Proposed Category 1 Exercise for ENGL 2201

**“The Big Problem Statement”**

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A. For this exercise, your first task is to **investigate a current controversy in your field** – that is, a topic which people in your chosen profession are discussing, right now. Start by investigating trade publications (including websites and print magazines), as well as social media (including blogs, Twitter, and other places where professionals talk to each other) in your field. What problems have they been unable as yet to solve? What conflicts have they yet to resolve? What important questions have they not yet been able to answer with a degree of certainty? **Pick a topic.**

B. Your next task is to **ask a research question** about that topic. Submit your question to your instructor in the three-part format from page 47 of *The Craft of Research*:

1. [TOPIC] I am writing about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. [QUESTION] Because I want to find out \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. [SIGNIFICANCE] …in order to help readers understand how/why/whether/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

C. Next, begin to **research an answer to your question.** Investigate not just trade publications and social media, but scholarly research as well. As you do, you should think about how to lay out the controversy or disagreement for your readers, using **problem-statement format:**

**1. Common Ground Position.** Some belief or idea that the discussion community currently holds that you believe is not quite right, or at least incomplete.

**2. Problem.** Consists of three parts:

**a. Disrupting Problem**. For conceptual problems, some gap of knowledge or lack of understanding that leads to a question.

**b. Question** raised by the disrupting problem.

**c. Cost or Consequence** of the question. Answers the question, “So what?”

**3. Solution** to the problem. Your claim.

As you read up on the problem, you should (obviously) be taking copious notes *in your own words.* You may do so in a notebook, or in Evernote.

D. Next, **divide your sources of information into groups, according to the part of your problem statement each one provides.** So, you should create

1. a group for the common ground – the understanding of the situation that your readers already have, when they start reading your piece.
2. a group for **each distinct position in the disrupting problem** – that is, each of the ideas that calls the previous understanding of the situation into question
3. a group for each distinct position in the solution – that is, each of the proposed ideas that might solve the problem.

E. Finally, write an **analysis of the argument and strategy of EACH of the sources in each of your lists.** The analysis should (all in your own words, of course):

**1. Using the Problem Statement form (attached), analyze the article’s problem structure.** Identify (specifically, and in your own words)

1. how the writer targets that audience in the common-ground portion of the article’s introduction,
2. what he or she introduces as a problem,
3. why that problem is supposed to matter to people in this field, and
4. what he or she offers as a solution.

**2. Using the Argument Boxes (attached) to outline the article’s reasons, evidence, and warrants.** Explain (specifically, and in your own words)

1. What, specifically, counts as convincing evidence in this field?
2. Where does the author get his/her information?
3. How does he/she present it?
4. According to what implied warrants does each reason support the claim?

**Problem Statements: The Parts All Fit Together!**

**Common Ground Position**

Upset by the Disrupting Problem.

Changed by the claim.

**Disrupting Problem**

Tells what’s wrong or incomplete about the

common ground position, setting up a conflict.

Raises a question.

**Question**

Raised by the disrupting problem.

Answered by the claim.

**Consequences**

Tells us what we’ll understand better when we answer the question.

**Response/Solution/Claim**

Answers the question.

Reevaluates the common ground position.

YOUR NAME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ARTICLE TITLE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Use this form to make an outline of the author’s argument. Draw lines between boxes to indicate their relations. Note that you need not use every box – just enough to show what the author is actually saying.*

CLAIM

Acknowledgment/Response Acknowledgment/Response

Warrant 1 Warrant 2 Warrant 3 Warrant 4 Warrant 5

Reason 1 Reason 2 Reason 3 Reason 4 Reason 5

Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid. Evid.