Winter 2013, Volume 26, Number 2

comments from CRISS

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CRISS Calendar

News from the CRISS National Office

Upcoming Newsletters and Call for Articles

Are you or someone you know doing great things with CRISS? Want to share your ideas with others? We are always looking for new authors for the newsletter. Articles should be 300-750 words in length. Include a brief biography and a headshot of the author (in jpeg). Articles should focus on how CRISS and a particular topic work together for student growth. Lesson plans may be in any format but all aspects of a CRISS learning plan should be evident. Data, student samples, and teacher and student reflections are encouraged. Additionally, we're always happy to receive "quick share" pieces of 250 words or less – let us help you spread your successes!

If you're interested in submitting an article or quick share piece for our next issue, please send a one paragraph abstract by April 1 to Anna Deese at adeese@projectcriss.com. If accepted, articles will be due by May 1, 2012.

Is there a topic you'd like to see in future issues of *Comments?* Please contact the editor, Anna Deese (adeese@projectcriss.com), with your ideas.

Have Student Sample Work?

If your students rock a strategy or write some interesting reflections, we'd love to see samples (even without a full lesson plan attached). Consider samples showing how different students approached the same task or how strategies build on each other over the course of a lesson. Student reflections are also incredibly powerful. Please consider taking a photograph or scanning the work and sending it to Anna Deese (adeese@projectcriss.com). Your colleagues thrive on shared examples!

CRISS Hits Road

Meet up with members of the CRISS National Office at the following events:

March 14-15, Illinois Reading Council Conference in Springfield, IL

Swing by our table in the vendor hall or attend Anna Deese's session, *Inspiring Inquiry with Challenging Texts* on Friday, March 15 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in A. Lincoln Freeport B meeting room.

April 19-22, International Reading Association Conference in San Antonio, TX

Carol Santa, Lynn Havens, and Debra Franciosi will be showcasing CRISS at the Kendall Hunt table in the exhibit hall. Additionally, catch them at the following presentations:

- *Thought-FULL Engagement with Primary Documents: Making a Difference with Strategic Learning,* Hyatt Bowie A, from 11 a.m.-12 p.m., April 20 with Deb.
- *Planned instruction that blends math and literacy standards in classroom lessons through the use of math-specific strategies*, Hyatt Travis A/B, 1:00-2:00 p.m., April 21 with Lynn.
- *Project CRISS: Strategic Reading and the Common Core*, 206B, 1:00-2:00 p.m., April 22 with Carol, Deb, and Lynn.

If you've moved to a new area and want to know about nearby CRISS activities or explore the possibility of bringing CRISS to your new school, call or email Anna (adeese@projectcriss.com, 1-877-502-7477).

Deep Viewing for Digital Literacy

By Kelly Sassi

Chances are you're reading this digitally. It's been sent to a graphic designer, been through multiple edits for content and layout, and the way it's presented here is different than the way it would be presented via dynamic website, webinar, or a speech using presentation software. The way you are interacting with the information in the article is different than the way you would interact with it if it was in your hands; here you can zoom, change it to greyscale, or follow links that provide more information with a single click.

Digital literacy is a broad term that encompasses all electronic-based communication, from communicating ideas to pulling ideas from electronic sources. It shares many of the same features as traditional literacy, but there are nuances our digital-age students need to understand.

The Common Core State Standards include several elements of digital literacy. Some standards mention them explicitly, such as in the following anchor standards for Reading and Writing:

- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7:*** *Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6 :*** *Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.*

In other standards, they are implied. Consider how a project supporting the following anchor standard for Speaking and Listening would end differently if the presentation was entirely oral versus conducted online with an audience who don't all share the same primary language, a situation common in workplaces: ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4*** *Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.*

> ***"Writing today is pervasively and generally digital: composed with digital tools; created out of word, image, sound, and motion"***
>
> *(De Voss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks; 2010).*

How can we help our students develop their skills in digital literacy? Deep Viewing is one strategy to help students develop these skills and the Project CRISS Frameworks for Teaching and Learning are vital in making this strategy work.

So, what is Deep Viewing? It is an "instructional method used to reach social understandings of visual texts through the use of communal talk, pictorial, and written means" (Pailliotet, 1993). I learned about Deep Viewing from Lynn Briggs, the director the Eastern Washington Writing Center in 1995-1996, when I helped modify the Deep Viewing heuristic to help tutors analyze videotapes of the work they were doing with student writers. Since then, I have used versions of Deep Viewing in my high school and college classrooms to help students develop strategies for viewing and analyzing commercials, films, and even poetry.

The Deep Viewing heuristic guides students to look at six categories in a visual text: Action/Sequence, Semes/Forms, Actors/Discourse/Sounds, Proximity/Movement, Culture/Context, and Production. Students explore these categories on three levels: Level I: Observation, Level 2: Interpretation, and Level 3: Evaluation (see handout on page 5 for more details). On the following page is a CRISS Framework for Teaching that can be used to introduce your students to Deep Viewing.

The International Society for Technology in Education, ISTE, has developed National Educational Technology Standards for Students, Teachers, Administrators, Coaches, and Computer Science Educators. We encourage you to explore the NETS here. The NETS for Students are more than just learning how to use digital tools; they span six major categories that focus on using technology to research, develop, and communicate ideas.

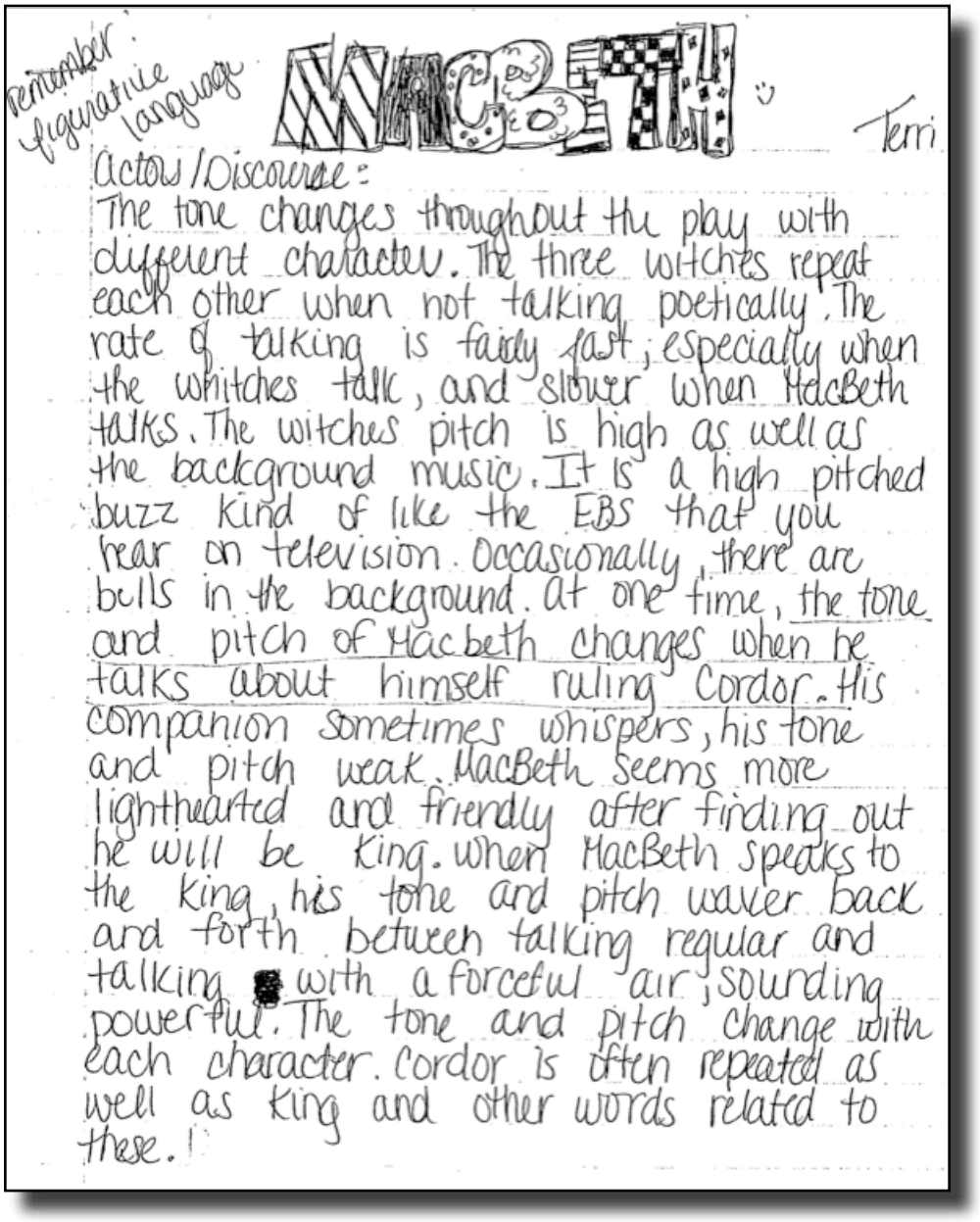
Plan	**Enduring Understandings** Students will be able to "read" a visual text, interpret its meaning, and evaluate its effectiveness. Students will express this knowledge in both oral and written form.
	Assessments Formative: Think-Pair-Share, Note-taking as a part of Deep Viewing Summative: Writing Prompt - *Evaluate how effective a commercial is at achieving its purpose.* During the summative assessment, students should demonstrate an ability to interpret and evaluate the content of the visual text in written and/or oral form using details from their observations to support their argument.
	Content materials A commercial available on YouTube (for example, a 30 second clip for chips or a video game system); commercials are quick for repeated viewing, familiar thus unintimidating, and everything is planned carefully so often all six categories are fully represented.
Prepare	**Activate Background Knowledge and Evaluate Author's Craft** • Free-Write prompt: *Estimate the number of commercials you watch each day. What is the purpose of a commercial?* • ABC Brainstorming (in groups of three): *What techniques do ad agencies use in commercials to get their message across to viewers?* **Student-Friendly Purpose** To become more active viewers through the use of Deep Viewing and to build digital literacy skills by evaluating a visual text.
Engage & Transform	1. Direct instruction on Deep Viewing using the hand-out on page 5 (also available for download here). 2. Model how to take Level 1 (Observation) notes on the category of "Actors/Discourse/Sounds" with a commercial. 3. Assign one of the five remaining Deep Viewing categories to groups of three. Students will use Think-Pair-Share as they take notes, meet in small groups, then share with the whole class. 4. Have students view the commercial three times, taking notes on their category only at the level of observation. Have them hold back on Level 2 (Interpreting) and Level 3 (Evaluating). 5. Students share their notes with their small group then choose a speaker to share the highlights with the whole class. 6. Model how to take Level 2 (Interpretation) notes on the category of "Actors/Discourse/Sounds" with the commercial. 7. Have students view the video a fourth time, taking Level 2 notes (Interpretation). 8. Model how to take Level 3 (Evaluation) notes on the category of "Actors/Discourse/Sounds" with the commercial. 9. Have students view the video a fifth time, taking Level 3 notes (Evaluation). 10. Allow students to share their notes with their small group and then share with the whole class. 11. Writing prompt: *Evaluate how effective this commercial was at achieving its purpose. Use examples from any of the Deep Viewing categories to support your evaluation.* ***Note:*** Students keep the same category throughout the repeated viewings so they learn the process and understand the level of attention and intensity that must be maintained to gather more than just superficial details. When students work with other categories in the future, they will remember the models heard in this activity (thanks to repeated viewings and the whole class sharing) and they can refer to the handout and the focused questions as a guide.
Reflect	There are many options for CRISS reflection prompts, but for this lesson, consider: **Active Involvement**: How were you actively engaged? What worked best for you to stay focused and learn the content? **Discussion:** How did discussion clarify your thinking? **Teacher modeling:** What kind of modeling did I do? Was it enough?

Deep Viewing (continued)

In the example on the right, you see how a 10th grade student used the Deep Viewing heuristic to take notes from the third perspective, Actors/Discourse/Sound at the first level, Observation. The underlined part is an observation she thought should be explored at the second level, Interpretation. These are her notes on just one perspective at just one level—multiply this amount of writing by six perspective with notes on three levels, and you can see how working with the Deep Viewing heuristic encourages writing and helps develop writing fluency, not to mention critical thinking.

Students often "complain" that after Deep Viewing, they can't just passively view a show on TV or a commercial—they feel compelled to analyze it.

There are many variations to this lesson. Deep viewing can be done on any visual text—a print ad, a film, a website, etc. Deep Viewing can also be modified to "view" a poem. Our students, who are "digital natives," can build on their success with Deep Viewing to tackle a medium some feel less confident about analyzing.



References

Briggs, L. (2000). Media literacy and spirituality: Tales from a university writing center. In Pailliotet, A. & Mosenthal, P. (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing literacy in the media age* (61-87). Stamford, Connecticut: JAI Press.

DeVoss, D.N., Eidman-Aadahl, E., & Hicks, T. (2010). *Because digital writing matters.* The National Writing Project. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Deep Viewing Handout

The Six Perspectives

1. **Action/Sequence:** What are the events? What happens? When and for how long do events take place?
2. **Semes/Forms:** What are the units of visual meaning? What forms are repeated? Consider both objects and people. What objects do we see? Look for colors, textures, shapes, icons, and repeated or emphasized objects. How do people appear? What are the traits of their dress and physical appearance?
3. **Actors/Discourse/Sounds:** What do the actors say? What words or phrases are repeated? Who talks the most and least? What does the talk sound like with regard to rate, tone, and pitch? What else is heard and how would you describe it?
4. **Proximity/Movement:** How do things move? What kinds of movements do people make? How fast or slow are the movements? How close are people or things to each other?
5. **Culture/Context:** What cultural references are made? What social knowledge is assumed or referred to? What is missing? What knowledge from science, art, or popular culture is alluded to?
6. **Production:** How does the production of the "text" (video/object/art/poem, etc.) influence outcomes? What are the angles of observation? How does the camera/perspective move or change? How is the sound and/or visual quality? Are there special effects? What is missing from view? What intentional or accidental elements of production are in the text?

The Three Levels

Level 1: Observation Viewers should concern themselves with cataloguing data. There will be a temptation to move right into interpreting observations, but for the sake of reaching for details, viewers are encouraged to focus only on observation and description of what is observed.

Level 2: Interpretation Viewers review their data and begin to ask what it might mean. It is often useful to engage in this process question by question, asking, for example, what the meaning of the length of an event might be, why some forms are repeated, what the significance of the patterns of speech might be, what the underlying culture assumptions are, and how the production influences the data available.

Level 3: Evaluation and Application In the third level viewers evaluate the quality or effectiveness of the visual text. They begin to hypothesize about changes that would enhance the visual text. Viewers might consider phrasing in terms of "I" statements, articulating likes and dislikes. Viewers might consider the question, "If you were the director of this performance, what might you do differently?"

Adapted by Dr. Kelly Sassi from:

Briggs, L. (2000). Media literacy and spirituality: Tales from a university writing center. In Pailliotet, A. & Mosenthal, P. (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing literacy in the media age* (61-87). Stamford, Connecticut: JAI Press.

Pailliotet, A. (1993). Understanding visual information through deep viewing. *Visual Literacy in the Digital Age: Selected Readings from the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association.* Rochester, New York.

Templates Help!

Scott Cason, Kevin Sacerdote, and Shannon McLanahan of the Duval County School District in Jacksonville, FL shared with us a template they created to help their students as they prepare for their Cambridge International Examinations. Their Stool Template (see page 8 or click here to view a larger version online), is similar to the Project CRISS strategy, Spool Papers (4th edition, page 200), but is more specific to the style of writing expected in the exams and in writing about history in general. Using templates such as Stool or Spool Papers can help scaffold students as they discover both their own writing styles and those demanded in various content disciplines. Additionally, their use supports a variety of the Common Core State Standards in writing, such as the following anchor standards:

- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1:*** *Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.*
- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.W.5:*** *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.*
- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.W.9:*** *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*
- ***CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.W.10:*** *Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.*

Kevin, a CRISS District Trainer, writes:

The history assessments of the Cambridge International Examinations are 100% essay format. The introduction and conclusion paragraphs are much more concise when compared to Advanced Placement, which makes the body paragraphs that much more important. To help students create powerful body paragraphs, we combine this template with a Discussion Web (CRISS 4th edition, page 82) *so students have a template to collect evidence.*

The students turn their prompt into a yes/no question and identify support details as called for in the Discussion Web. They then develop what Dr. Cason refers to a One-by-Two thesis statement for their entire paper.

A One-by-Two thesis statement contains the argument/stance of the writer with two pieces of evidence in support of the argument and one piece of evidence acknowledging some veracity to the other side. This One-by-Two template helps students learn how to write like historians; acknowledging important evidence exists for both sides of an argument, but then forcing students to dig deeper and consider the evidence supporting one particular view point.

Kevin goes on to explain:

If a typical essay prompt is, "Russia was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War. How far do you agree with this assessment?" *A One-by-Two thesis would go something like this:*

"Russia was partially responsible for the origins of World War I due to the mobilization of its troops, but Germany was much more responsible because of its role in the First and Second Moroccan Crises, and more importantly because of the incompetence of Kaiser Wm. II and his ministers."

Or

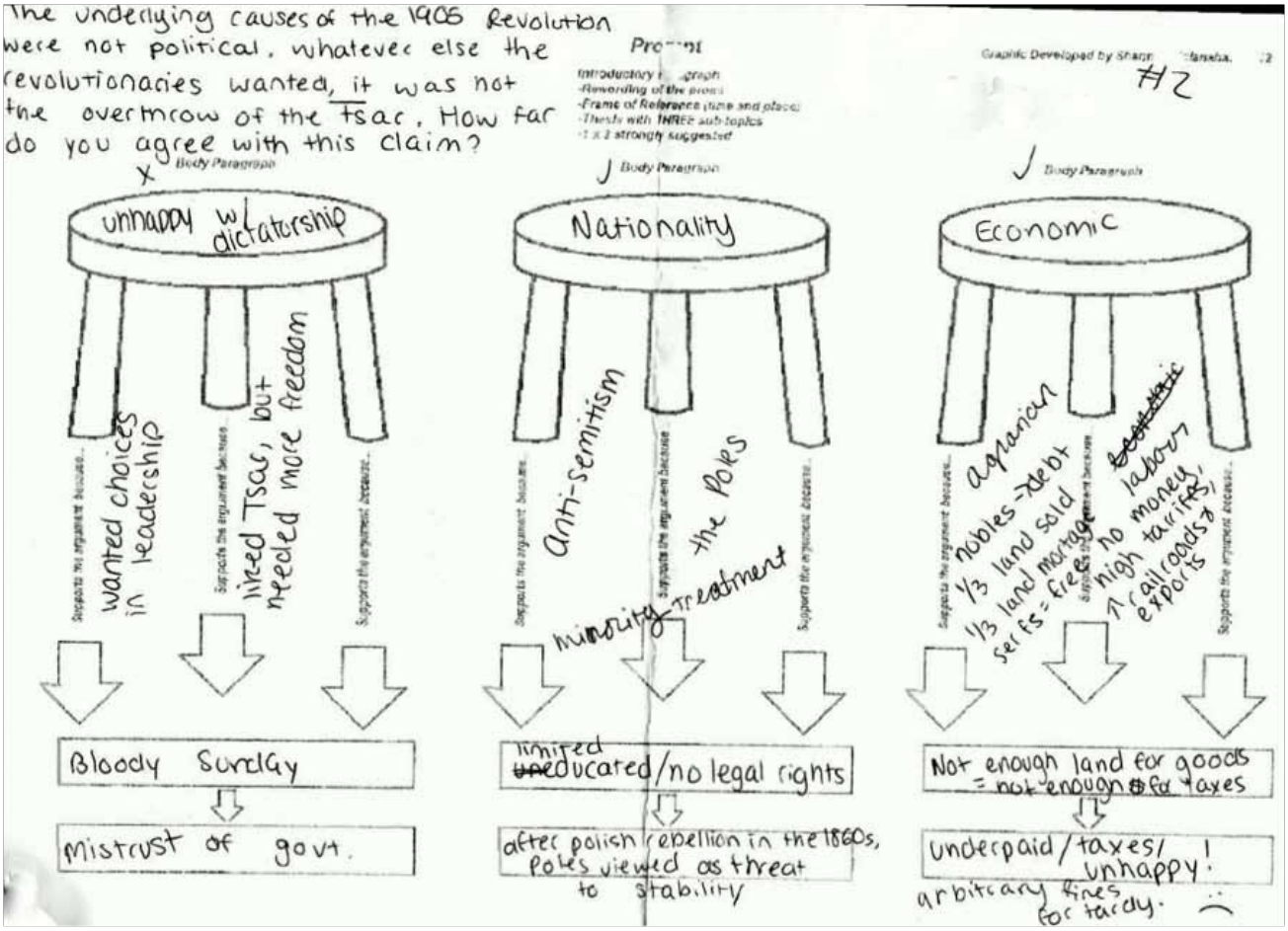
"While Germany escalated conflicts out of control due to the incompetence of its leaders, Russia was primarily responsible for the origins of WWI due to unconditional alliances with strongly nationalistic countries and Tsar Nicholas' desire for glory."

A One-by-Two thesis not only makes the writer address inter-paragraph balancing, but also helps with "intra-paragraph" balancing of each body paragraph.

At the intra-paragraph level, the One-by-Two balancing is similar; two details that support the topic sentence of the body paragraph with one detail that acknowledges the other side. One of Kevin's students explains the general format as support 1, support 2, other side of the coin.

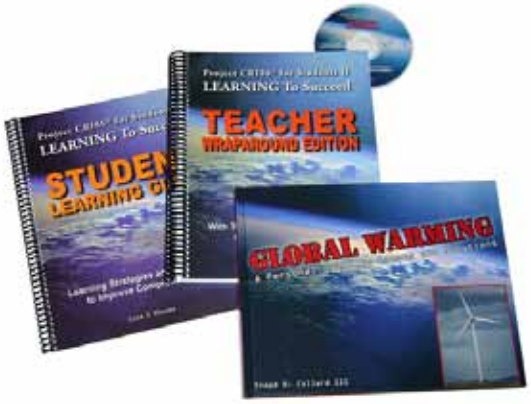
Templates Help! (continued)

In the example below, you can see how a 10th grader used the Stool Template to prepare a response to a prompt. Her One-by-Two ideas are unhappy with dictatorship, nationality, and economic reasons. Each of her body paragraph stools have two legs supporting the main idea and her next step is to develop the third leg where she has to acknowledge the flip-side of her argument.



Thank you to Scott, Kevin, and Shannon for sharing your template!
It's clearly helping your students navigate rigorous content.

Project CRISS for Students II: LEARNING To Succeed



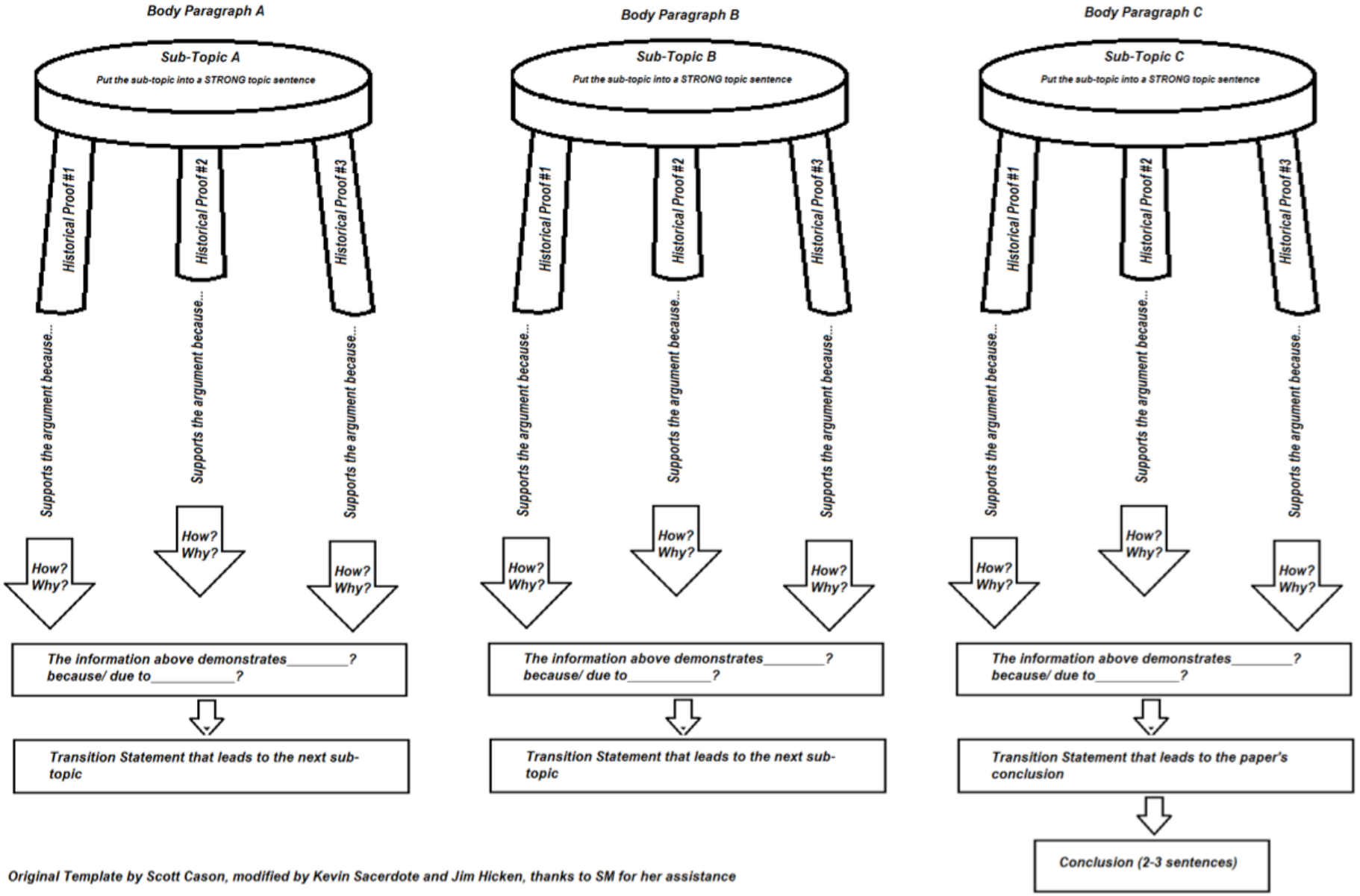
CRISS for Students II: LEARNING To Succeed is a flexible curriculum designed to teach the CRISS learning principles and strategies directly to students in high school or with advanced middle school students. Half of the lessons in the student workbook are based on the CRISS Keys to Learning—learning principles derived from cognitive psychology and brain research. Alternating with these lessons, students apply strategies to untangle the issue of global warming as presented by award-winning science author Sneed B. Collard III in his book, *Global Warming: A Personal Guide to Causes and Solutions.*

For more information about the CRISS for Students II program and a look at one of the chapters in the student workbook click here.

Prompt

Graphic Developed by Shannon Mclanahan, 2012

Introductory Paragraph
-Rewording of the promt
-Frame of Reference (time and place)
-Thesis with THREE sub-topics
-1 x 2 strongly suggested



Original Template by Scott Cason, modified by Kevin Sacerdote and Jim Hicken, thanks to SM for her assistance

Using CRISS Strategies and Technology to Teach Inference

By Louise Tallent and Julie Crary

Mobi Tablets can turn any space into an interactive whiteboard. The bulk of the Mobi is whitespace area that represents the space on the screen. One can "write" using a special pen and the writing appears on the screen. Up to nine Mobis can be distributed to a class and the screen then splits into equal-sized areas so everyone can see the work each group is producing. To learn more, navigate here.

Louise Tallent writes:

As a Dean of Students for two elementary schools and one middle school in the Lake Central School Corporation in Indiana, I encourage teachers in all academic subjects to work toward our district-wide goal of increasing teacher proficiency in the use of technology. As a CRISS District Trainer, I offer training to all new teachers in our learning community, and encourage school improvement through the implementation of the Project CRISS Frameworks and coaching. I'm happy to share a learning plan by Julie Crary, a third grade teacher in Dyer, IN at Bibich Elementary that supports our technology and CRISS initiatives. This lesson on making inferences uses the newest technology in her building, Mobi Tablets, and follows the CRISS Framework for Teaching.

Julie Crary states:

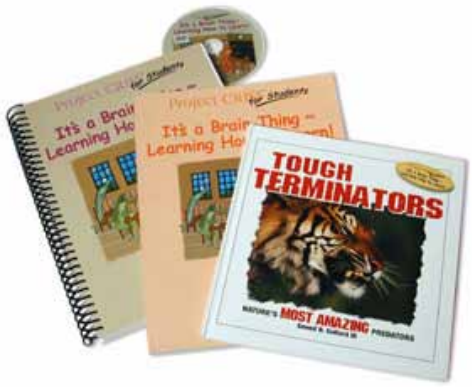
My students were very engaged by both the subject matter and the use of technology. They especially enjoyed using the Mobi Tablets to make their inferences. I will definitely teach this lesson again!

Plan	**Process Enduring Understandings:** 1) Students will learn how Background Knowledge is necessary to make an inference in their reading, and 2) Students will learn how to use Selective Highlighting to identify clue words that will help them predict what will occur next. **Content Enduring Understanding:** Indiana Standard 3.2.4; Students will make and revise predictions about a story.
	Assessments Formative: Choral Reading, Discussion, Selective Highlighting Summative: Writing Template, Picture Notes
	Content materials Two or three short read aloud books Barrett, J. (1970). *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing*. Macmillan Publishing. (tradebook)
Prepare	**Activate Background Knowledge** In order to get students thinking about guesses, inferences, and background knowledge, the teacher reads aloud selected short stories. At various times, she will stop and ask the students to think about what background knowledge they might need to understand the story as they move forward and what clues in the story can help them guess what happens next. **Student-Friendly Purpose** You will learn how to use your background knowledge and clues from the story to figure out what might happen next.
Engage & Transform	The instructor introduces the word "inference" and models inference by using think-alouds as she reads a short story, identifies clues using her background knowledge, and uses the clues to predict what may happen next. **Choral Reading and Selective Highlighting:** Students read a story using Choral Reading. Periodically, they stop to discuss their background knowledge regarding story content and use Selective Highlighting on the Mobis to identify clues that might help them infer what will happen next. A MOBI slide will allow the students to compare the clues they highlighted with the best possible answers and those of their classmates. Students then prepare to read *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* by examining a picture of a real life porcupine and the cover of the book (illustrated with a porcupine attempting to wear a shirt). The class discusses what problems would arise if porcupines were to wear clothing, and then they start reading the book. **Picture Notes:** With each animal in the book, students discuss the animal, examine a real-life picture of it to further activate their background knowledge, and finally draw on their MOBIs what the animal might look like and the problems it might have if it were to wear clothing. (The MOBIs allow the images to be shared immediately with the whole class.) Students then compare and discuss their images with those from the story. As a summative assessment, students read a completely separate short text, highlight clues, and infer what happens next. Students must describe and illustrate their predictions.

Reflect

Below are some quotes from Ms. Crary's students reflective process conference about the lesson:

1. **Metacognition: How did you evaluate your comprehension?**
   - I had to think about my inference compared to what the pictures the author put in her book that showed her idea of what animals looked like if they wore clothes. I just had to think and compare.
2. **Background Knowledge: Did I assist you in thinking about what you already know? Is Background Knowledge important?**
   - I have probably used background knowledge before but did not know what is was called or that is used to help me learn something new.
   - Yes, you made me think about what I already knew, but sometimes I did not know enough about an animal to make guesses or an inference. Looking at the MOBI pictures of real animals helped.
   - I used what I knew when we looked for clues. I pictured in my mind what I knew about the pig.
3. **Purpose Setting: Did you have a clear purpose for the lesson?**
   - Yes! You always told us we were learning how to take what we have and figure out what might happen next.
   - You showed us what to do and that helped make sense of inference. It was kinda hard to get what you wanted at first. But when we did it several times, it made sense.
4. **Active Involvement: How were you actively involved or engaged in the lesson? How did the use of the technology help you learn in combination with other learning strategies we used?**
   - I really liked using the MOBI to highlight, but I had to think about the clues before I highlighted the correct clue. At first I wanted to highlight everything!
   - I love to draw so drawing was fun.
   - The Mobi Tablets provided different slides using pictures, short stories, and the highlighter tool that we could share, discuss, and all learn as a class.
5. **Discussion: How did discussion clarify your thinking?**
   - I had to think before I answered. Listening to other kids helped me with my answer. I liked talking about my picture on the MOBI. Animals with clothes on are funny!
6. **Writing: How did we use writing to help you learn?**
   - When we had to write, I had to think. When I wrote my answers, I could check to see if I made sense in the answer. Writing helped me make sure I was getting the correct clues.
7. **Transforming Information: In what ways did you transform the lesson information so you could make an inference on your own?**
   - We had to write our own answers. We had to look for our own clues and write. Then we got to draw and color what we wrote. It was like writing in our journals. It was my work.



Project CRISS for Students I: It's a Brain Thing ~ Learning How to Learn!

Project CRISS for Students I: It's a Brain Thing ~ Learning How to Learn! is a semester-long learning strategies class for students in grades 5-9. The semester class introduces students to the CRISS principles and strategies. The curriculum includes the companion trade book *Tough Terminators* by Sneed B. Collard III and a DVD from the Critterman's World series (informational videos about animals) by Montana's own Doc Wild.

For more information about the CRISS for Students I program and a look at one of the chapters in the student workbook click here.

Avoiding the Gorilla Purpose

By Anna Deese

In 1999, Drs. Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris published an astounding study. They showed test subjects a video wherein groups of people wearing different colored shirts (white and black) passed basketballs to others on their team. The test subjects were to count how many passes the white team made while ignoring the black team. During the middle of the video, someone wearing a gorilla suit walks into the basketball-passing group and remains visible for at least five seconds. When questioned at the end of the experiment, approximately half of the test subjects reported they didn't notice anything unusual!

"… in 2010, I decided to make a sequel. This time viewers were expecting the gorilla to make an appearance. And it did. But the viewers were so focused on watching for the gorilla that they overlooked other unexpected events, such as the curtain in the background changing color."

– Dr. Daniel Simons, Smithsonian magazine, September 2012

This experiment was testing the limits of what earlier researchers termed *inattentional blindness*. Drs. Arien Mack and Irivn Rock (1998) coined the term to describe a subject's lack of perception of a stimulus while focusing on some other task when the ranges of the stimulus and the task overlap. Their resulting hypothesis, "there is no perception without attention," has been investigated in many variations since; auditory, tactile, directional movement — and thanks to Simons and Chabris, gorilla-visual. The results of the experiments uphold the hypothesis with most discussion centered on the cause of blindness (e.g., fixation, availability of working memory, etc.).

As educators, it's critical we remember that perception and attention are linked in order to take two specific actions: 1) avoid giving students Gorilla Purposes, and 2) teach students how to avoid transforming a task into a Gorilla Purpose themselves.

What is a Gorilla Purpose?

A Gorilla Purpose is a purpose or task that forces students to fixate on doing something and prevents them from actually learning key content. With a Gorilla Purpose, a student becomes so focused on a task, he or she may not consider how the new information connects to their prior knowledge, impacts their opinion on a related topic, or remember information not directly mentioned in the task. Gorilla Purposes are created when a teacher explains the learning goal in terms of what a student should complete (rather than learn) or when a student takes a considerate, complex learning goal and subconsciously turns it into an easier task.

A quick way to determine if students are working with either a given or created a Gorilla Purpose is to ask students what their purpose is. If their response is a simple completion task—take notes on a chapter, complete a worksheet, define the bold faced vocabulary—they may be working with a Gorilla Purpose.

Avoid Giving a Gorilla Purpose

Teacher-assigned Gorilla Purposes often start with the right intention… or at least in my case, they did. Consider the following essential question from the Next Generation Science Standards: *How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?* This could be the overarching question for a unit covering the organelles found inside a cell. In the example on the following page, you'll see how I was able to turn this rich content purpose into a Gorilla Purpose and the effects it had on my classroom. In the Considerate Content Purpose column, you'll see a possible alternative and how it would have led to a more effective lesson.

Gorilla Purpose (continued)

Gorilla Purpose		Considerate Content Purpose
In order to answer one of our unit's big questions, *How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?*, we need to examine what makes up a cell. We'll read this next section of the book and discuss it tomorrow. To be ready for the discussion, I want you to either take notes or complete a Content Frame over the organelles. It's your choice!	**What I tell the students**	Answer *How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?* with a Content Frame or notes using your prior knowledge and/or the book.
Read the next section of the book and take notes or complete a Content Frame on the organelles.	**What my students hear**	Create a Content Frame or notes that focus on answering *How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?* You can use your prior knowledge or the next section of your book to help you complete your work.
What's a Content Frame again? Is it easier than notes? Oh right, it's like a chart but I have to come up with categories. Let's check the book – headings for the organelles. It looks like each section has a picture, defines the organelle, and gives some additional info. I guess either will work. I like notes more, though, they go faster.	**What a typical student may think**	I need to answer the question *How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?* But she's letting me do it in a couple of ways. And I don't even need to read the book. So what does the question actually mean? What are life's functions? That's right, we covered some of that last unit. Let me see what's already in the book to figure out if I have to read it.
Day 1: Students complete the notes or Content Frame. Day 2: Students are unable to answer the big question even with notes. They can recite the functions of an organelle but can't connect what a single cell does for an entire organism and have a hard time remembering the needs of all living things from the last unit. I stop mid-discussion to lecture and review. I ask them to answer the essential question about any organelle as an exit ticket. Day 3: Review information again because the exit tickets weren't good. Pop quiz to check if they got it this time. Feeling rushed!	**What happens the next few days**	Day 1: Students sketch outlines for the notes or the Content Frame. When I'm sure a student is on the right path, they may start work or reading. If a student is struggling, I can work with them (or a small group) to better activate the background knowledge and/or come up with an organization idea together. Day 2: Students continue work. I walk around to assist. Day 3: Productive discussion and review of information.

Purpose setting is not only an important part of the CRISS Frameworks, but also several popular teacher evaluation models:	
Danielson's Framework for Teaching Instrument Domain 1c – Setting Instructional Outcomes	**Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model Domain 1, DQ1 – Communicating Learning Goals and Feedback**
"Outcomes must refer to what students will learn, not what they will do, and must permit viable methods of assessment."	*"The learning goal is a clear statement of knowledge or information as opposed to an activity or assignment."*

My intention wasn't to give my students a Gorilla Purpose, of course, but in an effort to save time, or simplify, or when I didn't have a handle on the students' prior knowledge, I inadvertently turned considerate purposes into Gorilla ones. Additionally, it's clear that by breaking the considerate purpose into a series of completion tasks or easier questions, I deprived my students of the valuable opportunity to think critically about how to answer the question. With experience as a harsh teacher, I reflected and improved as an educator in every way—including providing better purposes for my students.

If you need to break the habit of providing Gorilla Purposes, take time at the start of every unit to create or identify a handful of rich essential questions. When there are activities or tasks that need doing, ensure you frame the assignment in terms of an essential question and allow students the opportunity to break it down. Try to allow choice and provide time for students to start their struggle with the assignment, and time for you to effectively assess their progress and redirect or coach those needing help. Finally, don't be discouraged when you do occasionally feel you must give a Gorilla Purpose—just be realistic and remember your students may miss some information and connections.

Don't Let Students Create a Gorilla Purpose

Dr. Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Laureate in economics, discusses in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011) our intuitive and often lazy minds when he states, "If a satisfactory answer to a hard question is not found quickly, [our intuitive brains] will find a related question that is easier and will answer it… You will not be stumped, you will not have to work very hard, and you may not even notice that you did not answer the question you were asked. Furthermore, you may not realize that the target question was difficult, because an intuitive answer to it came readily to mind."

Consider the following assignment: *Design a video-gaming room with, at a minimum, a couch and big screen TV (identify specific products from catalogues or online).The gaming room happens to have the same exact dimensions as our classroom. Draw a floorplan of your room on the provided graph paper and ensure the layout of the couch and TV will maximize video game enjoyment! The Principal and other math teachers will vote on the best layout, so make sure your presentation is clear.* This project involves multiple steps, most students may be engaged by the premise of the problem, and it provides opportunities for the teacher to assess understandings regarding proportions early on, as everyone must use the same graph paper and room dimensions.

However, as Dr. Kahneman notes, our brains have a tendency to simplify complex questions and we may not even notice we've done so. In the example, students may fixate on just creating the scaled floorplan and inappropriately scale the furnishings (the TV ends up as a tiny dot), or they fixate on making a cool floorplan and they don't notice they used a different scale for different items. Or maybe the student doesn't consider the "maximum video game enjoyment," which results in the sweet 70" TV looking tiny to the gamers because it's on the far side of the room. Instead of answering the complex question, the student could change it into "How do I make a scale model using this room and items from this catalogue?" and loses the richness and nuances required of a complete answer.

We can help students avoid Gorilla Purposing themselves by encouraging and allowing metacognitive breaks—opportunities where students pause and ask themselves if what they are doing is actually responding to the learning goal. Ideally, this is done regularly so the student internalize the process and can do it without being asked.

Teaching students how and why to use the CRISS Framework for Learning when working with new information builds a platform for students to be metacognitive when approaching challenging tasks. Consider the math question again and imagine if the teacher allowed students to start working, and then every 20 minutes asked students to pause and consider one or more of the following questions. Which errors might be caught during that time?

Gorilla Purpose (continued)

Prepare	Engage & Transform	Reflect on Content and Process
What do I think I know about this task? Where is that background knowledge coming from? Is it reliable? *What are my learning goals? What should be a part of the outcome?* *How can I use the text to help me answer this? What won't be in the text?*	*How is transforming this information into pictures helping me respond to the task?* *What questions can I generate when looking at another person's design? How would I answer those questions about my own design?* *How could I organize or present the information driving my design considerations?*	*Did I learn or complete what I was expected to learn or complete? Can I explain it thoroughly?* *What was most helpful when preparing for the task or engaging with or transforming information? How could I apply that to other tasks in the future?*

Modeling and Practice

We should be modeling and performing think-alouds constantly for students so they become more aware that we, even as educators, are learners struggling with many of the same brain constraints. We need to model how we approach and plan for a difficult task and allow time for students to start, struggle, and restart—perhaps even multiple times. Building our students' metacognitive abilities will help reinforce that our classroom isn't just for memorizing or answering questions on a worksheet; we want our students to learn, apply, and discover our content area gorillas.

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Mack A., Rock I. (1998). *Inattentional Blindness.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Note: Access *Chapter 1* of *Inattentional Blindness here: http://www.theassc.org/files/assc/2417.*

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Gorillas in Our Midst: Sustained Inattentional Blindness for Dynamic Events by Drs. Simons and Chabris http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~cfc/Simons1999.pdf

But Did You See the Gorilla? The Problem with Inattentional Blindness by Dr. Simons http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/But-Did-You-See-the-Gorilla-The-Problem-With-Inattentional-Blindness-165589646.html#ixzz2KuObyCLX

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