

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

Instructions: You have 30 minutes to read the attached passages and make notes; you may write in the margins and/or use the space below for an outline, idea map, etc. Once the 30-minute pre-writing phase is over, you will have 60 minutes to write your response.

For this exam, you will need to rely on the intellectual tasks you practiced in English 1B, such as reading and synthesizing information from sources, summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, analyzing, and asserting a position. You must have a clear thesis statement and specific support.

Essay Prompt: Please write an essay that explains the debate presented in the passages and defend your own position, discussing the extent you agree or disagree with the authors.

“SCHOOLWORK” --Nicholas Lemann

In higher education, the reform story isn't so fully baked yet, but its main elements are emerging. The system is vast: hundreds of small liberal-arts colleges; a new and highly leveraged for-profit sector that offers degrees online; community colleges; state universities whose budgets are being cut because of the recession; and the big-name private universities, which get the most attention. You wouldn't design a system this way—it's filled with overlaps and competitive excess. Much of it strives toward an ideal that took shape in nineteenth-century Germany: the university as a small, élite center of pure scholarly research. Research is the rationale for low teaching loads, publication requirements, tenure, tight-knit academic disciplines, and other practices that take it on the chin from [. . .] for being of little benefit to students or society.

Yet for a system that [. . .] is deeply in crisis, American higher education is not doing badly. The lines of people wanting to get into institutions that the authors say are just waiting to cheat them by overcharging and underteaching grow ever longer and more international, and the people waiting in those lines don't seem deterred by price increases, even in a terrible recession.

There have been attempts in the past to make the system more rational and less redundant, and to shrink the portion of it that undertakes scholarly research, but they have not met with much success, and not just because of bureaucratic resistance by the interested parties. Large-scale, decentralized democratic societies are not very adept at generating neat, rational solutions to messy situations. The story line on education, at this ill-tempered moment in American life, expresses what might be called the Noah's Ark view of life: a vast territory looks so impossibly corrupted that it must be washed away, so that we can begin its activities anew, on finer, higher, firmer principles. One should treat any perception that something so large is so completely awry with suspicion, and consider that it might not be true—especially before acting on it.

“Left Unchecked, Market Forces Have Created a Dual System”

by Anthony P. Carnevale, Director of the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on September 3, 2010

Quality in postsecondary education is both increasing and increasingly unequal, a negative side effect of market forces. Since 1973, the pool of applicants to postsecondary institutions has nearly doubled; as a result, institutions have become increasingly selective. According to the financial news-magazine *Barron's*, between 1994 and 2009 the number of institutions rated “very competitive” or higher jumped from 399 to 472. Meanwhile, the number of “less-” and “non-competitive” four-year colleges declined from 429 to 299, and the share of students attending community colleges and other subbaccalaureate institutions is approaching 40 percent of total enrollment.

Thus the postsecondary system increasingly resembles a dual system of quality, which mirrors the parallel polarization of white students and those from affluent families at the top and a concentration of African-Americans, Hispanics, and students from disadvantaged families at the bottom. That polarization of quality has a persistent effect on educational and career opportunities. Those in the upper-half of the dual-quality system [. . .] get the most general preparation and follow the professional track into high earnings and personal empowerment. Those in the bottom half are tracked into more-specific occupational training that qualifies them for good but less secure mid-level jobs.

In response to this growing problem, if we cannot move large numbers of less-advantaged students into quality programs at selective colleges, then educators and policy makers should consider moving quality programs, and the money they require, to institutions where the least-advantaged Americans enroll.

University Essay: Second Course in Written Communication

You have thirty minutes to think about the following two passages. You may take notes and create an outline on this sheet and on one page of scratch paper. You may use a (non-electronic) dictionary. At the end of the preparatory phase, the proctor will distribute the examination booklets in which you will write your essay. You will have sixty minutes to write and proofread your essay. Please use ink.

A student told me last week that he was withdrawing from composition. "I don't think it's fair for you to make us write two research papers," he said. "It's too much reading and writing." Based on my twenty years of teaching experience, I'm convinced that this student is typical of millions of others nationwide.

Too many American students, from middle school through college, believe that education should come easy, that it should be fun and should make them feel good about themselves. Besides its naiveté, this feel-good movement is dangerous because, by insisting that students feel good at all costs, it institutionalizes mediocrity, while placing students' individual egos at the center of learning. As such, this come-easy trend debases the main purpose of education.

"It's not the aim of education to make the student feel good about himself or herself," writes John Searle, a philosophy professor at UC Berkeley. "On the contrary, if anything, a good education should lead to a permanent sense of dissatisfaction. Complacency is the very opposite of the intellectual life. The dirty little secret of intellectual life is that first-rate work requires an enormous amount of effort, anxiety, and even desperation."

A constant complaint I hear from veteran teachers is that large numbers of today's students are lazy. Such laziness is antithetical to education and is a sign of immaturity; it arises in part from educators' attempts to make students feel good.

— Bill Maxwell, 1994

Professor Marshall Grossman has come to expect complaints whenever he returns graded papers in his English classes at the U. of Maryland. "Many students come in with the conviction that they've worked hard and deserve a higher mark," he says. He attributes those complaints to his students' sense of entitlement.

A recent study by researchers at UC Irvine, in which a third of students it surveyed said that they expected B's just for attending lectures, and 40 percent said they deserved a B for completing the required reading, supports that attribution. Nearly two-thirds of students surveyed said that if they explained to a professor that they were trying hard, that should be taken into account in their grade. The survey results are also in line with the observations of James Hogge, associate dean of the Peabody School of Education at Vanderbilt University, who says that "Students often confuse the level of effort with the quality of work. There is a mentality in students that 'if I work hard, I deserve a high grade.'"

Sara Kinn, a Junior English major at the U. of Vermont, echoes that view: "I feel that if I do all of the readings and attend class regularly that I should be able to achieve a grade of at least a B." Jason Greenwood, a senior kinesiology major at the U. Of Maryland, agrees, saying: "I think putting in a lot of effort should merit a high grade. What else is there really than the effort that you put in? If you put in all the effort you have and get a C, what is the point?"

—Max Roosevelt, 2009

Directions: Write a well-developed essay in which you (1) explain the meaning of each passage, referring to specific ideas and phrases; and (2) drawing on specifics from your own personal experience, observations, and reading, discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with one or both of the passages.

IB Final Exam Prompt

"As with so many things in life, the pursuit of mastery is all in our head. At least that's what Carol Dweck has discovered.

Dweck, a psychology professor at Stanford University, has been studying motivation and achievement in children and young adults for nearly 40 years . . . Dweck's signature insight is that what people believe shapes what people achieve. Our beliefs about ourselves and the nature of our abilities . . . determine how we interpret our experiences and can set the boundaries on what we accomplish. Although her research looks mostly at notions of 'intelligence,' her findings apply with equal force to most human capabilities. And they yield the first law of mastery: *Mastery is a mindset.*

According to Dweck, people can hold two different views of their own intelligence. Those who have an 'entity theory' believe that intelligence is just that—an entity. It exists within us, in a finite supply that we cannot increase. Those who subscribe to an 'incremental theory' take a different view. They believe that while intelligence may vary slightly from person to person, it is ultimately something that, with effort, we can increase. To analogize to physical qualities, incremental theorists consider intelligence as something like strength. (Want to get stronger and more muscular? Start pumping iron.) Entity theorists view it as something more like height. (Want to get taller? You're out of luck.) If you believe intelligence is a fixed quantity, then every educational and professional encounter becomes a measure of how much you have. If you believe intelligence is something you can increase, then the same encounters become opportunities for growth. On one view, intelligence is something you demonstrate; in the other, it is something you develop.

[. . .] [Furthermore,] the two self-theories take very different views of effort. To incremental theorist, exertion is positive . . . a way to get better. By contrast, says, Dweck, 'the entity theory . . . is a system that requires a diet of easy successes.' In this schema, if you have to work hard, it means you're not very good. People therefore choose easy targets that, when hit, affirm their existing abilities but do little to expand them. In a sense, entity theorists want to look like masters without expending the effort to attain mastery."

- Daniel Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, 2009.

"Throughout my athletics career, the overall goal was always to be a better athlete than I was at the moment—whether next week, next month or next year. The improvement was the goal. The medal was simply the ultimate reward for achieving that goal."

- Sebastian Coe, British middle-distance runner and two-time Olympic gold medal winner

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For this exam, you will need to rely on the intellectual tasks you practiced in English 1B, such as reading and synthesizing information from sources, summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, analyzing, and asserting a position. Be sure to proofread your work.

Essay Prompt: Please write an essay that explains all of the points of view expressed in the attached passages; in other words, you will need to describe the main claims made by the authors of the attached passages. Explain to what extent you agree or disagree with their positions. You must have a clear thesis statement and specific support.

Notes

The new consumerism is also built on a relentless ratcheting up of standards. If you move into a house with a fifties kitchen, the presumption is that you will eventually have it redone, because that's a standard that has now been established. If you didn't have air conditioning in your old car, the presumption is that when you replace it, the new one will have it. If you haven't been to Europe, the presumption is that you will get there, because you deserve to get there. And so on. In addition to the proliferation of new products (computers, cell phones, faxes, [iPads etc.]), there is a continual upgrading of old ones—autos and appliances—and a shift to customized, more expensive versions, all leading to a general expansion of the list of things we have to have. The 1929 home I just moved into has a closet too shallow to fit a hanger. So the clothes face forward. The real estate agents suggested I solve the “problem” by turning the study off the bedroom into a walk-in. (Why read when you could be buying clothes?) What we want grows into what we need, at a sometimes dizzying rate. While politicians continue to tout the middle class as the heart and soul of American society, for far too many of us being solidly middle-class is no longer good enough.

—Schor, Juliet B. *The Overspent American* (1998)

In our society we spend billions each year creating want. Covetousness, discontent and greed are taught to our children, drummed into them. Not only through advertising, but in the feverish emphasis on success, on winning at all costs, on being the center of attention through one kind of performance or another, on being the first at something—no matter how silly or stupid. We are an addictive society.

Addition is a state of wanting. It is a condition in which the individual feels he or she is incomplete, inadequate, lacking, not whole, and can only be made whole by the addition of something external.

This need not be a drug. It can be money, food, fame, sex, responsibility, power, good deeds, possessions, cleaning—the addictive impulse can attach itself to anything, real or symbolic. You're addicted to something whenever you feel it completes you—that you wouldn't be a whole person without it.

—Slater, Philip. “Want- Creation Fuels Americans' Addictiveness,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, Sept. 6, 1984.