

**ACADEMIC WRITING: *WHAT IS IT? WHY DOES IT MATTER? HOW DO I TEACH IT?***

Debra Bell  
DebraBell.com  
BOOTH 453

**WHAT IS IT?**

- An argument.
- Writing that takes a position, expresses an opinion, establishes a clear point of view.
- Defends or explains that point of view with logical reasoning and solid evidence.

## WHAT IT ISN'T

- Emotional
- Irrational
- Prejudicial or biased without logical basis

## WHAT EVIDENCE?

- Statistics and factual information
- Details and elaboration
- Quotes from credible sources
- Definitions
- Examples
- Anecdotes
- Recognition of opposing/alternative perspectives

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- College application essays are all designed to reveal a student's intellectual promise.
- AP essays (and similar tests) are all argument essays. (Even the personal essay)
- Writing clarifies thinking.

## HOW DO I TEACH IT?

- Thesis statement
  - Establishes the point of view
  - Limits the scope of the paper
  - Controls everything else stated in the paper

## USE IT ACROSS SUBJECTS

- Discuss everything always
- Take opposing or alternative points of view
- Ask student to explain another's point of view
- Ask student to write from alternative point of view

Now that I am an inner city school teacher I have been instantaneously confronted with the complex issues of urban and, on a broader scale, national education. Countless strangers have offered me their perspective on what is wrong with the city schools and what one simple change will fix everything. Beneath these uninformed responses I have noticed three assumptions that our readings this week challenged. First, many people assume that the goal of education is clear and agreed upon. Second, they assume that education is apolitical. Finally, they assume that education is disconnected from our nation's history and our cultural history. In this reflection I will be focusing on how Labaree, Apple, and Kincheloe challenged these assumptions.