

Writing Assignments

Week 2

What is the main problem that the presenter claims/proposes is an issue within America?

The main problem that the presenter claims is an issue in America is the current public education system that is standardized and according to the presenter "designed for a different age" (Robinson 1:49-1:55). He claims that schools are doing what they did in the past rather than changing those habits and investing in a better system that would fit nowadays needs and reality. "I believe we have a system of education that is modeled on the interest of industrialism and in the image of it" (Robinson 6:33-6:43).

What are two credible sources that the presenter uses to support his claims?

He mentions a study of divergent thinking that exposes divergent thinking as "an essential capacity for creativity. It is the ability to see lots of possible answers to a question, lots of possible ways of interpreting the question" (Robinson 7:58-8:08). The presenter also mentions a book called Breakpoint and Beyond: Mastering the Future that tested 1500 kindergarten children on their skills on divergent thinking, the results were that "One is, we all have this capacity and two it mostly deteriorates" (Robinson 9:50-9:56).

What is one issue that you find that the presenter may be too ambiguous about?

One issue that I personally found that the presenter was maybe too ambiguous about was the chart on ADHD and the negative impacts that early medication can have in the development of children. He mentioned about it but haven't gone deep into the topic that I found really interesting, it is probably because it was not his main focus this time.

Does he offer a distinct and specific solution or does he just present the issue?

Right at the end he mentions that "we have to think differently about human capacity" (Robinson 10:29-10:32) and that "great learnings happen in groups" (Robinson 10:46-10:48) claiming that "collaboration is the 'stuff' of growth" (Robinson 10:48-10:50) he also states that we got to pay attention to "the habits of institutions and the habitats they occupy" (Robinson 11:04-11:08).

What are your thoughts on this issue?

I personally think that this is a really important topic, in my opinion school is standardized because it doesn't know how to change something that is so rooted in society already. Even some people that want to change the way they are educated and choose homeschool for example, suffer with judgement and bad comments from society. So I believe that as a community we have to think about better ways to rethink our public education system in order to improve children lives and education. I also think that if classes were held differently with more practical learning, like laboratories, rather than extensive lectures, can have a huge impact on children's focus and engagement with the class.

Week 3

Michael Rivero has some interesting thoughts about how the wars are related to banks. He says that "all wars and assassinations are orchestrated by private central bankers to impose debt-based financial systems on nations." He claims that all wars were fought with the intention to expand financial control rather than for security, territory, freedom or other reason. He affirms that all of the wars "track back to the private Central Bankers as the

initiating event...all wars are Wars for the bankers." Rivero includes terms like "all" and "every" to describe historic events, turning his claims less reliable academically. One example is "All of the modern Wars this nation has fought are Wars by and for the private Bankers..." This could be seen as a fallacy because he assumes a single cause for all events, excluding other reasons like social, political or even cultural. It is also noticeable that he exposes information without crediting any sources, like: "Following Kennedy's assassination, United States notes were pulled from circulation and destroyed." He often relies on quotes to approach his argument that most of which were indeed said but had nothing to do with Rivero's claims. He only uses them to support his conspiracies without taking accountability for other events, like those mentioned previously, economic, social, political, etc. He chooses to ignore it. From what I saw during the video, he does not state any secondary sources or studies that could bring a better context to what he is claiming. He also does not share with the audience any counterclaim, which I believe is important because it helps with credibility, allows other evidence to be exposed and could help the audience to understand more than one perspective to evaluate both sides. I personally think that his ideas hold some legitimate viewpoint of some sort because banks would finance the wars, and the economy was always influenced by these events, usually leading to motivation. But in my opinion, we can not ignore the bigger picture and completely forget about other reasons and motives wars have happened, because they also involve ideology, culture, politics and many other topics.

Week 5

Some factors that led to an upsurge in advertising directed toward children in the 1980s were that many parents worked during the day and therefore they felt guilty about not spending a lot of time with their kids, so they spent more money on them to ease the guilt. Because of this, many companies realized that children could indeed influence their families purchases and started directing their marketing to them specifically, as exposed here “Major ad agencies now have children’s divisions, and a variety of marketing firms focus solely on kids”. It is notable that they created departments that would solely focus on this public and they specialize their employees to create better marketing for kids. The pester power is what they called when a kid had that ability to encourage or influence their parents to buy specific products, they used in in ads to give children a reason to ask their parents, Schlosser even mentions the style of their nagging, such as, persistent, pity, pleading and even threatening, like repeated "please" and "mom" and saying that the child would be sad if it did not have the item bought. The marketing techniques that the advertisers used to identify what children would want in the products were focus groups and surveys in order to collect information about children, they also did observation to understand their preferences, advertisers used dream and fantasy research as well, Dan S. Acuff notes that “roughly 80 percent of children’s dreams are about animals,” which helped them explaining the appeal of some characters. Moreover, companies started to create mascots and children's clubs to attract even more customers and generate more sales. Marketers also used the internet and television to reach their intended audience, their primary source was television du to kids watching up to 21 hours per week and channels like Disney, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network broadcasting ads all day and all night. With the internet companies like Mc Donald's were encouraging kids to write emails to their mascot, Ronald McDonald making companies able to understand their audience and collect

information. Nowadays, there are laws that protect children's privacy online so this approach would not be possible anymore. Some connections I can make after watching children's advertising and cartoons is that companies will use the same colors, vocabulary and even the characters from specific cartoons to promote their products, we can see a lot of food products, for example, containing elements from these shows, two examples of products that I can think about are SpongeBob popsicles and The Fantastic Four PopTarts, both consumed by children and advertised for them. Also, fast food chains like McDonald's and Burger King will do a rotation on their toys offered in kids meals, to keep up with what children are watching online and in theaters or television. A recent example that I examined was the McDonald's ad featuring the new Minecraft movie intended for children audience, in the add they used the same characters from the game, colors, and music, while showing the McDonald's logo and their products but "in-game", this probably generated curiosity in kids and excitement, causing them to ask their parents for a Happy Meal in order to collect the toys and consume the same products that the game characters are marketing, making these approaches really effective for the company.

Week 6

After watching the video I can say that it helped me to understand the purpose on doing a annotated bibliography prior to writing the paper. One of the elements that we should include in the process of annotation is the summary, which will give the researcher a brief explanation of what the source is talking about and their intentions with the research, the best way to doing it is by reading your source and reflecting on it, then you put it away and using your own words to summarize the content, later you can compare your work with the

article to see if you got the full idea. The other element is the evaluation, the researcher is still summarizing the paper but they should also assess and critically evaluate the source, to check if it is credible, relevant and accurate, and if the paper chosen fits the research that will be conducted. It is a good thing to also compare with your other sources at this point. The third and last element is the combination, that basically combines both summary and evaluation, on the video it is said that they should be balanced at 70% summary and 30% evaluation because the goal is to give the researcher a better understanding of what the article talks about rather than showcasing why is relevant to their work. So the researcher would still need to summarize and evaluate but they are combining both to better understand their sources. These are important elements because it makes you a more efficient writer since it demonstrates your abilities to analyze and critically think about your sources, while also being helpful to collect data and important information that you might want to use before starting your paper, to give you a full idea of what your research will look like and if more sources are needed to support your arguments.

Week 7

After reading Peter Wonica's article I can say that I agree that avatars can provide adolescents with a "safe virtual space in which the real-life pressures of identity negotiation are reduced" (Wonica, 2014, p. 3). I believe that videogames are mostly known for a way to work on your imagination, and being able to create your avatar makes the gameplay more immersive and interesting. Because of the immersive experience most adolescents, even my younger self, can view the virtual space as a way to "escape" from their real-life problems. This idea also aligns with Erik Erikson's theory that during adolescence youth will

experiment with different possible selves or "identities" before committing to a stable identity. There are several games like Futurebound and Quandary that will provide that by allowing players to explore skills like decision-making, leadership, and moral reasoning while projecting their ideal selves into a digital context (p. 7–8). These environments are what supports Wonica's view which I agree, that well-designed games can help identity growth because it promotes self-reflection and confidence. While I agree with this claim, on the other hand, I believe that an excessive immersion in idealized identities can maybe confuse youth between self-perception and fantasy, leading to escapism, dependency, or unhealthy over-identification with avatars, this can result in many health issues such as mental health. In my opinion, the dependency causes to an adolescent the same thing as we watched earlier this week on the short-film "Glued", that the kid gets so immersive in the virtual space that it did not even knew how to play with the ball, for example. So this overwhelmingly positive portrayal of video games as tools for identity growth that Wonica explores can also be a point of disagreement for me, I believe his argument would be more balanced if he presented both sides and considered both the empowering and potentially harmful effects of these games that are avatar-based.

The article that Peter Wonica used during his research that I chose to analyze was "Learning from Myself: Avatars and Educational Video Games" from Melissa Lewis Hobart. Wonica uses this article to support his argument that when players use their ideal selves rather than avatars resembling their real-life identities they have a better engagement experience. He writes that Hobart “noted that ‘enjoyment of learning the material ... and involvement were all higher when players were playing as their ideal selves’” (Wonica, 2014, p. 6). I believe that the author implemented this research effectively in his paper

because it provided support for his argument. He was able to strengthen his claim about identity-focused avatar design and educational benefits. By the same token, I feel that Wonica could explore this source better by explaining Melissa Hobart's methodology and sample size to give a better reliability. This evidence feels selective at some point, he cites only the positive outcome without acknowledging that the study was “limited in scope” (p. 6). Even with that, I think he managed to use the source well because it grounds his theoretical discussion in real educational research.

Week 8

During this talk, Juan Enriquez presents his main argument that modern technology has in a certain way created what he named "electronic tattoos", which are digital footprints that reveal who we are and that it continues to exist even after our physical lives end. Juan says that the data we create and use such as social media, GPS, and interactions online makes almost impossible to be anonymous anymore, he asks "What happens if Facebook, Google, Twitter, LinkedIn, cell phones, GPS, Foursquare, Yelp, Travel Advisor... turn out to be electronic tattoos?" with that he suggests that our digital identities will most likely outlive us, "Maybe all of you and all of us are very close to immortality, because these tattoos will live far longer than our bodies will". With this comparison the presenter wants to show that we as a society are entering this digital immortality era where our data is permanently recorded. Juan backs up his ideas with examples that are clear for the audience to perceive how much information we have about ourselves that is out there. He exemplifies by saying “companies like face.com that now have about 18 billion faces online” to show the audience how widespread facial recognition and data tracking are. He also shows that what

he is saying about "electronic tattoos" is not hypothetical anymore, that this is already interfering how companies and businesses see and interact with us, with this example: "They take your picture, they tie it to the social media... so maybe the person in the store comes up and says, 'Hey, we've got five black dresses that would just look great on you.'" And companies will keep doing that based on your digital footprint because that is how marketing technologies are improving in order to influence and predict customer's behavior. Juan Enriquez primarily appeals to logic and ethic, he presents concrete evidence to his logical appeal and also rises moral questions about people's privacy. He references Greek myths like Sisyphus and Narcissus to warn the audience to be careful with what they post and to avoid falling in love with their "own reflection", so those could be lessons to remind the audience about their choices online that could lead to lasting consequences, like tattoos that stay with you forever.

Week 9

I believe that yes, all Americans should have the right to health care, based on the evidence shown on the text. It is important the exposition that the text brings to this matter when it presents as arguments that universal health care could potentially reduce medical bankruptcy and improve overall national health. I feel that it is a reality of many Americans to suffer with the health system if they are not supported by insurance, for example, and this can lead to several consequences that add up to a bigger problem, like Americans avoiding to seek medical assistance when needed, Americans declaring bankruptcy due to exorbitant unpaid medical bills, or even self-medicating and causing life-lasting consequences. This topic aligns with a current research that shows that countries with

universal health coverage tend to have lower rates of preventable deaths and better chronic disease management, because they are supported by low or free cost of high quality health assistance. Many countries in Europe, South America and Central America serve as an example of this practice and could use more research to adapt their policies into the the U.S. For example, a study made by Grace Venechuk published on Health Affairs found that giving acces to universal coverage can significatly reduces financial problems from medical expenses and also improve preventive care utilization (Venechuk, 2021). Overall, I support the expansion of health care rights in the United States, as various researchers indicate that universal health is not only about improving Americans' individual health but it also supports the community well-being because it reduces preventable illness and the financial difficulties.

The Editors of ProCon (2024). *Universal health care*. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/procon/universal-health-care-debate>

Venechuk, G. (2021). *Health Affairs*. Universal Health Coverage: Evidence From Aging Cohorts.

Week 12

The solution I will propose to help spread the word on the relationship between food, brain function and mental health is to integrate nutritional education as well as diet as a primary intervention in mental health treatment and public health systems. Based on the sources I gathered and the research conducted it clearly shows that nutrient-rich diets and good eating habits can improve mood, reduce stress and even enhance the performance of the

brain, on the other hand, maintaining poor nutrition can worsen mental health issues and symptoms. For example, according to Gomez-Pinilla (2008) omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants "influence synaptic function and plasticity," which helps protect the brain from stress and aging (p. 569). By the same token, Cook and Champion (2025) explain that incorporating nutritional psychology into treatment can "optimize mental wellbeing" by addressing the gut-brain connection and hormone regulation (p. 2). Going back to my solution, this integration could be implemented by clinical practices and education. Ridberg et al. (2025) expose that "food is medicine", which emphasizes that nutritious food interventions should be part of healthcare, this way improving both mental and physical health (p. 224). These types of programs could be inserted in community clinics, schools and even workplaces, because it would offer accessible nutritional counseling with mental health services. Besides that, Hoffmann (2024) supports that combining diet with lifestyle practices such as exercise and social engagement is crucial to promote "executive brain vitality" (p. 45). I believe that encouraging better habits and focusing on this integration between nutrition and mental health policies could strengthen public mental health outcomes in a global level.

Week 13

My main argument is that people should pay more attention to what they are eating because it directly impacts their mood, health and brain function. Having a balanced and nutritional diet is crucial to be able to overcome mental health problems and brain fog. A counterclaim to this argument that I could notice is affirming that mental health outcomes are primarily related to genetics and psychological factors rather than eating habits or diet.

Some people might argue that diet could provide good benefits but it could not resolve severe mental issues by itself, such as depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder. It is known that genetic predispositions and chemicals in the brain impacts significant conditions like major depressive disorder, which in this case, therapy and even medication is often the treatment that studies consider effective. They also can argue that other things can be a trigger for this mental health issues like socioeconomic challenges, stress and trauma, not only diet alone. And from this point of view, nutrition could be seen as a solution that is overly simple and that could divert attention from more serious treatment necessary during mental health care.

On the other hand, to refute this claim, some points can be emphasized, research shows that diet should not be considered a solution by itself, but as a complementary approach that could boost other forms of treatment. Moreover, studies cited by Gomez-Pinilla (2008) and Hoffmann (2024) shows that nutrients like omega-3, antioxidants and vitamins support brain function and improve mood regulation while also enhancing cognitive performance, which could increase the effectiveness of these other forms of mental health treatment. By the same token, as highlighted by Larson et al. (2020), a preventative measure that could reduce long-term risk factors for mental health conditions is to address food insecurity and access to healthy diets. A diet that is balanced and full of nutrients can serve as a tool for improving energy and focus, that supports mental health well-being and brain function, which demonstrates that nutrition could interact in synergy with genetic, environmental and psychological factors.

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I believe that during this term I have improved my writing in different ways. I can say for sure that I got better at organizing my thoughts and my arguments so my paragraphs would make more sense and be clear when trying to explain to my audience what I was thinking. Also, during this semester I think I really valued revision and was able to improve my work with the discussions and feedback received. Moreover, when looking for credible sources I feel that I did a great job, I was not too confused scrolling through the library website and because I had some key words in mind it was really helpful and easy to select some sources. Some things that I would like to improve is the way I build my sentences that sometimes feel way too casual and also, my vocabulary. Since English is not my first language I tend to run out of words to express what I really want and usually rely on synonyms, so improving my vocabulary would be really helpful. Overall I believe that I made good progress but there are still things and skills that I want to improve in the future.