

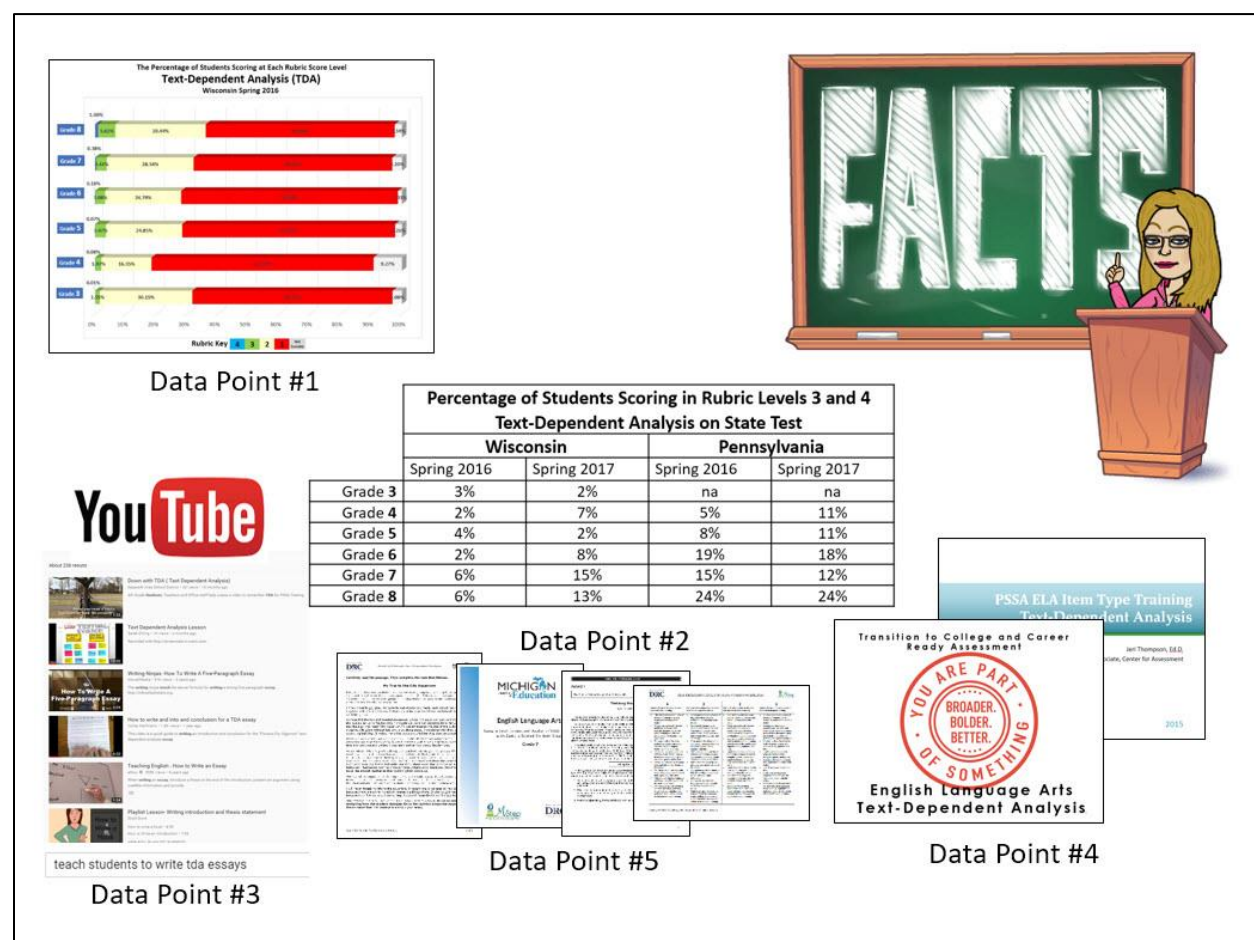
PART II

Michigan's NEW Text-Dependent Analysis Essay/M-Step Spring 2018

I am so excited to share Part II of what I've learned about the Text-Dependent Analysis Essays with you. In my last note, I shared key information related to the **text-dependent analysis essays** to help heighten awareness of the new type of item. Today, I am sharing some additional and very specific information useful to teachers and students in helping them better understand the prompts.

The biggest issue students will likely have is with the TDA essay prompt and figuring out what in heck they are supposed to do. Working with the prompt is a skill teachers can teach and students can learn. I did some additional research to hone in on exactly why students seemed to be scoring so poorly in other states. I revealed part of that to you in my last note – the TDA essay includes reading standards. **It is a reading analysis before it is a writing test.**

In the meantime, I've reviewed five data points (can you say, "triangulation"?), to see if I could get a clearer picture of the issue. These five data points are visually shown below and further explained on the next page.



Data Point #1: I first looked at Wisconsin’s data and put together a graph to visually see the results of its 2016 TDA Essay. Along the left-hand side are the grade levels, with grade 3 at the bottom up through grade 8. There are four performance levels, with blue and green representing the highest, and yellow and red representing the lowest. Gray represents papers that were not scorable – and get zeros when scored on the state test. The data on this visual was alarming to me, as I sure don’t want any district in Michigan to have this pattern. Why are such a high percentage of students scoring at Level 1? Why so many unscorable papers?

Data Point #2: I already shared this visual with you, but it is one of my data points. I wanted to see if this was an issue in the second year with Wisconsin (it was), and if it was an issue in any other states (it is).

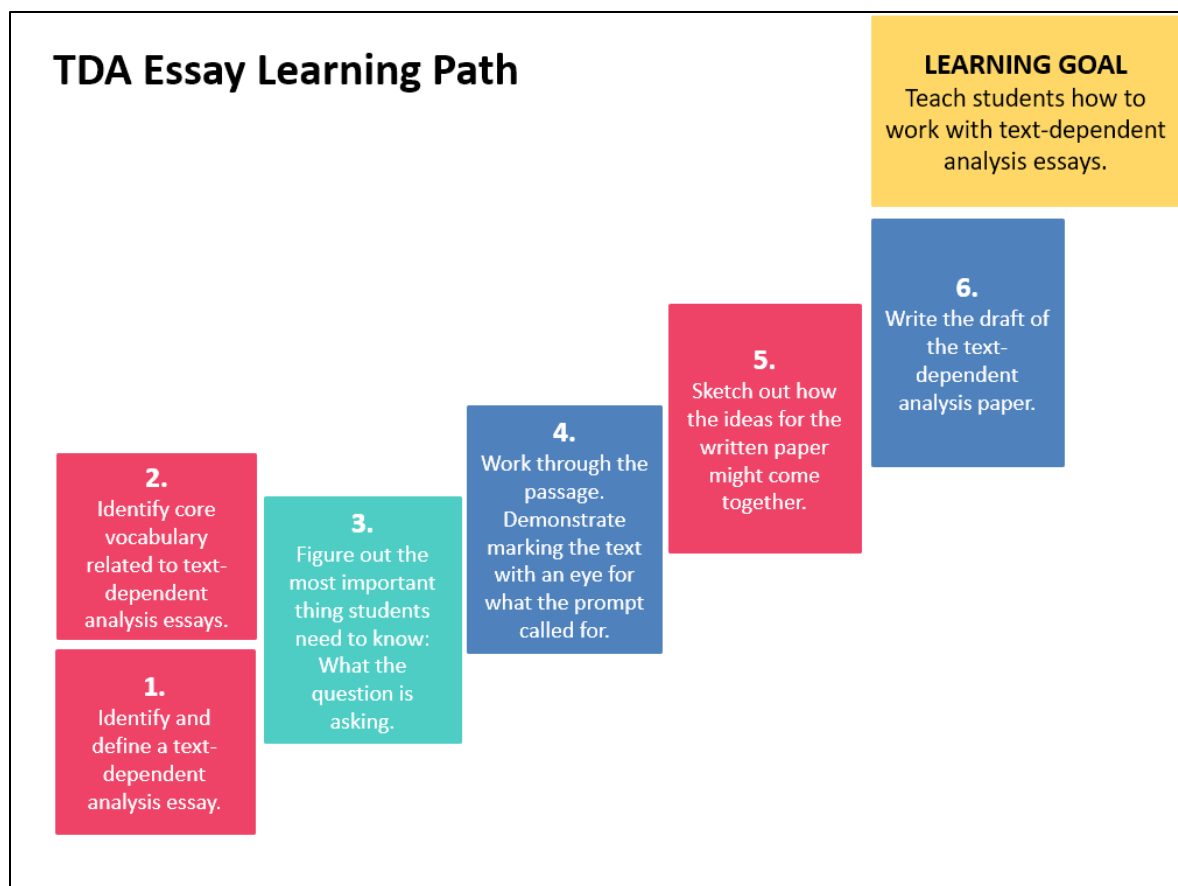
Data Point #3: I then watched loads of YouTube videos of teachers – explaining to students – how to work with text-analysis questions to determine the overall approach of teaching students how to work with this type of question. I made loads of notes. Most teachers focused on how students should write a paper rather than on figuring out what they were supposed to analyze.

Data Point #4: I reviewed numerous presentations from state departments of education that administer the TDA essays to see what type of guidance has been given to teachers. Pennsylvania provides the greatest amount of guidance, thus far.

Data Point #5: I then studied all the sample and released prompts I could find from different states. I unpacked all the prompts and answered all the essays, comparing what I did to what teachers told students to do in the YouTube videos, and compared what I did to presentation materials. Basically, what I had to do was a deep unpacking of the prompts as well as the process of answering the prompts. I also reviewed anchor papers and scores.

That’s how and when I found the answer. I got the clear picture.

I’ve sketched it out in a learning path, shown on the next page, which shows a path the learning could take for the TDA essay.



Here is a very big aha.

What is happening is that while learning to write TDAs, **students are going from a very shaky #3 directly to #6 without all the work in-between** that's related to the reading standards. Based on what I've seen, we are not yet fully addressing #3, #4, and #5 when students are learning to work on TDA essays. Rather, it seems the focus is on writing. Remember, numbers 3-5 are READING STANDARDS and Number 6 is a Writing standard.

Students cannot make the jump from #3 to #6 without support and practice.

Conceptually, this is why, when a teacher tries to use what he or she usually uses to have a student write a paper (read your prompt, find the purpose, find your audience, etc.), it doesn't work for the student. It's a reading prompt first, that a student then writes about. The prompt directs thinking first. Rushing students to think about things such as the audience first, moves students too quickly toward the writing piece – for which they don't yet have anything to write about. We need to help them focus on # 3, #4, and #5, or student thinking on the essays will not improve.

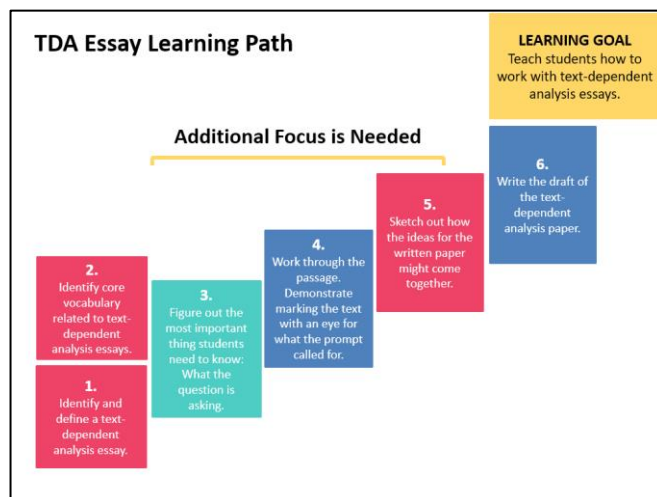
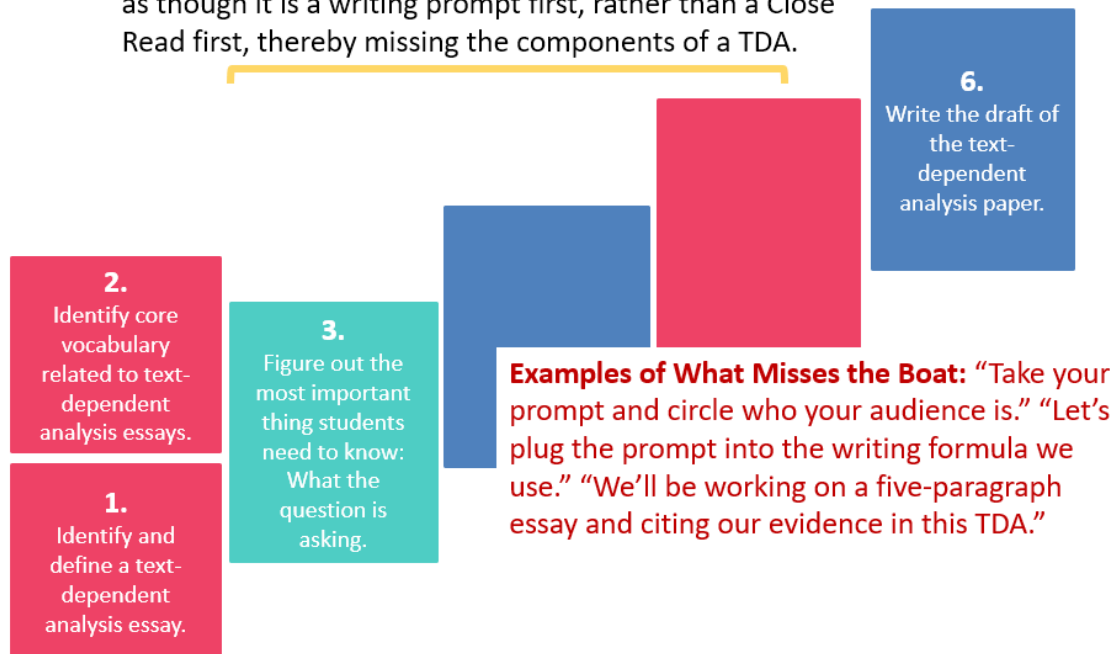
To review, take a look at the following visual.

TDA Essay Learning Path

In Wahlstrom's research, students are moved from a shaky #3 directly to #6. The students approach the TDA as though it is a writing prompt first, rather than a Close Read first, thereby missing the components of a TDA.

LEARNING GOAL

Teach students how to work with text-dependent analysis essays.



We need to provide additional focus and support for students on Numbers 3-5.

#3: Figure out the most important thing students need to know: What the question is asking.

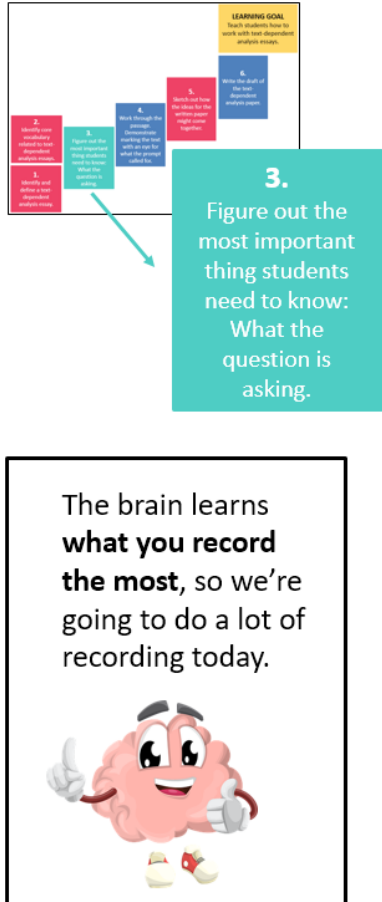
#4: Work through the passage: Demonstrate marking the text with an eye for what the prompt called for.

#5: Sketch out how the ideas for the written paper might come together.

It's messy work and there's not a simple formula for students to follow. There's not an acronym that works across the variety of prompts to which students will be exposed. Thinking is messy. Analysis is messy. Help students understand that.

I've developed some lessons and practice that will help teachers and students with Numbers 3-5, as that is the area of need. For today's focus, Number 3, I am going to show you how to break up the prompt and give you one way to help your students do this. Then, I'm going to give you ten (yes, 10) practice prompts to try on your own. You will be able to check your own thinking on these. In addition to figuring out the prompt, we'll also be looking at how we might organize our thoughts in preparation for reading the passage. You will be able to truly help students figure out what the question is asking.

The visual below highlights some of the tips I recommend for giving students purposeful practice. I'll be modeling this with you.



To get there, give students Deliberate and Purposeful Practice

- Choose several prompts and model for students how to unpack them. Unpacking the prompt just means **figuring out what the prompt is asking the student to do**.
- Remind students that **the prompt is going to tell them how the analysis should be done**. They don't get to choose, but they do need to follow directions. The prompts will be very, very specific.
- **It is important to mark the prompt while you work**. This will help you organize your thoughts as you bring your ideas together.
- **Read the prompt over and over again** if you need to.
- Use **whole words rather than abbreviations** when you mark the prompt.
- If this feels hard, **that is normal**. It feels challenging for just about everybody, but by practicing, you can do quite well learning to analyze. It's a skill. A thinking skill that gets easier and easier the more you do.

Teachers, after you work through the four lessons and then complete the ten practice prompts, you should be well on your way to supporting students. With the TDA essays, whether it's one you give as a class assignment or a state assessment, it really is important that you practice, so you can support even the most struggling student. Ready? Set? Let's learn and practice!

Lesson Routine

What to do: Follow along with me as I show you how I think through each of these.

[Link to Recording](#)

Write an essay analyzing how this statement made by Michelle Kwan shows a lesson that she learned. Use evidence from **both** passages to support your response.

[Link to Recording](#)

Write an essay analyzing how the author develops Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones' character and motivation throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your analysis.

[Link to Recording](#)

Write an essay analyzing how both passages show the statement to be true.

“One who is greedy always wants more.”

[Link to Recording](#)

Write an essay analyzing how the author’s organization of the passage helps the reader to understand the task. Use the information from the passage to support your response.

After completing these four examples, it’s time for you to practice. Instructions for practice are on the next page.

Practice Routine

What to do: Download each prompt and mark it. After you mark your prompt, **CYA – Check Your Answer**. The prompts are from sample and released TDA essays, so you get a feel for how they look within the larger assessment. Practice each prompt more than once if needed until you become comfortable working with each.

3.

Figure out the most important thing students need to know: What the question is asking.

With examples of prompts from four different states, you'll get the variety needed to support students. Here's the listing of the prompts.

Practice Order and Link	Grade Level	State	Check Your Answers
<u>1</u>	3 and 4	MI	<u>CYA 1</u>
<u>2</u>	3	SC	<u>CYA 2</u>
<u>3</u>	4 Page 17	PA	<u>CYA 3</u>
<u>4</u>	5 and 6	MI	<u>CYA 4</u>
<u>5</u>	5 Page 22	PA	<u>CYA 5</u>
<u>6</u>	7 and 8	MI	<u>CYA 6</u>
<u>7</u>	6 Page 20	PA	<u>CYA 7</u>
<u>8</u>	7 Page 20	PA	<u>CYA 8</u>
<u>9</u>	8 Page 21	PA	<u>CYA 9</u>
<u>10</u>	8 Page 16	NE	<u>CYA 10</u>

The Next Step

I'll next be preparing the lessons and the practice passages for #4 and #5, working with the passages. Look for those in a week or so!

As always, I hope this information is useful. Call (757-539-6513) or email (wahlstromd@successlineinc.com) if you have questions or need additional information!