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OF USU

An Anthology of
Student Essays

2014

EDITORS: BONNIE MOORE & JOHN ENGLER

Voices of USU:

An Anthology of Student Essays

2014

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Dear reader of this anthology, You're probably reading essays in this book because the instructor of your English 2010 class has assigned you to read them. Or perhaps you've been intrigued by some of the titles or subjects. As the editors, we invite you, however, to consider reading from a specific point of view: reading and analyzing these essays can help you hone your ability to use the core tool of modern society—communicating ideas in a clear, compelling, and persuasive way.

Whatever your major, you're going to find yourself in situations where it will be helpful—perhaps even necessary—to clearly convey your ideas to others and convince others of your point of view. Perhaps you're sending a memo to convince your project team about the value of a certain approach. Maybe you need to write a sales document for your clients. It could be that you want to make a case for a raise or a promotion. There might be times you want to petition your community for change. Perhaps you've developed a new theoretical model that you're publishing in an academic or professional journal. In all of these instances, you want your writing to be convincing.

Your English 2010 instructor will guide you through the exploration of many persuasive, rhetorical tools. All of these tools can be found implemented—to a greater or lesser degree of success—in the essays in this book. When you find a compelling moment in an essay, ask yourself, “How did they do that?” If a section seems to fall flat, ask, “How come that didn't work?” Dig beneath the surface of the content to explore the construction of the argument.

Know that these essays represent a cross-section of the very best writing by USU students who have taken English 2010 in recent years. Just as artists and athletes and academics study the work of those who have gone before them, you may find that standing on the shoulders of your peers gives you a leg up in a world that expects of you your very best work.

We hope you enjoy reading, and we welcome any thoughts or feedback you have about this anthology at voices.usu@gmail.com.

Regards,
Bonnie Moore
John Engler

GEMMA KOONTZ

Gemma Koontz is a history major with the dream of working in a museum. She currently lives in Mendon, Utah, but grew up in a military family. When she isn't studying, Gemma is reading books on numerous topics from fantasy to history and everything in between. Aside from reading and watching geeky things like Doctor Who and Jeopardy, Gemma spends the most time with her furry and scaly constant companions, all eleven of them: six rabbits, three dogs, a horse, and a fish. With this essay Gemma hopes to enlighten others of the struggles and triumphs faced by those with autism in her characteristic thought-provoking yet quirky, humorous way.



Each of us has a different background, with different strengths and different struggles. Uniqueness is an unarguable part of humanity. So how do we define “normal”?

In a personal narrative, Gemma Koontz discusses the idea of normalcy and how it has impacted her life, despite late diagnosis with Autism. Koontz reflects on what she learned about herself and what she thinks of being “normal.”

BACKGROUND

NOT NORMAL

Gemma Koontz

Normal. Webster's defines normal as, "usual or ordinary: not strange." Normal, such a simple term, nonchalantly uttered so often in everyday conversation, making it nondescript. Your blood pressure is normal. That's a normal thing. He led a normal life. Test results exhibited normal distribution. It's normal for kids to do that. Normally our office hours are from nine to five. After five days all side effects will dissipate and normality will resume. Normal. Normally. Normality. So monotonously commonplace. Yet, for an extensive period of my life, normal appeared to be something that one was either born with, taught, or achieved. It took a run-in with a bubbly, fun-loving, square-shaped sponge who lives in a pineapple under the sea to alter my views on what it means to be normal.

As a small child I was slightly different. With two older sisters having set a precedent, my parents knew what to expect of a normal pregnancy, child development, and behavior. Two pregnancies behind her, Mom foresaw no issues and felt that all would progress normally. As is usually the case with me, prior expectations were not to be followed. Six weeks prior to delivery, test results indicated white blood cell levels were far below normal, making it an awfully real possibility that either Mom or I could bleed to death. Fortunately, with regular assessments by excellent medical professionals, all progressed normally, resulting in a delightfully, adorable normal daughter.

Summers came and winters faded as time perpetually marched forward. Mom, comfortably situated in a chair stitching away on her handicraft, enjoys time to herself as Heidi and Nikki are out frolicking with friends. Next to her sits her little lamb, perfectly content to play quietly with herself. This

was a typical scene from my early childhood. While my sisters spent time running with friends, laughing loudly with juvenile innocence as any normal child would, I was at home within an arm's reach of Mom, playing discreetly like my namesake. Besides remaining quietly unsociable and declining to walk of my own accord until the age of fourteen months, there was nothing to indicate that I was anything but normal. Yet with each passing year, small idiosyncrasies began to surface. First, it was an extreme aversion to loud sounds. Crying would ensue as I covered my ears, exclaiming that it was too loud. Fireworks, airplanes, rodeos and similar venues or events were out of the question. To combat this and make it possible to attend such events, it was of paramount importance to have earplugs. After loud noises it was water--which was so akin to evil one would have thought I was a wicked witch as much as I dreaded getting wet. Bath time meant desperately running around and hiding to evade it. By this I earned myself the nickname "Tigger" as he, too, despised baths. What had previously been an endearing attachment to Mom and disinterest in socializing soon became a pressing concern on the part of my parents and a stumbling block in my life. Obsession with stuffed animals and stickers soon took over any remaining desire for friendship. Tantrums exploded as a result of seemingly small issues, such as the tightness of my shoe laces or the brushing of my hair. However, all of this was simply chalked up to being the sensitive baby of the family.

This all changed when we moved to Germany. As a six-year-old, I was enrolled in first grade, a time for normal kids to be excited, yet slightly nervous that they are attending big kid school. Not in my case. It was a living nightmare for me and, subsequently, for my parents. Extreme crying and desperate tantrums ensued as I pleaded with my parents not to force me to go. For a time, Mom was usually able to coax me to go to class. However, this behavior quickly escalated in severity,

resulting in me running away from school, sometimes into the surrounding forest, in an attempt to evade capture and return. The resemblance to a terrified rabbit, sheer panic and fear visible in its eyes as it realizes a fox has cornered it, was frightfully uncanny. A flashbulb memory, painfully searing across my mind is that of an awfully pathetic child. She is dreadfully small and alone, desperately trying to navigate a strange and terrifying world. No respite was to be found, except in the warm embrace of her mother's arms—unable to explain why it was so. From here it only grew worse. My parents helplessly stood by watching as their sweet, beautiful, normal lamb steeply spiraled down further and further into the darkness of frightful abnormality.

Much energy and TLC was invested in me by my family in an attempt to return me to normality. Mom discussed my issues with the school administration, who were more than unwilling to help, resulting in Mom pulling me from public school and beginning home school where I could fill out workbooks under her constantly watchful eye. My ever-loving sisters took me under their wings, playing lots of animal memory and wondrous games in the woods with me and doing everything in their power to cheer me up. After work, Dad treated me as any normal child, playing with me and reading stories which filled my mind with fantastical worlds into which I longed to step and leave my fears behind. He also fostered my desire for knowledge by providing challenges for me to solve, engaging my mind and turning my focus elsewhere. While all of this helped tremendously, it was still apparent that professional aid was required.

Dr. Hardaway, a child psychiatrist, was the first of many. After some observation of clinical signs and learning my case history he offered the diagnosis of generalized depression and anxiety. While this gave my parents something to work with, it didn't seem to fill the missing piece they were looking

for. Some of his suggestions to combat my fears and anxieties were ridiculous--such as having my parents physically restrain me until I calmed down. My parents flat out refused, the thought bringing to mind an image of a lion gripping the throat of a wildebeest as it strives to evade the death grip until it slowly suffocates and stops struggling. Despite these sometimes peculiar suggestions, he did offer a lot of help such as prescription medication and enrollment in a new school. However, much of the help I received and benefited from came as a result of my parents following their gut instincts and trying everything they could to help control the fears and idiosyncrasies that held me back from normality. Thus began the arduous journey on the "fix-it" highway, the way replete with potholes, mile markers of success, and signposts pointing to normality and giving warnings as to its passing.

Normal kids don't take antidepressants at the age of six. *How about some Zoloft with that chocolate milk?* Normal kids have real friends. *This is my friend Sarah. Well this is my friend Bunny. Um, you do realize he's a green stuffed rabbit? And your point is?* Normal ten year olds don't read at a post-graduate level. *History of the Vikings anyone?* Eye contact is a normal social gesture. *I will now stare into the depths of your soul in a friendly, non-creepy fashion as a way to connect with you.* Normally, kids have already outgrown school separation anxiety by now. *You are fifteen, now get out of the car and go to class.* Normal kids aren't so sensitive and quick to cry from offense as a result of comments from adult authorities. *Where have you been? Whaaaaa!* It's normal for kids to participate and enjoy extracurricular activities. *Dance, soccer, cheer, swimming? No thanks, I'll pass.* Reading so much instead of socializing is not normal. *Books don't judge and they're portable.* Normal kids actually have hand-eye coordination and reflexes. *Hit in the face by another ball, what a surprise?!* Normal teens don't need to have a free pass to the

guidance counselor because they are anxious. *May I be please be excused? I am having a slightly major freak out.* Teenagers normally want to date before they reach the age of sixteen. *Get in the car and chat with a real boy, like as in a human-- does my horse count instead?* Normal kids watch who knows what. *After Jeopardy I think I will watch a documentary on the building of the Roman Empire followed by some cartoons.* A high attachment to mother is not normal for one of my age. *What apron strings? Oh you mean the ones that I am tightly gripping?* Seeing so many different counselors is not normal. *Hi, my name is Dr. Jones..., Yeah, Yeah, just to get to the part where you fix me.* It is not normal to be referred to as an enigma by my counselor of two years. *Do you think you could have told me this like, umm I don't know, twenty-three months ago?* Obsessive behavior over certain aspects of life, such as clothing, food, and hand washing is not normal. *This shirt is .3333 cm too short and the fabric is scratchy. I can't eat this! It's been contaminated by garlic! Sterile hands are happy hands.* Being anxious over little things is not normal. I have to go to the store and buy socks. *Okay, inhale for four, exhale for six and repeat.* Normal, normal, normal.

My life became one lacking in normalcy, so much so that I began to think of and view myself as not normal, basing my identity around this belief. I desired so much to be taught how to be normal and attain the status of normality. Where did one go to learn how to be normal? It appeared that everyone had attended Normality 101, but I had missed

I felt insecure and ashamed of my quirks and foibles, trying to hide them from others and assume the guise of normalcy, but like a leopard pretending to be a tiger, it never quite worked.

the memo. Or perhaps in heaven I had skipped the line to be endowed with normality. I strove to become normal, to cast off my peculiarities so I could join the ranks of normal. I felt insecure and ashamed of my quirks and foibles, trying to hide them from others and assume the guise of normalcy, but like a leopard pretending to be a tiger it never quite worked.

Days faded into weeks and years full of unsatisfactory answers from bystanders and professionals alike as to the reason for my abnormality. Frustration, patience, moments of small accomplishments, and continued seeking for understanding marked the passing of time as I resigned myself to live in a tunnel of a not-normal life. It cannot be said that I wasn't happy, because I was. Yet the puzzle of my life contained pieces that didn't quite fit where they were placed and there were several pieces missing. A marriage counselor deftly provided the missing piece. Autism. At the age of seventeen I found myself on the high end of the autistic spectrum. Turns out that I wasn't normal. Finally, the missing pieces were filled in, and the image of the puzzle of my life became clear. I received specialized assistance. True, some of it came too late as I had already formulated my own coping skills, but much of it was greatly appreciated on my part and even more so on the part my family. Struggles still came, and I was never completely comfortable with the label of my diagnosis; but it was more to work with than had previously been available. Nevertheless, a niggling belief that surely now normality was in my grasp still germinated below the surface.

Flopped out in my reserved spot on the pluffy couch, gooey doughnut in hand, and surrounded by three small dogs, I grabbed and aimed the TV remote, the screen blinking to life. Flicking through channels, I stumbled across *SpongeBob Squarepants*, a show I invariably loved despite the nonsense of it all. Taking a bite of doughnut, I lackadaisically settled back to engage in some mindless entertainment before pursuing

normal activities. The episode started out with the usual silly antics of SpongeBob driving sarcastic, intellectual Squidward to the brink, causing him to accuse SpongeBob of not being normal. My ears perked up; there was that word that had haunted me since childhood. More attentive now, I sat up, doughnut forgotten in hand as I watched the episode unfold. Upset by this accusation, SpongeBob procured a self-help guide entitled, *A Journey into Normality*. He followed the advice and over time became a dull version of his previously boisterous self. Physically, he transformed into a round, smooth version with proportional facial features along with thick straight appendages; nothing like the wavy, porous, big-eyed, -nosed, and -toothed sponge with wiggly arms and legs. No jelly-fishing, bubble-blowing, making of Krabby Patties, or any other nonsense. Just plain normality working behind a computer with absolutely no personality. Soon, everyone around him, even Squidward, became annoyed with new, normal SpongeBob, driving his attempt to regain what he had lost. With the aid of Patrick the starfish and some very strange activities, it appeared as though he would return to his former bubbly self; but alas, he was to be doomed to a normal life. That is until the astonishment of seeing normal Squidward shocked him back to his prior, not-normal self. Tropical music then ensued signaling the end of the episode.

Stunned, I sat back, took a thoughtful and final bite of doughnut, pondering what I had just seen as three eager-eyed dogs looked on. To be normal is to be boring, to be bubbly and quirky is to be amazing. Everything I had believed growing up was blown away in eleven minutes by a talking sponge. Did I want to resign myself to normality or embrace my quirkiness? I realized that, no I don't want to be normal; I want to be me, be Gemma. Quirky Gemma, shy Gemma, crazy Gemma, anxious Gemma (well to an extent), "I-don't-eat-that" Gemma, giggly Gemma, witty Gemma, geeky Gemma, just Gemma. Sur-

rounded by highly disappointed dogs, I decided that I would be Gemma, no more of this normal stuff.

Some six months have passed since that spongy day. Through a large mental shift, I have come to embrace myself, all my quirks and insecurities, and I love it so! Just the other day, my sister inquired as to why I did something a certain, quirky way. The explanation I provided caused her to laugh, as she thought it was kind of silly. In retort, I told her that if I didn't have these sorts of eccentricities, then what would my family have to chuckle at? What would life be like without silly Gemma to cheer them up? Normal? No, I am not normal, but that is how I like it.

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"Normal." *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you define “normal”? What characteristics make a person “normal”?
2. Write about what life would be like if everyone was “normal” in the sense that everyone fit a particular mold.
3. How does Koontz’ reflection on normality affect how you see yourself in terms of being normal?
4. In the introductory paragraph, Koontz brings up the idea that normal is something that one is either born with, taught, or achieves. Which of these three ideas would you argue is most accurate? Provide reasons to support your view.
5. Koontz’ realization and self-acceptance is largely due to a cartoon, however many say that cartoons are mindless entertainment. How would you use Koontz’ experience to counter that argument? Write a thesis statement for an essay arguing that cartoons are educational.

MORGAN SANFORD

Morgan Sanford has lived in the same house in Sunset, Utah, her entire life. Along with being an Undergraduate Research Fellow, Morgan will major in English Teaching and plans to minor in Spanish Teaching following her return from serving an LDS mission in Viña del Mar, Chile. She loves playing the piano, writing music, and reading large books—and she owns way too many pairs of pants.



Morgan's experiences as a high school senior in Madrigals and AP Art inspired this essay, and she contrasts the two in order to discuss the effectiveness of using fear appeals in the classroom to motivate high school students.

When she was in high school, Sanford had a choir teacher who used punishment, rather than reward, to get her class to behave. In her essay, Sanford discusses the negative impacts of using fear appeals in the classroom. Students are less likely to gain real competence in class and more likely to be antagonistic towards the teacher and the subject if fear, rather than a sense of accomplishment, is fostered in the school setting.

Sanford's essay relies heavily on research from professors and teachers across the world who stress that positive motivators, not negative motivators, create better and more enthusiastic students.

BACKGROUND

DO IT OR ELSE:

The Negative Effects of Fear Appeals in the Classroom

Morgan Sanford

“Everyone who talked during roll call, stand up so I can mark you tardy.”

Students across the classroom exchange uncertain glances, unsure as to whether or not laughing counts as talking or whether they should have to pay the price for whispering an answer to someone else’s question. A few brave souls stand up, biting their lips and fidgeting uncomfortably.

“There was definitely more than five people talking, class. It’s up to you whether you want to be honest, but lying will only make you feel guilty.”

Four or five more mortified teenagers rise to their feet, eyes glued to the floor and hands wringing together in shame. They quietly report their roll call numbers when called upon and sit back down in stony silence.

“Next time, don’t talk. I take 10 points off for each tardy—that’s about five percent of your total grade.” A solemn, frustrated hush settles over the classroom, a handful of students lose their 4.0s, and choir rehearsal begins.

Fear appeals, the force that shaped my high school choral experience, are defined by Jennifer Akeley Spear and Ann Neville Miller, researchers at the University of Central Florida, as “persuasive message[s] designed to arouse the emotion of fear in a target audience by depicting the negative consequences of a relative threat” in order “to motivate people to engage in recommended adaptive behaviors” (198). According to David W. Putwain, a professor in the Department

of Social and Psychological Sciences at Edge Hill University, and Wendy Symes, a research associate in the School of Education at the University of Manchester, “fear appeals represent attempts to motivate students by highlighting the consequences of failure” (456). By scaring students into cooperating, this type of motivation successfully elicits a response and, because of its almost immediate effectiveness, is commonly used by teachers across the country as an easy and accessible means with which to motivate their students. However, easy doesn’t always mean better, and fear appeals tend to have as many negative effects as they do positive effects on the students they are directed toward, such as “an increase in . . . fear and anxiety” (Putwain, Symes 456). According to T. Scott Bledsoe and Janice J. Baskin of Azusa Pacific University, fear “impacts our cognitive processes—how we perceive our environment, how we remember things, whether we can focus and pay attention, how well we plan and then execute that plan, and how well we problem-solve” (33). Fear, then—the eventual result of fear appeals—can directly impact a student’s ability to learn successfully within a classroom environment. Because they focus a student’s attention on avoiding failure rather than achieving success, a teacher’s use of fear appeals in the classroom causes that student to develop antagonism toward the teacher, the subject, or the rule being enforced. This method of teaching eventually results in the student giving up and walking away from the situation and will, in the end, prove to be less effective in the classroom.

A study conducted by Kearney, Plax, Richmond, and McCroskey in 1985 “resulted in the creation of 22 BATs”—Behavior Alteration Techniques—which are “divided into two categories: prosocial and antisocial” (Sprinkle 391). Antisocial BATs, or fear appeals, are punishment-based and focus on the negative consequences of misbehavior. These Behavior Alteration Techniques are derived largely from coercive and legit-

imate power, coercive power emanating “from students’ perceptions that they will be punished by the teacher if they fail to comply with the teacher’s influence attempts,” and legitimate power “based upon students’ perceptions that the teacher has the right to prescribe behavior” (Sprinkle 391). Appeals that stem from coercive power often direct threats of punishment toward students in statements such as, “You will fail this assignment if you do not do as I ask.” Appeals derived from legitimate power lean heavily on the teacher’s authority as an adult and an educator and are often expressed in statements such as, “You have to do what I say because I’m the teacher.” According to Rose Sprinkle, a professor at Illinois State University, “[A teacher’s] use of appeals based in coercive and legitimate power decreased student cognitive and affective learning . . . due to the oppressive nature of such strategies” (391).

In an article concerning these uses of fear appeals in the classroom, Putwain and Symes state that “fear appeals orientate students towards the demonstration, rather than the development, of competence and . . . focus on failure, rather than achievement” (457). Essentially, teachers who motivate their students to succeed by eliciting fear, rather than by encouraging the mastery of a skill, set as the highest priority a “*demonstration* of competence rather than the *development* of competence” (Putwain, Symes 460). Following the completion of a study concerning the use of fear appeals in mathematics classrooms, David W. Putwain and Christine M. Roberts argue that teachers who utilize fear appeals condition their students to consider the reason for working hard in class merely to be to earn a good grade, rather than to actually develop learning and skill in that area or subject (656). During a typical day in my high school choir class, rather than emphasizing that her students *owe it to the class* to be on time and not talk, our teacher instead motivated us by threatening to take away participation points. As a result, the desire to salvage and preserve our

grades became our motivation to cooperate, rather than a desire to act responsibly out of consideration for our classmates. We thus became concerned with the demonstration of competence, or simply sitting still and being quiet, rather than the development of competence, which would require an understanding of the fact that others' time is valuable and should be used most efficiently by paying attention and being quiet. When a teacher emphasizes demonstration over development and teaches students by example that visible success is more important than developing deep learning in a given area, they tend to non-verbally communicate that "You're bad if you don't do this," rather than "You're good if you do this." Compliance, then, becomes a means of avoiding negative consequences rather than taking risks and obtaining the positive consequences that result from internalized learning.

"Every time you waste my time talking, I'm going to put a tally mark on the board. You'll have to stay after class one minute for every tally mark."

The class reverts to fearful silence, and rehearsal resumes. Time passes—there are five tally marks on the whiteboard. Another instructor walks into the classroom and begins a conversation with our teacher; rehearsal ceases. As they discuss something in hushed whispers behind the piano, each student becomes involved in their own conversations until snapped back to attention by our teacher announcing that we've all just earned another tally mark. "I've been sitting here waiting for a whole minute for you to be quiet," she says.

A soft-spoken, ever-respectful soprano stands up and contests this decision, pointing out that if the teacher should be able to interrupt rehearsal to have a conversation, then the students should have some of their tally marks erased. That would only be fair.

"It doesn't work like that," she says. "I'm the teacher;

and I can talk if and when I need to. The tally stays. Six minutes after class. And don't argue with me, or you'll get another one."

The soprano sits down, disappointed and terrified to discuss the situation further.

Every one of us is tardy to our next class, and the grumbling continues on during lunch and throughout the remainder of the day. Frustrated that her threats have robbed us of the ability to voice our opinions without suffering harsh consequences, each choir student suddenly feels that ours is not a teacher upon whom we can rely for support or with whom we can speak candidly and openly. Negativity festers and grows—it cankers the class.

Regarding such uses of fear in the classroom, Sprinkle explains that fear-based motivation, or “antisocial compliance-gaining strategies,” eventually causes students to become fearful of, or antagonistic toward, the teacher or subject being taught, essentially “lower[ing] students’ cognitive learning and caus[ing] them to have negative feelings toward the teacher, the course, and the content/subject matter in general” (392). Teachers

While many in our class began to associate their choir experience with feeling afraid, others became crippled by frustration and a lack of the ability to voice individual opinions.

who threaten students tend to elicit a negative response as these students likely will “become frustrated and even angry largely because they do not know how to avoid the threat on their own” (Sprinkle 393). For students who perceive their teachers as threatening and react in this way, fear appeals typically contribute to an increase in student worry, tension, and fear of failure (Put-

wain, Symes 470). Where teachers use fear appeals in order to stress the importance of tests, Putwain points out that “many students described a heightened degree of stress and anxiety in response to these fear-based messages,” often “described in severe terms such as ‘panic’” and “associated with a debilitating outcome where students would ‘freeze up’ and ‘blank out’ in examinations” (Putwain, Roberts 645). These students not only reported higher amounts of worry, but also reported higher tension and other stress-induced physical symptoms as a result of their teacher’s use of fear appeals as a motivational tool in the classroom (Putwain, Roberts 645). While many in our class began to associate their choir experience with feeling afraid, others became crippled by frustration and the inability to voice individual opinions. Contention spread like infection throughout our classroom, and, as students discovered to whom they could express their frustrations in confidence, our choir’s once-united front gave birth to fledgling alliances and divisions.

“I would hope that you would be mature enough not to badmouth me behind my back—I have ‘spies’ who are more than willing to come and let me know when they hear someone complaining. I’m not happy when I find out things like that. And believe me, I will find out. I always do.”

We sit in stunned silence, no longer possessing the ability to voice our concerns even outside of the classroom. When our mouths unintentionally run away to complain or talk negatively about our teacher, panic and fear of being reported always seem to kick in and stop the words as they exit our mouths. No one dares test the limits or discover the negative consequences of uttering such things.

Because teaching methods based in fear will eventually result in the students becoming “burned out”—or “negatively

influence behavioral outcomes such as students' likelihood of taking another course with the instructor or even visiting with the instructor outside of class for additional help with the course"—they prove less effective in the classroom in the long run, whether or not they provide short-term success (Sprinkle 393). "Burning out" occurs as a result of fear appeals because [...] when people perceive a high level of threat but do not believe they have the power to mitigate the threat, their fear is intensified due to their perceived inability to address the issue and thus 'they become motivated to cope with their fear...by engaging in maladaptive responses (e.g. denial)' (Akeley Spear, Miller 199).

Essentially, fear appeals eventually cause students to burn out emotionally and simply walk away from the classroom situation in which those appeals take place, whether that "walking away" occurs in the form of dropping a class, avoiding a teacher, or choosing to pursue a different academic and career path altogether. In terms of our little choir class, the end of the semester arrived, and third term's commencement brought with it fewer students to fill the chairs in our classroom. Frustrated by their inability to express concerns and frustrations—and having been deprived of a positive outlet with which to express those concerns and frustrations—many instead just gave up and dropped the class. Those that remained simply stopped speaking. Their bodies occupied the rows of plastic chairs, but choir no longer acted as an escape or a safe place, and their hearts no longer seemed to swell in time with the music they made. As students, we had lost respect for, and a relationship of trust with, our teacher. Instead, resentment and contention flourished, and summer could not come fast enough.

In contrast with the antisocial BATs mentioned previously, prosocial BATs are "messages that delineate and express positive consequences for being on task" (Sprinkle 391.) Rather than utilizing fear to motivate students, they rely on efficacy

statements to explain the positive actions that students can take to avoid trouble and negative consequences. These Behavior Alteration Techniques are derived largely from referent and expert power, referent power “intend[ing] to gain compliance and serve to build a positive relationship between the teacher and student,” and expert power “appeal[ing] to students’ desire to show respect for, or acknowledge, a teacher’s status, level of knowledge, training, and expertise” (Sprinkle 391.) The promise that “if you do this, I will be proud of you” is an example of referent power, while the phrase, “I’ve done this before, and in my experience it always works,” exemplifies a prosocial BAT stemming from expert power (Sprinkle 391). These examples explicitly rely on efficacy statements to point out the positive consequences for complying with the teacher’s wishes and thus provide students with a clear incentive for positive behavior.

Every teacher is different, and it is for this reason that a multitude of different teaching methods and classroom management styles exist. Although fear appeals often elicit negative responses on a long term basis, they can, however, result in positive outcomes if used responsibly and correctly. A successful fear appeal must “create the perception among students that teachers are attentive to [misbehavior],” accurately illustrating the consequences that will inevitably occur if misbehavior occurs. Successful fear appeals must also “illustrate that by engaging in suggested behaviors,” whether they be meeting one on one with the teacher, completing homework, or actively studying, a student can easily refrain from misbehavior; thus, avoiding undesirable consequences becomes “a feasible outcome” (Akeley Spear, Miller 199). It is critical that teachers who provide their students with a clear understanding of the consequences that will occur as a result of disobedience and other such negative behaviors also highlight a method by which they can avoid such consequences, for “when people perceive a high level of threat but do not believe they have the

power to mitigate the threat, their fear is intensified due to their perceived inability to address the issue” (Akeley Spear, Miller 199). Fear appeals alone, then, typically tend to be ineffective—because “the use of fear alone will likely lower students’ motivation and reduce the probability that they would seek help on future assignments with the instructor, . . . instructors should avoid using fear alone as a technique for influencing student behavior” (Sprinkle 399). That being said, however, “when combined with efficacy statements” that explain what a student can do to avoid negative consequences, “fear appeals may actually be useful in helping students achieve educational objectives” (Sprinkle 390). “If and when instructors use fear, they should be trained to use it appropriately. They must learn to craft a threat combined with an efficacy statement. . . that will positively influence student behavior,” for “students respond most favorably to an instructor who is encouraging and willing to help” (Sprinkle 399).

I gingerly offer her my newest piece, eighteen hours of my life and four sleepless nights, and her eyes thoughtfully acquaint themselves with the drawing. “This is wonderful, Morgan. I can tell you’ve done a lot of work, and this has really improved since the last time you showed me. I would suggest softening her jaw and accentuating the shadow beneath her chin, but it’s almost there, and I really like what you’ve done so far. I think it will be a very strong piece when it’s finished.” As I turn to walk back to the mess of pencils at the table after expressing gratitude for her suggestions, she says, “You’re very talented, Morgan, and you’ve improved so much this year. I’m glad you decided to take this class.”

Teaching in a public school classroom truly is an art. School teachers have an incredible and enormous opportunity to profoundly impact their students and send them out into the

world with a clear understanding of their potential and a capacity to perform well. It is essential, then, that teachers, in order to truly make a difference in the lives of their students, develop an increased awareness of the effectiveness of the methods and strategies with which they choose to manage their classroom. My high school choir class could and should have been a safe place in which my peers and I could create and express ourselves in ways far surpassing the level attainable in other courses and classrooms. However, a teacher with good intentions unintentionally used emotionally damaging classroom management strategies and encouragement methods to elicit from her students immediate compliance. These methods yielded short-term results and thus initially appeared to be successful; however, because our compliance resulted from fear rather than a relationship of mutual respect or trust, these methods had detrimental effects on us as students and upon the classroom atmosphere as a whole. In the words of Putwain and Roberts:

“Teacher-student interaction represents a complex, yet salient, aspect of the learning environment which is fundamental to the learning process. A positive classroom environment is seen by students as one characterized by rapport and respect with teachers who are supportive and effective teachers establish a learning environment in which they maintain control, but with a friendly manner, while allowing students the freedom to assume responsibility and learn” (644).

Rather than motivating students with fear, when teachers “reduce classroom anxieties, student engagement and performance...improve” (Bledsoe, Baskin 39).

One teacher truly can make an enormous impact on their students—they wield unmatched power. It is up to every teacher, then, to choose to use that influence in a positive way. Do it or else, then? No. Do it because you have the power to make a difference. See what I did there?

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1. Sanford uses many sources to back up her argument that fear appeals are ineffective. Do you think her research adds to or diminishes the effectiveness of her essay? How so?
2. Unique to Sanford's research essay are the personal experiences she inserts throughout. What do these experiences add to the piece? How might they take away from it?
3. Have you ever had a teacher use fear appeals in the classroom to get students to behave? How did that shape your opinion of the class?
4. Have you, like Sanford, ever had a teacher who used encouragement rather than fear appeals to motivate you? How did that shape your opinion of the class? How did that experience compare to the fear appeals experience (if you had one)?
5. Did Sanford's essay persuade you that fear appeals are negative? Why or why not? Can they, as Sanford mentioned, be positive? How?
6. What are other teaching or even parenting practices that you find ineffective? Explain.
7. Have you ever been discouraged from doing something because of fear appeals? Give an example.
8. Sanford's essay largely addresses the high school setting. Have you ever had fear appeals used in a college class? How was that experience different than the experiences Sanford shared?

MIKELL WOOD

Mikell Wood was raised in Kaysville, Utah. She graduated from Davis High School with high honors. While in high school, she competed at the varsity level in cross country and track, became an All-American in cross country, and ran in Portland, Oregon at the Nike Cross Country Nationals.



Mikell was awarded the Dean's scholarship to Utah State University for academics and received her Associate degree as a freshman. She enjoys running, writing, and is an accomplished pianist. Mikell will spend the next eighteen months in Rosario, Argentina in service to her church. She is humbled and excited to be published.

BACKGROUND

Selfies are beautiful. This is the message Wood sends in her essay about the rise in popularity and the benefits of self-portrait photography. Wood's piece gives examples of how selfies positively impact society, giving us glimpses into the real lives of celebrity figures that we look up to and allowing us to celebrate our own beauty. Her essay gives examples of beauty campaigns spurred on by selfie taking and celebrities who seem more normal and less airbrushed in the selfies they take and upload to Instagram.

Wood's essay takes a unique view on selfie culture that causes readers to consider their own technology use and the impact of self-portraiture.

SELFIES ARE BEAUTIFUL

Mikell Wood

Ellen DeGeneres, the host of the 2014 Oscars, made history when she decided to take a selfie with the famous actress Meryl Streep. Before Ellen took the picture, she invited other celebrities, such as Jennifer Lawrence, Brad Pitt, and Bradley Cooper, to join. Many others excitedly jumped into the phone's view, and it became the most "star-studded selfie" ever taken (Addley). Ellen announced that she believed this photo could become the most re-tweeted story in the whole history of Twitter. The world made it happen. The "Oscar Selfie" was re-tweeted more than 2 million times before the night was over and temporarily caused Twitter to collapse because of the massive overload (Addley).

Everyone knows what a selfie is. Everyone has taken at least one in their lifetime. The word selfie is one of the only nouns in modern history to be so readily and widely accepted in such a short span of time. "Selfie" was even chosen to be the word of the year in 2013 by the Oxford Dictionary (Brumfield). The modern definition of a selfie states it is a "self-portrait photograph, typically taken with a hand-held digital camera or camera phone . . . that is often associated with social networking" ("Selfie"). However, vain self-portraiture is not a new phenomenon; it has been around since the earliest of times. For example, cave drawings, although not detailed, were literally paintings of the painters used to tell self-promoting stories to pass on to the next generation. The first known painting that is thought to be a self-depiction was created by Jan van Eyck at the beginning of the Renaissance in 1433 called *Portrait of a Man in a Red Turban* ("Jan Van Eyck"). During the Renaissance period, painting self-portraits was a common, arrogant

practice by the wealthy, who would pay upwards of 500 ducats, or \$28,000, for a single picture (Allentown Art Museum). Through the centuries, taking a picture of oneself has been considered vain and self-centered. However, over the past year, selfies have saturated our society. Selfies have so inundated the human population that the view of self-portraiture has turned from narcissistic and egotistical to beautiful and cultured. Selfies are changing the definition of beautiful through reversible cameras on cell phones, Snapchat, celebrities taking selfies of themselves, and #selfiesunday, which ultimately led to the *Beauty Is Selfie Project* by Dove.

In 2010, the concept of reversible cameras on mobile phones became a reality. Initially, reversible cameras were created to provide face-to-face communication. Monumental advances in technology allowed phones to hold large amounts of data and communicate over networks with bandwidths large enough for video. The first cell phone to have a front-facing camera in the United States was called the HTC EVO 4G and was released June 4, 2010 (Gillepsie). This was followed by the iPhone 4, created by Apple, and was released just three days after on June 7th, 2010. The iPhone 4 was the first successful commercial offering of video chat. This new feature catapulted smart phones into extreme popularity. Within three years, the worldwide smart phone market sales surpassed basic mobile device sales. By the end of 2013, smart phone sales reached an amazing 1.8 billion phones sold (Lomas). Front-facing cameras are now a staple feature in modern cellular devices. Google Trends show that selfies increased in correlation with the rise in self-facing cameras owned by the public. Taking a selfie is now temptingly accessible because of a device kept in your pocket that only requires a touch of a button to snap your picture and post it on social media. In a short time, selfies were commonly being used to capture and share people's beauty in a revolutionary way.

Snapchat became widely popular as selfies from cell phones became more prevalent. Snapchat is a mobile app that can send a picture, or other media, from a cell phone directly to a recipient, and it automatically deletes within 10 seconds of reception. Interestingly, Snapchat was not always a popular application. In July of 2011, the predecessor of Snapchat, an app named Picaboo, was released by Robert Murphy and Evan Spiegel. It failed because “most of us were still adapting to the notion of uploading our personal photos—ones usually confined to the privacy of our printed albums—to the open internet” (“Why Selfies”). In October 2012, the creators changed the name of the app to Snapchat but still couldn’t generate income (“Snapchat”). However, in 2013, Snapchat became instantly popular. Over 60 million people have installed the app, 30 million use it monthly, and 16.5 million use the app every day (Shontell). The world populous discovered that this app was useful to take selfies and share them with others. It created an atmosphere that allowed humans to share their beautiful side and their ugly side at any moment in time. Personal photos don’t have to be posed or touched up. They can be spontaneous. Snapchat helped redefine beauty; it doesn’t just have to be tall, skinny, and blond. Every person is beautiful in their own way, and they can spontaneously share this beauty with others.

“Everyone from Pope Francis to astronaut Luca Parmitano to President Barack Obama has caught on to the [selfie] craze” (Studeman). Whether we like it or not, we look up to celebrities. Famous people have perfect pictures taken of them all the time, yet they still like to take selfies, which make them and selfies even more popular. Celebrity selfies are taken for various reasons. Some selfies, such as those of Miley Cyrus and Kim Kardashian, are taken in scandalous clothing and show off inappropriate parts of their bodies to the entire world. Others, such as the selfie Barack Obama snapped at Nelson Mandela’s

funeral, are taken to simply capture a moment in time. Celebrities are changing the definition of beauty because selfies humanize them. There is a difference between a celebrity going to a photo shoot, dressing up fancy, getting their picture taken, and airbrushing it up versus simply seeing a selfie they posted of themselves on Instagram. One picture is completely phony while the other conveys who they really are. Celebrity selfies show them as real humans on their good days and their bad days, their personalities, and their lives from their perspective. When comparing the two kinds of pictures, it is not hard to realize that anyone can be beautiful and that everyone is the same after all.

#Selfiesunday was literally created to give people permission to post a selfie of themselves without judgment. Sunday is “the one day out of the week where you won’t be frowned upon if you take millions of ‘Selfie’ pictures. Just make sure to attach this hashtag to your pictures or else you’ll be labeled conceited, vein (sic), stuck up, etc.” (Lopez). This hashtag enables a person to express themselves through a self-portrait and share it with the world. It is quite common to see other peoples’ selfies pop up in your newsfeed on Facebook tagged with #selfiesunday. People share selfies because they feel a desire to express their beauty. These pictures aren’t judged as they may have been in the past. They are accepted and even embraced by modern society, because everyone has the right to express themselves and show their beautiful side.

The company Dove created a yearly project called *Beauty Is*. In January of 2014, the theme of the project was “Selfie.” The makers went to Monument Mountain Regional High School and gathered every female in the school and asked them how they felt about beauty. One girl believed that if she was “to fit in, [she would] have to fit [the] mold” that people are exposed to in movies and magazines (*Selfie*). The creators explained that people have the power to change the world’s

view of beauty through the single touch of a button, by taking a selfie. They asked the girls to go home, take a selfie, show their mothers how to take a selfie, and have them take a selfie as well. The producers then took duplications of the selfies that the girls and women had taken, printed off large copies, and put the pictures on display in a Selfie photo exhibit for all to see. People walked around the portraits and commented on how beautiful each girl was. This not only helped the girls boost their self-esteem, but the mothers and others agreed that all of these girls were beautiful in their own way and deserved to be on display. Each had defining characteristics that made them stand out. One mother stated that “social media is widening what the definition of beauty is” (*Selfie*). This project proves selfies have transformed from vain to vivacious and shows they have changed the human perspective of beauty.

The proliferation of selfies has changed the world’s acceptance of what is beautiful. Many modern cell phone advances in technology have simplified taking self-photos and have made it amazingly convenient to capture your own beautiful moments. Many mobile app creators, such as Snapchat, have contributed to the wide acceptance of selfies. These apps are a gateway for sending and promoting selfies to many others with a touch of a button. Selfies have caught on with celebrities. Traditionally, the only photos that the public would see of a celebrity came from professional studios. But superstars no longer appear to be afraid to snap a selfie and post it to the world. Celebrities indirectly promote selfies by showing their true selves and sharing their pure beauty. Society has evolved its opinion of beauty and acceptable photography. The #selfie-sunday hashtag was introduced to society specifically to take the stigma off of sharing selfies with the social community. Everyone may share their form of beauty in a selfie with their social friends without reprisal. Selfies are building a new standard for expressing beauty and allow all to be beautiful.

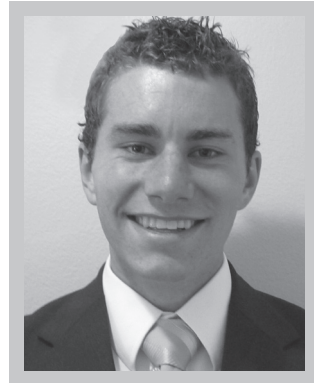
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1. Wood's essay argues that selfie-taking is a positive practice that strips away the photoshopped facade we often see in magazines and movie posters. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Aside from the benefits Wood outlined in her piece, how can selfies impact the world for good? How might an individual benefit from self-portraiture?
3. Selfie taking has often been criticized as a narcissistic practice in society, a way to show off image rather than internal beauty. Wood's essay largely overlooks the negative implications in favor of the positive. Do you believe this helps or hinders her argument? In what way?
4. If you had written this essay, would you have argued that selfies are largely positive or negative? Why?
5. Wood argues that selfies show the real sides and features of human beings. Provide examples of how you see this today.
6. When discussing advances in technology, such as the diversity of apps that are now available to smartphone users, a lot of criticism is laid on their use and abuse. Snapchatting, for example, has been decried in certain circles as an easier way for teens to sext. Do you think that apps like Snapchat are useful or do they cause more problems than they prevent? Why?

TAYLOR BEAN

Taylor Bean is a junior studying agribusiness. He is the oldest of five kids in his family and has a passion for working with agriculture.



Speaking about the inspiration for this essay, the author stated: “When I walked down the organic aisle of the grocery store, organic advertisements made me question the health and safety of conventionally grown foods. I grew up on a large farm in Burley, Idaho that is not USDA Certified Organic. For these reasons, I wrote about the following topic.”

BACKGROUND

Having grown up on a farm, Bean has a lot to say about food production. His essay champions conventional foods over the increasingly popular organic food options. Bean argues that conventional foods are completely safe for consumption and that organic farming actually does more harm than good to both produce and world hunger on a global scale.

Bean uses personal experience as a way of showing how conventional foods are grown and developed. He also relies on experience to discuss the health benefits of said foods.

BENEFITS OF CONVENTIONAL FOODS

Taylor Bean

I am an Idaho farm boy raised in a predominantly agricultural community. Technology and quality equipment have made it possible to produce record high amounts of food in the world, providing food to many people outside of the United States and minimizing world hunger. Despite these benefits, a new food growing method termed “organic farming” is coming to surface in the grocery store and in the field. Enticing marketing methods are used to make a consumer of non-organic foods question if conventionally grown foods are safe and healthy. However, conventional foods are safe and healthy, while providing the same health and safety benefits as organic foods. I hope that my explanation of this topic will help readers gain a similar understanding that will lead to peace of mind when purchasing conventional foods. To accomplish this goal, I will discuss the following: first, the difference between organic and conventionally grown foods; second, the health and safety of conventional foods; third, the implementation of new ideas by conventional farmers; fourth, conventional farming as the most effective way that we can produce food; and fifth, how we can use this technology and massive food production to feed the world.

The difference between organic and conventional production of foods can be understood by the following definition of an organic production system:

“[...] a production system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetic compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the

maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tillage, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds and other pests” (Diver).

This definition was formulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Let’s take a look at why conventional farms utilize these additives. Synthetic chemicals permitted for use in conventional farming are used to reduce, eliminate, or affect insects, rodents, bacteria, and other undesirable elements that abound in fields. On my family farm I have seen that if certain pests are not taken care of properly, they have the potential to destroy a whole crop as they multiply and feed off of the healthy plants, leaving nothing for us to harvest. To prevent this from happening synthetic pesticides are used. Therefore, small amounts of pesticides, yet greater than the amounts found in organic foods, remain in or on conventionally grown foods due to the growing and processing procedures (Magkos). It’s simply the most effective method.

Conventionally grown foods are healthy and safe. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains the standards of chemical use within a safe range. Those in favor of organic foods emphasize the assumed risk of consuming foods grown with synthetic pesticides and other chemicals. For example, in my apartment we have a box of organic granola, and the side of the box mentions benefits of eating organic foods. The box mentions that organic foods are not grown with dangerous pesticides. Do you see how these marketing strategies create an assumption that conventional foods are dangerous by using that very word? I question the validity of that statement. Let me explain how this marketing strategy is justified.

Synthetic chemicals and other substances used in conventional farming can be harmful if too much is used in

the growing process or if too many chemicals remain in or on foods prior to consumption. However, the EPA plays a critical role in ensuring human health by rigorously testing these chemicals to ensure that they meet the standards set forth by the government. The chemicals are tested by first understanding the nature of the pesticide and the amount that will be applied. The chemical is then rigorously tested to ensure that each additive adheres to the strict regulations set forth by the EPA. In addition, in order for a pesticide to be available for sale to the public, the EPA requires that the company submit a report that identifies the possible human health risks, the estimated amount of chemical that will remain on foods prior to consumption, and other potential dangers from use of the pesticide. Since the EPA controls this standard to a level that is scientifically tested to be safe, according to the best modern experiments, we can be confident that these foods are safe for consumption (*Environmental Protection Agency*).

Some hospitals have been known to promote the consumption of organic foods, since organic foods have also been assumed to reduce the risk of cancer. The American Cancer Society published the following statement in response to this assumption: “At this time, no research exists to demonstrate whether such [organic] foods are more effective in reducing cancer risk than are similar foods produced by other farming methods” (“ACS Guidelines”).

Conventional foods are just as healthy as organic alternatives. A group of Greek scientists published a study from a summarization of a number of studies upon the health and safety of conventionally grown foods compared to organically grown foods. They concluded that there is no scientific evidence in favor of the idea that organic foods are preferred to conventional foods for health or safety benefits (Magkos 26).

The rigorous testing and evidences shown by modern science can provide understanding about the issues of conven-

tionally grown foods. An informed decision can be drawn to conclude that conventionally grown foods only contain pesticide traces that are within safe levels for human health. Those who purchase organic products seem to have confidence and trust in the USDA's Certified Organic stamp. If this organic stamp is so trusted, why not trust the similar EPA stamp concerning the safety of conventional foods?

Conventional foods are healthy and safe because the EPA demands healthy and safe products from food that is produced or sold within the United States.

Farmers are continually searching for ways to implement new ideas to reduce costs. Consumers have looked upon conventional farming as uncreative and non-challenging because they think farmers fail to use new methods to preserve soil fertility. Some say that these farmers can simply inject the soil with needed nutrients to grow a subsequent crop. Yet, farmers continually look for ways to use the least amount of chemicals possible, since these chemicals are very expensive. Farmers, just like any other employee or business owner, always seek for ways to reduce costs. Many farms are multimillion dollar operations and strive to reduce expenses and costs at every opportunity in order to maximize profit. One of the ways to minimize cost is to rotate crops to avoid having to use excessive amounts of expensive additives to restore soil fertility.

On the approximately 3,500 acre farm run by my family, a specific rotation among crops is used so that a previous crop leaves many adequate nutrients needed to grow a subse-

If current organic methods are adopted by a majority of farmers, more land will be needed to produce the supply of food that is currently being produced.

quent crop, which helps reduce costs and maintain microbes and other precious soil life. An example of this occurred when we tried to better utilize the land after the early harvesting season of wheat. The wheat harvest generally ends in August, and, in previous years, we had not planted anything in that soil until early June of the following year when we planted beans. To better use this land, we decided to plant a crop that could be grown and harvested during this time. We ended up planting a type of grain called triticale. The first year, we chopped the triticale and worked the ground three or four times to get it ready before planting the beans. This cost thousands of dollars in diesel fuel, labor costs, and wear and tear on the equipment. The next year we tried an experiment in a small corner where we planted the beans straight into the freshly chopped triticale instead of plowing the soil. It worked great, and this method was implemented the next growing year. Others caught the vision of this new method, and all of the local farmers stopped to see what we did, and how they could possibly benefit from this new approach. Maximizing profit requires a farmer to continually search for ways to implement new methods and ideas in order to reduce costs.

Conventional farming is the most effective way that we can produce food. Organic systems tend to yield a fraction of what conventional farming methods yield. Organic performance, on average, is only about 65 percent of what conventional farming can yield under irrigated conditions (Seufert). Imagine if you could eat only two thirds of your desired diet.

If the organic trend continues to gain popularity, more people will go hungry and more resources will be used inefficiently. Yields are definitely factored into the performance of a crop. One of the reasons for this dramatic decrease in the performance of organic crops is due to inadequate essential nutrients. During a plant's life, critical stages of growth occur when certain nutrients are needed plentifully in order to

produce a healthy plant. In many instances organic crops lack these nutrients. To see an example of this, look at organic avocados or other similar produce, and compare the size with the conventionally grown avocados. You will definitely discover a significant size difference. A part of the explanation is that organic soils commonly lack phosphorus, an essential nutrient within the human diet, which needs to be plentiful in soils in order to produce a plant that can reach its potential nutrient content and size. Organic procedures simply cannot produce sufficient amounts. Plentiful nitrogen is also essential in a plant's life since a plant undergoes what is called the nitrogen cycle, where nitrogen amounts are critical for growth. Cover crops are relied upon to provide some nitrogen within organic farming methods, yet the amounts provided are often not sufficient to provide for a plant's needs. If current organic methods are adopted by a majority of farmers, more land will be needed to produce the supply of food that is currently being produced, which could require further deforestation, less natural lands, and less land and habitat for wildlife (Seufert). These trends would be damaging in many ways.

We can use technology and our ability to produce mass amounts of food to feed the world. As synthetic chemicals and other technologies are used, farmers can export food to nations in dire need of it. Between 2009 and 2010, food security in more than seventy countries improved (Shapouri). Our agricultural advances can be a force for good.

Are we willing to follow the rising organic trend that provides no scientific evidence for healthier and safer foods and deprive developing countries of precious food-growing resources? The abundant technologies and abilities that we have in the United States should be used in the most effective way possible to improve the lives of others around the world.

I hope consumers will think twice before doubting the health and safety of conventional foods due to strategic market-

ing campaigns. Conventional food production is the most effective way that we can produce food. Rigorous testing, provided by trustworthy government agencies, is continually progressing to ensure conventional food safety. Conventional foods are safe and healthy while providing the same benefits of organic foods.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. What biases might Bean have against “organic” foods? Are those biases evident in his essay, and if so, do they get in the way of his argument? How?
2. Bean outlines what his essay will discuss at the end of his first paragraph. Did you find this an effective method or a distracting one? Why?
3. If you were writing this essay, how would you construct its thesis?
4. Has Bean persuaded you to think differently about conventional and organic foods? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever been persuaded to “go organic” when you do your shopping? What marketing methods have been effective in urging you to do so?
6. Bean argues that because the EPA has approved of the chemical amount used on conventional crops, consumers should take confidence in the fact that the foods they buy are completely safe. Do you agree with this argument? If not, why?
7. How might conventional farming be marketed in a way that is just as effective as the ways used to market organic foods?
8. Think about the ways in which food is marketed today. How do food companies make their product look more appealing? Give an example.

JUSTIN CAMPBELL

Justin Campbell is a pre-med student studying philosophy at Utah State. He comes from nearby Syracuse, Utah, where he spends most of his time outside. Whether it's rock climbing, longboarding, hiking, or simply wandering, he is passionate about the outdoors and has a burning desire for adventure.



Despite being an adrenaline junkie, Justin is a self-described “big nerd” and would study everything at USU if he could, spending a large amount of his time kicking back in a hammock and reading.

In his essay, Campbell argues that the hipster culture has caused a resurgence in smoking, evidenced by the popularity of Hookah and e-cigarettes. He discusses not only the negative implications of alternative smoking, but the larger truth that society is extremely impressionable and susceptible to such trends. Campbell further notes that we should be wary of our own susceptibility.

His essay prompts the question: how susceptible are we really? Can that be a good thing, or is it always a bad thing?

BACKGROUND

HIPSTERS & HOOKAHS:

How The Latest Subculture Has Caused
A Resurgence Of Smoking

Justin Campbell

The hipster, the definition of originality, has become the opposite of just that: commonplace in society. This emerging counterculture trend has had a far reaching impact on society, especially on this generation's youth. Odd fashion trends and a resurgence of vintage everything, among other things, have their roots in the growth of the movement. As the new trend gains popularity, so too does the culture it embodies—one of rebellion, nonconformity, and expression of individuality. In just the recent past, there were the “greasers,” and soon after, the “hippies,” both of which symbolize a subculture of opposition to authority, embodied with a “don’t care” attitude, and by that very nature, never far from drugs or cigarettes. As time has passed, the culture has developed into the current manifestation: the hipster. But this trendy and carefree movement has its drawbacks. In conjunction with this movement we have seen a nationwide reemergence of popular smoking. The smoker of today isn’t the wealthy adult of the past; rather, it is the popular and trendsetting young adult. As new methods of smoking are being developed, these naive individuals are being targeted. Hookahs and e-cigs in particular have been the tools for this campaign. With new developments, the undesirable effects of smoking have been eliminated: fewer toxic effects, limited smoke, and reduced smell. Simultaneously, youth-specific features are being added to make these products more marketable: style features and unique flavors, to name a few. The hipster movement—the actualization of counterculture and rebellion—has instilled a careless attitude among the nation’s youth,

an attitude which has fostered the reappearance of smoking in society and media, largely due to modern social pressures and youth-specific marketing through the use of e-cigs and hookahs. By looking into the rise of the hipster movement and its significance, the social acceptance of electronic cigarettes, particularly among young Americans, and how marketing for these products is directed specifically towards these individuals, we can see how the subcultures of rebellion have specifically stimulated their growth.

The “counterculture” image isn’t a new one. In fact, most generations experienced some sort of rebellion against conventional society. These atypical and often eccentric groups all share the same fundamental idea: an expression of individuality, often demonstrated through art and self-expression. However, as these movements become trendier and popular, that uniqueness is lost and is replaced with conformity, the antithesis of what was the crucial essence to begin with. As the “non-mainstream” hipster movement develops into an actual mainstream culture, so too does the image it promotes. However, there is one major caveat: the culture has changed to emphasize subscribing to a particular guise, an individual favoring looking and acting cool over the previously cool self-expression. Societal pressure to fit in has overcome the original intention of standing out.

Today, the stereotypical hipster isn’t an uncommon sight. The Urban Outfitter-clad, artsy, independent coffee-shop aficionado, never far from indie music and mustaches, can be recognized from anywhere and is often seen validating this cool, careless attitude by smoking. Smoking

As the “non-mainstream” hipster movement develops into an actual mainstream culture, so too does the image it promotes.

conveys an important part of that image: a nonchalant disregard towards what is considered socially “acceptable.” In fact, simply the action of smoking is considered an act of rebellion to some. In the past, smoking was all over media. Actors, celebrities, and popular people in general were often found with cigarettes, because at the time, that was cool. Cigarettes were promoted throughout the public and became a contemporary cultural symbol. Despite opposition, smoking is regaining popularity quickly, particularly among high school and college students. As more individuals become manifestations of this image, a greater number of people have begun smoking.

Recently, the CDC, the Center for Disease Control, released the following findings: “From 2011-2012, electronic cigarette use doubled among middle and high school students [...] and an estimated 18.1% of all adults in the United States smoke cigarettes,” citing current social norms as a major cause of promoting smoking in young people (“Youth”). Typically, smoking is opposed heavily by the public. Anti-smoking ads run constantly on television, and in the recent past, cigarette smokers have been ostracized by those who don’t participate. However, the new trend, electronic cigarettes, is perceived very differently. Because of the limited smoke and absence of a foul smell, they are often viewed as acceptable in public places, even indoors. In addition, they possess far fewer negative effects on one’s health, and as a result, are thought of as a safe alternative to traditional cigarettes. It is no longer socially reprehensible to smoke around others; rather, it has become a group social activity. Another form of smoking, hookahs, in particular, emphasizes this group mentality. A hookah is essentially an instrument for vaporizing flavored tobacco and often has multiple stems attached, designed specifically for multiple individuals, making it a very social activity. Many “hookah bars” have sprung up in major cities, further showing this communal design. There are few social pressures greater

than the desire to fit in. When seeking approval, many may try smoking just for the public validation. An article from the text “Addictive Behaviors” by Adrienne Heinz, found that “relative to cigarette smoking, hookah smoking was associated with less perceived harm and addiction potential and higher social approval” (Heinz 2751). The article emphasizes just how important and influential that social endorsement may be, citing it as a major cause of first-time smoking. However, peer pressure isn’t the only force causing individuals to take up smoking; companies are now marketing specific products geared towards young individuals in a way that highlights the popular subcultures.

Each product is geared towards a particular audience. Whether it is a new car or brand of cereal, marketers have a specific target, a distinct type of individual in sight. To be successful in business, they must focus their ads on what appeals to that specific person. Today, the emerging market for electronic cigarettes is largely due to the popularity among young adults, and consequently, marketing is directed towards them. The article “‘Smoking Revolution’: A Content Analysis of Electronic Cigarette Retail Websites” by the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* found that websites which sold electronic cigarettes had the following frequency of advertisements: “youthful appeals included images or claims of modernity (73%); increased social status (44%); enhanced social activity (32%); romance (31%); and use by celebrities (22%).” In addition, “eighty-eight percent stated that the product could be smoked anywhere and 71% mentioned using the product to circumvent clean air policies. Candy, fruit, and coffee flavors were offered on most sites” (Grana 395-403). In a subculture which holds great importance on appearance and image, social status and modernity are given great value. Numerous companies have taken advantage of this, and in doing so, directed their business towards hipsters.

The hipster ideology has had a large impact on our

culture. Beyond the obvious trends in fashion and music, this movement has had subtle but influential effects on society. Smoking is one such result. However, it's not the negative health effects, or issues with legislation of smoking we should concern ourselves with, rather it is something far grander.

The increase in smokers, in part due to a cultural image, shows us just how susceptible we are to trends and fads in media. Beyond gaining opinion and favor for what they promote, these movements have a profound effect on the mentality of the people involved. They change social norms and, consequently, alter the individual's preferences and frame of mind. In our recent past, smoking was seen as a distasteful and disagreeable thing, largely because of progress made by "thetruth.com" and other media sources. However, as smoking regains its popularity, one can notice a different opinion among the public. With little research, these alternative methods of smoking—electronic cigarettes and hookah—are not only viewed as safe, but acceptable and commonplace. They are often used indoors and around others with little opposition or criticism. As a whole, we are susceptible to what media and society promotes. They have a constant, inescapable influence on our life. Whether it's smoking or funny mustaches, we should be aware of what the trends in our culture advocate, because we are impressionable towards these ideas.

The fast-growing hipster movement has had lasting effects beyond what is apparent on the surface. The original tenet of individuality has dissolved into conformity alongside the movement's growing popularity. It has since been replaced by an image, a distinct persona, a facade that all must subscribe to. As a result, societal pressure to stay with the trend, to personify that very image, has increased. This has evolved to form a group mentality towards what is perceived to be "cool and contemporary." With new alternative forms of smoking, such as electronic cigarettes and hookahs, gaining popularity

and favor among the public, the hipster subculture embraces the trend as well. Consequently, more individuals are exposed to smoking. Furthermore, beyond social influence, companies are tailoring their products to appeal to this particular subculture, placing a specific aim on young adults with a high interest in social status and modernity, things which the hipster movement embodies. Beyond showing recent increases in smoking, these findings convey an important message: social trends have a high degree of influence on our current opinions and preferences. They establish a format, upon which we decide what is acceptable, a powerful effect which is not to be taken lightly. Ultimately, whether it's an eccentric new fad, an unfamiliar bizarre ideology, or anything between, we should pay attention to the subcultures around us, because they have an effect far greater than what is obvious.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Campbell argues that the hipster culture has “instilled a careless attitude among the nation’s youth.” Do you agree or disagree? Do you see other examples of subcultures negatively impacting the youth of today?
2. Have you ever found yourself trying to conform to a popular trend or lifestyle? What did you find appealing about it? Explain.
3. What are your opinions about e-cigs and hookah? Do you think they are a healthier alternative to smoking cigarettes or do you think that they carry the same negative side effects and stereotypes of cigarettes and tobacco?
4. Campbell touches on the hypocrisy of a society that won’t endorse cigarettes but will endorse alternative smoking. Why do you think that endorsement exists?
5. Discussing alternative smoking, Campbell argues that our greatest concern should be that trends can influence us so quickly and easily. Do you agree or disagree?
6. What negative trends have you seen society promoting today? On the flipside, what positive trends have you seen society promoting today?
7. Predict a trend. What lifestyle, experience, or activity can you see gaining popularity in the near future? Why do you think it will?

WHITNEY BENSON

Whitney Benson considers herself an Oregon resident, having lived in Forest Grove the majority of her life, although her family currently lives in Hyde Park, Utah. She is a freshman studying sports psychology to become a therapist for college athletes. Whitney is an avid runner and enjoys anything that involves being outdoors such as hiking, rock climbing, and biking. This



essay was inspired by Whitney's aunt, Suzanne Gillies, founder of the non-profit African Promise Foundation. Suzanne researched the effects of this form of volunteering and has since changed her focus to benefit people on a long-term basis. This change brought Whitney to research the effects of volunteering, specifically in orphanages. Whitney strives to spread awareness for humanitarian work, and hopes that those who volunteer abroad will research to increase their understanding and give successful service.

We have all seen the commercials: "For only fifteen cents a day, you can feed a child in Africa who desperately needs your help." Images of sad-eyed, malnourished children flood the screen, but their faces light up with smiles as the volunteers hold them and feed them with the food that donations have paid for. But these people, who seem like saviors to the orphans of third-world countries, may actually be doing more harm than good.

In this Persuasive Research Essay, Benson attempts to expose the damage that the tourist-mentality of many volunteers has done to the abandoned and orphaned children of Africa. Though your intentions may be good, Benson's research may cause you to think twice before you embark on a service mission of your own.

BACKGROUND

TEARING DOWN BRIDGES

Whitney Benson

Dirty faces stare up at you, big eyes pleading for help. Hands mercilessly claw and grasp onto every inch of your legs as you pass by. Ribs protrude on little bodies as a vicious reminder of the hunger that grips their young lives. Almost routinely, wealthy citizens of the United States are faced with images and videos calling for the aid of selfless Americans. Perhaps the most appealing, publicized, and laid-out work, is that of aiding in orphanages. At some point in their lives, most people have the urgent desire to impact the world and to do something to better themselves. We often see pictures of Americans holding a smiling African child, or a volunteer playing with a group of orphaned Peruvian children. Automatically, we find ourselves longing to feel that connection and satisfaction of service rendered between ourselves and those abandoned or orphaned children. However, is hopping countries to invade these children's homes and then breaking your attachment with them after just a few days really beneficial to these orphaned children? Research has shown that good intentions as an orphanage volunteer are turning out to be more harmful than beneficial to those children that are supposed to be served. By working in orphanages, volunteers are causing dangerous attachment with children, attempting to teach things they are inexperienced in, exposing children to dangerous predators, and invading their homes, which has led to the bloom of orphanage and slum tourism. Instead of continuing this destructive form of volunteering, our methods need to be changed to positively affect and prepare a hopeful future for these children, instead of making them a short-term project.

Before we get in-depth, it is vital for me to make sure

my point is clear. I am not disputing volunteerism of any kind. I myself will be spending two months of this summer in Mbale, Uganda, teaching education and health classes. Orphanage volunteering is a beneficial act *when executed correctly*. Stopping by an orphanage like you would a tourist stop is not going to benefit anyone but the volunteer and fulfill only their personal need for self-gratification. In many cases, volunteers are spending a few days in orphanages to see the smiles on children's faces or to hug a child in need. Looking at these actions from a futuristic point of view, how are these efforts going to benefit the child's future? If you truly want to make an impact as a volunteer, it is absolutely vital to serve and teach in a way that will prepare these children for the future. The intent of going to any length to better another's life—not to change your own—is the key to volunteerism. A hug brings a smile for a moment, but a learning experience can change a life forever.

Perhaps one of the most pressing issues comes from the research done on children who have experienced major trauma—in this circumstance, losing both parents—and the grief it causes these children to experience when volunteers abandon them. Children, at such a young age, simply cannot grasp the concept of volunteers who come to care for them and hold them, only to have them leave just a few days later. According to *The Guardian*, the winner of the 2013 website and newspaper of the year, “People are coming in, attaching to the children and then leaving. It's highly damaging for the emotional and cognitive development of the kids” (Birrel). Children, for whom it is vital to have a central figure in their lives as they are learning and developing, will latch onto whatever attention or role model they encounter. To have these role models established and then torn away just a few days later isn't beneficial for anyone but the tourist. As said by Monica Pitrelli, writer for the U.K. newspaper *The Telegraph*, “The one or two day bonding and then leaving of volunteers, leads to a never

ending round of abandonment for the children” (Pitrelli). It is vital for children to be raised in a steady environment, which is impossible to have with tourists and visitors flocking to the children week after week.

Understanding what the children need and being able to explain their behaviors is key to learning how to benefit and help them. Pitrelli discusses the dangers that occur when we are unable to differentiate between volunteer emotional response and a child’s emotional response. This means that, instead of focusing on how the children feel about the constant stream of volunteers coming in and out of their homes and how much more prepared they feel about their future, we should focus on how volunteers respond to their personal experiences after returning home from an orphanage volunteer trip (Pitrelli). Common volunteer feedback is “I had such a great experience; my life will never be the same.” In comparison, the amount of times you will hear someone say “I changed a child’s future,” is extremely low, if ever.

Another issue with volunteering in orphanages is that inexperienced volunteers come in with good intentions but are clueless about how to actually benefit the children. Imagine trying to teach someone else how to fly a plane or build a rocket when you have no idea how to do it yourself. Children who have been abandoned or orphaned are fragile and need special care to overcome the traumas they have experienced. Volunteers picked up off the street are not qualified for this type of work but could be extremely beneficial to the development of orphans if they first receive some training. Pippa Biddle, an experienced volunteer of six years, gives an account of her first service trip to the Dominican Republic:

I started working in the Dominican Republic at a summer camp I helped organize for HIV+ children. Within days, it was obvious that my rudimentary Spanish set me so far apart from the local Dominican staff that I might as well

have been an alien. Try caring for children who have a serious medical condition, and are not inclined to listen, in a language that you barely speak. After my first trip to the Dominican Republic, I pledged to myself that we would, one day, have a camp run and executed by Dominicans. Now, about seven years later, the camp director, program leaders and all but a handful of counselors are Dominican. Each year we bring in a few Peace Corps Volunteers and highly-skilled volunteers from the USA who add value to our program, but they are not the ones in charge. I think we're finally doing aid right, and I'm not there (Biddle).

Biddle experienced what it was like to be a part of a service where she simply did not have the skills to fulfill what she was working towards. Instead of becoming frustrated, she chose to pinpoint and focus on her personal skills, using those to benefit others. She realized that sometimes stepping away may actually be best for those she is serving.

By coming in with the attitude that Pippa originally had, which is that we are "God-sent" to help even in areas we are inexperienced and underprepared for, we are creating what is called the "White Savior Mentality" among impoverished countries. White people, in many impoverished countries, are treated like Gods and viewed as rich people with the answers to all of a developing country's problems. This issue develops when white people come in with the desire to volunteer and then begin imposing their cultural ways on others. We believe that we have all of the answers just because we have the intent to help and serve the people. In response to this, the native people recognize that the white Americans coming in have money and success, something they do not have themselves. Therefore, it is accepted that white people have all of the answers. Instead of continuing to create this state of mind, we need to take the cultures around us into account and teach the people based on the cultures that are already in play. Suzy Gillies,

president of the African Promise Foundation, said in response to my upcoming Uganda trip:

Think of yourself as a learner while you are there. You will see some of the white people imposing our cultural beliefs and values as if we are all-knowing. Avoid this at all costs.

Take every opportunity to let local leaders lead the way and help the white volunteers empower the people in charge.

As volunteers, we are there to *empower*, not to override with our own beliefs. What is successful in our country and personal lives is often not applicable to others in helping them to become successful in their own environments.

Oftentimes, after a service trip, people have hundreds of pictures that they post all over the internet, sharing their humanitarian experience with the world. Perhaps the most popular of these pictures are those that display an American volunteer holding an impoverished orphan. One concern with this is that orphanages are becoming tourist attractions. It is invasive for a group of strangers to enter a child's home and environment, take pictures, and then leave. One reporter even went so far as to say that "Dropping in for a day to take pictures of children who just experienced tremendous loss reduces them to zebras and lions" (Birrel). Allowing any tourist to drop in is also dangerous and leaves the children unprotected. Birrel also says, "99% of tourists coming through have good intentions. However, background checks are never implemented and no precautions are taken in checking those that come through." Recent reports have raised concern particularly in Cambodia, where touring orphanages has become an increasingly common activity. Flyers, pamphlets, and posters plastered all over the city portray a picture of children on display in a glass case, surrounded by tourists and their flashing cameras. Underneath these images, "Children are not tourist attractions. Think before visiting an orphanage," is splashed across in bold letters.

Another issue raised in these Cambodian flyers is

the idea of orphanage tourism, which has started to blossom in impoverished countries over the past few years. This is the practice of tourists paying money to volunteer with orphans. Orphanages have admitted that, in the past few years, those asking to stop in and help has drastically increased their income. Although there has been a 65% increase in the number of orphanages since 2005, the number of vulnerable children and orphans has decreased. (Birrel). All around the world, studies have shown that the number of children who are actually orphans has dropped to only 28% over the past three years. That means that 72% of children in orphanages still have living parents (Pitrelli). Orphanages are now paying impoverished parents to send their children to orphanages, with the promise of their children obtaining a better future and education. Not only are children being recruited, but the practice of slum tourism is “on the rise, which is the practice of keeping children in slum living conditions as to promote the need for more money from tourists” (Birrel). In many cases, in non-state owned orphanages, money is coming in from tourists, but only a small percentage of that is going into helping the children and their living conditions. One possible way to minimize the amount of times this occurs is to only support and volunteer in state-owned orphanages. These are legitimate homes set up for children in need. These orphanages require background checks and therefore eliminate the dangerous exposure of unqualified outsiders to young children.

Although it may be harsh to hear, orphanage tourism is a rising industry in our world today. It has increased over the past three years and a solution needs to be found before it gets more out of hand. Volunteering in orphanages is a wonderful, beneficial opportunity. However, the focus should be placed more on educating children for their futures and teaching them how to be successful, independent human beings in their societies. Instead of stopping the work, our methods and goals

need to be altered. Children are always better off in a secure environment within their own families, so projects need to be implemented to keep families together. That alone will minimize the need for work in orphanages because the number of orphans will be substantially lower. Development of business, finance, and parenting classes would benefit entire communities because it provides jobs as well as assistance in providing and caring for families. For parents in third world countries who struggle financially and give up their children because they simply do not have the means or knowledge to care for them, these types of classes would prepare them to fend for their children and raise them in a positive environments with strong support units.

Orphanage tourism is a difficult and delicate topic to debate no matter who you are or what your opinion may be. Those who volunteer in orphanages often volunteer because of their desire to help and make a difference in the world. Service and joy is the ultimate goal in the eyes of these volunteers. The issues that are being presented as a result are due to the lack of knowledge behind these deeds. The vicious cycle of attachment and loss, the orphanage and slum tourism, the invasion of privacy, and the families being torn apart for money are all issues that, if they were recognized and explained, would cause volunteers to think twice about what kind of services they choose to be a part of.

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1. Have you (or someone you know) ever gone to a third-world country for a service mission? What kind of feelings did you return with? Do you feel that you were able to change a child's life? Did you change?
2. Do you think that volunteers should stop volunteering? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree with the idea that those who choose to volunteer in third-world countries are only doing so to fulfill a need to change the world? What other reasons might there be?
4. Did the author of this essay use her sources effectively?
5. Were you persuaded by the ideas that this essay presented to you as a reader?
6. How do you feel about the various organizations and fund-raisers that support children in third-world countries when there is still so much suffering in our own country?
7. Given the opportunity, how would you provide service in a third-world country?

BRIANNA MCPHAIL

Brianna McPhail grew up in Flowell, Utah and attended Millard High School. She played on the basketball team and was the Junior and the Senior Class Presidents as well as the National Honor Society President. She was the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership representative and General Sterling Scholar for her school, and served as a Stake Youth Council Chairperson and a Seminary Vice President for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She is currently a sophomore at Utah State University and is majoring in Elementary Education. Brianna is the oldest daughter of four children and loves to be with her family.



BACKGROUND

The Holocaust was one of the worst tragedies in the history of the world – but did you know that similar tragedies are still occurring today? In her Persuasive Research Essay, McPhail argues that future generations would be more prepared to deal with the problems that the world faces if school-age children were taught more about the effects of genocide in the past and the events leading up to those disasters.

If you want to learn more about the Holocaust and the individuals who lived through its horrors, you may be interested in these novels:

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak

The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

Night by Elie Wiesel

A MEASURE OF HOPE

Brianna McPhail

A recent visit to The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. really opened my eyes to the tragedy that is genocide. In one part of the museum there is a huge, three-story tower/room that goes all the way up to the top of the building and down to the bottom of the floor. There are pictures of the victims of the Holocaust on every open inch as far as you can see. The pictures reflect people doing mundane activities. The majority of the pictures on the walls are family photos of real victims. This mural is meant to represent the millions of lives that were lost in horrible, torturous ways. The pictures had real pathos as they conveyed that those people were not just numbers in a group of many; they were human beings. They had families and jobs. They played games, told jokes, and worshipped religiously. Many of the Germans were friends with Jews. Not all of them were horrible people, but because of a small group of perpetrators, millions were murdered. I left the museum perplexed at how a society could come to that and how some of the people in that society could justify such actions.

I never learned much about the Holocaust in school. I did learn that it was an event which happened in World War II. However, Adolf Hitler was just painted as a villain, the Nazi regime as his loyal soldiers, and the Jewish people as his victims. My teachers didn't explain how Hitler rose to power and how people could have stopped him. They didn't explain how horrible it was, and they didn't tell us that it is still happening today. The examples I will refer to for the focus of this paper are genocides and specifically the Holocaust, to prove how more effective teaching on subjects like this will benefit our

society as a whole.

A holocaust, by definition, is an act of mass destruction and loss of life—especially in war or by fire (Definitions). The term “Holocaust” became a proper noun when people in America started referring to the events during World War II after an NBC mini-series aired on television. The mini-series started a lot of controversy about the true events and the reverence and sensitivity to the events portrayed. However, it also brought about the idea that people need to be educated about history (Fallace 67-70).

Adolf Hitler believed that the Aryan race was above that of the Jewish people. The horrible, inhumane things that the German regime did to the Jews and the reasons why are unfathomable. The Jewish people were persecuted because of their race. Why are people discriminated against today? Maybe there is prejudice because of their physical characteristics, or the way they dress. The discrimination could be about where they are from, their religion, or simply because they are just different from everyone else. No matter the reason, it is bullying on a massive scale, and most of the time bullies are found in schools. Kids are not born racist and judgmental; they are taught to be that way by society. If prejudice can be taught, it can be untaught, and it should be. If teachers of the next generation do not teach and inform the upcoming youth of events like the Holocaust, they will keep happening.

Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz concentration camp survivor, wrote:

I confess I do not know how to teach these matters . . .
How do you teach events that defy knowledge, experiences that go beyond imagination? How do you tell children, big and small, that society could lose its mind and start murdering its own soul and future? How do you unveil horrors without offering at the same time some measure of hope?
(qtd. in Fallace 72-73)

I know that teachers have a short amount of time and a vast array of important subjects to cover. The curriculum is demanding, and there is a lot of pressure to speed through everything so that the students are prepared for testing at the end of the year. They do not always get to spend as much time on subjects as they would like. Perhaps it is not how much time they have to teach, but the way they teach the subjects that is important. Some people may argue that children are not ready to learn about the horrors that occurred in the Holocaust. David H. Lindquist, a professor at Indiana University, Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Co-Director of the Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies said, “Students’ maturity levels must be evaluated because exposing students to horrific images may cause them to react in one of two opposite yet negative ways, either shutting down and turning away from the topic or, alternatively, becoming entranced by those images.” I’m not suggesting that children should be exposed to all the violent images, film, and evidence of the things that happened. Indeed, revealing all of these could possibly traumatize children or desensitize them to the inexplicable actions of the Nazis. Also, dwelling on the atrocities of the details of events will not make them go away, nor help us to understand. No, instead I am urging teachers to focus on the events that led up to the Holocaust. Lucy Russell, author of *Teaching the Holocaust in School History*, paraphrases historian Nicolas Kinloch’s words from a previous article when she says, “Kinloch suggests that teachers . . . want to teach their students to evaluate source material rigorously, to develop and demonstrate a clear understanding of concepts such as causation and to be able to detect bias and propaganda” (4).

Propaganda is a concentrated set of messages that influence the opinions or behaviors of large numbers of people (Nazi Propaganda). This is one of the ways Hitler was able to convince or fool the German people. He aimed to communicate

his ideals to the people through music, art, books, radio, press, education, and films. He wanted to spread the principles of National Socialism. The propaganda was used to portray the Nazi government as restoring order and depicted Jews as cultural pests, consumed by evil and greed. The Nazis also spread the propaganda to other populations to gain political loyalty. Hitler's propaganda was especially successful through films. The movies either glorified Hitler and his movements or were used to give the illusion that the events transpiring in the concentration camps were humane and under control. The prisoners in the camps were required to send postcards to the people at home telling them all was well. These are just a few examples of how propaganda influenced the German population to accept and go along with Hitler and his ideals ("Nazi Propaganda").

The Holocaust is not an isolated example. George Santanyana, a Spanish-born American philosopher once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (284). This statement is often quoted in context of the Holocaust because it has an eerie truth to it. No one wants to see something this awful happen again, and yet tragedies like the Holocaust do happen over and over again.

Genocides are still happening today. However, we don't hear about them very often. A more recent incident that should be included in curriculum happened in 1994. Rwanda, a country in Africa, had a genocide among its own people. Rwanda is composed of three ethnic groups: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Some of the Hutu radicals planned an extinction for the Tutsi group. They blamed them for their country's problems and accused them of rebellion. Much like the Nazis, the Hutus used propaganda and political scheming to cause many of the people to fear and resent the Tutsi and to trust the Hutu. Again we see that this genocide resulted from the active choice to promote hatred and fear in order to gain power. Leaders and people who were against these extremists' plans were immediately

Why haven't we been able to overcome this primeval problem of destroying people based on intolerance and chauvinism?

put to death. Eight hundred thousand Tutsi men, women, and children perished in this genocide, along with thousands of Hutu who opposed the campaign and its leaders. The steps needed to prevent the genocide in Rwanda were simply not taken.

After the Holocaust, many nations, including the

United States, vowed to never again let something like that happen. Yet these other countries were aware of the plotting and destruction in Rwanda and did nothing to stop it, not until hundreds of thousands of deaths had already occurred (“Genocide”). Another genocide, known as the Darfur Genocide, began in 2003 and is still happening today in Western Sudan (NJ Voices Guest). Why haven't we been able to overcome this primeval problem of destroying people based on intolerance and chauvinism? This question is never really addressed in today's society. Some may determine that it is a problem of morals while others may say that those countries and nations are not yet socially or politically developed. Society's development is everyone's business, and cognitive and social development begin in the schools.

There is controversy in our nation right now over whether or not we are moving towards socialism. I believe that our nation is great, but it is leaning more towards political upheaval and unrest than it has in the past. One might suggest that future generations need to be better prepared by teachers to see and understand the signs and warnings of genocide. Russell quotes N. Longworth, author of *We're Moving into the Information Society*:

It does require some little imagination to realize what the

consequences will be of not educating our children to the sort of differences between essential and non-essential information, raw fact, prejudice, half-truth and untruth, so that they know when they are being manipulated, by whom and for what purpose.” (118)

Studying the Holocaust and learning how it happened and why genocides are continuing to happen will cause people to look at the deeper issues behind genocide. Not only will it ensure that future generations don't fall under the trickery of propaganda in our own nation, which is of the utmost importance, but it will also cause them to reflect on the things they can do right now in their lives to combat this.

People may argue that morals are not the responsibilities of teachers, but some children are not learning strong values and morals elsewhere. Genocide, particularly that of the Holocaust, is an emotional subject. Steve Illingworth, author of *Hearts, Minds, and Souls*, has written, “It is surely not too idealistic to hope that a study of the Holocaust would lead to pupils reflecting on their own behavior and attitudes” (Illingworth 22). The history lessons need to address both the social and moral issues that can shape students' views of the world in which they live. What is so wrong with inspiring kids to have more tolerance? If they don't learn it while they are young and moldable then they will probably never take the opportunity to do so. The students can benefit from learning to always be kind and to not pass judgments based on differences.

One of the biggest benefits of learning about the Holocaust is depicted in a documentary entitled *Paper Clips* that tells the story of a middle school in Whitwell, Tennessee. They started the project when the school principal, Ms. Hooper, decided they needed more tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the tiny southern town of Whitwell. The teachers decided the kids could benefit from studying an awful result of bigotry and so they began teaching the eighth graders of Whitwell Middle

School about the Holocaust. A goal to collect six million paper clips to represent the six million Jews killed by the German Nazis was set. They received millions of paper clips from all over the world, along with letters of encouragement and stories from concentration camp survivors. They set up a memorial there in their little town, of a train cart, one that carried the Jewish victims to the camps, and filled it with millions of paper clips and memorabilia to ensure that they always remember what they learned. The Paper Clip project still continues today, inspiring thousands of people to be a little more accepting and to show more kindness. What began as a simple school lesson developed into something extraordinary. Not only were the kids enthralled by the project, but the whole community, as well. Their actions changed toward different people and different ideas, and they gained greater tolerance towards all peoples (*Paper Clips*).

I'm not proposing that every class should do an extravagant project to learn about genocide or to fight prejudice, but those teachers really made a difference in people's lives. After all, that is why most people go into teaching, because they like kids and want to be able to make a difference in their lives. The students would truly gain a higher education if these values were taught in the classroom—an education that isn't based on SAT and ACT scores, but one that is focused on shaping the rising generation to be respectable and respectful citizens.

In conclusion, teachers should focus their lessons on providing instruction and learning from the past. Teachers have a profound responsibility to teach their students to love to learn and to value history. The Holocaust was not just a tragic story in history—it was the result of a vicious cycle of societal and human nature. If we do not remember the happenings that hold great lessons and learn to recognize the signs that lead to genocide, it will keep on happening. If teachers can effectively teach events in history and make the lessons applicable

for their students' lives, then the rising generation will have, to quote Elie Wiesel, "[a] measure of hope" now and for the future (qtd. in Fallace 72-73).

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1. Did you learn about the Holocaust in elementary/middle/high school? If so, to what extent were you taught about the tragedy?
2. Has the knowledge you possess about the Holocaust and ongoing genocide in the world persuaded you to be a better person?
3. Should younger children be taught about the Holocaust in depth at school? Why or why not?
4. Did the author use quotes and sources efficiently? Were they placed well within the essay? If not, take a paragraph in which a quote or source is inefficiently utilized and try to improve it.
5. Were there enough references to the personal experiences of the author in regards to the Holocaust and genocide? How does this affect the reader's emotional reaction to the essay?
6. Sometimes authors bite off more than they can chew. Genocide is a huge topic to confront, let alone suggesting a solution for it. Did McPhail approach and discuss this subject successfully?
7. Research and study have taught us that history often repeats itself. Do you think that something as huge as the Holocaust could happen again in the future?

MARCUS HASLAM

Marcus Haslam is a 24 year old Graphic Design major who sports a mustache.

His love of mustaches is paralleled only by his love of cheese. Marcus's mustache heroes include: Mark Twain, Salvador Dali, Rollie Fingers, and Tom Selleck (of course). When asked about his inspiration for writing this essay, Marcus responded, "It was my 'stache's idea. I just typed out what he told me be-

cause he doesn't have fingers." Marcus and his mustache can be seen performing original songs at various open mic nights around town.



BACKGROUND

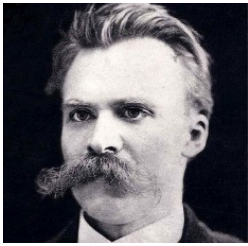
Are you having difficulty working your way up the corporate ladder? Does your appearance seem to be missing a touch of whimsy? Or do you simply want to feel like a man's man in a slowly softening world?

Marcus Haslam believes that mustaches could be the solution to these problems and more. In this Persuasive Research Essay, Haslam outlines the many benefits of a "'stache" for those who have considered having one.

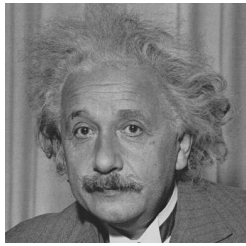
DON'T BASH THE 'STACHE:

How Sporting A Mustache Can Be
Advantageous To You & Your Loved Ones
Marcus Haslam

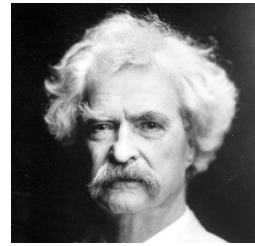
Let's play a game. What do Freidrich Nietzsche, Albert Einstein and Mark Twain have in common?



Nietzsche



Einstein



Twain

If your answer is that they all had a fondness for sardines, you may be correct. I don't know. The answer I am looking for is, "They all had mustaches" (although I'm fairly certain they did all like sardines). Now, I mean no disrespect to other influential people who have rocked the 'stache, I just chose these three because they represent a diverse demographic of influential people in different fields, namely philosophy, science, and literature. I could have easily mentioned Salvador Dali, the surrealist painter, or Wyatt Earp, the famous western lawman, or even Theodore Roosevelt, our 26th President and all-around man's man. The fact is, there are so many influential men throughout history that have sported the "nose neighbor," that it begs the question, what did they recognize that we don't?

The mustache's rise and fall in popularity throughout the years is much like a roller-coaster at Six Flags. The turn of the 20th century saw the mustache reigning supreme. As late



My dad was no exception.

as 1908, a soldier in the British Army was not allowed to shave his upper lip (Skelly 358). The mustache's popularity plummeted going into the '50s only to rise again throughout the '60s and '70s. Celebrities like Tom Selleck and Burt Reynolds, athletes like Mark Spitz and Rollie Fingers, and pretty much all of our dads rocked the 'stache during this time. However, in the case of the mustache, that old adage "the bigger they are, the harder they

fall" rings painfully true. Today, the lip brow doesn't enjoy the acceptance it deserves. In this age of mustache maltreatment, men pine for the glory days, when the query, "Should I grow a mustache?" didn't elicit looks of disgust from girlfriends and mocking scorn from family members; when no second thought was needed to answer this simple question. Ladies and gentlemen, the answer to this question is the same as it was 40 years ago, and that answer is a resounding yes!

Why do men continue to shave their upper lips? One common reason is that they are afraid that having a mustache may adversely affect their careers. While this is a legitimate concern, most men neglect to consider how having a mustache could be advantageous to their careers.

A common apprehension is that having a mustache will affect one's chances of landing a good job. In a blog post for simplyhired.com, Kevin Spence speaks of his anxiety about trying to find a job after his graduation from college. He wondered, "How was I going to stand out, when there were thousands of us with the same qualifications and the same skills applying for the same jobs?" His solution to that uncertainty

was simple and significant. “It was then that I realized that my career needed a handlebar mustache” (Spence). While it’s true that Kevin Spence used the idea of growing a handlebar mustache to represent finding out what sets you apart from other applicants (in other words, figuratively), a literal interpretation is just as effective.

J. Ann Reed and Elizabeth M. Blunk examined the influence of facial hair on the perception of a job applicant by persons in business in a 1990 study entitled *The Influence of Facial Hair on Impression Formation*. The study polled 228 persons who made hiring decisions at 177 companies in Texas. The subjects were shown ink sketches of six male job applicants that varied on three facial hair dimensions: clean-shaven, bearded and mustached. The results indicated that men with mustaches were more likely to be hired over the clean-shaven ones (Reed, Blunk). It appears that having a mustache definitely increases your chances of landing a good job.

Another concern is what effect a mustache will have on your earning potential. In a 2009 study commissioned by The American Mustache Institute and Quicken, it was discovered from a random sampling of 2,000 mustachioed and 2,000 clean-shaven men that males with mustaches earned 4.3 percent more per year on average than those whose upper lips were bare (Clayman). Clearly, mustaches have a favorable effect on a man’s earning ability.

By now you’re probably thinking, “Okay I get it. Mustaches can help men have successful careers. I guess that’s how the Monopoly guy did it, but aren’t there more important things in life than money?” The answer to that question is, of course there are. However, the mustache has more to offer a man than wealth and corporate success. It even has more to offer than just devilish good looks. The mustache offers something that every man today desperately needs—empowerment.

In a post on *artofmanliness.com*, Abdul R. Chaballout

observes that there are two types of men in this current age: those who tote and understand the mustache and those who do not. It is safe to say that women also fall into one of these two categories (except that most women don't tote mustaches). Chaballout explains that the mustache supporter "...can naturally delineate the *je ne sais quoi* importance of the mustache, which has everything to do with manhood, and nothing to do with fashion" (Chaballout). This information is vital on the road to understanding mustaches. Much like beauty, mustaches are only skin deep.

Men need more ways than ever to express their manhood because manhood in modern society is dead. Okay, I may have overstated that a tad, but manhood in modern society is definitely dying. One has to look no further than the models of Abercrombie & Fitch for proof. Instead of seeing men that could fell a tree just by glaring at it, we're presented with a bunch of hairless boy-men who, by glaring at a tree, could only tell you that the tree is brown. Such models are as accurate a representation of real men as their female counterparts are of real women. I believe this is one of the main reasons why the mustache has fallen out of favor. Models and celebrities (people who are, unfortunately, looked upon as role models) aren't growing them because of the media backlash from when others have tried. For example, in an article in The Huffington Post entitled "George Clooney's Mustache: It's Time for the Facial Hair to Go", the reasoning behind the author's definitive statement were simply five pictures taken of Clooney sporting his 'stache (Toscano). Hearing and reading things like this can make it daunting for a man wanting to grow a mustache to actually take the leap and do it. This is tragic because a mustache has more to contribute to manhood than just being an attractive lip accessory.

When a man grows a mustache, he is essentially stating, "I am a man and I am not ashamed!" This knowledge of

basic identity is the foundation upon which a man can build the rest of his identity. As Aristotle said, "Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom" (Aristotle). When you grow a "mo," not only do you make an instant connection with your mustached contemporaries, but also with your ancestral ones (many of whom I'm certain wore mustaches). "The reason for this goes back to the ancestral nature of this patch of hair, as it integrates both tradition and character, which provides an invariably solid foundation any two men can find relevant" (Chaballout). This immediately gives the man a sense of connection, of belonging, which is something that everyone, not just men, craves in life. It's the reason we join clubs, it's the reason we root for the hometown team, heck, it's the reason why we date and get married. We want to belong to something. This feeling of belonging leads to an increase in self-confidence, which leads to greater happiness, which, I think we can agree, is what we all want in life.

When a man has confidence, he isn't afraid to take risks and put himself out there. He isn't afraid to let loose and have fun. Jay Della Valle, creator and director of the documentary *The Glorious Mustache Challenge*, explained it perfectly in an interview with the New York Times. "The bottom line is this: The best response to the question, 'Why the mustache?' is, because it's fun." (Colman). Peter Tudorovic, a participant in The Glorious Mustache Challenge, described how his mustache made him walk differently and feel different. Having a mustache "...does change your personality ever so slightly because you become much more looser" (*The Glorious*). Walker Young, also a participant, stated, "It's comedy, 'cuz people are so uptight you know. Let's have fun in this world. Grow a 'stache!" (*The Glorious*). I, with my mustache, have had similar experiences to the participants of The Glorious Mustache Challenge. People passing by me on the street will often tell me with a smile how awesome my mustache is and we'll strike up a

conversation. My mustache stops little kids dead in their tracks and they can't help but smile and stare in confused awe and wonderment as I pass, and when the spell finally breaks they run to their mothers and excitedly ask, "Did you see that guy's mustache?" I'm making a difference in the world, and I barely even have to try. That is the power of a mustache.

The power of my mustache is unfortunately limited and can't convince you that mustaches are cool or that they look good. If you hate mustaches, I'd have the same amount of luck convincing you to love them as you would have convincing me that contemporary pop music is worth subjecting my ears to. Everyone has their own personal feelings, and it is up to each person individually to decide what they like and dislike. It is, however, important to understand the reasons why people do what they do and why they like what they like. The mustache is more than just upper lip hair. It's a career enhancer, a tool for self-empowerment, and an enabler of fun. It also keeps your lip warm in the winter, a definite plus on this campus.



Me and my handlebars.

If you're struggling with the decision of whether or not to join Nietzsche, Einstein, Twain, and myself in the pantheon of mustachioed men, ask yourself this question: "What have I got to lose?" After contemplation, you'll discover that you really have nothing to lose. The greatest thing is, a mustache isn't permanent. If it doesn't work for you, then you can shave it off, but don't just assume that it won't work without giving it a try. Give it a month or two and, who knows? You may end up becoming the next Magnum PI—and that guy drove a Ferrari.

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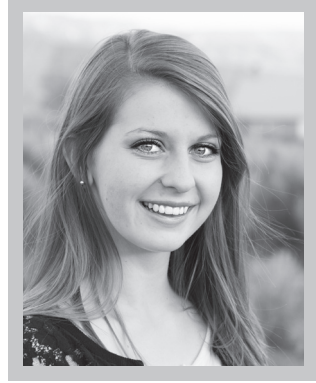
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FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel about facial hair? What does your attitude toward facial hair depend on?
2. Many mustachioed celebrities and world leaders are referred to in Haslam's essay. Do you think their possession or lack of facial hair affected their success?
3. Did this essay persuade you to change your views on mustaches? What about the author's writing was persuasive?
4. How did the personal experiences of the author and his mustache speak to you, as the reader?
5. Look at the "Date Published" sections of this essay's Works Cited. Could the passing of time on some of these sources have affected their accuracy? Why or why not?
6. How do our views of and feelings toward people change based on their appearances in professional settings? What about in casual settings?
7. Why do you think ideas about facial hair have changed over time?

GRETCHEN GILBERT

Gretchen Gilbert is from American Fork, Utah. She is currently an Elementary Education major but may switch to Math Education. She loves baking cookies and eating fresh fruit. Gretchen would rather read a book than watch a movie any day. In the future, she hopes to inspire kids to love mathematics, but mostly she wants people to know that hard work can enable them to live their dreams. She hopes to read more books about history and people, and to travel the world. Most of all, Gretchen hopes to live a life of adventure and inspiration.



Does math leave you tongue-tied and sweating? Gretchen Gilbert knows the feeling. In order to prevent the perpetuation of math anxiety in future generations, specifically female students, Gilbert suggests that the training of elementary education teachers be altered to give our youth's mentors and role models more confidence in their mathematical abilities.

BACKGROUND

“I CAN’T DO MATH”

Gretchen Gilbert

Eighth grade algebra class. The teacher calls me to the front of the room to solve a problem involving the Pythagorean Theorem. I drag my feet along the floor, hoping that if I move slowly enough class will be dismissed before I make it to the board. Sweat gathers in the palms of my hands as I rack my brain for any possible answer. The numbers and symbols on the board look like a dis-conglomerate mess. I can feel my classmates staring me down, their eyes searching for my mistakes. I finally scribble down my answer and bolt back to my seat.

These nervous symptoms can all be signs of math anxiety. As an Elementary Education major, I have seen that the effect of this anxiety can be especially detrimental to females. Because the cyclical nature of anxiety towards math in women is a result of learned behaviors, steps to combat this anxiety, particularly in female elementary school teachers, should be taken.

To begin, what exactly is math anxiety? It could be characterized by a nervousness about math or getting sweaty palms when thinking about doing a math problem. It does, however, run deeper than that. Gina Gresham from the University of Central Florida summarizes that “mathematics anxiety has been defined as a dread of mathematics that interferes with manipulating numbers and solving mathematical problems within a variety of everyday life and academic situations and is considered much more than a dislike toward mathematics” (22). Mathematics anxiety goes beyond a fear or dislike of math. It is important to note that different levels of math anxiety exist and lead to differing effects and outcomes.

Correspondingly, math anxiety and an incapacity to

deal with real-world math issues is a problem that is perhaps as serious as illiteracy. David Bornstein of the NY Times remarks, "Imagine if someone at a dinner party casually announced, 'I'm illiterate.' It would never happen, of course; the shame would be too great. But it's not unusual to hear a successful adult say, 'I can't do math.' That's because we think of math ability as something we're born with, as if there's a 'math gene' that you either inherit or you do not" (Bornstein). Math illiteracy and anxiety can cause stress in many people's lives. Whether it be calculating a tip at a restaurant or figuring out their gas mileage, people are afraid to do these simple calculations. Additionally, parents may not be able to help their children with simple math problems due to their fear and lack of knowledge. Eugene Geist, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, relates that parents may be less comfortable with math and may show negative feelings toward math. He states that "this, in turn, could hinder their ability to encourage and support those [mathematical] concepts with their child" (28). These day-to-day factors compound and make having math anxiety a real issue.

With this in mind, a leading cause of mathematics anxiety, especially among girls, can be attributed to gender stereotyping. There is an age-old belief that boys are better at math and girls are better at reading. These stigmas can be detrimental to a girl's belief in her own capability to do math. Parents are "more likely to attribute boys' math success to natural talent and girls' math success to effort" (qtd. in Gunderson 156). The issue here is that the adults in a child's life can strongly sway perceptions about capabilities. If a girl believes she succeeds at math only because she works hard, that could eventually lead to a decline in effort followed by lower math performance due to the fact that her mathematical self-concept has decreased. However, minimal differences truly exist between males and females in regards to their mathematics

performance. Confidence is where the difference is seen; males show more confidence in their abilities whereas females doubt their ability to do well in a math class or on a math test (Ross 284). A lack of mathematical self-confidence may lead to a perpetuation of females' anxiety toward math.

Consequently, another issue arises as these girls grow up. They grow up with the instilled belief that they are inadequate in mathematical abilities in comparison to their male counterparts. Oftentimes due to math anxiety, girls believe that they are incapable of succeeding in math. Throughout their lives, many of these girls have only seen women, whether it be their mothers or teachers, who choose not to go into mathematics or other technical fields. Similarly, "girls who observe women in their culture or society not becoming engineers or scientists or mathematicians avoid, and are anxious about, these subjects because they are perceived as outside the realm of what is possible" for women (qtd. in Ross 280). These unfortunate circumstances inhibit many females from observing respected women working in STEM fields, which include science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As a result, this math anxiety "negatively predicts course enrollment, career choices, and lifelong learning in mathematics related fields, thus contributing to the under-representation of females in many domains of [STEM]" (qtd. in Goetz 2079). This leads to fewer girls deciding to participate in the vital STEM fields and subjects.

There is an age-old belief that boys are better at math and girls are better at reading. However, minimal differences truly exist between males and females in regards to their mathematics performance.

Due to the nature of our global world, there has been a call for an emphasis on STEM subjects in American schools. If America wants to compete technologically, students need to be taught more about STEM disciplines. Charles Vest, an engineer, argues that there is a “continuing need for a new generation of bright engineers” and if the rising generation is competent in math, they will be able to “become innovators and entrepreneurs who push the cutting edge of technology, develop new products and services, and create and fuel the enterprises of the 21st century” (6). If students, especially girls, don’t have positive, early exposure to engineering and math, they will likely shy away from these important areas of work.

Despite efforts to make mathematics and technology seem enjoyable, many girls do not feel confident in their math abilities. These students will likely choose an area of work that only requires a minimal amount of math. In my studies of Elementary Education, I will have to be knowledgeable in multiple disciplines, so it seems that extensive upper-level math skills are unnecessary for me. For many, Elementary Education seems like a good major to choose because there are only a small number of required math courses. These four math classes will earn a degree: College Algebra, Mathematics for Elementary School Teachers, Intro to Statistics, and a Teaching Mathematics/Practicum course (“Elementary Education”). Higher level math courses are not necessary for elementary education. As a teacher, I will not need to know how to derive a function to be able to teach students about addition, subtraction, patterns, and telling time. Why should students have to suffer through an impossibly hard class learning math equations that will never be used again?

Furthermore, 90% of Elementary Education majors are female. Of that group, “38% of pre-service teachers reported low confidence in their ability to learn mathematics, 34% indicated high levels of mathematics anxiety, and 39% indicated

that mathematics was their least liked subject” (Beilock; qtd. in Brown 366). As these students enter college level math classes, their tension toward math may be further heightened due to large class sizes and disengaged math teachers. A lack of resources for tutoring and support may also contribute. The very word “math” can cause stress and discomfort in the students. Once female students enter classrooms as teachers, they may inadvertently pass on their anxiety toward math. Geist wisely states that “math anxiety does not come from the mathematics itself but rather from the way math is presented in school and may have been presented to teachers as children” (29). The students that come into the classrooms of these teachers will not have be predisposed to hate math. A teacher’s math anxiety, however, can carry “consequences for girl’s math achievement by influencing girls’ beliefs about who is good at math” and thus influence the students’ attitudes toward math (Beilock). The basic gender beliefs toward mathematics can be taught in class, whether that be promoted consciously or not.

Important to realize, however, is that math-anxious female teachers mainly pass on their anxiety to their female students (Beilock). These anxieties are embedded through promoting gender roles and beliefs, whether consciously or unconsciously. The girls in a class will emulate the teacher’s actions; if this teacher shows a disposition of tension toward math, the girl students will follow in that example. The teachers “seem to be specifically affecting girl’ math achievement – and doing so by influencing girls’ gender related beliefs about who is good at math.” The researchers speculate that these female teachers will perpetuate the gender stereotypes that girls are “not as good as boys at math, which, in turn, affects girls’ math achievement” (Beilock). Because of their own personal math anxieties and tensions, then, some female teachers can, in fact, create math anxiety in their female students.

Surprisingly, many of these pre-service elementary

education students realize that they have a problem. A student who reported that she had math anxiety said she felt bad for her future students. She said that her math anxiety has been a major difficulty in her life and she does not want any of her students to go through what she did (Gresham). The math-anxious individual recognizes the effect that her attitude can have on her future students.

To demonstrate, I gave an anonymous questionnaire to fellow USU students in my 1010 Elementary Education course. 97% of the students in my class are females. The students in my class reported varying levels of math anxiety. In support of the previous evidence given, many of these students reported that their previous math teachers had not taken the time to make sure they understood the material. Their teachers would often just glaze over the information, leaving the students more confused than before. It started as their teachers assumed the students understood the concepts they were teaching. They used vocabulary that made little sense and never fully explained how to complete specific problems. In a study on the issue done at Texas A&M University, students reported they were not able to keep up with the mathematical concepts, and the concepts that they did vaguely understand did not apply to the world at all (Cornell 226-227). Similarly, the pressure from timed testing and time requirements "does increase anxiety, decrease accuracy and create a negative attitude toward the subject matter" whether that be math or anything else (Geist 26). Along with classroom environment and teaching styles, the teacher's attitude can also make a huge difference. Many of the students at USU also said they chose to go into elementary education because they knew it would require only a minimal amount of math courses allowing them to have lower levels of stress and tension in their lives.

Interestingly, one USU student said, "I would like more classes about teaching math. If we, the teachers, are excited

about and ‘in love’ with math, the students will ‘be in love’ with math also.” Many students also said that it would be helpful to learn math that applied more to everyday life. If the math applies to real life, it would seem less like a waste of time and more like a puzzle or a game. Another student said that “having math not have so much of a stigma” would help improve their outlook on mathematics. If pre-service teachers fight their math anxiety before they begin teaching, it could lead to significant improvements in classrooms and more importantly, in the attitudes of their students and their beliefs about gender capabilities in mathematics. Obviously, teachers do not need to love math, but it can be a serious condition if they exhibit their dislike toward math.

Given these points, what can be done to terminate the cycle of math apprehension? Gina Gresham studied a mathematics methods course designed to help create good attitudes towards math and to help pre-service teachers combat their math anxiety. She argues that as the students focused on understanding content, they became less anxious towards math in general. In this course, “pre-service teachers were involved in a variety of group discussions, professional readings, and writing about the philosophical underpinnings of different approaches to teaching and learning with a focus on the role of the teacher and student” (Gresham 23-24). These activities helped the pre-service teachers understand mathematics and the basis of their anxiety. This in turn allowed for them to bring those positive dispositions into their classrooms. Strategies to help the students realize that their problems with math anxiety can be fixed should be involved in the training of future teachers. Murat Bursal of Washington State University states that “as teacher educators, our task should be designing the methods courses in a way that all teacher candidates, especially those who are severely anxious about mathematics, will have chances to reduce their anxieties and develop positive attitudes

toward mathematics and mathematics teaching." These courses could very well make the difference in a teacher's viewpoint for mathematics.

Similarly, Tad Brunyé and his team of researchers are trying to find solutions that can be easily implemented for students before math exams. Generally, students know how to do the math problems and understand the concepts, but they cannot focus their thoughts. Brunyé argues this point and says, "If math-anxious college students generally have the knowledge and ability to perform mathematics operations but are limited in their ability to forcefully control attention during anxiety-inducing situations, then treatments targeted at reducing anxiety and training attentional control might prove beneficial in supporting their math test performance" (2). The main strategy used in this study to cope with math anxiety was a focused breathing exercise. In the study, the breathing shifts the focus away from the worries of the upcoming test and focuses the students' worried minds on something else that will help them relax. This relaxed state of being allows for better testing results and more confidence and peace of mind for the test.

All in all, math anxiety leads to gender differences in mathematics performance causing female elementary school teachers to pass it on to their students. This consequently leads to a decreased interest and participation in STEM fields. This harmful cycle of math anxiety among females must be put to an end. In the long run, "reducing the negative emotions accompanying math anxiety is critical to increasing student participation in higher mathematics education, increasing mathematics competencies, and supporting math-related career decisions in STEM disciplines" (Brunyé). Rather than perpetuating these recursive inherited anxieties, a change needs to happen. Teachers need to be educated on the many aspects of anxiety and given strategies to deal with anxieties within themselves and their students. Perceived gender abilities need to be straightened out,

elementary teachers need to face their anxiety and prepare to teach their students in a more conducive way, and stressing the importance of STEM education needs to be implemented at an early age. This could be done by bringing in engineers and mathematicians to teach about their respective fields. If young students recognize they could one day build a rocket ship or manufacture futuristic technology, the importance of teaching positive attitudes toward mathematics would soon be realized among teachers and students. As educators, parents, and students come together to conquer the effects of math anxiety, a new generation may be able to face their fears and confidently complete math problems in front of their eighth grade algebra classes.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Was math the most difficult subject for you in elementary/middle/high school? If so, explain how you felt towards the subject and whether or not you believe your difficulty was affected by your gender. If not, write about the subject you struggled the most with and how you deal with it now.
2. Did you ever feel that one of your teachers was not confident in his or her teaching abilities? How did that affect your attitude towards various classes and subjects?
3. Describe a time in which you were asked to display your knowledge of a subject in front of a group of your peers. How did you handle the pressure?
4. Gilbert opens her essay with strong imagery. How does this type of writing draw the reader in? What category does it fall under (pathos, logos, ethos) and why?
5. Did the author use quotes and sources effectively? Why or why not?
6. Refer back to Morgan Sanford's essay, "Do It Or Else," on page 18. How might fear appeals interact with math anxiety?

MELODI OLIVER

Melodi Oliver is a fifth generation USU Aggie raised in Longmont, Colorado. She was a cheerleader in high school and now loves skiing, rock climbing, and spending time in the mountains.

Melodi became interested in computer science while still in high school and is currently working on a computer science degree with a minor in mathematics at USU. Over the last several years as a

minority in her field, she has become increasingly invested in the effort to get more girls interested in computer science, and hopes that her essay will encourage girls to push past the “computer-geek” stereotype.



Melodi Oliver felt pretty outnumbered when she walked into a computer science class of 50+ students and found herself to be the only female in the room. What is it that scares girls away from computer science? Oliver explores these fears in this Persuasive Research Essay and encourages women to pursue the technological fields to benefit themselves and society. She also argues that exposing girls to computer science at a younger age will inspire them to seek it out as a viable future career choice.

BACKGROUND

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bool tooPrettyToBeInComputerScience = false;
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Melodi Oliver

“It is easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission.” While many have heard this memorable quote by Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, most know nothing else about who she was or why she is important. What was arguably Hopper’s most memorable accomplishment was the invention of a program compiler (translates human-written code into computer code) in 1952, which “influences the development of software programming to this day” (Deagon). Possibly more surprising to some is the fact that Hopper wasn’t anywhere close to the first woman to greatly influence the history of computer science. In 1845, Ada Lovelace became the world’s first computer programmer when she wrote a program for Charles Babbage’s computer. Had this woman had the appropriate funding, “we may have had the computer revolution in the nineteenth century” (Karwatka).

With women having such strong roots in the foundation of computer science, it is almost shocking how few women are interested in the field today. When I walked into my Computer Science Undergraduate Seminar class at Utah State University for the first time this semester, I was the only girl in the room. This wasn’t something terribly unusual, after all – it was the very first day of class and I was a few minutes early. Usually a few other females showed up eventually. As the minutes ticked by until class began, my head turned every time I heard the door open, expecting to see another member of my gender. Class started and then finally ended, and I was left with a baffling reality. Fifty-one students in the class and I really was *the only girl*.

According to statistics compiled by the National Center for Women in Information Technology (NCWIT), women earn

only 18 percent of undergraduate computer science degrees, and this number has been decreasing over the last decade (“Aspirations”). This is especially surprising given that women earn 57 percent of undergraduate degrees and 52 percent of all math and science degrees (Ashcraft 17). They are clearly interested in the other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) fields. So what’s the deal with computer science that’s holding women back?

Research suggests that the cause lies in the effects of stereotypes and lack of exposure to the subject, and that the solution involves introducing computer science to students earlier in their academic career. Almost every major contributor to the discussion of the lack of women in computer science will agree that significant cause lies in the gender stereotypes associated with the field. NCWIT points out that even the classroom setup for a computer science class can have an effect on how comfortable girls feel in the class. They note that “rooms decorated with images and objects associated with “geeky” stereotypes (e.g., *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* images and paraphernalia, video game boxes, comics, science fiction books, stacked soda cans, electronics, and computer parts) are less appealing and communicate a lower sense of belonging to young women . . . who do not resonate with these “geeky” characteristics” (“Aspirations” 23). It is clear how such an environment could be unappealing to the majority of the female gender. My suggestion: get some girls in there with a little bit more breadth in their decorative tastes.

A similar observation of the stereotype is made by Khadeeja Sadfar in a *Wall Street Journal* article that describes the typical computer scientist as “intelligent, technology-oriented, singularly focused on computers, socially awkward, interested in science fiction and video games and physically unattractive.” Now somebody tell me: as a computer science major, should this offend me (particularly that last bit about be-

ing physically unattractive)? Experience tells me that perhaps I don't quite fit the general misconception. I will never forget the time I introduced myself in a building on campus during my sophomore year at Utah State. After telling this stranger what my major was, he responded: "But you're too pretty to be in computer science!"

Was this just a lame attempt at flirting? Perhaps. Nonetheless, significance can be gleaned from the statement. There are many who associate computer science with unattractive individuals. The effect this has on women is well illustrated by Sapna Cheryan in her study titled *The Stereotypical Computer Scientist: Gendered Media Representations as a Barrier to Inclusion for Women*, in which she states that "stereotypes of [a] computer scientist's physical appearance may deter women more than men due to the fact that maintaining an attractive appearance is a component of the female gender role" (5).

Hobbies and physical appearance are not the only stereotyped characteristics that could cause women to hesitate when pursuing computer science. Some misconceptions exist about a difference in aptitude for the field between men and women. Cheryan also touches on this point in her study:

Both male and female students perceive males in computer science as having a higher GPA than females in the field, even when no real differences exist, and women have less confidence in their computer aptitude than do men. As a result, some women, even those qualified to enter the field, may assume they are not intellectually equal to those already in computer science and may be reluctant to enter the field (5).

The idea that women may not have as great of a capacity to succeed in a technical field is held even by some who hold high positions in the academic community. Even the president of Harvard said in a speech regarding women a few years ago:

that in the special case of science and engineering, there are

issues of intrinsic aptitude, and particularly of the variability of aptitude, and that those considerations are reinforced by what are in fact lesser factors involving socialization and continuing discrimination (Summers).

This comment received a great deal of backlash from the academic community, as it should have. It's no wonder that women doubt their abilities when even those regarded with respect in the academic community hold similar misconceptions.

Now to address the question that I'm sure has come to your mind by this point: why does it matter that there are so few women in computer science? Why should you care that the only people working on the technology that you use every day probably are just a bunch of "geeky" guys? Perhaps there are some who don't think it makes a difference. But every source I've found seems to say otherwise.

Cohoon and Aspray answer the question quite eloquently in the first chapter of *Women in Information Technology*. They explain that "increasing the number of women will increase the qualified labor pool that the United States depends on to drive the innovation and product development in IT that is so key to the U.S. economy" (13). This is significant because, over the last several decades, there have been shortages in skilled IT labor that could have easily been filled if more women showed an interest in the area of computer science. They also talk about the immense value of a diverse workforce and the innovations that women can bring to the field (13).

In addition to benefiting the information technology field overall, pursuing a career in computer science provides a number of opportunities to women that many may not initially consider. For example, something that drew me to the field is the unique potential it has to lead to a job where I can work from home and be paid well! Computer Software Engineers are rated second on Forbes' list of the *Top 10 Best-Paying Work-At-Home Jobs*, right after radiologists (Goudrequ). I would

venture to guess that the opportunity to work from home is valuable to many women for the same reason it is valuable to me: it allows for easier balance of a career and a family.

So where does that leave us? We've established that the computer science field really is *seriously* lacking some estrogen and that the deficiency is something worth changing. The next question is: *how do we get more women interested in programming?*

The answer: expose girls to computer science at a younger age. In regards to the computer science stereotype, Cheryan points out that “these stereotypes are learned and accepted during the later years of elementary school.” As put by Ms. Wilson of the White House project, “if you really want to change things, you have to go where the people are—the little people” (Zimmerman). In 2010, Mattel Inc., the maker of Barbie, asked girls to vote on what career Barbie should take on next. “The voting was open to anyone...by the end of the first week, a growing flood of adult votes for computer engineer Barbie trumped the popular choice.” A group of female computer engineers led a viral Internet campaign to help “Barbie get her Geek on!” Mattel ended up producing computer engineer Barbie, as well as anchorwoman Barbie, which was the popular vote among the younger participants (Zimmerman).

Computer engineer Barbie is a fantastic first step, but the effort to get girls interested in programming can't stop there. Based on my personal experience, the best time to get girls to give programming a chance is in high school – and the only way to do that is if schools are actually offering the courses. My high school, which was a specially focused STEM school, had three such classes. Never once had I considered programming as potential career choice until I took my very first Intro to Programming class during my junior year of high school. By the time I was halfway through my Advanced Placement Computer Science class in my senior year, I had selected

my college major. If I hadn't had the opportunity to be exposed to programming before I reached college, I would have never thought to look into the field. Computer science wasn't even on my radar until my school counselor suggested taking it as an elective. Giving girls a chance to try computer science is a key factor in getting them interested, as the stereotypes associated with "computer scientists' lack of sociability may be more prevalent among students with less computing experience" (Cheryan).

I would also like to emphasize the benefits of rewarding girls who show an interest in computing. Recognizing their accomplishments is a great way to validate them and encourage them to ignore the stereotypes that may cause reservations. The NCWIT is an organization that focuses on reaching out to girls at the middle and high school level. They give a number of different awards to girls who show interest in computer science and apply through their organization.

I received one such award during my senior year of high school titled the "Colorado Affiliate Award for Aspirations in Computer Science." It empowered me to pursue computer science even though I knew I would be a minority (and let's face it – to an 18 year-old, boy-crazy, high school girl, entering a major composed almost entirely of men doesn't seem all that bad). Their website explains the purpose of the award:

By generating visibility for these young women in their local communities, the program encourages their continued interest in computing, attracts the attention and support of educational and corporate institutions, and emphasizes at a personal level the importance of women's participation in computing and IT ("Aspirations").

It served exactly that purpose for me, and I was given the validation I needed to pursue a field that I am passionate about.

In conclusion, I would urge middle and high schools to offer computer science as part of the curriculum. This is the

opportune time to reach young women with talents that they may never otherwise explore. They need to be exposed to and allowed to discover the world of programming before the fear of the “geeky” stereotype sets in and they are no longer willing to give it a shot. In her study on the effects of stereotypes, Cheryan found that women who had never taken a computer science class were 89.2 percent more likely to associate computer science with the typical stereotypes

than those who had taken at least one (15). Even a little push in the right direction can make a *huge* (89.2 percent!) difference. And to you girls out there who might be even a little bit interested in working with computers (but are possibly scared off by the stereotypes): give it a shot; you won’t regret it! Those *Star Trek* loving boys don’t smell *that* bad, I promise. And don’t forget: nobody is too pretty to be in computer science!

I would urge middle and high schools to offer computer science as a part of the curriculum. This is the opportune time to reach young women with talents that they may never otherwise explore.

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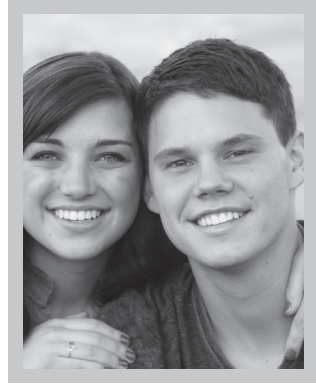
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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you taken classes that were dominated by one gender? Were you in the minority or the majority? How did it affect the class atmosphere?
2. When did you first know what you were going to major in? What inspired you to pursue that area of learning?
3. Write about a piece of technology that you utilize daily. What would you be doing if that technology had never been invented/discovered?
4. Do you think that high schools should allow students to pursue career-oriented learning paths or stick to general education? Why or why not?
5. Is the author of this essay credible? What gives her credibility?
6. Were the sources in this essay effectively utilized and placed?

ASHTON EDWARDS

Ashton Edwards is a junior at USU studying Accounting. Raised in Morgan, Utah, Ashton has a great love for the outdoors and all things sports. His specific love for football is what inspired his essay, "Let the Players Play." Ashton has been married to his sweetheart Seanna for over a year. She constantly teases him about his addiction to ESPN. Ashton cannot begin the day, let alone eat his cereal, without being updated on his sports scores and highlights.



Recent changes in the NFL rulebook have caused concern among some fans, including Ashton Edwards. Although the rule changes were made in an effort to prevent players from getting injured, Edwards worries that it will change the original game. Edwards addresses the NFL Commissioner and suggests solutions to prevent injury without changing the game. Edwards draws from his love of football as well as research to back up his argument.

BACKGROUND

LET THE PLAYERS PLAY

Ashton Edwards

Dear Commissioner Goodell,

As you know well, there has been a great amount of criticism due to the recent changes the National Football League made in the rulebook. These rules include: tacklers and runners hitting with the crown of their helmets will be penalized 15 yards; during kicking plays, only six defenders are allowed on the line or they will be penalized; and peel back blocks are now illegal everywhere on the field. One season has officially run its course with the new rules in place. As always, it was an entertaining affair with thrills for some fans and disappointments for others. Many fans, players and coaches have complained about the new rules and the effect they are having on the game. Plays that would have made highlight reels before the rule changes are now penalized, and games are being dramatically altered, mostly because of the human element that comes from the power of the referees. I agree with many of these arguments due to the fact that I am an avid football fan, and I follow the sport with much appreciation. Even though there are arguments in favor of changing NFL rules, I argue that the business and popularity of the NFL will eventually fade out if the game's originality is changed, and regardless, players are still going to get injured.

I understand that there are good reasons behind the league's sudden change in rules, and you probably know more about the game than the average fans that are so quick to criticize. You have stated more than once that by putting these rules in force, the league will avoid lawsuits that are carried out by former NFL players who have suffered from lifelong injuries. Also, because of your caring nature, you are naturally con-

cerned for the welfare of the players themselves, and the very health of the originality of the game. I would like to address your concerns and possibly give some alternate points of view with the hope that we can reach a compromise which will better suit owners, players, and fans alike.

To begin, the National Football League recently dealt with a lawsuit from 4,500 former players who now live with “brain injuries suffered on the field” (Smith). Many of these men suffered multiple concussions and played in a time when equipment wasn’t as reliable as it is today. These players feel that the league owes them because of their ailments. The NFL and former players finally came to an agreement of 765 million dollars “to provide medical benefits and injury compensation for retired NFL players, fund medical and safety research, and cover litigation expenses” (Smith). I understand that you fear future lawsuits that could sink the league financially, and the discouraging lack of support from former players who drive the popularity of the sport downward. You feel that, by changing the rules, injuries will be avoided that will decrease the likelihood of future lawsuits.

Another reason you have pushed for such drastic changes in rules is, in large part, due to the overall health and safety of those who play the sport. Many times players use their heads as weapons to strike other players during a tackle, or even use their helmet as a shield against a defender. Year after year players get concussions, neck injuries, and other long term injuries that could potentially affect the remainder of their lives. It is truly sad to hear stories from around the country of young players who get paralyzed or die due to head related injuries. To make matters worse, during the course of 2012, four current or former players took their own lives, and one even took the life of another. These deaths, along with others from prior years, have been associated with head injuries and the effect they have had on the players during their lifetimes.

Those among the deceased include Junior Seau, O.J. Murdock and Jovan Belcher. Activists who wanted so desperately to see our beloved sport reform saw these deaths as fuel to an already burning fire. Concussion history from some of these men, and many others who were involved in the lawsuit has resulted in the “war against roughness in pro football” (Goodell 008).

I come to you with great respect, because I recognize your efforts in trying to improve football so it continues to flourish. You have mentioned time and again that every decision to change the game is only to improve it and make it safer. In the midst of criticism you have remained true to your stance. You recently said, “the rule in our league is simple and straightforward: medical decisions override everything else” (Goodell 007). This statement has influenced every decision the NFL has made in past years. Coupled with new innovation in equipment, especially helmets, you said that “preserving the essence of the game, while reducing unnecessary risk, means we have to constantly reevaluate and refresh our rules reasonably and responsibly” (Goodell 007). Results have already been seen, as last year there was a 40% decrease in concussions on kickoffs. This kickoff statistic has caused more to lean towards the side of changing gameplay rules.

Your concern with the direction of this game, and more importantly, the health and safety of the players is inspiring. To not properly address your concerns listed above would be foolish. Due to the sensitive nature of these topics, I hope my perspective and opinion on them will potentially provide possible ways the NFL can change its culture, and continue financial growth, without destroying the originality of the game by changing rules.

As much of a blow the lawsuit was to the league’s wallet and to your heart, it was just that, a blow. The NFL can afford to pay 765 million dollars and move on. Changing rule after rule will not stop former players from suing when they

suffer from injuries. The best thing the league could do would be to move on from this lawsuit and legally protect the NFL by means of before-play waivers and better ground communication between the players union and the league.

In 2010 you set a league goal that, by the year 2027, the NFL would accumulate twenty-five billion dollars in yearly revenue. That means the league revenue would have to grow by at least one billion dollars a year for seventeen years in a row (Kaplan). This is a great goal to set, especially when considering the “massive upside internationally” (Kaplan). Your desires to take this great sport and popularize it overseas would probably lead to a surpassing of your financial goals. However, if rules continue to change and the originality of the game continues to decrease, how do you expect fans to spend even more money on game tickets and television subscriptions that fund your goal? Also, how do you spread the popularity of football into foreign countries when the fans in America become less and less impressed by the game because of its evolution? If this is a money issue, I think careful examination of the big picture will show that changing the rules will not only appease the men who sued you, it will lead to a much bigger financial crises later when you have no fan base.

As a business, the NFL would be smart to focus on their main contributors, the American fans. Pleasing the customer will increase revenue and allow the sport to expand internationally as you desire. If you look into fan pages, blogs, and listen to everyday sports commentators, the vast majority are outraged by the changing of rules because they feel that the sport they grew up loving has changed into something completely new. I do not wish to see players injured, I just want to see alternative measures taken instead of rule changes to ensure both player safety and sport originality.

The issue of player safety is complicated. It is heart-breaking to hear the tragic stories of players taking their own

lives, which many people claim is due to the injuries they sustained while playing in the National Football League. Upon closer observation of these stories though, I find that the whole truth is not being told. Jovan Belcher is a perfect example of kindling in the burning fire of game-changing activists who use his death as a reason to change the rules in football. In December of 2012, Belcher, a linebacker for the Kansas City Chiefs, shot his girlfriend in their home and then drove to the team's practice facility where he shot himself in front of his coaches. An autopsy after his death revealed that his alcohol level was double that of the legal limit. He had been drinking the duration of the night before and "apparently had troubles" with his longtime girlfriend Kassandra Perkins (Gregory 36). The Chiefs organization also said Belcher had "no long concussion history" (Gregory 36). You can look into almost every story like this and find similar facts. Junior Seau is probably the most famous player to commit suicide recently, but he was also known to have drug and alcohol problems. In an article that tries to promote rules changes, the author even admits, "it is impossible to pinpoint the degree to which CTE [chronic traumatic encephalopathy] drove Seau's rapid decline" (Penn).

These players probably did suffer concussions during their playing careers, but it is extremely premature to say these deaths were caused by issues that stemmed from hits to the head when not all of the facts are being properly evaluated. If the league is going to change rules that affect gameplay because of player safety, wouldn't it be wise to stiffen drug and alcohol testing to further protect players and find the real cause behind many of these off field deaths?

Football is a contact sport that has risk as well as reward. We cannot take injuries completely out of the game. Due to the recent deaths of famous players and the claims that their deaths are directly related to concussions they received in football, there has been a decrease in little league football

players in the last three years of 9.5 percent. That's roughly 23,612 kids who don't play the sport anymore (Fainaru, Fainaru-Wada). A great number of these kids have stopped playing because their parents are fearful about them getting injured. This decrease happens because of the lack of valid information about the concussion crisis, and the lack of positive motives to why a kid should play football. What do these statistics have to do with the new rule changes? The decrease in little league players represents the decrease in popularity the sport has seen recently. You have attempted to address the issues of player safety and business lawsuits without taking into account why both of these problems arose. To the public eye it appears that football is a barbaric sport that will surely put their children's lives at risk, when in reality many of these injuries or deaths happened because of outside factors or bad decision-making on the field. Rule changes alone will not satisfy the public enough to let their children play the game, but improved player education and training will help calm their fears.

In order for our sport to evolve and grow in a positive way, player education is critical. Teaching children from a young age how to tackle properly will decrease injuries, as well as getting them out of the "suck it up" mentality, which plays a large part in repeating concussions. Teaching parents about the positive attributes that can be developed in football, like leadership, hard work, and tough mentality, will help parents accept the risk that is associated with any contact sport. Newsletters, commercials, and internet advertising are just a few of the ways the NFL could educate parents, and attract future players. If the next generation doesn't fall in love with football like we have, this conversation will be pointless. Instead of changing the game so much, the NFL should worry about player education and elevating the image of the league, which will eventually serve as an alternative that brings about similar results and a happy fan base.

I completely agree that “medical decisions override everything else,” but that doesn’t necessarily mean that rules have to change. Zack Lystedt is a young man who suffered a brain injury in a football game in 2006 when he was just 13 years old. It wasn’t necessarily that the initial concussion crippled him; it was that the concussion wasn’t properly treated or detected, and he was put back into the game to continue playing. Since then, you have been heavily involved with passing the Zack Lystedt bill in every state, which makes sure that when a player of any age appears to have concussion-like symptoms, they must come out of the game, and cannot return to the field unless they have been cleared by someone who is trained to deal with head injuries. Also, new helmets have been tested and created which can cut the amount of G-force the head experiences during contact nearly in half, which lowers the chances of being dealt a head injury of any sort. These are just two of many examples that show how safe and responsible changes can be made without altering the rules in any drastic way.

Last season the New Orleans Saints and the San Francisco 49ers faced off in what turned into one of the best, and most controversial games of the season. On a third down and two situation in the fourth quarter, Quarterback Drew Brees dropped back to throw a pass and was hit squarely by Ahmad Brooks causing the ball to come loose, and the 49ers recovered it. A flag was thrown and a penalty was assessed for a high hit to the head area. Ahmad Brooks stands a tall 6’3 and Brees a mere 5’11, so even though Brooks made a textbook play, it appeared that Brees took a headshot. Upon closer review, it is easy to see that Brooks did not even make head to head contact with the quarterback. So why was he penalized for the play? Why did the Saints retain the ball and eventually win the game because of this call? Simply because the hit was so fundamentally sound it looked extremely violent to the spectators?

eyes, and because of the culture football is developing, one must think a hit that hard deserves punishment. In no way am I against protecting players or their futures, but it is difficult for me to support rules changes that determine the outcomes of games and seasons.

Mr. Goodell, the fears you have are fears that we mutually share. Neither of us wishes to see players injured, and neither of us wishes to see the originality of our beloved sport die. There are measures already being taken such as the Zack Lystedt bill, which will serve to better protect players in the future. Better equipment is produced every year that protects our players against head injuries and so on. You have the special opportunity before you to change football's culture in a positive way by providing improved player education starting at the ground level. Teach players the risk of playing football, and the importance of playing football the correct way, which promotes safe play. Of course you cannot take out all the risk, but just as underwater welders are constantly threatened by potential electrocution, and construction workers know they may have back problems in their later years, so do NFL players know that they may get injured. With the inherent injuries, why do these professions continue? They pay good money and bring life satisfaction. NFL players know the risks, and they are very aware of the rewards. Even if after all of these alternatives you still wish to change rules, at least consider designating a referee who can review dangerous play penalties and make the correct decision so that games will be unaffected by a bad call. Let us change this game by improving its culture, protecting the league financially, and understanding the deeper underlying problems that lead to later problems in a player's life. Then, Mr. Goodell, we will have a game that will spread across the world like wildfire.

Sincerely,
Ashton S. Edward

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1. Has there ever been a rule implemented that you disagreed with? What was it? How did you react?
2. What points brought up by the author give him credibility? Do you think the suggestions made in this essay could feasibly be considered by the National Football League? Why or why not?
3. Imagine you are Commissioner Goodell; write a letter responding to Edwards. Address his suggestions and how you would implement or reject them.
4. Does Edwards' bio affect how you read this essay? How does his personal interest in the topic help or hinder his argument?
5. Can you find the thesis statement? Does the content of the essay stay focused on the thesis, or does it go off on tangents?
6. Do you believe that investing in better equipment, particularly helmets, will decrease future lawsuits? How?
7. Have you ever had an experience where something you are passionate about was changed in some way? What did you do about it?
8. Consider the tone of Edwards' essay. How would it have been different if he were writing to a family member or friend?

EMILY BLAKE

Emily is an Environmental Studies major with a minor in Sustainable Systems, including an emphasis in Women, Gender, and Diversity studies. She works in both the Student Sustainability Office and the Access and Diversity Center.

Emily runs cross country but also loves climbing, hiking, and cross-country skiing. She became interested in interfaith incorporation at Utah State through her own experiences as well as hearing stories from others. She hopes this essay helps students at USU accept and empower one another.



BACKGROUND

In her freshmen year of college, Emily Blake learned many things, but one thing in particular – she hated Mormons. Living in a predominantly Latter-day Saint (Mormon) society caused Emily to feel discriminated against and judged.

In her persuasive research essay, Blake discusses the concept of faith and spirituality and its impact on social interactions. She reflects on her own interfaith journey and suggests ways to improve understanding and enhance communication among USU’s student body, faculty, and staff.

The War Against Mormons

Emily Blake

During my freshman year of college, my LDS roommates told me that my case of strep throat was God's punishment to me for partying on Saturday. That was the moment I realized I hated Mormons. I hated that I felt marginalized for wearing a tank top or drinking coffee. I learned to recognize church members by their wedding rings, polo shirts paired with plaid shorts, or women's ambitiously modest necklines, all with the intention of actively avoiding interactions with them. I hated how many words beginning with the letter "f" could awkwardly replace fuck: freak, frick, fetch, french toast, fack, friggin, front door, eff. I hated that our door was always plastered with family home evening activities and notes from home teachers. I was sick of being asked which ward I was in, always followed up with the pestering explanation that I am, in fact, still in a ward even though I am not Mormon. But mostly, I hated that my favorite part of my freshman year was those three hours on Sunday when my supposedly Christian-minded roommates were at church, relieving me of their judgment.

Religious discrimination is not a unique or singular struggle. Former president, John F. Kennedy (JFK), suffered the same religious judgment while running for president in 1960. In a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, a group of Protestant ministers, Kennedy explained that "while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew— or a Quaker or a Unitarian or a Baptist. . . . Today I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you — until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril" ("Transcript"). As

JFK depicted, religious discrimination is poison to societies. The unwarranted discrimination Kennedy felt is parallel to the judgment and discrimination happening on Utah State University's (USU) campus. Much like Kennedy described, the culture of religious intolerance has become the norm for many USU students, faculty, and staff members, and it is ripping apart the fabric of the relationships of those attending USU. Kennedy urged Americans to judge him on his character and previous decisions as a U.S. Senator, as I would urge affiliates of Utah State to judge their peers on their character rather than religious beliefs. The same religious discrimination was felt 48 years later during Mitt Romney's campaign as a Republican Party candidate. Romney is a member of the LDS church and was judged harshly by the American public for it. In a Gallup poll, "17 percent of respondents said they would never vote for a Mormon" (Roberts). This is yet another example of judgment being cast purely based on religious beliefs and stereotypes of those beliefs.

USU students have felt similar discrimination to that felt by Kennedy and Romney. Utah State's campus newspaper, *The Utah Statesman*, interviewed students about their feelings on the Mormon majority on campus. One student said, "A lot of [LDS] people are raised with a belief that people that aren't LDS are bad or wrong, they do bad things" (Baker). Students feel the impacts of this belief. Non-Mormons feel like outsiders while LDS church members feel the pressures of the majority. Mormons stick with Mormons and non-Mormons stick with non-Mormons. It is not rare to feel instant camaraderie with a fellow non-Mormon, comrades in a civil war against Mormons. When you buy into the war against Mormons, bashing begins, followed by the generalization of the LDS church, a church 15 million strong ("Facts and Statistics"). When members of the church congregate, a sense of almighty holiness seems to appear. These nasty byproducts of the segregation of religion

merely feed on each other, deepening the mutual ill feelings.

By my second semester as a freshman at USU I had somehow allowed myself to become a soldier in the war against Mormons. I had decided that if I made it through college without stepping into the Institute building or any other Mormon church, I would have had a successful college experience. I participated in the same nasty marginalization I had been a victim of. This translated into resentment, the generalization of mass groups, and the treatment of anyone associated with the church as wholly insignificant. It wasn't until my sophomore year that I recognized the struggle and negative impacts of a Mormon majority are mutual for both LDS and non-LDS students. Oftentimes, non-LDS students feel that "it's not safe to be different at USU" and that they often feel the need to "camouflage or closet" their beliefs (Glass-Coffin 2014). Students "camouflaging and closeting" their non-LDS beliefs are doing so to relieve themselves of the scrutiny felt for religious differences. While non-Mormon students feel the judgment of not being a member of the church, Mormon students feel the judgment of not being "Mormon enough." It is not uncommon to hear things like "she is kind of Mormon" or "he is a bad Mormon". A type of snobbery among the faithiest Mormon has grown and flourished through the high concentration of church members who appear to feel competition within the LDS church. There is a struggle to become the "most Mormon" or a "good Mormon." A USU sophomore, Sean (name changed for anonymity), explained that his decision to serve an LDS mission was due to pressures from fellow members and cultural pressures rather than feeling a calling to serve. He came home from his mission early and has since felt the scrutiny for his decision. He worries that this choice will hurt him in the LDS dating scene as it is taboo and traditionally shameful to come home early from an LDS mission. Sean also feels obligated to defend himself when others discovered that he came

home early. He described the shame and embarrassment he felt for his choice, but also felt that it was in the best interest of the church and himself to return early.

Similar pressures are felt by young women in the church. Junior student, Caroline (name changed for anonymity), feels pressure from peers to get married at a young age. “I am barely 20 and am regularly asked when I plan to get married. I am not interested [in getting married] anytime soon, but don’t want to be the only one left [who isn’t married].” Caroline described Sundays back in her hometown at church as uncomfortable. She feels uncomfortable because the only question she is ever asked is if she is dating someone and never about her academic life or studies. She explained how she increasingly feels as though her worth is based on her marital status. This is an example of the increasing marginalization that is happening, even to members of the dominant group.

Religious intolerance, in its many forms, is perpetrated by Mormons and non-Mormons alike. This hurts USU’s students as individuals harbor intolerance and suppress the desire to “engage with the risk of challenging and reconsidering [our] own views” (van der Straten Waiet). Considering the degree of intolerance and recognition that “[the discussion of] religion makes people uncomfortable,” Utah State University must take the first step towards tolerant religious pluralism (Glass-Coffin). Tolerant religious pluralism is often times referred to as interfaith. USU must harbor, celebrate, promote, and help create an inclusive environment for all students by utilizing interfaith practices.

A specific interfaith practice that needs to be implemented at USU is interfaith roundtables. These are roundtable discussions that invite all faiths and traditions to have open dialogue about religion. USU’s Dr. Glass-Coffin, a professor and researcher in the department of Sociology, Social Work, & Anthropology, held an anonymous interfaith roundtable and

explained to participants that, once we have recognized that discussing religion makes us uncomfortable, we must then ask, “why?” Others around the state are holding interfaith events and seeing really positive results. An interfaith roundtable program was started in Salt Lake City in 1999 to provide support for Olympic athletes and tourists during the 2002 Winter Games (Leonard). The group now meets monthly but it emphasizes February as an interfaith month which hosts events that give Utahns the opportunity to gather and have meaningful discussion about religion. A regular attendee of these discussions said, “I don’t feel that different from everyone else here. We’re all trying to build compassion, love and understanding” (Leonard). The lack of compassion, love, and understanding is the root of many disputes worldwide as well as within conflicting religious traditions. The implementation of interfaith dialogue at USU would help students “appreciate compassion, peace, love and harmony, which are tenets of many religions” (Leonard). Utah State University could easily model interfaith programs after the Salt Lake City interfaith program, as well as using information and people power from the interfaith discussion and research USU’s Dr. Glass-Coffin is in the midst of.

An idea suggested to help USU cultivate a climate that is tolerant of diverse religions was the implementation of “faith-zones.” These faith zones would be much like the Ally program, which is recognized nationwide as a place or person that supports the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, and allied (LGBTQA) community. An interfaith counterpart would look similar in terms of a safe place or person who is supportive of a diversity of faiths. It would give students a person or place to go where they were guaranteed to not be judged or scrutinized for their religious traditions. This idea was suggested by a professor who is not a member of the LDS church. In the past, she had run into difficulty advising LDS students who seemed to trust her less because she was not a

church member. Having “interfaith allies” would give students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to connect with one another as well as reach out to other students who would benefit from interfaith practices.

Another great suggestion fostered through Dr. Glass-Coffin’s studies is to offer a general education course that teaches interfaith literacy and discusses interfaith opportunities. This course would help build the capacity for interfaith dialogue as well as the recognition that “high education includes the health of a whole person (body, mind, spirit, relationship)” (Glass-Coffin). This inclusive atmosphere can be recognized and supported by upper administration but has to be embraced by the student body in order to be effective. This is why I would like to see a student-driven movement away from “Mormon bashing” and the judgment of non-Mormons based on their religious traditions and toward an inclusive interfaith environment that fosters the “compassion, peace, love, and harmony” so beautifully described by the SLC interfaith program.

It seems like we have lost sight of the goal and beauty of faith. We have become elitist in an inclusive tradition. We, as a culture, have twisted and manipulated words and changed the meaning of faith and spirituality. We have backed these words into a dark alley where no one goes unless they are looking for trouble. Why have we pushed what is often times our largest piece of identity so far away that we don’t even feel comfortable discussing it? USU’s students, staff, and faculty are vehicles for this culture of religious taboo. We burden ourselves with this stigma that openly discussing traditions, religion, and spirituality are poison in a learning environment when it is so clearly the antidote.

When I tell people I am a student at Utah State, the following sentence is usually, “Oh, I didn’t know you’re Mormon,” or, “Aren’t there lots of Mormons there?” To understand the implications of the Mormon majority, you need not

quantify the member, but rather live and feel the implications. You feel it through not understanding what FHE stands for, or thinking every bishop's name is "Rick" because you always hear members talk about their "bishopric". You feel it through the criticisms you receive for "unique" beliefs. This feeling of being misplaced or misinterpreted is a huge struggle for students at Utah State University. This struggle must be addressed in order to give students the opportunity of a wholesome higher education.

My personal interfaith journey has given me the tools and capacity to practice interfaith as well as promote it. An LDS Bishop in Dr. Glass-Coffin's roundtable discussion suggested visiting other church's services with the intention of finding common ground and building understanding. This really struck me and made me reflect on my own personal religious literacy, a literacy that I had originally felt secure and confident in. My feelings of security and confidence were really barriers I had put up to avoid the fact that I was embarrassingly illiterate in my religious beliefs as well as beliefs in my surroundings. Upon realizing my fault, I researched local churches to attend, hoping to gain some insight into this taboo world of religion. I eased into it. The first church I attended was the St. Jerome Catholic Newman Center near campus. This wasn't much of a stretch for me, given I am baptized Catholic and have family members devout to this religion. It ended up being a really beautiful sermon that talked about time commitments and doing what is best for you and those around you. The message I took away was a message of love and compassion for both myself and others. The next Sunday was spent in Boise with my mom. She regularly attends a non-denominational Christian church. The sermon preached was about forgiveness and how crucial it is in our relationships with each other and with God. Again, I left with lingering feelings of love and compassion for one another. Upon explaining my interfaith mission and

tolerant religious pluralism to my mom, she asked me when I planned to sit in on an LDS sacrament. Somehow I had completely disregarded the LDS church as being a vital part of my interfaith journey. My mom caught me participating in the same behavior I was working so hard against.

The following Sunday, cap sleeve t-shirt under my spaghetti strap dress, I attended an LDS sermon. I attended knowing that my original basis of college success (not going into the Institute building) would be surrendered. The bishop preached about the importance of family and all of the benefits a family provides to an individual's well-being. It was a talk based around love and compassion. It finally hit me that the love and compassion we as USU students have been so desperate for is found in every church and every person regardless of their religious traditions. Our college experience shouldn't be measured by the conflicts we avoid (in my case, the religions we avoid), but rather measured by the conflicts we confront and embrace.

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1. Aside from religion, what factors dissociate students and peers from interacting with and accepting one another? How could these conflicts be resolved?
2. In her essay, Emily Blake discusses how even members of a dominant group can sometimes feel criticized. Have you ever been in this situation? If so, how did you react? How did you resolve that feeling? If not, how would you handle the situation?
3. Are you persuaded at all by this essay? What evidence/research do you feel was the most compelling to prove the author's argument?
4. How does the title of this essay affect the way you read it? Does it make you defensive? Excited? Intrigued?
5. Do you think implementing interfaith discussion groups on USU campus would be successful? Why or why not? Would you attend an interfaith roundtable?
6. Do you agree with the quote "high education includes the health of a whole person (body, mind, spirit, relationship)"? What does this mean to you?
7. Discuss the elements of ethos, pathos, and logos in this essay. Does this essay appeal to one of these more than the others? If so, which one?

KRISTINA FORSYTH

Kristina is a senior at Utah State University, studying Family, Consumer, and Human Development. She enjoys singing with her husband, camping, and spending time with her family. Kristina is from Farmington, Utah, and is the oldest of three girls. She decided to do her research paper on autism and technology because of her mom's work as a one-on-one aid for children with disabilities.



Having heard stories about how basic technology was used in the classroom, Kristina decided to do more in-depth research to find out how technology can help children and adults with autism lead normal lives in today's society.

BACKGROUND

iPad = Miracle! This may seem like a bit of an overstatement to the average person, but for families living with an Autistic child it couldn't be truer. Kristina Forsyth uses APA format to explain how technology can help an Autistic child's learning and development. The use of APA style in this essay allows readers to quickly find information on the benefits of using technology in working with Autistic children, the research behind it, as well as success stories. Life with an Autistic child can be challenging, but there are resources that can help.

AUTISM & TECHNOLOGY

Kristina Forsyth

You are six years old, playing in a room with other children, but you don't notice them much. They try to move closer to you, to play with you, and you move away, content to play by yourself. The other children are unpredictable. That makes you nervous. The grown-ups are talking to you, and you turn your head, not wanting to look them in the eye, because it makes you feel awkward. You don't know how to communicate with them so they will understand. You hear an unexpectedly loud noise, and jump a little, startled. You are easily startled, and you don't like that. Some people call you stupid because you are different, but you know they are wrong. You just do things differently. You have autism.

AUTISM

Every parent wants the best for their offspring. So, to a parent, having a child diagnosed with autism can be a fearful and stressful time, especially if they are unfamiliar with the disorder and how it will affect their child's life, as well as their own. Becoming well informed about autism and the research that has been done can help make the situation easier, less stressful, and can help life be as normal as possible. Many parents and researchers alike have found that there are multiple ways to use technology to help autistic children learn to communicate better, as well as adapt to social situations. Learning how to integrate technology in the home is something that is very beneficial to parents of these children. To understand why technology is a positive influence to bring into the home, it is important to understand what autism is.

Autism Spectrum Disorders, or ASD, are “five com-

plex, brain-based disorders that affect a person's behavior as well as social and communication skills" (Autism Science Foundation, 2013). The Center for Disease Control says this about ASD: "Many people with ASDs also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, and reacting to different sensations. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary—from gifted to severely challenged" (Autism Science Foundation, 2013). Classic autism is the most common of the ASDs, and many people do not understand how to interact with people with autism because of their challenge with social skills (Autism Science Foundation, 2013). The Autism Science Foundation describes some of the other behaviors that are common with autism, listing a "resistance to change," as well as an "insistence on sameness" (Autism Science Foundation, 2013). In other words, autistic children like predictability. And nothing is more unpredictable than other humans.

AUTISM & TECHNOLOGY

Because humans are so unpredictable, Autistic children are naturally drawn to technology. Psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen, director of the University of Cambridge's Autism Research Center, describes the draw to technology like this: "you can pretty much guess what a computer is going to do next about 90 percent of the time, but human interactions obey very few predictable laws" (Mone, 2010). Simon Baron-Cohen and his team conducted an experiment using a child-sized robot named Bandit to try and engage an autistic child in play. They programmed Bandit to do simple movements, doing "come-here" gestures and trying to encourage the child to interact with the robot. The robot succeeded, with the child coming up to explore Bandit and showing curiosity. Their hope is that through more research and experiments, they can use Bandit to eventually be a "catalyst" for "social interaction," leading the children to be more engaging with other humans (Mone, 2010).

AUTISM,
TECHNOLOGY,
& RESEARCH

Some researchers have theorized that combining old therapy tricks and technology can produce new results.

Bandit's creators aren't the only ones interested in the autism and technology combination; Autism Speaks has reported on other experiments being done to help understand Autism using technology. One

technology being used is "a sensory wristband that collects information on responses" (Ownes, 2013). Matthew Goodwin from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and his team are using the information to understand what makes Autistic children act out and to predict, and hopefully prevent, melt downs. They acknowledge the difficulties researchers face because every autistic child has unique circumstances, but try to find ways to use technology to help everyone (Ownes, 2013). Another study being done uses a "candid camera in the home . . . [capturing] a panorama of home activity that allows the MIT team to track how nonverbal children with autism communicate their desires in their home environment" (Ownes, 2013). Their goal is to learn what interactions encourage them to speak, so they can learn to help a more widespread population of autistic children learn communication skills.

Some researchers have theorized that combining old therapy tricks and technology can produce new results. One technique that has been used in therapy for many years is equine psychotherapy. "Equine therapy is the discipline of using horses as a means to provide metaphoric experiences in order to promote emotional growth" (Equine Psychotherapy, 2008). Therapist Tina Caswell took it one step further to address the issue of communication skills by using the traditional technique of equine therapy and also giving the children iPads

with a program that generates speech. (Ithaca College, 2013).

Caswell, pleased with the outcome, says:

What I'm seeing in our Strides sessions is a lot of firsts, it's the first time the children have been on horseback, the first time many of them are using iPads with speech software, and more important, the first time they've had any kind of access to self-expression. Parents also tell me it's the first time they've been able to have a two-way conversation with their kids. It's wonderful when the children can express basic wants, but what we're seeing through this therapy goes beyond that. Children are doing more than requesting food and toys. For the first time, they are telling narratives and sharing feelings. (Ithaca College, 2013)

As shown by Caswell's success, combining different therapy types can be a very promising way to find new results.

This concept of two-way conversation and self-expression is not limited to Caswell's research; Rhonda McEwen works at the Institute of Communication Culture and Information Technology at the University of Toronto Mississauga. She and her team observed classrooms using technology for autistic children, and found that "using the touch devices, the study participants [autistic children] demonstrated knowledge gathered throughout their education that could not be elicited via traditional assessment means that rely on verbal communication. We can surmise that the receptive communication skills are more advanced than first thought" (Mozes, 2013). Basically, they found that the students were learning and retaining much more than anyone realized. McEwen's team has observed 32 children, using both iPads and iPods in their classroom, and have seen a 75% boost of motivation, attention spans, and social interactions. So much research has been done showing promising outcomes, and as a parent of an autistic child, this research is crucial (Mozes, 2013). By using technology, parents can help their child learn to communicate successfully.

AUTISM, TECHNOLOGY, & THE HOME

Parents reading this research may scratch their heads and think “How am I supposed to do that on my own?” Though these studies are not easily implemented by parents in their own homes, there are ways for parents of autistic children to use technology to help encourage communication and interaction. Studies done in classrooms are some of the easiest to implement in the home, because they are already being done in an adult-to-child setting; there is no need for a therapist, researcher, or psychologist. Parents may be even more successful, because they have the ability to spend more one-on-one time with the child, where in a classroom there are many other children claiming the attention of the teacher. Working parents, as well as parents with many children, may say that they simply do not have the time to spend one-on-one with their child, making it difficult to be successful in their use of technology. However, parents of all types still have the advantage over teachers because they know their child on a personal level and can connect with them, making the time they spend be quality rather than quantity time. Parents get to see the progress over a longer time-span and can experience the growth and success, being able to interact with their child in a way they have never been able to before. Though it may be more difficult for parents as many of them are trying to do these things by themselves, there are several programs to help make it possible for parents to find the same success that researchers and therapists have found.

Another concern might be a lack of training; how can a parent know how to best help their autistic child? This is not an uncommon concern, and because of that, there are many programs committed to teaching both parents and children how to effectively use technology. The Autism Cares Foundation has an iPad Enrichment Program that is “dedicated to using technology to assist people with autism” (Autism Cares Founda-

tion, 2013). They offer “an opportunity for parents to work directly with their child utilizing iPad educational apps” (Autism Cares Foundation, 2013). They claim that using technology to help autistic children makes learning “functional and relevant,” “fun,” and “creative” (Autism Cares Foundation, 2013). Their website gives a list of places a parent can get apps for an iPad, and offers tutorials on how to use them effectively.

Autism Speaks also has a program for ASD diagnosed people. The iTaalk Autism Foundation’s goal is:

to train and educate families, educators, and service providers on the basic uses of the interactive technological products (e.g. iPad, iPod, Android) for individuals with developmental disabilities; and, to supply/provide interactive technological products to individuals with a Medical ASD diagnosis. (Autism Speaks, 2013)

In other words, these people are trying to train parents and provide their children with the technology. On their website, itaalk.org, they give a list of their top 50 apps that are made specifically for children with autism, some free, some with low prices. Their website is an excellent source for parents to find information and assistance to enrich their child’s life.

Parents concerned with price argue that, even though these programs help some, they cannot provide iPads to every autistic person in the world. While that is true, there are other ways to find affordable products. Using an older generation product is one way, as well as using sites like EBay and Amazon to find cheaper but still good quality items. Also available are generic brand products. Instead of buying an iPad, parents can try Google’s Nexus, Amazon’s Kindle, and Samsung’s Galaxy tablet along with many others (Spoonauer, 2013). Simple internet research can yield many selections for every preference and budget. Almost every product you buy will also come with some way to learn how to use it; some products have manuals that come with them, some have interactive tutorials

as you first turn on the device. Parents should not be worried about having “name-brand” products that are out of their price range. Just like with food and clothing, store brand works as well, if not better, than name brand. What is most important is that these children are receiving the tools they need to have a quality life, and to not be held back because of a disorder.

AUTISM & TECHNOLOGY: THE RESULTS

Many parents have shared their thoughts on technology and how it has made a difference in their child’s life. Lynn, who has a three-year-old child, said:

My son is three years old and after months of using my laptop and Android phone to play games, we decided to get him an iPad. Best. Decision. Ever. Yes, it was expensive but well worth the money & in just two weeks, my son is communicating for the first time with Tap To Talk. He is playing games he never had patience/focus/attention for before like match games and puzzles. iPad = Miracle in our house!! (Autism Speaks, 2013)

Lynn is not the only one. Laura, who has an autistic daughter, shared this about her experience using an iPad:

My daughter has the iPad and we LOVE it!! She uses it primarily for educational apps, games and downloading her favorite music... We all actually use her iPad but it was the best buy we’ve ever made. It’s practical for the whole family and the apps are endless. If you go on autismspeaks.org they have some recommended apps for the iPad for kids with autism. (Rodrigues, 2011)

These women, and others like them, are proof that, not only do teachers and researchers say technology works, other parents do as well.

It is important to consider all effects of any treatment for a disorder, and in the case of autism and technology, research proves that it is a helpful, useful, life-changing tool.

Autistic children are naturally drawn to technology. They like the predictability of it. They like that it's made to be used on their level, using pictures and touch-screens. Parents can help their child learn to communicate and can teach their children to be more social. Having a child diagnosed with autism does not have to be scary or stressful. Being taught and informed about all the many ways technology can improve a child's life is all it takes to make the first step. All parents want the best for their children. Technology can give it to them.

You are six years old, playing in a room with other children. They don't bother you much. They try to move closer to you, to play with you, and you move towards them, happy to engage with the other children. The other children are unpredictable. But you aren't so nervous. They look at the tablet in your hand, and you press a button, making them laugh. The grown-ups are talking to you, and you turn your head, seeing what it is they want. They ask you a question, and you know exactly how to communicate your answer. Noises don't bother you very much; you just keep doing your own thing. Some people call you stupid because you are different, but you know they are wrong. You just do things differently. You have autism.

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NOTE

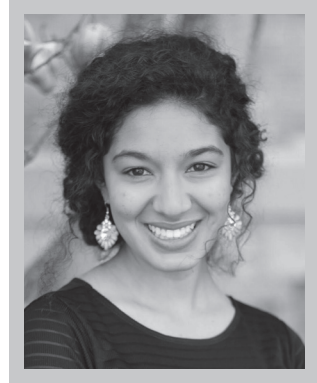
This essay and its accompanying Works Cited is formatted in APA (American Psychological Association) style. All other citations in this anthology are formatted in MLA style.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the benefits of writing in APA format? How would this essay have been different if it were written in MLA format? Give an example of how a quote from this essay would have been cited using MLA.
2. In what ways has technology helped you learn or develop a new skill? How does that relate to children with Autism using technology to learn how to speak or develop social skills?
3. If you were to write an opposing argument to this essay, how would you present your argument? What points would you focus on?
4. Were the quotes used effectively to support the argument? What changes or additions could have been made to make the essay even stronger?
5. Forsyth begins and ends her essay with a scenario from life as an Autistic child. Do you think this adds or distracts from the main point of the essay? Why?
6. The targeted audience for this essay is parents of Autistic children. Do you think that the author addresses all of the major questions or concerns parents may have regarding Autism and their child? Make a list of possible questions or concerns not addressed in this essay and ideas on how you might address them.
7. Discuss the ethos, pathos, and logos in this essay.

ASHLEY BROWN

Ashley Brown is a junior majoring in International Studies with a double minor in Asian Studies and Chinese. She is from New Mexico and was pleasantly surprised about the diversity that Utah State has to offer. She was inspired to write about diversity because she grew up in a bi-racial family. She has been influenced since birth by her parents' different cultures. Being involved in various multicultural organizations on campus and having the opportunity to Study Abroad in China has contributed to her love for diversity. She enjoys traveling, reading, watching movies, and volunteering. Ashley's biggest role models are Martin Luther King Jr. and Malala Yousafzai, who help inspire her to be an advocate for social change and equality.



“We must believe in the power and strength of our words.
Our words can change the world.” -Malala Yousafzai

As a child growing up in a bi-racial family, Brown wondered why there wasn't a Disney princess that she could culturally relate to. She was concerned that the only princess she shared any similarity with was Jasmine, and even then, the only thing they had in common was similar skin tones. Brown questioned why there wasn't a princess for her. What message was Disney trying to send?

In her persuasive research essay, Brown addresses the topic of diversity in Disney, arguing that in a world with a variety of cultures, it would be beneficial for little girls and for Disney if the company created more ethnic princesses with a variety of backgrounds. Brown's personal experience with this subject drives the point that Disney may unintentionally be excluding many girls by limiting the ethnicity of their princesses.

BACKGROUND

DIVERSITY IN DISNEY

Ashley Brown

The Disney Corporation is an iconic symbol of American culture. It has the ability to influence society and create emotions of happiness. Disney gives kids the possibility to dream and strive for success. Every time someone thinks about Disney, they feel a sense of comfort and happiness. As we've grown up in America, Disney has influenced all of our childhoods and inspires us to build ideas. These ideas help us develop our sense of self. As Walt Disney said, "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them" (qtd. in "Walt"). He argues that each individual creates a dream. If children can hold on to these dreams, they will have the ambition to strive for success.

Disney has created an industry of fictional characters that kids idolize. For example, girls look up to the Disney princesses. The princesses have good messages and values that parents approve of for their little girls. Girls see themselves in these characters, and they believe that they could be princesses. If a girl looks like a princess, she is more likely to idolize her and pretend to be her. Most girls choose to be the princess that looks like them. Having a "look alike" princess creates familiarity and gives girls the mentality that they can be that successful one day. Disney has created many different princesses: Belle, Ariel, Jasmine, Cinderella, Mulan, and many more. As Disney expands their number of princesses, they add more diversity, but is that enough?

The princess industry has created millions of dollars for Disney. A blog post by Vincent Ng states that "in 2001, sales for the Disney Consumer Products division was generating \$300 million. Fast forward to 2012, and the Disney Princess

franchise earned a whopping \$3 billion in global sales, making them the number one brand for best-selling entertainment products” (1). The princess industry has created huge revenue for Disney. This industry has expanded very rapidly and continues to grow. As Disney produces more ethnic princesses, revenue skyrockets. The few ethnic princesses, such as Tiana and Jasmine, each have made a substantial profit for Disney. According to Charisse Jones in her article “Princess Tiana Joins Disney Royal Family,” she states that the new princess Tiana is estimated to sell about the same as a Barbie (1). Even though princess dolls are popular, Barbie is always one step ahead; however, the creation of Princess Tiana profited as high as a Barbie, making millions for Disney. This profit boost came from an African-American princess. This princess made it big because a lot of girls could identify with her. They had the same skin color, hair, etc. They saw beauty in this princess, which helps them see beauty within themselves.

As more consumers push for ethnic princesses, I understand that it is hard to create them. Disney doesn’t want to offend a specific culture nor have its customers disapprove. It is hard to create a balance of progression but keep everyone happy, and it is difficult to incorporate these cultures into movies. There can be lots of repercussions if they display the culture wrong. People may get offended because they portray the culture wrong or because they’re being stereotypical. This probably will happen. A small minority of people will vocalize their thoughts, but Disney must think of the good which diversity brings. They hold the ability to create these new progressive ideals. As one of Disney’s customers, I can assure them that whatever they create will be successful. Anything that Disney creates is always integrated within our society and embraced by most. Most of the time, Disney’s messages create new ideals within our society. We have all come to understand that Disney influences our society. It has the ability to appeal to

many people and convey messages that other corporations just can't.

Disney's reputation is well known and continues to grow. Their reputation has grown due to the influence princesses have on girls. Princesses possess certain traits that girls admire. They have class, beauty, and charisma that girls want to possess. I remember being a young girl and wanting to be a Disney princess. I remember all my friends choosing a princess that looked like them. Most of my friends were Anglo-American, so there were so many dolls for them to choose from. Most of my friends were either Cinderella or Belle. I always had to pick Jasmine because she had the closest skin tone to mine. Jasmine was Arabic, so culturally I could not relate to her, but because she was the only "ethnic" princess, I always chose her. I remember questioning why there wasn't a princess that looked like me or a princess from my culture. Was I not as good as my friends because of my skin tone? Did my beauty not matter to the world? I was confused for a long time about why someone like me couldn't be a princess.

In 1998, *Mulan*, the first Asian princess, was created. I remember going to see *Mulan* in theaters because she was the new princess that was different, and on top of that, she was an independent woman. I believed that *Mulan* was a good role-model, and even though she didn't look like me, I had the ability to understand her message. These multicultural princesses influence the way American girls see princesses and themselves. According to Fanpop blog, the Top Five good role models that are princesses include all the diverse princesses (dweeb). These princesses not only have created diversity within Disney, but convey positive messages for young girls to admire. These princesses have paved the way for Disney to create more diversity and highlight issues of race, sexuality, and feminism. I believe that it is easier to convey these controversial messages within ethnic princesses because there is not a

Most of my friends were either Cinderella or Belle. I always had to pick Jasmine because she had the closest skin tone to mine.

standard that has been created for them. Each is individually unique. For example, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Ariel, and Snow White are Anglo-American princesses that dream of finding a prince. The standard that has been created for them and portrayed to young girls is that they are supposed to be beautiful and wait for true love. But the

ethnic princesses, such as Mulan, Jasmine, and Tiana, convey different messages. They show that women can be independent and successful. They also show that you can find love without having to wait for it. They hold the ideals of what true beauty is. They show that true beauty means being independent, courageous, and fighting for what you want. It is easier to represent these messages in ethnic princesses because each one has created a different standard and continually revises the previous standard. Disney has created these new standards and has the ability to create more standards that girls admire.

These ethnic princesses also have the ability to connect with girls from all over the world. Disney is an iconic symbol for America, but has been increasing its image all over the world. There are many new Disney parks in different places such as Paris, Tokyo, and Shanghai. According to Disney's website, "Shanghai Disney Resort will be Disney's second resort in China and sixth globally" (Disney). The global community is becoming aware of the happiness that Disney can bring. This happiness creates the iconic love for Disney. There is a Disney Park located on every continent (Disney). People are becoming more interested in Disney and teaching their children about the messages that are presented by Disney. Now,

the Disney princess audience is not limited just to the United States. Many girls around the world are not Anglo-American, so they cannot identify with the majority of the princesses. The few ethnic princesses that are created only reach a few cultures in the world. Tiana connects with African-American girls, not African girls. They may look the same, but their cultures are completely different. Mulan connects with a huge population of girls in China, but ignores the other Asian cultures. By creating new diverse princesses, Disney will be expanding its audience on a global scale. The global community is the new audience Disney needs to connect with. This community is populating rapidly. They want to be Americanized and want to understand the American ideals. If Disney wants to be a powerful influence in cultures around the world, they must expand their audience. This global community will help bring revenue for Disney. In the article "Disney's New Princess" by Nina Stochilic, she writes, "In 1992, *Aladdin* featured the first non-white princess and was one of Disney's first movies to gross more overseas than it did domestically" (1). Stochilic argues that Princess Jasmine was one of the most popular princesses that Disney ever made because she not only captured an American audience, but a world audience. By having more diverse princesses, girls from all over the world can identify with them. The creation of these princesses will bring in lots of revenue for Disney; they will also create a positive image about beauty and diversity for girls.

Also, by appealing to a global community, Disney can educate the American youth as well. With the creation of new figures that identify with a specific culture, they educate the American population. The easiest way for someone to learn about the world is through movies. If there are princesses that exemplify different cultures, then people will learn how these cultures work. For example, when *Mulan* was introduced, this movie highlighted Chinese culture. *Mulan* was not allowed to

fight in the army because only men were allowed to, highlighting the patriarchal society in China. American youth learned about the unfairness that has been embedded in the Chinese culture. Also, in *Pocahontas*, it gives life to American history. This movie depicts the real struggle that Native Americans had when the English were colonizing their lands. This movie helped Americans understand and get a sense of the suffering that the Native population endured during colonization. These movies educate people about life. Another great example of diversity is *Princess Jasmine*. Jasmine is diverse because her story incorporates real-life issues. For example, Jasmine wasn't allowed to marry just anyone, only someone her father picked out. This situation is paralleled with the Middle Eastern culture. Most girls are not allowed to make decisions without their father's approval. This situation, which is a representation of real life, helps educate people and have the audience connect with the characters. These diverse princesses are just a small example of how diversity helps educate people.

Many messages are conveyed by creating diverse princesses. The creation of these princesses portrays an image that allows young girls to be okay with who they are. By producing a spectrum of different skin colors, young girls realize that beauty comes from within, not by the color of their skin. By having more ethnic princesses, girls will learn that being just the way they are is acceptable. This attitude helps girls from all over the world generate better self-esteem.

It's time to stop tippy-toeing around diversity. Disney needs to step up and become more diverse. It's lacking in growth and falling behind in revenue because it does not connect with a majority of its audience. Most children today are becoming more culturally aware or integrated because that is the future. Disney is falling short of this phenomenon. In the early 1900s, Disney was pioneering with diversity when creating "*It's a Small World*." No reputable business had thought

to incorporate many different cultures into a song and use it to make a profit. Disney's daring decision to do this helped spark a revolution. People started to feel alive and accepted because they were being recognized. Decades later, the princess industry was thriving; it was attracting attention for so many young American girls. Later, this industry created some of the most well-known characters Disney has, such as Mulan and Princess Jasmine. These small steps Disney has taken are not enough. It needs to stop shying away from cultures by creating fictional, non-human characters to represent diversity. For example, in the movie *Shark Tale*, it represents a predominantly African-American culture, but instead of using humans to portray this, it uses fish (Lugo-Lugo, Bloodsworth-Lugo 168). This movie is about a fish which gets in trouble with some gangster sharks who believe that he killed his brother, but really, it was an accident. The whole movie is about Oscar the fish proving his innocence. The scene of the movie could be compared to New York City or any other cosmopolitan city. This movie highlights a certain culture within America, but it lacks the courage to portray this diversity in a human form. I understand that highlighting specific cultures could be controversial and may have lots of backlash, but Disney holds the power to educate instead of profile. In order to educate people, they need to integrate humans into movies. People will feel more connected with a character that is an actual human who looks like them or is from the same culture.

In conclusion, Disney needs to create more diversity within its movies. It is an influential force on American society, as well as different societies around the world. Disney has the ability to create movies that educate people, and the Disney princesses are influential characters that have been created. As Disney has made a little progress with creating ethnic princesses, it is still not enough. I would like to encourage Disney to expand on the Princesses by creating a Latina princess or

East Indian one. To go beyond that, I hope that Disney would create movies that incorporate different cultures. By creating these movies, Disney has the ability to connect with a global audience. This audience will help bring revenue to the company as well as more insight to the different cultures around the world. Having diverse movies will also help educate the youth. By Disney portraying specific cultures or ethnicities within a movie, kids are more likely to realize the diversity in the world. They will be educated and hopefully want to expand in their knowledge. As Disney becomes well-known globally, it needs to remember the power it has on the world. Disney creates emotions that make us feel like children forever. The happiness and memories brought by watching your favorite childhood classic will never be lost. I hope that by the time I have children, diversity within Disney will have grown.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you agree with Brown that Disney needs to continue to diversify the cultures and races of their princesses? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever had any experiences where you felt excluded because of your race? Give an example. How did that make you feel?
3. Brown argues that Disney Company has a huge influence in society, impacting both children and adults who have grown up watching and purchasing Disney movies and products. Do you see that same influence in your own life? How so?
4. If you had written this same essay, what would you have added or left out? Why?
5. Disney has often been criticized for not representing history accurately in their princess movies, particularly in the case of Pocahontas. Brown argues, however, that the cultural struggle depicted in this film was real and that Disney is educating viewers through its princess films. Do you agree that Disney is doing well at educating children? Or do you believe that Disney is not doing well at educating children? Why?
6. Overall, do you think Disney's impact on society has been positive or negative? Explain.
7. What does Brown's personal experience add to this piece?

MADELEINE KIMBALL

Maddy is a Music Therapy major with a minor in Psychology. She grew up in Lubbock, Texas, and is the oldest child in a family with five kids. Music and writing are two of her greatest passions, but she also loves reading, gaming, painting, and Netflixing. The inspiration for this essay came from wanting to take a more abstract object and spinning it in a new, very personal way. Maddy's

family and loved ones mean the world to her, and she is grateful for the experiences she has had, especially at Utah State.



Madeleine Kimball reflects on her life through the very thing that allows us to live: blood. As a carefree and innocent little girl she first saw her father's blood due to a mishap in the backyard. Later, it was her own blood as a confused, self-conscious adolescent that helped her realize the delicateness of life, and sometimes even the need for release.

Kimball's language and the unique structure of this essay allows the reader to consider personal wounds, physical or emotional, and in some way helps the wounded know they are not alone.

BACKGROUND

THE RIVER WITHIN

Madeleine Kimball

For a long while, the sight of it evaded me. Carefree, happy, and childishly optimistic, I flitted through my first childhood years like a butterfly, seeking all things colorful and thinking the whole world was sweet. However, owing partly to the fact that three younger brothers soon trotted along after me, I discovered that my real interests consisted of slaying dragons in that wicked jungle, my backyard, and riding the noble steed that was my two-wheeler. I took particular pleasure in the knowledge that, as the oldest kid, I could jump higher, run faster, and reach higher than any other child in the family, a point I frequently brought up, much to my brothers' annoyance.

Therefore, in the summer before my seventh birthday, when lightning attacked the monstrous tree that claimed dominance over the next-door neighbor's yard, who better to aid my father in the clean-up than his *oldest* and thus *most-capable* child? The storm sent chunks of enormous branches plummeting over the fence, eventually landing mere feet from my beloved swing-set. Because of this fact, I felt more than justified in helping my father, even if that only meant picking up sticks of varying sizes. The smallest branch was thinner than my pinky, but the biggest bough stretched to almost two feet in diameter, an impressive feat to adult and child alike.

My father has borrowed a chainsaw from a neighbor; I see him in my head to this day, attempting to slice through the thick wood. "Stay back," he commands firmly. I don't move from my position of ten feet away. I know that tone, and I don't dare disobey it. I watch, fascinated, as the terrifying blade roars to life, screeching its approval as man and nature collide, sending wood chips careening everywhere.

I don't recall exactly how it happened—for all I know, I could have turned my back—but I remember hearing my father cry out as the chainsaw's roar fades to a purr. "Daddy?!" I squeal in alarm, whirling to face him. At the time, I had never heard my dad make any such noise. "I'm fine, sweetheart," my father quickly says. His tone is meant to soothe, but his back is turned to me, so I take one step closer to him as the chainsaw drops to the ground. "Stay here," he says in strangely light voice, as though everything is fine. "You promise?"

In those days, keeping promises came easily to me. I am puzzled, but quickly respond, "Promise."

"Good."

He marches hastily inside, his arms tucked close to his body. The door closes very quickly. Curious and apprehensive, I take one step closer to the chainsaw, afraid to go near it even if the beast is silent. And then I see it: on the ground where my father had stood, something dark and crimson stains the grass.

It wasn't until I was much older that I realized he never wanted me to see him bleed.

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

—Winston Churchill

Blood; the internal superhighway through which nutrients, oxygen, and many other imperative life-substances travel to every destination in the body. A combination of many different types of living cells, each possessing distinct functions and water, "blood itself is alive" ("Blood"). Red blood cells within the crimson phenomenon carry waste and nutrients as though they were taxi cars, limousines, and garbage trucks. White blood cells, the ambulances and squad cars, respond first to any call of infection or disease ("Red Blood Cells"). A substance, blood keeps each of us alive, though we hardly think about it until the superhighway ruptures and millions of microscopic

vehicles spill out of our skin. Nevertheless, should that ever occur, platelets, the construction autos of the blood, staunch the traffic flow of blood and begin to make repairs. A living substance, blood resides within each of us, keeping us alive.

“For life of the flesh is in the blood.”

—Leviticus 17:11, King James Version

Fast-forward to what I consider two of the worst years of my life. Far from flitting to-and-fro, now I ducked for cover and attempted to survive within the walls of middle school, paranoid about losing friends and terrified of growth and body changes. A time where just about everyone, not just me—as I thought—struggled with identity. I constantly felt plagued by the blistering sores of insecurity.

Around this time, I began the almost-expected teenage girl practice of running to my room, slamming doors, and crying, usually all in very quick succession. As I recall it now, I cannot think of any particular thing that upset me, which only further underlines the pointlessness of my emotional upheavals. Still, while to the rest of my family it seemed as though I shed tears over stepping through a miniscule puddle. In my eyes, I felt as though I was drowning in the vastest ocean.

Perhaps it is because of this that, on the ill-fated day when I attempted for the first time to shave my legs and, for some stupid reason, my arms as well, for good measure, I inevitably cut my arm with the unlathered blade. My father walked in and, after a quick assessment, assumed the worst. I hardly blame him now. I can only imagine how that must have looked to him, with me standing over the sink, crying at my inability to get “anything right,” my wrist held out under the tap, the water in the basin turned cherry-red.

An eons-long discussion followed which I felt annoyed with at the time. It was obvious to me that I wasn’t cutting

my wrists and was certainly sound in the head, but my father had seen too many struggling teenagers in his line of work to ignore any warning signs. Though I would not have guessed it at the time, my father also suffered from extreme anxiety, a fact which, out of concern, he hid from us children. Though I had never touched a blade with the intent to harm myself, and haven't to this day, it would be a lie to say that I had not at least contemplated it when life's ocean threatened to capsize me.

Perhaps, had I not seen his face whiten at the time, drained of the same substance that dripped down the sink from my arm, the temptation to perform the action would have been far greater.

"It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood."

—Macbeth, Act III, Scene 4

From as far back as the ancient Egyptians, bloodletting served as one of the primary medical treatments for treating physical as well as mental illnesses. A person would receive a wound and then bleed it out for a length of time, under the assumption of "letting the demons out" or "bringing balance" to the body ("Early Practices"). The practice was disabled hundreds of years later as people began to understand the necessity of keeping blood, and thereby nutrients, under the skin. Blood sacrifices were common in ancient South American rituals, with giving blood seen as a great honor as well as a way to draw nearer to or commune with the gods (Maestri).

The blood of men lies splattered and stained across the history of the human race, with ancient civilizations and countries who sought glory in bloodshed and triumph in war. Even on the silver screen, from silent films of days long past to the newest arrivals at the box-office, the substance that gives us life has been modeled and copied, only to be thrown on actors, bringing audiences to theaters in droves. For "in these uncertain

days of high energy consumption, we need to bleed all the value from corn subsidies that we can” (Lucchesi). It is because of blood’s constant appearance and portrayal in the lives of men that it almost seems a little wonder that when an individual experiences traumas of life or extreme emotional pain, slicing one’s skin open appears to be the only release or alternative.

“*Of all that is written, I love only what a person has
written with his own blood.*”
—*Friedrich Nietzsche*

I sit at my desk in the little apartment paid for by my father and maintained by my grades. I scan my calendar, reading at length the varying assignments of which I must complete by the morrow. I pick at the side of my left thumbnail with my index finger of the same hand, a nervous habit of mine.

Occasionally I scratch the enflamed skin too hard and too much, and blood pools from the hang-nail that I invariably ripped off. With a wince, I glance down at my thumb, slightly exasperated that the blood amount seems a little overboard for such a small cut. I stick my thumb in my mouth, a childish solution, but it solves the problem quicker than getting up and finding a tissue to wipe it off. I taste the blood on my tongue, dull like faded copper. Yet then I see, as I pull my thumb out to examine it a moment later, the real damage lay underneath. Blood quickly fills in the gap of the cut again, but not before I take notice of how deep the wound really is.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does the introduction grab your attention? Did you know from the introduction what this essay is about? What did you think the essay would be about based on the first two paragraphs?
2. Kimball uses various quotes to separate ideas in her essay. Do you think these quotes add to or diminish the effectiveness of her essay? How so?
3. How does Kimball use tense in this essay? How do the different tenses affect your experience as a reader?
4. Can you identify the thesis statement? Does the essay stay focused on the thesis statement?
5. What would you say is the overarching message of this essay?
6. Have you ever had an experience where something you did on accident appeared to be much worse? What was the situation? How was it resolved?
7. Do you feel that the conclusion ties everything together? Was this a strong way to end the essay? Did the conclusion feel abrupt?

DON'T NERF THE ZOMBIES

Brayden Smith

Smith writes one of the best Rogerian style persuasive research essays that we've seen at *Voices* for a long time. He continually acknowledges the opposite points of view, allows them credence, and then makes his strong and persuasive arguments in favor of allowing nerf guns on campus during HvZ. Because he focuses on one person, Eric Olsen, Associate Vice President for USU Student Services, he really zeroes in on his audience and knows the opinions of that audience. No matter how individuals feel about HvZ at USU, this essay illuminates the topic and adds a nuanced and in-depth understanding of what may seem, at first glance, to be an insignificant activity.

Dear Mr. Eric Olsen,

As I'm sure you are aware, the most recent edition of *Humans vs. Zombies* has just taken place here at Utah State University. It was a great success, as always. Players had fun, friendships were formed, and memories were made.

However, I understand that you and some other University officials have taken issue with the use of Nerf guns in the game, and have requested that a partial ban be put into place. You listed a number of concerns, among them the somewhat juvenile nature of the game, the distraction to students who aren't playing the game, and most importantly, safety. These are clearly valid points. If I may, I would like to address them, and offer you some alternate points of view with which you can view the game and what it means to players.

Firstly, you express discontent with the "juvenile nature of the game." This is always the elephant in the room for players and non-players alike. Everyone who goes to USU has experienced this in some form or another. Players have to deal with the smirks and snide remarks offered by non-play-

ers trying to impress their girlfriends, and non-players have to cope with bypassing “humans” or “zombies” and the occasional zombie attack nearby as they walk to class. Players can’t help but feel somewhat sheepish as they walk around campus with neon orange bandannas, rolled-up socks strapped to their chests, and toy guns that say “Ages 6+” on them. I’ve even had little children come up to me and ask, “What game are you guys playing? Can I play with you?”

You also mentioned that the game is a distraction to students not participating. Again, this is a valid concern. It’s hard to not look at a horde of zombies chasing after a couple humans across the quad in the middle of the day, screaming “BRRRAAAAAIIINS!!!” and whooping all the way.

Finally, and most importantly, you expressed several concerns about safety, all of which certainly have merit and validity. I will do my best to address those as well.

In an email to Brice Colby, RHA Events Coordinator and head of the USU chapter of HvZ, you mentioned an incident where out of instinct, a Veteran subdued a player who startled him and broke his Nerf gun. This clearly presents a danger for both Veterans and players alike and is not something we’d like to have happen again. This is a scenario that, if it can be, absolutely should be avoided.

You also referenced “an increasing number of students with serious mental illnesses” that presented a danger as well. In referencing this, you cited the Virginia Tech tragedy, stating, “We live in a day and age where violence on campus is a reality.” Taking steps to reducing the possibility of that reality actually taking place is certainly a goal worth reaching for. Other schools share this fear as well, in fact. Alfred University had an incident where campus was shut down due to reports of a man carrying a gun around campus, only to discover later that it was simply an HvZ player walking around with his Nerf blaster. However, it’s clear that no school is taking any chances. Said

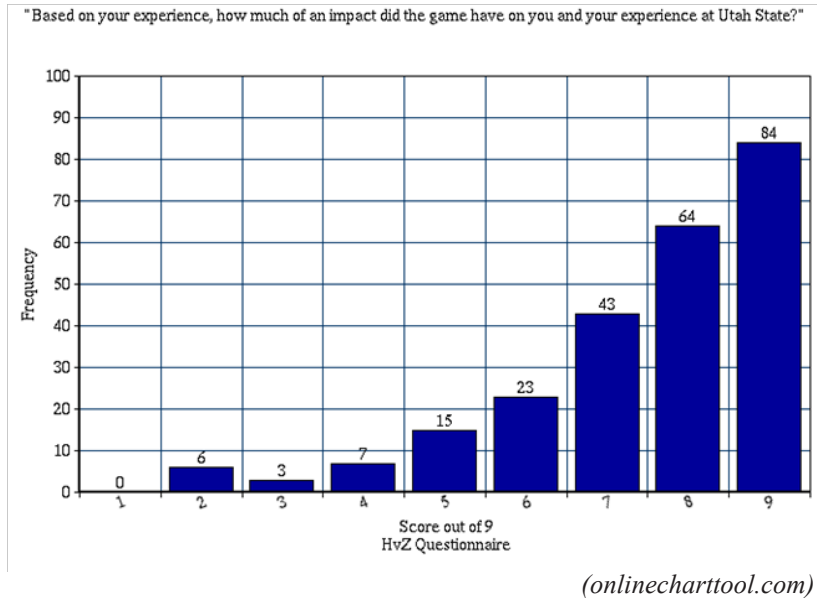
Charles Edmondson, president of Alfred University, “After Virginia Tech, no one would take any report of this nature lightly, and we did not” (*ynn.com*). Some schools, like Bowling Green State University, have banned Nerf entirely (*chronicle.com*).

Clearly, the school has major concerns, all of which are perfectly reasonable and valid. However, Mr. Olsen, as a two-time player and avid fan of the game, I have some alternative perspectives I would like you to look at. While I understand all of yours and the university’s concerns, I was disappointed to hear of the partial ban on Nerf guns. At least in part because of this ban, we saw participation drop from over 850 participants last semester to around 420 this semester, cutting the number of players in half and seriously detracting from the overall experience. I hope that after reading the remainder of my letter, you will re-evaluate the necessity of this new policy.

I speak for all HvZ players when I say that you and I are not as far apart on this issue as you may think. Utah State University is a school that prizes and encourages student involvement and experience more than any school I can think of. The thing I hope to be able to help you understand is that we prize the same thing. HvZ is simply another, if not somewhat unorthodox, way of accomplishing the same objective.

Firstly, the game means much more to many Aggies than some administration officials may realize. When talk of removing Nerf blasters from the game entirely began to occur, a survey was sent out to players, asking them about their experiences with the game. One of the questions asked how much of an impact the game had on players and their experience at Utah State. The average score was a 7.5. I have included a histogram of that question’s results to give you a clearer picture of exactly how high this score is. See below.

These numbers are remarkable. 78% of respondents answered with a seven or higher. Additionally, 84 of the 246 respondents (over one in three) gave the highest possible rating



on how much the game influenced their USU experience. One would be hard-pressed to find many other events, traditions, or aspects of student life here in Logan with such massive influence as this.

Also included in the survey was a comment box for respondents to include any commentary they would like to be brought before the Administration. The comments revealed just how much this game means to some players. For some, HvZ ranks with many events widely considered to be core to USU's identity. One said, "As a Utah state student, I pride myself in basketball games, ASUSU, and now Humans vs. Zombies." When another was talking about his friends at other Utah schools, they said, "They get to have boring College experiences on campus. I don't. I get to have the most fun I have ever had for a full week."

Many wonder why this game has such a powerful effect on many of those who play it. After all, it's just a glorified game of tag. What's so incredibly profound about a game with pretend humans and zombies, who chase each other around

campus with children's toys for a week? The answer is simple: Humans vs. Zombies transcends awkward social barriers and brings people together in a way that no other event, tradition, or organization on campus can. This is accomplished in a number of ways. Put simply, neither side can survive the game alone. Because of this, humans are constantly looking out for other survivors to team up with, and zombies are constantly looking out for other zombies to form a "horde" with. In these groups, friendships are made instantly.

Let me tell you a story about how I experienced this myself. During the last game, I was zombified on the first day. Along with me were three others named Hyrum, Josh, and Mitch. After we had become zombies, we were all angry about what had just happened. So we went out into campus determined to take down some humans in revenge. After an hour or so, we discovered that the four of us made a good team. So we exchanged numbers, and agreed to text if we ever wanted to meet up for another hunt. Now, I consider them to be my newest friends.

This experience was not unique to me. One comment submitted via the survey talked about how the game gave them a "venue to make friends quickly and to have fun with large groups of people," which they acknowledged is "something I usually avoid." Another commented, "Players in the game become instant friends, [and] learn to work together as teams." One talked about how "One of my roommates, who would not leave his computer for any social interaction, actually participated with the rest of the campus for once!" I cannot name a single staple of Utah State University that does this as well as Humans vs. Zombies. I have been to the Howl, basketball games, and frat parties. I'm a True Aggie, and have fallen in love with the city of Logan. I've gotten involved with the LDS Institute, my church callings, Area Government, along with various clubs and organizations around campus where I've

held leadership positions and organized events. And still, after eight heavily involved months of being an Aggie, I have yet to encounter anything that can hold a candle to HvZ's ability to bring hundreds of people together and foster automatic friendships. From what I've seen, it just doesn't exist. There are no cliques. There are no qualifications. There are no prejudices, judgments, or expectations; only players wearing orange bandanas.

Given all this, I think it's unfair to dismiss the game as "juvenile." Is it somewhat ridiculous? Absolutely. However, in my opinion, the administration shouldn't discredit the game's importance to hundreds upon hundreds of students because they personally feel that a game with pretend humans fighting pretend zombies is "juvenile." This game is a core aspect of student life to hundreds of students, and as a school that cares so much about enhancing that very thing, it seems somewhat contradictory to characterize this game as such.

With regards to your concerns of the game being a distraction, this can be addressed with simple rules and regulations put into place by the HvZ Council of War (HvZCoW). Already we have made efforts to do this, asking that players leave non-players alone when playing the game. Violations incur severe penalties from the many moderators officiating the game as they walk to and from class. Additional rules and penalties can be put into place if the need arises.

However, as far as in-class distractions go, HvZ (specifically Nerf guns) should be far down on the list of culprits. In a world where smart phones and laptops are commonly found in the classroom, it has never been easier for students to be distracted in class. This applies not only to those using them, but for those sitting nearby. Nerf guns stand out because they are unorthodox and irregular, but in the worst-case scenario, they catch a couple students' attentions for a couple seconds. Maybe even the professor makes a sarcastic aside comment, like,

“Glad to see you’re surviving the Apocalypse.” However, in a matter of seconds, the distraction is over, and class resumes as normal.

If the school would like to remove major distractions from the classroom environment, Mr. Olsen, I would suggest taking a look at ways to regulate the use of technology in class for things other than productivity. However, banning Nerf guns from classrooms for one week per semester isn’t going to do much to solve the problem. Sure, it may remove a distraction that would not be there otherwise, but at what cost? In my opinion, it isn’t worth the hundreds of students who chose not to play simply because this compromise was reached.

Finally, on a more serious note, I’d like to show you how HvZ is not a safety concern you should be worried about. While it’s important to ensure that USU is a safe place for everyone on campus, this needs to be approached with caution. As far as minor safety concerns go, rules and regulations can be, and have been, enacted to keep players from hazardous areas, such as the TSC patio or staircases. However, I recognize that this is not your chief concern, and that the administration is far more worried about an active shooter on campus.

Here is a scenario I’d like you to consider. HvZ came under fire in 2007, when the horrific events at Virginia Tech took place, after which many called for the game to be banned. However, at Goucher University, the game’s birthplace, President Sanford J. Unger recognized how the game’s benefits far outweighed its drawbacks. Because of this he wrote this in a column for the school’s newspaper: “In the wake of murders at Virginia Tech, we must be careful not to overreact” (*goucher.edu*).

President Unger was right. What happened at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University, while both tragedies beyond measure, were certainly “horrific aberrations,” not a regular occurrence. The game was ultimately allowed to continue

unchanged, and no tragedies have befallen Goucher. In fact, no tragedies have ever befallen any HvZ player in over 5,000 games played at over 650 locations around the world (*humans-vs-zombies.org*). In an email from Max Temkin, administrator of the official HvZ website, he writes, "There has never been an incident of violence related to HvZ."

Mr. Olsen, if the school would like to improve campus security, I would again argue that Nerf blasters should be far down on the list of priorities. At a university where people over the age of 21 can carry real firearms capable of actually killing people to class, it seems trivial to focus on foam dart shooters as a safety threat. I recognize that as a public university, you have to abide by state law, which permits concealed weapons to be carried anywhere on public lands. However, as lethal weapons present the far more clear and present danger to students' security, the debate should be between the University and our elected representatives, not between the University and students wanting to play *Humans vs. Zombies*.

In closing, I would like to restate a point I made earlier. Mr. Olsen, you and I, as well as the administration and hundreds of HvZ players across campus, are not as far apart on this issue as you may believe. Both of us want every Aggie to have a memorable college experience they can take with them when they graduate. We want everyone to be safe and respectful of others as they do this. However, we feel that the partial ban on Nerf guns has detracted from what is quickly becoming one of Utah State University's most celebrated traditions. For hundreds upon hundreds of Aggies, it makes one of the most enjoyable aspects of Aggie life less enjoyable, and ultimately makes Aggie life itself less enjoyable.

And so, having said all this, it is my sincere hope that you take the time to reconsider the necessity of this partial ban. Should you decide to lift it, you would be making a decision that restores an important, if not unorthodox, tradition to its

true and pure state, bringing the most joy and most memories to the greatest amount of people.

Sincerely,
Brayden Smith

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the format of Smith's essay impact the argument? Does it help or hurt it? In what ways? (Be specific.)
2. How does the up-front acknowledgment of the opposing viewpoint affect this essay? Is the argument weaker or stronger because of this tactic? Why?
3. At what points in this essay does Smith use Roge-rrian tactics? Do they work to his advantage? Why/Why not?
4. What does the title of this essay do for the argu-ment?
5. What kinds of sources were used? Were they credi-ble?
6. What logical fallacies, if any, were present in this essay? Why do you think so?
7. How did the thesis statement affect the structure of this essay? Was this an effective frame for the argument? Explain.
8. If you were Eric Olsen or a USU administrator, how do you think you would respond to this essay?
9. What has been your experience with HvZ?

BINDING OUR FEET THE AMERICAN WAY

Camille Jensen

In her engaging persuasive research essay, Camille Jensen examines sexualized media and its damaging effects on young men and women. In a skillful resemblance argument, she compares the sexualized beauty rituals of today's young women to the centuries-old foot-binding practices of China that lasted well into the twentieth century. Using a variety of sources, from books about Chinese culture to interviews with recovering pornography addicts, Jensen calls the reader to action, asking us to teach children "to treat these [sexualized] messages critically, rather than passively absorbing them."

Let me paint a picture for you. Footbinding. Chinese women hobbling on three-inch feet; infected limbs broken and folded like grotesque origami; little girls tightening their bandages in hopes of beauty and a rich husband. The practice is both horrifying and fascinating to us, twenty-first century Westerners. Why would an entire society submit to such a horrible custom?

Contrary to popular belief, the now-illegal Chinese practice of footbinding was not thought up by men to oppress women; rather, it was developed by jealous female concubines in the emperor's courts. Recorded as early as the twenty-first century B.C., footbinding began as a high-class women's fashion trend and escalated into a rich man's erotic craze. By circa 1300 A.D., footbinding had moved into the common class, evolving from a token of sexual allure into the very basis of feminine identity. Young feet all over the Chinese empire were broken, pushed inward toward the heel, reshaped, and bound tightly to eventually reach the three-inch-long ideal. These

“three-inch lotuses” became the sole definition of a woman’s self and social worth and an erogenous fantasy that men blindly toddled after (Wang). “A woman with her feet unbound was not really a woman, no matter how pretty her face, how slim and willowy her body. Binding their feet, women...became the codes of beauty, femininity, and eroticism” (Wang 226).

But unnatural beauty comes at a price. The violence with which mothers deformed their daughters’ feet is appalling. Five and six-year olds were forced to walk on broken bones, wrapped as tightly as possible; with each weekly wrapping, more flesh decayed from blood loss and infections spread through the crevassed flesh. Every living moment was excruciating. But the girls, reminded constantly that they were worthless with big feet, diligently bound their feet tighter every morning for the rest of their lives (Wang).

How bizarre, how cruel. A woman’s value determined by broken, rotting feet, not by her intelligence or her talents or her humanity. How could so many mothers submit to such a horrible practice? How could millions of men really think that a stinking, infected, inhuman foot was attractive? How could an entire society conform to abuse, pain, objectification, all in the name of sex?

Let me paint another picture for you. Billboards. Air-brushed skin, ballooned breasts, shrunken waists, coy smiles. Video games. Heaving bosoms, scanty armor, lithe animated bodies. Magazines. “His Best Sex Ever!” plastered next to 17-year-old Dakota Fanning’s underage smile (*Cosmopolitan* cover). Blockbusters. Women using sex as power over the gullible men around them. Porn.

The reality is that this fantastical, glorified version of sex has taken over our society. It breaks, pushes, reshapes, and bandages the minds of our children. The onslaught of images specifically targets girls, demanding that they be flawlessly alluring, but catches boys in the crossfire, insisting that their

sex drives can and should define them. Girls are taught that their self and social worth depends on their sex appeal; boys cultivate an all-consuming appetite for the unnatural products of Photoshop and animation. It is the American lotus foot.

The reality is that, even after multiple waves of feminism, women in our culture are not expected to have successful careers, powerful personalities, or extraordinary talents. Women are expected to be shapely, sly, seductive sex kittens and men are expected to be stupidly spellbound by them. From sexually charged movie characters like Vicki Vallencourt from “The Waterboy” to Disney princesses baring breasts and bellies for their wide-eyed audience, the expectations for our children are clear. Do you remember the women of the 2008 American presidential campaign? Michelle Obama was called a “slut,” Sarah Palin “masturbation material,” and Hillary Clinton a “haggard” 92-year-old, to name only a few of the sexist insults these women endured (Emanuella). Independent, inspirational, and overweight female celebrities, such as Adele and Queen Latifah, are criticized for being “fat” or praised for being “sexy” by gossip columnists, but never judged solely on their talent. If the most powerful, charismatic, successful women in our country are being ranked by their sex appeal, how is prime-time television teaching our boys and girls to judge each other?

One study surveyed adolescents who were exposed to media with varying degrees of sexual explicitness, asking them to agree or disagree with statements such as “Unconsciously, girls always want to be persuaded to have sex” and “There is nothing wrong with men being primarily interested in a woman’s body.” As we can expect, the correlation between explicit media exposure and agreement with these statements was positive, but the surprise was that there was no difference between boys and girls (Jochen and Valkenburg). This means that while young boys are being taught that a woman is a sex object, young girls are being taught to ignore their personal identities

and only invest in their sex appeal. Our little boys are drooling over lotus feet; our little girls are tightening their bandages.

Like three-inch Chinese feet, the sex appeal that American girls are expected to exude is naturally unattainable. The viral internet video *Evolution* shows this first-person; a model, before being placed on a billboard, is first doused in make-up—foundation, eyeliner, eye shadow, blush, contour powder, highlighting cream, mascara, brow liner, lipstick—and then put under the knife in Photoshop: lengthening her neck, thickening her hair, manipulating her facial bone structure, enlarging her eyes, and shaving her cheeks (*Evolution*).

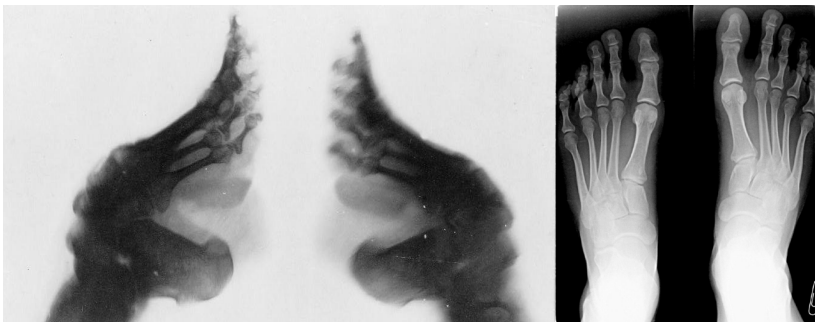
PHOTOSHOPPED

NATURAL

*(Evolution)*

LOTUS

NATURAL

*(Library of Congress/radiopaedia)*

The final product rings eerily similar to the intricate breaking/folding/binding procedure followed dutifully by generations of Chinese mothers and daughters. We are watching deformity become the status quo.

We can all agree that the media is the root of the problem. Every day, our children are confronted with obvious and subliminal messages alike through the television, internet, and grocery store checkout lines. We need it to stop if we want to protect them from the toxic effects. But can we expect an entire corporate market to change overnight, simply because we ask them to? However ambitious we are, however protective of our youth, that hope is unrealistic. This culture has become a foundation of our society, in the same way that the twisted fashion trend took over ancient China, and it can't be overthrown with one email petition. But there is a way to uproot it. It starts from the bottom up, and it's something we can all do today.

It was the adults of China that fostered their tradition through their daughters' abused feet and their sons' lotus-footed wives. If we, as parents and educators, can fight the spread of our sexualized media by teaching our children to recognize and reject its claims, we can change this society with each new generation. We need to take responsibility for educating our children about sex, gender, and identity to protect them from the media's onslaught of detrimental images. That's how we fight the lotus foot.

Forty-nine percent of alcohol commercials include a close-up of a woman's chest. Men exposed to advertisements that portray women as sex objects are more likely to believe gender stereotypes and rape myths, while women are more likely to experience depression and self-damaging behavior (Snigda and Venkatesh). In the top 100 grossing films of 2007, 2008, and 2009, only one-third of speaking characters were female, but female characters were more likely to be dressed partially nude, referred to as attractive by the opposite sex,

placed in “following” rather than “leading” positions, and less likely to achieve their goals (Azad). These messages seep into a young person’s mind and create unconscious beliefs that are difficult to correct. Girls are taught from an early age that their skills, intelligence, and independence do not matter unless they have an extraordinary sex appeal. Boys are taught that it’s okay, even expected, for them to have endless sex drives with no regard for the woman or the situation.

But imagine if, in our homes and our schools, we encouraged our young people to pick out the messages they see – the gender discrepancies, the objectification, the often laughable sexual advertising – in a carefully selected media clip, then describe what is unfair or inaccurate about it. Boys and girls alike can learn to treat these messages critically, rather than passively. Of course, do not subject children to full-on pornography, and be tactful in material, basing it on the age, needs, and maturity of each child. But don’t leave children to fend for themselves in this world. We can’t shut out the media from children’s lives, and we can’t change an entire culture just by asking, but we can lessen its effect with each generation, and we can protect each individual child from being shaped by the images they see.

Our children need this help more than we realize. I’ve been watching my younger sister “bind her feet” for years, basing her own and others’ worth on physical appearances. It started with rating teen movie stars by their attractiveness; now, at 12 years old, she won’t even be friends with girls she doesn’t think are pretty. And her view of herself? She wears heavily caked mascara, frets over her breast size, and periodically flies into frenzies about her weight. In her own words, after a conversation about her sinking seventh-grade report cards, “I don’t need to be smart as long as I’m pretty.”

I wish we had taught her to see and laugh at the messages in the media years ago. I hope it’s not too late for her to

correct the beliefs that have been nurtured by society. I don't think it is. I think that humans of any age can relearn and redefine their beliefs. But the key is that we, as adults, are responsible for children, students, and little sisters. And if we can equip every child with the means to combat the toxicity in our media, they will have the ability to change the world.

The issue is more urgent, more immediate than we may realize. I had the privilege of anonymously interviewing recovering pornography addicts, male and female, ranging in age from 14 to 22. The mediums with which these young people struggled varied from pornographic novels to filmed videos to animated pictures. Although interviews were completely separate, each interviewee had the same impressions about gender roles from their medium. The men in pornography are

- “emotionally detached” (Anon. 1),
- “always in control” (Anon. 2), and
- “uncaring assholes” (Anon. 3).
- “You never see their faces” (Anon. 4), and
- “the focus is never on them” (Anon. 5).

In contrast, pornographic women are

- “unintelligent” (Anon. 1),
- “frail” (Anon. 6),
- “submissive” (Anon. 4), and
- “morally bereft” (Anon. 5).
- “The woman was not really a woman. She was often completely willing to go along with whatever the man suggested or led her into, without any word otherwise” (Anon. 7).

Can we really let our boys be stereotyped as faceless “assholes”? Can we really let our girls be “unintelligent” and “submissive”? Pornography was once a socially taboo vice, but is now commonplace in American homes. You can bet that it will only get worse if we allow our media to continue its current ways, and these gender roles will become more and more

pervasive. Footbinding will not stay in the emperor's courts for long. As experienced personally by the young people I interviewed, it's already on its way. Wherever they are in their lives, however deeply the media has already affected them, we need to educate children and give them the means to fight for themselves. Procrastination on our part could find them trapped in the same awful situation that my seven anonymous friends now battle.

The media is binding our feet the American way. Little girls are being forced by their societal "mothers" to do everything it takes to be beautiful. Adult women are finding that their worth as a human depends, paradoxically, on their inhuman sex appeal. Men and boys are being taught to fixate on women with misshapen lotus bodies. But if we can help our children learn to take the bandages off, one by one—gender stereotypes, sex in advertising, Photoshop, pornography—perhaps we can truly leave them a better world than the one they live in now.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Note how often Jensen refers to Chinese foot-binding during the essay. She reinforces the notion that the practice of foot-binding is much like the effects of sexualized media today. Do you find the repetition effective? How might you do something similar in your own essay?
2. Jensen makes some strong claims; for example: “The reality is that, even after multiple waves of feminism, women in our culture are not expected to have successful careers, powerful personalities, or extraordinary talents. Women are expected to be shapely, sly, seductive sex kittens and men are expected to be stupidly spellbound by them.” Do you agree with Jensen’s summation of gender expectations? Is she making a hasty generalization?
3. Jensen skillfully uses her source material. Note how she discusses a study by researchers where “adolescents were exposed to media with varying degrees of sexual explicitness” (114). She summarizes the study, includes some direct quotes, then spends some time expounding on the study and how it relates to her thesis. Choose a direct quote or paraphrase from your own writing. Discuss it in your own words and then directly tie it back to your thesis.
4. How do visuals add to Jensen’s argument? Consider how visuals might be effective in your own argument.

WHAT THE CENSORED ?!?

PROFANITY IN FILM

Cameron Halvorsen

Introducing his topic with a personal narrative scene, Halvorsen begins with an image that many can relate to, and then discusses the history of profanity since the mid-1950s. Perhaps the most powerful section of this essay comes when Halvorsen describes the English of a Nigerian in Benin, West Africa, who proudly claims to have learned his profanity-riddled English from American movies. Halvorsen poses an interesting question: While profanity is often necessary in movies, is there a limit to its real usefulness? And if so, how much IS too much?

It is a Friday night and the family is fidgeting. We are all so bored that we would do anything to do something. What is the solution to Friday night boredom? Well, the movies of course! We all hop in the Suburban and head off to The Regal. Walking into the dimly lit, curtain-covered, stadium-seated cinema, our excitement builds as we see the 50-foot-ish screen stretching across the vast expanse of black. As we finally find the best ‘middle-of-the-screen’ seats, we plop down and notice the smell of buttery theatre popcorn wafting through the air and the dimmed lights that signal the commencement of the movie. We are hoping that this film, *Tower Heist*, with Eddie Murphy, Ben Stiller and Matthew Broderick will be comical and appropriate for our family. I mean, it is PG-13. How bad could it be? Fifty some odd unnecessary vulgarities later, “appropriate” is no longer applicable. After leaving the theatre, my youngest brother asks the question that we have all been mulling over: “Why did they need to talk like that?”

This is not just a one-time occurrence for a family of

six, but something that millions of people are noticing in our films. As films are allowed to include more profanity, words that used to be taboo are becoming mainstream. Many argue that the level of profanity has passed the allowance for 'reality' and crossed the borders to 'unnecessary.' The amount of profanity allowed in film should be reduced to diminish the harmful effects to the international public. To understand why profanity in film is becoming more of an issue, we must first understand when it made its debut and who is permitting the added stage time.

Profanity has been found in many films since the mid-1950s. It has been used to add a touch of reality to movies so that the everyday person can relate to and enjoy the film. Profanity today is still scattered throughout the cinematographic world, but who creates the criteria for the allowable quantity of profanity in different movie ratings? The Motion Picture Association of America, or MPAA, is the designated group that is responsible for fashioning the criteria for the different movie ratings for each film. They set the guidelines for how many profanities can be used during a film, how much violence (and what kind of violence) can be shown, and what amount of sexual content is passable. Why is all of this important? As newer movies take to the big screen, there has been a noticeable increase in the amount of profanity that comes with them.

As the years increase in number, so does the amount of profanity in our films. Films are now using the "F" word (the one that rhymes with truck) up to a record high of 428 times in one film, this film being *Nil by Mouth* (Heath). There are sneaky renditions of this word prominent throughout many American films, such as *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, where the "F" word is present on three different occasions. Don't forget the other famous words that begin with "S", "A", and "D". They still receive plenty of publicity. The only way that someone can escape hearing unnecessary profanity is by

watching G-rated Disney movies, and even some of those have subtle references to various vulgar words. As the MPAA permits more obscenities to be used in film production, we see Hollywood taking advantage of the opportunity. When a parent allows his/her child to do something, of course the natural instinct is to act upon that allowance.

Hollywood believes that adding profanity brings reality to a film. Evan Schaeffer, a well-published writer, lawyer, and author simply asks, “Who hasn’t noticed Hollywood’s increasing reliance on profanity to add some extra oomph to its films?” (Schaeffer). To an extent, this is true. You can’t expect a military movie to be filled with, “Oh Golly-gee. You flippin’ messed up. Get up and try the dadgum wall again.” I think everyone knows how this would really sound. However, there is a line which separates reality profanity (well-placed profanity that adds to the film) from unnecessary profanity, or the overuse of profanities that no longer add substance to a film. The question stands: is this distortion of reality affecting us? As our films become more and more populated by these different vulgarities, we actually do see a change in ourselves.

Firstly, swearing is something that everyone can relate to. When one gets overly angered because of an unfortunate event in life, normally a cuss word is integrated in a sentence used to express how that person feels. When an audience member hears an actor/actress using this type of language, they immediately know what the person is feeling in terms of emotion. Research has been done to show that we react to these words when heard or read (Sorry, subtitles. You’re in this, too.) and the reaction is more than just sympathetic understanding. Harvard University experimental psychologist, Steven Pinker, stated that “once a word is seen or heard, we are incapable of treating it as a squiggle or noise; we reflexively look it up in memory and respond to its meaning, including its connotation,” and “... taboo words are especially effective at snatching a

reader's attention" (Pinker). This response is what causes us to root what we hear into our minds. Once a thought enters into our minds, the likelihood of it becoming an action is drastically increased. As words become more ingrained in our stored memory and thoughts, they become easier to utilize. The first time is always the most difficult, but vocalizing becomes progressively easier with time and practice. How do these taboo words have harmful effects?

Simple. The utilization of these words can offend, degrade, and harm as we have seen in many cases around the world. The term that has been coined for this type of degradation is 'verbal abuse.' From all of the articles ever read, abuse never means anything good. It is destructive and cutting and can affect someone's life forever. Valerie Belew, an internationally certified substance and abuse professional, says that verbal abuse, especially to children, can lead them to allow people to verbally abuse them, it can lead to aggressive behavior, it can cause a delay in their development in areas such as academics, trust, and relationship building, and can lead to self-destructiveness (Belew).

This is not only an issue for our society, but relevant in other countries around the world where these movies are shown or distributed. It is especially prevalent in poorer countries with lower levels of spoken, written, and understood English, where our films can be a means by which audiences learn English. I have been in several third world countries and have seen the effects of profanity in film on many people. I can recall one such instance on a hot and humid day in the small, French-speaking country of Benin West Africa when I was taken aback at how these movies affected one such individual's life.

My friend and I, both serving ecclesiastical missions, plow through the mounds of sand that engulf our feet. Dripping with sweat, we decide to seek shelter under a large palm tree to avoid the gaze of the large globe of yellow up above.

As we pass from heat to refreshment, we find that we are lucky enough to have found a nice, well-worn bench held together with a few nails and smooth from the years of supporting the weight of passersby. We allow a couple of minutes to pass before my friend says, “We still have a ways to walk. We should probably get going before noon comes and we have to head back to the apartment.” I agree, and we start gathering our things. Just as we are about to depart, a man that has been cooking spaghetti omelets nearby rushes over to where we are. He fumbles with his words for a second and then stammers, “I am Nigerian. Can you teach me about the Word?” Delighted to have found another English speaker in this country, we invite him to sit down to teach him.

We begin to talk, and right from the start, I notice that there is something that makes me cringe when he speaks. Every other word is vulgar. I begin to wonder if he can finish a sentence without using some sort of profanity. I look to my friend and see a wide-eyed look on his face as this man proceeds to use every word we have been told as children to never use. That is, of course, unless you like the taste of soap. “Excuse me sir, but where in the world did you learn your English?” He smiles and politely replies, “Your American movies! This is how you speak in your country.” This is just one example of how the quantity of profanity in our films affects those who watch them and how reality is lost and unnecessary profanity wins out.

There are many people who enjoy swearing and therefore do not mind the amount of profanity used in movies. One such person, Peter Sessum, an army veteran and a journalist for *The Daily*, claims that swearing is a coping mechanism that is used for venting and for use when no other word works. Like when your favorite team is losing the soccer match. He also expresses that swearing “...is about being unedited. Everyone [in] the United States has the Freedom of Speech” (Sessum).

Scientifically, swearing actually does help.

Studies show that swearing increases the level of pain a person can tolerate. One such study done at Keele University in the UK was performed on students to test the amount of pain that a person could withstand by plunging their arm into a bucket of ice cold water. The first time, they were told that they could swear as much as they wished. During the second attempt, they were not allowed to swear at all. The research showed that when the students swore, they were able to tolerate pain longer than when not swearing (Gibson). Unfortunately, swearing does not turn you into an invincible Superman. There is a point where the swearing becomes useless and unnecessary. Unnecessary swearing, the overuse of using profanities, brought no additional help to the students. Peter Sessum also agrees and says that there is no need to swear too much (Sessum). While swearing does bring reality into movies and can help people to endure pain, the unnecessary quantity that is present in our cinemas, past the point of reality, does more harm than good, bringing no additional benefit or substance to the movie.

It is for this reason that the MPAA should amend the criteria for profanity in film in order to reduce the amount of unnecessary profanity in films, especially PG-13 and PG movies. I have heard numerous people say that the amount of swearing in many films is superfluous. Not just words, but action is necessary for change. Simply by writing a letter or email to the MPAA and letting such concerns be known, we can lessen the amount of excessive profanity that exists in our films. Not only will this help our nation reduce the level of profanity that is brought to us via the big screen, it will help those in other nations to understand that profanity is not an American's vocabulary.

We should always be seeking to better ourselves, so why should bettering our films and the world be any different?

Let us make a push to ameliorate our cinema so that we can enjoy the fun and positive experience of a film without the negative impact of profanity.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you seen a movie that you felt had unnecessary profanity? Write for ten minutes about the movie, the way profanity was used, and why you felt the language went over the limit of useful. If not, write about why you feel the level of profanity in movies fits the need, and how you disagree with Halvorsen's argument.
2. Are you persuaded to any degree by this essay? Why or why not? What evidence did you feel was the most compelling to prove the point of the author?
3. How does the inclusion of the research showing that individuals who swear can withstand more pain than those who don't swear affect the argument? Does this paragraph undermine the argument in any way? Or does it lend credibility to the author?
4. Does the fact that the author is on an ecclesiastical mission change your reading of the story of the Nigerian who spoke with the author in Benin, West Africa? Why/Why not?
5. Look at the organization of the essay. Should the author have changed any of the segments in his piece to add strength? Or do you feel that the organization adds to the power of the argument?
6. How does the title affect the meaning of the essay?

SPEAKING WITHOUT TALKING: The Power of Introverts

Claire Christiansen

In her persuasive research essay first published in our 2012 edition of *Voices*, Claire Christiansen includes her own personal story of life as an introvert, calling on the reader to question past misconceptions of those often labeled as shy, anti-social, or even rude. To diminish the often negative stereotypes of introverts, Christiansen asks the reader to learn the value of this personality type and appreciate the balance that comes with a world of both introverts and extroverts.

It's a Friday night, and while my peers bask in the glory of the weekend through parties and dances, I delight in the quiet of my apartment and the reprieve of conversation, alone at last after a week filled with people. I might read a book, watch a movie by myself, or simply sit and relax. Does this sound fun on a Friday night? Most people wouldn't think so. However, if you can relate, congratulations: you're part of the ranks of society's self-proclaimed introverts, and despite the negative views we're often subject to, introverts are making a comeback.

A search of the term "introvert" on Google Images confirms the skewed perception society has of those who classify with the word. Pictures surface of individuals with paper bags over their heads, moping faces, hiding behind their hair, or alone on park benches. What a revelation! Should I, myself an introvert, wear a paper bag over my head? It might be a good way to avoid conversation on the weekdays. However, I hardly think those images truly describe the average introvert. Therein lies the dilemma: introverts are not always shy, depressed, unconfident, and unhappy with themselves and thus should not be labeled as such. There are many common misconceptions about

introverts, and the rest of the population—extroverts, shall we say—would benefit from understanding a thing or two about their more reserved counterparts. In order to diminish the often negative stereotype associated with introverts, it is crucial that society learn to understand and value this personality type and appreciate the balance that comes with a world of both introverts and extroverts.

At the fresh age of 11, I came to the realization that I had a label conceived by my peers and their opinion of me: I was the shy girl. Fifth grade is a time when everything begins to stick. He's the funny one, she's smart, he's the troublemaker; these stereotypes formed relatively quickly, but they were long remembered, practically carved out on each individual's forehead. For a long time I didn't argue with my classmates. I was, in fact, less talkative and lively; raising my hand in class, talking to my teacher, and participating in group games and activities just didn't come as naturally or willingly to me, and I learned to make myself less noticeable. These actions may have all been signs pointing to shyness, but I believe I was simply at a malleable age, trying to find myself and my own kind of confidence. Instead of self-discovery, however, I began to feel that the reputation I'd earned was the one that had to stay. For whatever reason, I believed that because I had been told I was shy so many times, my only option was to stay shy.

One of the most common misconceptions about introverts is that they are shy. Some are, of course, but it is not reasonable to assume that every introvert is. A recent article in *Time* magazine, written by Bryan Walsh, states that shyness “is a form of social anxiety characterized by inhibited behavior. It also implies a fear of social judgment that can be crippling” (66). Introversion, on the other hand, describes someone who doesn't mind being alone. An introvert enjoys being social, but generally prefers not to engage and loses energy after spending time with people. While extroverts thrive off of interaction and

enjoy being the life of the party, introverts prefer to blend in and avoid attention. This does not mean that introverts don't enjoy being social; it simply means that introverts operate differently and can only handle so much interaction before requiring time alone to recharge. In my case, I spoke up when I had to and associated normally with my peers, but I simply preferred listening and observing to talking and drawing attention to myself. I have always been keenly observant. From a very young age, I took time to take in my surroundings before playing or interacting and was never one to run straight for the action. My mom tells me that at three years old I would observe everything going on at the playground and report back to her what I saw, noticing even who had the same shoes as she did before timidly joining in the fun.

Acute powers of observation are one of the defining characteristics introverts possess. Laurie Helgoe, in an article entitled "Revenge of the Introvert," writes that "while introverts have no special advantage in intelligence, they do seem to process more information than others in any given situation... Further, their brains are less dependent on external stimuli and rewards to feel good" (15). While introverts have the ability to process more material than extroverts, it does not always mean that they enjoy excess stimulation, specifically if it involves people. That's why an introvert might find a Friday night spent alone more thrilling than an evening spent in raucous partying. We live in a country that prizes the extrovert and celebrates those who are outgoing, confident, talkative and fearless. The early 20th century marked the beginning of a new ideal in America: the Extrovert Ideal. Susan Cain, author of *Quiet*, describes the cultural evolution from a society who placed emphasis on being a Culture of Character to becoming a society solely focused on developing the Culture of Personality. It changed "forever who we are and whom we admire" (35). The Culture of Character focused on improving self-worth and be-

coming disciplined and honorable, while the Culture of Personality idealized becoming bold and entertaining and examined the importance of being perceived in the right way (Cain 35). To this day, extroverts are still automatically seen by most as more attractive, smart, and interesting than introverts. Extroverts, who are outgoing, confident, and speak with ease, nearly always generate more respect in the workforce; whether or not their actual performance is superior to any introvert, their ability to communicate and persuade automatically puts them above introverts in many cases. Consider, for example, who a manager would be more likely to hire: an individual brimming with confidence who aces the interview and speaks effortlessly or someone who might struggle with words, seems more nervous, and cannot schmooze for the life of them. Both may be equally smart, hardworking, and beneficial to the company, but more often the extrovert triumphs. Unfortunately, it is no wonder that introverts often struggle to feel successful; it's an extrovert's world, and it will remain so unless light can be shed on all that introverts have to offer.

Besides possessing great skills of observation, introverts have the capability to focus intently for long periods of time, especially on solitary work. This can lead to impressive and innovative ideas as well as greater ease of skill-mastery. Significantly better at listening than their extrovert counterparts, introverts benefit immensely from their ability to concentrate while someone is talking. The aforementioned article written by Bryan Walsh for *Time* stated yet another introvert advantage: "Introverts are more cautious and deliberate than extroverts, but that means they tend to think things through more thoroughly, which means they can often make smarter decisions" (67). Extroverts tend to seek rewards and ambition without thinking about the risk, while introverts are more likely to pay attention to warnings and heed with caution. It's the personality traits that are more difficult to recognize at a glance

that are so valuable to society; introverts may not be able to charm, joke, or make speeches, but they can certainly think, listen, and care.

Neither end of the scale is superior; both introverts and extroverts are necessary to keep a balance in society. No one wants to live in a world where everyone tries to be the center of attention, just as the idea of a world filled with only thoughtful, quiet people doesn't sound very enthralling. However, this important idea of balance has washed away as the tidal wave of the brash, outspoken, and convincing pushes society evermore towards the Extrovert Ideal. It has become increasingly important in society to have a good personality, to be interesting, a good conversationalist, and the center of attention. What the world seems to have forgotten is the importance of character: there are inner, if less remarkable, traits that go far in leading to success. It's simply a matter of recognizing these qualities and reminding others of the important role that the introvert plays. There is great value in refraining from labeling introverted individuals as shy as well as learning to recognize the unique talents and abilities they possess. Introverts operate differently than extroverts, but there is nothing awry in this; it is simply their nature. No one deserves to be looked down on because they don't speak up as much as others. It is highly important that society learns to recognize the introvert advantage rather than focus solely on the extrovert ideal.

Had my classmates in fifth grade understood anything about introverts—or tact, for that matter—I believe things would have turned out very differently for me. Thankfully, I have gained confidence and self-assurance over the years and now respect myself for the introvert that I am. However, I could have saved myself from quite a bit of self-degradation and lack of confidence had I focused less on the negative label I had received and more on the qualities I had to offer. Not only are introverts focused, observant, careful, smart and devoted;

we are, in our own way, powerful. But please don't make us say that out loud.

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1. What is an abstract? Why are abstracts often used in academic writing? How did introducing the essay with an abstract affect the argument?
2. Discuss the effectiveness of the introduction and conclusion of this essay. Be specific and give examples of methods used by the author and how those methods work.
3. How does the author's personal experience impact the essay? Is the author more convincing because she claims to be an introvert herself? Why or why not?
4. Look at the way Christiansen uses detail and imagery: "these stereotypes formed relatively quickly, but they were long remembered, practically carved out on each individual's forehead" (206). What do those details do for the reader?
5. If you were assigned to write a similar essay on the power of extroverts, how would you argue? Why might this as a topic be less successful than the power of introverts?
6. How does Christiansen use Google Images as research?
7. Discuss labels and stereotyping. Were you ever labeled? Did you want to overcome the label? How did you? Is labeling generally a negative thing?

RESOURCES INDEX

As you consider employing different rhetorical tools, here are essays you may consider studying as models. Naturally, you may find favorites that are not listed under every tool they employ, but consider these a starting point as you develop and hone your skills.

Title and Intro Paragraphs

Do it or Else
Selfies are Beautiful
Don't Bash the 'Stache
The River Within
Binding Our Feet

Audience Awareness

Not Normal
Selfies are Beautiful
Hipsters & Hookahs
War Against Mormons
Don't Nerf the Zombies
What the Censored

Purpose

Benefits of Conventional Foods
Tearing Down Bridges
War Against Mormons
Diversity in Disney
Don't Nerf the Zombies

Conclusion

Do it or Else
A Measure of Hope
Don't Bash the 'Stache
Autism & Technology
Speaking Without Talking

Thesis Quality

Selfies are Beautiful
Benefits of Conventional Foods
Hipsters & Hookahs
Let the Players Play
Diversity in Disney
Binding Our Feet

Thesis Clarity

Not Normal
Benefits of Conventional Foods
Hipsters & Hookahs
Let the Players Play
Diversity in Disney
Speaking Without Talking

Evidence

Benefits of Conventional Foods
Tearing Down Bridges
The River Within
Don't Nerf the Zombies
Speaking Without Talking

Critical Thinking

Do it or Else
I Can't Do Math
Too Pretty To Be in Computer
Science
War Against Mormons
Binding Our Feet

Structure

Do it or Else
Too Pretty To Be in Computer
Science
War Against Mormons
What the Censored

Persuasiveness

Not Normal
Do it or Else
Benefits of Conventional Foods
War Against Mormons
Binding Our Feet

Source Credibility

Tearing Down Bridges
 Don't Bash the 'Stache
 I Can't Do Math
 Autism & Technology

Source Information

Do it or Else
 I Can't Do Math
 Too Pretty To Be in Computer
 Science
 Autism & Technology

Source Integration

Tearing Down Bridges
 A Measure of Hope
 Don't Bash the 'Stache
 War Against Mormons

Parenthetical Citation

Do it or Else
 Selfies are Beautiful
 Too Pretty To Be in Computer
 Science
 What the Censored

Works Cited Page

Hipsters & Hookahs
 A Measure of Hope
 Don't Bash the 'Stache
 I Can't Do Math
 Autism & Technology

Grammar

Selfies are Beautiful
 I Can't Do Math
 Let the Players Play
 Autism & Technology

Diction

Not Normal
 Don't Bash the 'Stache
 Too Pretty To Be in Computer
 Science
 The River Within

Binding Our Feet

Sentences

Not Normal
 I Can't Do Math
 Autism & Technology
 The River Within
 What the Censored

Paragraph Unity & Development

Do it or Else
 A Measure of Hope
 Binding Our Feet
 Speaking Without Talking

Transitions

A Measure of Hope
 Don't Bash the 'Stache
 Too Pretty To Be in Computer
 Science

Rogerian

Let the Players Play
 War Against Mormons
 Don't Nerf the Zombies

Voices of USU

is a collection of winning essays from the *Voices: On Stage and In Print* student writing contest hosted by the Writing Program at Utah State University.

The student essays featured in this anthology were voted best in class by students enrolled in English 2010, Intermediate Writing. The authors of the winning essays were also invited to present their work on stage.

Voices celebrates excellence in writing by providing students of all backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity to write on topics of their choice. The essays in this anthology cover a variety of topics and interests, capturing the unique 'voices' of USU.

“In life, finding a voice is
speaking and living the truth.
Each of you is an original.
Each of you has a distinctive voice.”
-John Grisham



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