

Understanding an Existing Map

Terms/Expectations/Questions: **THE TEQ SHEET**

Complete Citation:

Malady, Matthew. "We Are Teaching Our Children to Write Terribly." Slate. Ed. Julia Turner. Graham Holdings Company, 10 Oct. 2013. Web. 30 Aug. 2014.

Terms and Phrases

To make its claim, the source uses important concepts. These organize the evidence and make sense out of it. **Identify** four key terms or phrases that are especially important to the source's claim. **Explain** why each is important to the source's claim.

Term 1:

"tier": Malady says that SAT/ACT scores could be the difference between "Stanford and the second tier." This suggests that colleges have important differences in status. Malady's essay discusses the effect of testing and especially writing tests on getting into higher tier colleges.

Term 2:

"Regimented scoring process." Malady reports what the director of UMich's writing program says about how scoring follows specific rules that reflects the need to get papers scored rather than respond to them.

Term 3:

"bullshit on demand" This quotation (again from the UMich director) focuses Malady claim that the writing required in ACT/SAT tests does not reflect the real world of writing.

Term 4:

Holistic: the term means that scorers are expected to make a general judgment about an essay that doesn't require looking at many smaller aspects of the writing.

Expectations

Readers already have beliefs about a topic even more they start reading. It is important to recognize the difference between what we expected and what the document says. The difference between what we expect and we read can identify unexplained territories that are worth writing about. List four ideas, facts or other features from the source that surprised you. How was each different from what you expected?

Surprising Elements	What You Expected to Read
Content doesn't matter	I expected that readers would pay close attention to content and to the evidence that was used to strengthen a claim
A single part of a single test can keep people out of some schools	I expected that highly selective schools wouldn't bother looking at these test scores
That writing under a time pressure is a faulty way to test because nobody does that in the real world.	I don't think of writing courses as connected t t
The way I've been taught to write is really about test scores. It's not about thinking and writing.	I guess that I don't think writing matters.

Questions

After you have carefully reviewed the source, ask useful questions whose answer might become your claim. These questions should address the source's assumptions, evidence, thesis, or issues that it ignores.

Question 1 Ok . . . if some students from some schools get special training in how to take tests, aren't the result really more about the kind of school they graduated from rather than how well they write and think? Is there some sort of bias here?

Question 2 Who benefits from a system that experts (MIT, UMich, etc.) seem to think is bogus? Is it corporate profit, people who only want a certain type of student, who who who? Would we have to specify who benefits in order to get it changed?

Question 3 Ok . . . if this kind of testing creates a specific type of teaching that keeps us from thinking critically, who benefits from having an uneducated population? This isn't the same question as #2 because I'm thinking that everybody -- schools, companies, politicians, etc. -- are part of a bigger way of thinking about how the society should be organized? If these schools are so smart, why do they knowingly use these tests? Are there good schools that don't?