

4 Arguing and Debating: Breihan's History Course

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This chapter continues the exploration of the “difficulties” (p. 5) that arose as students tried to meet their teachers’ expectations, and the teachers’ methods and students’ strategies that appeared to affect those difficulties. Our special focus (p. 16) in this chapter is students’ development across the semester and how John R. Breihan’s teaching methods nurtured that development.

Breihan’s “Modern Civilization” course was a 100-level, required CORE course enrolling 27 students (mostly freshmen) at Loyola College in fall, 1985. Characteristics of the class, the college, and the students appear on p. 18 and in Appendix B. “We” in this chapter refers to Walvoord and Breihan, who collaborated in gathering the data and writing this chapter.

In Breihan’s class, difficulties arose in all six areas we constructed for the four classes (p. 14). However, we chose three areas of difficulty—stating a position, managing complexity, and using discipline-based methods to arrive at and support a position. We chose these three, first, because they were the main focus of Breihan’s and his students’ attention: 76 percent of Breihan’s meaning-changing comments (p. 40) on students’ essay drafts involved these three areas. Second, these three areas have seemed important to teachers and difficult for students, not only in our four classes but in other academic settings as well (Applebee et al. 1990; Connor 1990; Connor and Lauer 1985; Cooper et al. 1984; Perkins 1985).

We chose to focus on the effects of Breihan’s teaching methods because those methods had been carefully crafted over a period of years and influenced by his extensive experience in writing-across-the-curriculum workshops (Breihan 1986; Mallonee and Breihan 1985;

Walvoord and Dowling 1990). Further, Breihan's methods conformed to the "environmental" mode that Hillocks's (1986) analysis of empirical research on writing instruction has shown to be the most effective. Rather than merely presenting information (the "presentational" mode), Breihan's environmental mode structured ways for his students to learn to use information. Breihan's course also contained the characteristics that Kurfiss (1988), after a survey of the literature, lists as being common to courses that successfully support critical thinking:

- Critical thinking is treated as a learnable skill, with instructor and peers as resources for learning.
- Problems, questions, or issues are points of entry into the subject and a source of motivation for sustained inquiry.
- Challenges to think critically are balanced with support for students' developmental needs.
- Courses are assignment-centered rather than text- and lecture-centered. Goals, methods, and evaluation emphasize using content rather than simply acquiring it.
- Students are required to formulate and justify their ideas in writing or other appropriate modes.
- Teachers make standards explicit and then help students learn how to achieve them. (88–89)

Breihan's specific teaching methods most notably included:

1. An issue-oriented course plan, using issues as points of entry into the course.
2. Three major argumentative essays about those issues; these essays formed the central assignments toward which much of the other course activities were pointed.
3. A checksheet for evaluating/grading the essays that made his expectations very explicit.
4. Daily, focused writings ("exercises") explicitly planned both to develop needed skills and information and to serve as pre-draft preparation for the essays.
5. In-class discussions in which Breihan led his students through the modes of argument he wanted them to learn.
6. Seven in-class debates on historical issues that also served as pre-draft preparation for the essays.

7. Responses by Breihan on drafts of the essays, after which students revised.

But more important than the individual methods, to Walvoord the striking characteristic of Breihan's classroom was the consistent, focused, deliberate amassing of various activities, both written and oral, that all pointed toward the central course goal—teaching students to argue about issues by using historical evidence.

BREIHAN'S EXPECTATIONS

A student we call Bonnie Kraft recalled, in an interview by Walvoord three years after having taken Breihan's class, her surprise as she began to comprehend Breihan's expectations:

I remember going in there thinking, O.K., this is just a basic history course, you know, it's not going to be a lot of work, you know what I mean, it's just going to be basically all lecture and then I'm going to have to restate what he told me on an exam. But Dr. Breihan was saying, "I'm not a history teacher; I'm a historian who teaches history." And right there I knew the outlook that I had was WRONG! [As I looked through the course material] I remember thinking, this is going to be different than what I thought.

Breihan describes what history courses, in his opinion, should do:

The difference between basic historical study, of the sort that ought to go on in high school, and history as what historians actually *do*—is argument. History textbooks, for example, attempt balanced, comprehensive narratives of past events. Historians don't read them. They read (and write) opinionated arguments about what the past was like, and they often say why contemporary eyewitnesses and even other historians had it wrong. College history courses should introduce students to the world of what historians actually do. This usually involves introducing them for the first time to the concept of conflicting opinions in print, which is often difficult for them to grasp, and teaching them to recognize and adopt a critical approach to the opinions of others. This is combined with assigning them to develop their own opinions and to argue them against opposing points of view.

Breihan's history department had specified a goal of cultural literacy for this course as well, and the readings and lectures accordingly contained a great deal of factual material. But Breihan felt that this material was best learned by being used in argument.

THE ARGUER/DEBATER ROLE

The professional-in-training role (pp. 8–9) that Breihan wanted was the role that during data analysis we came to call “arguer” or “debater.” It was different in emphasis, as we will see, from Sherman’s expected role of business decision maker, though Breihan, like Sherman, tried to move students from mere text-processor or lay roles into the appropriate professional-in-training role.

Because few of Breihan’s freshman and sophomore CORE students would major in history, he expected them to use historical material as evidence to argue questions of concern to citizens involved in the public life of the nation. Many of Breihan’s essay questions therefore cast students in the role of politician (senator, advisor to a ruler) or of citizen/analyst who applies historical knowledge to current world concerns. The titles of the three main units of Breihan’s course were phrased as questions on such concerns:

Unit 1: Political stability—What is it worth?
(16th–18th centuries)

Unit 2: Economic growth—What does it mean?
(Industrial Revolution)

Unit 3: Why arm? Why fight? (World Wars and the Cold War)

The “Loyoliana” question is one of the options for Essay 1 at the end of Unit 1 (see Figure 4.1).

BREIHAN’S EMPHASIS ON GOOD/BETTER/BEST REASONING

Seventy-seven percent of Breihan’s essay questions, like all of Sherman’s, were in the good/better/best mode—here, for example, he asks what kind of government would be “best” for Loyoliana. Other questions involved actual historical situations: he asked the writer to be a U.S. senator who must decide whether to vote for ratification of the N.A.T.O. treaty and then must explain that decision in a letter to constituents. In still others, the student as historian/citizen-in-training argued a position to the teacher on, for example, whether Burke’s or Paine’s theories of government were more “valid.”

BREIHAN’S EXPECTATIONS FOR FINISHED ESSAYS

Figure 4.2 summarizes Breihan’s expectations for the finished essays. Our analysis relies on the various handouts Breihan used to explain

You have been approached by General Perez, dictator of . . . Loyoliana, for advice about politics. General Perez would like to bring about reform in his . . . country, where the relative positions of the relatively small landowning elite and the majority of impoverished inhabitants resemble France in 1789. He is willing to leave office peacefully and hand over his powers to a constitutional government. Yet he fears anarchy—Loyoliana had a serious civil war 40 years ago that killed thousands. He is also a keen student of European politics, 1500–1800, and is worried that reform might go too far and become a bloody revolution like the one in France. That is why he has come to you. He knows that you were a good student in the early part of History 101 at Loyola College, where you studied such matters with great intensity. He will not be convinced by any arguments or facts about other political systems (like those of the U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. today); he wants you to draw your arguments about government and examples to prove them entirely from the record of the European past during the three centuries between 1500 and 1800. He also requires that you answer any possible counterarguments against your recommendations. Prepare a report to General Perez along these lines. Be careful—the fate of millions may be at stake!

Figure 4.1. The Loyoliana Assignment.

Key words

used in class: The essay should:

issue	address the issue stated or implied in the question
opinion	by stating the student's opinion or
thesis	thesis that has been reached by
feelings	evidence from the standpoint of the student's feelings and values.
values	
fact	The student's opinion should be supported by specific, accurate facts/opinions found in the primary and secondary sources students read.
evidence	These facts and opinions should be used as evidence—that is,
connect	the student should connect the historical material to his/her
subtheses	own opinion by stating warrants and by using subtheses. The student should draw material from all or most of the relevant lectures and readings.
alternatives	In the argument, the student should acknowledge alternative
counter-	solutions/outcomes and should raise and answer the counter-
evidence/	evidence or counterarguments that would be expected from
argument	course readings or common sense.

Figure 4.2. Summary of Breihan's expectations for the essays.

his expectations to students, his statements in class as recorded by Walvoord and the student observers (p. 23), the checksheet he returned to students with drafts and final essays, the comments and grades he assigned to essay drafts and final papers during the course, the log he kept during the course, interviews and discussions between Walvoord and Breihan both during and after the course, and Breihan's post-course primary trait analysis (p. 35).

We turn now to explore three areas of difficulty that arose as students tried to meet Breihan's expectations. In each area, we focus on how students developed across the semester and on how Breihan's teaching methods appeared to structure and nurture that development. In the third area—using discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence—we also explore some differences between good/better/best reasoning in Breihan's and Sherman's classes, as well as aspects of Breihan's teaching methods that, on the basis of our study, he decided to change.

DIFFICULTIES WITH STATING A POSITION

THE NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

When they entered the class, Breihan's students generally expected to play the text-processor role (p. 9), not to state intellectual positions of their own. In the fourth week of the course, a freshman we call Tracy Wagner wrote in her log,

I haven't done things like this before. In high school we took the answers straight from the book. I am not in the habit of developing arguments.

Stating a position has seemed hard for students in other academic settings. Though Sherman specifically asked students to defend a stadium site, 16 percent of his class of junior and senior business majors stated no stadium location, and another 11 percent tacked on a decision only as an afterthought to their textbook summaries (p. 71).

In the 1988 National Assessment of Educational Progress, when eleventh graders were asked to take a stand and argue their position against an opposing point of view, nearly 33 percent did not state a position (Applebee et al. 1990).

STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

Breihan had good success in teaching his students to state a position. By the seventh week, when they drafted Essay 1 in class, every student in the focus group of nineteen students stated a position and then tried to support that position with evidence (for focus group see p. 40 and Appendix B). Further, all but one of the nineteen students stated the position in the first paragraph or two of the essay. The one student who did not—Tracy Wagner, who was “not in the habit of developing arguments”—devoted the first 40 percent of her draft to an encyclopedia-like report that began “Edmund Burke was born in . . .” But even she eventually got to a statement of her position on the issue.

HOW BREIHAN'S TEACHING METHODS HELPED STUDENTS LEARN TO STATE A POSITION

Our data suggest that Breihan's teaching methods helped students learn to state positions in the following ways:

Visible Issue Orientation

Breihan titled each unit with an issue-oriented question that implied a position (e.g., “Unit 1: Political stability—what is it worth?”). These issues were printed in the syllabus and at the head of the lecture outline that Breihan gave his students at the beginning of the semester. Walvoord observed that most students kept the outline in front of them during the class session, and many made notes directly on it; thus the issues were constantly before the students' eyes.

Daily Focused Writing

Many of the daily, in-class writing exercises focused on issues. For example, Breihan's instruction sheet for a number of the exercises began with the question, “What is the issue at stake in this chapter?” Only then would succeeding questions on the sheet address the specific readings for that day. Several students remarked in their logs or on their tapes that these questions about the “issue at stake” became habitual for them whenever they began a reading assignment for Breihan's course. The focus on issues, then, pervaded those areas—

readings and class sessions—where students might otherwise have expected merely to be acting as text processors, storing up facts. The exercises directly guided the way students approached their textbook—one of the sources of difficulty in Sherman’s class.

Further, the daily writings gave students practice in stating a position before they wrote their essays. One daily writing assignment shortly before Essay 1 asked students to state in a single paragraph which solution to 17th-century anarchy—the English or the French type of government—they personally found most reasonable and attractive. This exercise served as a direct preparation for Essay 1 where, for example, the Loyoliana question asked students to recommend a type of government to General Perez.

Finally, the daily writings, coupled with a series of debates, gave students the time, information, and experience that made them ready to adopt positions. Before the in-class draft of Essay 1, students had written and debated a number of times and from different angles 17th-century French absolutism and the Glorious Revolution in England. Their logs and tapes show them reacting to the issues, expressing likes and dislikes, hashing over various positions, and getting ready to take a stand.

In-Class Debates

The seven in-class debates held at various points in the semester also reinforced the process of taking a stand on an issue. For example, shortly before they wrote Essay 1, students participated in a debate in which half the class argued that Louis XIV was a “good king” and half the class argued that he was not. (Breihan consciously sacrificed subtlety of historical interpretation in order to emphasize the importance of taking a clear stand on an issue.) The debates were a visible and prominent feature of the course for students, who mentioned them frequently in their logs, notes, and dormitory study groups. Students in two dormitory study groups who taped their sessions for us discussed who said what in specific debates, weighed the relative merit of various debate teams, and debated some of the issues. The seven debates cast students visibly and physically in the role of arguer/debater (not of text processor) and encouraged them to read their assignments with the goal of preparing for the upcoming debates.

In-Class Discussions

The in-class discussions likewise emphasized the importance of taking a stand. Quoted below is an excerpt from a class Walvoord visited during the fourth week. First, notice that the written exercise students have brought to class is the basis for the discussion—the course is assignment centered; writing directly relates to what happens in class and to the central goals of the course. Second, note how Breihan emphasizes “turning the corner” from mere summary to taking a stand. (The discussion contains other lessons as well—about how to raise and answer counterarguments and how to support a position with evidence, which are the topics of the last two sections of this chapter.)

At the point where the classroom discussion begins, Breihan asks the same question as the exercise sheet students have just submitted:

Breihan: How can the letter by Colbert be used as evidence on the issue of whether Louis is a good or a bad king?

Vicky Ware: [summarizes the reading]

Breihan: [reinforces her, but pushes her further] Everything you’ve said is right, but you need to turn one little corner.

Ware: [hesitates]

Breihan: [rephrases his question]

Ware: He [Louis XIV] was good.

Breihan: [exults] YES!

The “corner” is to move from merely summarizing Colbert’s letter to saying that the material can be used to support an argument that Louis was a good king. Breihan tells the class he wants them to state their positions (“opinions”) boldly: “be *that* heavy-handed in your writing.” They must take a stand; then they must “make the connection” that links the historical material to their opinion about Louis, so that the historical material is not merely included, but acts “as evidence” to support the student’s opinion. Breihan also suggests that, to make the connection between specific information and their own opinions, students can say, “*Louis XIV was a good king because. . .*” (Later in the chapter, we will see how Bonnie Kraft adopted this linguistic formula as a key to her reasoning about good/better/best issues.)

Further lessons about how to form and support opinions emerge in a multi-student exchange which Breihan orchestrates later in the same class period:

Bonnie Kraft: [summarizes part of a reading selection in response to Breihan's question]

Monica Rhodes: [summarizes another part of it]

Breihan: How does it go, this dispute? Mr. McConnell?

Jim McConnell: [answers with summary of the argument]

Breihan: So how would you use this as evidence [on the central issue of the day's discussion]?

The same question about evidence has been asked on that day's exercise sheet. The lesson is that readings are not merely to be summarized, they are to be used as evidence for a position.

McConnell: [responds satisfactorily]

Breihan: Anybody look at it differently? Mr. Nessay?

Jerry Nessay: [responds]

Breihan has introduced counterargument, a necessary part of any successful essay in his course. He is also emphasizing that various opinions may arise in the class, even though students are all reading the same material.

Breihan: Yes, but you've made some very general statements. Get to *this* document. Miss Ware?

Ware: [begins, but stops]

Breihan: How do you know Louis was bargaining here—let's get specific. Let's get to the document.

Breihan pushes for specificity and for reference to the day's readings—both important lessons for success on the essays.

Ware: [silence]

Sharon Drake: [bails her out]

Breihan: [leads Drake, as she makes the argument that Louis was autocratic]

Again, Breihan is insisting that students take stands and construct arguments in the class, not merely summarize readings.

Breihan: Look at the dates. It takes three years of dickering before he [Louis] dismisses the deputies. We have absolutism here, *but*. When he did go in, he didn't send the army in, he took just ten guys. This is the importance of information [i.e., the little piece of information about how long it took for the king to act and how few men were involved allows one to make a point]. So you could use this as Miss Ware and Miss Drake

did [to support the point that Louis was autocratic], *but* [he explains how the same reading selection could also be used to support a different point—that Louis was restrained in his use of absolute power].

Throughout this and other in-class discussions Breihan led his students through the process of taking a stand, supporting it with evidence, and defending it against counterargument—all part of the professional-in-training role of arguer/debater he expected from them.

Comments on Essay Drafts

Notice Breihan's last comment: Even Vicky Ware, who had made a beginning and then had to be bailed out, shared the credit for having made the point that Louis was autocratic. Breihan credited students with stating positions even when they had needed help in articulating those positions. He did the same in his responses to their essay drafts. The comments Breihan wrote at the end of a draft always began with a summary of the student's thesis and main points. Here is the opening of a typical comment:

Mr. Carter:

This essay puts forward a very clear thesis that a "strong government" is needed to end anarchy. After reviewing several alternatives, you end by saying that a mixed government on the English model would work best for Loyoliana.

What is missing here is argument and evidence in favor of the thesis that you state so clearly. *WHY* would this system work so well? [The comment continues with further questions and suggestions for revision.]

Breihan's habit of addressing students by their surnames and crediting them with positions was intended to help them act like mature adults and scholars who take positions and defend them. His comment to Carter opened in much the same way he would open a published article in which he first stated the argument of another historian, then addressed the strengths and weaknesses of that argument. Thus the conversation between Breihan and his students took on the cast of professionals participating in a dialogue about historical issues.

Breihan's practice of identifying an argument with the student who had made it also reinforced the concept that argument in history is made by individuals who may be more-or-less accurate and astute, and who work from various biases, and that in their own writing students were expected to cite the authors of arguments they included.

Checksheet

Another teaching method that emphasized the importance of assuming a position was the checksheet that Breihan gave students at the beginning of the semester (Figure 4.3).

Breihan had constructed the checksheet based on his observations of students' essays over several years. Each item on the checksheet described a type of paper Breihan actually received, beginning with the least successful and going up to the most successful. Rough grade equivalents were:

<i>Items</i>	<i>Grade</i>
1-4	F
5	D
6-9	C
10	B
11	A

On the checksheet, stating a position appears as the first characteristic in every item from 7 to 11. The breakdown of grade values above also shows that students, in order to get a "C" or above, had to state a position. The checksheet, then, was one way Breihan did what, as we have mentioned, Kurfiss (1988) found in her survey of successful courses that teach critical thinking: the teacher makes expectations clear (pp. 88-89).

Breihan took pains to make this sheet highly visible to students. A copy of the checksheet was included in the packet of materials they received at the beginning of the semester. Breihan marked a copy of the checksheet and returned it along with his written comments and the draft. Later, each student resubmitted the revised essay together with the draft and checksheet, and Breihan made another check on the checksheet to represent his evaluation of the revised essay. Usually the student had improved, and the second check was higher on the scale. The checksheet, as well as Breihan's other methods, embodied another characteristic Kurfiss (1988) notes—critical thinking is treated as a learnable skill, and the teacher offers support for students' development (pp. 88-89).

Breihan's Use of "Thesis" Terminology

Notice that the checksheet mentions the word *thesis*. Breihan frequently and deliberately used that term. He was consciously relating his course to the required freshman composition course, which his students would

An assessment of your essay is marked on the scale below. The scale describes a variety of common *types* of paper but may not exactly describe yours; my mark on the scale denotes roughly where it falls. More precise information can be derived from comments and conferences with the instructor.

- 1. The paper is dishonest.
- 2. The paper completely ignores the questions set.
- 3. The paper is incomprehensible due to errors in language or usage.
- 4. The paper contains very serious factual errors.
- 5. The paper simply lists, narrates, or describes historical data, and includes several factual errors.
- 6. The paper correctly lists, narrates, or describes historical data, but makes little or no attempt to frame an argument or thesis.
- 7. The paper states an argument or thesis, but one that does not address the questions set.
- 8. The paper states an argument or thesis, but supporting subtheses and factual evidence are:
 - a. missing
 - b. incorrect or anachronistic
 - c. irrelevant
 - d. not sufficiently specific
 - e. all or partly obscured by errors in language or usage
- 9. The paper states an argument on the appropriate topic, clearly supported by relevant subtheses and specific factual evidence, but counterarguments and counterexamples are not mentioned or answered.
- 10. The paper contains an argument, relevant subtheses, and specific evidence; counterarguments and counterexamples are mentioned but not adequately answered:
 - a. factual evidence either incorrect or missing or not specific
 - b. linking subtheses either unclear or missing
 - c. counterarguments and counterexamples not clearly stated; "straw man"
- 11. The paper adequately states and defends an argument, and answers all counterarguments and counterexamples suggested by:
 - a. lectures
 - b. reading assignments: specific arguments and authors are mentioned by name
 - c. common sense

Figure 4.3. Breihan's checksheet for essays.

take the following semester, and in which “thesis” was heavily emphasized. By encouraging the thesis/support format, Breihan also forefronted the student’s position.

Breihan’s method here contrasted with Sherman’s, which emphasized define/analyze/prescribe. Each format brought corresponding difficulties. The define/analyze/prescribe format offered a process for arriving at a position, but, if students used it as an organizing pattern in their papers, it postponed the student’s position statement until the end. This sometimes invited students’ difficulties with stating any position at all, or with linking a stated position to the definition and analysis that had preceded it (see Kurt Larson, p. 89). The thesis-first format, on the other hand, forefronts the students’ decision but might encourage the view that forming a thesis is the first act of a writer, rather than the result of evolving investigation, planning, drafting, and revising. Breihan countered this danger by the daily, focused writing and the frequent debates which prepared students to state a thesis for each essay.

Essay Assignment Sheets

Breihan’s Loyoliana essay assignment sheet (p. 101) does not begin with advice to the student to read the textbook, but rather with General Perez’s dilemma. Breihan uses the words *advice* and *recommendations*, and, twice, the word *argument*, which he also used frequently in class, and which appears frequently in students’ logs and tapes—they get the message that this class is about argument. The word *report*, which might imply mere textbook summary, appears at the very end, where its meaning has already been established by the earlier framework of “argument.” Explicit instructions to answer counterarguments further define the students’ position as arguer/debater.

Further, the assignment sheet does not specify a limited body of information that students could summarize, but only refers to “European politics 1500–1800.” There is little on this assignment sheet that could possibly mislead students into thinking that they should summarize a portion of historical material they had studied. Everything drives toward the message that they are to assume the role of arguer/debater.

After analyzing all these teaching methods, it seemed to us that what helped students learn to take positions was not only the number and type of teaching methods Breihan used, but their consistency in

reinforcing the arguer/debater role and in addressing students' approaches to textbooks, their use of the "thesis" model, and their pre-draft writing.

Joe Walker's log entry from the third week of the course shows how Breihan's teaching methods were helping students learn to state a position:

I feel pretty good about the work done so far. It teaches you to think in a new way, which is somewhat difficult to adapt to after spending many years doing things the other way—that is spitting out facts instead of arguing opinions with support of factual evidence. Dr. Breihan explains things well, which is a big help.

As students adopted the arguer/debater role and learned that they must state a position, they began to confront two other areas of difficulty—managing complexity (primarily through raising and answering counterarguments) and using discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence.

DIFFICULTIES WITH MANAGING COMPLEXITY: COUNTERARGUMENT

THE NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

Breihan, like Sherman, expected that students would not merely use a "find reasons" strategy—listing advantages or reasons for their own positions—but that they would consider the complex aspects of an issue, entertain alternative solutions to a problem, and raise and answer counterevidence and counterarguments to their own positions. Breihan often used the term *counterargument* generically to refer to both counterevidence and counterargument, and we follow his practice.

In other academic settings researchers have found raising and answering counterarguments both rare and difficult for students. In the 1988 National Assessment of Educational Progress, when eleventh graders were asked to take a stand and argue their position against an opposing point of view, only 21 percent even briefly refuted some aspects of the opposing ideas (Applebee et al. 1990, p. 34). In a study by Perkins (1985), high school and college students offered only a few lines of argument to support, and far fewer in opposition to, their oral arguments on current issues. Cooper et al. (1984) asked a group of 400 SUNY at Buffalo entering freshmen to write persuasive essays during orientation week, then asked a group of SUNY teachers to rate

those essays holistically. In a sample of 50 essays, only 16 percent of the students addressed an opposing point of view on the issue. Yet counterargument was important to the raters.

STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

In contrast to these other settings, 58 percent of Breihan's students, by the final essay in his class, raised at least one counterargument relevant to a stated position and responded to that counterargument with further argument and specific evidence.¹ Even by Essay 1, in the seventh week of the course, 47 percent of the students met that standard. Data from early logs and exercises indicate that this was not because Breihan's students expected or knew how to raise and answer counterarguments when they entered the course; on the contrary, as we have seen, most expected to "take answers out of the book." Rather, Breihan's teaching methods very early impressed upon students the importance of counterargument. And Breihan's methods taught students how to raise and answer counterarguments. Larry Crane, for example, got the message very early. In the third week of the course, he recorded in his log:

As I read the selected passages, I tried to discern the writer's opinion (thesis) of Louis XIV. I looked for evidence in support of his opinion and *evidence in support of the opposite*. [Italics ours]

In the sixth week, preparing for the Loyoliana essay, he recorded that he jotted down "any ideas at all I had about the various aspects of the question, possible solutions, *counterarguments*, strategies, areas I need to investigate further, etc." (Italics ours). Like many other students, Crane early realized that, as he observed in his log on November 11, "counterarguments really thrill the professor!"

HOW BREIHAN'S TEACHING METHODS HELPED STUDENTS LEARN TO RAISE AND ANSWER COUNTERARGUMENTS

Choice of Texts

Breihan used four textbooks, one of which was a traditional, chronological account of events. A student who clung to the text-processor role and who received a "C" in the course wrote in her course evaluation at the end of the semester that this text was "straight facts stated out, easy to understand. We didn't use it enough." As the

student noted, Breihan placed his major emphasis on other texts that modeled and encouraged counterargument. One such text was a collection of primary and secondary readings arranged by issue—for example, evaluating Louis XIV. The other two texts were writings of Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. Thus Breihan chose and heavily emphasized textbooks that presented conflicting viewpoints on issues, making it difficult for students to see one book as a single, monolithic “right” representation of historical facts. Moreover, many of the authors in the textbooks themselves raised and answered counterarguments, thus providing further models for Breihan’s students.

The Language of the Assignment Sheets and the Checksheet

Assignment sheets specifically mentioned the need for counterarguments, as we saw in the Loyoliana question. Further, Breihan’s checksheet (Figure 4.3), which students had from the first day of class and which Breihan used as part of his response to their drafts and final essays, featured counterargument as the final, crowning trait that distinguished an “A” paper from all the rest (item 11).

Response to Drafts

Twenty-one percent of the meaning-changing comments (p. 40) Breihan wrote on students’ essay drafts concerned counterarguments.² Breihan both praised counterarguments when he found them and suggested them when he did not. He frequently mentioned specific authors or positions that the student should answer; for example, on one essay he suggested that

You need to answer the counterarguments contained in Ashton.

To a student who had included a number of counterarguments but not answered them very fully, he wrote:

You might also elaborate on the game laws counterargument and do more to counter Bossuet than simply to bring up St. Simon (who says St. S. is right??)

Our data reveal that 93 percent of Breihan’s meaning-changing comments on essay drafts resulted in some kind of revision.³ Breihan’s draft response then led students to consider counterarguments as one of the chief issues in their revisions.

In-Class Discussions

The in-class discussions, often based on the daily writings, aided comprehension and reinforced the notion that the readings were arguments on an issue. In the in-class discussion reproduced earlier, Breihan had asked for a summary of some readings by saying, "How does it go, this *dispute*?" In the class discussion, as we saw, Breihan led his students through a dialogue of argument and counterargument.

Debates

The seven in-class debates helped students in many ways. On a basic level, they helped with reading comprehension—not only with understanding the meaning of statements in the readings, but also with understanding that the readings were themselves debates, answering other voices, and that they could be used as ammunition for the students' own debates. Bonnie Kraft, reading the assignments in Burke and Paine, recorded in her log:

The readings were difficult and confusing. I spent much time rereading passages to make sure I understood what each man was arguing. This assignment took about 6 or 7 hours.

During the Burke-Paine debate, still unsure of herself, she sat silent, allowing her classmates to carry the argument, remarking in her log later:

Today's debate was a good experience and turned out exactly as I thought. I [had] missed some major points in the readings of Burke and Paine. I left class with a better understanding of the assignments.

After this debate, another student recorded the insight that "Burke and Paine are counterarguments to each other!!"

Debate as an Aid to Dialogic Thinking

In the high-success students' essays, argument and counterargument proceed in a constant, seesaw pattern of dialogue on both the macro and micro levels. For example, Larry Crane's in-class draft of the Loyoliana essay begins by arguing that the "English plan" of constitutional government has strong features that Loyoliana should adopt. Then, addressing the counterarguments, he acknowledges that this English plan has shortcomings, thereby setting himself up to argue

that it should be modified with some features of the “French plan”—absolutism—and some additions of his own. (In a wonderful adoption of the professional-in-training role, he calls this amalgam by his own name—“the Crane Plan.”) At the macro level, the overall organization of his paper is thus a dialogue of argument, counterargument, and answer. But such dialogue is also integrated at micro levels in every section of his paper. An example is this section, in which he addresses the kind of executive that Loyoliana should have (labels at left are ours):

Argument	Another shortcoming [of the English plan] was the succession of the monarch through heredity. Paine is right in saying that talents and abilities cannot have hereditary descent. An heir to the throne may have no desire or talent to rule. What is worse, kings sometimes have congenital birth defects. Charles II of Spain was unable to father a child and the result was the War of Spanish Succession. Louis XIV was a child when he inherited his title and the Fronde ensued. The crown may even fall to a foreigner. For Loyoliana, a non-hereditary executive possessing talent and abilities and acceptable to a majority of legislators is clearly called for.
Counter	Hume argues, however, that such an “elected monarch” would be motivated to accumulate as much wealth as possible before giving way to his successor. Also, any elected monarch would still harbor friendships and animosities and use his position to address them. But Hume also writes that people voting by their representatives form the best democracy. Could not those representatives then be counted on to elect a leader of limited powers who had the interest of the nation and the people at heart?
Answer	

Other paragraphs and sections of essays proceed similarly in Crane’s and other students’ essays. The frequency and importance of the dialogue at macro and micro levels are shown by a count of the types of connections that link ideas to one another in a sample of Breihan’s students’ essays.⁴ (We used Bonnie Meyer’s categories to classify types of connections, p. 42.) As Figure 4.4 illustrates, the kinds of connections that introduce counterargument or answers to counterargument are second highest in frequency. Further, the “A” essays have substantially more such connections than the “C” essays.

This dialogic pattern of argument, counterargument, and answer was a unique feature of Breihan’s class, different from the other classes we studied. It appears to us that Breihan evoked it because he made very clear that he wanted it and he taught students how to do it.

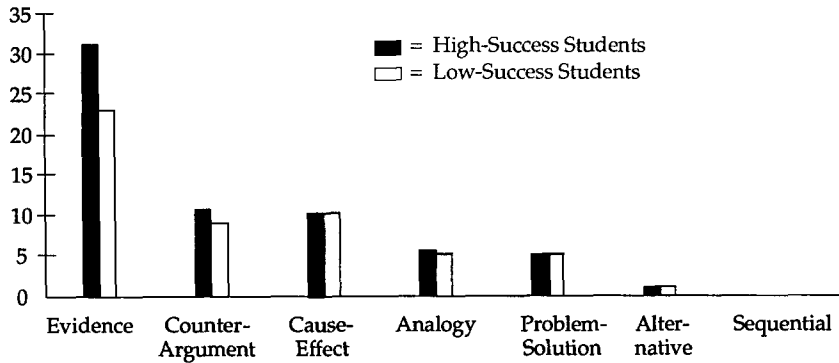


Figure 4.4. Types of connections among ideas in first three levels of hierarchy of high-success and low-success student essays. Evidence: Facts and opinions from course readings, presented as evidence (Meyer's "descriptive"). Counterargument: Counterargument and counterevidence, and answers by the writer (Meyer's "adversative"). Cause-Effect: Causes or effects (Meyer's "causation"). Analogy: (Meyer's "analogy"). Problem-Solution: (Meyer's "response"). Alternative: Any alternative not presented as a counterargument (Meyer's "alternative"). Sequential: Sequence is the only connective (Meyer's "sequential"). $N = 10$ essays: one high-success and one low-success essay (randomly chosen) on each of five topics spaced across the semester.

The debates seemed particularly effective in modeling the dialogic pattern of constant argument, counterargument, and answer. The teams in the debate did not simply each speak once or twice in a pro-con, one-side–other-side fashion. Instead, they contributed points in a basketball-like fashion, each side making a point, then yielding the floor to the other side, who could counter the point or begin a new one. In the debate about Louis XIV, for example, a student on one team might make the point that Louis built Versailles—a cultural and artistic landmark still admired for its elegance and beauty. Someone from the other side, however, might counter that Versailles was financed on the backs of desperately poor peasants cruelly taxed. Then the first side countered that or raised a new point.

Successful students' planning, as revealed in their logs and tapes, often exhibited a debate-like dialogue. One student described his habit of "arguing with myself" while planning a paper. Bonnie Kraft shows this dialogic way of thinking in an oral planning session for an exercise just after the Louis XIV debate, in the fourth week. Students were to make a one-paragraph statement and defence of what they thought was the best solution to 17th-century anarchy—the absolutism of Louis XIV or the limited monarchy of Britain. As she generated reasons why the English solution was better, she immediately addressed

counterarguments, as these excerpts from her think-aloud tape illustrate:

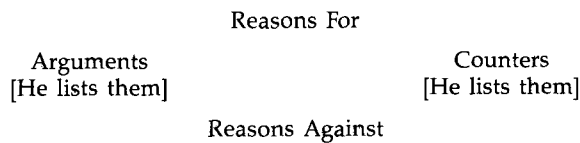
- Argument This leads to another reason I think the English solution was better, because, um, because um, there were checks and balances. [she talks through some evidence and explanation] But under the absolutism in France, Louis could do or make the decisions that he wanted; he didn't have anybody to regulate him or to tell him that that was wrong and that wasn't a good thing to do. He just did what he wanted to do.
- Counter I'm not saying that Louis didn't do good for the people or what he thought was good, but
- Answer no one was there to regulate what he did. . . .
- Counter The English solution didn't go without any problems. I mean there was a problem in finding someone that would succeed William and Mary and, um, and/or the Prince of Orange.
- Answer But the system is so much more democratic. . . . I wonder if I could include, or to say that the English wasn't perfect, but the good points outweighed the bad. I think that would be a good way to present this essay—to say that the English were good because they were doing good for the people.
- Argument They did set up a framework of government and looked toward the future.
- Counter But then again there was always the problem of succession.
- Answer But they solved that problem [3 second silence] with the, uh, with the Hanoveria- Han, Ha-, um, HanOverian succession, HanoVERian, I guess, HanoVERian succession.
- Counter Or that, um, there was a problem with the title *prime minister*,
- Answer but rather Walpole worked out the system for that.

Kraft's planning and that of a number of other high-success students was characterized throughout by this dialogic pattern. Other researchers have also noted the role of dialogue in argument. Basseches (1980) argues that mature critical thinking is "dialectical," that it moves beyond Piaget's formal operations to the ability to examine critically one's own ideas from an opposing point of view. Hays, Brandt, and Chantry (1988) suggest that this dialectical ability originates as literal internal dialogues between the thinker and one who might question or oppose the thinker's position. Our study of Breihan's class suggests that internal dialogues may be taught or evoked for students in a class where, over and over, in a number of ways, language is employed in a debate-like pattern.

Debate as an Aid to Pre-Draft Writing

Breihan used the debates also to help students with pre-draft writing. On the blackboard, he jotted down, in columns, the points the teams made, then drew chalk arrows between an argument in one column and its counterargument in the other. Similar arrows appeared in students' pre-draft writing, helping them to transcend a mere pro-con or one-side-other-side organization and to achieve dialogue on both the macro and micro levels. Pete Lane was a student who lacked counterargument in Essay 1 but achieved it by Essay 2. In the interim he had begun to use arrows in his notes in imitation of Breihan's blackboard models (Figure 4.5). A number of students likewise used arrows to make pros and cons talk to each other, some writing in the margins of their reading notes *counterarg* with an arrow to the argument under attack.

Jim McConnell combined pro/con with argument/counterargument in his written plan for Essay 3:



Lane's and McConnell's pre-draft writings use the two axes—horizontal and vertical—to bring different types of information into a disciplined relationship in order to arrive at and support a decision—the third task of good/better/best reasoning (p. 12). A related form of dual axis pre-draft writing—the factor-rating chart—was described in Sherman's textbook, but students did not use it (p. 75). In Breihan's class, the

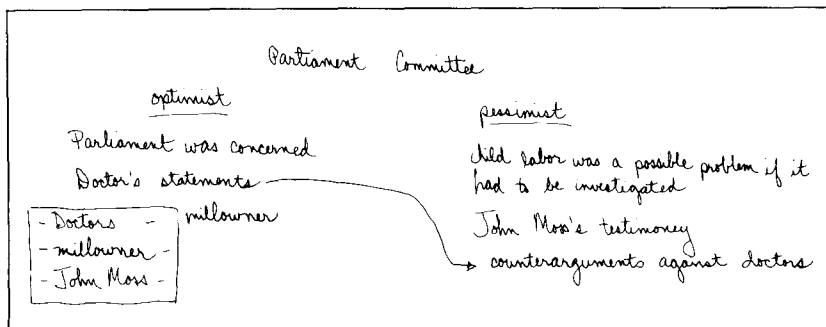


Figure 4.5. Pete Lane's notes (*Optimists held that the Industrial Revolution was good for workers; pessimists held that it was harmful.)

dual axis forms students used were actually written on the board and they grew from a dialogic in-class debate.

Even more flexible than dual axis arrows or charts was the system of pre-draft writing Bonnie Kraft used for Essay 1. She noted "counterarg" in the margins of her reading notes, then cut up the notes and taped them back together to form a very detailed outline in which arguments and counterarguments were interspersed in a dialogic pattern. This pattern then governed her essay draft.

Once Pete Lane had begun to use arrows in his notes, he began to write essays that raised and answered counterarguments and even to help other students to do so. Here is such an exchange within a dormitory study group the night before the in-class draft of Essay 2. Notice that the other student, Sara James, envisions counterargument as the admission of weakness by the writer, while Lane portrays it as an actual dialogue among opposing voices. Lane also uses the word *sceptical*, which Breihan often used to describe the way students were to approach their sources.

Sara James: [What about counterargument in Essay 2?]

Pete Lane: That's like saying, England was a good government, look at England. Then talk about England. Then you say, but it did have its flaws.

Sara James: So are we supposed to say, this may seem a little shaky in this area, but blah, blah, blah?

Pete Lane: Don't say it like that. Not that terminology.

Sara James: I know, but that train of thought? . . .

Pete Lane: It's like this, Sara. Talk about England and how great it was, a mixed government with its parliament, and its king. Well then why did Cromwell step in? That's the question someone might ask you. [In deep, hokey voice of the antagonistic someone:] "Well, if England was so great, why did Cromwell step in?" And then you have to talk about [preventing anarchy]. But then you look at France—no anarchy. But then why the French Revolution? You got to keep asking questions. Just like, be sceptical about what you're saying.

Sara James: I was going to ask you if I should . . . just present the whole thing without any possibility of there being counterarguments, but firstly that's, like, almost impossible, and secondly that's not what he's looking for. You're probably right.

Lane tried to help James with the sceptical, dialogic frame of mind necessary to frame counterarguments, and with the linguistic framework in which counterarguments are couched. It is no surprise that in writing his in-class Essay 2 the next day, he incorporated counter-

arguments and answers to counterarguments. James was less successful because her essay lacked both effective organization and sufficient specific information from the readings, but the pre-draft notes she had made during or after the study session contained specific passages marked "argument" and "counterargument."

In this section, then, we have explored some teaching methods that seemed to help students achieve the arguer/debater role by raising and answering counterarguments. The methods included Breihan's choice of textbooks, the language of the assignment sheets and the checksheet, his response to drafts, the in-class discussions, and the seven in-class debates. But again, more than the number and type of teaching methods was Breihan's intense, careful guidance of students' thinking and writing processes, his frequent feedback, and his consistent, strong focus, with all his teaching methods pointing students toward developing their ability to raise and to answer counterarguments. Breihan wanted his students to adopt the arguer/debater role, and in many ways the whole class became a debate, with both oral and written language used dialogically at many levels.

DIFFICULTIES WITH USING DISCIPLINE-BASED METHODS TO ARRIVE AT (AND SUPPORT) A POSITION

In this section, we take up a third area of difficulty—using discipline-based methods to arrive at the position and to support it with evidence. Again, as in the first two sections, we discuss the nature of the difficulties, students' development, and how Breihan's teaching methods affected students' learning.

In addition, we have two other points to make in this section: (1) there were some significant differences in the models for good/better/best reasoning used in Sherman's and Breihan's classes. Exploring these models can contribute to an understanding of what constitutes "good" thinking and writing in various academic disciplines or classes; and (2) our study revealed some areas in which Breihan wanted to change his teaching methods.

We make all these points by telling the story of how Bonnie Kraft learned to use discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to defend it with evidence. Accordingly, this section is organized differently from the rest, though it addresses similar issues.

Bonnie Kraft was the student who realized on the first day of class

that her previous notion about the text-processor role that would be required for the class had been “WRONG!” We’ve seen how she used dialogic thinking as she planned arguments and counterarguments about constitutional monarchy, and how she cut up and taped her notes to create an outline for her Loyoliana essay. During the first six weeks of the course, however, as she was learning the techniques of counterargument in preparation for her Loyoliana essay, Kraft struggled hard to learn how to use discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence—a struggle that other students experienced as well. The story of her struggle comes from her log, think-aloud tapes, notes, and drafts for the daily writings and debates that preceded the Loyoliana essay, and from interviews conducted by a freshman composition student during the course (p. 27) and by Walvoord three years later.

Kraft entered the course with several strengths that helped her in her struggle: she was well motivated, she had good learning skills, she set goals and worked deliberately toward them, and she could take detailed notes about her reading. At 530, however, her verbal SAT score was 12 points below the mean for the class and about 100 points below the mean for the other students who received “A” as a final course grade. Interviewed by Walvoord three years after the course, she remembered it as “THE hardest course I ever had,” but also one of the most useful because “there was a lot of writing involved and that was something that I hadn’t come into so far” and as a result “my writing improved so much.”

TEACHING THE HISTORICAL METHOD: FOUR STAGES

Breihan’s teaching worked in many ways to help Kraft. One of the things he did was to structure in four stages the use of discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence. Figure 4.6 shows selected exercises and debates that formed the four stages.

Stage 1: Showing How a Single Reading Can Be Used as Evidence

Kraft achieved:
Detailed summary of sources

Exercises	Skills
STAGE 1: SHOWING HOW A SINGLE READING CAN BE USED AS EVIDENCE	
<i>Author's Purpose and Summary: Week 1</i>	
What do you know about the textbook author?	Recognize that history is written by people who reflect their cultural biases.
What can you guess? When was the text written? published?	Pay attention to author's subheads.
List its subheadings and summarize a chapter.	Summarize.
<i>Narrative of the English Civil War</i>	
Write a one-paragraph narrative incorporating eight terms provided by Breihan.	Summarize events accurately.
<i>Analysis of Anarchic Episodes: Week 2</i>	
From eyewitness accounts of 17th-century riots, find evidence of the following factors: economic, political, social, religious, etc.	Become familiar with various analytical categories, and use them to categorize evidence.
<i>Primary Sources on Louis XIV: Week 3</i>	
What is the issue at stake in this collection of documents?	Understand how "primary source" material can be used as evidence by stating connections between eyewitness material and opinions on the historical issue.
Who was the author of each document? When did he/she live?	
How can his/her material be used as evidence on this issue?	
[Questions repeated for each source]	
<i>Secondary Sources on Louis XIV: Week 4</i>	
What is the issue at stake?	Understand what a "secondary source" is.
Who is the author and when did he/she write?	Use secondary sources as models for shaping historical arguments.
What is his/her position on the issue?	Understand how arguments are backed by evidence.
How does she/he back it up?	
<i>continued</i>	

Figure 4.6. The four stages of learning to use discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence

Figure 4.6 (cont.)

STAGE 2: CONTRIBUTING TO AN ARGUMENT ON AN ASSIGNED HISTORICAL OPINION

Louis XIV Debate Worksheet

Prepare notes in support of your assigned position on whether or not Louis was a "good king" plus counterarguments against the opposing opinion.

Understand that history is argument about the past.
Collect evidence for a position.
Take notes that allow easy access to evidence during debate.

Second Chance on Louis XIV Debate

Write two points that were not discussed in the class debate.
For extra credit say why you did not say them in the debate.

Learn skills and points not used in the debate.

STAGE 3: CHOOSING ONE'S OWN POSITION ON A HISTORICAL ISSUE AND BRIEFLY DEFENDING IT WITH EVIDENCE

Best Solution to Anarchy Essay: Week 5

In a one-paragraph essay, state which solution to the problem of 17th-century anarchy—French or English—you personally find more realistic and attractive. Try to explain why you feel the way you do and to back your feelings with evidence.

Choose one's own position.
Address the relevant issue.
Support the position with evidence.

STAGE 4: CHOOSING ONE'S OWN POSITION AND DEFENDING IT IN A FULL ESSAY, INCLUDING COUNTERARGUMENTS AND ANSWERS TO COUNTERARGUMENTS

Essay 1: Week 7

Select from among 3 essay questions:

1. The Loyoliana question.
2. Whose theories about the French Revolution—Burke's or Paine's—were more "valid"?
3. From class readings by Burke and Paine, infer their views, pro and con, of Louis XIV's reign.

Use several techniques for historical argument: analyzing problem, stating position, supporting it with evidence, answering counterarguments.

Kraft had difficulty:

- Recognizing bias in sources
- Stating the specific arguments the source could support
- Assessing a source's value as evidence

Bonnie Kraft struggled during the first weeks of the course to move from the text-processor to the arguer/debater role and to learn how to construct arguments as Breihan expected. In the third week her difficulty showed up clearly in the exercise analyzing primary source documents on Louis XIV (see Figure 4.6).

The assignment sheet asked students first, "What is the issue at stake in this chapter?" Like most students, Kraft correctly wrote, "The issue at stake is whether Louis XIV was a good king." The next questions asked for each of the primary source readings, "How can [this reading] be used as evidence on the issue at stake?" After completing the exercise, Kraft remarked in her log,

I really am not sure I did this assignment in the way the Professor planned it to be done. I took specific examples to back up what I thought the point of [the reading assignment] is.

For the finished exercise she had merely summarized the textbook, focusing on specific information and on "examples" as her way of expanding her writing. (In Sherman's class, "example" was a common mode for text-processing students to relate the assignment's issue or problem to their textbooks. See p. 72.) Here is Kraft's exercise:

Saint-Simon felt Louis XIV, as an absolute monarch was a bad thing because he had little education; he had spies everywhere that could tell him everything and when Courtenvaux made this known to the public, Courtenvaux position was taken from him; members of the Church sometimes acted as he wanted. For example, Abbe de Vatteville, ordained a priest, committed crimes yet made a deal with the government to be pardoned and live as abbey of Baume; in 1706, France lost wars and sustained losses on account of the cost of war. When Chamillart, the head of both finance and war department, could not carry on affairs due to lack of money, he asked to be relieved of his position; however, the king refused; finally, there was a tax put on baptisms and marriages because the need for money was so great. Poor people began to perform marriages themselves and their children were considered illegitimate. Peasants revolted against this tax, and it eventually had to be lifted. Louis was hurting the poor when he claimed he was trying to help them.

Kraft's shortcomings are evident when we see how a more successful student, Tom Siegel, after summarizing the reading, went on to assess it as evidence:

This all presents Louis as a bad king; however we must not forget that this was written after Louis' death and by a member of the social class which had the least to gain from Absolutism and who were viewed by Louis as the biggest threat to his person and his rule. But the material itself could be used to support the ideas that Louis' vanity made him a bad king; or that he was merciless in his demand for money to squander; or that he acted only on his own best interest rather than the best interest of the country by spying on his subjects and appointing ignorant people to positions of authority.

Siegel did several things that Kraft did not do:

- recognized bias in the source
- stated the specific arguments the source could support
- assessed the source's value as evidence

Breihan's written comments on Kraft's exercise called for her to transcend summary and to evaluate the evidence. For example, next to Kraft's summary of Bishop Bossuet's rationale for absolute monarchy (not reproduced here), Breihan wrote "true?" a version of another common question he wrote on many papers, "Yes, but is he [she] right?"

Another way that Breihan helped Kraft and other students transcend mere summary was through in-class discussion. Earlier in the chapter we analyzed the discussion that Breihan led on the day the Primary Sources exercise was handed in (pp. 105–107). After that discussion, Kraft, like several other students, wrote in her log, "I have a better understanding of the types of answers Professor Breihan expects because of the lecture on Primary Resources [*sic*]."

In Stage 1, then, Kraft was still merely summarizing readings, not fully treating them as evidence within the discipline-based method for arriving at a position and supporting it. Breihan gave specific feedback to her and other similar students by comments on their exercises and by in-class discussions of the exercises. Kraft came to some realization that she had not done what her teacher expected, but felt that she was coming to a "better understanding." She was switching from the text-processor role to the arguer/debater role, which was Breihan's version of the professional-in-training role that all four teachers expected from their students. However, as her experiences in Stage 2 will further demonstrate, Kraft still lacked a basic understanding of *how to construct* the arguments she had begun to realize Breihan wanted her to make.

Stage 2: Contributing to an Argument on an Assigned Historical Opinion

Kraft achieved:

Stating *why* something was good

Trying to find evidence

Constructing subtheses to organize source material

Using the teacher's linguistic formulas (e.g. "X is good because") but in a limited way

Trying, through revision, to bring herself closer to Breihan's expectations

Kraft had difficulty:

Transcending a limited "find good things" strategy

Forming an explicit definition of "good"

Recognizing evidence when she had it

Envisioning how to construct an argument to support a thesis

Understanding her teacher's previous written comments

Students entered the second stage of learning the historical method when, in the third and fourth weeks, they had to collect evidence to help their team support the position it had been assigned to defend in the debate on whether Louis XIV was a "good king" (see Figure 4.6).

Good/Better/Best Reasoning in Breihan's Class

An analysis of Breihan's model for good/better/best reasoning as opposed to Sherman's will clarify the problems that arose for Kraft at this stage (see Figure 4.7).

Sherman's define/analyze/prescribe model emphasized definition very heavily and reflected his explicit instruction for students to begin with definition. Virtually all students in his class did so, but two major problems materialized: (1) Some students did not relate the definition to the analysis and prescription and (2) some students spent all their time on definition and/or analysis (often paraphrased and summarized from the textbook) and never got to a position or prescription at all.

Breihan, on the other hand, emphasized to students the need to

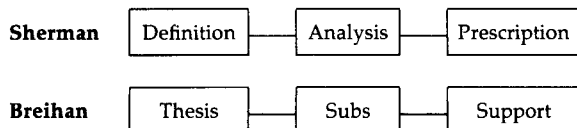


Figure 4.7. Sherman's and Breihan's models for good/better/best reasoning.

open with a statement of their position or "thesis" (Sherman's prescription), with the result, as we have seen, that virtually all of them learned to state a position. The hard part for Breihan's students, however, was stating a clear definition of "good." In his model, the definition was worked out through the subtheses or "subs." We can see the difference in Sherman's and Breihan's models by how each would critique this weak argument:

Louis was a good king. Louis controlled the nobles and improved the military.

In Sherman's terms, what is missing is an opening definition of what a "good" king was for 17th-century France, and Sherman would encourage students to begin their decision-making process and their papers with that definition. But Breihan did not talk explicitly about definition at all. In Breihan's terms, the argument appropriately begins with a thesis (Louis was a good king), but is faulty because it does not "connect" the "thesis" to the "facts" (Louis controlled the nobles and improved the military).

Breihan's model for good/better/best reasoning is similar to that of Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1984) in that the warrant and backing (which would contain a definition of "good") are in the middle, connecting the grounds (or historical information) to the claim (or thesis). See Figure 4.8. Our exploration of the models of good/better/best reasoning in Sherman's and Breihan's classrooms indicates that teachers or researchers who use the Toulmin model should be aware that the language and the placement of elements in relation to one another may vary by classroom or discipline, and that these differences may shape the students' difficulties.

Breihan had four ways of talking to his students about how to make the connection between thesis and facts:

1. He urged them to tell why something (e.g., controlling the nobles) was "good."
2. He told them they must "use as evidence" the historical facts and material from their readings.

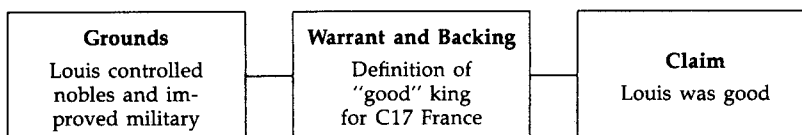


Figure 4.8. Breihan's model in the framework of Toulmin Logic.

3. He urged them to construct “subtheses” or “subs” to “connect the facts to the thesis.”
4. He gave them a linguistic formula to develop the thesis: “Louis was good because. . . .”

Breihan’s models for reasoning and his four ways of making connections shaped Kraft’s and other students’ learning in the second stage.

Bonnie Kraft’s Second-Chance Exercise

In the in-class debate on Louis XIV, Kraft remained silent, leaving her teammates to carry the argument. She was still tied to textbook summary and unsure of herself in the role of debater. Three years later, she remembered that, in the first weeks of the course, “I was so intimidated.”

The day after the debate, the Second Chance exercise asked students to write two points that no one had mentioned during the debate. On Kraft’s think-aloud tape as she plans the exercise, she tries to use all four of the ways Breihan has suggested for connecting thesis and facts: telling why something was good, using facts as evidence, constructing subtheses, and using the linguistic formula “X is good because” (italics are ours):

I think that Louis was a good king because that was what the people needed at the time. They needed someone to take control and to get their lives back in order, but I don’t have any evidence to back that up, so I think I should just leave that out [13 sec. silence]. I think Louis was a good king because when he did come to rule, there was a lot of disorder. Finances were exhausted, the administration of justice was filled by money instead of selection, people were poverty-stricken, and Louis did what he felt was best to reform these things. You know, he [Louis] was the one to know about everything going on in France through reports, and people were allowed to petition him, and he developed new whole industries which stimulated the economy. That wasn’t in the debate. But on my evaluation of primary resources [sic], Professor Breihan wrote, “Does this mean he was a good king?” So I don’t know, I guess that’s wrong. [She abandons the point.]

Kraft uses Breihan’s formula “X is good because” to generate her two subtheses, each of which states one reason why Louis was “good.” Kraft is also concerned about evidence to back her points. However, she does not understand what counts as evidence or how she could structure an argument about Louis. She makes a promising start at a definition of “good” as “what the people needed at the time,” and she refers to the facts she has about the chaos in France. But she does

not recognize those facts as "evidence" (defined by Breihan as "facts linked to argument"), which would show that France needed order more than anything else. So she uses Breihan's formula: "Louis was a good king because . . ." in a very limited way, merely generating things that Louis did and calling them good, without explaining why they were good in terms of the needs of 17th-century France. This find-good-things strategy is akin to the find-reasons strategy we saw in Sherman's class (p. 80). In both classes, the thesis/subthesis model made it easy for students to fall into that trap.

Kraft's difficulties in her think-aloud planning are compounded by her misunderstanding of Breihan's response to one of her earlier exercises—a response in which Breihan had again sought to alert her to the need for evaluating Louis XIV's rule. Breihan had written next to her summary of what Louis did: "Yes, but is this good?" In her planning for the Second Chance exercise, she remembers that earlier comment, misunderstands it, and abandons the whole point as "wrong" because she does not yet see how to integrate the issue of what was "good" in Louis' time. Kraft's decision to abandon the point altogether was a rather common strategy, especially for low-success students.⁵

Figure 4.9 shows Kraft's Second Chance exercise with her revisions marked. It is weak because, following her find-good-things strategy, she merely picked two points from her notes, made them into her subtheses, and then tried to justify at the end of each point why these things were good, without formulating an explicit definition of "good king."

Despite the difficulties we have discussed in her planning and in the exercise itself, Kraft's Second Chance exercise exhibits her progress in Stage 2. Although each paragraph of her exercise is essentially a summary of one reading, it takes a step beyond her reading-by-reading debate notes, which had opened each section with the name of the author ("Mousnier says. . ."). In the Second Chance exercise, she opens each paragraph with a statement of the subthesis: "Louis was good because. . ." The names of the writers being summarized under each subthesis are subordinated as a phrase ("according to Mousnier") or as the second sentence in the paragraph ("Voltaire writes. . ."). She has begun to use subtheses to organize her information.

To state her subtheses, Kraft uses Breihan's formula, "Louis was good because." In her explanation for her silence in the debate, she also employs Breihan's language of specific evidence, thesis, and subtheses—words she had written several times in her class notes and her planning notes for Stage 2.

A third sign of Kraft's progress is that virtually all her revisions

[Single brackets are Kraft's. The underlined words were written later in the margins. We have indicated words that Kraft scratched out.]

1. Louis was a good king because, according to Mousnier, he tried to make opposing classes, the Bourgeoisie versus the Nobility, more equal in social standing. ~~This wa~~ In order to make the Bourgeoisie rise in the social scale, Louis chose ministers, counselors, and intendants from among the bourgeois officers. ~~By opposing the Nobility~~ At the same time, Louis opposed the Nobility. He kept them busy by ~~filling~~ having them fill most grades of the army and by creating the artificial society at Versailles. ~~In Louis' Letters to His Heirs, Louis says he feels the Nobility~~ This was good because Louis, by establishing an equilibrium ~~on the stu~~ between the bourgeoisie and the nobility, he also was able to establish ~~more unity and~~ more order ~~to the state. He also~~ in France.

2. Louis was a good king because he introduced discipline into the armies and developed new military ideas. Voltaire writes

"It was he [Louis] [brackets around Louis are Kraft's] who instituted the use of the bayonet affixed to the end of the musket" p. 44

"The manner in which artillery is used today is due entirely to him. He founded artillery schools." p. 45

"In 1688 [Louis] established thirty regiments of militia, ~~where were prove. . . These militia ha~~ which were provided and equipped by the communes. These militia trained for war but without abandoning the cultivation of their fields." p.45

[Next sentence was written in later] Inspector Generals and directors were used to report on the state of troops to Louis.

~~The strong armies could ensure more control within France and could be used to expand France's borders. More control was exercised within France by. The armies could control more exercise control within France.~~

This was good because France now had military resources to fall back on whenever necessary. ~~Also, armies were not no longer uncontrollable within France. There were inspector generals and directors who reported on the state of the troops.~~ Armies ~~coul~~ also helped trade? . . .

[Two arrows also mark the above paragraph: one moves the first sentence to the very end; the other moves the "Also, armies" passage to the beginning of the paragraph.]

Extra. Credit. I thought, at the time of the debate, that these arguments ~~ideas~~ were not as important as the economic ideas. I also was not prepared to back up my thesis with specific evidence tied together with subtheses.

Figure 4.9. Bonnie Kraft's Second Chance exercise.

forswear further summary of her sources and insert sentences that attempt to answer Breihan's questions on her earlier exercise, "Was this good?" and "Why was this good?"

For extra credit students might tell why they had not originally made those points. Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman (1988) note how a new rhetoric graduate student, faced with a demanding new kind of discourse he must learn, went through a stage in which he communicated with his professors by personal notes—a forum which seemed, for a time, to help him deal with his insecurity in writing formal papers. Breihan's Second Chance exercise served much the same function for Kraft. She spent two hours on the page-long exercise and wrote in her log:

This activity was worthwhile because it gave me the opportunity to explain my ideas in writing. [During the debate I had been] nervous about speaking and explaining myself in class.

In Stage 2, we have seen that Breihan asked students to contribute evidence to a team argument on an assigned historical position. Kraft was still basically organizing material reading by reading. She was still confused about the nature of evidence, about how to construct an argument to support her thesis, and about the role of a definition of "good" king for 17th-century France. She used merely a find-good-things strategy. Her confusion was compounded by a misunderstanding of one of Breihan's comments on a previous exercise. However, she made progress: she tried to state why Louis' actions were good, she tried to find evidence, she organized her Second Chance exercise around subtheses, she tried to use the linguistic formulas Breihan had modeled, and she revised to bring herself closer to Breihan's expectations. Her explanation about why she had not made her points during the debate reveals her insecurity in assuming the role of debater, but reveals, too, her eagerness to learn and her desire for Breihan's good opinion.

Stage 3: Choosing One's Own Position on a Historical Issue and Briefly Defending It with Evidence

Kraft achieved:

Stating a thesis

Using the teacher's linguistic formulas (e.g. "X is good because"), but in a limited way

Testing her position against counterarguments

Kraft had difficulty:

- Transcending a limited, “find good things” strategy
- Formulating an explicit definition of “good” that addressed the “issues” Breihan had defined in the assignment
- Distinguishing between “evidence” and “feelings”
- Envisioning how to construct an argument to support a thesis

After the Louis debate, Breihan pushed students to a third stage: choosing and briefly defending their own positions. His wording on the single-paragraph exercise is important because it helps explain some of Kraft’s difficulties:

In a one-paragraph essay, state which solution to the problem of 17th-century anarchy—French or English—*you* personally find more realistic and attractive. Try to explain why you feel the way you do, and to back your feelings with some evidence.

Kraft’s “Best Solution to Anarchy” paragraph was a disappointment, both to Breihan and to Kraft herself (she received points equivalent to a “C+”). Her paragraph begins nicely with a thesis statement: “I find the English solution to 17th Century anarchy to be more realistic and attractive than the French solution.” Following that, however, she merely uses a “find good things” strategy to list three things about the English solution: it established a Bill of Rights, it built a system of checks and balances, it lasted a long time. Only once in her paragraph does she even refer to how a feature of the English system was a “solution to anarchy,” and she never explains why any of the features were more “realistic” or more “attractive” to her, as Breihan’s assignment had requested. Responding to her paragraph, Breihan wrote:

You need to *link* your facts to your argument. *Why* do these things make the English solution “more realistic and attractive”? You only mention those 2 words once.

Three aspects proved difficult in Kraft’s “Best Solution to Anarchy” paragraph:

1. Transcending a limited “find good things” strategy
2. Formulating an explicit definition of “good” that addressed the “issues” of the question—solving anarchy and being “realistic” and “attractive” to her
3. Distinguishing between “evidence” and “feelings.”

Breihan’s model for good/better/best reasoning and his phrasing on the assignment sheet helped to shape these difficulties.

"Find Good Things" Strategy

In her planning session for her paragraph, Kraft, as she had done in Stage 2, merely flipped through her notes, using the "X is good because" formula to generate "good things" about the English system, but without a controlling definition of "good." She begins her planning (italics are ours):

Okay, I obviously feel the English solution was better. [4 seconds silence] First of all, I think it was, I would say that it was less traumatic for the English people *because* [3 seconds silence] their individual rights were guaranteed, they were given rights by the Bill of Rights, they weren't taken advantage of. I think in Louis XIV's reign, in France, he didn't really c- I don't know, the common people weren't his main concern. He wanted to accomplish a lot of things, like, like let's say, um, taxes. He would tax the people, even though he knew they were poor. He just thought that taxing people was a way for him to get a lot of money to do things he wanted. This leads to another reason I think the English solution was better *because um, because um*, there were checks and balances, like the king, and the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, all had checks and balances on each other, so they could, um, regulate what, what was going on, like the king's decision vs. the Parliament's decision.

*Formulating an Explicit Definition of "Good"
That Addresses the "Issue" of the Question*

In merely flipping through her notes to find "good things" about the English system, Kraft failed to define "good" so as to address what we call the "issue" of the question: that is, Breihan expected her to explain how her favored type of government was a "solution to anarchy" and was "realistic" and "attractive" to her. In a sense, these phrases in the assignment sheet laid a foundation for defining "good," but, after stating them in her thesis sentence, Kraft ignored them.

Kraft's shortcoming is clearer when we examine how Joe Walker saw the issues in the question. He explicitly stated how each feature of the system he favored solved the problem of anarchy or was "realistic" or "attractive" to him. In this excerpt from his exercise, Walker has been citing reasons why the French solution was superior to the English in preventing anarchy (italics are ours):

In addition, I feel the French solution to anarchy (Louis absolutism) is also superior to that of the English because of the efficient flow of information which it provided. Louis had established clear and well defined lines of authority and communication. In this absolute system all information flows in an orderly path up through the

chain of command to the king. This, I believe, is another major reason why *this is such a good system for stopping anarchy*. This information system allows the king to stay abreast of problems in his country and his government, which *allowed Louis to maintain order and diffuse potential problems before the[y] arose into major disruptive problems*. Some people may argue that the issuing of power and authority to a single absolute ruler is [a] radical move and may be a mistake. However, if we view this problem in relation to the time, it becomes apparent that *radical action was required to end the anarchy of the 17th century and reintroduce order*. In this regard I think *absolutism is the more efficient form of government for halting anarchy*. This doesn't mean I feel this is the best form of government . . . [he goes on to explain why the English system is more attractive to him personally.]

Distinguishing Evidence from Feelings

The assignment sheet's language about "feelings" and "evidence" was confusing for many students. Walker handled it about as well as any, by stating "I feel" to open many of his points, and then presenting evidence to back his feelings, but distinguishing evidence about preventing anarchy from his personal preferences for a type of government. Kraft had more difficulty. She began her planning session, as we saw, with the phrase "I feel." The planning that followed contained evidence. But at the end of that long planning session, she said, "So I think I have a good idea of the way I feel. Now I need evidence." She defined her long planning session as "feelings" and did not recognize that it contained evidence. She marked off the composing process in her mind into the two sections of Breihan's instructions: choose topic by how you feel, then gather evidence to support it.

In Sherman's class, also, teachers' instructions, labels, and categories were literally interpreted by the students in ways the teacher did not intend. Here, too, as in Sherman's class, written instructions about how to perform a decision-making and argument-building process were very hard for students to follow on their own. Finally, we see in Breihan's and in Sherman's classes the difficulty for students of the fourth good/better/best reasoning task we mentioned—the task of integrating feelings and evidence in the decision-making process.

Testing the Thesis Against Counterarguments

Throughout the planning session for her one-paragraph exercise, Kraft's insecurity was evident. However, she met her fears by a strong strategy—testing her position against counterarguments. After she had generated some good things about the English system, she said,

I think I, I've, um, got good ideas here and I think I can write them in a coherent way, but that doesn't necessarily mean I, Dr. Breihan's going to like what I'm going to write and how I'm going to present it, because in other assignments I've thought I've done really well and I haven't gotten the grades I thought I should have. [5 sec. silence] But obviously I need practice or help in my, in the way I write. [7 sec. silence] Let me see if there's anything else I wanted to say [7 sec. silence] The English solution didn't go without any problems [resumes consideration of the question by raising and answering counterarguments to her support of the English].

In the rest of her planning session, Kraft addressed her fears about the adequacy of her evidence by raising and answering counterarguments. Throughout this long process, she kept trying to gain closure on her planning, saying things like "I think I'll just leave it at that," only to come back again to raise more counterarguments. Her careful consideration of counterarguments, though not much of it appeared in her finished exercise, presaged her later achievement of both written and oral arguments that raised and answered counterarguments as Breihan expected.

In sum, then, in Stage 3, where students had to choose a position and defend it in a paragraph with "some evidence," Kraft firmly stated a thesis at the beginning of her paragraph. She used Breihan's "X is good because" formula, though in a limited way, as part of a find-good-things strategy. In planning her paper, she tested her position repeatedly against counterarguments, seeking to strengthen it. She did not form an explicit definition of "good king" for Louis' time, nor address the issues that Breihan had posed and that should have helped to shape her definition of "good." Further, she did not recognize what was "evidence" and what was "feelings." More broadly, she still could not clearly envision how to construct the argument that would best support her thesis.

Breihan's Teaching Methods

An analysis of Kraft's and other students' difficulties led us to see the potential pitfalls for students in Breihan's model of good/better/best reasoning, his presentation of thesis and subtheses, and his "X is good because" formula. These insights caused Breihan, in succeeding semesters, to focus earlier and more heavily on the need to define "good" so as to address the "issue" of the question. He added that item to the checksheet, and he emphasized it more clearly in the

exercise instructions, in the class discussions, and in his responses to exercises and essay drafts.

Stage 4: Choosing a Position and Defending It in a Full Essay

Kraft achieved:

- Recognizing evidence when she had it
- Constructing an argument to support her position
- Transcending the limited "find good things" strategy
- Forming an explicit definition of "good"
- Addressing the issue Breihan had defined in the assignment
- Revising effectively to bring herself closer to Breihan's expectations

In writing the full essay that comprised Stage 4, Bonnie Kraft made a great leap to success. One factor that helped her was the Loyoliana question, which stated up front what General Perez wanted: to avoid anarchy and bloody revolution. There was no confusing language about "what you personally feel," or about a solution that was "realistic and attractive to you," as in the one-paragraph Best Solution to Anarchy exercise. General Perez's goals could become the definition of "good."

Breihan's past advice also appears to have helped her. In his written comment about Kraft's one-paragraph exercise, Breihan had concentrated on helping her address the issue of 17th-century government by asking, "Why do these things make the English solution more 'realistic and attractive'?" and he advised her to mention those two words throughout. Repeatedly on her and others' exercises, he had written "Why is this good?"

For the Loyoliana topic (see p. 101), she adopted Breihan's advice in the sense that throughout the essay she referred again and again to General Perez by name, and specifically to his goals of avoiding anarchy and bloody revolution. Several times, in the margins of the notes she was making for the essay, she added revisions that clarified how aspects of English government she was summarizing prevented anarchy and bloody revolution, the issue defined in the assignment. She also wrote, in large capital letters down the side of her notes for the Loyoliana essay, "KEEP IN MIND PROVING THIS GOOD." After the in-class draft, Breihan advised her to tighten her "connections" still more, and in the revision she did so by inserting additional explicit statements about how the English government prevented anarchy and bloody revolution. Her breakthrough was to transcend a mere find-good-things strategy by linking all her subtheses to a clear definition of what was "good" in that situation.

Another factor that helped her and other students is that Breihan, throughout the course, continually referred not to the English or French “form of government” or some other general term, but to the English [or French] *solution to anarchy*. That tag phrase appears throughout students’ notes, think-aloud planning, and drafts. In the one-paragraph exercise, Kraft had ignored the part of the question that asked “which solution to anarchy” do you prefer. On Essay 1, however, Kraft made explicit, from the beginning of her planning, that the English system was a solution to anarchy. For example, in her earliest outline for the essay, after jotting down some notes about French absolutism, she wrote, “It is advisable to follow the English Solution to C17 Anarchy” and then went on to draw a number of parallels between Loyoliana and England before the English Civil War—both were threatened by anarchy and bloody revolution. At another place in her notes, she wrote, “One reason Parliament established the Bill of Rights was to ensure protection against anarchy.” This is a significant step beyond her single paragraph in Stage 3, where she merely described the Bill of Rights as good, without linking it to the issues of the assignment or to an explicit definition of “good.” Breihan’s constant emphasis on the French and English systems as different responses to the threat of anarchy had sunk in. His specific statement that Perez wanted to avoid anarchy and his advice to Kraft on her earlier exercises helped her make the connection.

Once she had the structure of the argument—that Perez wanted to avoid anarchy and bloody revolution and that the English system had to be proven good *because* it would help him do that—then she could integrate into that structure the “X is good because” formula. She could also integrate her feelings, already expressed in the one-paragraph exercise, about the value of meeting people’s demands and granting individual rights. She argued to General Perez that he could best avoid anarchy and bloody revolution by meeting the people’s needs and demands, as the English system had done, rather than by repressing them and inviting their rebellion, as in France.

Kraft’s in-class draft for Essay 1 received points equivalent to a “B+”; her revision after Breihan’s comments not only received an “A” but was submitted, at Breihan’s suggestion, as a candidate for a departmental prize awarded each semester for the most successful student essay from all sections of the Modern Civilization course taught by Breihan and others. (She did not win the prize.)

Here is a condensed version of her revised Loyoliana essay. We have italicized the points where she links her arguments explicitly to the issue of how Perez could prevent anarchy and bloody revolution by

meeting the needs of the people and respecting their demands. Notice, too, the many echoes of her earlier exercises and debate notes: her information about Louis XIV, her feeling that no one was there to regulate what he did, her early summary of how Louis hurt the poor, and (slipped quietly in at the very end) her point that the English solution was good because it lasted a long time. The exercises and debates thus served in important ways as preparation for her essay.

General Perez, you have stated that you would like to leave your office as dictator of Loyoliana to be replaced by a constitutional government. After examining European politics from 1500 to 1800, I am confident there exists a way for you to transform Loyoliana's government peacefully, *avoiding both a recurrence of anarchy and violent revolution*. The constitutional government to be established in Loyoliana *must conform to the needs of the people while maintaining political order within the state*. These goals can be obtained in Loyoliana if you follow the example of the English and their solution to seventeenth-century anarchy by establishing a mixed government.

Because the positions of the relatively small landowning elite and the majority of the impoverished inhabitants of Loyoliana are similar to those in France in 1789, I am forced to draw my conclusions from the occurrences in France at that time. I find it necessary to prove to you that the French example of revolution must be avoided because revolution is drastic and harmful to the citizens. [historical information on effect of revolution in France, used as evidence to support the previous sentence]

General Perez, it is necessary for you to take action to *meet the demands of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry before revolution*. Revolution may only lead to the oppression of the people by a military despot. This would not be a final solution to political unrest; military despotism would only contribute to unrest. I believe *the French example of violent revolution in 1789 can be avoided by following the constitutional government of England in order to provide for the demands of the people*.

The position of your government is similar to that of England during the seventeenth century. The civil war that Loyoliana experienced 40 years ago is synonymous to the English Civil War of 1640–60. General Perez is similar to Oliver Cromwell, who emerged from the English Civil War as a military dictator. Just as citizens of England swung steadily in favor of a formation of a constitutional government instead of despotism, it is advisable for you to do the same.

The rest of the essay makes a number of points about the constitutional government of England, each time showing *how England avoided anarchy and bloody revolution by providing for the demands of its people before they resorted to revolution*. Here is her paragraph developing one

of those points—that Perez should adopt something like the English Bill of Rights.

The Revolution Settlement occurred peacefully and the Bill of Rights, passed in 1689 by Parliament, created a legal government with defined rights of the people and rules by which to govern. The Bill of Rights declared parliamentary supremacy over the crown. The landowning elite now had a say in government as a governing aristocracy was established. The Bill of Rights also enlarged the exercise of individual freedoms. As a result, the peasantry now had basic inalienable rights, and the taxes imposed by the king needed the approval of Parliament. These improvements were good for the bourgeoisie and the peasantry because their demands were being met before resorting to revolution. This shows the French example of revolution is unnecessary when solving political problems. The Bill of Rights was also peacefully abolishing absolutism by setting up a mixed government constitutionally. When establishing the Bill of Rights, the government demonstrated an interest in the liberty and freedom of the people. Whereas, in France, the absolute monarch had the ability to do what he wanted, which was not always for the good of the most people. For example, Louis XIV wanted to accomplish much in the culture of France. He had the Louvre constructed, a town at Versailles created, the Observatory built, and an Academy of Sciences founded. However, the peasants bore the costs of Louis' cultural accomplishments in the form of taxes. I realize it has been said that the aristocracy of England, in the Bill of Rights, made laws to suit themselves, such as the game law against the poor. Nevertheless, the benefits of the Bill of Rights greatly outweighed the harm of such game laws. The Bill of Rights protected farmers by guaranteeing rights such as freedom to bear arms, to petition Parliament, to be free from excessive bail or punishment, and to a trial by jury. Also, because taxes could be more evenly distributed, less of the burden now fell on the farmers. The benefits of these laws, only to name a few, significantly offset the harm caused by hunters and their dogs running through fields and ruining some crops of the farmers.

Kraft makes additional points like the one above, each supported with information used as evidence, and each explicitly linked to the definition of "good" provided by General Perez's need to *avoid anarchy and revolution by meeting the people's needs*. Each point also includes relevant counterarguments raised and answered. Her reference to game laws is a response to a suggestion by Breihan written in the margin of her earlier one-paragraph exercise. Again, she *uses* his advice. Below is her final paragraph:

General Perez, from the conclusions and arguments I have drawn in favor of the English example of mixed government, I hope you

can understand the benefits of this kind of government. *The demands of the landowning elites and of the impoverished inhabitants can be met peacefully and successfully, making revolution unnecessary.* By establishing a Bill of Rights, you can ensure inalienable rights of the people of Loyoliana and a system of government in which Parliament and the king will balance the powers of each other most effectively for the betterment of the country and its citizens. The successfulness of the English may be measured by the fact that the ideas and laws established in 1689 still exist today. I hope you will be able to learn from history and realize the *English solution to seventeenth century anarchy would be most productive* for you to implement in Loyoliana.

Kraft's Final Victory: Fully Assuming the Role of Debater

The Loyoliana essay represented a major step in Kraft's struggle to learn how to use discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence. But it was not the end of Kraft's struggle to learn in Breihan's course. After the success of her essay, she soon set a further goal for herself.

We continue to follow her story because it illustrates the importance of the roles that students adopt. This final piece of Kraft's story can serve as a conclusion to our discussion of all three areas of difficulty—stating a position, raising and answering counter evidence/argument, and using discipline-based methods to arrive at a position and to support it with evidence. In her Loyoliana essay, Kraft had achieved those aspects privately, in the writing seen only by her teacher.

Kraft's next goal was to assume publicly the role of arguer/debater by participating in debates and discussions. No longer was she content merely to write to Breihan as in her Second Chance exercise, telling what she might have said; now she wanted to say it herself in public, though she knew that to do so would expose her to what she feared—attack by counterarguers—a fear that had been evident in her think-aloud planning for the one-paragraph exercise. But that planning, where she anxiously tested her position over and over against imagined counterarguments, was also a dress rehearsal for an actual debate. A week after she got back her successful in-class Essay 1, there was another in-class debate. After it, she wrote in her log:

The in-class debate went well over-all. But I need to develop more confidence in my ideas and to speak up in class. I find other people have similar ideas; these people have the nerve to present their ideas. I am afraid of being wrong or misinterpreting a written passage. I want to be right 100% of the time. I am afraid of being

criticized or not having enough evidence to back up my ideas. I am disappointed with myself today; I must learn to speak up.

Two weeks later, after a class session that (like several others in the course), Breihan had billed in the syllabus as a "class discussion," rather than simply listing a topic for lecture, Kraft was again disappointed with herself, but still trying:

I again did not contribute much to the class discussion. I did partially answer someone's question on the White Man's Burden. I have my own questions but I just [*sic*] so afraid of appearing stupid. I really have to get over this feelings [*sic*] because I'm only hurting myself.

Two days later, on November 14 in the in-class debate on an aspect of the Industrial Revolution, she achieved the breakthrough, and wrote ecstatically in her log,

I finally did it! My group as a whole was not very outgoing, but if I had an opinion I stated it out loud and not just to myself. I actually got into practically a one-on-one debate with another member of the class. I feel much better about myself. After all, no one stood up and said "you are absolutely wrong."

Kraft's achievement points, among other things, to the importance of students' roles. Her ability to meet Breihan's expectations that she would state a position, answer counterarguments, and use discipline-based methods to arrive at her position and to support it with evidence was intimately connected to her growing ability to assume the role of arguer/debater. She, herself, did not feel she had fully succeeded in the course until she had publicly assumed that role, both in writing and in oral discourse.

BREIHAN'S AND WALVOORD'S CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusion from all this is that Breihan's careful, consistent teaching methods helped his students in many ways. Wanting students to be arguers and debaters, Breihan succeeded in using language in ways that encouraged that role. His daily focused writing exercises, his essay assignments, his in-class discussions, his responses to students' exercises and drafts, and the seven debates all offered guidance and feedback throughout students' thinking and writing processes. We saw how Breihan's teaching methods shaped students' ways of reading, of defining their tasks, of approaching texts, of arriving at and defending

positions, of using models learned in other settings—all factors that were important in all four classes we studied.

The study also revealed some differences between Breihan's and Sherman's classes in the models for good/better/best reasoning. Sherman's business decision-maker model features the manager's careful decision-making process, which begins by defining "good," uses factor rating, considers alternatives and counterarguments, and arrives at a responsible decision for implementation. Breihan's debater model, on the other hand, features the prominent statement of a thesis followed by the generation of subtheses, as the arguer supports the thesis and defends it against counterarguers. The definition of "good" is incorporated in the subs, but is not as visible or primary as in Sherman's model. Each model significantly influenced students' thinking processes and the difficulties that arose in each class. Writing teachers and researchers who use Toulmin's model for instruction or for data analysis need to keep in mind that the model's implied relationship among parts, and particularly the role of the definition of "good" in evaluative reasoning, may differ by classroom and discipline and that these differences may affect students' thinking and the difficulties that arise as students try to meet their teachers' expectations.

Our study focused on how difficulties were affected by students' strategies and teachers' methods, not on the influence of other factors such as gender, past education, learning style, or socioeconomic class. Nevertheless, we were very aware that, for example, Kraft's socialization as a woman must have affected her difficulty in publicly entering a dialogue where one stated a position boldly and defended it against counterarguers—in our culture a more typically male way of operating (Belenky et al. 1986; Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982). Breihan, we knew, faced a class of students with many differences which made it easier or harder for a given student to learn and adopt the role that Breihan expected. In the face of these factors, Breihan's response was to try to explain his expectations ever more clearly and guide his students' learning processes ever more effectively.

Breihan's primary goal for entering our research project was to find out how well his methods were working and to improve them. This study showed some difficulties that Breihan addressed in succeeding semesters—particularly the need to forefront the importance of defining "good," to make explicit his expectation that students would address the "issue" he outlined in an essay question, and to reshape the instructions for the paragraph exercise on the best solution to anarchy. More broadly, our study gave him an appreciation for how hard his

students worked to understand and meet his expectations and how important his guidance was to them.

Particularly, we stand amazed at Bonnie Kraft. Entering the course expecting to be merely a text processor, she struggled through what she remembered, three years later, as "THE hardest course I ever had," a course in which "I was SO intimidated." Her persistence, her keen desire to learn, her determination to use her teacher's guidance, her pluck and courage won our respect and admiration. It was no surprise that she graduated from Loyola College *summa cum laude* and planned to enter law school—the ultimate forum of public argument and counterargument.

Notes

1. To conduct this analysis, we used the primary trait scale (p. 35). We each independently rated a random sample of 11 essays to identify those that reached the stated standard, which was equivalent to a score of 4 or above. We achieved 91 percent agreement. Walvoord then completed the analysis for the rest of the in-class Essays 1 and 3 written by the focus group.

2. This count was based on 25 drafts by ten focus group students, some high success and some low success (p. 36).

3. Sample of 12 essay drafts written by eight students—four who received "A" in the course and four who received "C."

4. Our sample was a random selection of one high-success and one low-success in-class essay draft for each of five essay questions, including essays for all three units across the semester—a total of ten essays.

5. Among our focus group who earned course grade "C," 30 percent of the marginal comments resulted in the student deleting the passage, resulting in no improvement of the paper (in Breihan's judgment; see p. 36). Among "A" students, 7 percent resulted in deletion with no improvement. At times, abandoning a passage that the teacher had marked with marginal comments may have been a low-effort way out, but, as this example of Kraft shows, at times it might also have been the student's way of dealing with an issue not yet understood.