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**Improving Students' Confidence and Competence Using Critical Media Literacy Skills
in a Secondary English Language Arts Class**

By Leeanne G. Kline

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Education Degree

Kennesaw State University

December 2023

Dedication

I dedicate this to my parents and Jake. To my parents and first supporters: thank you for emphasizing the importance of education and insisting that I could do anything I put my mind to. To my husband and best friend: thank you for your endless love and support. I love doing life with you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Dail, and committee members, Dr. Goss and Dr. Wells, for their encouragement and guidance throughout my doctorate program and dissertation process. I could not have completed this project without you. I would also like to recognize the support of my colleagues and the work of my students; you make teaching fun.

Abstract

This is a dissertation for a six-week action research study that investigated how self-regulated learning strategies can affect students' perceived and demonstrated critical abilities in discussing informational media texts in the secondary ELA classroom. This dissertation examines topical research, gaps in the literature, and theoretical frameworks to justify the study. The qualitative action research study implemented a version of the Article of the Week program alongside self-regulated learning (SRL) and student-led discussion strategies to collect data on students' self-reported levels and observed critical media literacy (CML) skills. The purpose of this study was to build upon existing research on SRL, critical media literacy, and student discussions; a key component of this research is that it includes students' self-reported data on their perceived critical abilities. This study also sought to add scholarly research to the practice of Article of the Week. The findings are consistent with the existing literature on self-efficacy that states that repeated practice can increase self-efficacy levels. It also demonstrates the usefulness of implementing SRL strategies in the secondary ELA classroom.

Keywords: CML, critical media literacy, article of the week, self-regulated learning, peer-led discussions, self-efficacy, action research, secondary ELA

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Chapter One: Introduction

The purpose of education has changed over time; however, it almost always functions as a site to reinforce societal expectations (Giroux, 1980; Thomas, 2018; Williams & Woods, 2018). Given the close connection between democratic values and literacy (Coffey, 2015; Garcia et al., 2015), ELA classrooms provide a space rich with opportunity to practice critical media literacy (CML) skills, which are necessary to the functioning of a true democracy (Breakstone et al., 2018; Hobbs et al., 2022; Hooley et al., 2013; Mirra, 2018). CML skills are in dire need of practice. McGrew et al. (2018) found that 80% of high schoolers scored at the “beginning” level in their ability to compare two sources, one of which was sponsored content. Perhaps more concerning is that 57% of college students scored at the “beginning” level in their ability to determine a website’s reliability (McGrew et al., 2018). These low mastery levels are concerning when 75% of young people report accessing political information online (McGrew et al., 2018). Indeed, these statistics support Thomas’s (2018) claim that “Without critical literacy and increasingly critical media literacy, a people become pawns to demagogues and buffoons. We are a people without critical literacy and that may result in our being the pawns we deserve to be” (p. 22).

Relevance

The ELA practices of informational reading (Alvermann, 2008; Deane, 2020; Gallagher, 2009; Hooley et al., 2013; Mirra, 2018; Rahmatullah, 2017) and class discussion (Alvermann, 1995; Deane, 2020; Lightner, 2020; Mirra, 2018) provide avenues through which students can practice their CML skills. Unfortunately, Hooley et al. (2013) found that high school seniors report reading very little, whether for academic or recreational purposes. Additionally, a significant percentage of teachers are not requiring nonfiction reading, whether in or out of the classroom; Beers & Probst (2016) reported that “Roughly 57% of all teachers reported that they spend thirty minutes or less having their students read nonfiction

in class, and 85% reported that they ask their students to read fewer than ten pages of nonfiction a week outside of class” (p. 36). Thus, students need more and regular exposure to informational texts to develop stronger informational reading skills. Yet skills alone are insufficient.

Being an active and engaged citizen requires that a person be not only competent but also confident in their CML skills. Information without the ability to act is scant progress over critical media illiteracy. Research shows that students who lack confidence are less likely to attempt a task (Bandura, 2010; Chou & Zou, 2020; Hattie et al., 2016; Solomon & Andermann, 2016; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Without an attempt, it is difficult to gauge students’ true competence, and true competence is necessary for active citizenship. Furthermore, a person needs both competence and confidence to be an engaged and active citizen. Fortunately, students’ confidence can be increased through the regular practice of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Chou & Zou, 2020; Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Hattie et al., 2016; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Higher confidence can, in turn, improve participation and engagement in conversations requiring CML skills. Through regular critical reading and discussion of media texts, students can improve their CML skills.

I am not alone in wanting my students to read more. Many ELA classrooms already incorporate the study of informational media through an Article of the Week (AoW) practice (Aierstok, 2019; American Kennel Club, 2022; Faulkner, 2021; Gallagher, 2002, 2009; Hampton, 2019; MacKenzie, 2017; Springville High School, 2022; Stuart, 2014). AoW was coined by Gallagher (2008) and designed to regularly expose students to informational media texts. In Gallagher’s (2008) AoW program, the teacher selects and assigns an informational media article to students at the beginning of the week. Students are expected to independently read and write a response to the article and submit it at the end of the week. Gallagher’s

(2008) AoW program is invaluable for its consistent weekly structure and his ongoing efforts to support practicing teachers by continually linking the articles he uses on his website (2022). The structure and accessibility of articles has helped to make AoW accessible and practical for practicing classroom teachers.

Yet, Gallagher's (2008) AoW practice can still be improved. Indeed, countless teachers have adopted similar programs and attempted to refine it (Aierstok, 2019; Faulkner, 2021; Hampton, 2019; MacKenzie, 2017; Stuart, 2014). Of the existing AoW programs, many emphasize the informational aspect of media literacy rather than the critical component. Furthermore, many programs assess students' competency only through written work rather than including a class discussion (Aierstock, 2019; Faulkner, 2021; Gallagher, 2008; MacKenzie, 2017; Stuart, 2014). These gaps, coupled with the lack of scholarly research on the AoW (Rahmatullah, 2017) program demonstrate a need for academic research that formally assesses the AoW program while maintaining the same level of accessibility. Over a decade has passed since Gallagher's (2008) initial call for increased informational media reading in the classroom. In that time, CML has rapidly developed, but much CML research focuses on teachers' perspectives (Bezanilla et al., 2021; McNelly & Harvey, 2021) or provide an overview of the field of CML (Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; Potter, 2022). McGrew et al.'s (2018) extensive study provides insightful statistics. However, only one study has implemented a truly recognizable version of the AoW program (Rahmatullah, 2017), and while the results are promising, the study took place among tertiary students in Indonesia rather than secondary students in the United States. What is needed is a current U.S.-based study that not only infuses the AoW practice with scholarly research practices but also updates and refines it for immediate classroom implementation.

Personal Statement

My agenda for taking up this study is to increase the number of critically literate citizens capable of independently considering and interpreting ideas and then productively discussing those ideas with others. Personally, I want to increase my students' engagement with my course by regularly integrating CML into the curriculum. Several scholars recognize the need to bridge the gap between literacy practices in and out of classrooms (Bell, 2001; Dias, 1992; Jang et al., 2021; Muhammad, 2020); similarly, this study seeks to bridge the gap specifically regarding CML. Additionally, I feel that enabling students to think for themselves is a type of freedom because it allows them to make their own informed decisions (Breakstone et al., 2021; Garcia et al., 2015; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; Love, 2019; McGrew et al., 2018; Perry, 2012). Practically, I aim to integrate the analysis and discussion of informational media texts into my classroom routine; the analysis and discussion of these texts will infuse criticality into my practice, thereby transforming the traditional AoW practice into a CML practice.

I seek to challenge my students to critically engage with the types of informational media that they will continually encounter throughout their lives. Informational media refers to news articles that aim to inform readers of current events in the world. The informational media texts selected for this study will be traditional in their medium of words; however, studying them will provide opportunities for students to practice and improve their critical reading and discussion skills. It is my hope that by practicing these critical skills with traditional texts, students will be better prepared to engage in those same critical practices when faced with other types of multimedia texts, such as social media posts. Unfortunately, such an extension is beyond the scope of this current study. Intellectually, I am interested in discovering the most effective discussion strategies and ways in which I can engage my students in meaningful conversations. Effective speaking and listening skills are important

course standards (GADOE). Beyond the standards, I hope to better prepare my students for life as active and engaged citizens.

My agenda may positively influence my research in reminding me to remain objective; the goal is not for my students to accept my ideas but rather to develop their own (Blau, 2003). However, this belief may negatively influence my research in my hesitation to accept extremist views, which may be held by some students. I do not wish to isolate those students or create an environment in which they do not feel accepted (Mirra, 2018). I genuinely think that most students and people are politically moderate, and I hope to reaffirm that belief with this study. By “moderate,” I mean capable of engaging meaningfully in a dialogue with others of contrasting views. I do not necessarily seek to change my students’ preexisting beliefs but rather to guide students to better understand both their own beliefs and the beliefs of others, thereby improving their metacognitive abilities. I want students to be able to respectfully disagree with others while still acknowledging the validity of their beliefs.

My desire for students to transfer their critical literacy skills beyond the classroom addresses the topic of civic education. This connection between civic education and CML connects to the principles of a transformative worldview because both emphasize the importance of equipping peoples with the tools necessary to improve their situations. Working from a transformative worldview, I seek to empower students by increasing their confidence and ability to critically read and discuss informational media texts. At its core, critical literacy seeks to liberate (Breakstone et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2015; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; Williams & Woods, 2018). It is my hope that an increase in confidence and competence in critically confronting and discussing informational media texts will empower my students both in and out of the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

As a secondary ELA teacher currently teaching on-level and remedial senior Advanced Composition courses at a suburban high school, I am interested in increasing students' willingness and ability to engage critically in conversations about informational media texts. Working from a transformative worldview, my research will study ways to empower students to act as thoughtful and active citizens once they graduate high school. As high schoolers, my students are adolescents at the peak of their struggle to develop their identity and form their own opinions (Erickson, 1968; Gaultney et al., 2022). Given their developmental state, I seek to guide my students' transition into adulthood. As an ELA teacher, I am particularly drawn to critical theory because it encourages students to question and disrupt existing norms (Appleman, 2015). While I want my students to develop a sense of independence as they discover their identity, I also want to prepare them to interact with their peers in fruitful ways. As active citizens, they will need to critically consider the ideas of others and decide where those views fit within their own. This concept of making meaning through social interaction stems from the sociocultural and transactional work of Vygotsky (1978) and Rosenblatt (2005).

My desire for students to be thoughtful and active citizens aligns with the work of citizenship theory (Breakstone et al., 2018). While the citizenship theory of civic education has traditionally been taught in social studies classrooms (Hooley et al., 2013), I seek to implement its concepts in an ELA classroom. In my own classroom, I have observed students' reluctance and struggle to articulate their ideas verbally. Given the importance of verbal discussions in active citizenship, I draw on self-efficacy scholarship (Bandura, 1977) to discover ways I might improve my students' confidence in themselves as critically engaged citizens. Research on self-regulated learning suggests that certain strategies may

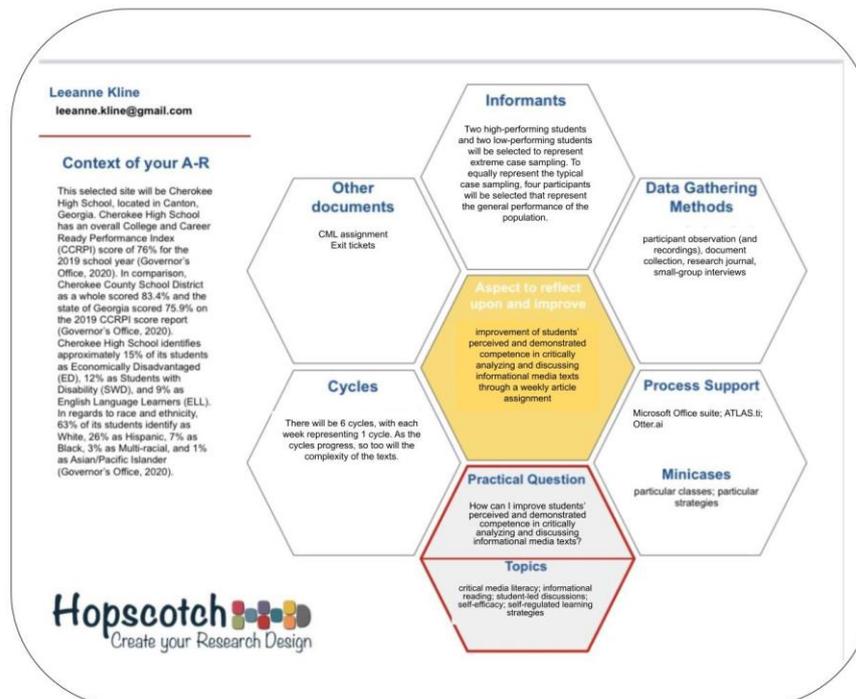
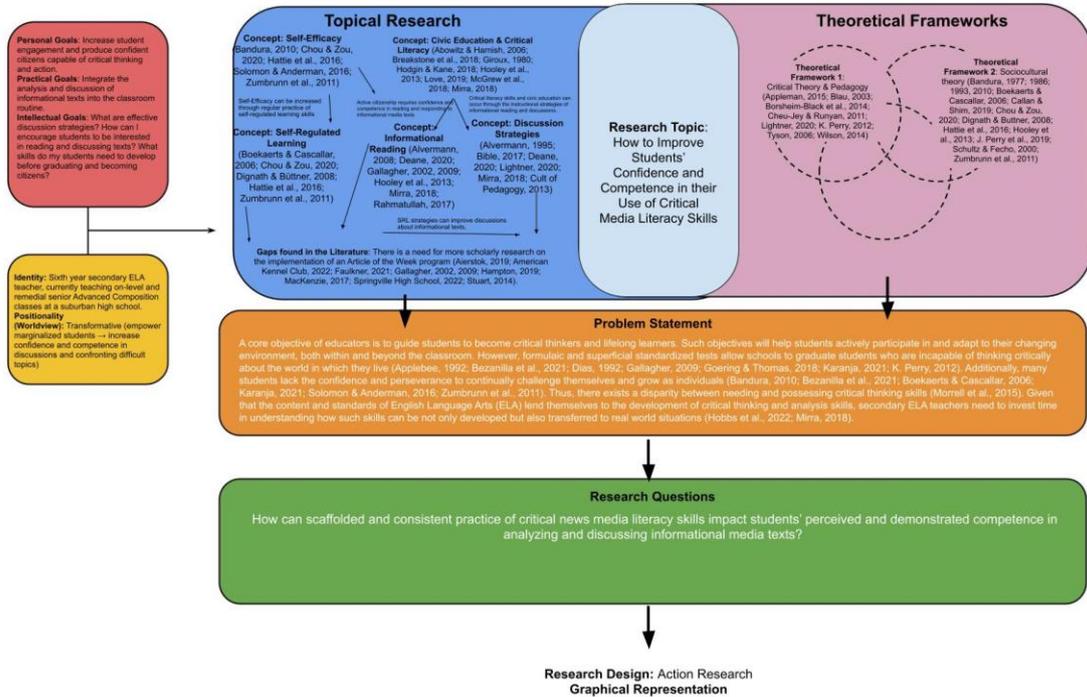
help to achieve this goal (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Chou & Zou, 2020; Zumbunn et al., 2011).

As previously mentioned, the AoW initiative in secondary ELA classrooms is designed to increase students' informational media reading skills (Gallagher, 2009). This instructional strategy requires students to critically engage with an informational media text from an established news outlet each week. While countless school districts and teachers have shared their conceptualization of the program (Aierstok, 2019; American Kennel Club, 2022; Faulkner, 2021; Gallagher, 2002, 2009; Hampton, 2019; MacKenzie, 2017; Springville High School, 2022; Stuart, 2014), very few academic studies exist (Rahmatullah, 2017). In lieu of literature on the specific AoW practice, I will instead examine the ways in which scholars have examined the topics of critical pedagogy, CML, citizenship theory, self-efficacy, self-regulated learning. Additionally, I will consider how these topical concepts can be applied in the classroom through instructional strategies dealing with scaffolding, self-regulated learning, and student-led discussions.

Action research appeals to my desire to implement and evaluate practices immediately. Action research aligns with the transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014); therefore, action research is the most appropriate method for this study. The conceptual framework that I propose for this study centers around students' perceived and demonstrated competence in analyzing and discussing informational media texts. The selected site of the study will be the school at which I currently teach. Eight participants will be selected using typical and extreme sampling. The different samples will provide a general picture while still recognizing the outliers. Data collection will consist of discussion observations, a field journal, document collection, and focus group interviews. Six cycles will occur, with one week representing one cycle, and as the cycles progress, the complexity of

the selected texts will increase confidence accordingly. A visual representation of this conceptual framework can be found in Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework: Improving Students' Analytical Confidence and Competence in Secondary ELA Discussions



Potential Impact

Although this study will occur on a small-scale within the context of my own class, I hope to discover effective and sustainable teaching practices aimed at improving students' CML skills. As aforementioned, most scholarly research has not focused on Gallagher's (2008; 2022) specific AoW practice, or on similar programs. Given time constraints and curricular mandates, most teachers struggle to incorporate CML practice into their regular routine. Thus, as a teacher and scholar, I seek to offer practicing educators a model that is practical like Gallagher's (2008; 2022) AoW, while extending beyond informational media reading to include student-facilitated critical discussions. The synthesis of confidence and competence should yield a student more capable of meaningful engagement with informational media texts, which is a necessary requirement for an active and engaged citizen.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study is founded on the concern that students need increased CML instruction and discussion practice if they are to develop civic engagement skills. It seeks to examine how CML is practiced in the secondary ELA classroom and can be transferred to civic participation in the real-world. Students need the confidence and ability to engage and participate in culture meaningfully. Additionally, as action research set in a high school classroom, it is pertinent to examine effective instructional practices that may be utilized to achieve the goal of increasing students' critical literacy and active engagement. Theoretically, this study is situated in critical theory and pedagogy as well as sociocultural theory. These theoretical frameworks intersect to create a study that encourages CML and civic engagement through the critical reading and collaborative discussion of various informational media texts.

Topical Research

This literature review is conceptual in that it seeks to “offer greater contribution to seeing the complexity of [the] professional problem” involving students' self-efficacy and competence in demonstrating CML and discussion skills (Stake, 2010, p. 111). Given that the focus of this literature review is criticality, it is first necessary to unpack the term. Once criticality is understood as a skill, it then reasons that students need guidance on how to practice it. Criticality requires students to understand, analyze, and question power relationships occurring within texts. Texts, understood within a multiliteracy framework, refers to any “thing” that requires students to “read” or process information. Therefore, applying CML skills to any text involves the work of citizenship theory. To improve students' civic engagement as citizens, it is important to consider factors that affect their levels of self-efficacy. Notably, self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies hold the potential to improve students' SE. In considering the practical application of such strategies, it is important to consider the pedagogical concept of scaffolding, particularly as it pertains to text

selection and discussion organization.

Critical Pedagogy

Although the word “critical” has become somewhat taboo in educational discussions, Morrell & Scherff (2015) remind teachers that “at all times education is a political act” (p. xiii). Teachers cannot avoid politics, and therefore should not avoid criticality in the classroom due to political fears. Criticality is important because it enables individuals to perform higher-order tasks before making informed decisions (Bezanilla et al., 2021) and allows people “to become conscious of the influences upon [them]” (Wilson, 2014, p. 75). Society constantly surrounds people with seemingly imperceptible influences; it is through criticality that they can recognize and analyze those influences (Breakstone et al., 2018; Thomas, 2018). Thus, criticality frees and enables people to make their own decisions rather than passively accepting the choices of others.

When criticality is applied in the classroom, it is termed critical pedagogy and refers to an individual’s freedom and power to enact changes upon the world instead of passively receiving them (Freire, 1993). The goal of critical pedagogy is for students to build authentic knowledge rather than solely rely on others (Blau, 2003). Teaching criticality empowers students to take ownership over their mental processing (Muhammad, 2020). To think critically, one needs the capacity “to conceptualise, apply, analyse, synthesise, and/or evaluate information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide towards belief and action” (Bezanilla et al., 2021, p. 22).

Critical Media Literacy (CML)

This study seeks to examine the ways in which students in a secondary ELA classroom apply critical skills to their reading and discussion of informational media texts. Therefore, this study will focus on CML, which is a subset of the larger field of critical

pedagogy. In a recent literature review on CML, Potter (2022) found great variety in how scholars define CML. Despite the wide range of definitions for CML, Potter (2022) identified two commonly cited sources among scholars used to support their definitions. The first was the National Association of Media Literacy Education's six Core Principles for Media Literacy Education, which include general, exposure, information processing, production, social, and reflection skills (Potter, 2022). The second source was the 1992 National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, which defined media literacy as "the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (Aufderheide, 1993). Following Potter's (2022) recommendation, I define CML within this study as the ability to analyze published informational media texts. This definition addresses the importance of information processing skills, which 144 articles similarly find central to CML (Potter, 2022). Given the scope of this study, my definition of CML is limited to the traditional conceptualization of media literacy as "the critical evaluation of media messages" (McNelly & Harvey, 2021, p. 120) rather than the expanded definition in which students are producers of media.

CML and Citizenship Theory

Scholars (Breakstone et al., 2021; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; McGrew et al., 2018) fear that a lack of criticality will weaken democratic participation. Thomas (2018) proclaims that "the current post-truth America is a significant issue among youth who seem unable to distinguish between facts and so-called fake news" (p. 3). Criticality can address this issue because it recognizes that no text is neutral and that there is always an underlying agenda stemming from power dynamics (Appleman, 2015; Borsheim-Black et al., 2014; Cheu-Hey & Runyan, 2011; Lightner, 2020; K. Perry, 2012; Wooldridge, 2001). Citizenship theory seeks to address this power imbalance and should be included in all subject areas (Breakstone et al., 2018; García et al., 2015; Mirra, 2018); however, much of the existing research on

applied citizenship theory occurs only within social studies classrooms (Hooley et al., 2013). Within the ELA classroom, critical readers can discern what is included as well as excluded, and, in effect, they read against the text (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014; Tyson, 2006). Thus, the critical reading that occurs in ELA classrooms functions as an important practice of criticality (Appleman, 2015; Hobbs et al., 2022). Although criticality is not a new concept, it is often discussed more in literature than in practice (Cheu-Jey & Runyan, 2011; Tyson, 2006).

Students' Self-Efficacy (SE)

Since the goal of this study is to increase students' critical skills both in and out of the secondary ELA classroom, it is essential that students possess not only the ability to transfer and apply critical skills to a variety of contexts independent of teacher guidance (Giroux, 1980) but also the confidence with which to do so. Within the context of this study, “confidence” and “perceived competence” both refer to Bandura’s (1997) conception of self-efficacy (SE), which is “a belief in one’s personal capabilities” (p. 4). In particular, Bandura (1993) asserts that “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives” (p. 118). Although SE is a complex idea, it is understood in the context of this research to refer to students’ confidence in using their CML skills competently.

It is challenging to overcome extended periods of low SE (Bandura, 1977); therefore, students would benefit from prolonged practices aimed to raise and improve their levels of SE. To increase students’ levels of SE, the demanded tasks must be appropriately challenging (Bandura, 1977). Finding the appropriate rigor entails finding the zone of proximal development (ZPD): “The ZPD is a place of shifting circumstances wherein the learners gradually take on more responsibility for their own learning through guided or scaffolded instruction from a more experienced other” (Schultz & Fecho, 2000, p. 53). Similarly,

Bandura (1977) notes that “generalized, lasting changes in self-efficacy and behavior can best be achieved by participant methods using powerful induction procedures initially to develop capabilities, then removing external aids to verify personal efficacy” (p. 202). In other words, scaffolding is one strategy teachers may use to reach students’ appropriate level of ZPD and improve their SE beliefs.

Potential Improvements of Students’ SE through Self-Regulated Learning

Karanja (2021) confirms what students have long lamented: critical thinking is hard. Critical thinking “involves calculated, effortful thinking,” and, as a result, “humans tend to accept patterns and narratives at face value and rarely pursue them further” (Karanja, 2021, p. 235). Given the effort required to think critically, teachers need to provide students with the resources that will enable them to maintain regular practice of this skill. Self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies are imperative to this study because critical thinking is challenging (Karanja, 2021), and research suggests that students with low self-efficacy do not possess the resilience necessary to persevere through such a challenge (Bandura, 2010; Zumbunn et al., 2011). Therefore, educators should teach SRL strategies with the goal of increasing students’ levels of SE, and therefore their ability to continually engage in challenging critical work.

As “a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences,” SRL encourages educators to guide students through certain strategies until they develop the ability to regulate themselves (Zumbunn et al., 2011, p. 4). SRL emerged from the sociocultural research of Vygotsky (Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Hattie et al., 2016; J. Perry et al., 2019), and as a result, aims to make students independent and lifelong learners (Bandura, 1993; Zumbunn et al., 2011). As a process, SRL is cyclical in nature (Callan & Shim, 2019; Chou & Zou, 2020; Hattie et al., 2016) and therefore dynamic (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006). The current literature offers suggestions for ways in which classroom teachers can implement SRL

strategies: limiting distractions, taking regular breaks, setting goals, monitoring progress, and revising work (Zumbrunn et al., 2011).

Perhaps the most fundamental component of SRL that teachers need to implement into the classroom is student autonomy (Bandura, 1993; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Callan & Shim, 2019; J. Perry et al., 2019; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Student autonomy refers to the idea that students are in control of their own learning: they need to self-assess, reflect, and set goals for themselves. However, students seem to possess poor internal feedback regarding their ability to self-assess and reflect on work and establish and prioritize goals (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Chou & Zou, 2020). Therefore, teachers can help students improve their ability to assess and reflect by providing regular feedback (Hattie et al., 2016; Hooley et al., 2013). In doing so, teachers equip their students with SRL strategies applicable to any situation in which they need to self-regulate themselves. Although implementing SRL strategies into the classroom can be time-consuming, it is a worthwhile endeavor, as it is one of “the primary determinants of . . . whether or not [students] will persist through challenging tasks” both in and out of the classroom (Zumbrunn et al., 2011, p. 18). SRL has a positive impact on academic achievement with one of the highest effect sizes of all educational strategies (Hattie et al., 2016); the average effect size ranges from 0.69 (Dignath & Büttner, 2008) to 0.79 (Hattie et al., 2016).

Instructional Strategies

The topics of criticality and SE are key to this study, but equally important is how they will be practically implemented into a secondary ELA classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what specific instructional strategies will be employed to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Scaffolding in CML Text Selection.

Keeping the goal of increasing students' CML confidence and ability in mind, I will intentionally guide students through their practice of CML skills. I will model how to complete the CML worksheet by reading and annotating the informational media aloud, to share my internal processing and thoughts. I will reference those annotations when constructing open-ended discussion questions and will verbally explain my choice to word the questions in specific ways to elicit strong responses. While students will work independently to complete the CML worksheet in subsequent weeks, I will intentionally provide increasingly less guidance, thereby leading students to gradually take on more responsibility for the assignment (Bandura, 1977; Schultz & Fecho, 2000). For example, after the first week, I will not read and annotate the informational media texts aloud. However, I will answer student questions regarding the text's content. Instead of preparing my own questions in front of the class, I will instead review student-created questions and prompt them to make changes to improve their quality. I anticipate my students will need encouragement to make questions more abstract, rather than concrete, in nature. They may also need feedback to clarify their wording. A copy of the CML Worksheet can be found in Appendix A.

Perhaps the most important element of scaffolding is evident in the increasing complexity of the selected informational media texts. As previously mentioned, I will use Beers & Probst's (2016) nonfiction text complexity rubric to determine the complexity level of each selected article. A copy of this rubric can be found in Appendix A. Unlike most secondary reading programs that focus on the quantitative measurement of a text's Lexile score to determine its appropriateness for readers (Beers & Probst, 2016), Beers & Probst's (2016) nonfiction text complexity rubric examines the qualitative characteristics of ideas presented, structure, language, and required prior knowledge (Beers & Probst, 2016). Beers & Probst (2016) assert that "text complexity is multidimensional. It involves vocabulary and

syntax. And those factors are influenced by clarity, coherence, inferences the reader must make, ease in spotting author bias, the style of the writing, and most certainly the content discussed” (p. 47). The nonfiction text complexity rubric, included in Appendix A, illustrates what different levels of mastery looks like for each of these criteria.

I will use my professional discretion to review and score timely informational media texts using the text complexity rubric, and I will seek the advice of a colleague to confirm the selected text corresponds to the appropriate complexity level for that week. In general, a Level One text will have a simple central idea that may be considered “basic information” (Beers & Probst, 2016, p. 50) by some. Its text structure will be clearly organized and contain recognizable text features, such as headings, and illustrate its ideas with photographs or illustrations. Its language will be straightforward, contain simple vocabulary, and utilize simple sentence structure. It will not require any prior special knowledge and will be relatable to most readers. A Level Two text will have slightly more complex ideas that require some inferential reasoning. It will still include graphics and texts, but it may not follow chronological order. It will use a slightly higher vocabulary and greater variety in sentence structure. It may reference well-known events or texts. A Level Three text will include ideas that require readers to weigh multiple perspectives or consider ambiguous ideas. Readers will also need to consider potential author bias and motivations. It will present multiple perspectives and include tables and figures rather than photographs or illustrations. It will use more figurative language, particularly that of metaphors, and more technical language specific to its topic. It may describe unfamiliar situations that require prior cultural or historical knowledge. Finally, a Level Four text will include complex ideas, subtle arguments, and implied meanings that require readers to make inferences and search for evidence to support those inferences. It will use little to no graphics and instead include not only multiple perspectives but potentially multiple text structures. It will contain implied meanings,

extensive vocabulary, and compound and complex sentences. It will require specialized knowledge that is not explained within the text and may be beyond students' experiences.

Students will interact with two articles of each level over a period of two weeks. For weeks one and two, students will be assigned an informational text that I have assessed as Level One in complexity. For weeks three and four, students will be assigned a Level Two text; for weeks five and six, students will be assigned a Level Three text; and for weeks seven and eight, students will be assigned a Level Four text. By assigning students the same level of text for two consecutive weeks, they will have multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate their skills at each mastery level (Beers & Probst, 2016; Hodgin & Kahne, 2011). The exposure to various informational media texts will hopefully help to “demystify” (Dias, 1992, p. 140) the practice of reading and engaging with diverse media, which will work to reduce the gap between school and real-world reading. Additionally, by scaffolding the texts from “easier” to “demanding,” I hope to enable students to better “trust [their] intuitions” when they approach a text of any level (Dias, 1992, p. 140). The gradual increase in text complexity and reduction of teacher assistance serve to scaffold CML practices.

Applying SRL Strategies.

SRL strategies will be used in this study with the intention of improving students' SE, and therefore increasing their independence as learners (Bandura, 2010; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). These strategies include limiting distractions, allowing regular breaks, encouraging self-assessment and revision, and allowing for autonomy (Bandura, 1993; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Callan & Shim, 2019; J. Perry et al., 2019; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). In having students complete the CML Worksheet on a designated day during class, I hope to limit potential out-of-school distractions. In having students read the texts and then discuss the following day, students will take a break and approach the discussion after rest and adequate time to process their thoughts. Including success criteria on the CML Worksheet will

empower students to self-assess their work, ask questions, and revise before participating in the discussion. Giving timely and regular feedback on the CML Worksheet and discussion will allow students to reflect on their progress and set goals for improvement. Students will also self-reflect by completing the exit ticket (see Appendix C). In asking students to suggest changes to the CML Worksheet, I hope to engage their sense of autonomy. Student autonomy will also be engaged in the choice of a student-led discussion strategy.

Socratic Seminar as a Discussion Strategy.

Reading is a social practice that needs to be completed through conversation (Blau, 2003; Deane, 2020). Nonfiction texts “prepare us for participation in society” (Beers & Probst, 2016, p. 43). Therefore, it logically follows that discussions are important to preparing students for their future behaviors as informed and capable citizens. Scholars recognize that discussion skills are crucial to strong CML (Abrami et al., 2015; Giroux, 1980; Mirra, 2018; Leggett & King-Reilly, 2020; Lightner, 2020; Rahmatullah, 2017). Mirra (2018) asserts that discussions can “prepare young people to lead 21st century civic life in a more compassionate and collaborative manner” (p. 49). Discussions provide students with experience from which they can draw upon when faced with similar situations in their adult lives, and, as Bandura (1977) observes, past experience is more effective than verbal persuasion in convincing someone that they can do something. Giroux (1980) explains that “critical pedagogy must provide the conditions that give students the opportunity to speak with their own voices” (p. 359). Therefore, classroom discussions assist students in their development as confident speakers and listeners. Furthermore, in viewing discussions as a teachable skill, teachers can help students to increase their SE regarding their discussion skills (McAvoy et al., 2022).

Although collaborative discussions are an essential teaching practice (Harvey & Goudvis, 2013), they should be modeled and monitored by teachers to ensure their

effectiveness (Alvermann, 1995; Deane, 2020). Teachers should model effective discussion skills, such as including textual evidence and involving others in the conversation (Deane, 2020). Given its clear procedures and structure, the Socratic seminar can provide students with an appropriate model of discussion (Mitchell, 2006). The Socratic seminar is rooted in Greek philosophy and has been reimagined by scholars to meet different purposes (Mitchell, 2006). In the 1920s, Nelson and Heckman envisioned the Socratic Method as involving a group rather than one-on-one conversation; additionally, the role of the facilitator should be to ensure members understand and participate (Mitchell, 2006). The Harkness Method, developed at Phillips Exeter Academy in the 1930s, emphasized a need for such discussions to be student-led (Soutter & Clark, 2021). The Harkness Method is known among practicing teachers as a “discussion strateg[y] that emphasize[s] open-ended questions and a culture of collaborative learning” (Coppens, 2020, p. 16).

I will utilize the Harkness Method as the discussion strategy in this study, and I will refer to it as a “Socratic seminar,” which is a familiar term and practice to students, even though I and other educators often implement a modified version of the traditional discussion strategy (Mitchell, 2006). Seating will be arranged in the style of a “fishbowl” to form an “inner” and “outer” circle, which differs from the typical Socratic seminar seating. Students will have autonomy to self-select where they sit. As the discussion facilitator, I will remind students that the discussion is meant to be student-led without my interference. Once the discussion begins, the inner circle of students will lead the discussion by asking one another their prepared discussion questions. The day before the discussion, all students will complete the CML Worksheet, which requires them to read, analyze, and prepare open-ended questions on an informational media text. While the inner circle asks and responds to each other’s questions, the students in the outer circle will record notes on interesting questions, comments, and textual evidence they observe. They will also choose a part of the discussion

that most interests them and write their own response to it. A copy of this Socratic seminar observation worksheet can be found in Appendix D. After about twenty minutes, I will instruct students to switch from the inner to the outer circle and vice versa, and the process will repeat. I will ask the new inner circle to avoid repeating the same ideas but encourage them to bring up any points they feel they can add to. They will also ask each other their prepared questions while the new outer circle completes the observation worksheet. After twenty minutes have passed, I will instruct students to end the discussion and independently complete an exit ticket; students will have between five and ten minutes to complete the exit ticket before the end of the class period. The exit ticket will ask students to reflect both on their preparation for the discussion as well as their participation in it. It will also ask them to suggest any changes they would like to see to the assignment or discussion. A copy of the exit ticket can be found in Appendix C.

Some scholars recommend tracking student discussions to increase the frequency with which students contribute (Ismail et al., 2020; Wiggins, 2017). While such tracking tends to collect data on the frequency of participation rather than “the quality of the discussion” (McAvoy et al., 20221, p. 1761), they can also hold students accountable for participating in the discussion. Therefore, I plan to use the spider-web discussion tracker introduced by Wiggins (2017) and used by practicing teachers (Coppens, 2020). To use this spider-web “tracker,” I will record the names and relative position of students. Throughout the discussion, I will draw lines to indicate which students interacted with one another. Not only will this method encourage students to participate, but it will also provide me with data on which students are interacting with one another.

Theoretical Frameworks

Sociocultural Theory

Transactional Theory.

Since the early 1990s, scholars have urged teachers to implement more student-centered instructional practices consistent with constructivist theory, which shifts the emphasis from passively knowing content to actively shaping it (Applebee, 1992). For Dias (1992), what is important is not merely understanding a text but demonstrating a willingness to continually examine a text. This relates to Rosenblatt's (2005) transactional theory, which suggests that a reader's understanding of a text can change over time. Rosenblatt (2005) reasons that since "human beings are always in transaction and in a reciprocal relationship with an environment, a context, a total situation," their interpretation of a text may change due to differences in the time or setting in which they read it (p. 26). Thus, students need to possess critical skills that will allow them to read a text and gain new insights; their learning should be dynamic and malleable rather than static. One drawback to Rosenblatt's (2005) work is that it relies largely on theoretical ideas rather than concrete examples that might be useful for readers who are teachers. In accordance with transactional theory, Gallagher (2009) asserts that "what the reader brings to the page is often more important than the ability to read the words on the page" (loc. 661). Gallagher's explanation speaks to Rosenblatt's (2005) transactional theory by valuing the background and experience that a reader uses to make sense of a text. Additionally, Gallagher (2009) offers practical advice for teachers wishing to expand their students' reading practices, which he believes will boost students' critical thinking skills.

Rosenblatt (2005) theorizes that a reader's understanding of a text is dynamic and changes with different times and settings. Gallagher (2009) builds on Rosenblatt's (2005) transactional theory by prioritizing the reader's individual experiences; Gallagher (2009) asserts that the background and experience that a reader uses to understand a text is more important than the simple cognitive ability to read. Dias (1992) explains that meaning is "constantly renewed in the transactions that occur between reader and text" (p. 131)

Ultimately, transactional theory works within a sociocultural framework that values an individual's social and cultural context. Transactional theory necessarily involves critical literacy because individuals are influenced by the context in which they live (Mills & Comber, 2013; Rahmatullah, 2017; Schultz & Fecho, 2000).

Scaffolding.

Sociocultural theory believes “that knowledge and understanding is socially constructed through interactions with others” (Hattie et al., 2016, p. 309). As a site of the social practices of language and literacy (Blau, 2003; Deane, 2020; K. Perry, 2012), the ELA classroom has long been influenced by sociocultural theory (Nystrand, 2006). Vygotsky's sociocultural work has influenced the ELA classroom's adoption of scaffolding techniques and recognition of a student's zone of proximal development (Schultz & Fecho, 2000). The zone of proximal development, or ZPD refers to “a place of shifting circumstances wherein the learners gradually take on more responsibility for their own learning through guided or scaffolded instruction from a more experienced other” (Schultz & Fecho, 2000, p. 53). Indeed, several pedagogical scholars base their practices on the work of Vygotsky (Blau, 2003; Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Hattie et al., 2016; J. Perry et al., 2019; Prior, 2006; Rahmatullah, 2017; Schultz & Fecho, 2000; Williams & Woods, 2018).

This study will use a variety of scaffolds. First, the informational media texts that students are assigned to read and analyze will be scaffolded in increasing complexity throughout the study. The texts' complexity will be determined based on guidelines recommended by Beers & Probst (2016). Additionally, towards the end of the study, students will be responsible for researching their own articles. Hopefully, this gradual increase in rigor will guide students to reach their respective ZPD.

The teacher will be conscious of her level of assistance throughout the study. Initially, the teacher will provide a clear structure for the Critical Media Literacy (CML) worksheet

and discussions. She will guide students through the worksheet and complete it as a class for the first week. In completing the worksheet as a class, the teacher will reaffirm students' initial responses and model approaches to completing it. Over time, the teacher will provide less assistance to students and expect them to complete the worksheet independent of assistance. Regarding discussions, a clear structure will be provided for students and norms will be established. For instance, one student will begin the conversation by asking a prepared question. After the conversation for the question reaches its natural end, it will be the responsibility of the person next to that student to ask the next question. Initially, the teacher-researcher will interject when necessary to facilitate the conversation. Over time, the teacher-researcher will interject less often and then not at all; the goal is for students to maintain authority and control over their conversation.

Critical Theory

Critical theory, or criticality, refers to a framework of philosophical ideas that guide one's interpretations of texts. Appleman (2015) argues that literary theory can help students to develop a "critical consciousness" that will help them to better "understand the world around them" (p. xiv). This critical consciousness "helps [students] develop a more complex way of thinking as they move from the dualism of early adolescence to the relativism of adult thinkers" (Appleman, 2015, p. 9). In other words, students who think critically about one text can transfer that skill to their understanding of another. Critically literate students are ones who "assum[e] an evaluative stance and ac[t] upon these stances as they uncover manifestations of social injustice in their lives and in the world around them" (Avila & Moore, 2008, p. 28).

Critical theory originated with German intellectuals Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in the 1940s; these scholars supported "the idea of destabilizing . . . assumptions and questioning what appears normal" (Mirra, 2018, p.7). Critical theory aims to not only

increase comprehension but also to transform society (Giroux, 1980; Mirra, 2018). Criticality prompts students to recognize power structures and act in ways that promote social justice and equality. By encouraging criticality, teachers can support students as they add their “distinct voices to the discourses of authority” (Avila & Moore, 2012, p. 32). Texts expose students to complex real issues and allows students to think about them abstractly before they face them in real life challenges (Gallagher, 2009). For many scholars, the importance of transferring critical thinking skills from the classroom to the real-world is necessary in creating thoughtful individuals capable of understanding complex ideas and enacting appropriate change (Giroux, 1980; Mirra, 2018; Thomas, 2018).

Problem Statement

A core objective of educators is to guide students to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners. Such objectives will help students actively participate in and adapt to their changing environment, both within and beyond the classroom. However, formulaic and superficial standardized tests allow schools to graduate students who are incapable of thinking critically about the world in which they live (Breakstone et al., 2018; Gallagher, 2009; Thomas, 2018). Several scholars have expressed concerns about students’ inability to apply critical thinking skills to both literature and the real world (Applebee, 1992; Bezanilla et al., 2021; Dias, 1992; Gallagher, 2009; Goering & Thomas, 2018; Karanja, 2021; K. Perry, 2012). Additionally, many students lack the confidence and perseverance to continually challenge themselves and grow as individuals (Bandura, 1993; Bezanilla et al., 2021; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Karanja, 2021; Solomon & Anderman, 2016; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Thus, there exists a disparity between needing and possessing both critical thinking and perseverance skills (Morrell et al., 2015). Given that the content and standards of English Language Arts (ELA) lend themselves to the development of critical thinking and analysis skills (Georgia Department of Education, 2015), secondary ELA teachers need to invest time

in understanding how such skills can be not only developed but also transferred to real world situations (Hobbs et al., 2022; Mirra, 2018). Offering students multiple opportunities to practice these critical skills may improve both their critical abilities and their confidence in using those critical abilities.

Research Question

This study poses the following research question: How can scaffolded and consistent practice of CML skills impact students' perceived and demonstrated competence in analyzing and discussing informational media texts?

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

My personal beliefs as a researcher align with the transformative worldview, which “contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). The transformative worldview believes that “specific issues need to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). In teaching students to be critical of texts, I seek to challenge oppressive social structures (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, in viewing the researcher as a collaborator with the participants, the transformative worldview honors my role as not only a researcher but also as a teacher within the classroom. According to a transformative worldview, “researchers consciously and explicitly position themselves side by side with the less powerful in a joint effort to bring about social transformation” (Mertens, 2010, p. 21). In this sense, as both the researcher and teacher, I aligned myself with the participants, my students, to equip them with increased CML skills; by equipping them with these improved skills, I sought to empower them to be engaged young adults and citizens. Ontologically, the transformative worldview suggests that “what is taken to be real needs to be critically examined via an ideological critique of its role in perpetuating oppressive social structures and policies” (Mertens, 2010, p. 32). Within this study, students were encouraged to critique and challenge ideas presented in different media as well as those from their own peers. In effect, the participants of the study engaged in transformative practices. The transformative paradigm is valued for its acknowledgment of social justice issues, which speaks directly to this study’s focus on developing CML. Thomas (2018) asserts that “without critical literacy. . . people become pawns to demagogues and buffoons” (p. 22). Accordingly, Thomas’s (2018) statement emphasizes the need to think critically and tackle social issues.

Typically associated with the transformative worldview, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate for this study. Qualitative approaches tend to employ open-ended questions, emerging approaches, and text data (Creswell, 2014). The open-ended nature of my research questions and my interest in studying how participants engage with each other and a particular teaching strategy aligned with qualitative methods. Additionally, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to position herself in the study, collect participants' meanings, focus on a single concept, bring personal values into the study, study the context of participants, interpret the data, and create an agenda for change or reform (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative approaches allowed me "to emphasize the micro over the macro" and closely study the participants in my study, rather than seeking to generalize to all secondary ELA students (Stake, 2010, p. 18). Although qualitative research is subjective, this subjectivity is not necessarily negative but rather "an essential element of understanding human activity" (Stake, 2010, p. 28).

Action Research Design

Although action research is not one of the most common qualitative research designs, it is popular among practitioners, such as teachers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and is typically associated with transformative paradigms (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014). Action research is interested "in closing the gap between the roles of theorist and practitioner" (Kemmis, 2007, p. 6). Action research is a type of backyard research that allows the researcher to "study their own classroom with the purpose to improve schooling experience for students" (Glesne, 1999, p. 27). Backyard research offers certain affordances: easy access; established rapport; applicability of work; and reduced time and financial costs (Glesne, 2016). Although backyard research poses the risk of blurring the line between researcher and the established position as teacher, Glesne (2016) notes that action research "tend[s] to work best in 'backyard' settings because of the collaborative nature of the work as well as the agreed-upon

purpose, oriented toward some sort of change” (p. 49). Action research tends to follow certain principles: it focuses on solving a problem or improving a practice, allows emergent designs, and views participants as co-investigators (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Kemmis (2007) explains that “action research aims at changing three things: practitioners’ practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice” (p. 1); the implementation of a CML Worksheet alters my teaching practice and seeking student feedback informs my understanding of the practice and the classroom conditions.

There are three main types of action research: technical, practical, and critical action research (Kemmis, 2007). In technical action research, the teacher-researcher acts independent of the student-participants and focuses on improving a certain outcome. In practical action research, the teacher-researcher acts somewhat independent of the student-participants but considers their opinions--the relationship is more reciprocal--and the focus is not only an immediate outcome but also the longer-term consequences. In critical action research, the teacher-researcher acts collaboratively with the student-participants, and the goal is to collectively transform social practices. Kemmis (2007) envisions these types of action research on a spectrum, whereby technical represents the most independence for the teacher-researcher, who refers to the student-participants in the third person; practical represents a moderate independence for the teacher-researcher, who refers to the student-participants in the second person; and critical represents the most collaborative for the teacher-researcher and student-participants, who function in the plural first person. Given the researcher’s established role as teacher and the participants’ established role as students, practical action research is most appropriate for this study. Practical action research affords the student-participants input: the teacher-researcher should “remain open to the views and responses of others, and the consequences that these others experience as a result of the practice” (Kemmis, 2007, p. 8). However, practical action research stipulates that the

practitioner is ultimately “the one who decides what is to be explored and what changes are to be made” (Kemmis, 2007, p. 8). In practical action research, the teacher-researcher and the participants share a reciprocal relationship in which both parties share the experiences and consequences of the study (Kemmis, 2007).

Context

This selected site is a high school outside north metro-Atlanta, at which I teach. As a professional doctoral student, it is appropriate that the research site was a space I already inhabit (Stake, 2010). The selected site has an overall College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score of 76% for the 2019 school year (Governor’s Office, 2020). In comparison, the school district scored 83.4% and the state of Georgia scored 75.9% on the 2019 CCRPI score report (Governor’s Office, 2020). The selected site identifies approximately 15% of its students as Economically Disadvantaged (ED), 12% as Students with Disability (SWD), and 9% as English Language Learners (ELL). Regarding race and ethnicity, 63% of its students identify as White, 26% as Hispanic, 7% as Black, 3% as Multi-racial, and 1% as Asian/Pacific Islander (Governor’s Office, 2020).

As a type of backyard research, this site offers certain affordances including easy access, established rapport, and reduced time (Glesne, 1999). As action research, this study functions autobiographically and seeks to “lessen the political challenges” (Glesne, 1999, p. 27). Although this research holds the potential to provide dangerous knowledge, or “information that is politically risky to hold, particularly for an insider,” it nevertheless yields useful and applicable information pertaining to my teaching practice and my students’ wellbeing (Glesne, 1999, p. 27).

Participant Selection

As aforementioned, the research site is a public high school outside north metro-Atlanta. The students consist of twenty-nine high school seniors enrolled in an on-level

college preparatory Advanced Composition class taught by the teacher-researcher. The school operates on a seven period per day schedule, and the participants are all in the same 1st period course that lasts from 8:30-9:30 AM. Additionally, these participants are enrolled in the second semester section of Advanced Composition B and have already taken Advanced Composition A with the teacher-researcher the previous semester. Due to scheduling limitations, only one section of the course is utilized for this study.

Like most qualitative research, this study utilizes purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2016). Participants are selected using typical and extreme case sampling. Typical case sampling is used to “highligh[t] what is typical, normal” while extreme case sampling is used to illustrate unusual or special cases (Glesne, 1999, p. 29). The two samples provide a general picture while still recognizing outliers. Given that the population consists of high school seniors completing their final semester of course work, I seek to select a modest but plentiful number of participants from each sample to ensure that both sample types are represented even amid potential student absences. Therefore, two high-performing students and two low-performing students are selected to represent extreme case sampling. Choosing two of each extreme allows me to collect data representative of the sample, even if participants are absent at any point during the study. To equally represent the typical case sampling, four participants are selected to represent the general performance of the population.

Sampling occurred at the end of the first week, after the first set of data collection to ensure that students were selected based on their demonstrated CML skills rather than their past course performance or prior labeling as a “gifted” or “remedial” student. The eight sampled students were then tracked for the remainder of the study. The same students were tracked to demonstrate their true progress throughout the course of the study. It should be noted that all members of the student population engaged fully with the study. My research question focused on students’ perceived and demonstrated competence in analyzing and

discussing informational media texts. Therefore, sampling accounted for their performance on the first CML 1 worksheet as well as the initial interview and CML 1 discussion. Of the twenty-nine students in the class, six did not consent to participate in the study. Of the remaining twenty-three, three students never submitted the worksheet, and four submitted the worksheet late; these seven students were excluded from the population sampled. Of the available population, one student was absent for the first discussion, and two students were present but chose not to participate in the initial interview and first discussion; since no data could be collected on these students' speaking skills, they were also excluded from the population sampled. Therefore, only thirteen students remained in the population eligible for sampling.

Extreme Case Sampling: High-Performing Students

In identifying two high performing students for extreme sampling, I noted four of the thirteen students completed the CML 1 worksheet in its entirety: Ivan, Sophia, Carson, and Jacob. Of those four students, Carson demonstrated advanced skill in all areas of CML on the worksheet, so he was selected. Sophia demonstrated advanced skill in five of the six sections of the worksheet, but her speaking levels were identical to Carson's, so she was eliminated because I wanted the second sampled student to demonstrate higher levels of speaking skills. Ivan and Jacob demonstrated advanced skills in four of the six sections on the worksheet and advanced speaking skills for both the initial interview and the first discussion. In choosing which student was most representative of a high performing student, the teacher-researcher and collaborating observer agreed that Ivan's speaking skills were slightly higher given that he initiated conversations whereas Jacob mostly participated in them. Therefore, Ivan and Carson were identified as high performing students for the extreme sampling.

Extreme Case Sampling: Low-Performing Students

In identifying two low performing students for extreme sampling, I noted five students who had submitted a worksheet that was at most half-completed: Jen, Conor, Jerry, Sam, and Bailey. Of these students, Jen and Jerry both demonstrated advanced speaking skills in the initial interview but then performed less well in the first discussion. Both students seemed to have high levels of confidence by showing advanced speaking skills in the initial interview, yet they failed to show high levels of CML skills on the CML 1 worksheet and in the first discussion. Although they were not truly low performing, they held an interesting contradiction between the desire to speak in conversations, as evident by their advanced speaking in the initial interview, and their ability to demonstrate advanced skills on the worksheet or in the discussion.

Typical Case Sampling

In identifying students for typical sampling, four students emerged as candidates: Aiden, Maggie, Daniel, and Kathy. Aiden, Maggie, and Kathy completed all but one section of their CML worksheet, and Daniel completed all but two sections. Therefore, these students' completion levels seemed to be typical of the class. Aiden demonstrated advanced skill on three sections and proficient skill on two sections; Maggie demonstrated advanced skill on four sections and proficient skill on one section; Daniel demonstrated advanced skill on three sections and proficient skill on one section; Kathy demonstrated advanced skill on five of her completed sections. Thus, these four students demonstrated varying degrees of proficient and advanced skill on the sections of the worksheet that they completed, but they were unable to complete the worksheet in its entirety in one fifty-minute class period. Aiden, Maggie, and Daniel demonstrated proficient speaking skills in the initial interview. Aiden's demonstrated speaking level dropped to beginning in the first discussion, whereas Daniel's demonstrated speaking level increased to advanced in the first discussion. Maggie's speaking

level remained proficient during the first discussion. Kathy, who demonstrated advanced skill on the worksheet demonstrated beginning speaking skills in both the initial interview and the first discussion.

Article Selection

This study implemented an Article of the Week program modified from Gallagher's (2008) original conception. Such a program provides consistency by offering students multiple opportunities to practice their critical reading and discussion skills. Additionally, the weekly article selection affords the teacher-researcher the opportunity to include relevant work in the course. For this study, relevancy differs from interest (Beers & Probst, 2016). Whereas interest can be fleeting, relevance is based on something deeply personal. Something that is relevant has greater power to maintain students' attention than something that is interesting. To select media that was both relevant and timely, I selected media texts throughout the course of the study. The media texts were selected based on criteria outlined by Beers & Probst (2016); a table of these criteria are included in Appendix A. The qualitative criteria Beers & Probst (2016) outline to measure the complexity of a nonfiction text include: ideas presented, structure used, language used, and knowledge required. They describe the progression of each criterion from its most basic level (level one) to its most complex (level four). In evaluating the selected texts, I assigned complexity levels that spanned two levels, which are noted by a "half" score such as 2.5, which indicates the text scored between a level two and a level three on that criterion.

Each week, the teacher-researcher assigned an informational media text to students to critically read. Students were responsible for completing a CML worksheet, which was created by the teacher-researcher, and drew from the work of Beers & Probst (2016). Students were given one full class period of fifty minutes to read the text and complete the worksheet. The following day, they were expected to participate in a student-led discussion.

In selecting media texts, the following criteria were considered: interest, background ability, attitudes and maturity, potential for stimulating thought, discussion, and further reading (Beers & Probst, 2016). Selecting the media during the study afforded the teacher-researcher the opportunity to use media that was authentic in its timeliness and relevancy to students. In selecting media, I strategically reviewed what was published by established news outlets. Political leanings of each media outlet, as reported by AllSides (2022) was considered, and I sought to select media from a variety of politically leaning outlets to represent a wide spectrum and engage students in the practice of critically analyzing the ways in which different outlets present information. Table 1 shows a list of topics, titles, outlets, and complexity scoring that I maintained throughout the study.

Table 1*Article Selection and Evaluation*

Week	Topic	Article Title	Source	Leaning	Complexity Rating
CML 1	The Willow Project	Biden approves massive oil drilling project climate activists derided as 'carbon bomb'	Fox	Right	Overall: 1.5 Ideas: 2 Structure: 1.5 Language: 1 Knowledge: 2.5
CML 2	AI Pause	In Sudden Alarm, Tech Doyens Call for a Pause on ChatGPT	Wired	Center	Open Letter: Overall: 3 Ideas: 3 Structure: 2 Language: 4

					Knowledge: 4
					Article
					Overall: 3
					Ideas: 3
					Structure: 3
					Language: 3
					Knowledge: 3
CML 3	Pentagon Leak	When 'Top Secret' Is Not So Secret	The New York Times	Left	Overall: 2.5
					Ideas: 3
					Structure: 2
					Language: 2.5
					Knowledge: 3
CML 4	NFL contract	Jalen Hurts' contract a reminder of the realities for Lamar Jackson	Andscape (partnered with The Walt Disney Co.)	Left	Overall: 3
					Ideas: 3
					Structure: 3
					Language: 2.5
					Knowledge: 3
CML 5	Ticketing industry	New Senate bill would push ticket sellers to disclose fees upfront	CNBC	Center	Overall: 2.5
					Ideas: 3
					Structure: 3
					Language: 2
					Knowledge: 2
CML 6	Fashion and Labor	Shein: China fashion giant faces US calls	BBC	Center	Overall: 3.5
					Ideas: 3.5
					Structure: 3

Practices	for probe over	Language: 3
	Uyghur claims	Knowledge: 3.5

To select an article for the CML 1 assignment, I began by browsing recent articles on the AllSides website. I wanted a topic that stood out to me as engaging without being polarizing, as it would be the first week of this activity and I wanted students to discuss a topic that while debatable, would not be something they associated with certain political parties, such as former President Trump’s indictment hearings or California’s new gun restrictions (AllSides, 2023). I considered an article on a teacher’s strike in California and Google job layoffs, but I was not satisfied. My search for something relevant and engaging led me to look at Skimm, a website and email subscription service that I personally use. TheSkimm sends daily emails with links to what their content editors view as the most important news stories for that day. Although their target audience is women, their stated mission is “to help you live smarter” (theSkimm, 2023). On TheSkimm, I considered an article about Tik Tok banning deepfakes, which I thought might be relevant to my students’ discussion of Tik Tok and social media in an initial interview. Ultimately, I decided to compile a selection of topics I found on AllSides and TheSkimm and asked students to vote on which topic most interested them in a Microsoft Form; as a Microsoft school district, all students have a Microsoft account and were able to access the form through it. The topic selection included: The Willow Project; Tik Tok & Congress; Tornadoes in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia; Silicon Valley Bank; Jonathan Majors Assault Accusation; and NCAA Final Four. Students voted to read an article on The Willow Project. To find an article, I browsed the AllSides website and selected one from Fox News, which is a right-leaning media outlet. Using the Nonfiction Text Complexity Rubric from Beers &

Probst (2016), I scored the article as having an overall complexity of 1.5 out of 4. In addition to the article, I chose to show students two videos from TikTok given my students' stated interest in the social media platform during an initial interview. The first TikTok video was very short and seemed to be targeted toward a young adult audience, given that the speaker is a young adult himself and he seemed to utilize a trendy approach to his video. The second was a few minutes in duration and more informative in nature; the video's subject stated that she was an engineer and showed excerpts of documents throughout the video to support her point.

For CML 2, I listened to students' feedback that the first topic vote had too many options and distributed votes too widely. Students also told me that just listing the topic did not provide them with enough information. Therefore, for the topic vote for CML 2, I included a brief description of the topic, provided by AllSides (2023), and only gave three options: NCAA Taunt Backlash Prompts Accusations of Racial Double Standard; Gwyneth Paltrow Awarded \$1 in High-Profile Ski Trial; and Tech Experts, Including Elon Musk, Call for a Pause on AI Development. The description for each offered topic can be found in Figure 1. Most students voted for the topic on the Pause of AI Development. These headlines were included in AllSide's "headline roundup" and were chosen with the intent of including diverse topics: one features a celebrity, one sports, and one technology. I also I wanted a topic that was personally relatable to students, as suggested by Beers & Probst's (2016) nonfiction complexity rubric. To find an article on the voted topic, I returned to AllSides. Before reading any of the media coverage, I first reviewed the original open letter. Ultimately, I felt that it would be important to expose students to the open letter, as it was referenced in most articles that covered the topic. By requiring students to read the open letter in addition to an article covering the topic, I attempted to expand students' background

knowledge on the topic. The article I selected for students came from Wired, a centered outlet, and was given an overall complexity rating of 3 out of 4.

Figure 1

CML 2 Topic Selection

- NCAA Taunt Backlash Prompts Accusations of Racial Double Standard - A viral moment at the NCAA women's basketball national championship sparked controversy and accusations of a racial double standard — and even got First Lady Jill Biden involved.
- Gwyneth Paltrow Awarded \$1 in High-Profile Ski Trial - A Utah jury found actress Gwyneth Paltrow not liable for a 2016 ski accident and awarded her \$1 in damages. The trial's popularity led AP (Lean Left bias) to call it a "pop culture fixation."
- Tech Experts, Including Elon Musk, Call for Pause on AI Development - A group of tech and civic leaders signed an open letter calling for a pause on training powerful AI systems for at least six months. The letter's 1,000+ signatories included Elon Musk, Steve Wozniak, Andrew Yang, and more.

For CML 3, I again narrowed the topics to three: celebrity endorsements/sponsored advertisement; fentanyl/opioid crisis; pentagon leak. The first and third topics I selected after browsing headlines on AllSides and TheSkimm. The second topic was suggested by a student as something they would be interested in reading. Instead of using specific headline details in the topic vote like I did for CML 2, I instead kept the topics broader. My thought was that the vote would give me a general sense of what students wanted to read and I could then look for specific articles once a topic had been selected. The topic that most students chose was the pentagon leak. Since I already used articles from right-leaning and centered outlets, I first began by reviewing an article from a left-leaning outlet, *The New York Times*. I scored the article's overall complexity as 2.5. I felt the article would be more accessible than CML 2, which covered AI, because its language was more informal, and it emphasized the concept of "top secret" rather than the specific details of what was leaked. Therefore, I felt students would be likely to form their own opinion on the topic without having to know all the details.

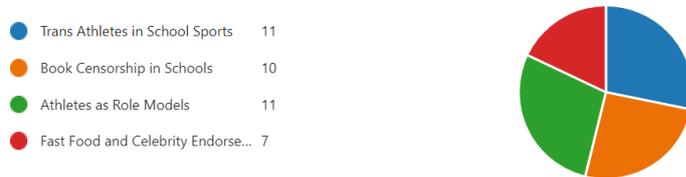
For CML 4, I relied heavily on topics that students suggested in the hope of better engaging them. Celebrities and sports-related topics seemed to intrigue them the most, so I chose to include both in the CML 4 topic vote; I also elected to include book censorship

because there was a lot of coverage on this topic and students were reading a novel in class, *The Poet X*, which has been banned in some school districts, so I thought it would be relevant. See Figure 2 for the CML 4 topic vote. There was a tie in students' vote for CML 4 between trans athletes and athletes as role models, so I decided to search for media about sports. An online search did not render much recent news on the topic of "sports" on AllSides or a general "news" search on Google, so I sought the advice of colleagues who made the following suggestions: NFL player contract agreements and MLB pitching rules. My colleagues seemed to think students would have a lot of opinions on the NFL contract agreements, and in looking at students' suggestions for articles on the CML 4 topic vote, I noticed that one student had actually suggested the NFL draft, so I began searching for articles related to it. I would like to note that although some students requested NBA playoffs, I had a difficult time finding debatable articles on them, and students specifically requested that the articles lend themselves to a debate or conversation with differing opinions. They also said they liked it when they got to talk about things that hadn't happened in which their opinions felt more relevant and important. Although students are not directly involved in the NFL draft, I felt it was something which they could speak on in the present as well as the future. Additionally, I felt it would lend itself to a more engaging conversation than the playoffs, which might focus students on wins and losses rather than their opinion. After researching several articles, I selected one from Andscape as the best option. As someone personally unfamiliar with sports, I felt the Andscape article was approachable and did not require as much background knowledge of players and the game as did other articles, and I scored it with an overall complexity of 3 out of 4. As it is a smaller media outlet, Andscape's political leaning is not identified by AllSides. However, in reading more about the company, I found it was partnered with The Walt Disney Co. and aims to include stories relevant to the

lives of black Americans. Using this information, I identified the platform as being politically left leaning.

Figure 2

CML 4 Topic Vote Results



For CML 5, I chose to again use broader categories to get a sense of what students were most interested in reading and discussing. After browsing recent articles on AllSides, I chose five areas that I thought might interest students: music industry; world news, U.S. news, college-related news, and health news. I then listed some examples of articles that each category might include. See Figure 3 for a copy of the topics. The structure for CML 5 topic vote was informed by students' suggestion. Of these topics, students showed the most interest in the music industry. At the time, Taylor Swift concert tickets had just gone on sale, and it was a very hot topic among my students – some of them even missed school so they could stay home in the online cue to buy tickets. After researching several articles, I settled on one from CNBC, a politically center media outlet. While the article mentioned the frenzy and issues with the crashing of TicketMaster for Taylor Swift's concert tickets, it focused mainly on the proposed bill to regulate the ticketing industry. I felt that this would allow students to examine legislation once again as they had done with the Willow Project in CML 1. I scored the selected article as having an overall complexity of 2.5. However, the topic of music seemed more personally relatable to students' everyday lives than the Willow Project. Given the relatively low complexity of the article I selected, I required students to find a second article of their choice related to the topic. I hoped this would personally involve the students

more in having them research their own article. I also hoped that at this point in the study, they were capable of researching their own articles.

Figure 3

CML 5 Topic Selection

- Music industry - Ed Sheeran copyright lawsuit; Kesha's singles; Latin women in music; ticketing industry regulations
- World news - Crimean oil depot explodes; nuclear submarines sent to South Korea; fighting in Sudan
- US news - Fox and CNN anchors resigning; Disney sues FL governor (free speech rights); Supreme court & ethics guidelines; gerrymandering
- college-related news: "free college"; college rejection parties
- health - the science of hope; eating disorders and diabetes; FDA regulations on supplements

For CML 6, I again required students to find an article related to our chosen topic. After students' displayed interest in a more personally relatable topic in CML 5, I offered students the following topics that I found on AllSides: Surgeon general declares public health epidemic over loneliness; Hollywood writers' strike; and child labor (McDonald's) or forced labor (Shein). Most students chose the third topic. After researching articles related to the topic, I selected one from the politically centered media outlet BBC. Although this was the third time I chose a centered media outlet, I had not yet used this one. Additionally, I felt that it offered students general information over the controversy. Since I was asking students to research their own article in addition to what I selected, I wanted it to include general information and be relatively short. However, as the final week of the study, I also wanted to select an article with a higher overall complexity, and I scored this one as 3.5 out of 4.

Data Gathering Methods

To triangulate data, this study utilized multiple methods of data collection, including field journaling, participant observation, document collection, and small group interviewing. These methods of data types and gathering methods are largely consistent with other

scholarship on CML. Rahmatullah (2017) also utilized participant observation; Karanja (2021), McGrew et al. (2018), and Rahmatullah (2017) utilized document collection assessed with a rubric; Bezanilla et al. (2021) and Rahmatullah (2017) utilized open-ended questionnaires. Although small group interviews have not been used in other CML research (Bezanilla et al., 2021; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; McGrew et al., 2018; McNelly & Harvey, 2021; Potter, 2022), it added an additional source of data and allowed participants to go into more depth regarding their experience. Whereas other studies have been afforded lengthier durations (Karanja, 2021; Rahmatullah, 2017), this study is limited by curricular and time limitations. Therefore, the various data of this study will be collected over a period of six weeks, with each week constituting one data cycle. Regarding data collection on self-efficacy, most research utilizes participants' self-reports on quantitative questionnaires (Solomon & Anderman, 2016). However, an open-ended qualitative questionnaire will be used in this study in the form of exit tickets.

Field Journal

Following the recommendation from Glesne (2016) and Stake (2010), the researcher maintained a field journal during the study that included “ongoing speculations, puzzlements, and ponderings” (Stake, 2010, p. 101). As the teacher-researcher, I used the field journal to record my observations on students' willingness to participate in the discussions as well as their demonstrated competence in discussing the texts. This field journal provided an additional space for the teacher-researcher to reflect upon the observations; given the nature of action research as occurring within the teacher-researcher's classes, this field journal was completed at the end of each day of the study. Comparing the journal to students' demonstrated competence on the CML Worksheet and reported confidence on the exit ticket better allowed the teacher-researcher to corroborate the data. This field journal included descriptive and analytic notes as well as reflective thoughts (Glesne, 2016). Regular

maintenance of the field journal held the teacher-researcher responsible for her actions, which is a practice encouraged by Stake (2010). At the end of each week, I reviewed the fieldnotes and wrote analytic memos, as suggested by Glesne (2016); this weekly practice coincided with my weekly article selection. As a result, the field journal mostly contained a running list of my ideas and links as I considered and researched topics for students. It also contained my observational notes, which were used to make adjustments throughout the study. Although no specific format was required for the field journal (Glesne, 2016), I stored all my field notes in a single folder on my Microsoft OneDrive. Using OneDrive maintained a digital backup of my files and allowed me to use both scanned handwritten notes as well as digital entries. All field notes were dated and organized chronologically.

Document Collection

One document was collected weekly from students: the CML worksheet. To avoid burnout, students were asked to complete a CML exit ticket only twice throughout the study, which provided another source of document collection. The CML worksheet provided written data on students' CML skills, and the exit ticket provided data on students' self-reported levels of self-efficacy. Collecting one document weekly and the other periodically provided the researcher with multiple data points to observe patterns throughout the course of the study. Analyzing these student documents "enabl[ed] the researcher to obtain the language and words of participants" directly and allow[ed] the researcher to access the data at a convenient time (Creswell, 2014, p. 192). A copy of the CML worksheet is included in Appendix B. A copy of the exit ticket appears in Appendix C. Both documents remained static, as they are applicable to the study of any media at any point in the study.

CML Worksheet. The teacher-researcher created the CML worksheet based on the nonfiction signposts identified by Beers & Probst (2016) and the state standards (GADOE, 2015). The CML worksheet was intentionally general so that it could be used to critically

analyze any media text. To increase grading transparency, the success criteria and assessment of mastery levels were included throughout the worksheet. Success criteria was drawn from the work of Beers & Probst (2016) as well as the state standards (GADOE, 2015). Each success criteria was scored according to students' demonstrated mastery of the associated standard; these mastery levels were then assigned point values. This type of scoring informed the students of their demonstrated mastery level as well as its equivalent point value. This assignment used mastery levels consistent with those already used in the course. To ensure clarity and recognize the value of students' input, the teacher-researcher reviewed the worksheet with students prior to their completion of it.

As aforementioned, the five nonfiction signposts that students had to identify and analyze from each media text were: contrasts and contradictions, extreme or absolute language, numbers and stats, quoted words, and word gaps (Beers & Probst, 2016). The teacher researcher connected each signpost to a state standard (GADOE, 2015) to ensure the assignment met the expected requirements of the research site. Including descriptions of the signposts on the assignment reinforced the concepts as students searched for each element within the media text. Using these nonfiction signposts was intended to teach students how to read and take notes from nonfiction texts, thereby enhancing their "ability to acquire information on one's own to test ideas against one another, and to decide for one's self what notions have merit and which should be rejected or abandoned" (Beers & Probst, 2016, p. 32). Although Beers & Probst (2016) do not explicitly address CML, their nonfiction signposts nevertheless serve as a scaffold to guide students through a critical reading of informational media, which is the core skill necessary to CML.

After students read and analyzed the article, the CML worksheet asked them to craft three original discussion questions that they could ask peers during a class discussion. Students were asked to create three questions to provide them multiple but manageable

opportunities to pose inquiries. The success criteria for the questions were as follows: questions must be open-ended, thought-provoking, and clear. The streamlined success criteria were intentionally designed to be short and easy for students to remember. Its conciseness lends itself to a quick checklist for students to self-review so that they could enter the discussion more confidently.

Discussion Reflection. Initially, students were asked to complete a Socratic Seminar Observation worksheet; a copy of this Socratic Seminar Observation worksheet can be found in Appendix D. This worksheet was designed to be completed when students sat in the outer, observational circle of the fishbowl-style Socratic Seminar, which occurred for the first three weeks of the study. The Socratic Seminar Observation worksheet asked students to record textual evidence they noticed being used and what questions and comments that they found most interesting. It then asked them to contribute their own thoughts to whatever part of the discussion they found most interesting or engaging. The Socratic Seminar Observation worksheet was printed on paper and distributed to all students prior to the Socratic Seminar discussion.

Halfway through the study, the discussion format changed from the fishbowl-style Socratic Seminar to a small-group format. As a result of this structural change, the discussion reflection changed as well. Since students no longer sat in an outer observational structure, students were instead asked to complete a modified reflection for their small-group discussion; a copy of the small-group discussion reflection can be found in Appendix E. The small-group discussion reflection asked students only one of the questions from the original Socratic Seminar observation: What is the most interesting thing that was said during the discussion? What are your thoughts on this subject? During week four, the teacher verbally asked this question to students and had them record their response on their own sheet of

notebook paper. During weeks five and six, the teacher printed the discussion reflection on paper and distributed to students prior to their discussion.

Exit Ticket. The exit tickets asked students to qualitatively report their perceived level of competence in understanding and discussing each selected text. The exit ticket aligned with other studies on self-efficacy and SRL, which typically included student self-reports on questionnaires and were often supplemented by interviews or observations (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Solomon & Anderman, 2016). To maintain consistency, the exit ticket always asked the same questions. By asking only open-ended questions, the exit ticket sought to better understand the classroom and discussion from the students' perspectives, a strategy Frank (1999) recommends. The exit ticket contained four open-ended questions. The first asked students to describe their comfort level reading and analyzing the media text; this question measured students' perceived CML skills. The second and third questions asked students to describe their comfort in asking questions and responding to peers during the discussion; the skills of asking and responding were separated so that the data would provide a more complete picture of the students' confidence to engage at different parts of the discussion. The final fourth question asked students for any suggested improvements to the assignment. This fourth question also provided a space for students to privately check-in with the teacher about any miscellaneous matters. By soliciting students' feedback on the CML Worksheet, the teacher-researcher involved students in the activity, which is a recommended practice in practical action research (Kemmis, 2007). A copy of the exit ticket is included in Appendix C.

The exit ticket was given on paper printed and distributed by the teacher-researcher; in this manner, the teacher was able to visually ensure students completed and submitted the exit ticket before leaving class. All students were asked to complete the exit ticket two times throughout the study: once during the first half and again during the second half. The entire

student population completed the exit ticket twice to provide feedback to the teacher-researcher; in asking all students to complete the exit tickets, the selected participants were not asked to complete additional work for this study. Students were listed in alphabetical order and then assigned a chronological number corresponding to their alphabetical position. The teacher-researcher then accessed Wheel of Names in a web browser and used it to select about seven to nine students to complete the exit ticket. The number range of students selected to complete the exit ticket was chosen to ensure that all students completed an exit ticket during the first half, or first three weeks, of the study. Once a student had completed the exit ticket, they were removed from the sampling until all students had been asked to complete an exit ticket. This process repeated so that all students completed the exit ticket a second time during the second half, or last three weeks, of the study. Although all students were asked to complete the exit ticket twice, only data of the selected students was included in this study.

Participant Observation

In order “to understand what is really going on in [my] classroo[m],” I must “analyze the classroom from the perspective of the actors [students] in the room” (Frank, 1999, p. 92). The teacher-researcher and observing colleague observed students’ participation in the weekly discussion of a media text, which served as their engagement in a particular activity that the study observed (Creswell, 2014). These discussions occurred weekly, so the study observed a total of six discussions. It should be noted that the observing colleague teaches ELA across the hall from the teacher-researcher and is also enrolled in the ED.D. program; as such, she is CITI-certified and was depended upon to follow observation protocols. The participant observations collected data on students’ demonstrated CML through the content of their participation as well as their demonstrated self-efficacy through their willingness to participate in a weekly discussion over the selected media text. By observing the discussions,

the teacher-researcher and observing colleague observed how and when students choose to participate. As a result, observations from the discussions spoke to students' abilities to self-regulate as the study progresses. It should be noted that as practical action research, the teacher-researcher was necessarily involved in facilitating discussions. As the teacher-researcher, I acted as a full participant because I was "simultaneously a functioning member of the community undergoing investigation and an investigator" (Glesne, 1999, p. 44). To minimize flaws in the observations (Stake, 2010), both the teacher-researcher and observing colleague observed participants' discussions and followed observation protocols as outlined in Appendix F. Additionally, since "the first responsibility of the observer is to know what is happening, to see it, to hear it, to try to make sense of it" (Stake, 2010, p. 94), the teacher-researcher also collected an audio recording of the participants' discussions. These recordings were supplemented with a sketch illustrating students' relative positioning within the classroom. The audio was recorded using Otter.ai on school-issued laptops.

The intention was to observe the participants engaging in a student-led Socratic Seminar discussion each week. It should be noted that what I refer to as a "Socratic Seminar" within this study is like the one used by Coppens (2020), which utilizes a "fishbowl" seating style of an inner-circle of speakers and an outer-circle of observers. Although speakers within this Socratic Seminar asked open-ended questions, students were nonetheless expected to cite textual evidence rather than merely anecdotes as in a traditional Socratic seminar (Altorf, 2019). Additionally, while the teacher facilitated the conversation as needed, the students bore the responsibility of leading and maintaining the conversation. To allow for autonomy, an important element of SRL (Bandura, 2010; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Callan & Shim, 2019; J. Perry et al., 2019; Zumbunn et al., 2011), students were allowed to self-select whether they began the discussion in the inner or outer circle. In requiring students to prepare questions and lead the discussion, the teacher further allowed for student autonomy. Students

prepared for the discussion by completing a weekly CML worksheet, which was then collected and analyzed for data purposes. Preparing for the discussion allowed the students time and space to independently read and consider the text and to seek additional assistance from the teacher as needed.

After the discussion for CML 1, the teacher-researcher decided to use the “snowball” method for questions. This method asks students to write their prepared questions on slips of paper, crumple the paper, and place it in the center of the discussion. In this manner, all student questions are compiled into a question bank that any speaker may pull from during the discussion. This “snowball” strategy was used for the discussions over CML 2 through 4. Starting with the discussion for CML 3, the teacher-researcher created her own discussion questions and added them to the “snowball” pile. After CML 4, the teacher-researcher compiled a list of discussion questions based on what students created and submitted as well as some she wrote herself. This list of questions was printed and distributed to students in the discussions for CML 5 and 6. The change to printing the list of questions occurred after students demonstrated difficulty in listening to lengthy questions; in providing a printed list, the teacher-researcher hoped it would allow all students to review the questions and better formulate their answers. Another change that was implemented was clear structure of who should speak when. To better facilitate the student-led discussion, the teacher asked for a volunteer to begin each discussion. Whenever the conversation came to a natural stop, the person to the last speaker’s left was responsible for selecting and asking a question. This structure was followed for all discussions after CML 1.

The Socratic Seminar discussion protocols were followed for the first three weeks before the teacher-researcher switched to small group discussions. This change in discussion strategy was anticipated by the teacher-researcher and included in the study’s IRB application. Given the large size of the class with twenty-nine students, the teacher-researcher

ended up dividing students into three groups rather than two; this division meant that students participated in the inner circle discussion one time and observed other groups' discussions twice. Utilizing three groups meant that the teacher-researcher had to allocate two class periods as discussion days in addition to the one day reserved for students to read and analyze the text. Therefore, the teacher-researcher decided to utilize a small group discussion structure for weeks four through six. All small groups had their audio recorded using Otter.ai on school-issued laptops. The teacher-researcher assigned students their small group. Sampled participants were limited to two groups so that the teacher-researcher and observing colleague could better monitor students' body language during the discussion. After conferring with the observing colleague, the teacher-researcher decided to keep students' small groups the same for the remainder of the study rather than changing its members each week; this was a departure from the randomized grouping for the Socratic Seminar. In assigning groups, the teacher-researcher tried to maintain a balance of students' genders, attendance patterns, and participation levels. Since all three groups discussed during one class period, the teacher-researcher used a different setting that provided more space. For CML 4, the teacher-researcher was able to reserve the library, which afforded enough space for all groups to be spaced out from one another. For CML 5 and 6, the library was unavailable, so two groups stayed in the teacher-researcher's classroom, and one went into the observing colleague's classroom.

Focus Group Interviews

This study conducted two focus group interviews, as outlined by (Glesne, 2016). By interviewing in focus groups, I was able to interview more than one person at a time, which was efficient, and may have been more comfortable than a one-on-one interview for the students (Glesne, 2016). The teacher-researcher conducted an initial interview before assigning CML 1 and an exit interview after students completed CML 6. Since students

provided written feedback on the exit ticket, it was appropriate to hold only two interviews to glean further information. Creswell (2014) recommends that focus group interviews consist of six to eight members. The class had twenty-nine students, and they were randomly divided into three groups of approximately eight to ten to accommodate the class size. Each group participated in the focus group interviews, but I only collected transcripts and observation data on the eight students who were chosen as study participants. The audio of the focus group interviews was recorded using Otter.ai on a school-issued laptop, and the observing colleague who was CITI-certified assisted in facilitating the interviews. The interviews took place in an available and secured classroom during the established class time, thereby reducing the participants' time commitment. The interviews lasted approximately twenty-five minutes each, which fit the constraints of the class period and allowed the teacher time to communicate instructions with students and ensure another teacher arrived to supervise the students who were not currently being interviewed. Two class periods were utilized for the initial interviews and two were utilized for the final interviews. Although it was not necessary for all students to be interviewed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), I felt it created a sense of equality within the study for all students to engage in the same tasks. However, only data from the eight selected participants were included. In focusing on the eight participants, I selected a diverse group of interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Students were randomly divided into three focus groups for the initial interview. The first focus group was interviewed on March 23, 2023, and included Ivan, Jerry, Jen, and other students not selected as participants. The second and third focus groups were both interviewed on March 24, 2023. The second focus group included Aiden, Carson, Kathy, Daniel, and other students not selected as participants. The third focus group included Maggie and other students not selected as participants. For the exit interview, focus groups consisted of the same students as the discussion groups for CML 4, 5, and 6. The first focus

group was interviewed on May 11, 2023, but did not contain any of the sampled participants. The second and third focus groups were interviewed on May 12, 2023. The second focus group included Daniel, Jen, and other students not selected as participants. It was planned to include Jerry with this second focus group, but he was absent the day of the exit interview. The third focus group included Aiden, Kathy, Carson, Ivan, and other students not selected as participants. It was planned to include Maggie with this third focus group, but she was absent the day of the exit interview.

The teacher-researcher utilized the format of a semi-structured interview, which afforded the opportunity to both prepare questions and ask questions that emerged during the interview (Glesne, 2016; Hatch, 2002). The prepared questions can be found in Appendix G. The questions were intentionally ordered to begin with experience questions intended to be easier for students to answer at the beginning of an interview (Glesne, 2016; Hatch, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questions were topical in nature and designed to “seek perception and attitudes toward” the CML Worksheet (Glesne, 2016, p. 97).

At the initial interview, I asked students five planned questions:

1. In your own words, what does critical media literacy (CML) mean?
2. Currently, when or how do you use CML skills?
3. How comfortable are you reading and analyzing an informational media text?
4. How comfortable are you asking questions during a discussion?
5. How comfortable are you responding to peers during a discussion?

These questions were intended to provide information on students' background with CML and their self-reported levels of confidence engaging in classroom discussions with peers. Questions three through five are the same questions that students will answer on the exit ticket; by asking these questions at the initial interview, I sought to establish a baseline of students self-reported confidence levels. Since the students were already familiar with each

other and me, I did not feel it necessary to include questions regarding students' personal background. For the exit interview, I asked students four questions:

1. How comfortable were you reading and analyzing the text?
2. How comfortable were you asking questions during the discussion?
3. How comfortable were you responding to peers during the discussion?
4. How might the CML Worksheet be improved?

For the exit interview, I asked students some of the same questions from the initial interview and the exit ticket; by asking these same questions at different points throughout the study, I hoped to chart students' progress. Like the exit ticket, I also asked students for ideas to improve the assignment. As students provided answers to these questions, the semi-structured interview protocol allowed me to ask follow-up questions to get more nuanced answers (Glesne, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). All follow-up questions were included in the transcript and analyzed from there.

Although focus group interviews limit the depth of information shared and hold the potential to silence or exacerbate students with differing views, they nonetheless are "an efficient use of time that allows simultaneous access to the perspectives of a number of people on a topic" (Glesne, 2016, p. 126). Additionally, by supplementing observations and data collection with interviews, I hoped to gain a deeper insight into students' experiences (Hatch, 2002). Given the nature of this study as involving weekly group discussions of informational media texts, I anticipated that the focus group interviews would flow in a manner like the weekly discussions; however, instead of discussing media texts, students would discuss the CML Worksheet, and instead of students asking questions, I would ask questions. Glesne (2016) acknowledges the ongoing effort of researchers to co-construct interviews. By considering my students' feedback on the CML Worksheet and implementing suggested changes, I hoped to demonstrate that students' feedback was valued, and thereby

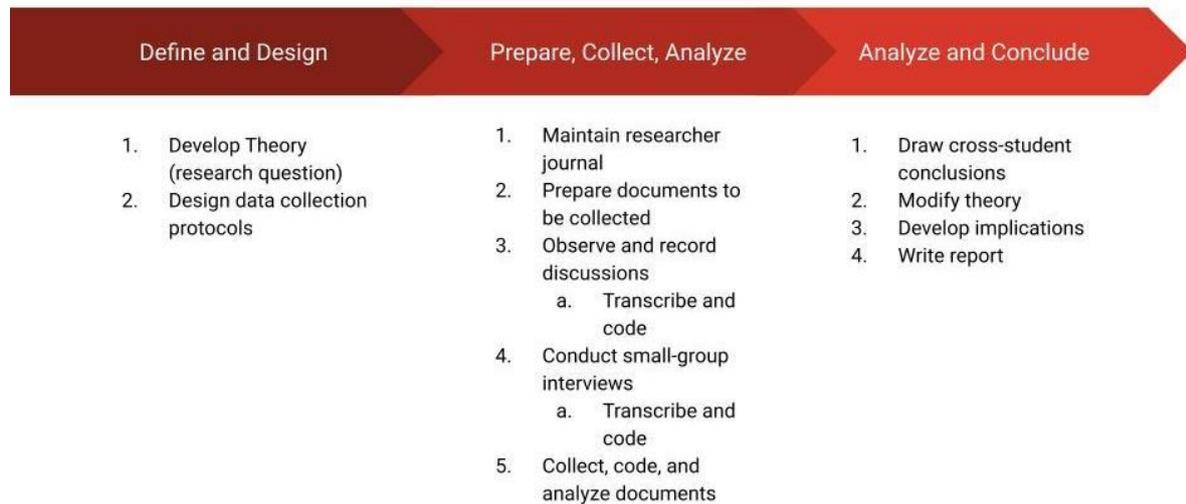
empower participants as equals rather than merely subjects during the final focus group interview.

Data Analysis Plan

I followed my proposed analysis framework to develop a research question and design data collection protocols. This framework was informed by Maxwell (2008) and Creswell (2014), and a visual representation can be seen in Figure 4. Prior to beginning the study, I created the CML Worksheet (see Appendix B) and exit ticket (see Appendix C). Throughout the study, I utilized Beers & Probst's (2016) nonfiction text complexity rubric (see Appendix A) to select the informational media texts. As I selected each article, I recorded my justification in my field journal. I utilized my established observation protocols (see Appendix F) as I observed the student discussions. I recorded and transcribed audio data of all discussions. I recorded observations of the discussions or interviews in my field journal; I also included notes from the observing colleague in my field journal. Interviews followed a semi-structured format and posed the prepared questions outlined in Appendix G. Follow-up questions were included in the interview transcript. The initial and final focus group interviews as well as all weekly student discussions were recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai; those transcripts were then uploaded to the CAQDAS program of ATLAS.ti to code and analyze data (Scientific Software, 2022). After the study concluded, I reviewed my field journal to determine any emerging themes. From there, I then referenced the collected and coded data to draw further conclusions.

Figure 4

Proposed Analysis Framework

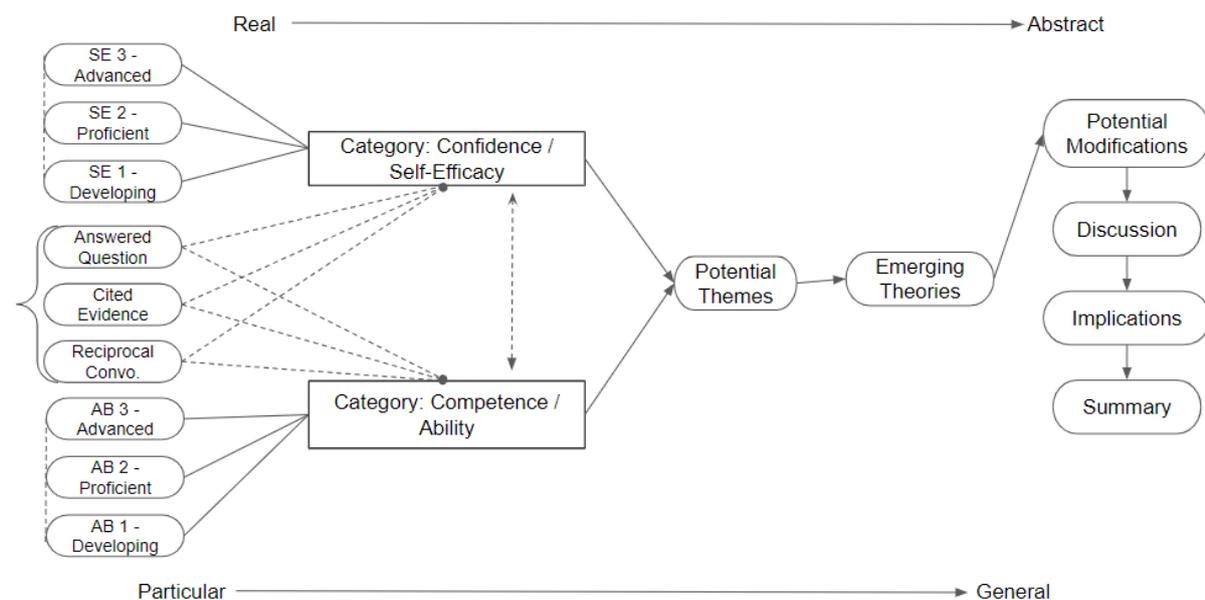


To “maximize coherence among [the] codes,” I established predetermined organizational categories: confidence and competence (Creswell, 2014, p. 199). Given their similar sounds, I substituted “self-efficacy” or SE for confidence and “ability” or AB for competence. Figure 5 shows a streamlined codes-to-theory model that is adapted from Saldaña (2009). I coded each category in accordance with the scoring of a standards-based rubric: advanced, proficient, and developing. Although the exit ticket and focus group interview did not include a rubric, I applied the same mastery levels to my analysis of those collected documents using my professional knowledge. In addition to the predetermined categories, I established three additional ones to further identify components of SE and AB. These codes were: Answered Question, Cited Evidence, and Reciprocal Convo. These added codes provided additional insight into both SE and AB. The first code, “Answered Question,” was used to tag any instance in which a student responded to a posed question. Typically, this code tended to align with instances of developing or proficient levels of SE; depending on the answer a student gave, it could demonstrate developing, proficient, or advanced levels of AB. The second code, “Cited Evidence,” was used to tag instances in which students cited some sort of evidence, whether it was from the assigned text or an outside one. Typically, this code

coincided with proficient levels of SE. Depending on the type of evidence cited, this code either demonstrated proficient or advanced levels of AB. The third code, “Reciprocal Convo,” was used to tag instances when a student seemed to genuinely engage with another peer; oftentimes these instances involved a student asking spontaneous, spur-of-the moment questions rather than prepared ones. These instances typically revealed advanced SE and proficient or advanced AB.

Figure 5

A Streamlined Codes-to-Theory Model for Qualitative Inquiry



Characteristics and student examples of self-efficacy and ability at each mastery level are included in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively. Examples of high self-efficacy were coded as “SE 3 Advanced,” and included speech that asked clarifying questions, were the first to speak, gave an example outside of the assigned text, stated a potentially controversial idea, and challenged a peer or offered an opposing perspective. Examples of moderate self-efficacy were coded as “SE 2 Proficient,” and included speech that admitted to not knowing something, agreed with someone’s idea, referenced someone else’s words when adding a general idea, used textual evidence to answer a question or support an idea, and responded to

a posed question with an idea but without explanation. Lower levels of self-efficacy were coded as “SE 1 Developing,” and included speech that responded to a posed question with a simple answer such as “yes” or no” or briefly acknowledged someone else’s ideas.

Table 2

Self-Efficacy Mastery Level Characteristics and Examples

SE 3	Characteristic	Example
Advanced		
	Asks clarifying question or is the first to speak	Jerry in initial interview: in discussing CML “It’s not only reading, right?” and then “I’d say like movies or shows like a lot of people like to talk about together”
	Gives an example outside of assigned text	Ivan in initial interview “Like especially when it comes to political beliefs. A lot of people just copy what their parents say”
	States a potentially controversial idea	Carson in initial interview: “our generation is lazy so we’re trying to find information as fast as possible without having to research it”
	Challenges a peer or offers an opposing perspective	Carson in initial interview: “Yeah. Who do you email?” after KS says she uses email
SE 2 Proficient	Characteristic	Example

Admits to not knowing something	Ivan in initial interview said “No” when asked if anyone had heard of the website AllSides
Agrees with someone’s opinion	When asked if they associate calmness with being less biased and more objective in the initial interview, a student said “I would” and Maggie adds, “I think emotions play a big part.”
References someone else’s words when adding a general idea	In CML 1 discussion, Jen said, “Probably not, because like Aiden said, it’s just too harmful, I think. Also it took a while to get approved and I think there’s a reason for that.”
Uses textual evidence to answer a question or support an idea	In CML 1, Aiden said, “No, I don’t think there’s enough jobs coming out for the amount of damage. It says there’s only like 300 volunteer jobs and 278 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions. I don’t feel like it’s . . .”
Responds to a posed question with an idea but without further explanation	When asked what it means to be critical in the initial interview:

SE 1	Characteristic	Example
Developing	Responds to a posed question with a simple answer such as “yes” or “no”	Ivan: “To break down, to find the purpose.” Jen: “To examine.” When asked in the initial interview if they try to talk to others about texts they read, Jen said “yes.”
	Briefly acknowledges someone else’s idea	In the initial interview, after Ivan answers a question, Jen adds “It definitely does.”

Table 3*Ability Mastery Level Characteristics and Examples*

AB 3	Characteristic	Example
Advanced	Uses academic language	Daniel in initial interview explaining how to know if someone has bias: “how they describe it like if they're using adjectives in personal words like this is bad. This is good. There's going to be some bias.”
	Makes inter-disciplinary/academic connections	Ivan in initial interview: “Like example. Like the Roe v. Wade

thing, if you ask a question about it, you're kind of, especially as a male, they're like 'why don't you know about that?'

Explains ideas thoroughly and logically

Daniel in initial interview: "I mean, why did we create email? Because we didn't like sending letters. So now it's an extensive a week long process. The whole point of developing is to be more lazy."

Ivan in CML 1: "Yeah. So that's the thing like we can't control them, because we're, that's at that point where then we're a third party. This would take out the middleman entirely which would make it more efficient for us and more economically stable when it comes to giving jobs but also us producing oil. Like that's the thing like yeah, I'm not disagreeing that climate change is like, is bad, like, obviously it's bad, but at the same time you can't go and say, Oh, well, just because it's in Alaska it's

going to cause so much more climate change, and we can't have that work. We need oil. We need oil no matter what I don't, I don't know of one time within any of our lifetimes, any of us that we're not going to see oil as a key factor in our life. And so what's the difference between them drilling in the Middle East, Mexico, Argentina, compared to Alaska, what's the difference?"

Engages in reciprocal conversation

In CML 1, Jen added to an ongoing conversation: "Do you all think this is like a political thing like right and left like, because I mean, I feel like more of the Left Party is going to lean more towards the like, environmental side of it and then the rights gonna lead more towards like the economy. Do y'all think that like impacts especially with the article, it's written by Fox News, do you think that's like a,

		like a bias for the article and like the information that it gives or?"
AB 2 Proficient	Characteristic	Example
	Gives an example (can be from the text or outside of it)	Daniel in initial interview: "Everyone uses TikTok and the whole Congress thing just to think about what they're saying and if it has any meaning."
	States an idea but doesn't explain or provide sufficient detail	Daniel in initial interview: "TikTok is just less formal than an actual article." Carson in initial interview explaining what he thinks CML is: "It's like, you read something and you think about it in some ways, and I can use different techniques to try and figure out the things they're saying." Aiden in CML 1: "So I think the only reason why they're actually considering this is just because of the economy, how much it would make."

AB 1	Characteristic	Example
Developing	Gives a general answer without explanation	<p>In initial interview answering about types of media:</p> <p>Daniel: “TV shows, news”</p> <p>Carson: “articles, social media”</p> <p>When asked what they do if they don’t know something in the initial interview, Maggie said, “Maybe ask questions.”</p> <p>In CML 1, Maggie responded to Ivan: “But it's like progressing? And we're gonna be the ones . . .”</p>

Examples of high CML ability were coded as “AB 3 Mastery,” and included speech that used academic language, made inter-disciplinary or academic connections, explained ideas thoroughly and logically, and engaged in reciprocal conversation. Examples of moderate CML ability were coded as “AB 2 Proficient,” and included speech that gave an example from either the text or outside of it and speech that stated an idea but didn’t explain or provide sufficient detail or explanation. Examples of lower CML ability were coded as “AB 1 Beginning,” and included speech that gave a general answer without an explanation. It should be noted that self-efficacy and ability mastery levels did not necessarily coincide. For example, in the discussion over CML 1, MO responded to LI’s idea in a way that demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy but only proficient ability. She said, “We could slow it down and hold the progression back.” Her response demonstrates confidence in her

willingness to challenge LI, who had dominated much of the conversation. While her response shows that she has some vague idea of possible solutions to climate change, she does not explain what those are, which is why her ability demonstrated proficiency rather than mastery.

Strategies to Ensure Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility, observations followed the established protocol, which is informed by well-established methods (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, these observations included “thick description of the phenomenon under study” (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). The study occurred at a site in which the researcher was familiar, which allowed her adequate time in the field. The participants were allowed to opt-out of the study to ensure honesty and comfort of informants. To ensure transferability, the teacher-researcher provided adequate background to establish the context of the study and increase relatability for readers. All pertinent information regarding data collection was included. To ensure dependability, participant observations were corroborated with collected documents and student interviews (Mack et al., 2005). The teacher-researcher also solicited other researchers not involved in the research process to complete an inquiry audit to examine the process and the product (Shenton, 2004). To ensure confirmability, the researcher maintained an audit trail of the research steps, revealed personal beliefs, triangulated the data to reduce the effect of investigator bias, and described the methodological approach (Shenton, 2004).

One potential threat was that the students might seek to overcompensate to seemingly help the teacher. To combat this bias, I made it clear that although I was conducting a study, I was interested in the process and its findings rather than a particular outcome. In emphasizing that students be honest, I hoped to counteract any bias in student behavior during discussions and performance on documents. For participants, the only major difference between a formal study and a teacher’s innovative ideas was the requirement of approval and consent forms as

well as an additional teacher observer. Otherwise, the nature of the teacher-student relationship cultivates a relationship of trust under which the teacher maintained the students' best interest while navigating the research methods. Data was triangulated with multiple methods, including interviews, observations, and document collection.

Another potential threat was the subjective nature of the classroom members. That is, although the class was an on-level college preparatory one, the individual members had distinct personalities and relationships with one another. The preexisting relationships might have affected students' willingness to participate in the class discussions. To overcome this challenge, student feedback was solicited regularly and implemented when feasible. For instance, although students participated in a discussion each week, the structure was modified throughout the study to better meet the needs of students. Finally, by including written data from the CML Worksheet and exit tickets, the teacher-researcher was able to examine individual students' growth both in CML skills and self-efficacy throughout the study regardless of students' willingness to participate in class discussions.

Ethics

Students are identified by pseudonymous rather than by name for de-identification purposes. For example, a participant may be referred to as "Sally Smith" rather than by their legal name. Since data about individual students is needed to complete this project, the researcher consulted a faculty advisor and secured approval from the KSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Furthermore, the researcher followed specific Administrative Guidelines Regarding Educational Research for the selected site. Both the KSU IRB and the school district's Administrative Guidelines required applications to be completed and approved before the start of research. Specifically, the school district required a completed request for research, notarized data confidentiality statement, and a completed parent consent form (Cherokee County School District, 2020).

This study constituted open autocratic research because “the researcher [was] open with research participants about all aspects of the research and invit[ed] feedback on research interpretations, but [did] not give the respondents the rights of veto” (Glesne, 1999, p. 124). Although this situation created an imbalance of power wherein the “power resides with the researcher,” such an approach felt appropriate given the existing relationship between the researcher as teacher and the participants as students (Glesne, 1999, p. 124). As both a teacher and researcher, I created a positive environment without abusing my power and mindfully maintained appropriate emotional and physical boundaries (Lichtman, 2012).

The goals of this study were to discover strategies that might help students. Therefore, a potential benefit for participants was that they might improve their ability to demonstrate CML skills, both in the form of spoken discussion and written analysis. Since speaking and writing are universal activities, these students might be able to transfer their perceived and demonstrated critical thinking skills to any context, whether it is a literature classroom or an informal conversation with peers (Lichtman, 2012).

Work was shared with the university and school district, but confidential information was maintained as the researcher deemed appropriate. No financial gains were received by any participating party. When analyzing the data, I actively sought to avoid misstatements and misinterpretations. I present evidence fully to allow others to determine the extent to which my interpretation are believable (Lichtman, 2012).

Chapter Four: The Study

This action research study took place over six weeks. Participants were sampled using extreme- and typical-case sampling at the end of the first week. The sampling was based on participants' participation in an initial focus group interview and their completion and discussion of a CML worksheet. Each subsequent week, data was collected based on students completed CML worksheet, exit ticket, and discussion observations. All students were asked to complete the CML worksheet and participate in the discussion weekly; students were asked to complete an exit ticket once during the first three weeks of the study and again during the last three weeks of the study. The findings of the study are organized chronologically, starting with the focus group initial interview and week one. Since participants were sampled after these events, descriptions of the participants follow week one. After participants were sampled, the study continued to proceed through weeks two through six and concluded with a focus group exit interview. Chapter four seeks to offer a step-by-step overview of the study; chapter five provides further insight into the findings.

Focus Group Initial Interview

The study began with an initial interview. For the initial interview, the teacher-researcher asked approximately eight students to volunteer to be interviewed first. This first group included Ivan, Jerry, and Jen. Due to time constraints, the second and third groups were interviewed on the following day. The second group included Carson, Aiden, Kathy, and Daniel. The third group included Maggie. Although other students participated in the focus group interviews, only the selected participants are named and discussed. The initial interview was semi-structured in nature. All groups were asked the same prepared questions, but the teacher-researcher asked follow-up questions to respond to students' responses and encourage further elaboration. A copy of the initial interview questions can be found in Appendix G.

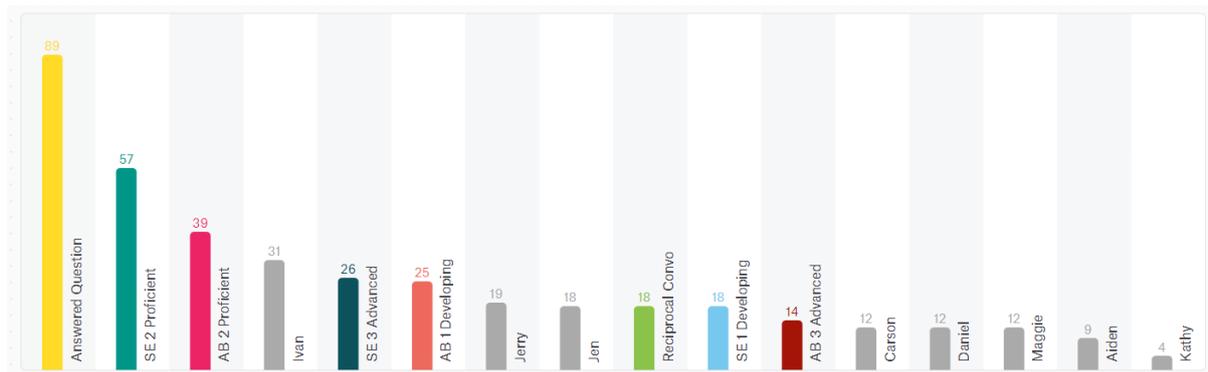
Figure 6*Coded Transcripts for the Initial Interview*

Figure 6 shows the coded transcript for all initial interviews. In the initial interviews, participants most often demonstrated proficient levels of self-efficacy (SE). The transcripts for initial interviews revealed fifty-seven instances of proficient SE, twenty-six instances of advanced SE, and eighteen instances of developing SE. As fits the nature of an interview, participants most often responded to posed questions rather than engaging in reciprocal conversation; there were eighty-nine instances of responding to posed question and eighteen instances of engaging in reciprocal conversation.

Ivan and Jerry appeared comfortable discussing sports; Jen frequently added to the ideas of others; Daniel alternated between crossing and uncrossing his arms; Aiden bounced his leg gradually less throughout the interview and began to lean back; Kathy often nodded her head and physically followed the conversation; Maggie used academic language and appeared to feel comfortable taking the lead. Jerry said he would feel comfortable reading and discussing texts in class “so long as I like understand it, and I get the gist of it.” Ivan, Jerry, and Maggie stated that given the amount of conflicting information found on media platforms, people could feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable forming an opinion when they felt they lacked all the information.

Participants most often demonstrated proficient levels of ability (AB). The transcript for initial interviews revealed thirty-nine instances of proficient AB, twenty-five instances of

developing AB, and fourteen instances of advanced AB. Students focused on what “media” referred to as well as strategies they used to think critically about a text. Ivan, Jen, and Jerry felt comfortable expanding the definition of “media” to include social media, movies, and books. Students expressed that they felt comfortable thinking critically about “extreme” social media posts, but that they did not engage in critical thought unless a post seemed particularly unusual. Daniel claimed that “TikTok is just less formal than an actual article” in his explanation of why students felt comfortable relying on social media to learn news information. In considering formality, Kathy and Carson expressed that email was a more formal method of communication that they would use in serious matters, such as school, but that text messages were faster and easier otherwise. Kathy and Daniel noted that written communication lacked facial expressions, body language, and tone that could lead to misunderstanding. Aiden felt that written communication made it possible for some people to avoid in-person conversations. Maggie said she felt comfortable having difficult in-person conversations: “Everyone’s entitled to their opinion. I don’t judge them because they have a different opinion.” Ivan said he was most likely to engage in critical conversation if he had a “hot take,” or a controversial opinion; to illustrate his point, he said, “LeBron James is the best basketball player of all time.” In considering controversy, Ivan, Jen, Jerry, and Aiden all said they tried to avoid discussing political topics.

Students shared strategies they already used, such as checking a website’s URL to see if it used “.org” or “.gov.” Daniel shared that he often looked for “personal words” that might reveal an agenda behind a post. Ivan suggested that passive language could be an indicator of bias: “They [media outlets or authors] use certain words that apply to certain political parties and derogatory terms aimed at certain political parties.” Maggie shared that she associated a calm demeanor with objectivity and an emotional demeanor with bias. To learn more about unusual social media posts, Aiden and Carson both shared that they read the comments

section on posts. Maggie questioned the purpose of posting content publicly on social media; she suggested that people often do so for attention. Ivan expressed interest in learning and practicing more CML strategies: “If you have the tools, I mean like, it’s right there. Just gotta push yourself. At that point, you’re already biased if you don’t want to.”

Week 1: The Willow Project

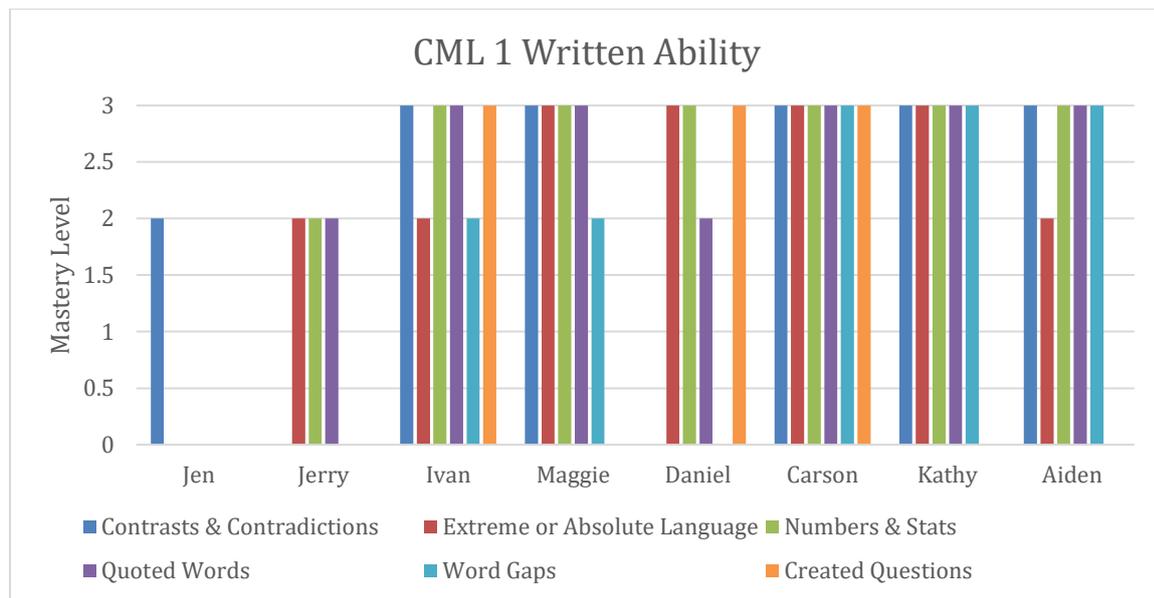
For the first week, students were presented with three possible topics. These topics were selected by the teacher-researcher using the methods described in chapter three and were presented to students through a Microsoft Form. Of the offered topics, students voted to learn more about the Willow Project. The teacher-researcher provided students with a printed copy of “Biden Approves Massive Oil Drilling Project, Climate Activists Derided as ‘Carbon Bomb.’” The article was published by the right-leaning outlet of Fox News. Using the informational text complexity guidelines provided by Beers & Probst (2016), which appear in Appendix A, the teacher-researcher scored the text’s overall complexity as 1.5 out of 4.

CML Worksheet 1

Although completion rate does not indicate a students’ ability, it is important to note how much data was available in the assessment of students’ abilities on the CML 1 worksheet. As aforementioned, Ivan and Carson completed the CML 1 worksheet in its entirety; Kathy completed five of the six sections, Aiden, Maggie, and Daniel completed four, Jerry completed three, and Jen completed one. Figure 7 shows students’ demonstrated written ability on the worksheet for CML 1. Student responses were assessed holistically based on their demonstrated mastery level. The ratings used were developing, proficient, and advanced. A detailed description and example of each mastery level for CML ability can be found in chapter three.

Figure 7

CML 1 Worksheet



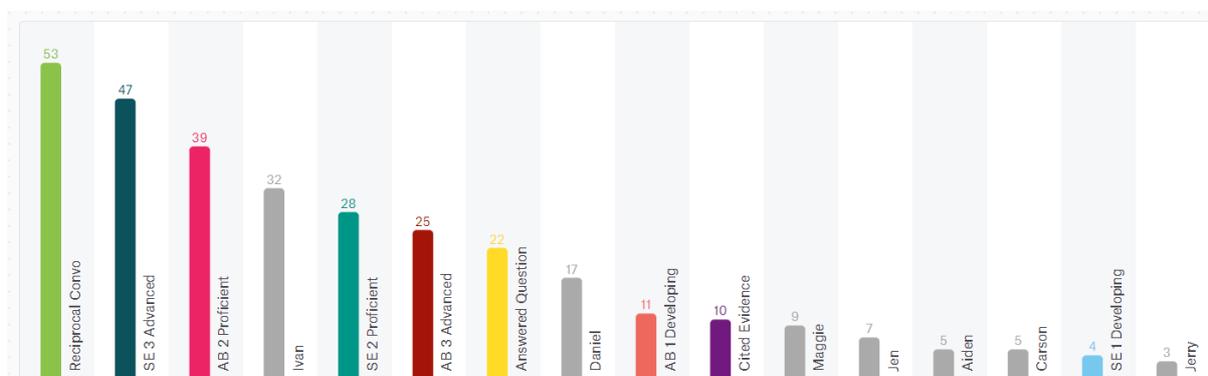
Of the completed sections, Carson, Aiden, Daniel, and Kathy demonstrated advanced ability, Ivan and Maggie demonstrated proficient to advanced ability, and Jen and Jerry demonstrated proficient ability. All participants except for Jerry and Jen completed the first section identifying contrasts and contradictions with advanced ability; Jerry did not complete the section and Jen demonstrated proficient ability on this section. All students except for Jen completed the section identifying extreme or absolute language; Maggie, Daniel, Carson, and Kathy demonstrated advanced ability and Jerry, Ivan, and Aiden demonstrated proficient ability. All students except for Jen and Jerry demonstrated advanced ability on the section identifying numbers and stats; Jen did not complete the section and Jerry demonstrated proficient ability. All students except for Jen completed the section identifying quoted words; Ivan, Maggie, Carson, Kathy, and Aiden demonstrated advanced ability, and Daniel and Jerry demonstrated proficient ability. Three students did not complete the section on word gaps: Jen, Jerry, and Daniel. Carson and Kathy demonstrated advanced ability on word gaps; Ivan, Maggie, and Aiden demonstrated proficient ability. Only Ivan, Daniel, and Carson completed the section requiring students to compose discussion questions, and all of them demonstrated advanced ability. Since the worksheet for CML 1 was used to sample participants, additional examples of student work are included in the participant section later in this chapter.

Participant Observation 1

The first discussion used a fishbowl structure consisting of an inner and outer circle. Given the size of the class as containing twenty-nine students, students were randomly sorted into three inner-circle groups using the website Wheel of Names. Each group contained approximately eight to ten students. The first group included of Jen, Kathy, Carson, Aiden, and Jen. The second group included of Ivan, Maggie, and Daniel. The third group of students did not contain any participants. The first group spoke during one class period, and the second and third groups spoke during the next class period on the following day. When sitting in the inner circle, students were expected to lead the conversation by asking questions they had prepared in advance, and the outer circle was expected to record their observations by completing a Socratic Seminar Observation Worksheet, which can be found in Appendix D. It should be noted that although students were expected to complete the observation worksheet, no data was collected from it for the purpose of this study. Students' contributions to the discussion were assessed holistically using the same three mastery levels as their written ability: developing, proficient, and advanced. Descriptions of each mastery level for both ability and self-efficacy can be found in chapter three.

Figure 8

Coded Transcripts for CML 1 Discussion



In the discussions for CML 1, students most often demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy. The transcripts revealed forty-seven instances of advanced SE, twenty-eight

instances of proficient SE, and four instances of developing SE. Participants tended to engage in reciprocal conversation more often than responding to posed questions; there were fifty-three instances of reciprocal engagement and twenty-two of question response. Students generally demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy in the discussion for CML 1. Jerry volunteered to ask the first question, and Carson was the first student to respond; both actions demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy. In another group, Maggie was the first student to offer her own opinion, which was another indicator of high self-efficacy. Ivan stared at the table while speaking and only made eye contact when he was directly speaking to one other student, which he did with Daniel; Ivan's body language demonstrated lower self-efficacy despite his steady voice and extensive background knowledge on the topic. Daniel demonstrated comfortable body language by leaning forward and uncrossing his arms when speaking; he was also willing to offer his opinions in the discussion. Carson seemed uncomfortable with prolonged silence and filled it by either answering the question or asking a new question to the group. Aiden mumbled frequently, and at one point Carson had to repeat what Aiden said so that the rest of the group could hear it.

In the discussions for CML 1, students most often demonstrated a proficient ability to use CML skills. The transcript revealed thirty-nine instances of proficient AB, twenty-five of advanced AB, and eleven of developing AB. Throughout the discussions, there were ten instances where students cited textual evidence. Jerry started his group's discussion by asking a hypothetical question requiring students to consider the historical importance of the topic: "Do you think maybe like 30 years ago if we knew like the same impact that the willow project or whatever is happening. Do you think we'd have like the same reaction and amount of backlash at it?" Carson answered in the negative before asking the group if they supported the project proposed in the article. Aiden, Carson, and Jen cited evidence from the text to

support their claim that the project's environmental damage would not be worth the financial incentives. Their evidence appeared to sway Jerry, who agreed. Ivan, Maggie, and Daniel took a more optimistic stance; Maggie claimed that people will choose money over anything else; Daniel felt the government lacked sufficient care to stop the project; Ivan expressed that the project was like others that had already happened and would therefore continue.

Regardless of their stance, most students demonstrated an ability to identify pros and cons of the project suggested in the article.

Exit Ticket 1

For the first week, students were randomly selected to complete the exit ticket. The teacher-researcher entered all students' names into the website titled Wheel of Names and asked the first eight selected students to complete an exit ticket. Of the sampled participants, Jen, Jerry, Kathy, and Aiden were selected to complete an exit ticket for the first week.

In her exit ticket, Jen said she felt "very comfortable" reading and analyzing the text because she had "heard about it [the topic] before" even though "this [was] the first actual info that [she had] read." She also reported feeling "pretty comfortable" asking questions during a discussion with her peers but noted that she "struggle[d] with finding questions to ask." She said that she felt "comfortable" responding to her peers and added "I'm not scared of sharing my opinion." She expressed a desire for "more contrast in questions" and said, "I wish more people would have answered." Jen contributed to the discussion seven times and demonstrated proficient levels of self-efficacy in five and developing self-efficacy in two. All her contributions were responses to posed questions rather than reciprocal engagement.

In his exit ticket, Jerry said he was "very comfortable" reading and analyzing the text; he explained, "I just read what was in the article then said it." He said he felt "comfortable" asking questions and "very comfortable" responding to peers: "I just gave my opinion and what I thought." He suggested that "smaller groups talking [might] mak[e] it less

awk[ward].” Jerry contributed a total of three times throughout the discussion. Two of his contributions demonstrated advanced self-efficacy and the other demonstrated proficient self-efficacy. One of his contributions responded to a posed question and the other showed reciprocal engagement with peers. An instance where he demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy was when he took a stance on the topic: “I think like, in terms of what’s more important, like environmental should go first because it said something about like, the greenhouse, all that stuff like how much it would cost to like fix it and stuff. So as long as you keep that safe, you can save money overall.”

In her exit ticket, Kathy said that she “was very comfortable reading/analyzing the text.” She added, “I don’t think it was a struggle, but I didn’t love the topic.” She said she felt “comfortable” asking questions but noted that it was “hard when everyone was silent.” She said she felt “comfortable” responding to posed questions, adding that she “didn’t have a problem.” She suggested that the teacher-researcher should “maybe pick a more interesting topic” for future assignments. Kathy did not directly contribute to the discussion for the first week, which demonstrated developing self-efficacy.

In his exit ticket, Aiden said that he “found the article easy to read” and noted that “all [the] words and phrases make sense.” He said he “was comfortable” asking questions, adding, “I don’t worry about talking to other people.” He said he was “comfortable” responding to others and that he “enjoy[s] engaging in conversation with other people.” He reflected that he “would rather not do any thing with politics but I know that other people get fired up and it creates a good argument.” Aiden contributed a total of five times and demonstrated proficient self-efficacy in each.

Participants

Participant selection occurred at the end of the first week using data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion. Selection was based on extreme and

typical sampling to represent both the high- and low-performing students as well as the average students. Students were assessed on their contribution frequency in speech or completion in writing, their demonstrated ability in both speech and writing, and their demonstrated self-efficacy in speech. Three mastery levels were utilized: Advanced, Proficient, and Developing. Since students were assessed on both their writing and speaking skills, sampling was holistic in nature, meaning students were not entirely representative of one mastery level for all criteria; priority was given to students' written performance on the CML worksheet.

Carson

Carson was selected using extreme sampling to represent a student who demonstrated high performance in CML skills, as demonstrated by his work on the CML 1 worksheet. Carson completed the worksheet in its entirety and demonstrated advanced CML skills in all areas. For each section, Carson assessed how the nonfiction signpost element appeared in the media text and provided textual evidence to support his response. For example, for the section on Contrasts and Contradictions he noted: "I am shocked that the Alaskans approved of the Willow Project. B/c of the environmental problems that comes with it. I didn't think the economy boost was worth it for them." He then included two quotations from the text that stated how the project would affect the economy and environment and deduced that the economy was more important to the Alaskans than the environment. His response demonstrated advanced levels of CML ability in his evaluation of the topic and citation of relevant evidence. A copy of his response can be found in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Carson's CML 1 Worksheet

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>• I am shocked that the Alaska's approval of the Willow project. B/C of the environmental problem that comes with it I don't think the economy boost was worth it for them.</p> <p>• "More than 2500 construction jobs and 300 long term jobs" Economy</p> <p>• "Proseal alone would cause \$14.8 billion worth of 'climate-related damages'" Environment</p> <p>• Economy > Environment</p>	
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During the initial interview, Carson contributed a proficient number of times. Of these contributions, he demonstrated developing to proficient levels of ability and proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy. He primarily responded to posed questions rather than engaging with his peers. Carson was typically the first student to respond to a posed question, which demonstrated his high levels of self-efficacy. Carson related CML to social media frequently and was willing to make bold claims, such as “Our generation is lazy, so we’re trying to find information as fast as possible without having to research for it.” He was also willing to challenge his peer, Kathy, when she said she used email. Carson asked, “Yeah? Who do you email?” It should be noted that prior to the study, Carson and Kathy chose to sit next to one another in class and demonstrated friendliness, so Carson’s question seemed natural of his and Kathy’s demonstrated rapport.

Although Carson demonstrated a range of ability and self-efficacy during the initial interview, he demonstrated only proficiency in both his ability and self-efficacy during the discussion for CML 1. Additionally, the frequency of his contributions dropped from proficient in the initial interview to developing in the CML 1 discussion. Although Carson still participated in the conversation, he seemed focused on answering a question and moving on to the next rather than allowing time for himself or others to think more deeply about the first question. For example, in the CML 1 discussion, Jerry asked the group if they thought there would have been the same kind of “backlash” to the Willow Project thirty years ago. Carson responded, “I don’t think so, because I don’t think we’d know what like the effects

are of what we're doing, so I think we're just trying to like, move on and modernize our economy. So . . . If you guys were in charge, would you go along with the Willow Project or support environmental conservation? Why or why not?" Carson's willingness to answer the question shows an advanced level of self-efficacy. The content of his response shows a proficient level of CML ability. However, he quickly moves on to asking another question instead of elaborating on his response or allowing others the time to contribute to his idea. Even though his question is original and open-ended, demonstrating advanced CML ability, his quick transition to a new question demonstrates an overall proficient speaking ability. Table 4 reviews Carson's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as his contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 4*Carson's Week 1 Data*

Carson	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Proficient	Developing to Proficient	Proficient to Advanced
CML 1 Worksheet	Advanced	Advanced	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Developing	Proficient	Proficient

Ivan

Ivan was selected using extreme sampling to represent a student who demonstrated high performance in CML skills, as demonstrated by his work on the CML 1 worksheet. He completed all sections and demonstrated proficient to advanced mastery levels. Ivan's written

work on the CML 1 worksheet was concise but thoughtful. For example, he identified four examples of numbers or statistics in the article. Identifying such would have merely demonstrated proficient CML ability. However, Ivan added a reflection: “How is this proven & how do we know it to be true” His commentary demonstrated an advanced level of CML ability and a willingness to question sources. A copy of his response can to the Numbers and Stats section can be found in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Ivan’s CML 1 Worksheet

<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>- 19.8 B worth of climate change damages - 278 M tons of greenhouse emissions - 2 million cars - 64 million barrels of oil</p> <p>How is this proven & how do we know it to be true</p>
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During the initial interview, Ivan demonstrated the same proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy as Carson; however, his contribution and ability levels were both higher. In the initial interview, Ivan was in a different focus group from Carson, and, in Ivan’s group, he was the first student to answer posed questions. He also demonstrated a willingness to challenge authority figures when he stated that his required reading for class still counted as media. Ivan cited cultural allusions as evidence, demonstrating his high CML ability. Although Ivan maintained a confident tone and frequently contributed, he generally avoided eye contact by staring down at the table.

During the CML 1 discussion, Ivan continued to contribute to the conversation with advanced frequency, and he demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of CML ability and advanced levels of self-efficacy. He often presented concepts that his peers seemed

unfamiliar with, and he appeared frustrated with others misunderstood him. Similar to the initial interview, his eyes remained fixed on the table when he spoke, but he paid attention to the conversation and made direct eye contact when engaging with a peer in a one-on-one manner. During the conversation, Ivan often engaged in reciprocal conversation rather than just answering posed questions. For example, he said, “I mean, oil drilling is already prominent. What’s the difference between that project compared to others? I mean, at the same time, we’re not going to the Middle East to drill and then we have to do import taxes and all this other stuff. So, what’s the big difference? Just because there’s climate change doesn’t mean [there’s] not climate change or any other oil drilling like area.” Ivan’s comment demonstrated prior background knowledge about the topic and advanced CML ability in his presentation and explanation of an idea. His commentary also invited his peers to consider the topic in comparison to other real-world events. Table 5 reviews Ivan’s demonstrated AB and SE, as well as his contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

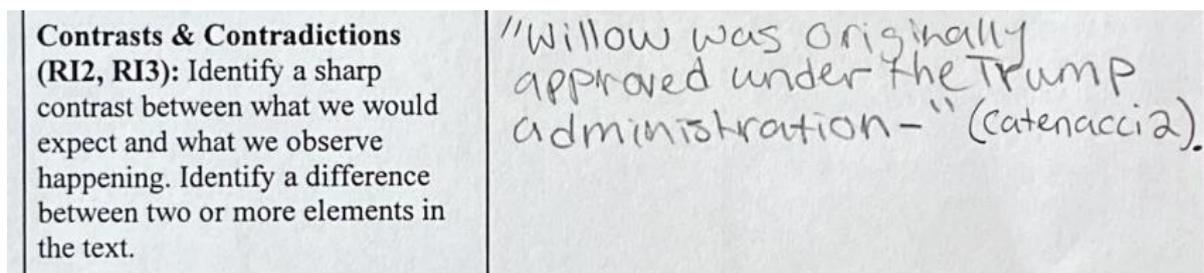
Table 5

Ivan’s Week 1 Data

Ivan	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced
CML 1 Worksheet	Advanced	Proficient to Advanced	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Advanced	Proficient to Advanced	Advanced

Jen

Jen was selected using extreme sampling to represent a student who demonstrated low performance in CML skills, as demonstrated by her work on the CML 1 worksheet. Jen only completed one of six sections on the worksheet, which demonstrated developing completion skill. The completed response scored proficient in CML skill. For the section, she identified a quotation in the media text that she felt showed a contrast or contradiction, and she attempted to include an in-text citation: “Willow was originally approved under the Trump administration.” Her citation of evidence demonstrates a proficient level of CML ability, but her response could have been improved by adding an explanation as to why that quotation demonstrated some type of contradiction. Figure 11 shows Jen’s response to the section on Contrasts and Contradictions on the CML 1 Worksheet.

Figure 11*Jen’s CML 1 Worksheet*

Although Jen’s work on the CML 1 worksheet resulted in her being sampled as a lower-performing student, she had an advanced frequency of contributions to the initial interview. The content of her contributions demonstrated a developing ability and a developing to proficient level of self-efficacy. During the conversation, Jen tended to build off others’ responses. For example, in answering what it meant to be critical, Ivan said, “To break down. To find the purpose,” and Jen added, “To examine.” Several times throughout the interview, Jen would give brief and simple responses, such as “Yeah” or “Yes,” which

demonstrated a developing to proficient level of self-efficacy in her willingness to engage but only an overall ability level of developing in the content of her responses.

In the CML 1 discussion, Jen contributed less frequently, demonstrating a proficient, rather than advanced, level of speaking skills. The content of her speech, however, improved to demonstrate proficient levels of ability and self-efficacy. Although Jen still contributed some simple comments, like saying “True” after a peer made a point, she generally improved the quality of her contributions in the discussion of CML 1. In answering a question, she said, “I think it's really 50/50. Because we're already in like so much debt. So of course, like, the economy is very important. And then at the same time, we're not trying to like, destroy the planet. So I think it's a 50/50 type of thing. You know, there's good and there's bad, but something like this is a big, big impact.” Her response demonstrates a proficient level of both ability and self-efficacy. While she shares a response, her response uses evidence from peers rather than her own logic, which is why it demonstrates proficiency in ability. Her reliance on others' evidence demonstrates that she was engaged in the conversation, but it shows a hesitation to share her own thoughts, which is why it demonstrates proficiency in self-efficacy. Table 6 reviews Jen's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as her contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 6

Jen's Week 1 Data

Jen	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Advanced	Developing	Developing to Proficient

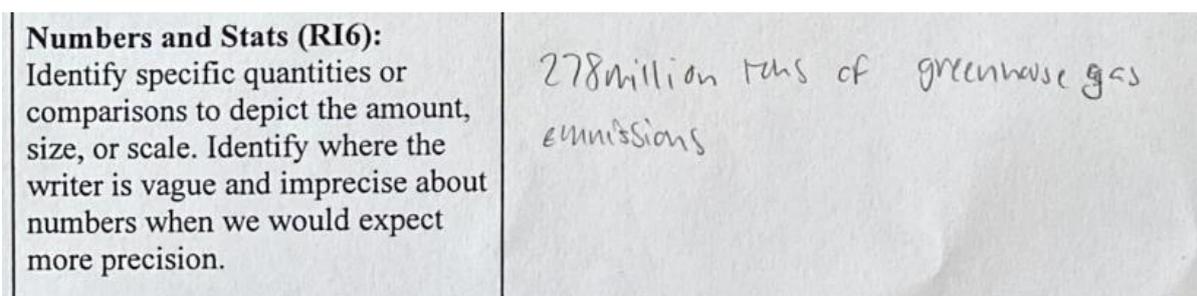
CML 1 Worksheet	Developing	Proficient	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

Jerry

Jerry was selected using extreme sampling to represent a student who demonstrated low performance in CML skills, as demonstrated by his work on the CML 1 worksheet. He completed three of the six sections at developing to proficient levels of CML ability. For example, he successfully identified a number in the media text: “278 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions.” This response demonstrates proficiency in his CML ability. However, he could have added why this number was important to the text overall, which would have demonstrated a higher, advanced level. Figure 12 shows Jerry’s response to the section Numbers and Stats on the CML 1 Worksheet.

Figure 12

Jerry’s CML 1 Worksheet



In the initial interview, Jerry showed advanced levels of participation in the frequency of his speech. He primarily responded to questions posed, which was expected in an interview. The content of his responses showed proficient levels of CML ability and proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy. For example, when I asked if students felt they were critical of things outside of class, Jerry nodded his head. When prompted, he shared an example: “Making decisions when talking to people.” This response demonstrates a proficient level in self-efficacy in his willingness to participate in the conversation, and it

demonstrates a proficient level in his CML ability. His response could have elaborated to demonstrate a higher level of ability. Often times, Jerry would answer a question but would not elaborate upon it, which is why his ability levels in the initial interview were typically proficient.

In the CML 1 discussion, Jerry volunteered to ask the first question and get his group's conversation started. Although he demonstrated advanced participation in the initial interview, after asking the first question, he only demonstrated a developing contribution frequency. The content of his responses continued to show the same levels of proficient ability and proficient to advanced self-efficacy as did the initial interview. For example, when Jen asked if the article was biased in the information it included, Jerry responded, "I think that there's definitely like some bias like, because we're not all like super geniuses, like we don't know exactly what these numbers mean. So like, we're just understand, like hearing what the experts tell us. So like, we could underestimate or overestimate what they're saying which makes us think one way or another." His response demonstrated proficiency in both his ability and self-efficacy. While he is thoughtful in his response, he could be more clear or detailed, or provide an example from the text to support his answer. Table 7 reviews Jerry's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as his contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 7

Jerry's Week 1 Data

Jerry	Contribution	Ability	Self-Efficacy
	Frequency or		
	Completion		

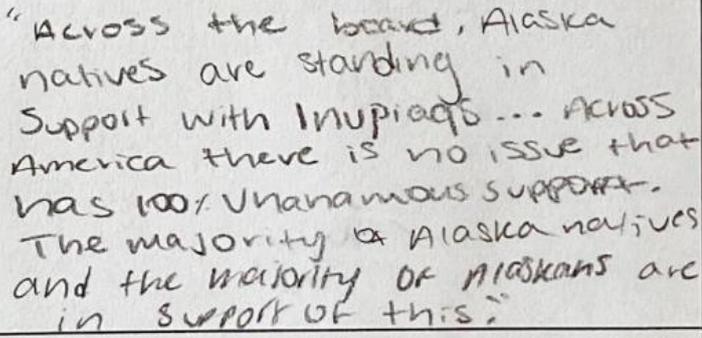
Initial Interview	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced
CML 1 Worksheet	Developing	Developing to Proficient	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Developing	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced

Aiden

Aiden was selected using typical sampling to represent a student with average CML skills, as demonstrated by his work on the CML 1 worksheet. Aiden completed four of the six sections on the worksheet, which was typical of most students and showed proficiency in completion. His completed written work demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of ability. For example, Aiden identified a quotation from the article that used extreme or absolute language: “Across the board, Alaska natives are standing in support with Inupiaq. . . Across America there is no issue that has 100% unanimous support. The majority of Alaska natives, and the majority of Alaskans, are in support of this.” His response demonstrates proficiency in CML skills because he addresses the prompt with evidence from the text and he correctly uses ellipses. His response could have elaborated to explain how or why this passage used extreme or absolute language, and that would have improved his response to an advanced level of ability. Figure 13 shows Aiden’s response to the section Extreme or Absolute Language on the CML 1 Worksheet.

Figure 13

Aiden’s CML 1 Worksheet

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	
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In the initial interview, Aiden demonstrated proficient levels of contribution, and his responses showed developing to proficient levels of CML ability and proficient levels of self-efficacy. Aiden had somewhat nervous body language during the initial interview: he bounded his leg frequently at the beginning and gradually stopped and leaned back in his chair later in the interview. The first contribution he made to the interview was referencing a TikTok trend to illustrate how he used critical skills on social media. He simply asked, “How many holes are in a straw?” When I expressed confusion, another student, Daniel, explained the trending concept to me while Aiden remained silence. This interaction showed proficiency in Aiden’s ability and self-efficacy. He could have improved his performance for both criteria had he elaborated or provided more context.

In the CML 1 discussion, Aiden demonstrated a developing level of contribution, which was lower than the initial interview. However, the content of his speech was slightly higher with a proficient ability; his self-efficacy levels remained proficient. His higher level of ability was demonstrated with frequent references to the text. However, at times, he seemed to rely on the text to provide his reasoning rather than independently synthesizing the information. For example, a student asked the group if the amount of jobs the Willow Project would create was worth the environmental risks, and Aiden responded, “No, I don’t think it’s enough of jobs coming out for the amount of damage. It says there’s only like 300 volunteer jobs and 278 million tons of greenhouse emissions. I don’t feel like it’s . . .” Aiden’s response demonstrates proficiency in his self-efficacy due to his willingness to participate. It also

demonstrates proficiency in his response because he provides an answer and defends it with textual evidence. However, after he cites the evidence, his voice trailed off, suggesting he wanted to add more but was unsure of what to say. During the conversation, Aiden spoke in a quiet voice that was difficult for others to hear; at one point, Carson had to repeat a question Aiden asked the group. Table 8 reviews Aiden's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as his contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 8

Aiden's Week 1 Data

Aiden	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Proficient	Developing to Proficient	Proficient
CML 1 Worksheet	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Developing	Proficient	Proficient

Maggie

Maggie was selected using typical sampling to represent a student with average CML skills, as demonstrated by her work on the CML 1 worksheet. Maggie completed four of the six sections on the worksheet, which was typical of most students and showed proficiency in completion. Her completed written work demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of CML ability. An instance where Maggie demonstrated advanced CML ability was the section on quoted words. She identified a passage from the text and quoted it: "You can stop this ill-

conceived and misguided project.” She then explained why those quoted words were significant: “The author then used this information to bring up the cost of how much climate damage there would be after the project.” Her detailed response is what demonstrated advanced ability. A copy of Maggie’s response to the section on quoted words can be found in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Maggie’s CML 1 Worksheet

<p>Quoted Words (RI5): Identify opinions or conclusions of someone who is an expert on the subject (voice of authority), or someone who might be a participant in or a witness to an event (personal perspective). Identify times the author might simply cite others (others’ words) to provide support for a point.</p>	<p>"you can stop this ill-concieved and misguided project."</p> <p>The author then used this information to bring up the cost of how much climate damage there would be after the project.</p>
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In the initial interview, Maggie demonstrated proficient levels of contribution, ability, and self-efficacy. She seemed comfortable taking the lead in answering questions and guiding the conversation. For example, when the group suggested social media as a text worth studying critically, Maggie stated, “We share everything. It’s public.” When asked to elaborate, she added, “For instance, you get to choose what you want to share, but a lot of people, I think they like to share a lot that goes on in their life with a bunch of strangers.” When asked why, she responded, “Attention, maybe?” She then elaborated, “It all revolves around attention. Pretty much everything that anyone posts on social media, they’re most likely doing it for attention.” Maggie’s engagement demonstrates proficiency in her willingness to participate and in her ability to use CML skills to interpret social media. Her self-efficacy might have been higher had she volunteered those opinions without being frequently prompted to elaborate. While her final comment on social media is more

advanced, most of her contributions were proficient because she did not elaborate sufficiently.

In the CML 1 discussion, Maggie maintained a proficient level of contributions, but her ability decreased to span developing and proficient. Inversely, her self-efficacy levels increased to span proficient and advanced. Maggie's higher levels of self-efficacy was demonstrated when she was the first student to state her own opinion on the topic when she said, "I just know it's going to, like ruin our climate. And I just feel like people aren't really focusing on like, the pros and cons of this project. They're just like focusing on the pros because that's what a majority of people want." Maggie's statement demonstrates an advanced level of self-efficacy in that she not only states an opinion rather than information from the article, but in that she is the first person in her group to do so. The content of her comment reveals proficient CML ability in that she questions what is happening but does not fully expand upon her statements or use evidence to support what she says. Table 9 reviews Maggie's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as her contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 9

Maggie's Week 1 Data

Maggie	Contribution	Ability	Self-Efficacy
	Frequency or		
	Completion		
Initial Interview	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
CML 1 Worksheet	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced	N/A

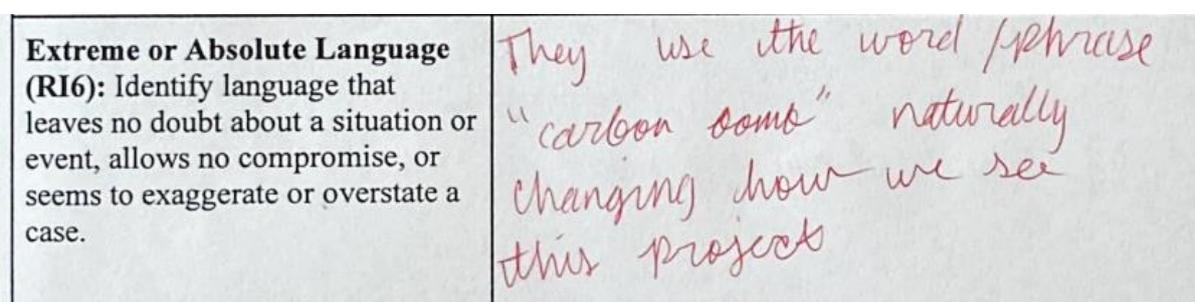
CML 1 Discussion	Proficient	Developing to	Proficient to
		Proficient	Advanced

Daniel

Daniel was selected using typical sampling to represent a student with average CML skills, as demonstrated by his work on the CML 1 worksheet. Daniel completed four of the six sections on the worksheet, which was typical of most students and showed proficiency in completion. His completed written work demonstrated proficient to advanced CML ability. For example, Daniel identified extreme or absolute language by saying, “They use the word/phrase ‘carbon bomb’ naturally changing how we see this project.” His response not only cites information from the text but also explains the effect of its word choice, which reveals his advanced mastery of CML ability. A copy of his response can be found in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Daniel’s CML 1 Worksheet



In the initial interview, Daniel demonstrated proficient contribution, ability, and self-efficacy. Although he entered the interview with crossed arms, he uncrossed them throughout the conversation, suggesting that he grew more comfortable. For example, when a student explains he has to use critical skills when trying to negotiate deals selling his artwork, Daniel helps him to explain: “[think about it] more than you normally would. You can’t treat it the same as like ‘Hello Sam.’ You can’t treat it like they’re just a person. You’re working with

them in a different way.” Here, Daniel’s commentary reveals proficiency in his willingness to enter the conversation and in his ability to explain the concept. He could have been more clear or elaborated more to better make his point, but it is clear that he has proficient ideas.

In the CML 1 discussion, Daniel’s contribution frequency increased to advanced; his ability level remained proficient; and his self-efficacy increased to span proficient and advanced levels. In this discussion, Daniel appeared to have more comfortable body language because he would lean forward when speaking and then back into his chair when he was done. In effect, he utilized his body language to signal to his peers when he wanted to engage and when he was finished. Daniel’s higher level of self-efficacy appeared when he was the first student to answer a posed question. When asked why people would support the Willow Project knowing it would damage the environment, Daniel responded, “Capitalism. I mean, the Alaskan people want it because once they shut down the Alaskan pipeline, they all lost jobs. So they can get their jobs back.” The content of his response demonstrated a proficient level of CML ability in that he was able to answer the question and provide a reason. However, his answer could have been more advanced had he elaborated more or provided evidence to support his response. Table 10 reviews Daniel’s demonstrated AB and SE, as well as his contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 10

Daniel’s Week 1 Data

Daniel	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

CML 1 Worksheet	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient to Advanced

Kathy

Kathy was selected using typical sampling to represent a student with average CML skills, as demonstrated by her work on the CML 1 worksheet. Kathy completed five of the six sections on the worksheet, which was typical of most students and showed proficiency in completion. Kathy's completion of five sections is slightly higher than the rest of the participants that were sampled typically. Her completed written work demonstrated an advanced CML ability. Although she does not include a direct quotation for the section on quoted words, Kathy successfully identifies a place where quoted words are used in the article and briefly addresses why those words were quoted: "The president talks ab[out] how he got the Alaska Congressional delegation on his side. Quotes him." Kathy could have been a bit more specific by including what the president's side was, but she still demonstrates advanced CML skill in her ability to identify and understand the use of quoted language in the text. A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Kathy's CML 1 Worksheet

<p>Quoted Words (RI5): Identify opinions or conclusions of someone who is an expert on the subject (voice of authority), or someone who might be a participant in or a witness to an event (personal perspective). Identify times the author might simply cite others (others' words) to provide support for a point.</p>	<p>The president talks ab how he got the Alaska Congressional delegation on his side. quotes him</p>
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Although her CML 1 worksheet demonstrated a slightly higher level of proficiency than the others through her completion of five sections instead of four, Kathy's speaking skills were slightly lower than the other typically sampled students. Although Kathy did not contribute frequently, she nodded her head in agreement with peers and her eyes and body physically moved to follow the conversation, suggesting that she was engaged, if not particularly active, in the conversation. In the initial interview, Kathy showed developing contribution levels. However, the content of her speech revealed proficient levels of CML ability and self-efficacy. For example, when discussing types of communication, she commented, "Well I feel like it kind of depends. Email is more formal. Like for colleges." When another student questioned her about who she emailed, Kathy responded, "Like teachers." Her initial answer about email demonstrated proficiency in self-efficacy through her willingness to participate and in ability through her critical opinion of email. Her response could have been more advanced if she explained more about why she felt email was more formal than another mode of communication. Her response to being questioned about emailing practices, however, demonstrated a unique instance of advanced self-efficacy. Throughout the remainder of the interview, she demonstrated mostly proficient levels of self-efficacy through her infrequent responses to posed questions.

In the CML 1 discussion, Kathy maintained a developing level of contribution to the conversation, but her ability and self-efficacy levels dropped from proficient to developing. These lower scores are due largely to the fact that Kathy did not verbally participate in the CML 1 discussion. However, she continued to show engaged body language as she did in the initial interview. Table 11 reviews Kathy's demonstrated AB and SE, as well as her contribution frequency or worksheet completion during week one; week one collected data from the initial interview, CML 1 worksheet, and CML 1 discussion.

Table 11

Kathy's Week 1 Data

Kathy	Contribution Frequency or Completion	Ability	Self-Efficacy
Initial Interview	Developing	Proficient	Proficient
CML 1 Worksheet	Proficient	Advanced	N/A
CML 1 Discussion	Developing	Developing	Developing

Week 2: Proposed Ban on Artificial Intelligence

For the second week, the teacher-researcher honored students' feedback that the first topic vote had too many options. Students verbally shared with the teacher that they felt the votes were distributed too widely. Students also shared that simply listing a topic was insufficient; they wanted more information so they could make a more informed vote. More information on the topic selection process can be found in chapter three. Ultimately, students voted to learn more about the pause on AI development. The article I assigned them on this topic was titled "In Sudden Alarm, Tech Doyens Call for a Pause on ChatGPT" and was published by the centered outlet Wired. In addition to assigning the article, I also asked students to read the original open letter that the article addressed. Both the open letter and the selected article were scored as three out of four in their complexity, according to the rating system outlined by Beers & Probst (2016).

CML Worksheet 2**Figure 17**

Student's Demonstrated Written Ability on the CML Worksheet for Week 2

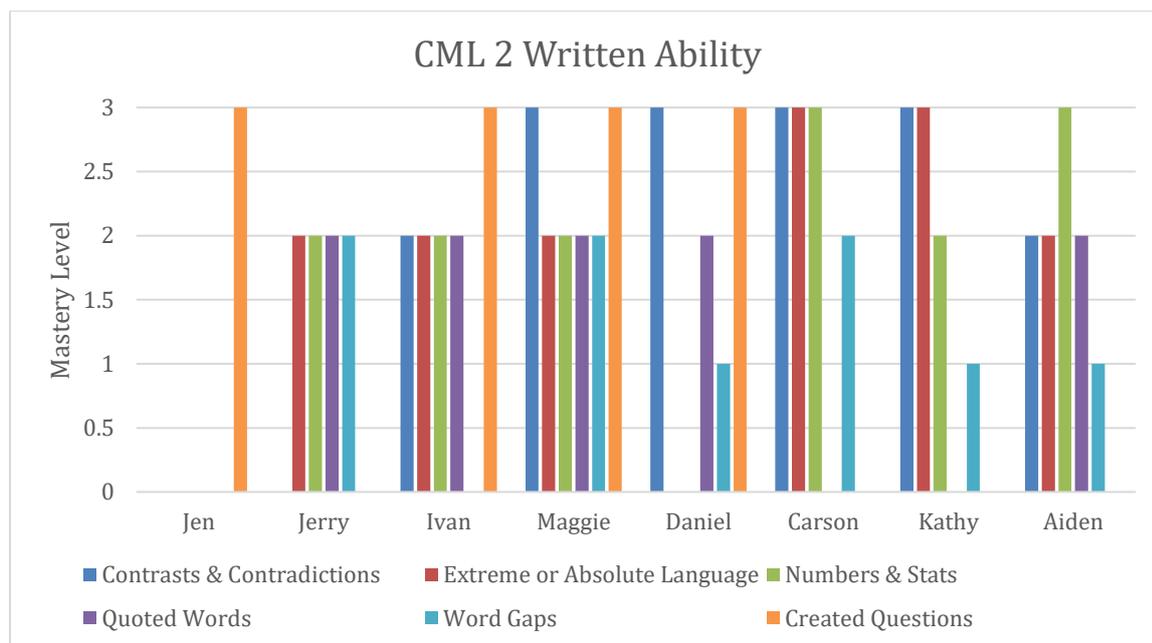


Figure 17 depicts the participants' demonstrated written ability on the CML worksheet for week two. Maggie was the only student who completed all sections of the worksheet. Ivan completed all sections except for word gaps, for which he wrote "n/a" to indicate he did not identify any. Aiden completed all sections except for created questions, for which he wrote one but not the required three. His one question was, "What is the benefit of artificial intelligence?" Carson, Kathy, and Jerry completed four of the six sections; all were missing created questions, Kathy and Carson were also missing quoted words, and Jerry was missing contrasts and contradictions. The category in which students demonstrated the highest ability was created questions; all students who completed the section demonstrated advanced ability. Students most struggled with word gaps and quoted words. Students demonstrated developing to proficient levels on word gaps and proficient levels on quoted words; these were the only section in which no student demonstrated mastery.

For the section on word gaps, students only listed the unfamiliar words without providing context or addressing what confused them. Carson, Jerry, and Daniel all identified "existential" as an unfamiliar word; Daniel provided some context by writing "existential dangers." "Moratorium" was also identified as an unfamiliar word by Maggie, Kathy, and

Carson. Carson and Kathy listed “robust” as another unfamiliar word. Carson added “signatories” and Maggie added “compute” and “commensurate” to their respective worksheets. Aiden was the only one who identified the text’s topic as a word gap; he listed “chatGPT” and “openAI” on his word gaps. For the section on quoted words, Maggie, Daniel, and Ivan relied upon textual evidence. Ivan provided a brief quote, the speaker, and his credentials. Daniel provided only a quote. Maggie included a lengthy quote with the page number, but no speaker or context. Aiden and Jerry did not use quotation marks, but instead restated the title of the article in his quoted words. Aiden listed speakers who were quoted within the article rather than providing a quote.

Figure 18

Ivan’s CML 2 Worksheet

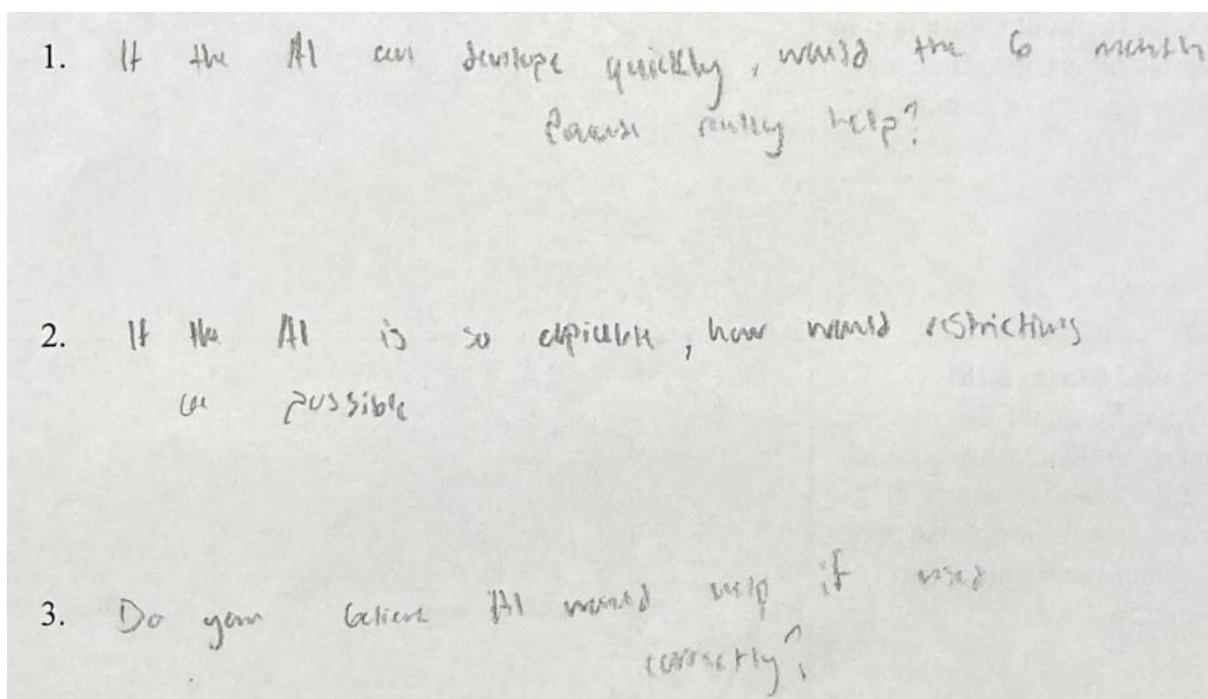
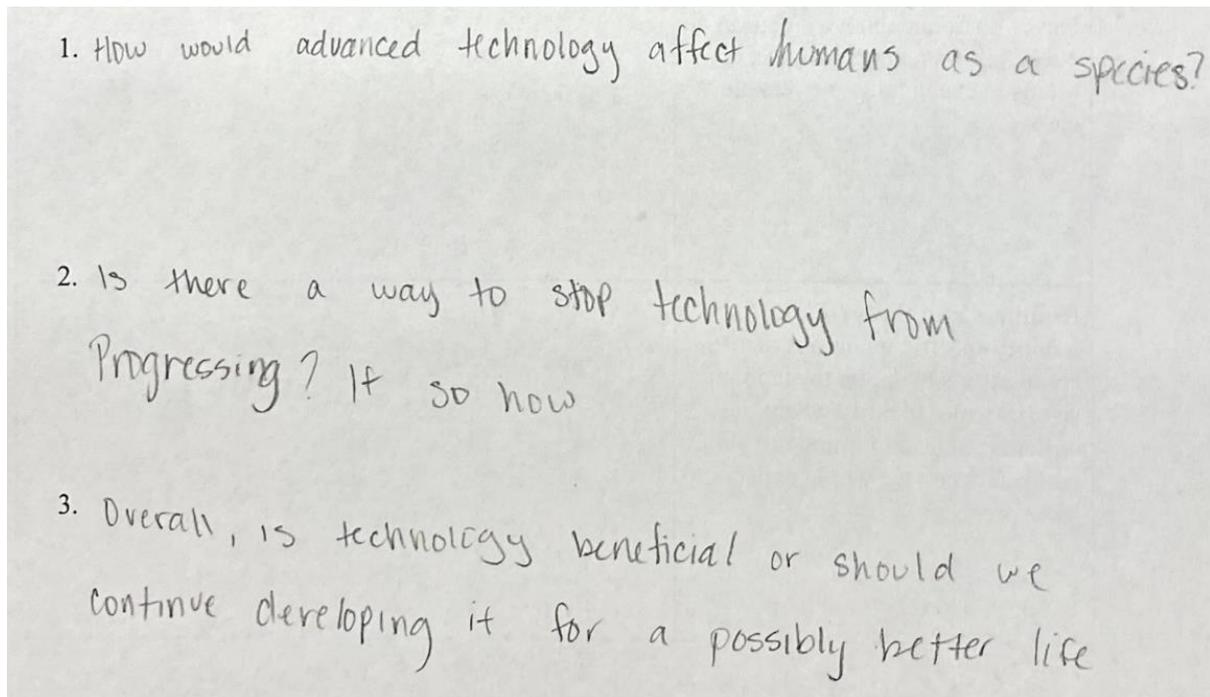
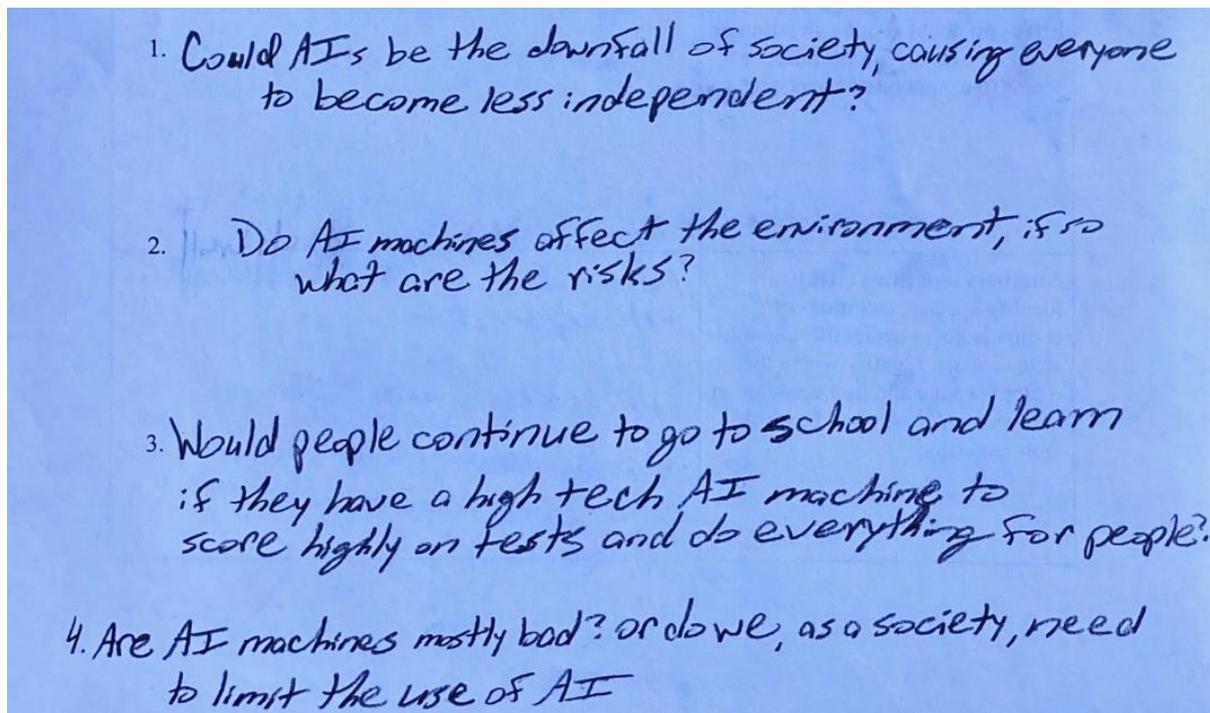


Figure 19

Daniel’s CML 2 Worksheet

**Figure 20**

Maggie's CML 2 Worksheet



Figures 18, 19, and 20 show the prepared questions by Ivan, Daniel, and Maggie, respectively; on this section, all three of these students demonstrated advanced ability. Ivan posed two hypothetical questions. For the first, he asked, "If the AI can develop quickly,

would the 6 month pause really help?” Although this is not an open-ended question, it still demonstrates critical thinking in his questioning of the effectiveness of the proposed topic. For his second question, he asked, “If the AI is so capable, how would restrictions be possible?” This second question is open-ended but asks a question his peers might not know without significant background on the topic. For his third question, Ivan asked his peers to form an opinion: “Do you believe AI would help if used correctly?” Although this is also a close-ended question, it is more accessible to peers and would allow him to ask follow-up questions about their reasoning.

Like Ivan, Daniel’s first two questions are open-ended and use the keyword “how.” In his first, Daniel asked, “How would advanced technology affect humans as a species?” It is open-ended and invites his peers to consider the topic and perhaps connect it to their own lives, which is why it demonstrates advanced ability. For his second question, Daniel asked, “Is there a way to stop technology from progressing? If so, how?” The first part of Daniel’s question is close-ended, but by adding the “how,” he asks speakers to expand upon their answer, thereby inviting extended conversation. Although students may require some form of background knowledge to answer this question, it still invites students to share their thoughts on the subject. For his final question, Daniel asked his peers to form their own opinion: “Overall, is technology beneficial or should we continue developing it for a possibly better life?” The wording is a bit confusing because it seems to ask speakers to choose between two options but then restates the first option. Even though the wording could have been improved, Daniel still attempted to pose a question that required higher-order thinking.

Maggie elected to create four questions rather than the required three. Although her questions are largely close-ended, they provide context to prompt a response. For her first and third questions, Maggie poses hypotheticals. The first asks, “Could AIs be the downfall of society, causing everyone to become less independent?” For her third, she asks, “Would

people continue to go to school and learn if they have a high tech AI machine to score highly on tests and do everything for people?” Although her second question is close-ended, it asks the speaker to consider the consequences of a situation: “Do AI machines affect the environment, if so, what are the risks?” In addition to asking for long-term thinking, this question harkens back to the discussion from CML 1, which also discussed the effects of human actions on the environment. For her last question, Maggie asked her peers to consider the role of AI within society: “Are AI machines mostly bad? Or do we, as a society, need to limit the use of AI?”

Participant Observation 2

The discussion for week two used the same fishbowl structure as week one in which there was an inner and outer group of students who were randomly selected. The first group of inner-circle speakers contained Daniel and other non-participants; the second group contained Maggie, Jen, and Jerry; the third group contained Ivan, Aiden, Carson, and Kathy. The first two groups spoke for half of the same class period, and the third group spoke on the following day. In response to the first week’s discussion, the teacher-researcher added a “snowball” question feature to the discussion with the intention of increasing students’ confidence in asking questions. This change was made in response to the teacher-researcher’s observations from the previous week’s discussion. For the “snowball” discussion, the teacher asked students to write their prepared questions on slips of paper, crumple them up, and toss them into the center of the table; students were then encouraged to pull a question from the middle and ask it whenever a silence occurred in the discussion. To establish clearer communication roles, the teacher asked a student to volunteer to ask the first question; after the first question had been discussed, it was the responsibility of the person sitting clockwise next to them to ask the next question. In the discussion, students most often demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy with thirty-seven occurrences of this level. There were

twelve instances of proficient self-efficacy and six instances of developing self-efficacy. Students tended to respond to posed questions rather than engaging in reciprocal conversation; there were forty-two instances of question response and eleven of reciprocal conversation.

Figure 21

Coded Transcripts for CML 2 Discussion

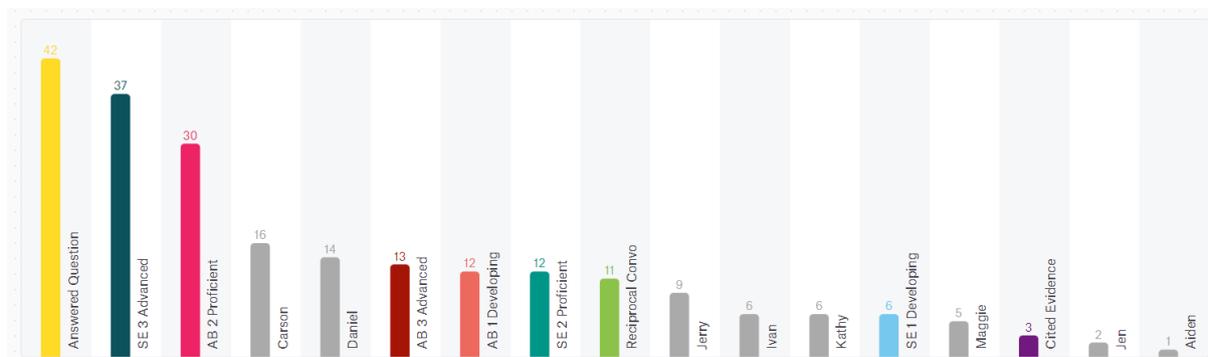


Figure 21 shows the coded transcripts for the CML 2 discussions. As can be seen, Carson and Daniel had the highest frequency of verbal contribution to the discussions; Carson spoke sixteen times, and Daniel spoke fourteen times. Jerry, Kathy, Ivan, and Maggie spoke a moderate number of times that ranged from five to nine. Jen and Aiden spoke the least with three and one contribution, respectively. Of their contributions, Ivan, Daniel, and Kathy demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy. Kathy volunteered to ask the first question to begin the discussion. Ivan demonstrated a steady voice but often looked down at the table rather than making eye contact. Daniel began with crossed arms but was the first student to offer his opinion: “I think the people making it [AI] are beyond our control.” Unprompted, he supported his claim: “Because people are going to keep learning about technologies becoming more prominent. As we develop, some more people are going to learn how to make it and all it takes is one person to make. So even if we make laws to stop it, we really can’t stop it.” Daniel also demonstrated background knowledge on the topic and explained what ChatGPT was to his peers and how it worked; this website or application is an

artificial intelligence that can answer questions, summarize texts, and write prompts for users, according to Daniel. Perhaps most noteworthy about Daniel's knowledge of ChatGPT is his willingness to admit and defend his use of it, even after the teacher expressed surprise. After Daniel's confession, Jerry admitted to using it as well.

In the discussions for CML 2, both Jerry and Carson demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy. Jerry made eye contact when speaking with his peers and asked follow-up questions. For example, in thinking about the benefits and risks of AI, Jerry asked the group, "Do you think it [AI] has more benefits or like downsides? Like, how do you like weigh [it] all?" Meanwhile, Carson nonverbally demonstrated his attention by tilting his head in the direction of the speaker; additionally, he was the first one in his group to offer a disagreement. For example, when his group was discussing the benefits of AI, Carson acknowledged what his peers said: "I think it [AI] can be very resourceful because it's a lot easier to access information. You just ask them a question or something and it'll give them an answer." He followed his statement with a counterargument: "But I just think you can't abuse it. Or that's when it'll get too powerful." Although he did not elaborate, Carson demonstrated a respectful disagreement with his group, which demonstrated an advanced level of self-efficacy.

Maggie demonstrated a proficient level of self-efficacy, while Jen demonstrated a developing-to-proficient level and Aiden demonstrated a developing level. There were thirty demonstrations of proficient ability, thirteen of advanced, and twelve of developing in the discussions for CML 2. Additionally, students did not cite much evidence; there were only three instances where students referenced the text. Students struggled to understand what AI meant. In trying to understand the concept, students shared their personal experiences with AI. Daniel and Jerry admitted to using ChatGPT. Students were interested in how they could benefit from such programs while avoiding potential consequences. Jerry said he used

ChatGPT “as a shortcut” but not as something he could fully rely upon: “I reread . . . and see how I can improve it. Because like you know, I do want to like know what I’m doing because I know eventually like I’m gonna be asked about it so like I don’t want to like look stupid but I feel like depending on the person like you can.” Daniel reviewed ChatGPT’s summary of the discussed article: “I said summarize this article for me. It summarized it perfectly . . . I understood what the article was saying. And it helped me save like ten minutes of my time. My quality of life improved, so that’s what AI is for.” Many students seemed interested in such time-saving potential. However, they also considered some potential drawbacks.

Maggie respectfully acknowledged the benefits of AI before questioning how its service impacted the user. She described a situation in which a student used AI to “write a whole essay” before asking “is that student actually learning anything?” Carson expressed a similar concern when he said, “I think it’s [AI] bad because I think that people are just gonna continue to get lazier. And then eventually that will lead to people getting more dumb because people will not want to do their own work. And then I think people will rely too heavily on AI which won’t be good for the future.” Daniel agreed with Carson’s concern about people’s reliance on AI. Daniel said, “I think mainly just people in general will start to fail. AI gets too far because people will get laxy and they won’t be doing anything. And then if they stopped being able to do whatever it does today, then we won’t be able to what AI does, which means that you will fail.” Despite these fears, students suggested ways to prevent over-dependence on AI. Carson said, “in order to like protect our future and make sure it’s [AI] getting too powerful. And then also like to decrease our reliance on using what we’ve been before AI and all that stuff occurred.” In other words, Carson felt it was important to make sure one had the ability to complete a task before delegating it to AI. Jerry acknowledged this possibility before expressing confidence in people’s ability to use AI wisely: “I feel like it could be like a good tool for helping stuff. I mean, like there’s definitely

people that use it to like skip stuff and like not better themselves, but I feel like overall, we could use it to help ourselves rather than hurt ourselves.”

Exit Ticket 2

Maggie was the only participant asked to complete an exit ticket during the second week. She expressed that she “was pretty comfortable reading the text” even though she noted “there were some words [she] didn’t know and didn’t understand.” She felt the discussion had a conversational atmosphere that made her feel comfortable: “I was comfortable asking and discussing the questions. It just felt like a normal conversation and not everyone was educated, which means no judgment.” She added that “it was good to hear everyone’s pov and opinions” but hoped that in the future, “people just need to talk more and not be nervous.” As the student with the least amount of speaking, Aiden demonstrated closed-off body language. He had crossed arms and a stiff neck; he looked up and down rather than making eye contact or physically following the conversation.

Week 3: Pentagon Leak

For the third week, students were once again presented with three topic options. Like week two, the topic options included a brief description and students voted on a topic using Microsoft Forms. The topic students voted to learn more about was the Pentagon leak. The assigned article came from the left-leaning outlet *The New York Times* and was titled “When ‘Top Secret’ is not so Secret.” The teacher scored it as having an overall complexity of 2.5 out of 4, once again using the nonfiction complexity rubric provided by Beers & Probst (2016), which can be found in Appendix A.

CML Worksheet 3

Figure 22

Student’s Demonstrated Written Ability on the CML Worksheet for Week 3

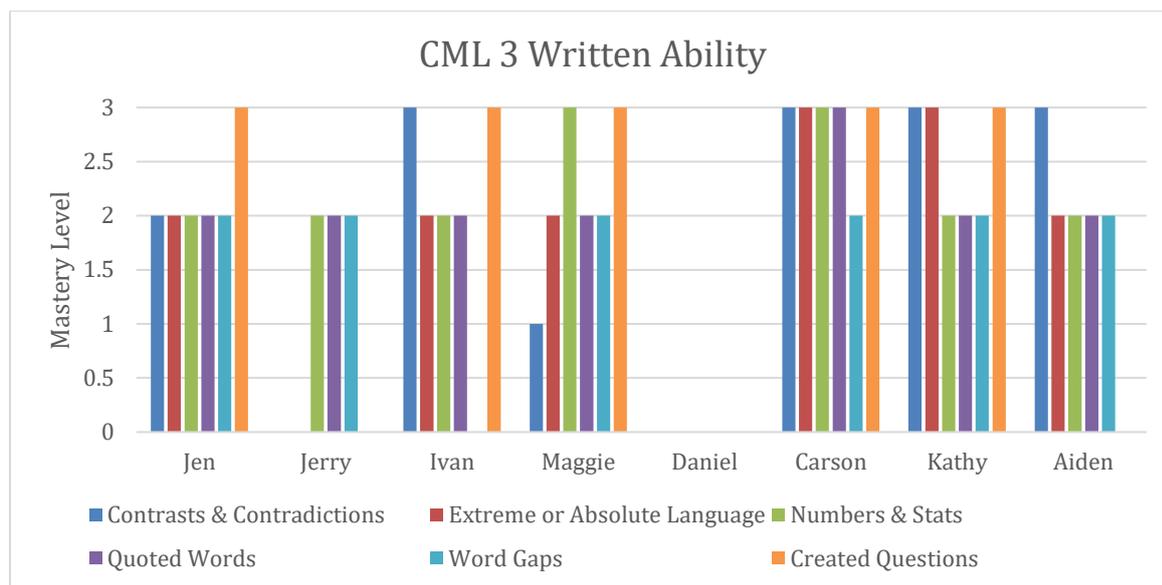


Figure 22 depicts students' demonstrated ability levels on the worksheet for CML 3.

Jen, Maggie, Carson, and Kathy completed all sections; Aiden and Ivan completed all but one section; Jerry completed all but three sections; Daniel did not submit a worksheet. Of the completed sections, students demonstrated the highest ability on the created questions section, and all who attempted it demonstrated advanced ability. On the sections for extreme language and numbers and stats, students demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of ability. All students demonstrated proficient ability on word gaps; it was the only section in which no student demonstrated advanced ability. The section with the highest ability range was contrasts and contradictions, and students' demonstrated ability ranged from developing to advanced. The only example of developing ability was Maggie's section on contrasts and contradictions.

For the section on word gaps, all students who completed it wrote unfamiliar words without providing context or definitions. Kathy, Jerry, Jen, and Maggie all identified "memorandum" as an unfamiliar word. Jerry and Maggie listed "swath." Kathy and Jen listed "vetting." Kathy and Maggie both identified phrases related to "Snowden" as unfamiliar. Aiden listed "pore" and "afield." For the section on quoted words, most students included direct quotations from the article without providing context or explanation. For example, Jen

wrote “This does bring up just someone this junior would have access to some of our most sensitive intelligence and documents to brief our most senior officials.” She included a second quote: “Once you’ve been cleared, you’re entitled to almost everything.” Ivan likewise included two uncited quotes. For his first, he wrote, “This was a major security breach that can’t be allowed again.” For his second, he wrote, “These reforms clearly weren’t effective.” Jerry and Maggie both included the following quote: “Clearly too many people have access to too much top-secret information.” Maggie cited the speaker as Evelyn Farkas. Maggie also included a second quote: “So all indications are, again, this is a criminal act,” and cited Pentagon spokesman as the speaker. Aiden included one quotation: “Each of us signs a non-disclosure agreement – anybody that has security clearance.” He also cited Brig. Gen. Patrick S. as the speaker. Carson was the only student who demonstrated advanced skills in this category. Although he did not provide context for the quotations, he included the speaker and their title. For his first quotation, Carson wrote, “When you join the military, you may require a security clearance . . . we entrust our members with a lot of responsibility at a very early age,” and he cited the speaker as General Ryder. This quotation uses ellipsis to remove unnecessary information, which contributes to Carson’s advanced mastery on this section. For his second quote, Carson wrote, “This should give us pause as to who has access to this level of material and how and why we allow people to print such material,” and he cited the speaker as “Mick Mulroy, a former CIA officer and top Pentagon official.”

The greatest range of ability appeared on the contrasts and contradictions section. Ivan, Carson, Kathy, and Aiden all demonstrated advanced mastery. Jen demonstrated proficient mastery. Maggie demonstrated developing mastery. Kathy demonstrated advanced ability by synthesizing the information, writing “I expected the government documents to be more protected and secured.” She then provided textual evidence to support her

interpretation: “There are military contractors and even analyst at think tanks who have some level of security clearance.” Kathy’s response is shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23

Kathy’s CML 3 Worksheet

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>I expected the government documents to be more protected and secured. 1. “there are military contractors and even analyst at think tanks who have some level of security clearance”</p>
--	---

Jen demonstrated proficient mastery in her response, which synthesized her interpretation but did not include a direct quotation. Jen wrote, “Why would a national guardsman leak top secret information? And does his age have anything to do with it? This situation is just a matter of too many people know top secret information.” Jen’s posed questions are analytical but could be strengthened by referencing the text. Jen’s response can be found in Figure 24.

Figure 24

Jen’s CML 3 Worksheet

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>Why would a national guardsman leak top secret information? + does his age have anything to do with it? This situation is just a matter of too many people know top secret information</p>
--	---

Maggie’s response demonstrated developing ability. Like Jen, Maggie recorded questions she had. However, she did not provide a sentence to sum up her ponderings. She wrote, “Should 18 year olds hold top secret information or should everyone just not be responsible? Is a

pause necessary? Will it change anything? Is age the problem? Do too many people have information?” Maggie’s response to the section on contrasts and contradictions can be seen in Figure 25.

Figure 25

Maggie’s CML 3 Worksheet

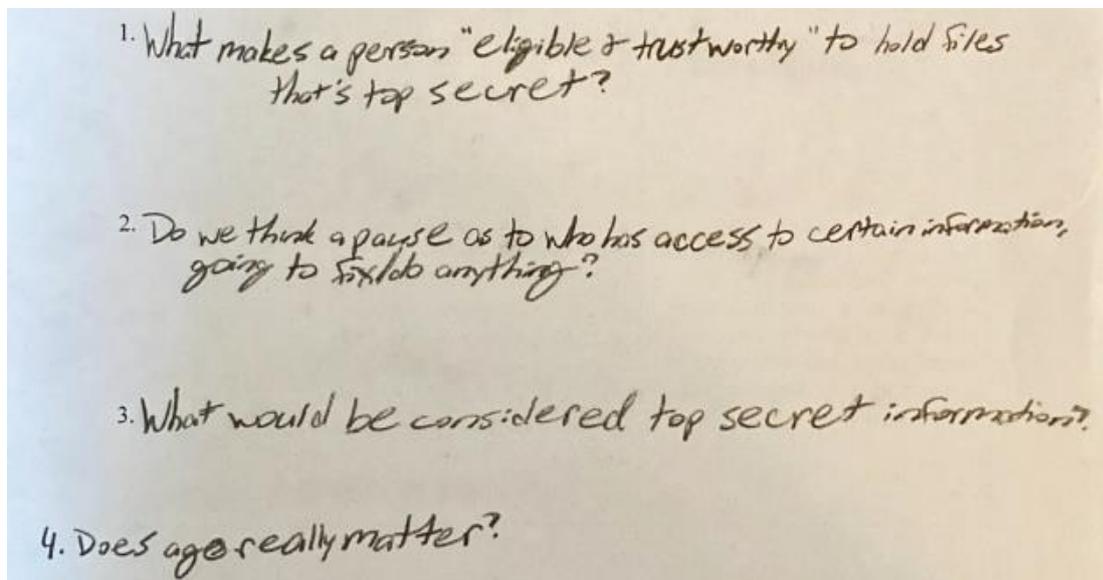
<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>Should 18 year olds hold top secret information or should everyone just not be responsible? Is a pause necessary? Will it change anything? Is age the problem? Do too many people know information?</p>
--	--

The questions Maggie posed in her section on contrasts seemed to prepare her for the section on created questions; she seemed to further develop her queries for this section. A copy of Maggie’s prepared questions can be seen in Figure 26. Like all other students who completed this section, she demonstrated advanced ability. Once again, Maggie chose to ask four questions instead of the required three. Her first and third question were open-ended, and her second and fourth question were close-ended. For her first question, she asked, “What makes a person ‘eligible and trustworthy’ to hold files that’s top secret?” For her third, she asked, “What would be considered top secret information?” For her second question, she asked “Do we think a pause as to who has access to certain information, going to fix anything?” While this question is close-ended, she uses the collective “we” to invite her peers into the discussion and seek a group consensus. By referencing a “pause,” she connects this third article to the one from the previous week, which was about an explicit AI development pause. For her fourth question, Maggie asked another close-ended question: “Does age really matter?” Although this question could be answered with a simple yes/no, it is a topic that all students addressed in their questions. Jen asked, “Should 18 year olds be allowed security

clearance at such a young age?” Kathy asked, “Do you think there should be a age requirement for his job?” Ivan asked, “Should 18 year olds be allowed for ‘top secret’ clearances?” Carson asked, “Do you think the age of person who holds valuable information is really important? If so, why?” By adding the “why,” Carson transformed his question into an open-ended one. Jerry asked, “Does being young mean you are more likely to be untrustworthy?” Jerry explicitly connected the ideas of age and trustworthiness, which is another topic that emerged during discussions over the article.

Figure 26

Maggie’s CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions



Student questions were also interested in the idea of what constituted and who should be permitted to access “top secret” information. Figures 28, 29, 30, and 31 show the prepared questions for Jen, Kathy, Ivan, Carson, and Jerry, respectively. Ivan asked two questions concerning top secrecy. His first question was “What requirements should be necessary for clearances?” His other question was “What point does the cutoff for people in top secret happen?” Jen asked, “What more security clearance should they add to prevent leaks again?” Carson used the collective personal pronoun “we” to place responsibility on himself and his peers: “What can our country do better in order to ensure top secret information doesn’t get

leaked again?” Similarly, Jerry asked students to form their own plan; he asked, “How would you handle who has clearance or know about top secret info.?”

Carson, Kathy, and Jen all expressed interest in determining a fair and appropriate punishment for leaking classified documents. Figures 28, 29, 30, and 31 show the prepared questions for Jen, Kathy, Ivan, Carson, and Jerry, respectively. Carson asked, “Do you think the punishments of people who commit the crimes of releasing valuable information to others are justified?” Kathy wondered, “Do you think he should be in jail for more than 15 yrs?” Although her question was close-ended, it nevertheless addressed an important topic that emerged during the discussion. Jen wrote, “Should someone serve extreme jail time for leaking information?” In her handwritten question, she underlined the word “extreme” to add emphasis. Kathy was the only student who asked a question regarding the motivation for leaking information, which became a point during the discussion. She asked, “How much money is not enough to do something that illegal?” Although her question is worded in a vague and somewhat unclear manner, it strikes at a different perspective than those seeking preventative measures or punishments.

Figure 27

Jen's CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions

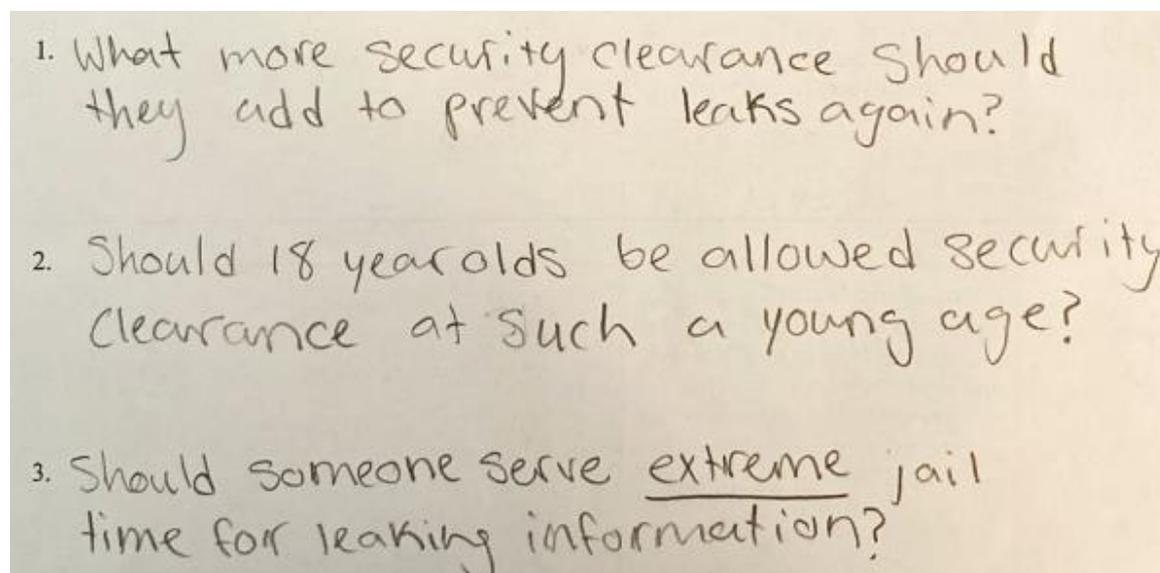
- 
1. What more security clearance should they add to prevent leaks again?
 2. Should 18 year olds be allowed security clearance at such a young age?
 3. Should someone serve extreme jail time for leaking information?

Figure 28

Kathy's CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions

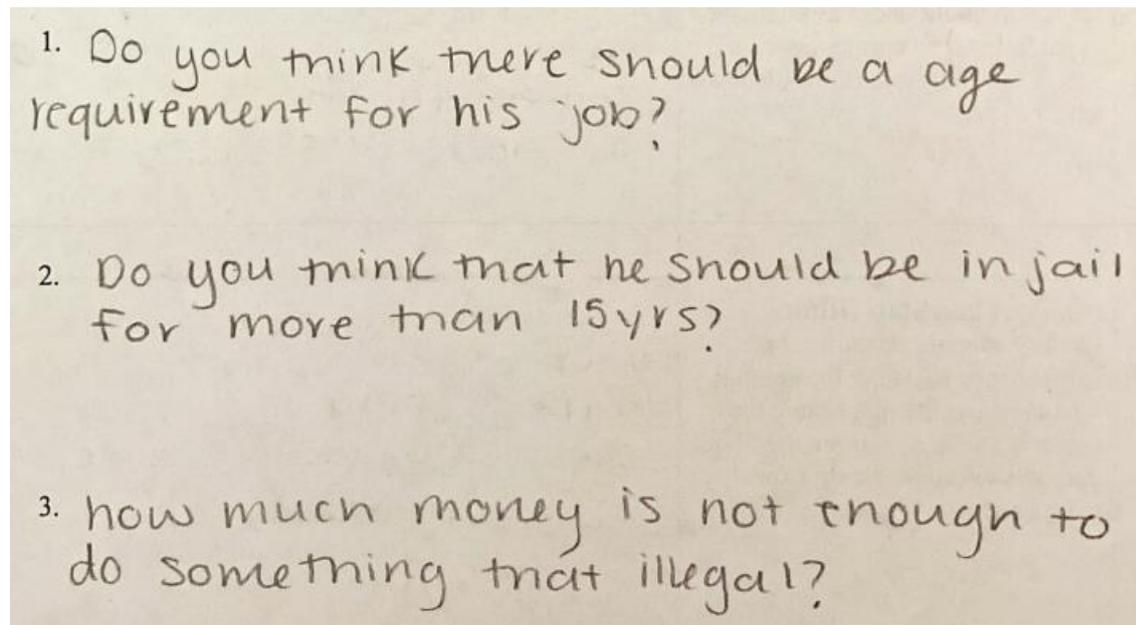
- 
1. Do you think there should be a age requirement for his job?
2. Do you think that he should be in jail for more than 15yrs?
3. how much money is not enough to do something that illegal?

Figure 29

Ivan's CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions

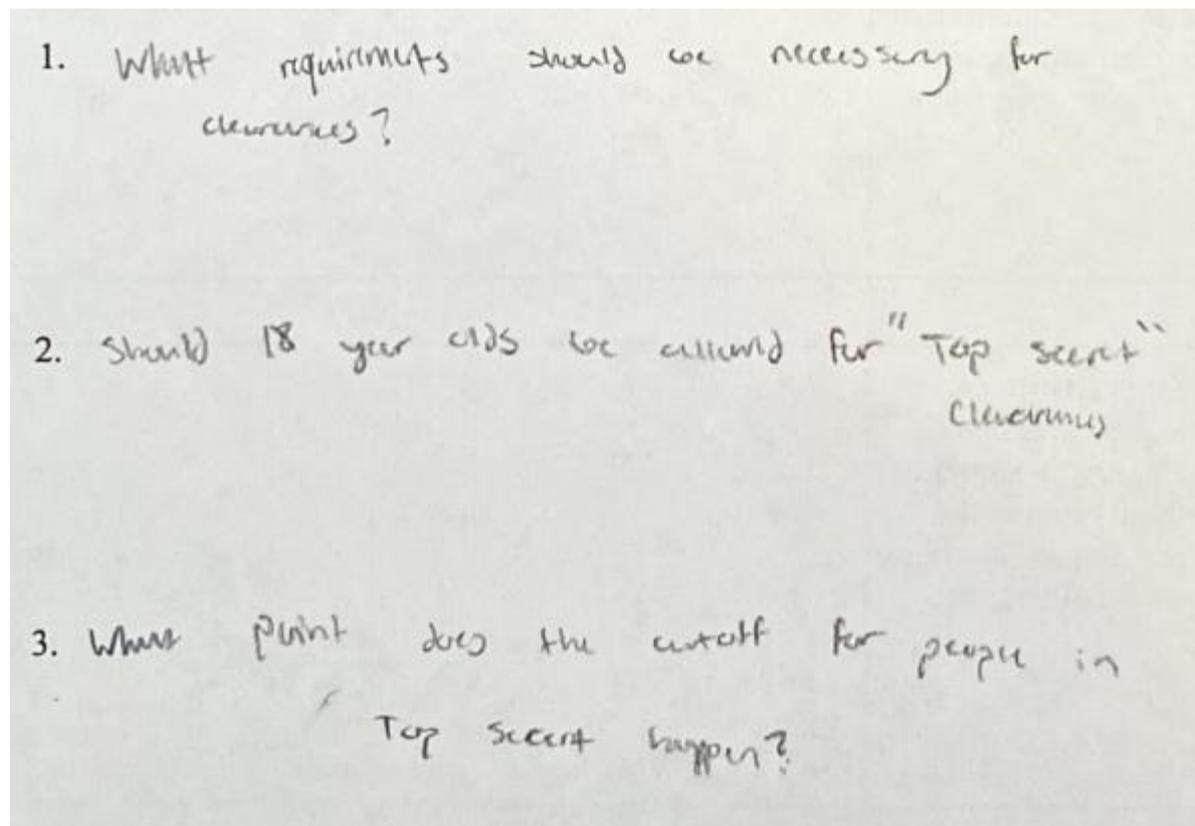
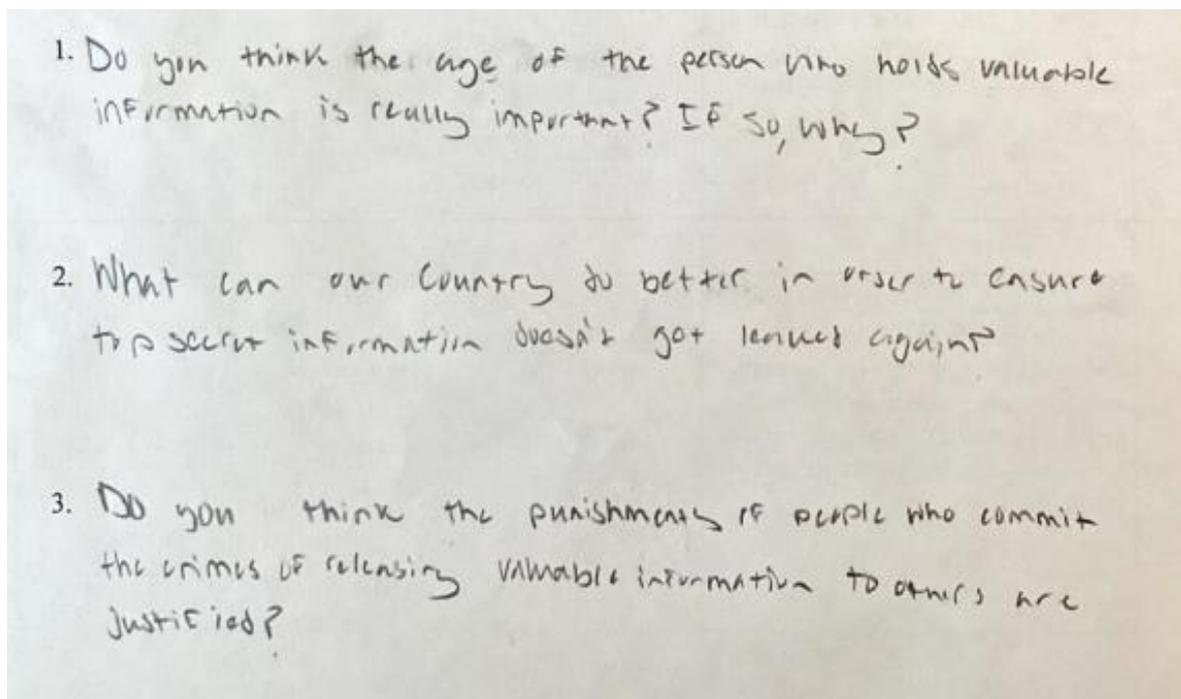
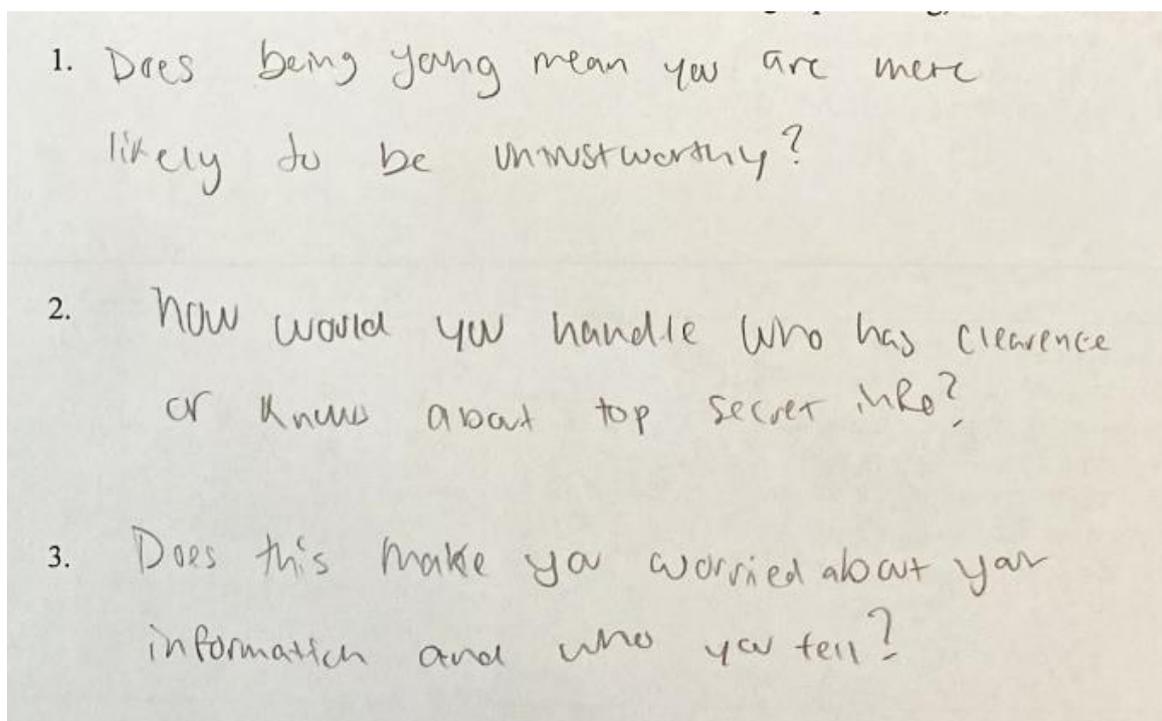
- 
1. What requirements should be necessary for clearances?
2. Should 18 year olds be allowed for "Top secret" clearances
3. What point does the cutoff for people in Top secret happen?

Figure 30

Carson's CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions

**Figure 31**

Jerry's CML 3 Worksheet – Prepared Questions



All students who submitted the worksheet demonstrated proficient to advanced ability for the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. Carson demonstrated advanced ability on both sections; Maggie demonstrated proficient ability on extreme language and advanced ability on numbers and stats; Kathy demonstrated advanced ability on extreme language and proficient ability on numbers and stats. Aiden, Jen, and Ivan demonstrated proficient mastery on both sections. Jerry demonstrated proficient mastery on numbers and stats but did not complete extreme language. Maggie demonstrated proficient ability in extreme language and advanced ability on numbers and stats.

Figure 32 shows Carson's responses to the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. In the section on extreme language, he identified, "Senator Jack Reed says, 'Anyone with a security clearance who betrays their country by purposefully mishandling classified documents or disclosing classified materials must be held accountable.'" Carson then explained, "This quote shows how if you betray the country in any type of way w/valuable information, then you'll get harsh punishments for your crime." For the section on numbers and stats, Carson demonstrated advanced ability by synthesizing information in the article. He wrote, "Throughout the article, it states that Jack Teixeira is only 21 yrs old, and why does someone that young even hold top secret information." He then drew an arrow and quotes the article: "Why would a 21 year old national guardsman be in position with access to top secret documents to begin with?" He then provided additional information by saying, "The other way the article used stats was to describe the amount of years victims would spend in prison for committing their crimes."

Figure 32

Carson's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>summary.</p> <p>• SCRAM JAIL REPS 2022, "Anyone with a security clearance who betrays their country by purposefully mishandling classifiable documents or disclosing classified materials must be held accountable."</p> <p>• This note shows how if you betray the country in any sort of way w/ valuable information, then you'll get harsh punishments for your crime.</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>• Throughout the article, it states that JACK TEIKER is only 21 yrs old, how why does someone that young even hold top secret information.</p> <p>↳ "Why would a 21 year old national guard member be in position with access to top secret documents or begin with?"</p> <p>• The other way the article used stats was to describe the amount of years victims of 9/11 spend in prison for committing their crimes.</p>

Figure 33 shows Maggie's responses to the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. In the section on extreme language, she identified a passage from the article, although she does not use quotations around it. She wrote, "Pentagon officials say the number of people with such access is in the thousands, if not tens of thousands." Her response demonstrates proficiency by referencing the article, but it could be improved by including more explanation as to how and why the statement uses extreme language. For the section on numbers and stats, Maggie provided two examples. For the first, she wrote, "American service members with top-secret clearance include nearly all of the more than 600 or so generals in various services." This quotation accurately identifies an important number, but it does not explain its importance. However, Maggie's second example demonstrates advanced ability by interpreting the example. She noted, "After Sept. 11 2001 terrorists attack, what and how much info was shared, author very vague." Even though she does not elaborate on why the author might be vague, she provides a brief context as to why the quotation is significant, which demonstrated advanced ability.

Figure 33

Maggie's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>Pentagon officials say the number of people with such access is, in the thousands, if not tens of thousands</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>American service members with top-secret clearance include nearly all of the more than 600 or so generals in various services</p> <hr/> <p>. After Sept. 11 2001 terrorists attack, what and how much info was shared, and how very vague</p>

Figure 34 shows Kathy's responses to the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. On the section on extreme language, Kathy wrote, "In the text they argue about whether or not there should be an age requirement on people who have access to government documentation." Although she does not provide textual evidence, she identifies the part of the article that most notably uses this language and provides context to explain why the article would use extreme language in that situation, thereby demonstrating advanced ability. For the section on numbers and stats, she gave the same quote as Maggie about the 600 service members. Like Maggie, Kathy demonstrated proficient ability by correctly identifying a purposeful use of a number that is related to the focus of the article. However, she could have improved her response by explaining why that number was significant in the context of the article.

Figure 34

Kathy's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>In the text they argue about whether or not there should be an age requirement on people who have access to government documentation.</p>	<p>9/10</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>"American Service members w/ top-secret clearance include nearly all of the more than 600 or so generals in the various services."</p>	<p>8/10</p>

Figure 35 shows Aiden's responses on the sections identifying extreme language and numbers and stats. For the section on extreme language, he wrote, "Now access to some classified secrets is 'just mind-numbingly broad.'" Although he does not explain this quote, he successfully blends it with his own words in a way that shows proficient mastery. Aiden also selected another passage that he identified as using extreme language: "We've gone so over board and made it so convenient and easy for a wide range of people to have access to precisely what they want." Aiden's second quotation demonstrated proficient to advanced ability by identifying an appropriate quote, but he could have improved his response by providing more context or explanation to show how or why the quote used extreme language.

Figure 35

Aiden's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>"NOW access to some classified secrets is "Just mind-numbingly broad"</p> <p>"We've gone so over board and made it so convenient and easy for a wide range of people to have access to precisely what they want"</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>After 9/11 intelligence agencies began sharing material much more widely across the government</p>

Figure 36 shows Jen's responses to the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. For the section on extreme language, she identified two quotations from the article. The first was "This was a major security breach that cannot be allowed to happen again." This quote was also identified by Ivan for numbers as well as quoted words, indicating its importance to the article. For her second quote, Jen wrote, "Clearly, too many people have access to too much top secret information." This quote was also identified by Maggie and Jerry as important quoted words. By including important quotes, Jen demonstrated proficient ability. She could have improved her responses by providing more context or explanation as to how and why the article used extreme language in these sentences. Jerry wrote the same sentence as Jen and demonstrated proficient ability. Like Jen, he could have improved his response by adding additional context and explanation.

Figure 36

Jen's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>"This was a major security breach that cannot be allowed to happen again." - "clearly, too many people have access to too much top secret information."</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>- Airman Teixeira was arrested under the Espionage Act, violations of which carry a penalty of up to 10 years prison per count.</p>

Figure 37 shows Ivan's responses to the sections on extreme language and numbers and stats. On the section on extreme language, he identified two quotations from the article. The first was "This was a major security breach that cannot be allowed again." Interestingly, Ivan felt this was an important sentence because he included it again in his section on quoted words. By quoting this sentence, Ivan demonstrated proficient ability. He could have improved his response by explaining what was extreme and why the person saying it might use that language. For his second quote, Ivan wrote, "Those reforms clearly weren't effective though." Again, Ivan did not provide sufficient explanation to effectively analyze the use and effect of extreme language. Additionally, he utilized this quote in the quoted words section, which suggests its importance but fails to explain such.

Figure 37

Ivan's CML 3 Worksheet – Extreme Language and Numbers/Stats

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>"This was a major security breach that cannot be allowed again"</p> <p>"these reforms clearly weren't effective though"</p>
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>± 10,000 for top secret clearance</p> <p>± 100,000 for secret clearance</p>

Jerry did not respond to the section on extreme language. However, his response to the section on number and stats demonstrated proficient ability by identifying a quotation from the article that demonstrated that characteristic. He also used this quotation for his quoted words section, indicating its importance. However, he did not provide additional context or explanation as to how or why this vague reference to an amount was used in the article. A copy of his response to this section can be seen in Figure 38.

Figure 38

Jerry's CML 3 Worksheet – Numbers/Stats

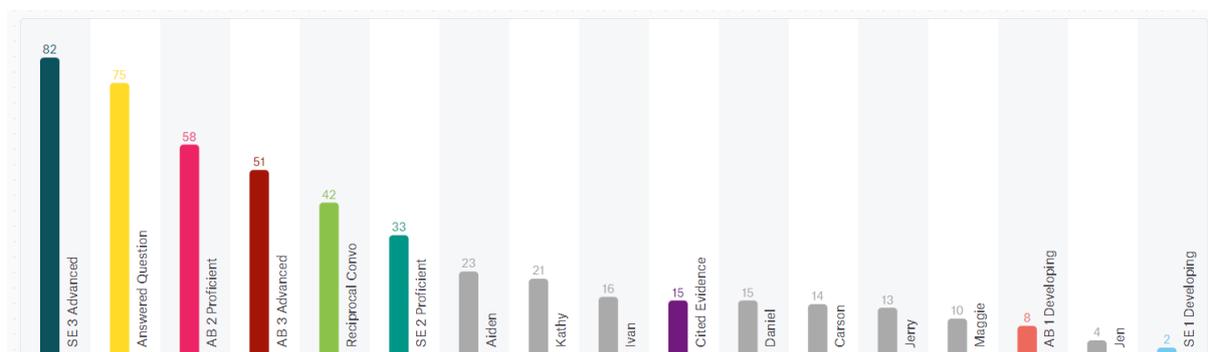
<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>"Clearly too many people have access to too much top secret information"</p>
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Participant Observation 3

For the discussion during week three, students again used the fishbowl structure with an inner and an outer circle. Students were randomly assigned to their small inner-circle groups using the website Wheel of Names. The first group contained Carson, Jen, and Jerry; the second group contained Daniel and Ivan; the third group contained Maggie, Aiden, and Kathy. The first two groups spoke during the same class period, and the third group spoke on the following day. Students reported that having a clear speaking order was beneficial the previous week, so this same protocol was utilized during week three. Students continued to use the “snowball” question method, but this week, the teacher added her own prepared question; the intention was to address the issue of unclear or repeated questions that students reported the previous week. Like the students, the teacher wrote these questions on sheets of paper and added them to the group; unfortunately, this decision was spontaneous and the teacher-researcher did not maintain a list of the questions she added.

Figure 39

Coded Transcripts for CML 3 Discussion



A copy of the coded transcripts for the discussion on CML 3 can be seen in Figure 39. In the third discussion, students most often demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy with eighty-two occurrences of this level. There were thirty-three instances of proficient self-efficacy and two instances of developing self-efficacy. Students tended to respond to questions posed rather than engage in reciprocal conversation; there were seventy-five

instances of question response and forty-two of reciprocal conversation. Aiden and Kathy had the highest frequency of verbal contribution to the discussion; Aiden spoke twenty-three times, and Kathy spoke twenty-one times. Ivan, Daniel, Carson, and Jerry all spoke a moderate number of times that ranged from thirteen to sixteen. Maggie spoke ten times, and Jen spoke the least amount with four contributions.

Of their contributions, Daniel and Ivan demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy. Daniel demonstrated open body language and held his head up; he sat on a stool during the discussion rather than a student desk, which may have contributed. He frequently asked follow-up questions and maintained eye contact when directly speaking with other students, which he often did with Ivan. Daniel's comments often connected the topic to more relatable experiences for the other students. For example, in considering someone's clearance level and job, Daniel said, "If someone's a chef at the White House, they shouldn't know everything that happens but because they're at the White House, I'm not saying this is true, but they might [be] given certain information that they have no reason to be having." Although Ivan appeared to have closed-off body language with crossed arms and eyes that looked down, his voice sounded steady and confident. He offered detailed explanations and respectfully disagreed at times. When he spoke directly to one student, he maintained eye contact. Most of Ivan's contributions responded to his peers and offered an overview of both sides of the topic. For example, in considering whether people should be trusted with classified information at a young age, Ivan stated, "I think it's a debatable like why should they or if they should be trusted with such important information, it just comes down to the amount of work that they put in and the qualifications they have, but at the same time, that's just statistics. It's not the person that they are. So I feel like most of the time, they shouldn't be. I mean, most of us in here 18 like Jen said, like, half of us don't even know what we're doing, right? Like some of us have an idea of what we're going to do after high school, not just college, but like what we

want to do as a career. So what really makes the difference if this person has a career but it doesn't mean that they're still pushing out 100% knowing what they're going to do so . . .”

In the discussion for CML 3, Carson, Aiden, Maggie, Kathy, and Jerry demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of verbal self-efficacy. Carson was quick to answer questions, and he often referred to the text from memory without having to directly reference it. At the beginning of the conversation, Carson summarized the main idea of the article without having to reference it: “What this says is that they have a pause and they kind of say that they don't really have everything figured out. They don't really know how to like control. People that have the ability to access this information and they don't really know how to like, make sure it doesn't get leaked. So we're trying to figure that out now.” Although his comment did not offer new ideas, it served to provide context for the discussion. Aiden often referred to the text for his discussion contributions. While he would make eye contact when he was speaking directly to someone, he otherwise had his hand resting on his face and his foot tapping. Aiden was particularly engaged in when the conversation discussed the trustworthiness of young adults in the military. He was willing to admit when he did not know something. When his group was discussing what qualified something as “top secret,” he admitted, “Yeah I have no idea honestly.” He was also willing to deepen the conversation. For example, after he asked, “should someone serve extreme jail time for leaking information” and a peer responded with a simple “yeah, I think so,” Aiden asked a follow-up question that he thought of in the moment: “Do you think that 10 years was reasonable though? Is that enough time?” Maggie demonstrated proficient to advanced verbal self-efficacy, particularly when she asked a redirecting question without prompting and then looked around the group for a response. After the group had discussed possible motivations to leak information, there was approximately a thirty-second period of silence before anyone spoke. Although it was not Maggie’s responsibility to ask the next question, she nevertheless asked, “How does this leak

affect the U.S.'s reputation on a global scale?" While most of Maggie's answers to questions were brief, she engaged in the conversation by asking questions to prompt the group to continue the discussion.

Kathy volunteered to ask the first question and get the discussion started: "If you were the one arrested. Would you say it was for a good cause? I would say yes. Because because you're not gonna incriminate yourself. Right? Right, right. Yeah, I would say yes. Would any of you say no?" Since the question was one created by the teacher, she responded to clarify the intended question. After the teacher clarified that question was asking if there was a worthy cause presented in the article, Kathy responded, "No, I don't think it would be a good for a good cause. You just like kind of ruin your life. Going to jail." After nonverbal consensus from the group, she continued to say, "You work so hard to get your job and now it's just like out the window." Although no one else responded to her final comment, Kathy's willingness to be corrected in front of her peers and her sustained effort to answer the question demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy. Throughout the remainder of the discussion, Kathy frequently responded with simple answers, such as when the group discussed what it meant for something to be "top secret." Kathy responded, "I feel Like it's just your opinion on what you think top secret is." Although she did not elaborate, she provided brief responses on different topics throughout the conversation.

Like Kathy, Jerry volunteered to ask the first question for his group. Throughout the conversation, he started to engage more frequently and asked follow-up questions. Most notably was his willingness to think aloud as he processed information. At the beginning of the discussion, Jerry admitted to being unfamiliar with the topic before reading the article and explained the significance of such: "I didn't hear much about this. So like if you think if this was like, more widely known or more mainstream information, you would think we would have more outrage and push for this to be fixed." Approximately fifteen minutes into the

conversation, Jerry shared how he was processing the information they had discussed: “I’m starting to think it’s like more of like, this generation and age stuff because a lot of the documents were posted on like, Thug Shaker’s online gaming group’s chat so I think that that like kind of gives us a hint. I think we just like assume like what the people would like look like and like, be with the just that name like online gaming. So like, that just makes me think like people our age and possibly like around it have a tendency to be more into like just this type of stuff.”

Jen demonstrated a proficient level of self-efficacy. Early in the conversation, she offered an opinion but seemed nervous; she fidgeted with her earring and did not elaborate on her opinion. She answered a question by saying, “Yeah. I think if you give them a long time in jail, then it’ll scare other people from doing it. So I think they should get a harsh punishment for the crimes.” Later in the conversation, Jen appeared more comfortable because she looked around the group while speaking, as if she were inviting them to engage with her. Her contribution toward the end of the conversation also provided more detail than her earlier one. Jen answered a question asking if the age of a person determined their trustworthiness by saying, “It said something in the article where it was like so if you’re like 18 and you’re going into the military clearly there’s stuff that you’re going to learn like some some like information, you know, so it kind of comes with it. But at the same time, you know, like, I’m 18 and I can’t imagine like, knowing any kind of class classified like information, but, I mean, if you’re, you know, willing to die in the military, I guess it’s like, it kind of just comes with it. But I think there’s certain levels to like the classified stuff.”

There were fifty-eight demonstrations of proficient ability, fifty-one of advanced, and eight of developing in the discussions for CML 3. Additionally, students cited evidence fifteen times. Students’ discussions tended to focus on three questions: What is the motivation to leak classified documents? How should such actions be punished? What makes

a person trustworthy enough to have access to classified information? In considering why someone would leak classified information, Carson suggested financial incentives: "I mean, some people do it just to get money, because that's valuable. So I think the pay could be a lot where they would get a good amount of money but other than that I don't really see the benefits." Kathy and Aiden struggled to understand how there could be any reason that was "good enough" to merit such a risk; Kathy was concerned with the punishment and Aiden was concerned with how it would affect a person's reputation. After hearing ideas from his peers, Aiden changed his mind to comment, "Aiden commented, "Someone names a price high enough. Just give it up." Someone brought up the topic of how people will do anything for a certain amount of money, to which others interpreted "anything" to mean murder. Kathy seemed surprised and upset that her peers would murder for money. Maggie said, "I wouldn't murder anyone. But I know there's a lot of people out there that like they they would murder someone for like the right amount."

Students were very interested in what constituted an appropriate punishment for leaking classified information. Daniel asserted that, "I feel like they have to be punished in some way or another or else it's just you're pretty much saying Do what you want." Kathy and Ivan both expressed that there should be a consequence to a clear violation of a rule. Daniel, Ivan, and Jen felt ten years in jail was appropriate. Carson agreed that the amount of jail time needed to be significant: "Yeah. I think if you give them a long time in jail, then it'll scare other people from doing it. So I think they should get a harsh punishment for the crimes." Aiden questioned if ten years in jail was a harsh enough punishment, and he asked the group, "Do you think that 10 years was reasonable though? Is that enough time?" Kathy agreed: "Yeah, I honestly would have done more" before asking the group, "What do you think could be like the highest?" Aiden suggested twenty-five years.

Students also demonstrated concern over how future leaks could be prevented, and they generally agreed that it depended on limiting access to secure documents to only trustworthy individuals. However, they struggled to determine what would make someone trustworthy. Jerry felt that “there’s always gonna be someone that’s not gonna be trustworthy.” When another student suggested that age could be a determining factor, Jerry struggled to form an opinion. The student’s suggestion was that if a person was old enough to join the military and risk their life for their country, then they should be old enough to be trusted with sensitive information. Thinking aloud, Jerry responded, “I think age doesn't really matter with the trustworthiness. I think it's really experience. Well, actually, yeah, I guess age really does kind of matter. How long they've been with like, being so like, like, important to us and like, how severe it is. They like understand and hold them accountable. Like you would know what they're like so you can trust them.” Ivan suggested that a person’s actions and character should be taken into consideration beyond simply their age. Aiden stated, “I don't really think age matters. I think it's more of just like, experience and the trustworthiness.” He also admitted that trustworthiness could be a murky term by adding, “But I don't know how you make someone like trustworthy like, what do you do?” Maggie and Kathy shared Aiden’s uncertainty in knowing whether or not someone is trustworthy. Maggie asked if there was some sort of test, and Kathy commented that whatever requirements were already in place to gain military security clearance were not sufficient. Ivan suggested a possible change to the clearance process: “I feel like there should be more of a committee not just a selection system, in itself like a check off the boxes. You know, it should go down to just like how representatives for the White House when it comes down to like how they're selected. They go from very deep intel from back when they were like a child just to see who they really are as a person.”

Exit Ticket 3

On his exit ticket after the discussion, Daniel reported that on a scale of 1-10, he felt that reading the article was an 8.5 in difficulty and added that “It was mostly just high officials talking.” In asking questions, he rated his comfort level at 10. While he felt “It was an interesting topic” he noted that there was “not much to be debated.” He rated his comfort level responding to peers as a 9, explaining “I was fine answering, but it was just me and Ivan talking.” He reflected that “People don't talk, it's either no one, or 2 people going back and forth.”

In his exit ticket, Ivan reported feeling comfortable reading the article: “Pretty easy to read & analyze. Yes it could get boring at times but it was an easy read overall.” In asking questions, he said he felt it was “easy except my group sucked so I was the only one talking.” In responding to others, he said he felt “very comfortable & confident.” He suggested that he would like to “have better interactions with each other” in future discussions.

In his exit ticket, Carson reported that he “was very comfortable reading/analyzing this text. I didn't struggle understanding the context of the text.” In regard to asking questions, he shared, “I was comfortable asking questions during the discussion because I felt like I understood the topic well.” He also felt comfortable responding to peers because “the discussion questions were open-minded, so it was easy to discuss the article with peers.” However, he suggested better regulation of the questions for future discussions: “Maybe take out questions after they've been asked or try and limit the questions about the same topic.”

Week 4: NFL Contracts

For the fourth week, students were again offered three topics. These topics were chosen by the teacher-researcher in response to students' suggestions. The topic that received the most votes was NFL contracts. The article that was selected and assigned was titled “Jalen Hurts' Contract a Reminder of the Realities for Lamar Jackson.” It was published by

the left-leaning outlet of *Andscape*, which is partnered with The Walt Disney Co. It scored a 3 out of 4 using Beers & Probst's (2016) nonfiction complexity rubric, which can be found in Appendix A.

CML Worksheet 4

Figure 40

Student's Demonstrated Written Ability on the CML Worksheet for Week 4

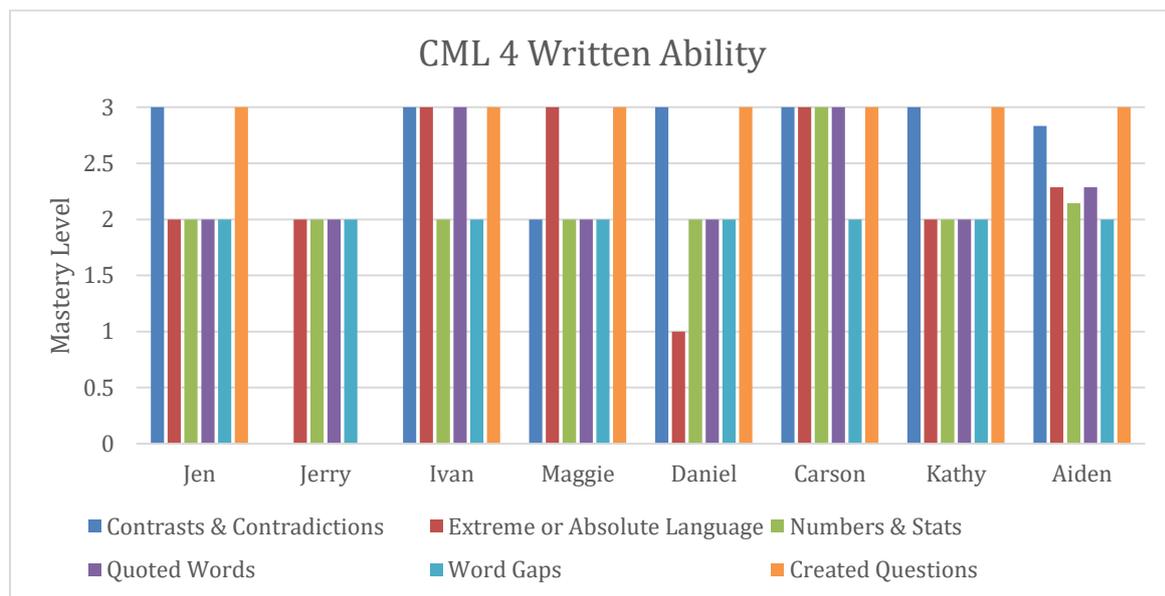


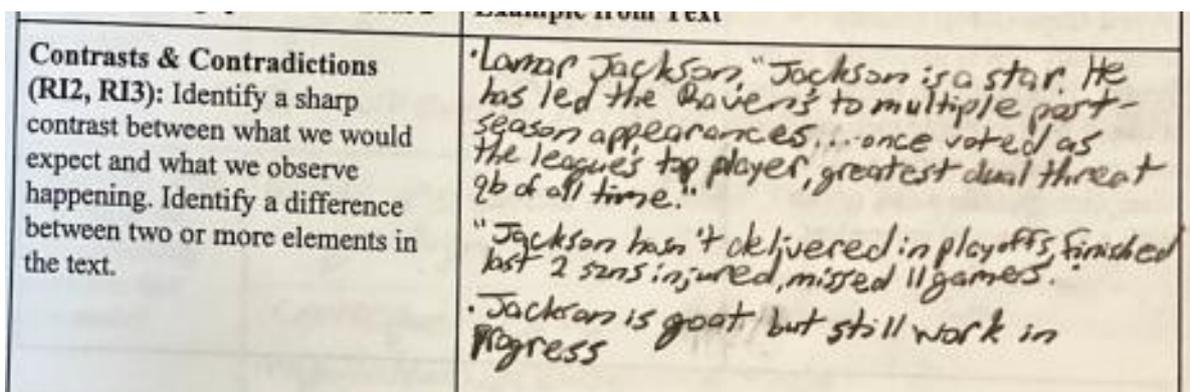
Figure 40 depicts students' demonstrated ability levels on the worksheet for CML 4. Ivan, Maggie, Daniel, and Carson completed all sections. Jerry completed all but two sections. Aiden was absent the day students read the article and completed the worksheet, and he did not submit a completed worksheet after his return. The section with the highest levels of demonstrated ability was created questions, followed by contrasts and contradictions. All students who completed the section on completed questions demonstrated advanced ability.

For the section on contrasts and contradictions, Jen, Ivan, Daniel, Carson, and Kathy all demonstrated advanced ability; Maggie demonstrated proficient ability; and Jerry did not attempt the section. Maggie provided two quotations where she identified a contrast. The first was, "Jackson is a star. He has led the Ravens to multiple post-season appearances . . . once voted as the league's top player, greatest dual threat qb of all time." The second quotation

was, “Jackson hasn’t delivered in playoffs, finished last two season injured, missed 11 games.” To explain, Maggie wrote, “Jackson is goat but still work in progress.” Although she identified a contraction and provided textual evidence, Maggie’s response is proficient rather than advanced because it does not explain the importance of that contradiction more deeply. A copy of Maggie’s response can be seen in Figure 41.

Figure 41

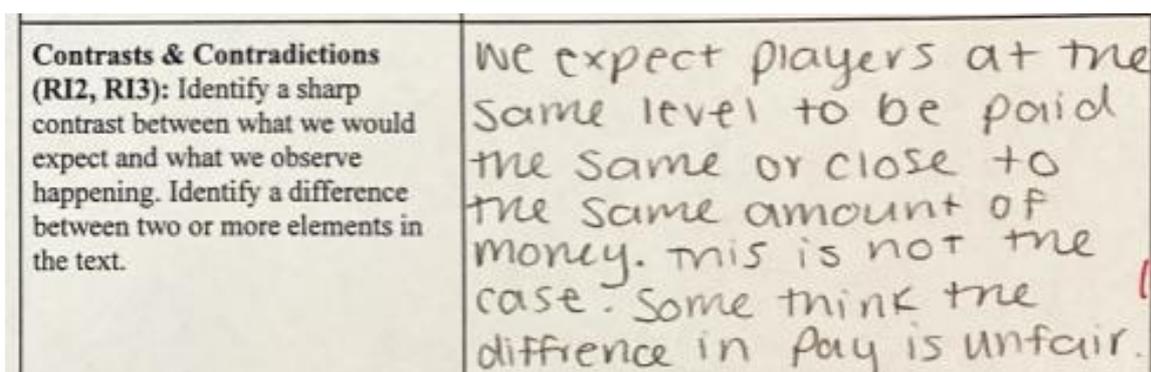
Maggie’s CML 4 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions



In contrast, Kathy explained, “We expect players at the same level to be paid the same or close to the same amount of money. This is not the case. Some think the difference in pay is unfair.” Kathy’s response demonstrated advanced ability in her ability to reflect on her own expectations as a reader and connect it with a section of the text. A copy of Kathy’s response can be seen in Figure 42.

Figure 42

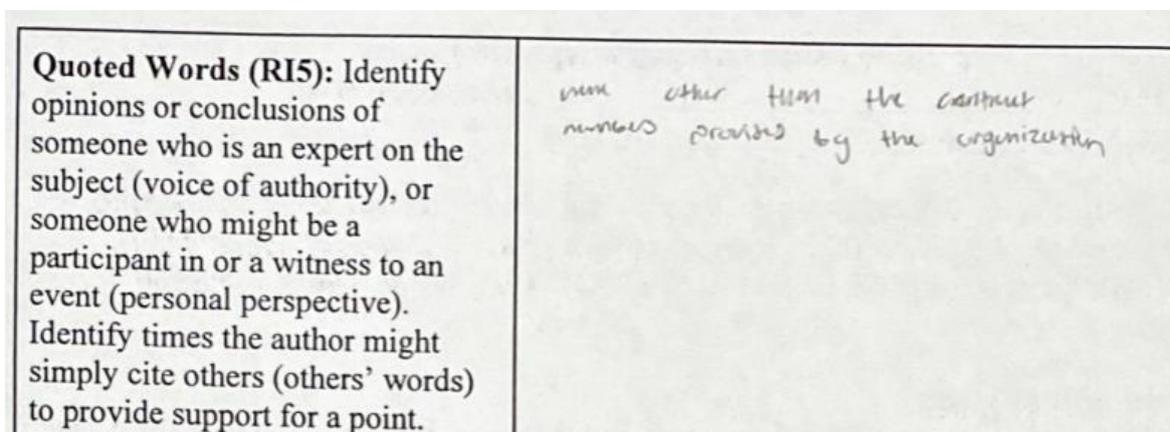
Kathy’s CML 4 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions



Students demonstrated proficient to advanced ability on the sections identifying quoted words. Ivan and Carson demonstrated advanced ability, and all other students who attempted the section demonstrated proficient ability. Ivan's response observes that regarding quoted words, there were "none other than the contract numbers provided by the organization." Although his response could elaborate more on why this instance of quoted words matters, he adeptly identifies a clear gap in quoted words and suggests that it is problematic. A copy of Ivan's response to this section can be seen in Figure 43.

Figure 43

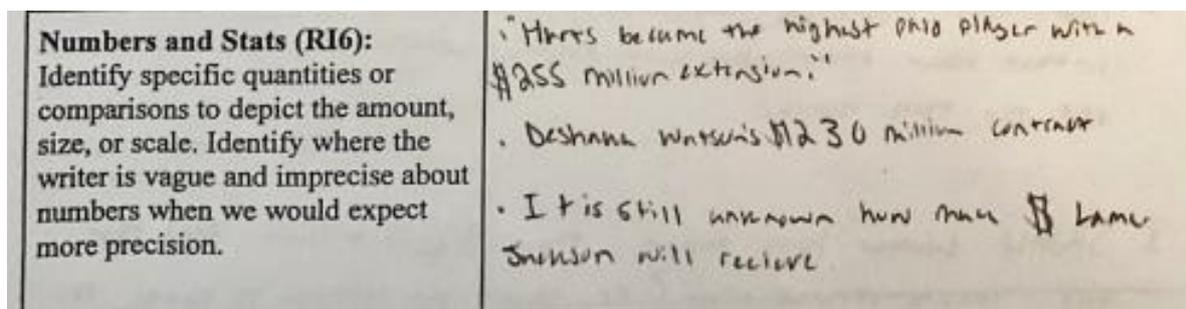
Ivan's CML 4 Worksheet – Quoted Words



Most students demonstrated proficient ability in identifying numbers and stats; Carson was the only student who demonstrated an advanced ability for this category. A copy of his worksheet can be seen in Figure 44. For his response, Carson noted the numbers associated with three different football players' contracts. He wrote, "Hurts became the highest paid player with a \$255 million extension . . . Deshaun Watson's \$230 million contract . . . It is still unknown how much \$ Lamar Jackson will receive." Carson's response carefully notes the monetary amount two players have already received in their contracts before connecting it to the primary subject of the article, Lamar Jackson.

Figure 44

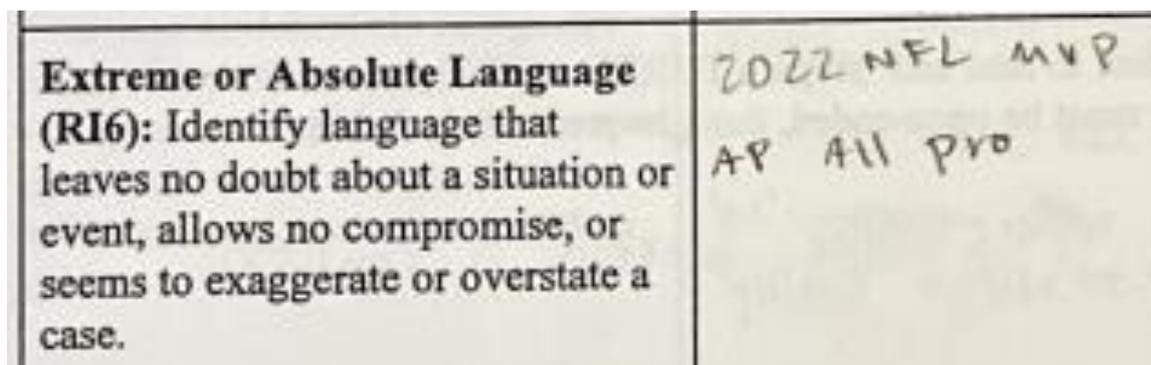
Carson's CML 4 Worksheet – Numbers/Stats



Students demonstrated a ranging ability on the section for extreme language; Daniel demonstrated developing ability; Jen, Jerry, and Kathy demonstrated proficient ability; Ivan, Maggie, and Carson demonstrated advanced ability. For this section, Daniel wrote, “2022 NFL MVP” and “AP All Pro” without providing additional context or explanation as to how those phrases demonstrated extreme language. A copy of Daniel’s response can be seen in Figure 45.

Figure 45

Daniel’s CML 4 Worksheet – Extreme Language



On the section for word gaps, all students demonstrated proficient ability. For her response, Jen recorded three unfamiliar words: demonstrably, apoplectic, and unprecedented. Although her notes reflect that she was able to identify unfamiliar words, she does not provide further context that might clarify her understanding and allow her to demonstrate a more advanced ability. A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 46.

Figure 46

Jen’s CML 4 Worksheet – Word Gaps

<p>Word Gaps (RI4): Identify vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the reader. This might be because it is a word with multiple meanings, a rare or technical word, a discipline-specific word, or one with a far-removed antecedent.</p>	<p>- demonstrably - apoplectic - unprecedented</p>
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Other words students noted as unfamiliar included lucrative, apoplectic, odious, and catbird seat. Carson is the only student to identify the phrase “catbird seat” as unfamiliar; as the teacher-researcher, I, too thought the phrase was uncommon, so I included it in a discussion question asking students why the author might choose to use that phrase and how it might affect readers.

Participant Observation 4

For the second half of the study, students simultaneously participated in an assigned discussion group. After collaboration with the observing teacher, the teacher-researcher intentionally assigned students into groups based on their discussion performance thus far. One group contained Daniel, Jen, and Jerry, and another group contained Aiden, Ivan, and Kathy. A third group contained only non-participants. Carson and Maggie were absent and unable to participate in the week four discussion. This change in the discussion structure eliminated the observational role, which many students reported caused feelings of boredom or discomfort. It also allowed all discussions to occur within one class period, rather than two; this shortened time was necessary due to curricular demands unrelated to the study. A laptop was provided to each group, and Otter.ai was used to document and transcribe an audio recording of each group’s discussion. There was not adequate technology or personnel to ensure an audio and video recording of all groups when they discussed at the same time. The discussion groups were assigned by the teacher-researcher with the intention of balancing students of different skill and confidence levels. These groups remained static for

the remainder of the study, which ensured that students participated in discussions with fewer peers, all of whom they had previously interacted with. For the discussion on CML 4, the teacher reserved space in the school's media center. The intention was to provide additional space so that the groups could spread out more. Once again, the teacher asked students to record their prepared questions on sheets of paper; instead of crumpling the paper, students folded their questions and placed it in a cup. The teacher-researcher once again prepared original questions as well as enhanced some of the prepared questions students had previously submitted, and these questions were already in the cup that students added more questions to. A copy of the questions the teacher enhanced as well as her original questions can be found in Appendix H.

Figure 47

Coded Transcripts for CML 4 Discussions

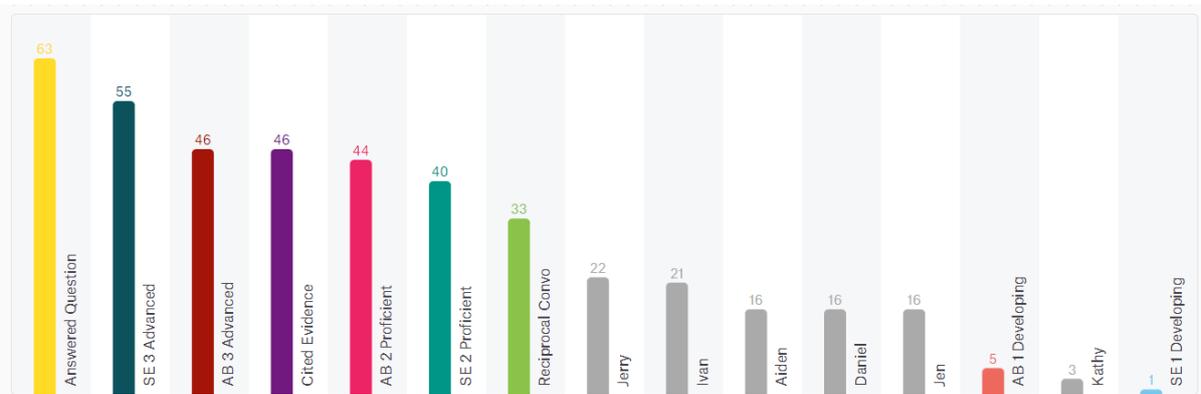


Figure 47 visually represents the coded transcripts for the discussions for CML 4. In the fourth discussion, students most often demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy with fifty-five occurrences of this level. There were forty instances of proficient self-efficacy and one instance of developing self-efficacy. Students tended to respond to questions posed rather than engage in reciprocal conversation; there were sixty-three instances of question response and thirty-three of reciprocal conversation. Jerry and Ivan had the highest frequency of verbal contribution to the discussion; Jerry spoke twenty-two times, and Ivan spoke twenty-one

times. Aiden, Daniel, and Jen all spoke a moderate number of times with sixteen contributions each. Kathy had the lowest number with three contributions. Carson and Maggie were absent the day of the discussion, so their verbal self-efficacy could not be assessed this week.

Of his contributions, Jerry demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of self-efficacy. During the discussion, he both responded to posed questions and engaged in reciprocal conversation. As was the case for CML 3, Jerry once again demonstrated his willingness to think aloud. For instance, as his peers discussed Jackson's contract, Jerry commented, "I'm like this is, I'm starting to see like he's kind of being selfish." Initially, Jerry appeared to support Jackson when he questioned the article's representation of Jackson: "This is what like second person? Like we're hearing this and like, you know, I don't know the right words, but we're not hearing it straight from the person. It's like a filter." As the conversation continued, however, Jerry began to question whether Jackson deserved more money than his contract offered. When his group discussed the physical risk athletes took in comparison to their financial compensation they received, Jerry said, "You could reach like these certain expectations and like heights and stuff, but like you're falling short, and I don't know if the money is really what you should be given." During the conversation, Jerry shifted from believing that Jackson deserved more money to feeling unsure about it.

Like Jerry, Ivan demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of self-efficacy in the discussion. In his group, Ivan volunteered to ask the first question. Throughout the conversation, he often looked down and fidgeted with the strips of paper containing the questions. However, he maintained a steady tone and responded to opinions to keep the conversation going. Ivan opened the discussion by sharing his opinion: "I think it's just the fact that he [Jackson] hasn't delivered in the playoffs. That's the only shortcoming there

is . . . if you look at these achievements, they outweigh the shortcomings that they said, so I don't really see a problem with him asking for more money."

Daniel also demonstrated proficient to advanced levels of self-efficacy during the conversation. During the conversation, Daniel frequently suggested controversial ideas and then observed as his peers discussed. For instance, when discussing salary for professional athletes, Daniel suggested that more money "could demotivate people. Cause like if you get 200 mil and then just upfront you don't want to play as well because you already have the money. You're set for life." He also introduced the possibility that Jackson, the player whose contract was being debated, may not be a likable teammate; Daniel suggested, "We also don't know how he's like to the other players. We just know like how he is money wise. So like the Raven people might not want to sign him because he's just a bad dude. And they don't want him on the team because he might not be good in the locker room. Might be irresponsible with stuff."

Jen also demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of verbal self-efficacy for CML

4. Although she had access to teacher-prepared questions, Jen chose to ask an original question: "One of the questions that I put, *should newer players receive more money because they're in the spotlight more than older players?* Because I mean, anytime my dad's like watching football or anything, they're always talking about the newer players, and they're always being like 'Oh well, you know, they're like excelling, blah, blah, blah.'" Jen demonstrated advanced self-efficacy by asking an original question and sharing a personal experience with her peers. Throughout the conversation, Jen frequently interjected to show her reactions and agreement with peers. For instance, at one point, Jerry commented, "these numbers [NFL contracts] don't even sound real to me," and Jen added, "They don't! Especially like being in econ. This is crazy to me." Such an instance allowed Jen to validate her peer's opinion and expand upon it with her own reaction.

Although Aiden was absent for the previous class, he quickly read the article and demonstrated proficient levels of self-efficacy during the discussion. Although he fidgeted with the question strips, he answered questions and leaned back into a more relaxed sitting position. Aiden relied on his prior knowledge of sports to aid in the conversation. For example, when his group discussed the physical risk professional athletes take, Aiden cited an example from outside the article: “There was a guy on the Colts that played for like six years, but he had to quit because he got a punctured liver, so he quit playing football. So like, you never know how long your career will last even if you are a quarterback.”

Kathy demonstrated the lowest participation in the discussions. Despite only having three substantial contributions, she did have small moments of response to her peers. For example, when another student expressed disbelief about the amount football players get paid, Kathy nodded her head and said, “Yeah.” She behaved in a similar manner when her peers discussed post-football opportunities, such as acting in commercials or owning car dealerships. Her lengthier contributions often consisted of clarifying questions or statements. For instance, when Jackson was compared to another football player, Kathy asked, “Isn’t that what like the difference [is] between the two? Like one played in the Super Bowl and one didn’t?” Kathy appeared comfortable despite her lack of knowledge at times. For instance, when her group read the teacher-prepared question asking about the article’s use of the phrase “catbird seat,” Kathy was the first in her group to respond and admit that she did not know what the phrase meant. After she responded, two other peers shared her same response, but Kathy’s willingness to admit to not knowing demonstrated a moment of advanced self-efficacy.

There were forty-six instances of advanced ability, forty-four of proficient, and five of developing in the discussions for CML 4. Additionally, students cited evidence forty-six times. Students were interested in the article’s perspective, and several noted that there was

not much direct information from the article's subject. Ivan noticed that the article "only had one quote direct from Jackson" and suggested that it might "make the reader feel a little bit more biased towards one opinion or the other . . . To almost feel like as if Jackson was in the wrong or in the right . . . Given that . . . the one quote that they did quote him on was about his guarantee, basically how they're overlooking him. I don't feel like you would put that in the article if he didn't think it was necessary." Jerry observed that "a lot of this [the article] is like, from a sports watcher standpoint" rather than "hearing it like straight from the person. It's like a filter." Daniel added that "Lamar doesn't really get a say. They say a Twitter post [of Lamar Jackson], but there's no actual quotes of what he says. It's all just 'he said this' but not word-for-word." He added, "that Tweet can be taken with a context. It can be taken two different ways." Jerry responded to Daniel to verbalize the two perspectives: "Mmhm. I feel like this is a bias of Lamar like for him. Because with that being like what's it called, the only direct quote, I feel like they're trying to show that he is like being the victim here . . . And there just isn't exactly enough information to show both sides like why they're not wanting to pay him this, but there's a lot more showing that they should pay him [so much] compared to other people."

Students demonstrated an understanding for Jackson wanting more money in his NFL contract as well as the team, the Ravens, wanting to invest the money in a player that would perform certain standards. Ivan felt that Jackson's only shortcoming was "the fact that he hasn't delivered in the playoffs." As a result, Ivan felt "these achievements, they outweigh the shortcomings . . . so I don't really see a problem with him asking for more money." Thinking aloud, Jerry shared, "When you really start to think about it, you can understand the Ravens' dilemma, like why they didn't want to give him as much [money] . . . I mean, he missed eleven games." Daniel suggested off-field behavior might be a factor in the Ravens' hesitation: "We also don't know how he's like to the other players . . . he might not be good

in the locker room.” Jerry raised the question of “if sports athletes should really be paid this much,” and Jen agreed that “it’s a lot of money,” later adding “I think that’s crazy. That amount of money [\$200 million] is crazy.” Daniel suggested that “Lamar [is] probably also not thinking of himself like ‘Oh, I missed eleven games, that makes my value go down.’ He’s thinking ‘I’m this good. I need this much.’ Instead of thinking, ‘Okay, how much am I worth as a person and a player instead of just on the field?’” Aiden suggested, “it’s hard to tell if someone’s worth 255 million.” Ivan added, “it’s hard to justify any type of money if we’re not in their shoes.” He then offered a relatable comparison: “for us, our closest to that [NFL contracts] would probably be like scholarship offers, like quarter-ride, half-ride, full-ride. But how would you demand more? What really makes us able to demand more money or demand a better ride?” Aiden responded by saying, “I don’t think you can unless you have some say in it. Like unless you’re one of the best I guess.” Students were also interested in understanding how off-field behavior could affect employment and payment. Students alluded to another NFL player, Deshaun Watson; they felt that he did not deserve another contract in the NFL. Ivan, Jen, and Jerry felt strongly that players are “in the spotlight” and “represent that team.” However, Jerry noted “if it’s like allegations with no clear conclusion, just tell him not to do it again or something like that.” Aiden suggested “it depends on what you do. Cause if you do what he [Deshaun Watson] did then yeah, you probably should not get any more money.”

Exit Ticket 4

On his exit ticket, Daniel reported feeling “fine” reading the article. Regarding asking questions, Daniel said he felt a comfort level of “10” and added “Everyone else had thoughts and talked w/everyone.” In considering his responses to others, he noted that there were “a few tough questions but we all agreed.” However, he seemed unhappy with the agreement

because he suggested “discussions or debates. Debates could last forever but a discussion dies out if everyone flawlessly agrees w/each other.”

On his exit ticket, Aiden explained “I wasn’t here so I didn’t really read the article, but I do like watching sports, so I know what we were talking about.” He reported feeling comfortable asking and responding to questions, noting that “I was comfortable because I like talking about sports related matters.” He suggested that “we should do more sports articles or something that involves sports.”

On her exit ticket, Kathy said, “I was comfortable reading/analyzing the text. I struggled a little bit understanding it b/c I’m not big on football.” She reported feeling “very comfortable” asking questions and “comfortable responding to the questions.” She added “I wasn’t big on the article, so I didn’t have a lot of background knowledge.”

Week 5: Ticketing Industry

For week five, students were again presented with a list and description of topics through Microsoft Forms. The topic most students chose was “Ticketing Industry.” The assigned article was titled “New Senate Bill Would Push Ticket Sellers to Disclose Fees Upfront,” and it was published by the centered media outlet CNBC. Using the nonfiction text complexity rubric (Beers & Probst, 2016), the teacher-researcher scored the article as having an overall complexity of 2.5 out of 4. One reason for selecting an article with a lower complexity score than previous weeks was because the teacher-researcher asked students to find and read an additional article related to the subject. The intention behind having students read two articles was that the common article would provide an overview of the topic, and the second article would allow students the opportunity to practice CML skills and find an article that interested them.

CML Worksheet 5

While students were asked to read two articles for this week, students completed the CML worksheet using information only from the second article that they were responsible for finding and reading on their own.

Figure 48

Student's Demonstrated Written Ability on the CML Worksheet for Week 5

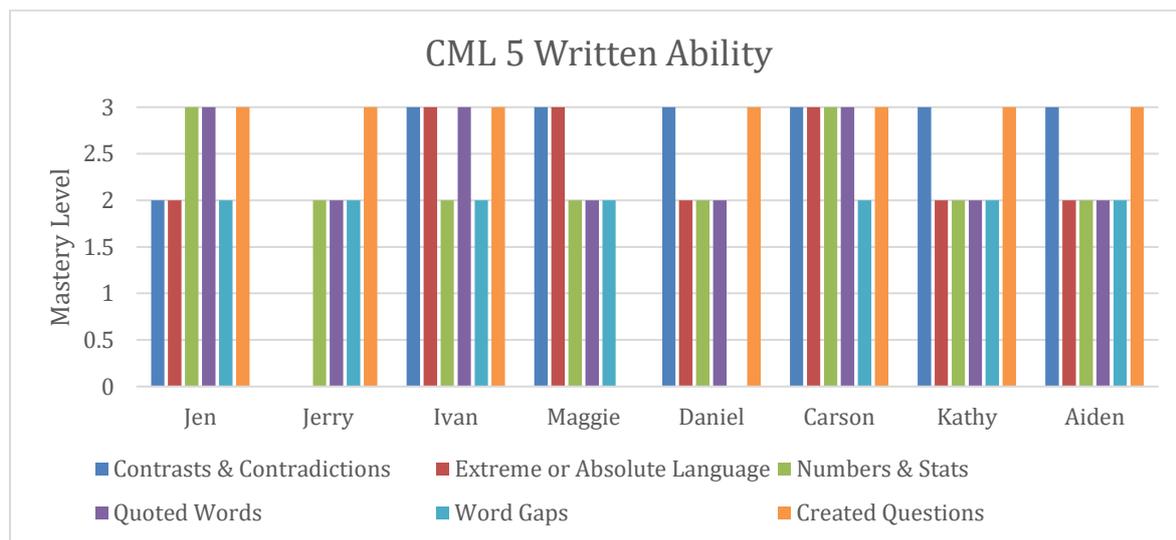
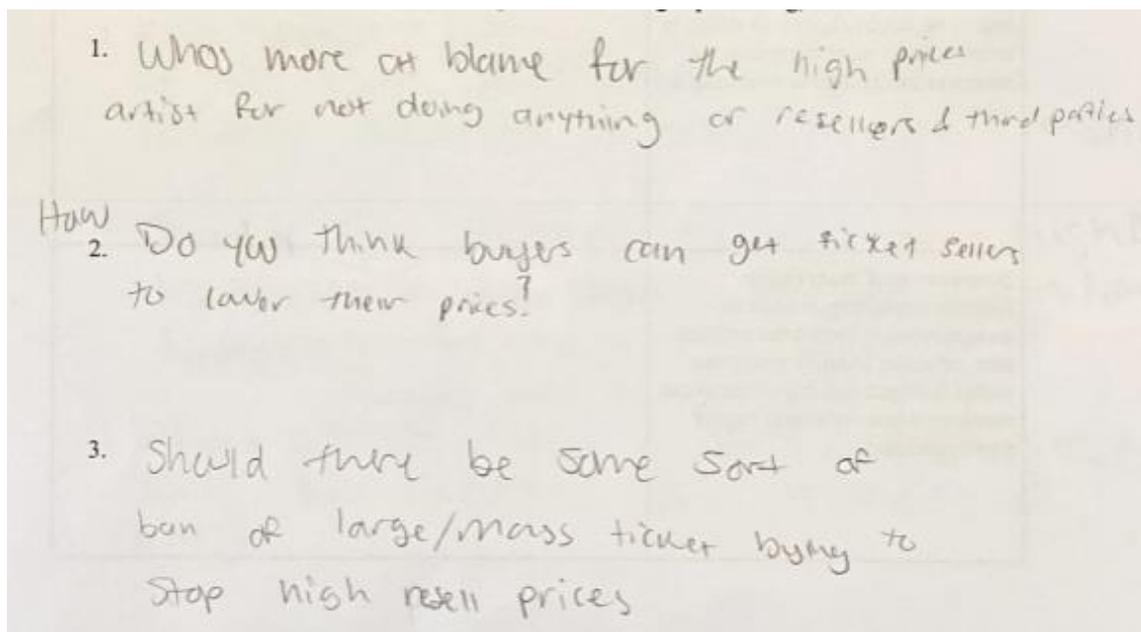


Figure 48 depicts students' demonstrated ability levels on the worksheet for CML 5, which covered the topic of the ticketing industry. Jen, Ivan, Carson, Kathy, and Aiden completed all sections of the worksheet; Maggie and Daniel completed all but one section; Jerry completed all but two sections. The section that students demonstrated the highest levels of mastery was created questions; all students who attempted the section demonstrated advanced ability. Created questions was the only section on which Jerry demonstrated advanced ability; a copy of his response can be seen in Figure 49. Jerry was interested in identifying the party responsible for the current problem as well as posing hypothetical solutions. In trying to determine fault, he asked, "Who's more at blame for the high prices—artists for not doing anything or resellers and third parties?" He then asked his peers to consider a solution: "How do you think buyers can get ticket sellers to lower their prices?"

For this second question, he initially omitted the “how,” which he later added to transform the question from a close- to an open-ended question. Although his final question remained close-ended, his wording offered peers the opportunity to elaborate upon their answer. He asked, “Should there be some sort of ban of large/mass ticket buying to stop high resell prices?”

Figure 49

Jerry's CML 5 Worksheet – Created Questions

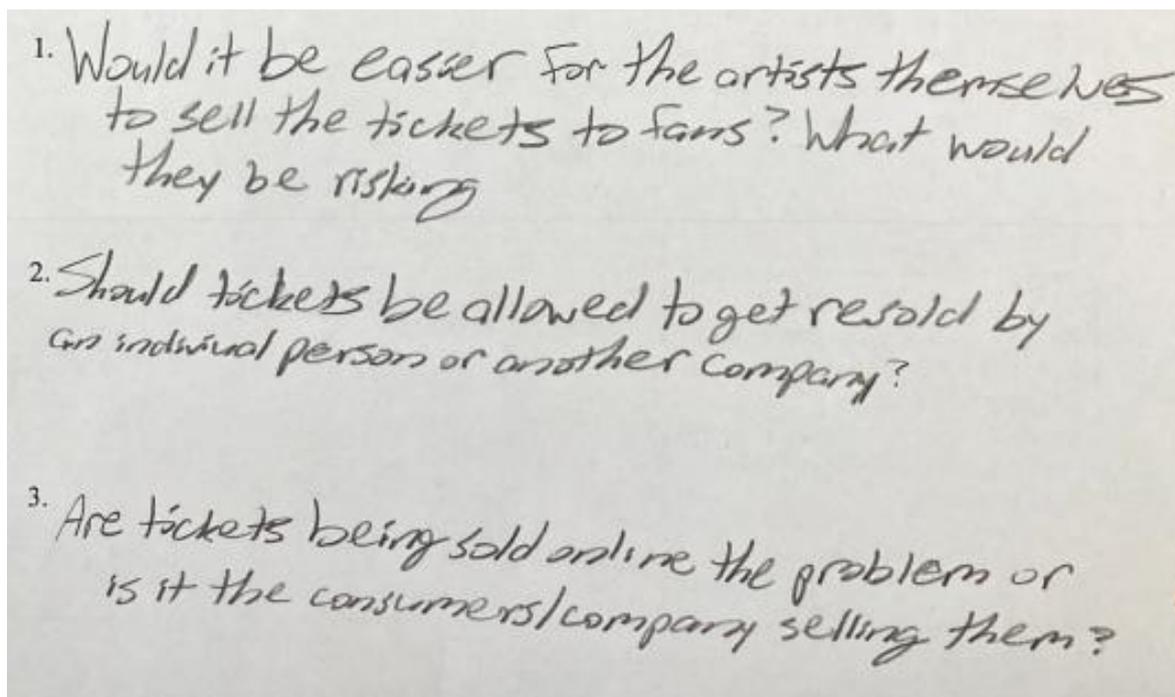


When she initially submitted her worksheet, Maggie did not prepare discussion questions. Thus, what appears in Figure 50 was completed and resubmitted after the discussion. This was the first time in the study that Maggie did not prepare discussion questions prior to the conversation; additionally, she completed the required three questions rather than adding a fourth question, as she had in past weeks. Maggie's first question asks her peers to choose between two options: “Would it be easier for the artists themselves to sell the tickets to fans? What would they be risking?” The follow-up question shows that she is considering possible barriers that might prevent or slow down the suggested sales restructuring. Her second question seems to build on the first; she asks, “Should tickets be

allowed to get resold by an individual person or another company?" Although close-ended, this question poses two options for students to choose from and then expand upon. For her third question, Maggie tried to better understand the root of the issue by asking, "Are tickets being sold online the problem or is it the consumers/company selling them?" Like Jerry, Maggie's third question seeks to identify the party most responsible for this issue.

Figure 50

Maggie's CML 5 Worksheet – Created Questions



Except for Jen, all students who attempted the section on contrasts and contradictions demonstrated advanced ability. Jen demonstrated proficient ability, and Jerry did not attempt the section. Notably, it was this section on which Daniel, Kathy, and Aiden demonstrated advanced ability whereas they demonstrated proficient ability on all other attempted sections. Jen's response included two direct quotations. For the first, she wrote, "Swift blamed Ticketmaster for the snafu, noting that there were a 'multitude of reasons why people had such a hard time' getting tickets." For her second, Jen recorded the article's citation of Taylor Swift: "I'm not going to make excuses for anyone because we asked them, multiple times, if

they could handle this kind of demand and they assured they could,' the singer wrote." A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 51.

Figure 51

Jen's CML 5 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>- "Swift blamed Ticketmaster for the snafu, noting that there were a "multitude of reasons why people had such a hard time getting tickets"</p> <p>- "I'm not going to make excuses for anyone because we asked them, multiple times, if they could handle this kind of demand & they assured they could." the singer wrote.</p>
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In contrast, other students demonstrated a more advanced ability by providing context to explain the contrast they identified. For example, Daniel's response blended his own expectation with information from the article. He wrote, "I would think most artists wouldn't care, but 'some big name artists have tried in their own ways to fight back.'" He then added that "Louis C.K. even made his own website" and "Neil Diamond was posting high prices on ticket sites."

Figure 52

Daniel's CML 5 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>I would think most artists wouldn't care out. "Some big name artists have tried in their own ways to fight back."</p> <p>Louis C.K. even made his own website</p> <p>Neil Diamond was posting high prices on ticket sites</p>
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Kathy likewise explained how the article contrasted with her expectations, even though she did not include a direct quotation. She wrote, "We observe that ticket sellers don't

tell where the fees are going to. There is a bill trying to be passed to prevent this.” Although her answer could add more explanation, it successfully identifies a contrast in her expectation and what she observed in the article, which is the task this section asks students to do. A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 53.

Figure 53

Kathy’s CML 5 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>We observe that ticket sellers dont tell where the fees are going to. There is a bill trying to be passed to prevent this.</p>
--	---

Aiden chose to identify a contrast within the article itself rather than include his own expectations. Aiden wrote, “This article tells you how much artists are really affected. Maggie Rogers, an indie pop star, is selling her tickets by herself so people don’t have to pay the fines they are charged when purchasing tickets.” In his response, Aiden outlined an issue and explained how an artist overcame it. A copy of his response can be seen in Figure 54.

Figure 54

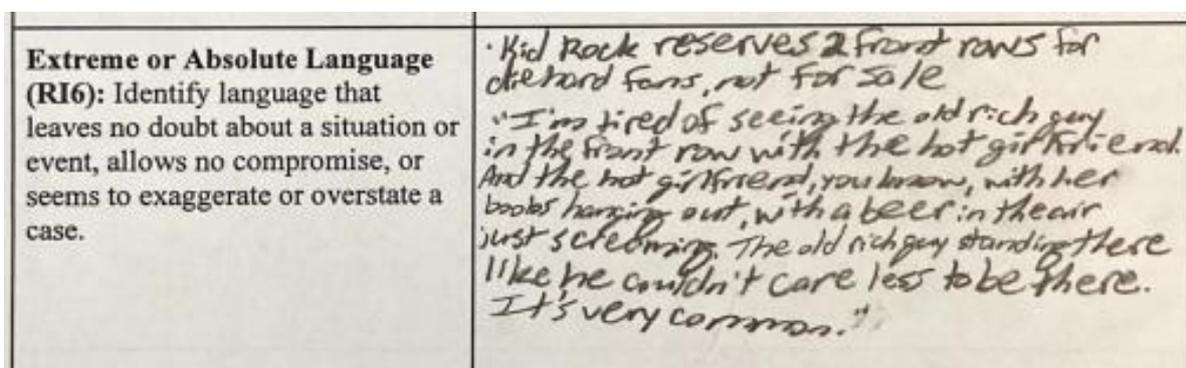
Aiden’s CML 5 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>This article tells you how much artists are really affected. Maggie Rogers, an indie pop star, is selling her tickets by herself so people dont have to pay the fines that are charged when purchasing tickets</p>
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For the sections on extreme language, numbers and statistics, and quoted words, students demonstrated proficient-to-advanced ability levels. For example, Maggie demonstrated advanced ability by providing a direct quotation from her article: “I’m tired of seeing the old rich guy in the front row with the hot girlfriend. And the hot girlfriend, you know, with her boobs hanging out, with a beer in the air just screaming. The old rich guy standing there like he couldn’t care less to be there. It’s very common.” She provided the context by saying, “Kid Rock reserves 2 front rows for die hard fans, not for sale.” Given the context, her direct quotation appears to be a statement from the artist explaining his choice. A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 55.

Figure 55

Maggie’s CML 5 Worksheet – Extreme Language



For the section on numbers and statistics, Jerry, Ivan, Maggie, Daniel, Kathy, and Carson demonstrated proficient ability, and Jen and Carson demonstrated advanced ability. Jen demonstrated a higher level of ability by providing a number used in the article as well as sufficient context to explain why that number is significant. She wrote, “The traffic on Ticketmaster. Taylor would need to perform over 900 shows (20x more than what she is doing) - that’s a stadium show every single night for the next 2.5 years.” Her response includes several numbers, all of which are aimed at supporting a claim. A copy of Jen’s response to this section can be seen in Figure 56

Figure 56

Jen's CML 5 Worksheet – Numbers/Stats

<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6): Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	<p>- hitting 52 stadiums across the US. - the traffic on Ticketmaster Taylor would need to perform over 900 shows (20x more than what she is doing) - That's a stadium show every single night for the next 2.5 years</p>
--	--

For the section on identifying quoted words, Ivan demonstrated an advanced ability by analyzing the article's use of quotations from the president and other media outlets. For his response, he wrote, "Joe Biden for administration effort as well as CNBC to show how loud the issue is." In his response, he also underlined the word "loud" to emphasize the importance of the issue. Although his response is brief, Ivan identifies unexpected sources the article cited and addresses the author's purpose in including those sources. A copy of his response can be seen in Figure 57.

Figure 57*Ivan's CML 5 Worksheet – Quoted Words*

<p>Quoted Words (RI5): Identify opinions or conclusions of someone who is an expert on the subject (voice of authority), or someone who might be a participant in or a witness to an event (personal perspective). Identify times the author might simply cite others (others' words) to provide support for a point.</p>	<p>Joe Biden for administration effort as well as CNBC to show how loud the issue is</p>
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For the section on word gaps, all students who attempted the section demonstrated proficient ability. Daniel is the only student who did not attempt the section. For Carson, this section was the only one on which he did not demonstrate advanced ability. Carson wrote, "the company AXS, secondary sellers, primary sellers." Carson only demonstrated proficient

ability in his identification of unfamiliar words; he could have demonstrated a more advanced ability by providing context for the words or attempting to use context clues to decode their meaning. This was the first week where students read different articles, so their identified words were all different. Some other words that students identified as unfamiliar included unprecedented, inornate, enormity, nongeneralizable, analog, speculative, bipartisan, and dubbed.

Participant Observation 5

For week five, students remained in the same discussion groups that they used in week four. Instead of having discussion questions printed on individual slips of paper, the teacher-researcher compiled all discussion questions onto a single sheet of paper. These questions were submitted by students the day before and others were created by the teacher-researcher. All students were provided with a questions sheet that they could reference during the discussion. A copy of this question sheet can be found in Appendix I. In response to students' comments that some questions repeated, the teacher-researcher attempted to synthesize similar questions to avoid repeated discussions. Additionally, the teacher-researcher limited the prepared questions to ten, which seemed a manageable amount for students to discuss. The intention was to provide students questions to ask, and the hope was that quality questions would encourage them to engage in reciprocal conversation and expand upon their answers instead of quickly moving on to the next question. Instead of going to the media center, two groups remained in the classroom with the teacher-researcher while one group went to another available classroom with the observing teacher. This group included Ivan, Maggie, Carson, Kathy, and Aiden. Unfortunately, there was a technical error with the recording software, so the group's discussion was not recorded. However, the assisting observer took detailed notes on the unrecorded group's discussion.

The observing teacher noted that students frequently referenced the list of questions when a group member asked a question from it. This sheet appeared to aid communication, particularly when some speakers asked questions quietly. The articles that students researched themselves seemed to spark discussion; nearly all members had something to say about the article they researched. The observer noted that the students tended to gaze at the table when speaking but that they followed their conversation with their eyes when listening to peers interact with one another. During the discussion, Carson had a lot of back-and-forth conversation with group members Maggie and Ivan. In his conversation with Ivan, Carson asked an original question rather than one from the question list provided by the teacher. Although Maggie was quieter than usual in the discussion, she still engaged in back-and-forth conversations with group members Carson and Ivan. Ivan maintained eye contact when speaking directly to Carson, but when Ivan spoke to the group, he often looked down at the table. Additionally, he frequently fidgeted with his hands throughout the discussion. Although Kathy volunteered to ask the first question, she interacted in the conversation infrequently. Instead of speaking, she followed the conversation with her eyes and used nonverbal communication, such as head nods, frequently to respond to her peers. At one point, she paused and provided space in the conversation for a quieter student to vocalize their thoughts. Aiden also demonstrated a moment in which he waited for a quieter student to finish their thought before adding to the conversation. He often rested his hand on his chin, rather than leaning back in his chair as he had done in previous conversations.

Figure 58

Coded Transcript for CML 5 Discussion

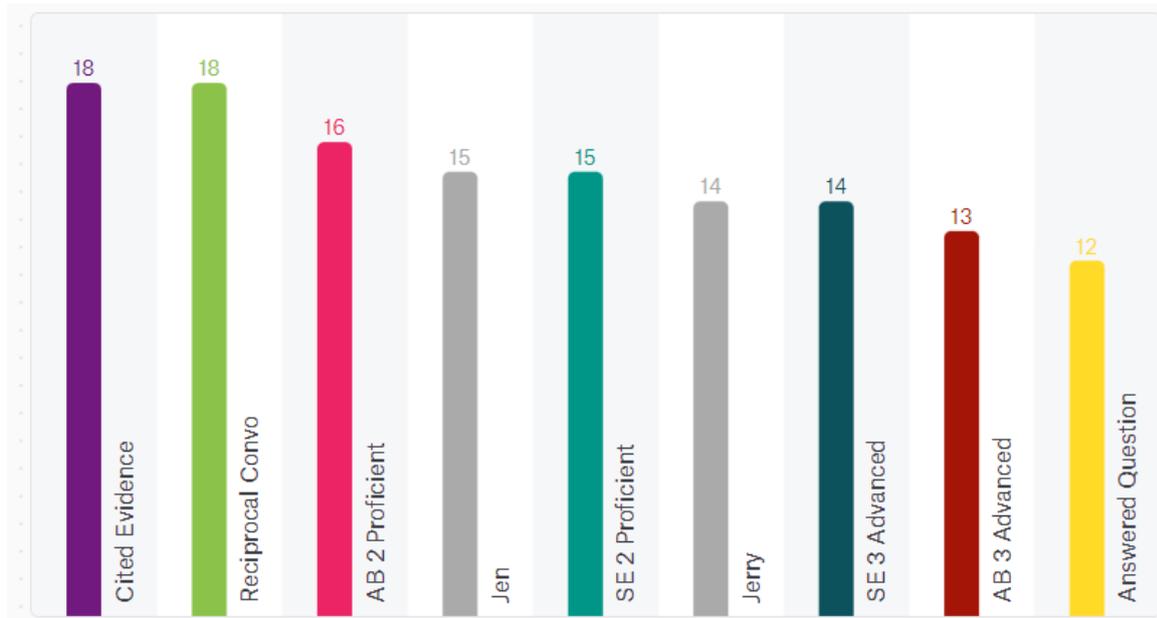


Figure 58 shows a visual representation of the coded transcript for the group of participants whose conversation was recorded. In their group, Jen and Jerry demonstrated high levels self-efficacy; there were fifteen instances at the proficient level and fourteen instances at the advanced level. Students tended to engage in reciprocal conversation rather than responding to posed questions. There were eighteen instances in which students engaged in reciprocal conversation and twelve instances in which students responded to posed questions. Additionally, students tended to cite evidence, and there were eighteen instances in which evidence was cited. Both Jen and Jerry had high levels of engagement; Jen contributed to the conversation fifteen times and Jerry contributed fourteen times. Throughout the discussion, both Jen and Jerry demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of self-efficacy. Jen volunteered to start the discussion with an original question: “Okay I’ll start. I’ll read one of my questions How should Taylor Swift respond to the angry fans who aren’t able to receive tickets because of the [Ticketmaster website’s] crash?” Later in the conversation, she chose to make personal connections, sharing about the fees associated with at SZA concert ticket. Both instances demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy. After making her points early in the conversation, Jen started agreeing or elaborating on other people’s responses

rather than introducing original ideas; these subsequent instances demonstrated proficient levels of self-efficacy. At the end of the discussion, Jen asked her group if there were any questions they had not yet answered and then reflected, "I think we did pretty good guys." In this manner, Jen both opened and closed her group's conversation, which demonstrated advanced self-efficacy.

Jerry likewise demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of self-efficacy. A strong moment for him was when he asked an original question: "Do you think there's ever going to be prices that are like too high, that people just won't buy the ticket?" When this question did not result in an engaging discussion, he asked a follow-up question to clarify: "Where do you think the limit . . . like, say you're just you have like nosebleed tickets? And like not being able to watch the show. Like how much is your max price?" His willingness to ask a follow-up question and desire to engage his peers in the conversation demonstrated advanced self-efficacy. Jerry tended to demonstrate proficient levels of self-efficacy when he answered questions. For example, when someone questioned how Ticketmaster was able to include so many additional fees, Jerry responded, "Because like, consumers don't really know where else to buy. So like, maybe they tend more to go to this one company. And they [the company] know that they're [people are] gonna come to them. So they just raise the price."

Throughout the conversation, there were sixteen demonstrations of proficient ability, thirteen of advanced ability, and zero of developing ability. Once again, Jen and Jerry both demonstrated proficient-to-advanced levels of ability in the discussion for CML 5. Jen demonstrated advanced ability in her processing and explanation of ticket company involvement. She questioned why other ticketing companies were not held responsible for the inability of fans to purchase Taylor Swift concerts: "I was like wondering why more like more ticket companies weren't used and why wasn't it more spread out? Like I felt like it was just like, solely blamed on like Ticketmaster because that was like the only source that people

are getting their tickets. But I know for a fact that there's other like companies that also sell tickets.” She also connected the high prices of tickets to the previous week’s discussion about athlete contracts: “At some point like, it’s like, like we talked about last time it was like how much like athletes get paid and stuff and we're like they get paid like a crap ton of money. Like it's crazy. It's like okay, so clearly, like literally just one seat for a person is like, [Another student: a paycheck.] Yeah. And it's crazy to me.” In discussing the high prices, Jerry demonstrated advanced ability by relating the cost to something more relatable. He suggested, “That’s a salary for most people.” He also demonstrated advanced ability when he analyzed why buyers were so interested in the fee breakdown. He said, “I feel like a good part of like why we want it [ticket prices and fees] to be like upfront to show you is because like I feel like a good part of them [fees] is like, BS like there's not actually like they're adding more money just so they can make it. Not for an actual reason.”

Exit Ticket 5

Jen, Jerry, and Carson completed the exit ticket for week five. All three students reported feeling “very comfortable” reading the articles on their own. Jen added that the articles had “easy word[s] & easy writing to understand.” Jerry shared that he “didn't read it often though it was easy.” Carson noted that “the text was interesting and easy to understand.” In asking questions during the discussion, all three students again reported feeling “very comfortable.” Jen noted that “smaller groups were way easier to talk in.” Jerry shared that he “had personal experiences to add to the conversation.” Carson felt that “the article [wa]s relatable to our generation, so it was easy to discuss it.” In reporting their comfort level responding to peers, Jen said that she felt “good” and Jerry and Carson both reported feeling “very comfortable.” Jen added that “everyone had good questions & responses.” Jerry reflected that “we all had similar ideas sometimes it was quiet because we talked about everything.” Carson did not elaborate beyond feeling very comfortable

responding to his peers. In suggesting changes to the assignment, Jen said that she did not have suggestions, and shared that “I think the CML helps me understand the article more.” Jerry suggested that we continue to read “more topics like this we can relate to rather than us leaning something new/unrelated.” Carson felt similar to Jen and said that “I have no ideas, I really enjoyed this week.” After the discussion, Carson verbally shared with the teacher-researcher that he felt this week was the best discussion yet.

Week 6: Fast Fashion

Like week five, students were once again asked to read a common article assigned by the teacher. Then, students were asked to find an article on their own that related to the topic.

CML Worksheet 6

Although students read two articles for this week, they completed the CML worksheet using information from their second, independently researched article.

Figure 59

Student’s Demonstrated Written Ability on the CML Worksheet for Week 6

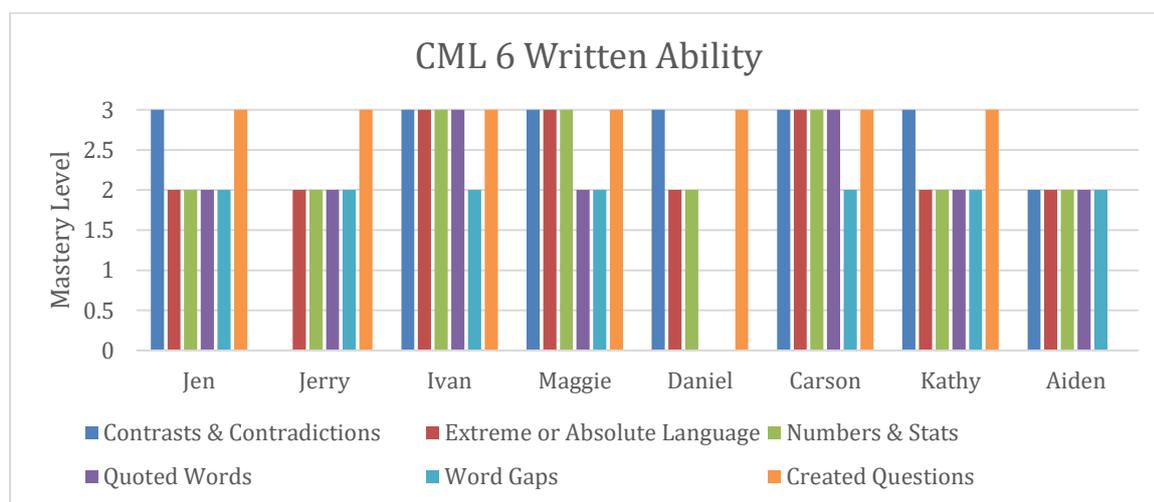
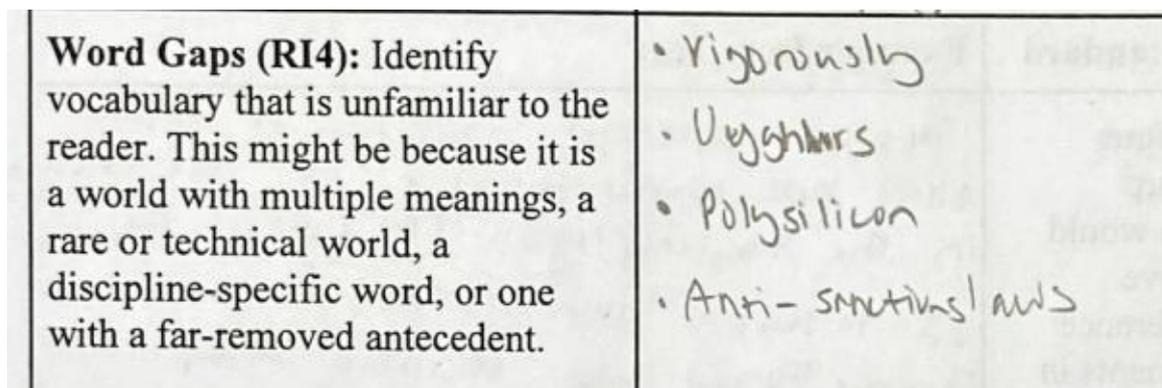


Figure 59 depicts students’ demonstrated ability levels on the worksheet for CML 6, which covered the topic of fast fashion. Jen, Ivan, Maggie, Carson, and Kathy completed all sections; Jerry and Aiden completed all but one section; Daniel completed all but two sections. All attempted work demonstrated proficient or advanced ability. Ivan and Carson

demonstrated advanced ability on all sections except for word gaps. For this section, Ivan wrote “n/a” and explained that he did not find any unfamiliar words in his article. Carson compiled a list of words that included “vigorously,” “Uyghurs,” “polysilicon,” and “anti-synthetic laws.” Figure 60 shows Carson’s response to the section on word gaps.

Figure 60

Carson’s CML 6 Worksheet – Word Gaps



On the other hand, students demonstrated advanced levels of mastery on the section asking them to create questions. Students demonstrated interest in learning one another’s personal involvement with fast fashion. Kathy asked, “Have you ever shopped at Shein?” She prepared a follow-up question, asking her peers, “Do you think that people will continue to buy the clothes even though they have bad working conditions?” Similarly, Daniel asked, “Would you still buy from Shein if the allegations are true?” Jerry wondered, “Should people stop the support of big forced labor companies?”

Students prepared questions concerning the working conditions for employees of fast fashion. Maggie asked, “If Shein is one of the biggest fashion companies in the world, why are their employees underpaid but expected to work 18-hour days?” She also expressed interest in employee liability by asking, “Should employees of any company be penalized for making mistakes?” Carson expressed interest in the particular region of China that his article addressed: “Why does [the region], specifically Xinjiang, promote harsh human labor? Wouldn’t they still make money by having people work willingly?” Jerry questioned how

victims of these unfair labor practices could be better supported when he said, “Should the U.S. take more action on helping the Uyghurs?”

Students also wanted to know how companies exposed for unfair labor practices could be punished as well as what possible solutions might help to address the issue. Daniel posed a broad, opinion-seeking question by asking, “What should the consequences be?”

Maggie wondered why Shein was still operating: “Should Shein be shut down? If so, why do people keep buying from them?” She reiterated her confusion with another question: “If many people know about how bad Shein is and they’ve got [ten] reported multiple times, why haven’t they got shut down?” Similarly, Kathy wondered, “Do you think Shein will ever get banned?” Ivan asked, “Will forced labor ever be abolished?” and underlined the word “ever” to show emphasis on the continued success of businesses using these practices. Jerry expressed a desire to not only end these unfair labor practices but to prevent them in the future when he asked, “How do we prevent/stop forced labor?” Ivan was interested in the details when he asked, “How can we, in the U.S., track forced labor?” Jen was interested in the root problem of fast fashion when she asked, “Is over consumption a big problem in general? What else is an issue in overconsumption?” She also suggested ways to avoid supporting fast fashion: “Is secondhand shopping the solution to the overproduction of clothes?” Carson was concerned with legal matters. First, he asked, “How successful will the United States be at banning products coming from forced labor regions? What about if there is a third party?” Then, he asked, “As a U.S. citizen, would you want a ban on those companies even though they benefit us or help these people in [the] news?”

Another section of the worksheet on which students demonstrated advanced ability was the section identifying contrasts and contradictions. Except for Aiden, all students who attempted the section demonstrated advanced ability; Aiden demonstrated proficient ability. Jen’s response demonstrated advanced ability by identifying two instances of contradiction.

She noted “producing clothes uses a lot of natural resources & creates greenhouse gas emissions which are responsible for climate change.” She also wrote, “More than 2/5 of 16 to 24 y/o buy clothes online at least once a week, compared to 13% on average for other age groups.” A copy of her response can be seen in Figure 61.

Figure 61

Jen’s CML 6 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>-Producing clothes uses a lot of natural resources & creates greenhouse gas emissions which are responsible for climate change</p> <p>-more than 2/5 of 16 to 24 y/o buy clothes online at least once a week, compared to 13% on average for other age groups</p>
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Whereas Jen’s information showed a comparison between two concepts, Aiden noted concepts and implied there was a contradiction; his implied contradiction demonstrated proficient rather than advanced ability. For example, his response stated, “The workers work 18 hours per day with no weekends” and “Only one day off per month.” His response implies that the workers are overworked, but he does not say such explicitly. A copy of his response can be seen in Figure 62.

Figure 62

Aiden’s CML 6 Worksheet – Contrasts and Contradictions

<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	<p>The workers work 18 hours per day with no weekends</p> <p>only one day off per month</p>
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Students demonstrated proficient-to-advanced ability on the sections identifying extreme language, numbers and statistics, and quoted words. For instance, Carson

demonstrated advanced ability in identifying extreme language. In his response, summarizes the claim made in the article and then includes the direct quotation to indicate the instance of extreme language used. He wrote, “The United States should prevent gaining imports from the Xinjiang region. This is because of the forced labor that’s going on in China and how it goes against the U.S.’ beliefs making UFLPA necessary. ‘The Uyghur Forced Labor Act (UFLPA), which goes into effect on June 21, 2022, gives US authorities increased powers to block the import of goods linked to forced labor in China.’” A copy of Carson’s response to the section on extreme language can be seen in Figure 63.

Figure 63

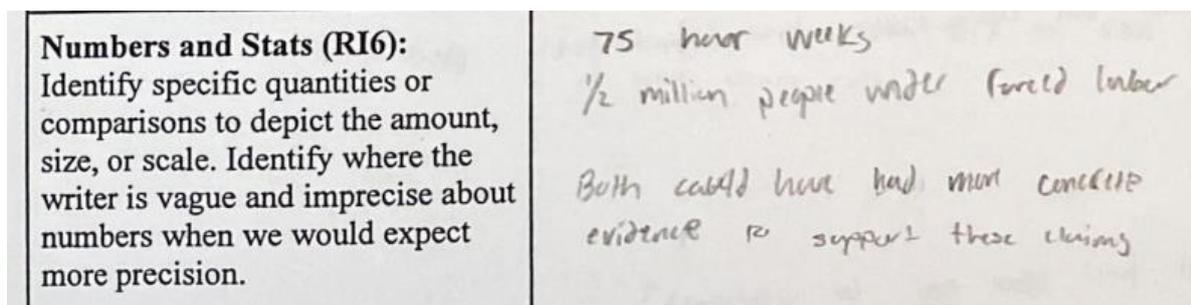
Carson’s CML 6 Worksheet – Extreme Language

<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	<p>• That the United States should prevent gaining imports from the Xinjiang region. This is because of the forced labor that's going on in China and how it goes against the U.S.' beliefs making UFLPA necessary. • "The Uyghur Forced Labor Act (UFLPA), which goes into effect on June 21, 2022, gives US authorities increased powers to block the import of goods linked to forced labor in China."</p>	
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Ivan demonstrated advanced ability in understanding the use of numbers and statistics. His response records the numbers used in the assigned article as well as the one he found. He wrote, “75 hour weeks” and “½ million people under forced labor.” He then assesses the use of numbers: “Both [articles] could have had more concrete evidence to support these claims.” A copy of Ivan’s response to the section on numbers and stats can be seen in Figure 64.

Figure 64

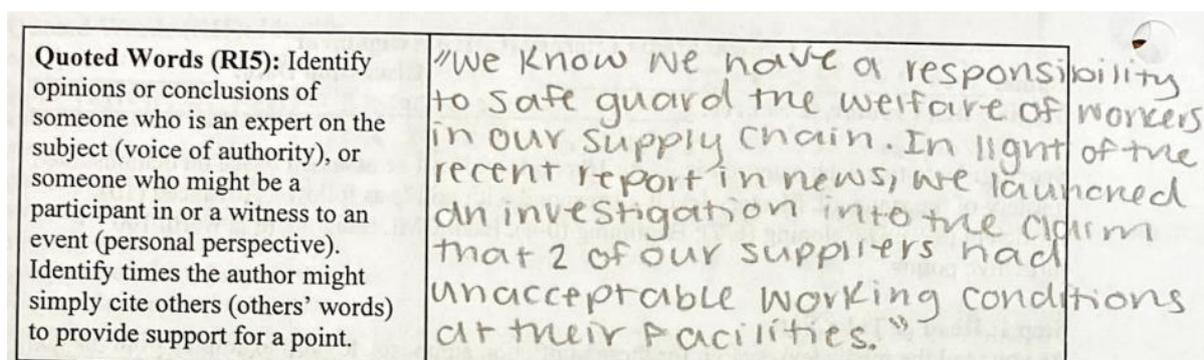
Ivan’s CML 6 Worksheet – Numbers/Stats



Kathy demonstrated proficient ability by including a direct quotation in the section on quoted words. Her response could have been improved if she had explained the significance of the quotation she included or analyzed its speaker. She wrote, “We know we have a responsibility to safe guard the welfare of workers in our supply chain. In light of the recent report in news, we launched an investigation into the claim that 2 of our suppliers had unacceptable working conditions at their facilities.” A copy of Kathy’s response to this section can be seen in Figure 65.

Figure 65

Kathy’s CML 6 Worksheet – Quoted Words



Participant Observation 6

For the sixth discussion, students remained in the same small groups that they used previously in weeks four and five. The teacher-researcher once again provided students with a list of questions; these questions were enhancements of students’ prepared questions as well as some original questions prepared by the teacher researcher. A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix J. Like the previous week, two groups stayed in the teacher-

researcher's classroom for their discussions, and one went into the classroom of the observing teacher. Given the recording issue for one group during week five, the teacher-researcher wanted to ensure there were no issues for that same group; the teacher-researcher also had this group remain in her classroom so that she could observe them. This group included Carson, Kathy, Aiden, Ivan, and Maggie. The group that went into the observing teacher's room included Jerry, Jen, and Daniel.

Figure 66

Coded Transcripts for CML 6 Discussions

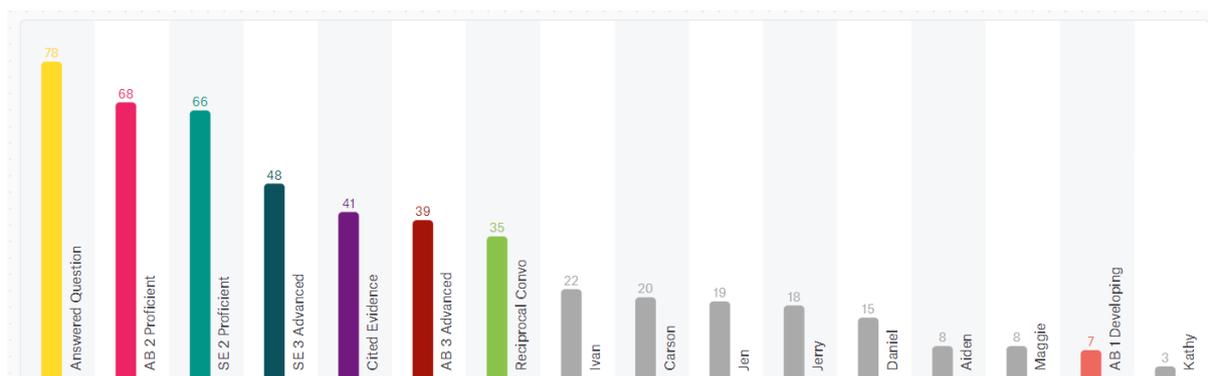


Figure 66 visually depicts the coded transcripts to the discussions for CML 6. In this sixth discussion, students most often demonstrated proficient levels of self-efficacy with sixty-six occurrences of this level. There were forty-eight instances of advanced self-efficacy, and zero instances of developing self-efficacy. Students tended to respond to posed questions, with this type of interaction occurring seventy-eight times. Students cited textual evidence forty-one times and engaged in reciprocal conversation thirty-five times. Ivan engaged the most often with twenty-two contributions to the discussion. He was closely followed by Carson, who had twenty contributions; Jen, who had nineteen contributions; and Jerry, who had eighteen interactions. Daniel contributed a moderate amount with fifteen contributions. Aiden and Maggie contributed eight times each. Kathy had the lowest rate of verbal engagement with only three contributions to the discussion.

Students demonstrated advanced levels of self-efficacy when discussing the ethics of companies' labor practices, consumers' responsibility, overconsumption, and potential solutions. In considering ethics, Kathy asked, "Should there be a ban on [fast fashion] companies?" Carson suggested that "people just want to benefit themselves before really thinking about like what's happening." Maggie challenged her peers, saying, "do you think that people would actually stop buying? Cause Shein has been reported multiple times, but we're still buying from them?" Carson echoed this sentiment by asking the group "Are you guys still gonna buy from Nike and other companies even after this?" Jen expressed that "overconsumption, it's so real. . . . The article that I read said . . . it was like 64% of people will buy or online shop at least once a week . . . [it] is crazy." She later explained, "because Shein is so cheap, there is overconsumption for it. I don't know if y'all have seen the big hauls where it's like 100 things from Shein . . . [but] it was only like \$200. Like that's all they spent because it's so cheap." Jerry agreed with Jen and shared a personal experience: "When I bought from Shein, I genuinely did get like 100 things and it wasn't that much . . . So because I think I'll either need it now or if I buy it now and I can save later, like almost every week I've been buying things . . . I've gotten to this point where I have to get a lot of stuff." Jen suggested secondhand shopping as a potential solution, but noted that it was more difficult. She explained, "You have to go out of your way to get something [when you shop secondhand]. That's why it's easier to just go online."

Daniel doubted the likelihood of a major company like Shein or Nike getting shut down, but felt hopeful about potential reforms. He said, "I think you can force them to like change their methods. But definitely not shut down the entire company. Like just changing the way that they do things." Ivan agreed that it would be "kind of hard to ban all the companies [because] even Nike uses child labor." In considering solutions, Jerry asked, "Why do you think this keeps happening? . . . We don't see a big response . . . to this because

it seems like a pretty bad issue.” Daniel thought the lack of consequences enabled companies to continue unethical practices. He then joked, “I mean, the kids are making good shoes [and] people are gonna buy the shoes . . . they don’t care.”

Students demonstrated advanced ability when discussing the responsibility of governments, worker conditions, and product quality. In considering the U.S. government’s responsibility to ban imports from companies using unethical labor practices, Carson shared “they could sell it to one country like third parties and then sell it to us. So I think it is hard to try and completely shut down what’s being imported and exported.” Ivan expressed geopolitical concerns if the U.S. were to get involved in the economic affairs of another country, worrying that it “will cause some kind of civil war within either their country [or] our country.” He also felt that the U.S. government would “rather take money than moral compass ideas or idealism from another country.” Ivan also suggested that such government intervention would only happen if demand for it were “widespread.” He explained, it would need to “be something like a movement,” and acknowledged “it’s hard to get a movement going unless millions upon millions act on it. You can have a vocal movement, but it’s not really effective unless a certain amount of people are going.” Carson responded that it would be difficult to instigate a movement because of the difficulty involved in “chang[ing] perception.” He gave the example of Nike: “What’s the first thing you think of with Nike? You don’t think of human labor.” Ivan volunteered, “In fact, you think about the top athletes in the world.” Ivan and Carson agreed that for most U.S. citizens, the concept of labor practices is “not in my backyard type of mentality.” Daniel similarly felt that “we don’t really have to do anything. It’s their [other countries’] economies. Their country. We let them do how they want but we don’t have to support them.” He added, “it’s not like they’re shipping drugs or guns. It’s just a tshirt,” noting that the product itself was less concerning than alternatives.

Maggie struggled to understand the willingness of companies to profit at their workers' expense: "I feel like with major companies, their employees should get paid if they're making that much profit. Since it's a good company, I just feel like their employees should get the pay they deserve." Aiden also shared Maggie's concern for the workers' conditions. He cited evidence, saying, "I read an article that said they make 4000 yen per month, which is \$556 U.S. dollars. I know for a fact I couldn't live on \$500 in one month. Like just eating food is more than that if you had to pay for insurance and all the other stuff." Aiden's ability to relate the workers' pay to his own understanding of the cost of living demonstrated his advanced ability to think critically. Ivan provided another example of a company benefiting off of unethical human labor: the FIFA World Cup. He shared, "I mean shoot, look at the FIFA World Cup. There was what like 1.1 billion people watching and people were boycotting the fact that they use slave labor for their employees to set up stands and everything. I mean you still have 1.1 billion people watching. It's hard to make an effect if you're equal or more than the people that are buying or taking it." Ivan's ability to cite another example of these unethical labor practices demonstrated his existing knowledge of the problem as well as his ability to connect it to the information discussed with peers. Carson agreed with Ivan's point, adding, "I think some people just want the benefit that comes from those people. People like having to do that type of work over them caring about that because it doesn't really affect us at the end of the day but they should deserve better, but none of us can do anything about it." Carson's response demonstrated his ability to think through multiple sides of the problem.

Students were also interested in their internal conflict as consumers: they did not want to support unethical companies but they also could not afford the more expensive products from more ethical companies. Carson explained, "It's like you can buy a jersey in the U.S. if it's like a real one for \$100 or you could go on a fake website and buy one for \$15. And it's

like the same quality if not better than the ones from China.” Ivan expressed concern over how consumers could verify if a product was produced by an ethical company. He asked, “How can we prove that most of the stuff is made in the U.S.A.? If you look at the same quality, it’s the same quality. Sometimes it’s even the same price, but how can we prove it unless there’s no establishments out there other than the ones in the U.S.A.” For Ivan, he felt the average consumer was unable to know if a company was truly ethical because of a lack of corporate regulations. Maggie agreed, saying, “I don’t think we care enough. I feel it just depends on if it’s the same quality.” For Maggie, quality was the only requirement for a consumer choosing which product to purchase. Ivan felt that even if consumers knew more about the company producing a product, they would “still try to find the cheapest option, or at least a majority of people are.” Jerry agreed, reflecting that “at this point everyone knows about Nike and like those Indonesian children building all their shoes and whatnot. But I feel like it’s so obvious that nobody cares at this point. Like we’re getting what we want. So we just turn and focus on what we’d like to look at, you know?”

Exit Ticket 6

Ivan and Maggie completed the exit ticket for this final week. In regards to his comfort level in reading the article, Ivan answered “Very. While the topic could be sensitive, I think it all is important to share.” Maggie responded, “I felt comfortable with reading the text. I liked how the articles were short, sweet, and to the point.” In asking questions, Ivan said he felt very comfortable and added, “Getting points across & learning new perspectives were easy.” Maggie reported that she “felt comfortable asking questions and adding to questions.” In reporting his comfort level responding to peers during the discussion, Ivan drew a line to his response for the previous question about his comfort level asking questions, indicating that the same answer was applicable. Maggie commented that she “felt comfortable responding and did not struggle” in responding to peers. In considering potential

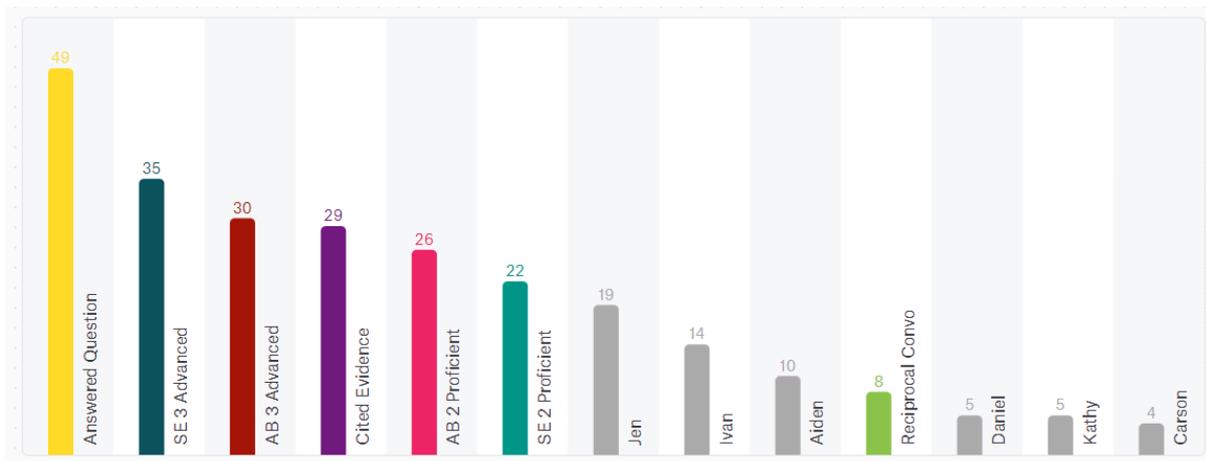
improvements to the assignment, Ivan wrote, “IDK think it is done well, some just don't wanna contribute.” Maggie wrote “n/a” for suggestions but added “I like the small groups and typed out questions because it gets our mind running to ask more questions.”

Focus Group Exit Interview

The exit interviews were conducted in a similar manner to the initial interviews. Students were interviewed in small groups in the observing teacher’s classroom. Students were interviewed in the same discussion groups that were used for weeks four through six. Thus, one group consisted of Aiden, Kathy, Carson, and Ivan. The other group consisted of Daniel and Jen, as well as other non-participating students. Jerry and Maggie were absent and therefore unable to participate in the exit interview.

Figure 67

Coded Transcripts for the Exit Interviews



A copy of the coded transcripts for the exit interviews appears in Figure 67. Across both exit interviews, participants demonstrated thirty-five instances of advanced self-efficacy and twenty-two instances of proficient self-efficacy. There were no instances of developing self-efficacy. Participants demonstrated advanced ability thirty times and proficient ability twenty-six times. There were no demonstrations of developing ability. As fits the nature of an interview, students responded to posed questions more often than they engaged in reciprocal

conversation; there were forty-nine instances of question response and eight instances of reciprocal conversation. Students also cited evidence twenty-nine times in the exit interviews. Jen was the most involved participant with nineteen contributions. Ivan and Aiden engaged a moderate amount with fourteen and ten contributions respectively. Daniel, Kathy, and Carson had the lowest amount of contributions with four to five contributions each.

Topics

During the exit interviews, students primarily discussed the topics covered throughout the study as well as the structure used. Jen expressed frustration over how some topics did not lend themselves to debate: “I thought it was supposed to be more a debate thing, and I was like *how are we supposed to debate over this?*” She felt that the first topic over The Willow Project was the best because it was debatable. Similarly, Ivan reflected, “Some of the topics weren’t the best.” However, he acknowledged, “it’s hard to please everybody with a certain topic.” Although Jen felt The Willow Topic was debatable, Carson described it as “really boring.” For Aiden, the article about the NFL contracts stood out to him the most, but he clarified it stood out for him because one of his group members was really interested in it, saying it was good “for her, not for me.” Aiden said it “helped out not having to choose the same thing every week or having to go find something.” When asked if he would rather be assigned an article or asked to find one on his own, he said, “I would rather you just give it to us.” Even though students would get disappointed when the topic they voted for was not selected for the week, Ivan still thought having the teacher assign the topic was beneficial because “it’s hard to get the rest of the twenty-five people on board . . . it’s hard to find three or more [topics] that appl[y] to all thirty-kids.”

Most participants agreed with Ivan’s sentiment that “it’s either pick your own article or give it to us. Like not both.” His statement referenced the structure for weeks five and six in which students were assigned an article on the topic and then asked to find a second article

on their own that related to the topic. Ivan said, “I liked the one where you gave us an article . . . since it was a similar article [we] would go back to what it says.” Aiden felt that “the discussion was better” when everyone had their own article and suggested it would be better to “giv[e] us a topic and [ask us to] go research a little bit . . . [rather] than giving us an article and then having to go find another.” Jen shared that it “ma[de] it easier to talk about if people have different [information because] all articles are going to have something different to say. So if everyone reads something different and gains some knowledge of that, then . . . it’s easier to talk about rather than [everyone] knowing the same information and then just talking about it like that.” To support her statement, Jen provided an example, explaining that “for the Shein one, I had read something where it was like 64% of people shop online at least once a week. So I was able to say that and other people hadn’t read that.” Regardless of the article selected, Ivan said he “enjoyed that a lot more than reading a book and analyzing it. Because we can at least analyze an article, something up to date. It’s not fiction [and] be able to capitalize on that.” Conversely, Jen liked reading and discussing articles alongside our novel study of *The Poet X*, saying that she “liked the little mix up.” Daniel said he liked the CML Worksheet but that it was disconnected from our novel study, suggesting that they still use “these groups and talk about the book . . . you could still do the articles, but then make *The Poet X* relate to it.”

Discussion Structure

In considering the different structures used for the assignment, several participants reported liking the consistent small groups all discussing the article during the same class period rather than having an inner circle of discussion and outer circle of observation. Jen reported that “having the same small groups [allowed them to] connect [to] some of the other discussions. We would kind of be like *oh, well remember when we talked about blah, blah, like that type of thing.*” She also felt that having an outer observational structure “stopped

people from talking” since it required them to talk “in front of the whole class.” Carson shared that he “liked keeping it with the same people cause you get more comfortable around them discussing topics.” Aiden felt that “keeping smaller groups together every week [wa]s better.” Ivan noted that even though “some people want to talk [and] some people don’t . . . stay[ing] in the small groups [allowed them to] get more comfortable.” Telling students that the person to their left was responsible for asking a question whenever the conversation reached a lull proved helpful to Jen, who said that “the person to your left thing kind of forced people to join in and just talk.” Jen also reported that she liked “both where it was the questions in the middle and then also the sheet of paper [because] the first time that we did it [in week one], we didn’t have any questions like that and it was really difficult [because] we didn’t know what to talk about.” Carson expressed preference for “the printed sheet because it’s not like when we crumpled up the paper [and] we repeated questions a lot . . . And I mean they were better questions because you edited them, which made them better and easier to discuss about. So I think the list is probably the best.” Kathy observed that “people didn’t like reading their own questions . . . people talked more from reading the sheet than their own questions.” Ivan thought the list of questions made it easier for people to ask original follow-up questions “cause you can kind of base it off some of the questions on the sheet . . . it’s easier to take a question and kind of put it in another way.”

CML Worksheets

The CML Worksheet remained consistent throughout the study. However, during the first three weeks, students were asked to complete an additional observation worksheet when they sat in the outer observation circle of the Socratic Seminar. When the structure shifted to concurrent small group discussions, students no longer completed the observation worksheet. Aiden reported that he did not like completing the long observation worksheet in addition to the CML worksheet. Jen said she found the CML worksheet helpful: “I liked the organized

piece of paper where we were able to fill it out and it kind of had a little description of what we're supposed to write." When I shared that other variations of the CML activity simply had students write a one-page reflection, she responded "I think that [CML worksheet] is better than writing a page of reflection because doing that, I feel like it's easy to just continuously repeat yourself and I like the little boxes."

Kathy admitted, "I didn't love the worksheet. I thought it was kind of hard to understand at first. I had to go ask you what it meant because I didn't know." Aiden nodded his head in agreement when Kathy shared her opinion. Aiden elaborated, "I thought it was fine. I just thought it was confusing the way the stuff was worded. Like I feel like it was too much because I only put two things for each. So it wasn't too much work, but I just thought it was confusing." Although Kathy and Ciaden felt the worksheet was confusing, they did not elaborate on which sections challenged them. Jen shared that "I didn't have a big struggle coming up with the questions, but I felt like I had more struggle with the numbers and stats portion only because I would continuously attempt to read the article and like skim over it, trying to find some kind of data, but not all of them had that. So I ended up writing like if it said six months or something, I ended up just writing that down in the section. So maybe that could be like a little bit wider." Ivan shared that he liked having to prepare questions for the discussion because it "brings up some of the things that weren't touched on in the article." Jen also reported struggling with the section on word gaps because it was sometimes difficult "to find words that I didn't know or understand."

Chapter Five: Interpretation of Findings

As a practicing high school ELA teacher, I value critical thinking skills that my students can use in and beyond my classroom. This qualitative action research study allowed me the opportunity to implement critical practices into the secondary ELA classroom and study their effect on students. Eight students from a class of twenty-nine were selected using typical and extreme case sampling. Students participated in an initial focus group interview, six weeks of reading, analyzing, and discussing informational media texts, and an exit group interview. This chapter interprets the study's findings.

Changes to Format

In considering the findings, it is essential to consider the structural changes the study underwent. Table 12 summarizes those structural changes, which included changes to the discussion style, speaking structure, question creation, and question presentation. The first three weeks of the study used a fishbowl discussion style, which adhered to the original plan. Based on student feedback and time constraints, the second half of the study changed to use small groups. In this manner, instead of observing groups of their peers discussing a text, all groups simultaneously discussed the text. Although the simultaneous discussion prevented the observers from observing all three groups at the same time, the conversations were recorded and transcribed after; this recording seemed to hold students accountable and all groups continued to discuss even when not being physically observed by an observer.

The first week utilized an unclear speaking structure. Students were instructed to "ask their prepared questions" and told to be engaged and respectful throughout the conversation. After observing that the students struggled to self-regulate their speaking, the teacher instructed them to move clockwise from the last speaker whenever the conversation reached a lull. This assigned responsibility to students and appeared to increase their confidence in asking questions to initiate conversations. It also allowed students to hold each

other accountable. For example, Jen reminded Jerry that it was “his turn” to ask a question during their group’s discussion in week four. For the first two weeks, students asked only the questions they prepared after reading the article. After observing that some of these questions were surface-level and required only lower levels of critical ability, the teacher-researcher began incorporating her own questions for the remainder of the study. Students seemed to respond well to the addition of teacher-created questions. The remainder of the study included a mixture of student- and teacher-created questions.

The way questions were presented changed throughout the study. Initially, students were told to verbally ask their questions during the discussion. During the first week, students seemed uncomfortable asking their questions. For the second and third week, the teacher-researcher asked students to write their questions on slips of paper, crumple them into a paper ball, and place them on the center table. During the discussion, students selected random pieces of paper and asked the question written on it. This seemed to lessen students’ embarrassment if their question was not immediately answered by peers; it was no longer the students’ question, but a question that any peer could have asked. This increased anonymity seemed to make students feel more comfortable asking questions. However, students reported that some questions were “repetitive.” Additionally, the teacher-researcher noticed that her questions were lengthier than the students, and this increased length appeared challenging when students verbally read the questions. Therefore, for the final two weeks, the teacher-researcher provided students with a printed list of questions. This allowed the teacher to curate a list that combined student- and teacher-created questions while avoiding repetitiveness. It also allowed students to preview the questions and read along when a peer asked one of the prepared questions. Students reported that the printed list was the preferred method of question presentation used in the study.

Table 12

Structural Changes throughout Study

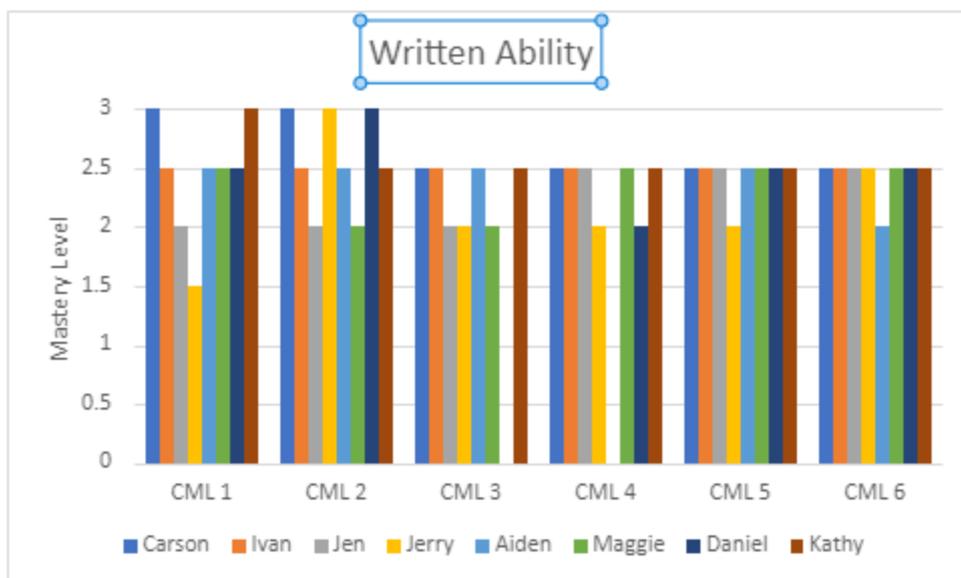
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Discussion	Fishbowl	Fishbowl	Fishbowl	Small	Small	Small
Style				Group	Group	Group
Speaking	Unclear	Clockwise	Clockwise	Clockwise	Clockwise	Clockwise
Structure		from first speaker	from first speaker	from first speaker	from first speaker	from first speaker
Questions Created	Students	Students	Students and Teacher	Students and Teacher	Students and Teacher	Students and Teacher
Questions Presented	Orally	Snowball slips of paper	Snowball slips of paper	Snowball slips of paper	Printed list	Printed list

Written Ability

Students' written ability was measured by their performance on the CML worksheet. Figure 12 depicts students' demonstrated written ability on the CML Worksheets throughout the study. The mastery levels numerically align with advanced, 3; proficient, 2; and developing, 1. An advanced mastery level for written ability included responses that used academic language, made inter-disciplinary or academic connections, and explained ideas thoroughly and logically. A proficient mastery level gave an example from either the text or outside world and stated an idea without providing sufficient explanation or detail. A developing mastery level gave a general answer without any explanation.

Figure 12

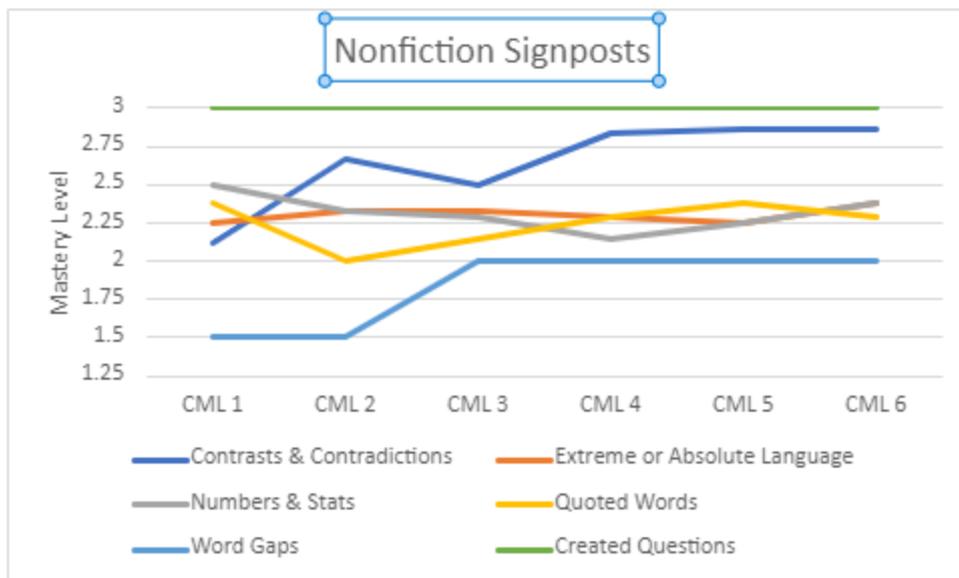
Students' Demonstrated Written Ability throughout the Study



Students' written ability was measured by their work on the CML Worksheet they completed each week, and Figure 12 depicts the collected data. It should be noted that Daniel did not submit a worksheet for CML 3, and Aiden did not submit a worksheet for CML 4. Although Carson, Kathy, Jerry, and Daniel demonstrated advanced written ability on the worksheets for CML 1 or CML 2, no student demonstrated an overall advanced ability on any subsequent worksheet. This decline in demonstrated ability may coincide with an increase in the rigor of the selected texts studied. The decline could also result from the teacher-researcher's emphasis on students' verbal ability in discussions. The data reflects students' initial submission; students were allowed to revise and resubmit their worksheet to earn a higher grade for the course. Therefore, students may have prioritized their participation in the discussion, which they could not revise or redo.

Figure 13

Students' Demonstrated Performance for the Nonfiction Signposts



The specific signposts included on the CML worksheet measured students' ability to employ specific critical skills through writing. Figure 13 shows students' ability to identify and analyze nonfiction signposts, as measured by the CML worksheet. These six categories were chosen to represent the most important features of nonfiction texts, as identified by Beers & Probst (2016). The chart includes data from attempted categories only; if students did not attempt a category on the worksheet, data was not collected from them on that category, and therefore, that data is not represented in the chart. Students demonstrated consistent advanced ability in creating their own questions. The consistent and high levels of mastery suggest that students already possessed strong question-generating abilities prior to the study. Despite possessing strong question-creating ability, most students relied upon asking questions prepared by others instead of their own original ones throughout the discussions. This discrepancy suggests that students possess the ability when given time and space, but that they struggle to implement their ability in a verbal conversation.

Another area in which students were consistent was word gaps. For the first two weeks, students demonstrated lower levels of ability in analyzing this feature of texts. After the second week, however, students began demonstrating a consistent level of proficiency. This continued demonstration of proficiency without variation suggests that students were

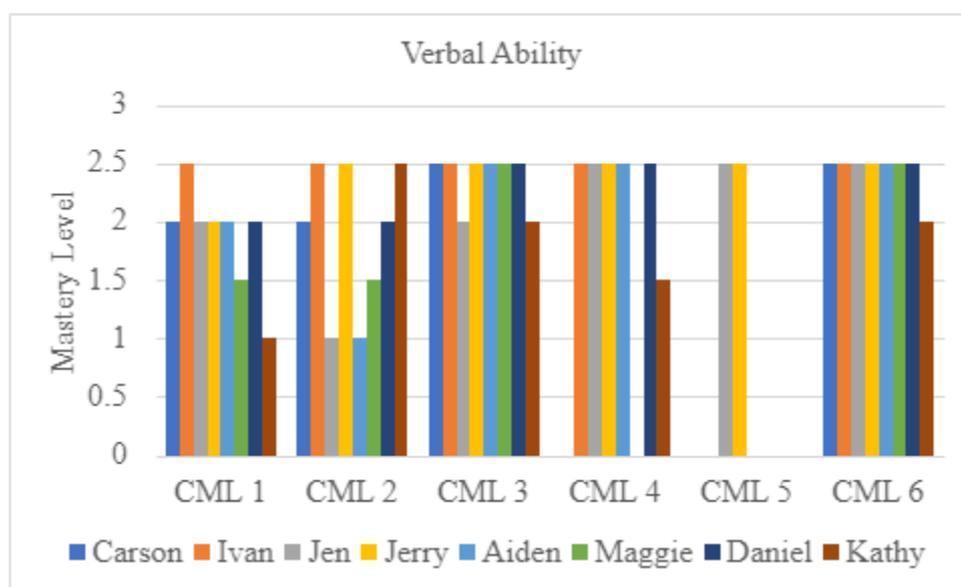
satisfied with their ability and did not seek to improve. It also suggests that students most struggled with this category.

Students demonstrated the greatest range of ability in identifying contrasts and contradictions. Students demonstrated their lowest ability in this category during the first week, and, after week four, maintained a relatively steady level of ability. Although students' average ability in this category did not reach advanced, it came close; in the last two weeks, students averaged 2.857 out of 3.0 in their demonstrated mastery level. The large range in students' demonstrated ability to identify and analyze contrasts and contradictions suggests that this characteristic holds variability depending upon the text under study.

Verbal Ability

Students' verbal ability was measured in its frequency and quality. Figure 14 represents students' demonstrated verbal ability in discussions throughout the study. Although frequency is not necessarily an indicator of ability, it is nonetheless important to understand how many verbal contributions were assessed and labeled at each level of proficiency. Students' verbal ability was measured using the same mastery levels and characteristics as their written ability on the CML worksheets.

Figure 14

Students' Demonstrated Verbal Ability throughout the Study

As aforementioned, the data from CML 5 represents the contributions of only two students because the recording device failed to record the other participants. Throughout the study, students gradually demonstrated fewer instances of developing verbal ability. After the third week, students demonstrated ten or fewer instances of developing verbal ability. Students demonstrated their most advanced verbal ability in the third week. Although students did not demonstrate advanced verbal ability as frequently in the subsequent weeks, they still demonstrated advanced verbal ability at higher frequencies for the last half of the study than for the first half.

Reported Self-Efficacy

Students reported their levels of self-efficacy in writing two times throughout the study by completing exit tickets. The exit ticket asked the same questions and was designed to collect self-reported data on students' comfort levels throughout the study. The first question asked students to report their comfort level reading and analyzing the text by themselves. In the first half of the study, Jen, Jerry, Kathy and Carson reported feeling "very comfortable" completing this task on their own, and Aiden, Maggie, Ivan, and Daniel

reported feeling “pretty comfortable.” These proficient-to-advanced levels of self-efficacy in reading and analyzing the texts continued for the second half of the study. Jen, Jerry, and Carson continued to report feeling very comfortable. Ivan reported feeling very comfortable reading the text on his own, which was an increase from the first half of the study. Maggie and Daniel continued to report feeling moderately comfortable reading the text on their own. Kathy reported feeling comfortable but admitted that she struggled with the sports topic during the second half; conversely, although Aiden was absent and did not read the sports article, he reported feeling comfortable quickly skimming the article before the discussion due to his prior knowledge on the topic. Students’ self-reported responses suggest that most students maintained their comfort level in reading and analyzing an informational text on their own. Ivan and Kathy were the exceptions; Ivan’s comfort level increased while Kathy’s somewhat decreased when she was less interested in the topic.

In considering their comfort level asking their peers questions during the discussion for the first half of the study, participants generally responded that they felt comfortable. Jen noted that it was difficult to ask her own questions, and Daniel said the topic was interesting but difficult to debate. Kathy and Ivan both noted that it was somewhat difficult to continually ask questions when their peers were quiet. Maggie felt that the discussion felt like a “normal conversation,” and she did not feel judgment asking questions she did not understand. For the second half of the study, Aiden continued to report feeling comfortable, while Jen increased from “pretty comfortable” to “very comfortable,” and Kathy, Jerry, and Carson increased from comfortable to “very comfortable.” Jerry, Carson, and Daniel felt that the topics discussed during the second half were relatable and allowed them to add more of their own personal experiences. Ivan added that he felt like he learned “new perspectives” and Daniel noted that “everyone had thoughts.”

Considering their comfort level responding to peers during the discussion for the first half of the study, Jen, Kathy, Aiden, and Maggie reported feeling comfortable, and Jerry, Ivan, and Carson reported feeling very comfortable. Daniel said, “it was fine,” explaining that it was only him and Ivan talking to each other during his discussion. Ivan reported that he felt “confident” responding to his peers. Jen and Jerry shared that they felt comfortable sharing their opinions, and Aiden and Maggie reported that they enjoyed hearing other people’s opinions. Carson noted that “the discussion questions were open-minded,” which he believed helped him to feel comfortable engaging in the conversation. For the second half of the study, Maggie, Kathy, Aiden, and Jen continued to report feeling comfortable responding to peers, while Carson, Ivan, and Jerry continued to report feeling very comfortable responding to peers. Daniel explained that there were “a few tough questions, but [his group] all agreed.” Similarly, Jerry noted that his group “all had similar ideas, [so] sometimes it was quiet because we talked about everything.” Kathy noted that she “didn’t have a lot of background knowledge” on the sports article, while Aiden said he “like[d] talking about sports-related matters.”

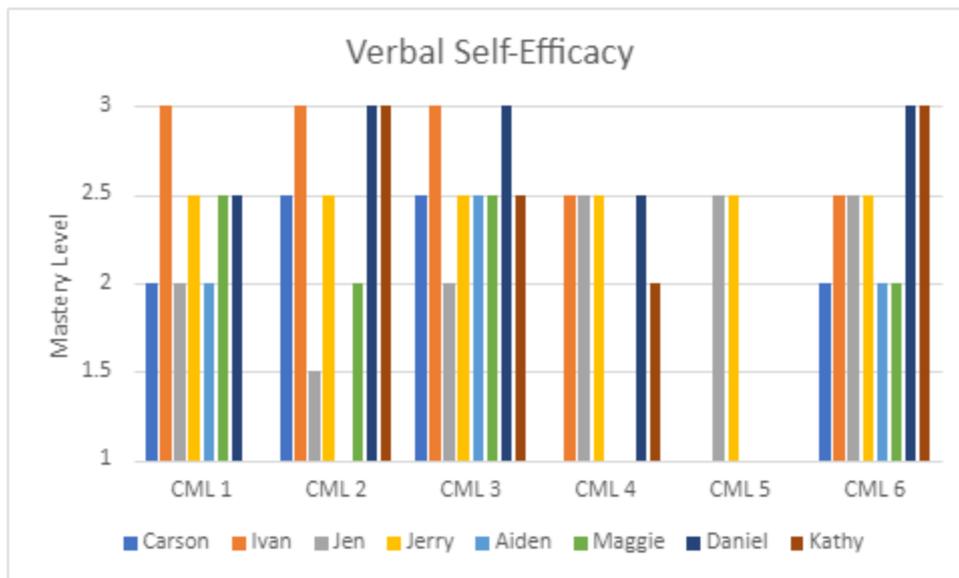
Verbal Self-Efficacy

Figure 15 depicts students’ demonstrated verbal self-efficacy during the weekly discussions. Students’ demonstrated self-efficacy during the discussions were scored using the following mastery levels: advanced, 3; proficient, 2; and developing, 1. Advanced SE included instances in which students asked clarifying questions or were the first to speak, gave an example outside of the assigned text, stated a potentially controversial idea, and challenged a peer or offered an opposing perspective. Proficient SE included instances when a student admitted to not knowing something, agreed with someone else’s opinion, referenced someone else’s words when contributing to a general idea, used textual evidence to answer a question or support an idea, and responded to a posed question with an idea needing further

elaboration. Developing SE included instances when students responded to a posed question with a simple answer such as “yes” or “no” and when students briefly acknowledged or referenced someone else’s ideas.

Figure 15

Students’ Verbal Self-Efficacy throughout the Study



Ivan, selected as a high-performing student, demonstrated advanced verbal self-efficacy during the first three weeks, which utilized the format of a Socratic Seminar. Once the structure changed to small group discussions for weeks four through six, Ivan’s demonstrated verbal self-efficacy dropped from advanced to proficient-to-advanced. This change suggests that Ivan’s verbal self-efficacy was higher when he was being observed by peers in the outer observational circle. Daniel and Kathy are the only other students whose verbal self-efficacy reached an advanced level of mastery. These students demonstrated advanced verbal self-efficacy in weeks two and three and again in week six. Given that the structure changed after week three, their performance suggests that they grew more confident after they adjusted to discussion structure. By weeks two and three, Kathy and Daniel had

participated in at least one discussion using the Socratic Seminar style format. By week six, they had participated in two previous small-group discussions.

Jerry, a student identified as low-performing at the onset of the study, maintained a steady proficient-to-advanced mastery of his verbal self-efficacy throughout the study. Jen, the other student identified as low performing, demonstrated the greatest growth in her verbal self-efficacy. During week two, Jen demonstrated developing-to-proficient levels of self-efficacy. However, she maintained a proficient-to-advanced level of verbal self-efficacy during weeks three through six; her improved self-efficacy suggested that she felt more confident speaking in a small group of peers without added observation from an outer circle of peers.

Unfortunately, due to absences and a recording issue, data is unavailable for Carson, Aiden, and Maggie for weeks four and five. Without this data, it is difficult to understand the effect that the changed format to small groups had on these students. However, based on the available data, these students demonstrated their highest levels of verbal self-efficacy using the original fishbowl Socratic Seminar style of discussion. Maggie demonstrated her highest levels during weeks one and three; Carson demonstrated his highest levels during weeks two and three; Aiden demonstrated his highest level during week three.

Looking at all data on verbal self-efficacy, it suggests that some students felt more confident using the fishbowl Socratic Seminar style of discussion, including Ivan, Maggie, Carson, and Aiden. However, other students demonstrated higher levels of confidence during the small groups, such as Jen. For other students, the discussion structure itself appeared to matter less than the student's familiarity with it. Daniel and Kathy appeared more confident after they had used a discussion style previously. For Jerry, the mere act of discussing topics seemed to improve his confidence; after the first discussion, his confidence grew and remained consistent for the remainder of the study.

Intersections of Ability and Self-Efficacy

In assessing students' levels of critical ability and self-efficacy, I realized additional codes were needed to better understand the specific context. These codes included "answered questions," which was used to identify instances in which students responded to a posed question and "reciprocal convo," which was used any time a student engaged in reciprocal conversation that extended the discussion beyond a simple answer. In reviewing the coded transcripts, I noticed that certain contexts coincided with specific levels of self-efficacy and ability. For instance, students demonstrated a wide range of abilities when answering a question, yet their levels of self-efficacy tended to remain at developing or proficient. When engaging in reciprocal conversation, students tended to demonstrate proficient-to-advanced levels of critical ability, but their levels of self-efficacy tended to be advanced. Below, Table 13 provides an overview of these coding intersections. Descriptions and examples of the mastery levels for ability and self-efficacy can be found in Tables 2 and 3, both of which are in chapter three.

Table 13

Coding Intersections

Code	Demonstrated Level of Self-Ability	Demonstrated Level of Self-Efficacy
Answered Question	Developing (1), Proficient (2), or Advanced (3)	Developing (1) to Proficient (2)
Reciprocal Conversation	Proficient (2) to Advanced (3)	Advanced (3)

Initially, students entered the study with differing levels of written ability, verbal ability, and verbal self-efficacy. However, by the end of the study, participants achieved an equal mastery level of all three. Figure 16 focuses on the quality of students' demonstrated

ability and self-efficacy throughout the study. This figure depicts participants' average mastery levels for the worksheet and discussion. Participants' ability was measured through both written work on the CML worksheet and verbal contributions to the weekly discussion. Students' self-efficacy was measured through students' participation in the weekly discussion and can be supported by participants' self-reported comfort levels on the exit tickets. It should be noted that students' ability on the worksheet decreased over the course of the study; this may be due to the teacher-researcher's emphasis on their verbal confidence and ability. Additionally, although the data represents students first submission of their CML worksheet, they were allowed to revise their worksheets to earn a high score. By allowing revisions, students may have placed less focus on the worksheet and more on their discussion, which they could not "revise" or redo.

Figure 16

Intersections of Ability and Self-Efficacy throughout the Study



Conclusion

Format changes were implemented to improve the students' experience. These format changes included changes to the discussion structure and question presentation. Participants tended to prefer smaller groups rather than the fishbowl structure for discussions. Participants

also preferred receiving a printed list of edited questions rather than asking their prepared ones. Students' written ability was measured by their performance on the CML worksheet. After the second week, students' abilities seemed to taper off. This is likely due to the teacher's emphasis on the discussion and allowance for worksheet revisions; these conditions may have deemphasized the importance of students' initial worksheet submission. Students demonstrated the highest levels of written critical abilities when creating questions. They showed the most improvement in identifying contrasts and contradictions and identifying word gaps, but their performance in identifying word gaps only reached proficient levels, which suggests they still have further improvements to make. Students demonstrated their strongest levels of critical ability verbally in weeks three and six, which suggests that students were able to perform their best when they had repeated practice utilizing a certain discussion format. In week three, students had two previous weeks using the fishbowl discussion format, and in week six, students had two previous weeks using the small group format. Students reported feeling proficient-to-advanced comfort levels reading and analyzing informational media texts independently throughout the study. However, students tended to report feeling more comfortable asking and responding to peer's questions in the second half of the study, which suggests that extended discussion practice increased their perceived self-efficacy. Similarly, most students demonstrated higher levels of verbal self-efficacy throughout the study, which indicates that students gained confidence through the repetition of discussion. However, some students, such as Jen, seemed to have higher levels of self-efficacy when engaging in small group discussions. Others, such as Maggie, Aiden, and Kathy, had varying levels of self-efficacy depending on the topic under discussion; when discussing topics that they found engaging, these participants demonstrated higher levels of verbal self-efficacy.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Implications

This chapter discusses the study's connections to previous literature, its limitations, and its implications for future research and practices. The study described is an action research study conducted in a senior-level high school English class. The study lasted six weeks and sampled eight participants using typical- and extreme-case sampling. Students were required to read, analyze, and discuss assigned informational media texts each week. Data on their written and verbal critical media literacy skills were assessed through their completion of a worksheet and their performance in peer-led discussions. Further information on the protocols used can be found in chapter three; information on participants' specific results can be found in chapter four; thematic interpretations of the study can be found in chapter five.

Connections to Previous Literature

The goal of this study was for students to practice their critical skills to improve their demonstrated and perceived abilities. Given the close relationship between critical consciousness and citizenship theory (Giroux, 1980; Mirra, 2018; Thomas, 2018), this study sought to apply theoretical ideas to a secondary classroom, thereby producing practical results.

Critical Theory

Criticality asks that readers examine what is included as well as what is excluded (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014; Tyson, 2006). Students practiced such criticality when they completed sections of the CML worksheet. In particular, the sections on "Contrasts and Contradictions" as well as "Quoted Words" tended to guide students to note elements of the news media text or information that surprised them. Although students found it challenging to find quoted words in some articles, they soon realized they could respond to the prompt by observing whose perspective was included and whose was excluded. Participants also

demonstrated criticality through their processing of information (Potter, 2022). Students had to synthesize the information they read along with the verbal contributions of their peers. In encouraging students to learn from one another, the study involved transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 2005) by allowing a changed setting and peer collaboration to contribute to students' meaning making of the topic. Such synthesis of information is a key element of criticality (Bezanilla et al., 2021).

During the discussions, students engaged in criticality by making informed decisions (Bezanilla et al., 2021). In discussing fast fashion, several participants acknowledged the negative effects of overconsumption, including its use of unethical labor practices. However, despite that knowledge, some of them still stated that they would continue to buy from the same companies. Even though their responses did not demonstrate a change in behavior, they demonstrated their ability to consider information critically and then make an informed decision. Being conscious of the invisible influences surrounding them is an important critical component according to Wilson (2014). Students also demonstrated a willingness to “destabiliz[e] assumptions and questio[n] what appear[ed] normal” when they questioned the unethical labor practices of established companies; they focused on the unwillingness of companies, such as Shein and Nike, to provide adequate pay and benefits for their employees. Even though some students felt they were already familiar with this topic, they still showed a willingness to critically examine the text, which is another tenet of criticality (Dias, 1992).

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning

Student autonomy is perhaps one of the most important elements to implementing self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies in the classroom (Bandura, 1993; Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Callan & Shim, 2019; J. Perry et al., 2019; Zumbunn et al., 2011). As a result, this study tried to incorporate moments of student autonomy when possible. Students were encouraged to suggest relevant topics, and they voted on which topic was most

interesting each week. Additionally, halfway through the study, the format for discussions changed from fishbowl to small groups, which was suggested by several participants. While in these small groups, students were not constantly observed by a teacher; without constant observation, students were solely responsible for leading and maintaining their group's discussion. The small group discussions provided a space for students to form connections between topics and discussions independent of teacher facilitation. Such independent transference of ability is a goal of citizenship theory (Giroux, 1980). In addition to utilizing student autonomy, this study incorporated additional SRL strategies, including limiting distractions, providing breaks, allowing revisions, and encouraging self-reflection (Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Giving students time both in and out of class to read the informational media text and complete the CML worksheet provided them with a setting free of distractions and allowed additional time between the reading and discussion activities. Although data was collected from students' initial worksheet submissions, they were allowed to revise their work for a higher grade. Students were encouraged to self-reflect by completing an exit ticket. Additionally, the information provided on the exit ticket was used to inform the study, thereby seeking students' input.

Throughout the study, the teacher-researcher attempted to scaffold the assignment to better reach students' zone of proximal development (ZPD). After seeing students struggle to ask questions and maintain the conversation during the first discussion, the teacher began including some of her own questions into the question bank. These questions were either original questions posed by the teacher-researcher or questions written by their peers that had been enhanced by the teacher-researcher. Seeing examples of the enhanced questions seemed to help students feel more confident in writing and asking their own questions. Requiring students to find their own article during the last two weeks of the study was another way the teacher-researcher tried to increase the rigor of the assignment. The change in discussion

structure from fishbowl to small group presented an opportunity for students to assume more responsibility in their participation and facilitation of the conversation. Although they were not constantly monitored by the teacher-researcher, their conversation was recorded, which provided accountability. Students reported feeling more comfortable talking in the same small groups rather than different groups using the fishbowl structure in which other peers observed them. Both discussion formats were collaborative (Harvey & Goudvis, 2013) and student-led (Soutter & Clark, 2021).

Limitations of the Study

Although this study adds to the existing body of literature of action research in the ELA classroom, it nonetheless contains limitations. The first limitation is the setting and participant selection. The setting was selected due to the teacher-researcher's access rather than more selective criteria. Although participant selection was intended to be wide in its scope, it was still limited to the students assigned to a particular course and period due to scheduling limitations.

Another significant limitation was the changed structure of the study. Although the teacher-researcher believed all modifications were beneficial to students, those changes altered situations and may have impacted the study's results. For instance, the teacher researcher changed the way questions were presented and shared during students' discussions. Initially, the teacher relied upon students to ask their prepared questions. Then, the teacher asked students to record their responses, crumple them up, and throw them to the center of the table as a way of anonymizing the questions and reducing students' discomfort in asking original questions aloud. The teacher then began including some of her original questions to provide students with more variety. Towards the end of the study, the teacher provided students with a list of printed questions that they could ask – this list included original questions created by students as well as those written by the teacher. While students

were always encouraged to ask spontaneous in-the-moment questions, the change in how questions were provided to students during the discussion may have impacted students' engagement and experience. Based on findings from this study, it is recommended that future research use the final method of question presentation in which the researcher compiles a list of student-created questions, enhances those questions, and supplements them with teacher-created questions. This list should then be provided for students to use in their discussion. This method was most preferred by students, who found it helped them to understand the questions asked and avoided repetition. They also felt confident in the quality of the questions, knowing that the teacher had reviewed and edited them as needed.

The study's findings are limited by the structural changes that were made throughout. The first half of the study randomly assigned students to an inner or outer circle in a fishbowl-style student-led discussion. The second half of the study kept students in assigned small groups that discussed simultaneously. Although half of the study utilized one format and the other half utilized the other, it is still difficult to understand the differences due to students' absences. There is not enough data over the six-week study to suggest whether one structure was more successful in certain regards than others. However, based on student feedback, it is recommended that students remain in the same groups because it creates a routine and level of familiarity among peers. Additionally, future studies should implement a clear speaking structure, such as the one utilized in this study; a student volunteer initiated the discussion, and when the conversation reached a lull, it was the responsibility of the student sitting next to the last question-asker to ask the next question and continue the conversation. Students responded well to this speaking structure both in the fishbowl and small group discussions; even when students were not directly observed, they maintained this speaking structure and held one another accountable according to the protocol when it was their turn to ask a question.

Another limitation is the method in which the teacher-researcher assigned students to complete exit tickets. While participants were required to complete an exit ticket for the first half and the second half of the study, they were randomly assigned. This meant that for some weeks, as many as half the participants completed an exit ticket. For other weeks, as few as one participant completed an exit ticket. Had the teacher-researcher been more intentional in assigning participants exit tickets, she could have assigned students of differing levels to complete an exit ticket each week. Future research could utilize sampling information to intentionally assign a high-, low-, and average-performing student to complete an exit ticket each week to gather data from a range of abilities.

A final limitation is the time requirements. One goal of the study was to provide a sustainable teaching practice that integrated CML practices into the ELA classroom, which it did not. Given that this study occupied two to three class periods each week, it is not a sustainable teaching practice. Perhaps if students were to read the assigned text outside of class time and simultaneous small group discussions were the default structure, only one day per week could be allocated to this practice, and it would be more realistic for classroom use. Or perhaps if this practice occurred on a monthly rather than weekly basis, a practicing teacher could justify spending two to three class periods per month completing the activity. I hope that future research will continue to study how CML skills can be regularly integrated into a secondary ELA classroom.

Implications

Based on the above limitations, future research should address structural changes. That is, student discussion groups, whether using the fishbowl or small group structure, should maintain a consistent group of student speakers that follow established speaking protocols. This consistency will build students' familiarity with one another. Establishing expectations and protocols for speaking will provide students with clear expectations that

they can follow when they facilitate the conversation; this study placed the burden of maintaining the conversation on the student next to the last question asker, which proved useful and manageable throughout the course of the study. The choice to use fishbowl or small group structure is dependent upon future researchers as this research did not provide conclusive data to support one structure over another. However, based on students' feedback and the teacher-researcher's observations, I suggest there is value in utilizing a fishbowl structure to model appropriate discussion behavior and interactions before transitioning to small groups to encourage students' increased role as facilitators of the conversation.

Student feedback on the text selection was mixed. Some students appreciated having a say in suggesting and voting on topics, while others felt their choices were not selected. Regardless, students noted that they appreciated that the teacher sought their opinion. Towards the end of the study, students began to assume responsibility for researching their own text related to the topic. This transition occurred to scaffold the exercise; students seemed to feel comfortable finding their own text after "good" or appropriate texts had been provided for them earlier in the study. However, students typically felt it was unnecessary to read both a shared text and then research their own. Therefore, future research should merely provide students with a topic when requiring them to research their own text. Although students were generally advanced at creating discussion questions, they reported preferring having a printed list of questions that they could use during the discussion. Throughout the study, students reported feeling that the printed questions were "better" because they had been reviewed and enhanced by the teacher. The printed list also removed the burden of responsibility in asking a question. It also allowed students additional time to consider questions before being expected to discuss them with peers.

In addition to these specific suggestions, future research should have an increased duration. A significant limitation of this study was its short timeframe of six weeks. This

short duration combined with a lack of data due to student absences and technology failures rendered incomplete results. A longer practice duration could also ameliorate the issue of weekly time commitment. That is, while the initial implementation of the practice may still take a few days per week, by continuing the same expectations for a longer period of time, a practicing teacher might be able to reduce the class time utilized from the assignment from two to one day per week, thereby making this a more sustainable teaching practice. By sustainable practice, I mean one that is realistic for teachers to incorporate alongside their existing curriculum. The practice as described in this study is not feasible for teachers to utilize alongside their existing lessons for an extended duration. Perhaps if students were to read the assigned text outside of class time and simultaneous small group discussions were the default structure, only one day per week could be allocated to this practice, and it would be more realistic for classroom use. Or perhaps if this practice occurred on a monthly rather than weekly basis, a practicing teacher could justify spending two to three class periods per month completing the activity. I hope that future research will continue to study how CML skills can be regularly integrated into a secondary ELA classroom.

Furthermore, although the study addressed my definition of CML as the ability to analyze published informational media texts, it did not address the skill of production, which is an important feature of CML, as defined by the Media Literacy Education (Potter, 2022) and the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy (Aufderheide, 1993). Therefore, future research should aim to address the topic of students as producers of media rather than just consumers. Perhaps future studies could incorporate an element in which students composed their own informational media to respond to the topic; this could take the standard format of print, or perhaps a more multimedia format through a social media platform, such as TikTok. Of course, students should be exposed and guided through the critical analysis of multimedia content, such as social media posts and videos, prior to their creation of such.

Thus, expanded definition of “informational media text” could and should be expanded beyond the traditional text and printed media utilized in this study.

Pedagogical Implications

If I were to share this study with members of my department or other ELA colleagues, I would propose it as a yearlong program with a monthly focus. My school’s year is divided into two semesters consisting of five months each. Working within this ten-month time frame, I will outline ten phases that I recommend my colleagues and I follow to implement this modified CML program. For each month, teachers would seek students’ input in choosing a current event topic on which to focus. Students would be required to complete a CML worksheet each month; the teacher should emphasize that students complete and submit the entire worksheet prior to the discussion; this early submission will allow the teacher time to review student-created questions, enhance them, and compile them and additional ones into a list to provide to students for the discussion. Since the assignment is monthly based rather than weekly, all students would be required to complete an exit ticket at the end of the month. This will ensure that all student voices are heard, and any necessary modifications are made prior to the following month’s assignment.

For the first two months, the teacher would be responsible for finding a traditional written text and a multimedia or social media post. One month should seek to find left-leaning texts and the other month should seek to find right-leaning texts so as to expose students to a range of political leanings. The teacher should assign the article to students at the beginning of the month and allow them approximately two weeks of time outside of class to read it and complete the CML worksheet. The expectation is that students will spend time outside of class independently working on the assignment to prepare for a discussion at the end of the month. The first month should utilize a fishbowl discussion so that the teacher can help to facilitate the conversation and model effective discussion practices. For the second

month, students would speak in the same group but would do so without peer observation, thereby using a small group discussion format. For month three, the teacher should seek to find a politically centered article; students would be required to find their own multimedia text to pair with the article. Students' multimedia text could have any political leaning, but they would be expected to discuss the connection of their multimedia text to the assigned article as well as the texts found by their peers. Since students are now responsible for finding a text, they would be required to submit their finding by the midpoint of the month to allow their peers adequate time to preview their peers' findings. At the end of the month, students would be expected to discuss the article and peer-found multimedia texts in their same small groups. While students could have access to all students' submitted texts, students would only be required to view the texts submitted by their group members; this caveat will ensure that students are not overwhelmed reading a plethora of texts. For months four and five, students will research an article and multimedia text related to the assigned topic. For one of these months, students should find biased texts; for the other month, students should find centered or neutral texts. Again, students will be required to submit their found texts at the midpoint of the month so that their group members can review their findings prior to the discussion at the end of the month.

The second semester, which consists of months six through ten, will shift students from being consumers to producers of media. This semester should once again be intentionally scaffolded to assist students in developing more independence in their CML skills. Since this study did not explore students as producers of media, I would offer a general outline and solicit feedback from my colleagues in its design. Possible suggestions I could offer would be to require students to rewrite or remix researched information initially. In this manner, students are gradually becoming producers but are able to rely upon the published work of others. Throughout the semester, I would recommend that students gradually assume

more responsibility. By the end of the semester, the goal would be for students to be capable of creating and sharing biased and centered texts of various mediums.

Conclusion

The study suggests that students benefitted from scaffolded and structured reading, analyzing, and discussion of informational media texts. Students were interested in learning and discussing timely media topics that related to their own lives. The more students read and discussed texts, the more comfortable and competent they became in demonstrating critical media literacy skills. Different structures and situations allowed different students to thrive. Although the structural changes made data interpretation challenging, it also provided different contexts for students to participate and better understand what factors assisted or hindered them. This insight could aid students continued CML practices beyond the classroom; in better understanding themselves as critical readers and speakers, students may now understand the situations in which they are most productive.

Ultimately, this action research study adds to the limited body of research on applying CML skills to the secondary ELA classroom (Rahmatullah, 2017) and provides data from students' perspectives, rather than from teachers (Bezanilla et al., 2021; McNelly & Harvey, 2021). It confirms previous findings that students' SE benefits from sustained practices (Badura, 1977; Zumbrunn et al., 2011) and suggests the need for an even longer study. It also demonstrates the importance of interaction in forming ideas (Vygotsky, 1978; Rosenblatt, 2005). Students' reports of their own critical practices reinforce the existing concern that students lack CML skills and need more guided practice in the classroom (Beers & Probst, 2016; Bell, 2001; Dias, 1992; Gallagher, 2008; Hooley et al., 2013; Jang et al., 2021; McGrew et al., 2018; Muhammad, 2020). The student-reported data from this study contributes to the limited body of research, which tends to focus on student performance and teacher observation without accounting for students' perceptions.

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Appendix A: Nonfiction Text Complexity Rubric, from Beers & Probst (2016)

Worksheet for Analysis of Text-Complexity of a Nonfiction Text

Title of the Text: _____

Quantitative Measures: Lexile (Other) Score _____ Grade level suggested by quantitative measures: _____

Qualitative Dimensions:

Ideas Presented			
Offers basic information. Simple, single meaning. Explicit and direct. Purpose or stance clear.	Much explicit, but moves to some implied meaning. Possibly two perspectives. Requires some inferential reasoning.	Probably requires weighing of multiple perspectives. Some analysis of bias and author's motivations. Some ambiguity.	Complex, subtle arguments, implied meanings. Author's intent may be concealed. Difficult ideas, evidence hard to assess; main idea must be inferred across many pages
Easier ←		→ More Demanding	
Evidence: _____			

Structure Used			
Easily identified text structure; photographs or illustrations help provide the meaning. Text features such as headings guide reading.	Primarily explicit; primarily one perspective; may vary from simple chronological order. Graphics and text features clarify points.	More complex, multiple perspectives may be presented; more deviation from chronology. Tables and figures support understanding.	Complex, multiple text structures & perspectives. In some texts, almost no graphics are used; in others overuse can interfere with reading.
Easier ←		→ More Demanding	
Evidence: _____			

Language Used			
Explicit, literal, contemporary, familiar language. Vocabulary simple. Mostly Tier I words. Mostly simple sentence structure with one idea or fact presented. More similes than metaphors.	Mostly explicit. Tier II and III words are defined in context and used sparingly. Sentence structure more complex with perhaps more than one idea presented in a sentence.	Vocabulary not defined at point of use. Mostly Tier II and III words. Metaphor (rather than similes) used more; Multiple technical words may be used in one sentence.	Implied meanings, allusive. Language may hide speaker's biases or affiliations. Compound, complex sentences requiring much unpacking. In some texts, Tier III vocab is used extensively.
Easier ←		→ More Demanding	
Evidence: _____			

Knowledge Required			
Requires no special knowledge or experience. Settings, problems familiar or easily envisioned.	Some references to events or other texts. Most of text deals with common or easily imagined experience.	More complex problems. Experiences may be less familiar to many. Cultural or historical references.	Explores complex ideas; refers to texts or ideas that may be beyond students' experiences. Expected prior knowledge is not explained in the text. May require specialized knowledge.
Easier ←		→ More Demanding	
Evidence: _____			

Qualitative dimensions indicate text makes demands that are: Mostly easier Mostly more demanding

Grade level suggested by qualitative assessment _____

Appendix B: Critical Media Literacy Worksheet

Name: _____ **Discussion Date:** _____

Media Title, Creator, & Source: _____

Scoring: Note that each category is worth 10 points and will be assessed based on demonstrated mastery of the standard. Mastery levels correspond with points as follows: Advanced (10); Proficient (8-9); Developing (6-7); Beginning (0-4). Each CML Worksheet is worth 100 formative points.

Step 1: Read & Take Notes

As you read the media text, search for these nonfiction signposts. Record examples from the text.

Nonfiction Signpost & Standard	Example from Text
<p>Contrasts & Contradictions (RI2, RI3): Identify a sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening. Identify a difference between two or more elements in the text.</p>	
<p>Extreme or Absolute Language (RI6): Identify language that leaves no doubt about a situation or event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.</p>	

<p>Numbers and Stats (RI6):</p> <p>Identify specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Identify where the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.</p>	
<p>Quoted Words (RI5): Identify opinions or conclusions of someone who is an expert on the subject (voice of authority), or someone who might be a participant in or a witness to an event (personal perspective).</p> <p>Identify times the author might simply cite others (others' words) to provide support for a point.</p>	
<p>Word Gaps (RI4): Identify vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the reader. This might be because it is a world with multiple meanings, a rare or technical world, a discipline-specific word, or one with a far-removed antecedent.</p>	

Step 2: Prepare Discussion Questions (SL1a)

Before the class discussion, you need to read and prepare THREE original discussion questions about the assigned text. Questions must be open-ended, thought-provoking, and clear.

1.

2.

3.

Appendix C: Exit Ticket

Name: _____ **Discussion Date:** _____

1. How comfortable were you reading and analyzing the text? Explain any moments of struggle or success.

2. How comfortable were you asking questions during the discussion? Explain any moments of struggle or success.

Appendix D: Socratic Seminar Observation Worksheet

Instructions: Complete this chart when you sit in the OUTER circle. Observe your peers as they participate in the inner circle discussion. Record notes on questions they ask, comments they make, and textual evidence they reference.

Questions: What are some of the most interesting questions that were asked?	
Comments: What are some of the most interesting comments that were made?	
Textual Evidence: What details from the text are referenced?	

What is the most interesting thing that was said? What are your thoughts on this subject?

Appendix E: Small Group Discussion Reflection**Name:** _____ **Date:** _____

What is the most interesting thing that was said during the discussion? What are your thoughts on this subject?

Appendix F: Observation Protocols

Location:

*Attach a diagram or image of the physical space layout and add reflective comments

Date:

Time of Day:

Activity Observed: Socratic Seminar Discussion

Length of Activity: 1 class period, approximately 50 minutes

Specific focus of the activity:	
Descriptive Notes (what you directly observe and sense -- what do you see or hear?)	Reflective Notes (your impressions or questions)
How is information shared among students?	
How do students spend their time? What do they do?	
Key notes from observed student conversations:	
Key notes from observed student work:	
Unexpected questions or happenings:	

Appendix G: Focus Group Interview Questions

Preface: In this focus interview, we will follow the same guidelines we use in our class discussions. This means we will treat everyone with respect. We will allow everyone to speak and will thoughtfully consider their ideas.

Questions to ask at the initial interview:

1. In your own words, what does critical media literacy (CML) mean?
2. Currently, when or how do you use CML skills?
3. How comfortable are you reading and analyzing an informational media text?
4. How comfortable are you asking questions during a discussion?
5. How comfortable are you responding to peers during a discussion?

Questions to ask at the endpoint:

6. How comfortable were you reading and analyzing the text?
7. How comfortable were you asking questions during the discussion?
8. How comfortable were you responding to peers during the discussion?
9. How might the CML assignment be improved?

Appendix H: CML 4 Discussion Questions

1. The author uses a simile to compare Jalen Hurts' critics to the Eagles: "even his most fervent onetime critics became as invisible as the Eagles' defense in the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl." Why would the author make this comparison?
2. The author uses a simile to compare NFL franchise owners' support of guaranteed contracts to their support in ending tax write-offs (see the third paragraph on the back). What is the author saying when he makes this comparison?
3. The author says, "Hurts' new deal provides another reminder of the realities of the market even for franchise quarterbacks – the most important players in a quarterback-centric league." What does he mean and why might he make such a claim?
4. The author asks the reader a rhetorical question when he says, "How are Hurts and Jackson linked? Permit us to explain." Why might the author ask this rhetorical question?
5. The author cites a Tweet from Jackson saying that "the Ravens have 'not been interested in meeting my value.'" This is the only direct quotation in the entire article. Why might the author choose to include this quote?
6. Who isn't quoted in this article that you think should have been? What opinions or perspectives are missing?
7. In providing context for readers to understand Jackson's ongoing contract negotiation, the author is vague, saying words like "reportedly," "some time ago," and "many NFL observers." Why might the author choose to be vague rather than specific? What is the author's expectation of his reader?
8. The author says that "Jackson is a star" but also notes some of his shortcomings (see the bottom of page 1). According to the author, what might be preventing Jackson from getting the contract he desires? Do you think these shortcomings should prevent Jackson

from getting the contract he wants? If you were a team owner, would you take a risk on Jackson and offer him a contract with more money? Why?

9. The author explains that although Hurts may seem like the NFL's highest-paid player, he actually "ranks second to Watson . . . in total guarantees." What does he mean? (See the first page, fourth paragraph from the bottom). In your opinion, which is more important – the total amount or the total guaranteed?
10. The author describes Hurts as "spectacular in the Eagles' 38-35 loss." Typically, a loss is not associated with the word "spectacular." Why might the author choose to use the word? What is the effect of such a choice?
11. Towards the end of the article, the author says that "Coming off a fabulous season with his rookie contract finished, Hurts was in the catbird seat in his talks with the Eagles." According to Wikipedia, "The catbird seat" is an idiomatic phrase used to describe an enviable position, often in terms of having the upper hand or greater advantage in any type of dealing among parties. Were you already familiar with this phrase? What effect does it have on you as a reader? Why might the author choose to include it?
12. What kind of playing level does Lamar Jackson need to show in order to receive the contract he wants?
13. The author references another football player, Deshaun Watson, who received "a record-setting contract despite his off-field conduct." Do you think a player's off-field conduct should affect their football contract? Explain.
14. The author says that the Baltimore Ravens offered Jackson "\$133 million guaranteed at signing, injury guarantees that increased the total to \$175 million and an additional \$25 million if Jackson remained on Baltimore's roster on the fifth day of the league year in 2026." Do you think he should have accepted the offer? Why?

15. How could the ongoing negotiation for Jackson's contract affect his career or reputation?

How will the sports community be affected by Jackson's contract?

16. Do you think Lamar Jackson will receive a contract that pleases him? Do you think he deserves a contract with more money? Why? Do you think Lamar Jackson will settle and sign a contract that pays less than he wants? Why?

17. The author chooses to end the article by saying, Hurts "was wise enough to realize that his current employer as well as potential future ones would only go so far. It's time for Jackson to reach the same conclusion." What does the author mean? Why would he choose to end the article with this sentence?

18. Should newer players receive more money because they are in the spotlight more than older players? Or, should experience play a factor? Explain.

19. What bias do you notice in the article?

Appendix I: CML 5 Discussion Questions

1. Who is to blame for the high prices of tickets? Explain.
2. What level of involvement should artists have in the ticket sales for their events?
3. Should the ticket prices be higher to discourage people from purchasing and reselling tickets at a higher price? How many tickets should a buyer be able to purchase?
4. What is a reasonable ticket price for an event? At what point do you think a ticket is “too expensive”? What reasons could justify a higher ticket price? Explain.
5. What are some potential consequences of the proposed Ticket Act? Do you think it’s enforceable? How will the Ticket Act affect ticketing companies, artists, and buyers?
6. Should ticketing companies be required to refund service fees to buyers? Explain.
7. Why might the government be interested in addressing the high fees ticketing companies charge as of late? Explain.
8. Why aren’t ticketing companies more transparent in ticket prices? What should be included in the advertised price of a ticket?
9. Is it ethical for companies to add additional ticket fees? What might be some of their justifications for these fees? Explain.
10. Should ticketing companies have to share their profit information with the public? Explain.

Appendix J: CML 6 Discussion Questions

1. Should there be a ban on companies that allow forced human labor? Why?
2. What would be the process to rid the market of goods made with forced human labor?
3. Do you think American-operated businesses will be better able to compete when forced labor practices in other countries such as China are ended? Explain.
4. Why do you think companies such as Shein are allowed to continue operating despite multiple reports of their forced labor practices?
5. What responsibility does the U.S. have to get involved in supporting the Uyghurs?
6. How can we as consumers prevent or stop forced labor practices?
7. How can companies prove that they use fair labor practices? What is the responsibility of experts from human rights agencies?
8. Why might well-known brands, such as Shein, Nike, and Adidas, engage in risky practices if it could have dire consequences on their business? Are the consequences worth the risk?
9. Do you buy products from these companies who allegedly use forced labor? What is our responsibility as consumers?
10. Is second-hand shopping a solution to the over-production of clothes? Why? Is over-consumption a problem in general? Other than clothing, what else might be over-consumed in the U.S.?