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Rap and Technology Teach the Art of Argument

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How can teachers integrate rap and technology strategies to teach students with learning disabilities the art of persuasive argument writing? This teacher research study presents creative new approaches for teaching argument writing. Strategies used in the study helped college freshmen with learning disabilities (LD) succeed in developing persuasive argument writing skills. Key strategies used in the study were: The Argument Rap, The Rap Protocol, A Multimodal Technology Approach, A Peer Observation Feedback Strategy, and Argument Prompts. Each strategy was aligned with The Common Core State Standards (see Introduction, this issue). Results of the study indicate that these strategies were effective in helping first year college students with LD develop successful argument writing skills. Results suggest that the strategies could be adapted to teach secondary students with LD the skills of effective argument writing. Results also suggest that some of the strategies could be modified to teach middle grade students how to write effective opinion essays.

Keywords: **Argument, Writing and CCSS, Engagement, Secondary English, Rap to Teach, Digital Technology Strategies**

Introduction

How can students with learning disabilities learn the complex skills of persuasive argument writing? What innovative approaches can capture their imaginations and spur their growth as thinkers, readers, and writers? These questions intrigued me and led to my teacher research study in a college composition course. The purpose of the study was to integrate rap and creative technology approaches in order to teach learning disabled students the skills of creative argument writing.

A growing body of research suggests that optimal learning and engagement occur when teachers integrate students' interests, the arts, and multimodal teaching methods (Fink , 2015, 2012, 2007, 2006, 2002/2003,1998; Fink & Samuels, 2008; Gardner, 2014, 1999, 1983; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Klauda, 2012; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Hong Xu, 2008, 2007; Murray, 2015; Renninger & Hidi, 2016; Rinne, Yarmolinsky, & Hardiman, 2011). Recent research indicates that multimodal/multisensory methods are especially helpful for teaching students with autism spectrum disorders and other learning differences (Hardy & LaGasse, 2013; Murray, 2015).

In recent years, teachers increasingly are using strategies that capitalize on students' interests, curiosity, and musical tastes. Today's teachers tap into students' interests in sports, superheroes, nature, gymnastics, and gaming as well as the arts of music, dance, fine art, drama, and rap. This expansion in strategies may be due in part to research indicating that the arts have a unique capacity to promote engagement and propel learning forward (Bouffard, 2014; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Gardner, 2014, 1993, 1983; Hong Xu, 2007).

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Rationale

We can all recall songs, nursery rhymes, prayers, and poems that we learned as early as age 4, 5, or 6 –-- before we learned to read. One reason we retain such detailed information along with poignant memories of these early learning experiences is that rhythm and rhyme have a magnetic ability to embed words and concepts indelibly in our brains. Recently, educators have created new ways to integrate the power of rhythm and rhyme as central components of instruction. New techniques use the dynamic power of art forms such as rap, song, and poetry to instill information in memory and make deep, lasting impressions. These creative techniques along with state-of-the-art digital strategies can be applied to teach students with learning disabilities how to write persuasive arguments.

Participants

In this teacher research study, I used rap and technology strategies in my English composition classes at a small liberal arts college in the Northeast in order to help students with documented learning disabilities master the complex skills of argumentation. Classes were small inclusive classes of 20 students each. During the study's five-year period, the total number of participants was 400 students, approximately 100 of whom had documented learning disabilities (LD). Students with LD presented their documentation letters to me with summaries of their specific needs for reasonable accommodations.

The Use of Rap

By using rap in my argument writing lessons, I was able to capitalize on students' fascination with rap music and *draw in all types of students, including those with LD*. I observed that the powerful, distinctive rhythms and beats of rap provided captivating hooks that sparked my students' interests and engaged them in learning argument writing skills.

In a compelling book, *Hip-hop poetry and the Classics,* Alan Sitomer and Michael Cirelli (2004) argue convincingly that rap lyrics possess the same literary components as classical poems and can be used effectively for teaching. Sitomer and Cirelli demonstrate that rap and classic poetry both include alliteration, allusion, figurative language, hyperbole, imagery, irony, theme, metaphor, simile, mood creation, onomatopoeia, personification, symbolism, rhythm patterns, rhyme schemes, and so forth. As a teacher using rap as a teaching tool, my purpose was to harness the enormous appeal and power of rap to enliven my lessons and reach all types of students, including students with learning disabilities.

I found that writing original raps inspired students' enthusiasm and enhanced their ability to read critically and write coherently. I observed that when students with LD engaged in the process of writing their own original raps, they:

1. Read complex arguments closely,
2. Developed analytical comprehension skills about arguments,
3. Reviewed the content of specific arguments, and
4. Related argument texts in meaningful ways to their own lives.

I noticed that when students created their own raps, they experienced the excitement and joy of creation and an authentic sense of accomplishment and pride.

Perhaps most importantly, their knowledge and self-confidence about writing clear arguments soared!

Goals

The goals of this paper are to present strategies and activities that:

1. Promote engagement in argument writing,
2. Develop and enhance mastery of the skills of argument writing,
3. Integrate digital technology skills with argument writing activities,
4. Provide protocols or templates for assessing both written and verbal arguments, and
5. Meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and national literacy goals for writing persuasive arguments.

Teacher Research Method

To meet these goals, I conducted a teacher research study based on Cochran-Smith and Lytle's method of practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Curwood, 2011). The study was conducted in the context of first year composition classes over a five-year period at a small liberal arts college in the Northeastern United States. Many of the students were the first person in their family to attend college. They often came to college steeped in deep knowledge of popular culture and admiration for popular art forms.

Given my students' backgrounds and their abiding interests in popular culture, I set out to explore creative ways to capitalize on their familiarity with the art of rap and digital technology to teach them argument writing skills in an inclusive setting.

Guiding Questions

The following questions guided the inquiry:

1. How can teachers capitalize on the power of rhythm and rap to spur students with learning disabilities to create convincing written arguments?
2. How can teachers integrate digital technology and creative research approaches into lessons on argument writing?
3. What tools can teachers use to incorporate peer feedback and critical evaluation of arguments during the research, writing, and oral presentation processes?

Organization

This paper is organized according to four main sections. Each section describes a strategy that I developed and implemented in my English composition classes. The four strategies are:

1. *The Rap Protocol* with step-by-step instructions to guide students to create original raps in order to develop and reinforce the skills of argument writing.

2. *The Argument Rap*, which summarizes the essence of argument skills and reinforces the essential components of good arguments: Claim, evidence, counterargument, and conclusion. *The Argument Rap* is based on models of argument writing by Toulmin (2003), Kuhn (1991), and others (Kuhn, Hemberger, & Kait, 2014).
3. An Instructional Model for Using Digital Technology to Teach Multimodal Argumentation Skills (Wise & Panos, 2014).
4. A Strategy for Peer Analysis and Response to Multimodal Digital Arguments, Oral Presentations, and Papers.

Using Rap in the Classroom

I used *The Rap Protocol* in Figure 1 successfully in my English composition classes (see Figure 1). Following this step-by-step protocol enabled me to implement rap as a creative tool for teaching argument writing. I have used *The Rap Protocol* with many teachers, who find the steps fun and easy to follow. *The Rap Protocol* can be easily adapted for any content area or grade level and fits seamlessly into lessons on writing effective, creative arguments. It is adaptable for a whole class, pairs of students, or small groups of students with learning disabilities—especially when teachers use a gradual release of responsibility approach. As students work in pairs or small groups, they learn the step-by-step sequence of *The Rap Protocol* and become increasingly independent as rap artists.

In my English composition classes, I observed that the more experiences students were given to create original raps, the more independent they became in using rap as an art form and learning tool. I noticed that creating new raps to summarize their ideas was especially useful for helping students with learning disabilities learn how to synthesize information about argument writing. While students worked on creating their own raps, I observed them engaged in deep discussions about challenging vocabulary and concepts, including the essential vocabulary and components of effective written arguments.

In addition, I noticed that all types of raps worked well for helping students with learning disabilities master the skills of argument—published raps, teacher-made raps, and student-created raps. I observed that student-created raps were an especially good way for my students with learning disabilities to consolidate what they had learned from reading about a topic, including argument writing.

Over time, I became increasingly comfortable as a teacher with integrating rap into my composition writing lessons. I discovered that I could use rap effectively on a regular basis to help students review for weekly quizzes, midterms, and other tests and assessments.

Student-Created Raps

Writing their own raps helped my students review what they had read and prepared them to write persuasive argument essays about challenging, full-length texts. Many students created lively gestures and body movements to accompany the words and accentuate the rhythms of their raps. Here are four raps created and performed by my composition students after they read two challenging books: *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race And Inheritance* by Barack Obama and *What Girls Learn* by Karin Cook.

Raps about *Dreams from My Father*

The first rap, *Daddy Wasn't There,* recreates the moment in President Obama's life when, at age 21, he received a phone call from his aunt in Nairobi, Africa informing him of the death of his biological father, who had left the family when Obama was about 3 years old. After deserting the family, Obama's father visited only once when Obama was 10. Nevertheless, Obama continued to dream about some day being reunited with his father. The following student-created rap movingly expresses Obama's eternal yearning for his absentee father.

***Daddy Wasn't There* by Hannah Brosnan and Rose Heller**

Sitting in the kitchen
Cooking up some breakfast
Got a phone call
And my life was re-directed
My aunt from Nairobi
Was like "Listen up B"
"Your dad passed away, I am so sorry"
STOP! REWIND!
I don't know what to feel
I don't know what to think
The death of a father
Flashed by in a blink
Tension in the air,
Daddy wasn't there.

Memories I knew only from stories
Cried myself to sleep over all of these worries,
Daddy where'd you go? Daddy where ya been?
Never thought we'd meet again, said goodbye when I was ten.

Dreams from my father
Yearning is a bother
Daddy wasn't there
Guess I shouldn't care…
…But I do.

After writing about Obama's reactions to his absent father's death, students composed original raps about the salient qualities of a good parent. The topic of good (or inadequate) parenting is embedded throughout Obama's memoir, and students had previously discussed this topic and done in-class free-writes about the characteristics of good parents. A sample rap by a student follows:

***A Good Parent Loves Unconditionally* by Todd R. Neill**

A good parent loves unconditionally,
Is always there physically and emotionally,
Is patient and calm in face of calamity.
A good parent teaches
Honesty and modesty,
And keeps lofty goals within reach.
Instilling values in each child,
While always being calm and mild.
A good parent loves unconditionally.

Raps about *What Girls Learn*

Students also read and wrote raps about Karen Cook's coming-of-age novel, *What Girls Learn*. This engaging novel deals with the relationship between two sisters, ages 11 and 12. Sibling love and rivalry is the theme of the next student-created rap.

Sibling Rivalry by Molly Wyman and Michelle Goldberg

We fight about clothes
'Cause you steal my sweaters,
And sometimes we argue
But it's all for the better.
We look out for each other
From dating to looks,
And when you need help
I crack open the books.
Our fights don't last long
Even though they're intense,
We can't stay mad for long
'Cause our love is immense!

What Girls Learn raises several thought-provoking questions*:* Why do people lie? Under what circumstances, if any, is it okay to tell a lie? What long-term negative effects may ensue? In the novel, these intriguing questions are considered in the context of the family's response to the mother's diagnosis of breast cancer. The following student rap addresses the issue of secrecy and lies elicited by the novel.

***Euphemisms, Dark Secrets, White Lies Too* by Todd R. Neill**

In school one day Tilden gets an invitation
To see a movie about menstruation.
She hides the invite 'til the right time to tell
'Cause right about now, Mama isn't doing well.
Her doctor's appointment isn't routine,
She'll be in the hospital a week, it seems.
They learn that Mama has a lump in her breast,
It could be cancer; they'll find out from the test.
Tilden and her sister and Nick are on edge,
They go to visit Mama and stand near her bed.
Tilden gets mad and feels really, really sick

When she learns that Mama told her secret just to Nick.
Euphemisms, dark secrets, white lies too,
They make you feel betrayed and out of the loop.
Euphemisms, omissions, white lies too,
Do they ever really help, or just hurt you?

Students' Discussions And Reflections

While students wrote raps and performed them for the class, I observed them actively discussing and reflecting deeply on what they had read. I noticed the students' intense attention, enthusiastic participation, and consistent engagement. I observed that creating their own raps helped students deepen their understanding and review for tests about *What Girls Learn* and *Dreams from My Father*. Writing and performing their raps not only helped students review for tests, but also prepared them to write effective argument essays about the texts.

Writing Argument Essays

After students had read and created raps about *What Girls Learn* and *Dreams from My Father*, I guided them to write persuasive essays that articulated various points of view found in the texts. As a culminating writing activity, they constructed argument papers in which they made choices about what to write while following specific guidelines for effective argument writing. Their argument papers addressed the following essay prompt:

The role of surrogate parents in place of absentee parents is a major theme in *What Girls Learn* by Karin Cook and *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama. An implicit issue in both books is the question: What makes a good parent?

Write a persuasive argument essay in which you list and explain <u>two</u> important characteristics of good parents. <u>Choose one</u> <u>adult</u> who acts as a surrogate parent <u>in each book</u>, and write a persuasive essay arguing that each surrogate parent either succeeded or failed to demonstrate salient qualities of good parenting. Relate the specific actions and words of these adults to specific characteristics of good parents. Use illustrative examples from each text to show how each individual either met or failed to meet an important characteristic of good parenting.

State your claims clearly; then explain and cite evidence based on specific examples from the texts to show that the individuals you chose either were or were not good surrogate parents. Refer to *The Argument Rap* to ensure that you include each component of an effective argument in your paper.

Argument Writing Results

The outcomes of this argument writing activity were very positive, as demonstrated in the students' papers. Results showed that students with learning disabilities who used rap in these lessons succeeded in writing clear, coherent argument essays. Their papers not only fulfilled requirements of the argument prompt (above), but also fulfilled requirements of state and national literacy standards for effective argument writing [see Introduction, this issue]. Overall, the papers of students with learning disabilities contained each component of effective argument writing:

a clearly expressed claim, a counterargument, detailed supporting evidence, and a clearly articulated conclusion. These results suggest that students with LD can benefit from the integration of rap as a teaching tool in the argument writing curriculum.

Integrating Rap in Argument Lessons

There are several ways to integrate rap into lessons. After students read a text about a topic of interest or about components of effective arguments, teachers can introduce rap as a genre to help students deepen their understanding and review what they learned from reading. The teacher can explain that the use of literary elements such as alliteration, allusion, rhythm, and rhyme in rap is similar to the use of the same literary elements in classic poems by Tennyson, Keats, Frost, Whitman, or Shakespeare. Depending on the needs of the class, the teacher can select one or two literary elements as a focus for each lesson.

To begin, the teacher models by reading a rap aloud, such as *The Argument Rap.* Other raps are readily available in the book *Reading, Writing, and Rhythm*: *Engaging Content-Area Literacy Strategies* (Fink, 2015) or on the Internet. After modeling, the teacher guides students as they follow *The Rap Protocol* in Figure 1. This protocol is designed to help students of all ages with learning disabilities create their own original raps. Student raps might address components of effective argument writing that is clear, cohesive, and persuasive. Alternatively, raps can be about a specific topic of interest to each student. Although my composition students were first year college students, these same rap strategies can be used with minimal modification by teachers of high school students. The strategies are aligned with state and national standards and therefore can be used to help students with LD meet CCSS writing goals (see Introduction, this issue).

Figure 1. **The Rap Protocol by Rosalie Fink**

1. Tell students to use rhythm and rhyme to create raps about the components of clearly written persuasive arguments. Explain that not every line must rhyme. Encourage students to use alliteration and rhymes within lines.
2. Explain that students' argument raps should use language appropriate for performing in school.
3. After students write their own raps, have them practice reading them aloud, expressively and rhythmically. Encourage them to add gestures, clapping, body movement, and costumes.
4. Have students perform their argument raps for the class. If possible, the teacher can record the students' performances and post them on a class or school website or blog. Another option is for the teacher to arrange for students to perform their raps live for families, school assemblies, nursing homes, etc.
5. Display students' argument raps on bulletin boards in the classroom or school display cases, and have students publish their work in school newsletters or online newspapers.
6. Encourage students to create artwork to accompany their raps; then display the artwork.

Teach *The Argument Rap*

After the teacher presents each component of a well-written argument, students can review the components by chanting *The Argument Rap* in unison. This can be done with a partner, small groups, or the whole class.

Figure 2. **The Argument Rap by Rosalie Fink**

Let's analyze an argument
What must it contain?
The first component
Is the argument's claim.

Some call the claim "the thesis"
It's the author's main idea,
The important thing about it?
It's a statement, and it's clear.
Where does the claim belong?
Beginning? Middle? End?
Any place can work well
But there's usually a trend.

Often the first paragraph
States the claim there.
But sometimes the claim
Appears elsewhere.

The second component
Is called the evidence.
Data, details, facts and reasons
Used to convince.

To convince your readers
That your argument is tight,
Use facts and examples
To convince them of its might.

Explain each fact fully
So they know you're right.
Reasoning and logic
Make your argument tight.

Raise rebuttals or counterarguments
To show your awareness, and strengthen your position.
Concede any weakness in your argument,
Acknowledge the strengths of the opposition.

Finally your argument needs to end
With a clear conclusion, to avoid confusion.
To give your argument an awesome end,
Write a clear conclusion. Write a clear conclusion!

Restate your claim
And If you want, to be creative.
End with a new question.
That's sure to get attention!

Clap, Snap, and Move

After students are familiar with the words of *The Argument Rap*, the teacher can model and encourage students to recite it while simultaneously clapping, finger snapping, or bending knees up and down to the rhythm. Some students may want to choreograph simple body movements and steps to be performed while chanting the rap. In addition, the teacher can guide students to do a simple "One, Two, Three, Kick" side-step as follows:

1. Move sideways to the left in 4/4 beat:

Step on left foot, step on right foot, step on left foot, kick right foot raised slightly in air to the front and across body to the left.

2. Move sideways to the right in 4/4 beat:

Step on right foot, step on left foot, step on right foot, kick left foot raised slightly in air and across body to the right.

Repeat #1 and #2 until end of rap.

Use Technology for Multimodal Argument Projects

In addition to using raps with gestures and movement, teachers can use technology to help students create multimodal argument projects. Multimodal argument projects provide a timely and important focus on critical thinking and writing activities. These projects promote deep understanding of argumentation and presentation skills, key goals of The Common Core State Standards (see Introduction, this issue).

Digital technology and multimodal methods are especially powerful adjuncts to teaching argument writing to students with learning disabilities. They can be used to teach argument writing skills in conjunction with books, artwork, magazines, and articles to create multimodal argument projects.

To begin a technology-based multimodal argument project, the teacher might create a multimodal text set based on a specific point of view about a topic (Wise and Panos, 2014). The text set could include a textbook, artwork, digitized primary sources, and short passages with views that differ from those in the regular class textbook (Wise & Panos, 2014). A wide range of technology tools and software programs are available for multimodal projects. Some examples are:

- PowerPoint Slideshow
- Movie Maker
- Photo Story

- iMovie
- VoiceThread.com
- Animoto.com (Wise & Panos, 2014)

What Is a Multimodal Argument?

A *multimodal argument* is the presentation of a thesis with a clear point of view—utilizing various modes, such as expository writing, poetry, song, rap, movement, dance, images, and video. As with traditionally written expository arguments, multimodal arguments are presented and supported by logical, clearly presented details and evidence. The main difference is that multimodal arguments include digital evidence. To help students begin this type of technology project, teachers can have students view an example of a multimodal argument presented in the form of a documentary film. Here's one way to guide students through the first viewing of the film:

1 . Identify the author's perspective.
2 . Identify the author's claims.
3 . Identify the evidence.
4 . Identify the closing argument.

Next, have students watch the film again, this time with different purposes. During the second viewing, direct students to think critically about how different modes, such as sounds, images, movement, and words, work together. Have students consider the following questions about the various modes of presentation (Wise & Panos, 2014):

* Which modes of presentation does the author use?
- How does each mode enhance the mood, theme, and claims of the main argument?
- Were any of the modes distracting to the argument? If so, which ones?
* What techniques do you want to try in your own multimodal argument project? (Adapted from Wise and Panos, 2014)

These types of questions promote the ability to consider the role of multiple modes of collecting and presenting ideas, a skill emphasized in state and national standards (see Introduction, this issue).

Modeling by The Teacher

Modeling by the teacher is crucial for teaching students with LD how to use digital resources effectively to create coherent arguments. To begin, the teacher can use a storyboard or whiteboard to compose the argument. Provide structure to the process by guiding students through the following steps:

1. State a claim clearly. Know the main idea and communicate it well.
2. Model ways to support the claim with specific evidence:
    - Include evidence from the text(s), giving credit where credit is due to authors, artists, videographers, etc.
    - Include evidence from primary digital sources, such as texts, images, and music. During the presentation, give credit to the filmmaker, videographer, singer, actor, or artist.

3. Provide a concluding statement to tie the entire presentation together. The conclusion can briefly summarize the claim or main ideas(s) or ask the audience an interesting, thought-provoking question.
4. Demonstrate ways to include a narrative to explain the main points of your argument. For example, give a few interesting examples as a way to expand and explain the main points of the argument and engage the audience.

Present Projects To An Audience

College students with LD in my English composition classes presented their multimodal argument projects to the whole class. Similarly, secondary teachers can use this approach and guide high school students with LD to present their multimodal argument projects in class. This can help secondary students meet college and career readiness standards for research, writing, and oral presentation skills (see Introduction, this issue). In guiding students' presentations, teachers can remind students that each multimodal argument presentation needs to include a clear claim, credible evidence, a counterargument, a clear conclusion, and a critical self-analysis of their own experience learning from the multimodal process.

Respond to Student Presentations

While classmates are presenting their digital/multimodal argument projects, have students in the audience write responses. This ensures active attention and involvement and enhances the learning of students with learning disabilities. It is helpful to provide students with questions that guide their listening and viewing. Here are sample questions adapted from Wise and Panos (2014):

- What was the viewpoint or stance of each argument? How did you know? What evidence did you notice? Be specific.
- Which modes of presentation evoked feelings of anger and annoyance or sympathy and agreement? Why? Explain your reasons fully.
- How did the multimodal presentation affect your view of this argument? Explain.
- Was the digital material a helpful aid, or was it a distraction? Why? If it was a distraction or seemed like extraneous "window dressing," how could the digital material be used more effectively in future presentations? Be specific in making a constructive suggestion.

Integrate Peer Feedback---Oral and Written

To ensure that students in the audience are attentive and learn from their classmates' oral presentations, expect listeners to give both oral and written feedback to their peers. Using a feedback form such as the one in Figure 3 can be extremely helpful (see Figure 3). I used this form in my English composition classes and noticed that students with learning disabilities listened more attentively, learned from each other, and became adept at presenting information orally, analyzing the style and content of presentations, and giving and receiving constructive feedback. These were invaluable lessons not only for argument writing across the curriculum, but for success throughout life.

Figure 3. **Peer Observation Feedback Form**

Presenter's Name:
Observer's Name:
State the claim of this argument.
List three things that were used to support this argument.
1.
2.
3.
Identify something you would like to know more about related to this argument.
Explain two ways that you were impressed by the presentation of this argument.
1.
2.
Offer one constructive suggestion to improve the presentation of this argument in the future.

Explore Multiple Perspectives

In my English composition classes, I used argument-writing lessons to expose students to multiple perspectives about controversial issues; then I guided them to develop their own stance or point of view. Teachers can use this opportunity to expose students to multiple perspectives at various grade levels. For example, after students have consulted several sources and analyzed different perspectives about the same issue, the teacher can guide them to identify their own stance in response to an argument prompt. Offer choices so that students can select a topic of personal interest to them.

To help students with these tasks, the teacher can pose thought-provoking questions, such as those in Figure 4 (see Figure 4). These types of questions promote critical-thinking skills and help students with learning disabilities consider multiple perspectives about arguments, including their own perspective. While the list of questions in Figure 4 provides interesting suggestions, the topics for argument prompts are limitless. Teachers can create their own thought-provoking questions and also encourage students to generate questions of particular interest to them.

Analyzing arguments from multiple perspectives is a skill usually geared for the curriculum in middle school, high school, and college. Although the term "argument" is not introduced in the Common Core State Standards until the sixth grade, it is important to introduce this type of analytical, creative thinking to young students as early as possible. The earlier that students begin to consider issues from multiple perspectives and support their opinions with the logic and evidence of solid argumentation, the more likely they are to succeed in developing the sophisticated thinking skills necessary for writing effective arguments on important topics that matter to them in the real world.

Figure 4. **Sample Argument Prompts/Questions**

1. Do you think the civil rights movement ended discriminatio against African Americans? Why or why not? What more remains to be done to end prejudice and discrimination against all minoriites? How do you know?
2. Do you think American involvement in the Vietnam War was a good decision? Why?
3. Do you think American involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was a good decision? Why?
4. Do you think we need more laws to control access to guns in The United States today? Why?
5. Do you think that police in the United States need more training to prevent unnecessary violence? Why?
6. Do you think we need more laws and regulations to limit greenhouse gases and global warming? Why?

Conclusion

The ability to write clear, convincing arguments supported by credible evidence is a major goal of the new college and career readiness standards. Another goal of the standards is to infuse digital technology into the 21st century curriculum. The results of this study show that rap and digital teaching techniques are effective for instruction and easy to integrate into lessons on argument writing. These innovative approaches are engaging and effective ways to teach students with learning disabilities. By using *The Argument Rap* and other creative raps, teachers can capitalize on students' out-of-school interests and musical preferences and help them master the complex skills of argument writing. Together, both rap and technology provide meaningful new ways to reach and teach all types of students. What could be more important than that?!

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