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Writing Bootcamp Unit

Thesis Revision Exercise

**Abstract:**

Allows students to see the potential for revision in their own thesis statements. Encourages both revision and avoiding “falling in love” with the first draft of a thesis. Activity assumes some prior knowledge of good conventions for thesis statements.

**Standards:**

- W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

**Procedure:**

At individual tables or in individual groups, have students brainstorm a topic. To get the ball rolling, the teacher might suggest a few when the class is still in a large group. Students should be encouraged to think of topics pertinent to them—college education costs, employment rates, etc. Once the students are in small groups, have each student write the thesis statement on the top of a sheet of paper. Then have the students rotate papers clockwise at their table or in their groups. Instruct the student in this “second” position to read the thesis statement, and then attempt a second thesis statement from the **opposite** side of that issue. So, if student #1 wrote that the government should step in to curb the soaring costs of higher education, student #2 might have to conceive of a thesis statement which identified the individual as the culpable party. Then, have the students rotate the paper once more. Students in this #3 position should be instructed to then return to the original thesis statement (which should be listed first on the sheet) and write an alternative version, but keep the same position.

This activity can be continued as long as the teacher deems helpful, thus generating several versions of thesis statements, and could be modified so students initially only focus on one stance.