

Jacksonville University
English Department
ENGLISH 103 EXIT ESSAY

The English department at JU requires students enrolled in ENGL 103 to take an exit exam focused on research, writing, and citation/documentation. These skills are emphasized throughout ENGL 103. Students must demonstrate proficiency in the above skills in order to pass the exam and exempt ENGL 214.

YOU MAY USE THIS SHEET FOR NOTES. WRITE YOUR ESSAY ON THE LINED PAPER.

- Select one of the following options and read the article carefully. You may wish to spend a few moments organizing your thoughts and writing down some ideas or an outline.
- Using appropriate conventions of organization, structure, and language, write a formal essay in response to the prompt, referring to the attached source article you selected. Your essay should demonstrate:
 - a. an effective introduction that establishes a focus for the essay
 - b. an essay body that is organized, unified, and developed
 - c. that you can properly integrate into the essay a summary, a paraphrase, and a quote (at least one of each should be evident in the essay), and cite each appropriately
 - d. appropriate documentation at the end of the essay
 - e. standard grammar and general mechanics

Option I—"The Power of Positive Coaching"

PROMPT: The article suggests a radical change in America's approach to youth, high school, and college sports; considering the evidence in the article and your own experience, discuss whether this approach will improve coaching or whether coaching should be left as they are in the current system.

Option II—"A Silicon Valley School That Doesn't Compute"

PROMPT: The article suggests that schools may be better off rejecting most of the latest digital technology rather than spending billions on acquiring the latest digital resources; considering the evidence in the article and your own experience, discuss these two options and formulate your own response to this suggestion.

The New York Times

Opinionator

OCTOBER 20, 2011, 9:20 PM

The Power of Positive Coaching

By DAVID BORNSTEIN

Fixes looks at solutions to social problems and why they work.

Tags:

children, Coaching, Sports

Imagine you're coaching a big soccer game, against an undefeated team that has beaten your team in all your previous matches. Your 11-year-olds are playing well and are ahead. Then, in the closing minutes, the official makes a bad call that goes against you and, because of it, you lose. After the game, the parents of your players scream at the official. The kids are disappointed, looking up at you. What do you do?

Or you're coaching tee-ball and one of your 5-year-old players has failed to get a hit so far. Now, he's up again in a crucial situation and is nervous. All eyes are on him. His first swing misses high. The second misses low and knocks the ball off the tee. You call him over to offer some help. What do you say?

Or you're a parent and your 14-year-old daughter has just come off the basketball court. In the final seconds of the game, with her team behind by a point, she was fouled and awarded two free throws. What do you say if she missed both of them and her team lost? What if she triumphed? (Tune in on Wednesday for the answers!)

The meaning that coaches or parents help young people derive from sports can shape their lives.

Coaches can be enormously influential in the lives of children. If you ask a random group of adults to recall something of significance that happened in their fourth or fifth grade classroom, many will draw a blank. But ask about a sports memory from childhood and you're likely to hear about a game winning hit, or a dropped pass, that, decades later, can still elicit emotion. The meaning that coaches or parents help young people derive from such moments can shape their lives.

But today's youth coaches often struggle to provide sound, evidence-based, and age-appropriate guidance to players. Part of the problem is that of the 2.5 million American adults who serve as volunteer coaches for youth sports less than 10 percent receive any formal training. Most become coaches because their kid is on the team — and they basically improvise. I did this in soccer and, through my over-eagerness, almost destroyed my then-6-year-old son's delight for the game.

But a bigger problem is that youth sports has come to emulate the win-at-all-costs ethos of professional sports. While youth and professional sports look alike, adults often forget that they are fundamentally different enterprises. Professional sports is an entertainment business. Youth sports is supposed to be about education and human development.

That's why it is so disturbing that, over the past two decades, researchers have found that poor sportsmanship and acts of aggression have become common in youth sports settings. Cheating has also become more accepted. Coaches give their stars the most play. Parents and fans boo opponents or harangue officials (mimicking professional events). They put pressure on children to perform well, with hopes for scholarships or fulfilling their own childhood dreams. Probably the most serious indictment of the system is

that the vast majority of youths – some 70 to 80 percent – drop out of sports shortly after middle school. For many, sports become too competitive and selective. In short, they stop being fun.

What's needed is a culture change. That's the goal of the Positive Coaching Alliance, a modest-size organization that punches well above its weight. P.C.A. has trained 450,000 adults, mostly coaches and youth sports leaders, who reach about 4 million children and youths. The organization is working to spread the message that youth sports is about giving young athletes a positive, character-building experience – not to become major league athletes, but to become “major league people.”

PositiveCoach.org Ed Buller, an athletic director and football coach at Oak Grove High School in San Jose, Calif., has helped pilot a Positive Coach Alliance program.

P.C.A. has conducted in-person and on-line trainings with coaches from 1,700 youth sports organizations including Little League Baseball, the American Youth Soccer Association, U.S. Lacrosse, and the Amateur Athletic Union, which has committed to put all of its 50,000 coaches through P.C.A.'s online trainings. The Dallas Independent School District, which oversees 800 youth sports coaches, has enlisted P.C.A. for trainings. “There's been such a push from parents about winning at all costs,” explained Jeff Johnson, the district's athletic director. “Sportsmanship sometimes goes out the window. The positive coaching has helped my coaches think about more than just winning.”

Many advocates dream of reforming youth sports, but P.C.A. is distinctive for its approach. Through its messaging, it reassures coaches that it's O.K. to win – that, in fact, a “relentlessly positive” coach will usually be more successful on the scoreboard. As such, P.C.A. has been able to penetrate the hard-nosed culture of competitive sports. The organization is supported by top professional coaches like Phil Jackson who led the Los Angeles Lakers and Chicago Bulls to 11 National Basketball League titles, and Doc Rivers of the Boston Celtics. This gives the organization credibility. Finally, P.C.A. has artfully packaged complex psychological research into simple tools that any coach or parent can put into practice. As a father of an 8-year-old who has happily regained his love of soccer thanks to a very positive coach, I can attest to the value of its teachings. Research has found that youth attrition rates are 80 percent lower for children whose coaches practice positive coaching (pdf, p.11).

P.C.A. was founded by Jim Thompson, a teacher who previously directed the Public Management Program at Stanford Business School. Years before, Thompson had taught in a classroom with severely emotionally-disturbed students, where he became skilled at managing and motivating children. When his son turned 6 and started getting into sports, Thompson discovered parents and coaches violating all the rules he'd learned: putting pressure on children to perform, trying to give kids technical advice while they were anxious or frustrated, rewarding misbehavior by giving it extra attention, making children worry about making mistakes. He started coaching, discovered he loved it, and collected his ideas in a book: “Positive Coaching, Building Character and Self Esteem Through Sports.” (He has since authored seven others.) With the support of Stanford's Athletic Department, he launched P.C.A. in 1998.

The core of P.C.A.'s approach is to train “double goal” coaches: coaches who balance the goal of winning, with the second, and more important, goal of teaching life lessons. Coaches are taught to help children focus on improving their own game, helping their teammates improve their game, and improving the game as a whole. (In life, this translates to improving yourself, being a leader who helps others flourish, and working to make society better.) P.C.A. encourages parents to let go of winning and concentrate on life lessons. “There are only two groups of people whose job is to win games,” says Thompson. “Coaches and players. Parents have a much more important job: to guide their child's character development.”

To deliver these concepts, Thompson built up a network of 100 expert trainers and developed catchy acronyms and simplified conceptual tools. For example, sports psychologists know that athletes who focus on things they can control, as opposed to external factors, are less anxious, more

Because there are so many opportunities to fail in sports, it is a gold mine of teachable moments.

confident, and consequentially, happier and better performers. Thompson wondered how to translate the ideas so they could be picked up by any coach.

He came up with the “ELM Tree of Mastery” to help coaches remember that the feedback that most helps young athletes develop their potential is *not* praise for good performance or criticism for bad performance. What works best is helping children understand that they control three key variables: their level of Effort, whether they Learn from experiences, and how they respond to Mistakes.

Because there are so many opportunities to fail in sports, it is a gold mine of teachable moments. “If a child misses a big play, it’s a perfect opportunity to talk about resiliency,” explains Thompson. “I know you’re disappointed and I feel bad for you, but the question is what are you going to do now? Are you going to hang your head? Or are you going to bounce back with renewed determination?”

“The single most important thing we do is help coaches teach kids not to be afraid to make mistakes,” he adds.

In a fast-moving game, things happen in seconds. When a 12-year-old kid makes a mistake on an athletic field, he will immediately look over to his coach or parent. “If the coach is saying, ‘Don’t worry about it,’ it’s actually not very helpful,” notes Thompson. The key is to get rid of the mistake quickly and decisively. So P.C.A. encourages coaches to establish a “mistake ritual.” One technique, adopted by many, is teaching players to “flush” their mistakes. Using a hand gesture that mimics flushing a toilet, a coach can signal from the sideline and players can signal to each other. “So the kid looks at the coach and the coach goes: ‘Flush it.’ The teammates are saying: ‘Hey, Flush it, we’ll get it back.’ And the kid plays better. Because if you’re not beating yourself up, you can focus on the next play.” After the game, the coach can talk to the player about what happened and why.

P.C.A.’s techniques are grounded in the idea that every child has a kind of “emotional tank.” When it gets drained, it’s difficult to take on challenges or perform well. Coaches need to learn to recognize this and adjust accordingly. P.C.A. even has a “magic ratio” — the ideal ratio of positive (i.e., tank filling) statements to criticism — should be 5 to 1.

Focusing on filling the emotional tank is not wimpy or soft. Professional coaches, like Phil Jackson, have used it to great success. It takes effort to do well. Coaches need to observe players closely so they can offer specific and honest feedback. (Kids know false praise when they hear it.)

Nor does it mean a coach can’t have hard conversations with players. The key is not to withhold criticism, but to deliver it in a way that is helpful. If the child is angry or sulking or defensive, she’s not going to be listening very well anyway. “When you ask people to focus on mastery, it’s not soft,” notes Thompson. “And screaming at a kid is not tough. That’s just a lack of impulse control.”

Ken Eriksen, head coach for the U.S.A. Softball Women’s National Team, has incorporated another technique from P.C.A. called the “criticism sandwich.” “I love the philosophy of praise-critique-praise,” he told me, speaking by phone from the Pan American Games in Mexico. “Instead of getting into a kid: ‘Hey, What’s the matter with you? Didn’t we just go over this?’ I like to take the approach: ‘Hey, young lady, you’re doing a great job. You know on that approach to a ground ball, maybe I would use a different footwork. Other than that I cannot commend you enough on your hard work.’ It works so much better.”

“People often think that youth sports is simple, but it’s actually very complex,” observes Thompson. “The symbolism of sports is so powerful. You’ve got coaches whose identity is tied to whether their team wins or not. You’ve got parents who have all this anxiety about their kids being successful and happy, living in a culture that put so much emphasis on winning or getting into the best schools. And you’ve got the kids who are nervous, worried about establishing their own identity, who want to please their parents, and are afraid about looking bad in public.”

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“But because sports is so valued, we have the opportunity to change the way people relate to their kids through it. Most research indicates that people coach the way they were coached. So you now have kids who are growing up coached with this model and soon they’ll become coaches themselves, so I think the general impact on our society could be huge.”

Have you had a memorable experience with a coach that stuck with you (good or bad)? On Wednesday, I’ll respond to comments, provide some more details about P.C.A.’s techniques, and reveal how Thompson told me he would handle each of the scenarios above.

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From
ALEXANDER PAYNE
Director of
SIDEWAYS

October 22, 2011

A Silicon Valley School That Doesn't Compute

By MATT RICHTEL

LOS ALTOS, Calif. — The chief technology officer of eBay sends his children to a nine-classroom school here.

So do employees of Silicon Valley giants like Google, Apple, Yahoo and Hewlett-Packard.

But the school's chief teaching tools are anything but high-tech: pens and paper, knitting needles and, occasionally, mud. Not a computer to be found. No screens at all. They are not allowed in the classroom, and the school even frowns on their use at home.

Schools nationwide have rushed to supply their classrooms with computers, and many policy makers say it is foolish to do otherwise. But the contrarian point of view can be found at the epicenter of the tech economy, where some parents and educators have a message: computers and schools don't mix.

This is the Waldorf School of the Peninsula, one of around 160 Waldorf schools in the country that subscribe to a teaching philosophy focused on physical activity and learning through creative, hands-on tasks. Those who endorse this approach say computers inhibit creative thinking, movement, human interaction and attention spans.

The Waldorf method is nearly a century old, but its foothold here among the digerati puts into sharp relief an intensifying debate about the role of computers in education.

"I fundamentally reject the notion you need technology aids in grammar school," said Alan Eagle, 50, whose daughter, Andie, is one of the 196 children at the Waldorf elementary school; his son William, 13, is at the nearby middle school. "The idea that an app on an iPad can better teach my kids to read or do arithmetic, that's ridiculous."

Mr. Eagle knows a bit about technology. He holds a computer science degree from Dartmouth and works in executive communications at Google, where he has written speeches for the chairman, Eric E. Schmidt. He uses an iPad and a smartphone. But he says his daughter, a fifth grader, "doesn't know how to use Google," and his son is just learning. (Starting in eighth grade, the school endorses the limited use of gadgets.)

Three-quarters of the students here have parents with a strong high-tech connection. Mr. Eagle, like other parents, sees no contradiction. Technology, he says, has its time and place: "If I worked at Miramax and made good, artsy, rated R movies, I wouldn't want my kids to see them until they were 17."

While other schools in the region brag about their wired classrooms, the Waldorf school embraces a simple, retro look — blackboards with colorful chalk, bookshelves with encyclopedias, wooden desks filled with workbooks and No. 2 pencils.

On a recent Tuesday, Andie Eagle and her fifth-grade classmates refreshed their knitting skills, crisscrossing wooden needles around balls of yarn, making fabric swatches. It's an activity the school says helps develop problem-solving, patterning, math skills and coordination. The long-term goal: make socks.

Down the hall, a teacher drilled third-graders on multiplication by asking them to pretend to turn their bodies into lightning bolts. She asked them a math problem — four times five — and, in unison, they shouted “20” and zapped their fingers at the number on the blackboard. A roomful of human calculators.

In second grade, students standing in a circle learned language skills by repeating verses after the teacher, while simultaneously playing catch with bean bags. It's an exercise aimed at synchronizing body and brain. Here, as in other classes, the day can start with a recitation or verse about God that reflects a nondenominational emphasis on the divine.

Andie's teacher, Cathy Waheed, who is a former computer engineer, tries to make learning both irresistible and highly tactile. Last year she taught fractions by having the children cut up food — apples, quesadillas, cake — into quarters, halves and sixteenths.

“For three weeks, we ate our way through fractions,” she said. “When I made enough fractional pieces of cake to feed everyone, do you think I had their attention?”

Some education experts say that the push to equip classrooms with computers is unwarranted because studies do not clearly show that this leads to better test scores or other measurable gains.

Is learning through cake fractions and knitting any better? The Waldorf advocates make it tough to compare, partly because as private schools they administer no standardized tests in elementary grades. And they would be the first to admit that their early-grade students may not score well on such tests because, they say, they don't drill them on a standardized math and reading curriculum.

When asked for evidence of the schools' effectiveness, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America points to research by an affiliated group showing that 94 percent of students graduating from Waldorf high schools in the United States between 1994 and 2004 attended college, with many heading to prestigious institutions like Oberlin, Berkeley and Vassar.

Of course, that figure may not be surprising, given that these are students from families that value education highly enough to seek out a selective private school, and usually have the means to pay for it. And it is difficult to separate the effects of the low-tech instructional methods from other factors. For example, parents of students at the Los Altos school say it attracts great teachers who go through extensive training in the Waldorf approach, creating a strong sense of mission that can be lacking in other schools.

Absent clear evidence, the debate comes down to subjectivity, parental choice and a difference of opinion over a single word: engagement. Advocates for equipping schools with technology say computers can hold students' attention and, in fact, that young people who have been weaned on electronic devices will not tune in without them.

Ann Flynn, director of education technology for the National School Boards Association, which represents school boards nationwide, said computers were essential. "If schools have access to the tools and can afford them, but are not using the tools, they are cheating our children," Ms. Flynn said.

Paul Thomas, a former teacher and an associate professor of education at Furman University, who has written 12 books about public educational methods, disagreed, saying that "a spare approach to technology in the classroom will always benefit learning."

"Teaching is a human experience," he said. "Technology is a distraction when we need literacy, numeracy and critical thinking."

And Waldorf parents argue that real engagement comes from great teachers with interesting lesson plans.

"Engagement is about human contact, the contact with the teacher, the contact with their peers," said Pierre Laurent, 50, who works at a high-tech start-up and formerly worked at Intel and Microsoft. He has three children in Waldorf schools, which so impressed the family that his wife, Monica, joined one as a teacher in 2006.

And where advocates for stocking classrooms with technology say children need computer time to compete in the modern world, Waldorf parents counter: what's the rush, given how easy it is to pick up those skills?

"It's supereasy. It's like learning to use toothpaste," Mr. Eagle said. "At Google and all these places, we make technology as brain-dead easy to use as possible. There's no reason why kids can't figure it out when they get older."

There are also plenty of high-tech parents at a Waldorf school in San Francisco and just north of it at the Greenwood School in Mill Valley, which doesn't have Waldorf accreditation but is inspired by its principles.

California has some 40 Waldorf schools, giving it a disproportionate share — perhaps because the movement is growing roots here, said Lucy Wurtz, who, along with her husband, Brad, helped found the Waldorf high school in Los Altos in 2007. Mr. Wurtz is chief executive of Power Assure, which helps computer data centers reduce their energy load.

The Waldorf experience does not come cheap: annual tuition at the Silicon Valley schools is \$17,750 for kindergarten through eighth grade and \$24,400 for high school, though Ms. Wurtz said financial assistance was available. She says the typical Waldorf parent, who has a range of elite private and public schools to choose from, tends to be liberal and highly educated, with strong views about education; they also have a knowledge

that when they are ready to teach their children about technology they have ample access and expertise at home.

The students, meanwhile, say they don't pine for technology, nor have they gone completely cold turkey. Andie Eagle and her fifth-grade classmates say they occasionally watch movies. One girl, whose father works as an Apple engineer, says he sometimes asks her to test games he is debugging. One boy plays with flight-simulator programs on weekends.

The students say they can become frustrated when their parents and relatives get so wrapped up in phones and other devices. Aurad Kamkar, 11, said he recently went to visit cousins and found himself sitting around with five of them playing with their gadgets, not paying attention to him or each other. He started waving his arms at them: "I said: 'Hello guys, I'm here.' "

Finn Heilig, 10, whose father works at Google, says he liked learning with pen and paper — rather than on a computer — because he could monitor his progress over the years.

"You can look back and see how sloppy your handwriting was in first grade. You can't do that with computers 'cause all the letters are the same," Finn said. "Besides, if you learn to write on paper, you can still write if water spills on the computer or the power goes out."