

Resources

The original lessons and complete reading text are available at:

<http://www.achievethecore.org/page/31/the-omnivore-s-dilemma-the-secrets-behind-what-you-eat-by-michael-pollan>

Achieve the Core has other CCSS-aligned lessons at each grade level as well as student work samples: www.achievethecore.org

Designated ELD Vignette

Vignette 6.3 illustrates good teaching for all students with particular attention to the learning needs of ELs. In addition to good first teaching, ELs benefit from intentional and purposeful designated ELD instruction that builds into and from content instruction and focuses on their particular language learning needs. Vignette 6.4 illustrates how designated ELD can build from and into the types of lessons outlined in the first vignette. It also illustrates how teachers can show their students ways to deconstruct, or *unpack*, the language resources in arguments.

**Vignette 6.4 Designated ELD Instruction in Seventh Grade
Unpacking Arguments: Text Organization and Language for Persuading****Background**

During designated ELD, Ms. Quincy, the school's English as an additional language specialist, teaches a class of English learners, most of whom are at the Expanding level of English language proficiency. Most are long-term English learners, that is, they have been in U.S. schools since the elementary grades, but have not reached academic proficiency in English, according to state assessments. A few English learners in this class are at the Emerging level of English language proficiency. They have been in the country for a little over a year, are progressing well, and are already fairly fluent in everyday English. All of the students experience challenges using academic English when writing academic papers or providing oral presentations. Ms. Quincy focuses her attention on supporting her students to strengthen their abilities to use academic language in both writing and speaking, using grade-level texts.

Lesson Context

Ms. Quincy collaborates with an interdisciplinary team that includes Mrs. Massimo, the ELA teacher, on a series of lessons where students read informational texts for the cross-disciplinary thematic unit on food, nutrition, and agriculture, "You Are What You Eat." Ms. Quincy and Mrs. Massimo worked together to design a series of designated ELD lessons that build into and from the interdisciplinary unit. They want to ensure their English learners will be successful with the literacy tasks they engage in throughout the unit and will be well prepared for the unit's culminating task: a written argument supported by evidence from the texts and media they used for their research on the topic.

Both teachers have noticed that many of the English learners in Mrs. Massimo's class are challenged by some of the academic texts they are reading and by the short writing assignments that are leading up to the research project. As the unit progresses, Ms. Quincy adjusts her lessons to ensure her students receive the appropriate level of scaffolding to meet the high expectations she and Mrs. Massimo have for them. In today's lesson, Ms. Quincy will begin guiding the students to analyze several mentor texts—arguments written by previous students, as well as newspaper editorials. The class will be looking

closely at the language resources the writers used to persuade readers to think a certain way or do something. The learning target and CA ELD Standards for today's lesson are the following:

Learning Target: Students will analyze a written argument, focusing on the text structure and organization and language resources useful for persuading.

CA ELD Standards (Expanding): *ELD.PI.7.1 – Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions by following turn-taking rules, asking relevant questions, affirming others, adding relevant information, and paraphrasing key ideas; ELD.PI.7.4 – Adjust language choices according to purpose (e.g., explaining, persuading, entertaining), task, and audience; ELD.PII.7.1 – Apply understanding of the organizational features of different text types (e.g., how narratives are organized by an event sequence that unfolds naturally versus how arguments are organized around reasons and evidence) to comprehending texts and to writing increasingly clear and coherent arguments, informative/explanatory texts and narratives; ELD.PII.7.2b – Apply growing understanding of how ideas, events, or reasons are linked throughout a text using a variety of connecting words or phrases (e.g., for example, as a result, on the other hand) to comprehending texts and writing texts with increasing cohesion.*

Lesson Excerpts

Ms. Quincy begins by activating students' background knowledge of persuading by asking them to discuss the following question with a partner:

Have you ever tried to persuade someone to do something? What did you say? How did you say it? Did it work?

After the students have had a couple of minutes to discuss the questions, she explains the purpose of constructing arguments.

Ms. Quincy: When we make an argument, our purpose is to persuade someone to think a certain way or to do something. You're very familiar with trying to persuade people with good reasons in a conversation. The way we persuade people in a conversation is different than the way we persuade others in writing. When we write to persuade others, there are certain language resources we can use to construct a strong argument. We're going to take a look at those language resources, and we're going to look at how an argument is structured so that you can write arguments later in this unit.

Ms. Quincy distributes copies of an argument written by a student the previous year. She also displays the text on the document reader. She begins by having the students read the text chorally with her. The content of the text is familiar as the class is in the middle of the thematic unit on food, nutrition, and agribusiness. Nevertheless, she ensures that they understand the general idea of the text by telling them that the text is an argument, written as a school newspaper editorial, for serving organic foods in the cafeteria. She tells them that as they analyze the text structure, they'll gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the text.

Next, she shows them the text structure and organization of the mentor text by breaking the text up into meaningful chunks. She draws a line to separate each large chunk, or *stage*, and in the left-hand column, she explains that they will use the terms *position statement*, *arguments*, and *reiteration of appeal* to indicate what these stages are. Under each stage, she writes what the *phases* of each stage are and explains that the phases show where the writer is making deliberate choices about how to use language to get her idea across. Knowing where the stages and phases are, she tells them, will help them to read the argument, and it will also give them ideas about how to structure their own arguments. She has the students write the stages and phases on their copy of the text.

<p>Stages (bigger chunks) and <i>Phases</i> (smaller chunks inside stages)</p>	<p>Title: “Our School Should Serve Organic Foods”</p>
<p>Position Statement <i>Issue</i> <i>Appeal</i></p>	<p>All students who come to Rosa Parks Middle School deserve to be served healthy, safe, and delicious food. Organic foods are more nutritious and safer to eat than non-organic foods, which are treated with pesticides. Our school <i>should</i> serve only organic foods because it’s our basic right to know that we’re being taken care of by the adults in our school. Organic foods <i>might</i> be more expensive than non-organic foods, but I think we can all work together to make sure that we eat only the healthiest foods, and that means organic.</p>
<p>Arguments <i>Point A</i> <i>Elaboration</i></p>	<p>Eating organic foods is safer for you because the crops aren’t treated with chemical pesticides like non-organic crops are. According to a recent study by Stanford University, 38% of non-organic produce had pesticides on them compared with only 7% of organic produce. Some scientists say that exposure to pesticides in food is related to neurobehavioral problems in children, like ADHD. Other studies show that even low levels of pesticide exposure can hurt us. I definitely don’t want to take the risk of poisoning myself every time I eat lunch.</p>
<p><i>Point B</i> <i>Elaboration</i></p>	<p>Organic food is more nutritious and healthier for your body. The Stanford University study also reported that organic milk and chicken contain more omega-3 fatty acids than non-organic milk and chicken. Omega-3 fatty acids are important for brain health and also might help reduce heart disease, so we should be eating foods that contain them. According to Michael Pollan and other experts, fruits and vegetables grown in organic soils have more nutrients in them. They also say that eating the fruits and vegetables close to the time they were picked preserves more nutrients. This is a good reason to get our school food from local organic farms. Eating local organic foods helps keep us healthier, and it also supports the local economy. <i>We might</i> even be able to get organic crops cheaper if we work more with local farms.</p>
<p><i>Point C</i> <i>Elaboration</i></p>	<p>Organic foods are better for the environment and for the people who grow the food. Farmers who grow organic produce don’t use chemicals to fertilize the soil or pesticides to keep away insects or weeds. Instead, they use other methods like beneficial insects and crop rotation. This means that chemicals won’t run off the farm and into streams and our water supply. This helps to protect the environment and our health. In addition, on organic farms, the farmworkers who pick the food aren’t exposed to dangerous chemicals that <i>could</i> damage their health. This isn’t just good for our school. It’s something good we <i>should</i> do for ourselves, other human beings, and the planet.</p>
<p>Reiteration of Appeal</p>	<p>To put it simply, organic foods are more nutritious, safer for our bodies, and better for the environment. But there’s another reason we <i>should</i> go organic. It tastes better. Non-organic food can sometimes taste like cardboard, but organic food is always delicious. When I bite into an apple or a strawberry, I want it to taste good, and I don’t want a mouthful of pesticides. Some people <i>might</i> say that organic is too expensive. I say that we can’t afford to risk the health of students at this school by not serving organic foods. Therefore, we <i>must</i> find a way to make organic foods part of our school lunches.</p>
<p>From Chapter Five of the CA ELD Standards (used with permission from WestEd)</p>	

Once the students have the stages of their arguments delineated, Ms. Quincy models how she locates key sentences, which she highlights:

- **The position statement:** All students who come to Rosa Parks Middle School deserve to be served healthy, safe, and delicious food.
- **The issue:** Organic foods are more nutritious and safer to eat than non-organic foods, which are treated with pesticides.
- **The appeal:** Our school *should* serve only organic foods because it's our basic right to know that we're being taken care of by the adults in our school.

She underlines the arguments and briefly notes that the rest of the paragraphs elaborate on the arguments.

Ms. Quincy: We're going to be looking at text structure and organization a lot over the next couple of weeks, so if things aren't clear right now, don't worry. What I want to spend most of our time on today is all the different kinds of language resources you can choose when you write an argument. We'll be looking at a lot of different arguments that some students your age wrote, as well as some newspaper articles that are arguments, so that you can see that there are a lot of language resources you can choose from.

Thyda: What do you mean "language resources?"

Ms. Quincy: A *resource* is something that can be used by you to do something. Language resources are words or groups of words that help you make meaning and do the things you are trying to get done with language. Some language resources help you put ideas together in sentences, like when you use the words *and* or *but* or *because*. Other resources help you be really precise in your meanings, like specific vocabulary, for example. Because we're focusing on argument texts, we're going to explore which kinds of language resources are used in arguments to help make the text more persuasive.

Ms. Quincy models how she identifies language resources by reading the first paragraph. She stops at the word *should*. She highlights the word and points out that it is a modal verb that expresses the point of view of the author. The word *should*, she points out, makes the statement much stronger than if the author had used the words *could* or *can*. The modal *should* tells us what the author thinks is right or best; the modals *could* and *can* tell us what the author thinks is possible.

She writes this observation in the margin. Next, she asks the students to work together in pairs to explore the rest of the text, paragraph by paragraph, and to work collaboratively to identify other language resources that make the text persuasive. She asks them to underline these language resources, agree on why the language is persuasive, and to then write their ideas in the margin. (She has each student at the Emerging level of English language proficiency work with two other students at the Expanding level who she knows will support and include them in the task.) As the students are exploring the text, she walks around the classroom so that she can provide support when needed and can observe which language resources they find.

Samuel: "According to a recent study by Stanford University"—it seems like they're using that to show there's proof.

Mai: It seems like they're using what?

Samuel: The words at the beginning, "according to."

Mai: Yeah, because after that they have some numbers about pesticides, "38% of non-organic produce had pesticides on them compared with only 7% of organic produce." If they just said that, without *according to*, then it sounds less important or official.

Samuel: Let's underline that and say it makes it sound important and official.

Ms. Quincy: Can you say a little more about that? What do you mean by “important and official”?

Mai: It’s like, he can say the numbers, but when you say “according to a study,” then that means there’s evidence.

Samuel: Or if you say “according to a scientist,” that means someone important thinks it’s true.

Ms. Quincy: Like an expert?

Samuel: Yeah, a scientist is like an expert on things, and a study is like evidence, so if you say “according to” that expert or that evidence, that makes your argument stronger.

Ms. Quincy carefully observes the students at the Emerging level of proficiency and steps in when extra scaffolding is needed. She will also check in with these students at the end of class to ensure that they understood the purpose of the task and the ideas discussed.

After ten minutes of exploration, Ms. Quincy pulls the class together and asks them to share their observations. She writes their observations on chart paper so that the students can continue to add their ideas over the next two weeks and can refer to it when they begin to construct their own arguments.

Language Resources Useful for Writing Arguments		
Language resource and examples	Example from the text	What it does
According to + (noun or pronoun), statement.	According to Michael Pollan and other experts, fruits and vegetables grown in organic soils have more nutrients in them.	lets you cite evidence or an expert; makes it sound more official
Modal verbs: should, would, could, might, may, must	Our school <i>should</i> serve only organic foods ... Organic foods <i>might</i> be more expensive ...	makes statements stronger or softer; lets the reader know that you believe something or doubt it’s true
Judging words: deserve, basic right, more nutritious, safer	... it’s our <i>basic right</i> to know that we’re being taken care of by the adults in our school.	shows how the author is judging or evaluating things
Precise words and academic words: nutritious, organic produce	Some scientists say that <i>exposure to pesticides</i> in food is <i>related to neurobehavioral problems</i> in children, like ADHD.	makes the reader think you know what you’re talking about and gets at the meaning you want

Ms. Quincy points out that there’s an important reason for using terms like *according to*.

Ms. Quincy: I agree that it does make the writing seem more *official*. But there’s an important reason why we use terms like *according to*. We have to attribute facts to their source. That means that we have to say where the facts came from, and *according to* is one way to do that. Facts aren’t always just facts. They come from somewhere or from someone, and we have to make judgments about where they came from, the source. We have to decide if the source is *credible*, or rather, if they are someone who knows enough to be able to give us these facts. There are lots of ways to do this. For example, we could also say something like, “Scientists at Stanford found that ...”

The students have also noted that there are some words that help connect ideas throughout the text together. In their planning, Mrs. Massimo and Ms. Quincy had anticipated this, and they created a chart that they would each use in their classrooms to support students with cohesion (how a text hangs together and flows). Ms. Quincy writes the *text connectives* the students identify (*in addition, instead, to put it simply, therefore*) and provides them with other text connectives that are useful for cohesion. (The class will add additional terms to the chart over time.)

Why use?	Which text connectives to use (to help create cohesion)
adding ideas	<i>in addition</i> , also, furthermore
sequence	first of all, finally, next, then, to begin with, lastly
example	for example, to illustrate, for instance, to be specific, in the same way
results	as a result, as a consequence, consequently, therefore, for this reason, because of this
purpose	to this end, for this purpose, with this in mind, for this reason(s)
comparison	like, in the same manner (way), as so, similarly
contrast	<i>instead</i> , in contrast, conversely, however, still, nevertheless, yet, on the other hand, on the contrary, in spite of this, actually, in fact
summarize	<i>to put it simply</i> , in summary, to sum up, in short, finally, therefore, as you can see

Next Steps

Over the next two weeks, Ms. Quincy will continue to work with students to analyze other mentor texts, deconstruct some of the sentences in them, and discuss the language resources in the texts. Once the students have had many opportunities to deconstruct these texts, she will guide them to help her co-construct an argument on the theme, using the text structure and organization of arguments, as well as some of the language resources they have identified.

When Ms. Quincy and Mrs. Massimo meet for collaborative planning later that week, they discuss how the lesson went. Ms. Quincy shares that the students responded well but that there were some questions that were difficult to answer. Mrs. Massimo invites Ms. Quincy to come into her ELA class the following week to co-teach a lesson on language resources in arguments so that she can learn how to show all of her students how to identify and use language for persuading. With both of them working on this area of language development, Mrs. Massimo suggests, perhaps some of the students' questions will become easier to answer.

Source:

Lesson developed using the CA ELD Standards, Chapter Five, and Derewianka and Jones (2012).

Resources

For further reading on teaching students about the language resources of different text types, see: Derewianka, Beverly, and Pauline Jones. 2012. *Teaching Language in Context*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Gibbons, Pauline. 2009. *English Learners, Academic Literacy, and Thinking: Learning in the Challenge Zone*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.