Lesson 3 - Compelling Arguments

Lesson Plan Information	
Subject/Course: Trans-Disciplinary Potential. Integration possible in: Language Arts, Sciences, Math, History, and Social Studies.	**Name:**
Grade Level: 7-12	**Date:** **Time:**
Topic: Compelling Arguments	**Length of Period:** 50 - 70 Minutes

Expectation(s)

Big Idea OR Framing Question *(Directly from the Ontario Curriculum):*

Utilize expectations for the current course being instructed.

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Utilize expectations for the current course being instructed.

Learning Skills*:* Critical Thinking

Content

What do I want the learners to know and/or be able to do?

Today learners will:

- Relate your primary learning goal to the specific expectation for the course being currently instructed.
- Learn to craft complex, compelling arguments

Assessment / Evaluation
(Recording Devices: anecdotal record, checklist, rating scale, rubric, success criteria)

Based on the application, how will I know that the learners have learned what I intended?

- Student generated conversation will allow for partial indication of understanding. This can be accomplished using your anecdotal records, exit tickets or another preferred method.
- Student presentation of arguments will allow for indication of comprehension.

Learning Context

A. The Learners
(i) *What prior experiences, knowledge, and skills do the learners bring with them to this learning experience?*

- Learners will be familiar with argumentation, and arguments present within essays and similar assessment structures.
- Learners may be familiar with debates, and the characteristics of what generates a good argument.

(ii) *How will I differentiate the instruction (content, process, and/or product) to ensure the inclusion of all learners?* (must include, where applicable, accommodations and/or modification for learners identified as exceptional)

- Exceptional learners should be provided with their standard accommodations and modifications.
- ELL students should be provided with their standard accommodations.
- When building a compelling argument, limit the number of supporting arguments to 2 or 3 for students who may need additional time.
- Allow students to present their argument in a variety of formats - video, oral presentation, essay format etc.
- COVID19 Limitations
    - Note: This lesson is optimally delivered in a traditional classroom setting. However, due to COVID19 restrictions you may choose to do this in an alternative method than described below. Suggestions for alternatives are as follows:
        - Student presentation of their compelling arguments can still be differentiated. Allow students to choose the presentation medium that best suits their needs in a non-traditional setting.

B. Learning Environment

Instructors may include a map of their classroom in this section, including desk placement, and the location(s) of resources/materials.

C. Resources/Materials *(cite resources as may be necessary)*

- Appendices (see attached file)
- Chalkboard/Chalk

- Whiteboard/Markers
- Smartboard (Optional)
- Projector

Teaching/Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION
How will I engage the learners? (e.g., motivational strategy, hook, activation of learners' prior knowledge, activities, procedures, compelling problem)

Ask students to generate arguments for or against a common classroom topic
- Students may consistently argue for or against this in your classroom.
- Topics may include: Classroom rules (Homework, wearing hats, eating etc.),
    - Note: This topic must be something you as the instructor are comfortable to engage with (within reason).
- Ask students which responses are the best to convince someone either for or against the topic material and why they believe they are compelling arguments.
- Record student answers (either on the board, or electronically).
- Note: Students can be asked this to generate a class discussion, or you can allow students to personally critically think or engage in a think/pair/share with a classmate.

MIDDLE
<u>Teaching</u>: *How does the lesson develop?* **How we teach new concepts and processes (e.g., gradual release of responsibility – modeled, shared, and guided instruction; content and strategies).**

Share/construct criteria for a compelling argument
- Present students with three sample arguments around wearing face masks (Appendix 1: Arguments for Wearing Face Masks)
- Ask that they read each of the arguments and then rank them from the most to least compelling. Invite students to share what they were thinking to help them do their ranking. For example, what did they consider as they were deciding that one argument is more compelling than the others? Do not have students share their actual rankings as they will be more focused on the answer rather than the thinking to surface the criteria. For some students you may want to ask them to focus on the most and least compelling arguments only, explaining why one is clearly more compelling than the other.
- After students have ranked and explained their decision, encourage them to review the arguments presented by their peers. Ask that each student select at least one statement made by a peer that was effective at getting them to re-consider their ranking or provided a different argument than they had thought of that supports their ranking.
- Invite students to share what they believe were the key features of a compelling argument.
- Point out to students that a key difference between a "strong" argument and a "compelling" argument is that a compelling argument is designed to encourage others to act.
- Present students with the following set of criteria for a compelling argument and ask them to decide which 3-4 criteria should be kept and/or if any other criteria should be

added?
Note: This can be a classroom discussion, accomplished in small groups, breakout rooms, or think/pair/shares.

Criteria for a compelling argument
- Focused on a coherent meaningful purpose that promotes prospective thinking
- Based on the most significant relevant and reliable evidence from a variety of disciplines
- Built on insights that consider the evidence from a variety of discipline-based perspectives
- Sets out a clear general/broad action
- Makes effective use of powerful language to support the driving claim (strong words such as essential, imperative, vital...etc.)
- Ensures the purpose, evidence and action support each other and do not change throughout the argument (a *cohesive* argument).

Introduce thinking strategy to help build a compelling argument
- Present students with Appendix 2: P.E.A.S. Distinguish for students the difference between simple arguments and complex arguments. Simple arguments are focused on a single idea or perspective; a complex argument is constructed through the careful weaving together of several simple arguments so that it makes a strong case for action through the connections between related disciplinary perspectives. Both simple and complex arguments can and should be compelling.
- Review the samples to help students understand how the thinking strategy can be helpful in building arguments. Ask students to practice by completing the empty cells for the final two examples. If time permits, ask students to generate one or two additional samples with each cell completed. Once students have a clear understanding of how to use P.E.A.S., provide them with Appendix: Task: Framing Simple Arguments Using P.E.A.S. (see attached).
- Have students work in pairs/groups to gather evidence (research) and develop an argument regarding a *course topic.* Depending on class size/time constraints, pick a variety of topics associated with your course and even engage students with opposing sides of the same topics (similar to that of a mini debate).
    - Topics can be instructor assigned or student selected. This is at your discretion as the instructor.

Sample topics may include:

History
- Conscription
- The FLQ Crisis

Mathematics
- Is repetition the best way to learn mathematics?
- Should mathematics move away from test-based assessment to project-based learning?

Language Arts
- Should students learn to write letters?
- Should teachers assign mandatory course novels?

Geography
- Should national borders exist?

Note: Questions may vary based on the learners in your classroom and the course material being instructed.

Share draft arguments
- Invite the student pairs/groups to share the simple arguments they have constructed by posting them online or on the walls of the classroom. Encourage each student to review at least three sets of simple arguments by commenting on their strengths and making helpful suggestions to improve the arguments.
    - These comments should either be written by the students reviewing each argument or the "poster" should take notes on comments regarding their own argument.
- Note: In a non-traditional classroom setting, students may utilize a blog-post or discussion thread to share their simple arguments with their peers.

Introduce "Prospective" Thinking
- Introduce the concept of prospective thinking by presenting the following definition: Prospective thinking is future-oriented. Prospective thinkers look at past and current events to identify trends and patterns they can use to plan for positively impacting the future
    - Note: Prospective thinking can be scaffolded by creating a classroom conversation about historical cause and consequence (noting that consequences can be positive in nature).
- Ask students to review the three arguments for face masks (Appendix 1). Inform them that two of the three arguments contain a prospective element. Ask that they identify the arguments that contain a prospective element and that they underline the relevant section. For the argument that does not contain a prospective element invite students to edit the argument so that it also contains a prospective element.
- Encourage students to share their revision through a class discussion or by posting online.
- Review the criteria for a compelling argument and ask students "Which of the criteria

is most affected by prospective thinking?"

Criteria for a compelling argument
- Has a clear purpose
- Is based on relevant and reliable evidence;
- Motivates people to take action;
- Makes effective use of language to support a claim (e.g. strong words such essential, imperative, vital…);
- Ensures the purpose, evidence and action support each other and do not change throughout the argument

Revise and polish compelling argument
- Encourage students to revise their simple arguments considering where there are opportunities to add a prospective thinking element. Also encourage students to reflect on the strengths of the arguments they reviewed and the comments made by their peers about their draft arguments.
- Allow students time to make revisions to their set of arguments that:
    - Improve clarity, and/or
    - Adds a prospective element, and/or
    - Strengthens the argument, and/or
    - Makes more effective use of evidence.

Construct a Complex Argument
- Introduce students to "transdisciplinary" thinking by sharing the following image:

Multidisciplinary   Interdisciplinary   Transdisciplinary
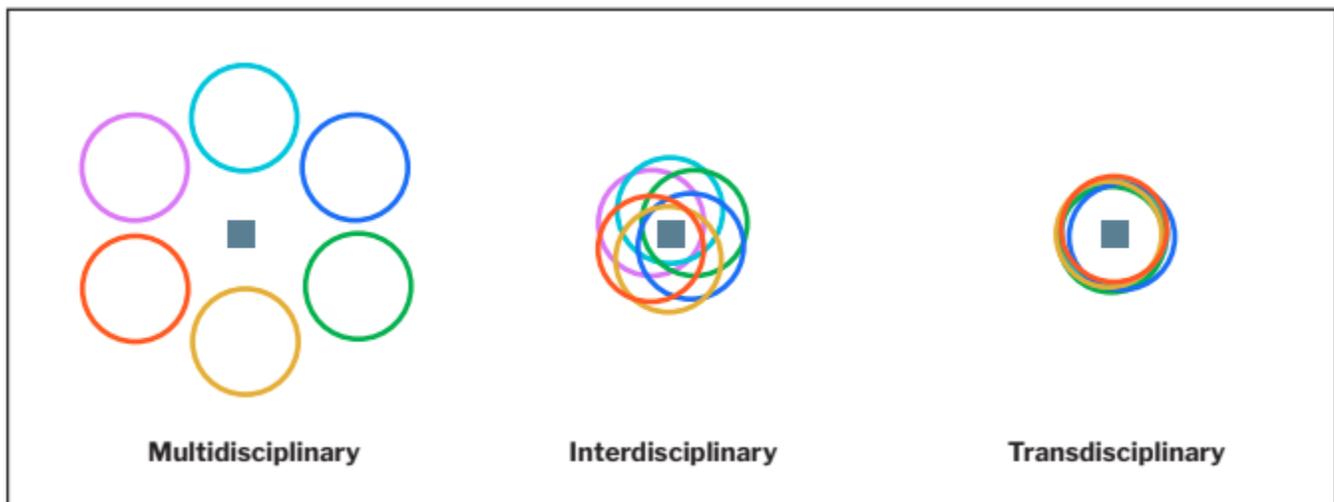
- Invite students to describe in words what each of the images convey about the differences between the terms multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Help them to see that multidisciplinary refers to considering evidence from a variety of disciplines around a common issue; interdisciplinary refers

to looking for the intersections of a variety of disciplines as they relate to a common issue; and **transdisciplinary** refers to combining evidence from a variety of disciplines to create a new more holistic argument.

- If time, ask students to use the collection of simple arguments they created through the consideration of evidence from a variety of disciplines to construct a coherent compelling argument. Inform them that this will require developing a central argument or thesis statement around which the simple arguments can be organized to construct the complex, compelling argument.

Consolidation and/or Recapitulation Process: *How will I check for understanding?*

- Understanding will be checked for through student discussion of the different questions and evidence gathered for their compelling arguments.
- Understanding will be checked through student presentation of their compelling arguments.

Application: *What will learners do to demonstrate their learning?* **(moving from guided, scaffolded practice, and gradual release of responsibility)**

- Students' presentation of their arguments, alongside their refining of said arguments will demonstrate their understanding of developing compelling, complex arguments.

CONCLUSION
How will I conclude the lesson?

- Ask students how they feel about creating complex, compelling arguments. (Confident, unsure, etc.)
- Discuss with students the potential for the creation of these types outside of the current course (this is a necessary skill found within practically every discipline, and will continue to work throughout their educations and possibly into their careers).

My Reflections on the Lesson

What do I need to do to become more effective as a teacher in supporting learning?

Appendix
Task: Framing Argument Simple Arguments Using P.E.A.S.

Thinking Strategy: P.E.A.S.	Criteria
P - Purpose **E** - Evidence **A** - Action **S** - Strong word or phrase	- Has a clear purpose - Is based on reliable and relevant evidence - Motivates people to take action - Makes effective use of language to support a claim - Ex. Essential, imperative, vital… - Ensures that the purpose, evidence and action support each other, and do not change throughout the argument

TOPIC:

PURPOSE Why are you making the argument?	EVIDENCE What supports your argument?	ACTION How should people react?	STRONG WORD OR PHRASE What word or phrase supports your argument?	ARGUMENT

References

Ministry of Education, (2018, revised).

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/canworld910curr2018.pdf. Toronto, Ontario.

Defining Moments Canada. (2021, January 14, revised). https://definingmomentscanada.ca/.

*This lesson plan template has been adapted from the Nipissing University Schulich School of Education Bachelor of Education lesson planning template.