Some Approaches to constructing solid, analytic academic summaries-C:\Documents and Settings\Erin O'Brien\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\JRVSPCAQ\MC900352510[1].wmf

(use with the ***Elements of Writing Proficiency***)

I.D. what the target IS and IS NOT:

characterize—use your own vocabulary-

paraphrase not translation

BIG Picture: a+b+c = d not: a+ b+ c ≠ a+ b + c

discuss what the text SAYS and DOES

what else?

SAMPLE DRAFTS OF TB SUMMARIES

Summary of TB Issue/Debate #1

The controversial issue of using neuroscience in the juvenile justice system is as much about science as it is a critique of the justice system itself (and by extension, US society). The push for admitting scientific data into court proceedings derives its power from the conviction that juvenile offenders are subject to serious double-standards- to the extent that some instances are unconstitutional on at least two counts: cruel and unusual punishment, and, due process. Specifically, advocates of using science in the courts are targeting the two most extreme punishments: death sentence and life without parole, and problems involving due process(e.g., competence to stand trial).

The development of human brains is still largely a mystery, however, new technologies and areas of research are at the very least demanding consideration of how society views and treats teenage criminal offenders (and suspects). The brain studies’ proponents argue that since the criminal court system is so riddled with problems touching upon civil liberties for juveniles, the application of even incomplete research findings out to be applied when determining legal culpability(and to a lesser extent, due process).

The bottom line of the new brain studies is that they confirm what we know about adolescents from experience and ‘common sense’: they tend to be impulsive, risk takers, exercise poor judgment and so on. If this is true such that we restrict their driving, drinking and voting age(as well as military service, marriage and even using equipment), then why would so many teens be sentenced to life without parole, capital punishment and be subjected to a host of legal double-standards?

Nevertheless, criticism and opposition to this proposal abound usually on the basis of two types of argument: behavior isn’t just biology, serious crimes can be culturally/socially specific, and applying scientific research to social issues is problematic and even potentially dangerous. Critics apply the standard measures for good’ science, e.g. validity, reliability, to the neurological studies and find them falling far short of both. In the larger social context, they argue that the transition from a scientific context to a court setting is such a dangerous journey that they potential good is outweighed by the potential harm.

**Some Revisions Strategies-C:\Documents and Settings\Erin O'Brien\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\JRVSPCAQ\MC900352510[1].wmf**

Make Observations: (repeat for every sample) \*\*\* what’s here \*\*\* what’s missing \*\*\*I want to make sure I mention these in my Summary: \*\*\*plug in citations \*\*\*

C:\Documents and Settings\Erin O'Brien\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0JQ1RRS3\MC900233518[1].wmfSummaries “naturally” lead to critical analysis and your STAND

**Summary Version #2 (partial)**

The current state of juvenile justice in the U.S. has evolved out of a century long history marked by a pendulum-like movement from “soft” to “hard” stances on Juvenile offenders (Frontline, p. ) Presently the system is again in flux between persistent get tough attitudes and calls to end to juvenile death sentence and life without parole. In this current round of debates, new scientific research is being introduced by legal reformers who deem these harsh sentences, as well as other factors, to be unconstitutional because they represent “cruel and unusual punishment.” The scientific research would serve as an objective, irrefutable objection to harsh sentences and other civil rights violations. Ultimately, juvenile justice advocates are working for a Supreme Court ruling that will override all state statutes that permit juveniles to be tried as adults.

**Version # 3 (partial)**

According to, the initial stance in the 18th century society saw children/teens as smaller adults and thus fully culpable as adults for crimes,( ). Gradually, with the impetus of liberal reformers and the growing social sciences, US society began to perceive human growth/maturation as a gradual developmental process. Consequently, the notion of a separate juvenile justice system was born. The reformers were convinced of the possibility of rehabilitation/reform, even when punishment was not to be discarded.

**Version # 4(partial)**

There is an ongoing campaign to lessen the punishments handed to teens who commit very violent crimes on the claims of neuroscience. Scientists and legal experts have joined to redress what they see as not only egregious double standards in juvenile court system but unconstitutional practices, e.g. capital punishment and life without parole.

Opponents, also from science and law, attack the plan on a number of points that primarily concern the applicability of scientific research to social problems and the quality of the studies themselves. Opponents also raise the issue of culturally and socially specific conditions that override any claims that the immature brain directly calls for diminished culpability.

Both sides of this controversy make solid arguments for their position and it seems that taking a stand really depends on one’s hierarchy of priorities**.**