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| ***English 99 /jroth***  The Summary-and-Response Essay Assignment ***Revisited***  As we now know, the Summary-and-Response essay assignment teaches us how to incorporate another writer’s words with our own. The process begins by carefully reading another writer’s essay. We then begin our essay with an opening paragraph that identifies the writer, the name of the essay we read, and briefly summarizes its content. The rest of our essay is made of our words and ideas with selected words from the other essay occasionally blended in for added effect and impact.    Please recall the five requirements of the first paragraph:   1. name the author 2. name the work 3. add a brief summary 4. build a bridge to your thesis (a transition) 5. state your thesis at the end of the paragraph   **The Assignment** (100 points possible)  Select any one of the three essays in the Green Packet and write a summary-and-response essay to it. Please be sure to follow the instructions and advice carefully. Also, please be sure to use what you’ve already learned to make this second summary-and-response essay even better.  Due: Thursday, March 1 at the beginning of class  Peer Editing Day: Thursday, February 23  Computer Lab Help Days: February 17, February 24, and February 27 |
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CHOICE #1

“I'm Still Learning from My Mother”

By Cliff SchneiderThe full text may take 40-60 seconds to translate; larger documents may take longer.

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WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY growing up on New York's Long Island in the 1950s, it was common to see boys and their fathers gathering in the roads in front of their homes on warm summer evenings to "have a catch." That was the term we had for tossing a baseball while we talked about school, jobs and life in general. Although my dad and I had many catches together, my most memorable ones were with my mother. She would happily grab a glove, run out to the road and then fire fast balls at me that cracked my glove and left my hand stinging. She never showed any motherly concern, though, just a broad grin with the tip of her tongue exposed in the corner of her mouth. This was her game face. I can still recall how delighted I was tossing the ball with Mom and hearing the comments from my friends and neighbors: "Where did your mother learn to throw a ball like that?"

My mother, you see, was a jock long before Title IX unleashed the explosion of modern women's athletics. She lettered in field hockey and basketball while attending Hofstra University in the late 1930s. This was a time when it wasn't very fashionable for women to go running alter a ball and work up a sweat. Luckily for me, Mom never worried about what was fashionable. She loved sports, loved being active and, most of all, loved the competition. Mom was kind to her kids until we played ball. Then we'd notice this gleam in her eye, the broad grin and the familiar tongue that told us she was ready for action and ready to have some fim. No matter what game she played, Mom had class. She played hard, she laughed a lot and, win or lose, she was always gracious.

The years have diminished Mom's physical abilities, as they would have for anyone who is about to become an octogenarian. Her back is a little bent, and she complains occasionally about her hip. Het biggest concession to the aging process, however, is that she has had to lighten up on her bowling ball. As a young mother in suburban bowling leagues she toted a 15pound ball, carried a 160 average and had a high game of 212. As she's grown older, her scores have declined. In recent years she's had to start using an eight-pound ball, which she protests is too light and "doesn't give enough pin action."

For years I have had to listen to my mother's perennial battle cry as she begins each new bowling season-"This is the year I'm going to bowl a 200 game!" I've always smiled and nodded in agreement, which was my way of acknowledging her determination. During our regular Thursday-evening phone conversations (she bowls on Thursdays), she gives me a frame-by-frame description of her games, and gripes that she can't bowl the way she used to. She almost always slips in the comment "I'm going to make 200 if it kills me.' I try to explain that she should be satisfied that she is at least able to play the game. "Try to make some concession to your age, Mom," I say. Of course, she will have none of this talk and this year bought a 10-pound ball in pursuit of her dream. Vince Lombardi would be proud.

A week after she started bowling with her new ball, I called to check on her progress. She no sooner said "Hi" than I could tell something big had happened in her life. I could feel the smile all the way from Hendersonville, N.C., to upstate New York. I shouted, "You bowled a 200 game!" knowing it could be the only reason for such a happy voice. She corrected me: "Not a 200 game; I got a 220." It was her highest score ever! She gave me a strike-by-strike description of her game, and we both celebrated over the phone. As she signed off and said her goodbyes, I could still sense the smile on her face. Her grin mill probably fade in another month or two.

After some reflection, I am amazed by my mother's accomplishment. Whether it is baseball, tennis, golf or even bowling, I have never heard of anyone's peaking at 79. Yes, there is some degree of luck in every game, but in Mom's case she had the best same of her life because she persevered Mom's achievement has lifted her spirits and made her feel young again. For someone who is too frequently reminded that she can't do what she used to, this experience could not have come at a better time in her life. I guess I'm not surprised that I can still learn from Mom-that you are never too old to dream and never too old to realize those dreams. I am not surprised, either, that in our most recent calls she talks about bowling a 250 game.

Schneider, Cliff. "Im Still Learning from My Mother." *Newsweek* Mar 20 2000: 13-. *ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source; ProQuest Research Library.* Web. 13 Feb. 2012 .

CHOICE #2

“Televising humiliation”

By Adam Cohen

In November 2006, a camera crew from NBC's "Dateline" and a police SWAT team descended on the Texas home of Louis William Conradt Jr., a 56-year-old assistant district attorney. The series' "To Catch a Predator" team had allegedly caught Conradt making online advances to a decoy who pretended to be a 13-year-old boy. When the police and TV crew stormed Conradt's home, he took out a handgun and shot himself to death.

"That'll make good TV," one of the police officers on the scene reportedly told an NBC producer. Deeply cynical, perhaps, but prescient. "Dateline" aired a segment based on the grim encounter.

After telling the ghoulish tale, it ended with Conradt's sister Patricia decrying the "reckless actions of a self-appointed group acting as judge, jury and executioner, that was encouraged by an out-of-control reality show."

Patricia Conradt sued NBC for more than $100 million. Last month, Judge Denny Chin of U.S. District Court in New York ruled that her lawsuit could go forward. Chin's thoughtful ruling sends an important message at a time when humiliation television is ubiquitous, and plumbing ever lower depths of depravity in search of ratings.

NBC's "To Catch a Predator" franchise is based on an ugly premise. The show lures people into engaging in loathsome activities. It then teams up with the police to stage a humiliating, televised arrest, while the accused still has the presumption of innocence.

Each party to the bargain compromises its professional standards.

Rather than hold police accountable, "Dateline" becomes their partners - and may well prod them to more invasive and outrageous actions than they had planned. When Conradt did not show up at the "sting house" - the usual "To Catch a Predator" format - producers allegedly asked police as a "favor" to storm his home. Patricia Conradt contends that the show encourages police "to give a special intensity to any arrests, so as to enhance the camera effect."

The police make their own corrupt bargain, ceding law enforcement to TV producers. Could Conradt have been taken alive if he had been arrested in more conventional fashion, without SWAT agents, cameras and television producers swarming his home? Chin said a jury could plausibly find that it was the television circus, in which the police acted as the ringleader, that led to his suicide.

"To Catch a Predator" is part of an ever-growing lineup of shows that calculatingly appeal to their audience's worst instincts. The common theme is indulging the audience's voyeuristic pleasure at someone else's humiliation, and the nastiness of the put-down has become the whole point of the shows.

Humiliation TV has been around for some time. "The Weakest Link" updated the conventional quiz show by installing a viciously insulting host, and putting the focus on the contestants' decision about which of their competitors is the most worthless. "The Apprentice" purported to be about young people getting a start in business, but the whole hour built up to a single moment: when Donald Trump barked "You're fired."

But to hold viewers' interest, the levels of shame have inevitably kept growing. A new Fox show, "Moment of Truth," in a coveted time slot after "American Idol," dispenses cash prizes for truthfully (based on a lie-detector test) answering intensely private questions.

Sample: "Since you've been married, have you ever had sexual relations with someone other than your husband?" If the show is as true as it says it is, questions in two recent episodes seemed carefully designed to break up contestants' marriages.

There are First Amendment concerns, of course, when courts consider suits over TV shows. But when the media act more as police than as journalists, and actually push the police into more extreme violations of rights than the police would come up with themselves, the free speech defense begins to weaken.

Patricia Conradt's lawsuit contains several legal claims, including "intentional infliction of emotional distress," for which the bar is very high: conduct "so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community."

Reprehensible as "Moment of Truth" is, it doubtless falls into the venerable category of verbal grotesquery protected by the First Amendment. The producers of "To Catch a Predator," however, appear to be on the verge - if not over it - of becoming brown shirts with television cameras. If you are going into the business of storming people's homes and humiliating them to the point of suicide, you should be sure to have some good lawyers on retainer.

*Adam Cohen is the assistant editor of The New York Times editorial board.*

Cohen, Adam.“Televising Humiliation.” *New York Times.* Web.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/11/opinion/11iht-edacohen.1.10925712.html> 13 Feb. 2012.

CHOICE #3

***Let’s Really Reform Our Schools***

by Anita Garland

American high schools are in trouble. No, that's not strong enough. American high schools are disasters. "Good" schools today are only a rite of passage for American kids, where the pressure to look fashionable and act cool outweighs any concern for learning. And "bad" schools-heaven help us-are havens for the vicious and corrupt. There, metal detectors and security guards wage a losing battle against the criminals that prowl the halls.

Desperate illnesses require desperate remedies. And our public schools are desperately ill. What is needed is no meek, fainthearted attempt at "curriculum revision" or "student-centered learning." We need to completely restructure our thinking about what schools are and what we expect of the students who attend them.

The first change needed to save our schools is the most fundamental one. Not only must we stop *forcing* everyone to attend school; we must stop *allowing* the attendance of so-called students who are not interested in studying. Mandatory school attendance is based upon the idea that every American has a right to basic education. But as the old saying goes, your rights stop where the next guy's begin. A student who sincerely wants an education, regardless of his or her mental or physical ability, should be welcome in any school in this country. But "students" who deliberately interfere with other students' ability to learn, teachers' ability to teach, and administrators' ability to maintain order should be denied a place in the classroom. They do not want an education. And they should not be allowed to mark time within school walls, waiting to be handed their meaningless diplomas while they make it harder for everyone around them to either provide or receive a quality education.

By requiring troublemakers to attend school, we have made it impossible to deal with them in any effective way. They have little to fear in terms of punishment. Suspension from school for a few days doesn't improve their behavior. After all, they don't want to be in school anyway. For that matter, mandatory attendance is, in many cases, nothing but a bad joke. Many chronic troublemakers are absent so often that it is virtually impossible for them to learn anything. And-when they *are* in school, they are busy shaking down other students for their lunch money or jewelry. If we permanently banned such punks from school, educators could turn their attention away from the troublemakers and toward those students who realize that school is a serious place for serious learning.

You may ask, "What will become of these young people who aren't in school?" But consider this: What is becoming of them now? They are not being educated. They are merely names on the school records. They are passed from grade to grade, learning nothing, making teachers and fellow students miserable. Finally they are bumped off the conveyor belt at the end of twelfth grade, oftentimes barely literate, and passed into society as "high school graduates." Yes, there would be a need for alternative solutions for these young people. Let the best thinkers of our country come up with some ideas. But in the meanwhile, don't allow our schools to serve as a holding tank for' people who don't want to be there.

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Once our schools have been returned to the control of teachers and genuine students, we could concentrate on smaller but equally meaningful reforms. A good place to start would be requiring students to wear school uniforms. There would be cries of horror from the fashion slaves, but the change would benefit everyone. If students wore uniforms, think of the mental energy that could be redirected into more productive channels. No longer would young girls feel the need to spend their evenings laying out coordinated clothing, anxiously trying to create just the right look. The daily fashion show that currently absorbs so much of students' attentions would come to a halt. Kids from modest backgrounds could stand out because of their personalities and intelligence, rather than being tagged as losers because they can't wear the season's hottest sneakers or jeans. Affluent kids might learn they have something to offer the world other than a fashion statement. Parents would be relieved of the pressure to deal with their offspring's constant demands for wardrobe additions.

Next, let's move to the cafeteria. What's for lunch today? How about a Milky Way bar, a bag of Fritos, a Coke, and just to round out the meal with a vegetable, maybe some french fries. And then back to the classroom for a few hours of intense mental activity, fueled on fat, salt, and sugar. What a joke! School is an institution of education, and that education should be continued as students sit down to eat. Here's a perfect opportunity to teach a whole generation of Americans about nutrition, and we are blowing it. School cafeterias, of all places, should demonstrate how a healthful, low-fat, well-balanced diet produces healthy, energetic, mentally alert people. Instead, we allow school cafeterias to dispense the same junk food that kids could buy in any mall. Overhaul the cafeterias! Out with the candy, soda, chips, and fries! In with the salads, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables!

Turning our attention away from what goes on during school hours, let's consider what happens after the final bell rings. Some school-sponsored activities are all to the good. Bands and choirs, foreign-language field trips, chess or skiing or drama clubs are sensible parts of an extracurricular plan. They bring together kids with similar interests to develop their talents and leadership ability. But other common school activities are not the business of education. The prime example of inappropriate school activity is in competitive sports between schools.

Intramural sports are great. Students need an outlet for their energies, and friendly competition against one's classmates on the basketball court or baseball diamond is fun and physically beneficial. But the wholesome fun of sports is quickly ruined by the competitive team system. School athletes quickly become the campus idols, encouraged to look down on classmates with less physical ability. Schools concentrate enormous amounts of time, money, and attention upon their teams, driving home the point that competitive sports are the *really* important part of school. Students are herded into gymnasiums for "pep rallies" that whip up adoration of the chosen few and encourage hatred of rival schools. Boys' teams are supplied with squads of cheerleading girls . . . let's not even get into what the subliminal message is *there.* If communities feel they must have competitive sports, let local businesses or even professional teams organize and fund the programs. But school budgets and time should be spent on programs that benefit more than an elite few.

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Another school-related activity that should get the ax is the fluff-headed, money-eating, misery-inducing event known as the prom. How in the world did the schools of America get involved in this showcase of excess? Proms have to be the epitome of everything that is wrong, tasteless, misdirected, inappropriate, and just plain sad about the way we bring up our young people. Instead of simply letting the kids put on a dance, we've turned the prom into a bloated nightmare that ruins young people's budgets, their self-image, and even their lives. The pressure to show up at the prom with the best-looking date, in the most expensive clothes, wearing the most exotic flowers, riding in the most extravagant form of trans­portation, dominates the thinking of many students for months before the prom itself. Students cling to doomed, even abusive romantic relationships rather than risk being dateless for this night of nights. They lose any concept of meaningful values as they implore their parents for more, more, more money to throw into the jaws of the prom god. The adult trappings of the prom-the slinky dresses, emphasis on romance, slow dancing, nightclub atmosphere-all encourage kids to engage in behavior that can have tragic consequences. Who knows how many unplanned pregnancies and alcohol-related accidents can be directly attributed to the pressures of prom night? And yet, not going to the prom seems a fate worse than death to many young people-because of all the hype about the "wonder" and "romance" of it all. Schools are not in the business of providing wonder and romance, and it's high time we remembered that.

We have lost track of the purpose of our schools. They are not intended to be centers for fun, entertainment, and social climbing. They are supposed to be institutions for learning and hard work. Let's institute the changes suggested here--plus dozens more--without apology, and get American schools back to business.

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