interests, commercial

Figure 1



enterprises in several countries have turned to pre-existing aquaculture species from other regions, such as the Japanese Oyster, (*Crassostrea gigas*), the Atlantic Salmon, (*Salmo salar*), and the California abalone, (*Haliotis rufescens*). By using these species, research and development costs are minimised through use of overseas research and development outputs. Similarly, these new enterprises can utilise pre-existing markets with well established brand identity to create a more rapid profit.

Source D

Devine, Robert. Alien Invasion: America's Battle with
Non-Native Animals and Plants. Washington, DC:
National Geographic Society, 1998.

The following is an excerpt from a book about the impact of imported plants and animals.

Crop-killing microbes worry farmers all over the world. What they fear is what happened during the early and mid-1990s to Jenny and Delan Perry and other papaya growers on the Big Island of Hawaii. The Perry's 70-acre farm lies about 3 miles from the ocean in a rural area near Kapoho, a tiny town on the eastern side of the Big Island. This area is—or was—the heart of the island's papaya region. To reach their farm, I left the blacktop and crunched over a mile of lava-gravel road, curving past abandoned sugarcane fields, banana trees, and coconut palms.

After I met up with Jenny Perry, we drove out into the fields. Perry . . . and her husband bought this farm in 1973 and planted a variety of crops, including papaya, in 1980. Conditions proved perfect for papaya, and within a couple of years they had planted papaya trees on most of their acreage. The Perrys and the papayas thrived. But in 1992, the Perrys saw evidence of an exotic microbe: papaya ringspot virus had invaded their fields. By 1994, the virus had erupted into a full-blown epidemic. Within a few years, the local papaya industry had nearly vanished—and so had their livelihood.

Source E

Baskin, Yvonne. A Plague of Rats and Rubbervines: The Growing Threat of Species Invasions. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002.

The following is excerpted from a book about the threat posed by invasive species.

World trade drives the rearrangement of the living world in two ways, one intentional and the other accidental. The exotic plants and animals we import or move intentionally beyond their natural ranges—pets, flowering plants, boutique crops, plants for restoring degraded lands, animals destined for the table or for release into woods, fields, and streams as game animals—provide an increasing reservoir of potential invaders.

The organisms such as snakes and turtles and nursery plants that we import intentionally, however, pale in numbers beside the masses of smaller living things we set in motion incidentally. These are the hitchhikers that ride in ballast tanks or aboard the hulls of ships, in airplane cargo holds and cabins, in the nooks and crannies of shipping crates and containers, or mingled with grain, fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, timber, minerals, soils, and the other goods bought, sold, and shipped worldwide.

Source F

Spotts, Peter N. "Australia's Most Unwelcome Guest."

The Christian Science Monitor 7 April 2005.

27 May 2005

<<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0407/p13s02-sten.html>>.

The following is excerpted from an online article about cane toads in Australia.

It seemed like a good idea at the time. In 1935, two types of beetles were chewing through Queensland's sugar-cane fields. In desperation, growers turned to cane toads to battle the insects. They'd heard glowing reports about the warty, fist-sized amphibians from growers at a conference in the Caribbean two years earlier, and successfully lobbied to import them.

Australia would come to rue that day.

Instead of concentrating on beetles, the voracious toads began munching on almost everything in sight: insects, bird eggs, and even pet food. Their poison killed predators—even pets—who tried to eat them. And instead of staying put in cane fields, they began to spread along a broad swath of the country.

In recent years, the cane toad has become a poster child for the problem of invasive species here, forcing the government to embark on a multimillion-dollar campaign to stop them. . . .

Introducing them "was not an inspired idea," says Ross Alford, professor of biology at James Cook University here in Townsville.

By Peter N. Spotts. Reproduced with permission from the April 7, 2005, issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* (www.csmonitor.com). (c) 2005 The Christian Science Monitor. All rights reserved.

Source G

National Research Council Report. Lost Crops of the Incas: Little-Known Plants of the Andes with Promise for Worldwide Cultivation. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1989.

The following is excerpted from a book about specific plants.

To the Incas, quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*) was a food so vital that it was considered sacred. In their language, Quechua, it is referred to as *chisiya mama* or “mother grain.” Each year, the Inca emperor broke the soil with a golden spade and planted the first seed.

In the altiplano especially, quinoa (pronounced *keen-wa* or *kee-noo-ah*) is still a staple. For millions it is a major source of protein, and its protein is of such high quality that, nutritionally speaking, it often takes the place of meat in the diet. Outside the highlands of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, however, the cultivation of quinoa is virtually unknown. . . .

Quinoa seems particularly promising for improving life and health in marginal upland areas. It probably could be cultivated in highland tropical regions, such as elevated parts of Ethiopia, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. The malted grains and flour hold promise as a weaning food for infants, and it is noteworthy that child malnutrition is common in many of these areas. Also, quinoa is one of the best leaf-protein-concentrate sources. . . .

The plant’s daylength requirements (for flowering) are, for now, likely to limit its successful cultivation in North America, Europe, Japan and other such industrialized areas to types that come from equivalent latitudes in the Andes (for example, from Chile). At present, these are not readily available. On the other hand, tall, late-maturing, daylength sensitive types could prove productive for forages*, a use for which flowering is unnecessary.

Despite this limitation, the plant has already shown some promise in tests of farm-scale cultivation in high altitudes of Colorado and at near sea level in Washington and Oregon states as well as in England and Scandinavia.

* food for domestic animals

AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION SAMPLE SCORING GUIDELINES FOR THE SYNTHESIS ESSAY

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources, or impressive in their control of language.

8 **Effective**

Essays earning a score of 8 effectively take a position and support their position by effectively synthesizing (For the purposes of scoring, synthesis refers to combining the sources and the writer's position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing all sources) and citing at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is convincing, and the cited sources effectively support the writer's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources, or a more mature prose style.

6 **Adequate**

Essays earning a score of 6 adequately take a position and adequately synthesize and cite at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is generally convincing and the cited sources generally support the writer's position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. Though the language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 take a position and support their position by synthesizing and citing at least three sources, but their arguments and their use of cited sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, or uneven. The writer's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the writer's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately.

4 **Inadequate**

Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately take a position and attempt to present an argument and support their position by synthesizing and citing at least two sources but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the cited sources they include. The link between the argument and the cited sources is weak. The prose of 4 essays may suggest immature control of writing.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.

2 **Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in taking a position and may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially or by summarizing the sources. The prose of essays scored a 2 often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic or weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.

0 Essays earning a score of zero (0) are on-topic responses that receive no credit, such as those that merely repeat the prompt.

— Essays earning a dash (—) are blank responses or responses that are completely off topic.