To Whom It May Concern,

I have a few comments about the current ELA Standards that I believe should be considered during the standards review in the coming year.

First, I want to direct attention to Writing Standard 8 in the 6-12 grade span, which focuses on how students gather information and engage with it in their texts. The standard specifically suggests that students do this work "while avoiding plagiarism." This phrasing ignores the complex work that writers have to do to "avoid plagiarism." Learning to bring the writing of others into your own writing without seeming to appropriate their ideas is difficult, takes considerable time and practice, and is caught up within issues of working memory while writing. The revision of the standards should take this reality to heart, and suggest for teachers some language that will help them think about incorporating others' work as occurring within an individual developmental trajectory for each student.

Second, I think the three "types" of writing (narrative, argument, informative) are needlessly restrictive. Writers across all disciplines and jobs do many different kinds of writing as part of their professions, and none of these fall neatly into the three types identified in the standards. It would be far
better to pay attention to the rhetorical moves of a given genre and help students think about writing through those moves, rather than according to one of three types of texts. No doubt the range of writing needs to be narrowed for the sake of scoring writing assessments, but that can be done without these three types of texts guiding us.

Third, I would like the review team to think further about their use of the word "clear" in the text. Written language cannot actually be clear - that's a metaphor that means different things to different people in different circumstances. A complex mathematical formula given to the right people at the right time can actually be "clear" to the audience, even if a different audience might find it bewildering. So there seems to be some assumptions about language here that are not being explicit, and I think the review team should consider that.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these suggestions. I am aware that assessment changes slowly and some of these may not be feasible at the moment, but I appreciate their consideration.

Best,

Ryan

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