

EDTRUST PRESENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIERCE ADVOCACY

A WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES FOR
EDUCATORS OF COLOR

Op-ed/Blog Writing 101: Your Experiences Power Change



JANUARY 22, 2024
MONDAY



AT 06.00 PM
- 07.00 PM ET



REGISTER ON ZOOM



MORE INFORMATION:



@edtrust



@edtrust



www.edtrust.org

Icebreaker QUESTION

While We Wait: Introduce Yourself!

1. What is your name, pronouns, educator position?
2. Where are you coming from?
3. Who was the first educator of color you ever had?



Allow us to introduce ourselves:



Communications Manager, Partnerships & Engagement
Former middle school math teacher in Texas



Associate, Partnerships & Engagement
Former early childhood education teacher

Meeting Goals

Teachers' experiences in the classroom matter when influencing and shaping policies and practices. Op-eds and blogs can serve as an effective tool for advocacy to move people to action. In this session, teacher advocates will learn the foundations of how to write an effective blog and op-ed, hear success stories from advocates who have had their written pieces published, and leave with a drafted brainstorm piece and next steps.

We hope these trainings will allow you to:

1. Build your communications skills & toolkit so you can go back to your school communities with next steps to advocate loudly for your students
2. Help connect you with people and resources to learn more about effective messaging and advocacy
3. Build your confidence and a support system with other like-minded educators to advance equity in education



Norms to keep in mind



- ▶ **Assume best intentions**
- ▶ **Keep an open mind**
- ▶ **Be present**
- ▶ **Speak your truth**
- ▶ **Listen to understand**
- ▶ **Focus on solutions**

AGENDA FOR TODAY

- **The Foundations of Blogs & Op-Eds**
(15-20 mins)
- **Success Stories: What Makes a Compelling Written Piece** (5 mins)
- **Collaborative Brainstorm Session**
(20 mins)
- **Wrap-up and Next Steps Towards Action** (5 mins)



Why write a blog or op-ed?

- Teacher voice is an integral component of teacher leadership.
- Teachers are the best spokespeople when it comes to issues and policies that affect them, their students, and equity in education.
- **Writing an op-ed or blog is a powerful tool in your advocacy toolkit.** It brings the issue to public attention—and provides a platform to advocate for solutions.



The Foundations of Blogs & Op-eds

Letisha Marrero, Editorial Director, EdTrust



What is a Blog v Op-ed (Opinion Editorial)

Blog:

- **Etymology:** short for web log
- A public website that's regularly updated with content that is **informal, conversational, anecdotal, and timely**
- There are multitudes of blogs that cover every topic
- **Length: 300-900 words** (flexible within reason)
- Turnaround time: **Flexible**



Op-ed:

- **Etymology:** describes the location of the page: opposite of the editorial page
- The purpose of an op-ed is to offer an opinion. An op-ed puts forth a **persuasive argument/essay** on a timely, topical issue with a strong **personal viewpoint**.
- Different from a blog in that op-eds appear in print or online
- **Length: Determined by outlet** (usually no more than 800 words)
- Turnaround time: **Depends on news cycle and outlet you decide to pitch to (quick turn-around of 48 hrs might be needed)**

Opinion

IN MY OPINION

dia Schools need adequate staffing, not silver bullets, to restore quality

By Walt Heilman
Special to the Argus

How long will Oregon be a state that sets ambitious education improvement goals while simultaneously reducing teachers' ability to deliver basic education?



an average of 40 in Hillsboro high schools and Oregon can't afford to keep its schools open all year. Tragically for these 20 years, Oregon's educational and political leaders have not focused people's attention on the important need for replacement funding and increased

BLOGGING 101: What do I even say?

Find your voice & theme/topic!

- **Be interesting**
- **Be valuable**
- **Be visual**
- **Be brief**



BLOGGING 101: 4 Key Components of a Blog

1. **Strong Title**
2. **Detailed opening paragraph**
3. **Chunked out content**
4. **Succinct Conclusion**



BLOGGING 101: Things to Consider

HOOK the Reader!

- Remember: You have **3-8 seconds** to capture a reader
- First 2 sentences are the most important
 - Tell the main point of the blog or ask a thought-provoking question
 - The rest of the paragraph quickly provides the 5 W's & H to demonstrate the value of the blog

Strong up top, then wrap it up!

1. Put your most important content **up top**
2. Summarize all findings succinctly
3. To end: Ask a leading question or provide a CTA (call to action)

BLOGGING 101: Clickable Titles for Blogs

Examples to start:

- How (or How To)
- Why
- # Ways to X (odd # is a magic number)
- # Facts About X
- # Reasons to X

How FAFSA Delays Will Impact College-Going Decisions of Low-Income Students and Students of Color



Teachers Shouldn't Have to Be Afraid to Teach Honest History

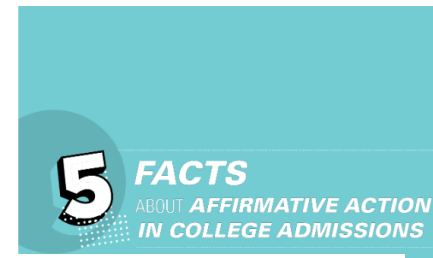
Teachers are not part of some nefarious cabal trying to indoctrinate children. Instead — through a curriculum featuring diverse people, places, and perspectives — teachers are teaching our children the true history of the United States.

"I love America more than any other country in the world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist

INFOGRAPHIC: 5 Facts About Affirmative Action

There is a lot of rhetoric ahead of the #SCOTUS ruling, but here are 5 facts about #affirmativeaction you need to know. @ameshiacross explains

SHARE THIS STORY

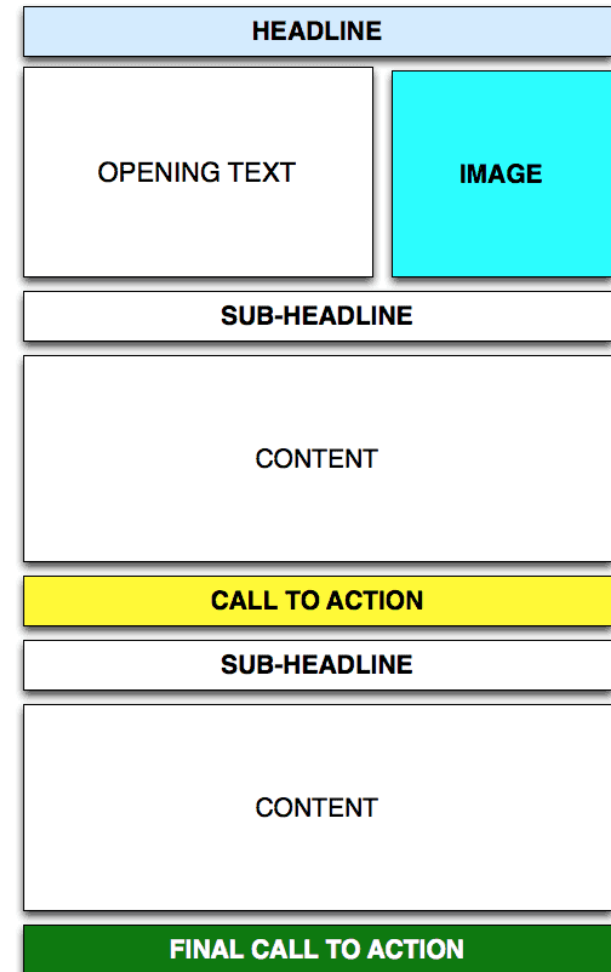


Two Cautions for Educators to Consider in the Aftermath of Affirmative Action Decisions



The Blog Structure

STRONG Title & Subtitle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Title is clickable and eye capturing <input type="checkbox"/> Subtitle is main point/theme of blog
1st paragraph (the LEDE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has good hook that captures reader (thought provoking question, statement, or theme) <input type="checkbox"/> First two sentences should contain keywords & 5 W's & H <input type="checkbox"/> Add visual cue
Next 2-3 paragraphs (CHUNKED OUT CONTENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Short paragraphs that chunk out your content (70-80 words think mobile) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Think Subtitle followed by Paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> One idea per paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Feel free to add visuals and content that pops out! (infographics, data visuals, bullet points)
Succinct Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bring it back to your lede <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up the blog with a call to action and make it memorable (to the public, lawmakers, other teachers, etc.)



OP-ED Writing 101: What does the media look for in an op-ed?

Op-ed:

- Offers fresh insight on public issue
- Critiques ideas, actions, and policies—not people
- Suggests solutions
- Examines an underlying idea or a broader context
- Stimulates thinking and stir our hearts
- Attracts a wide readership with genial persuasion



OP-ED Writing 101: Ledes & News Hooks

Lede: Grabs reader's attention. It is your intro!

News Hook: Ties your idea into the zeitgeist & makes your piece timely

- Use the news
- Tell a dramatic anecdote
- Reference pop culture
- Turn conventional wisdom on its head
- Use wit or irony to point out a contradiction
- Use an anniversary
- Cite a new study
- Get personal

OPINION

Op-Ed: I never imagined that being a Black author could put me in harm's way

ELEMENTARY TO HIGH SCHOOL

OPINION: We're not doing enough to support teachers of color

Many black and Latino educators feel undervalued and unappreciated in their profession

by JOHN KING and LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND
May 28, 2018



OPINION

Why teaching honest history is paramount

OPINION: We must urgently stand up and speak out against conservative-led efforts to whitewash or erase Black history, which is truly American history.

BLAIR WRISTON

5. Student Loan Forgiveness and Payment Pause: What's Happening and What Will Biden Do?

3. LSU's Angel Reese and Other Black Women Are Held to Unfair Standards in Public

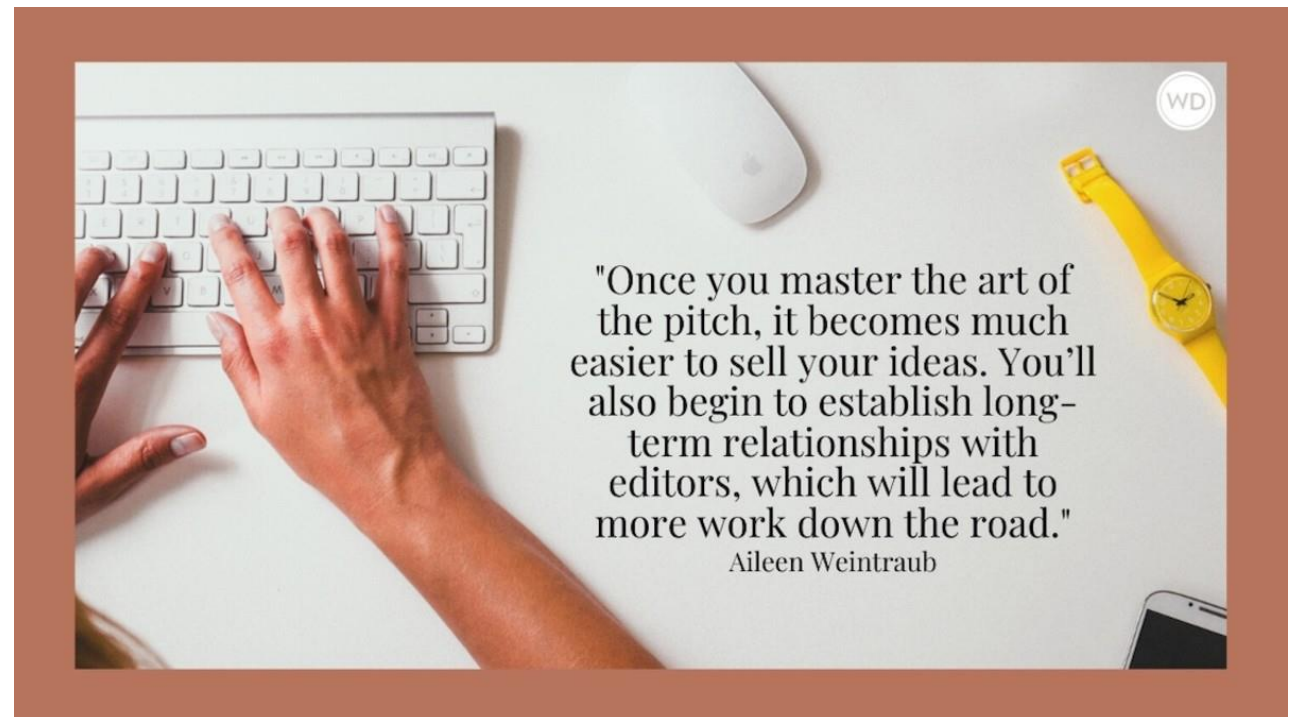
First-Generation, Low-Income College Students Face Acute Social Pressures at Elite Institutions

In this op-ed, a sophomore at Brown University shares the challenges of being a low-income student at an Ivy League school.

BY SOFIA BARNETT
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

OP-ED Writing 101: 3 Things to Ask Before Pitching

1. **Why Now?**
2. **So What?**
3. **Why ME?**



The range of media



Local/state general-interest publications



Education trade publications

EDUCATION WEEK



Education sites for blogs



The Op-Ed Structure

STRONG Title	
Lede	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify a news hook. Timely and relevant. <input type="checkbox"/> Could be a student anecdote or your story to illustrate and bridge to your theme
Thesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis: in one to two sentences — what you believe about the issue and why change is needed.
Next 3-4 paragraphs (ARGUMENT + EVIDENCE)	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Zoom out</i> on your theme, <i>zoom in</i> on your main points of argument pulling from evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations, solutions, and ideas that support your theme and add up to a persuasive argument with evidence (qualitative or quantitative) <input type="checkbox"/> Reference your own work or current policy/pending legislation.
Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring it back to your lede <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up the op-ed with a call to action (to the public, lawmakers, other teachers, etc.).

Basic Op-Ed Structure

[From the Op-Ed Project](#)

*THIS IS NOT A RULE! – JUST ONE WAY OF APPROACHING IT.

Lede (Around a news hook) - A lede is what sets the scene and grabs your reader's attention – it is your introduction. A news hook is what makes your piece timely, and often is part of the lede. More Information on ledes and news hooks is below.

Thesis- Statement of argument – either explicit or implied

Argument- Based on evidence (such as stats, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience)

- 1st Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion
- 2nd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion
- 3rd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion

Note: In a simple, declarative op-ed (“policy X is bad; here’s why”), this may be straightforward. In a more complex commentary, the 3rd point may expand on the bigger picture—historical context, global/geographic picture, mythological underpinnings, etc.—or may offer an explanation for a mystery that underpins the argument— eg., why a bad policy continues, in spite of its failures.

“To Be Sure” paragraph- pre-empt your potential critics by acknowledging any flaws in your argument, and address any obvious counter-arguments.

Conclusion- often circling back to your lede

So where do I start?

Anchor your theme in your expertise—and your passion as an educator.

Here are a few EdTrusters who had a theme and anchored their story to it:

Meili Powell, Former educator and Director of Advocacy at EdTrust-TN: Censorship deepens systemic oppression in education by jeopardizing students' right to learn, educators' autonomy, and directly challenges the tenets of our democracy: [Tennessee censorship laws directly affect children's ability to learn to read | Opinion](#) (Op-ed)

Nathan Kriha, Advocate and P-12 Policy Analyst: A good principal raises student outcomes, cultivates accepting communities, closes academic gaps that separate students of color from their peers, and ensures classrooms are staffed with strong teachers from diverse backgrounds: [Developing a High-Quality and Diverse Principal Pipeline](#) (EdTrust Blog)

Qubilah Huddleston, Advocate and Equitable School Funding Policy Lead at EdTrust: District and state officials can find ways to sustain the funding that has effectively supported students of color and students from low-income backgrounds for the past three years. [How K12 leaders can lobby states to support students beyond ESSER deadline](#) (Op-ed)

Success Stories: What makes a compelling written piece?

Meili Powell, Assistant Director of Advocacy & Engagement, ET-TN



Some of her pieces published:

- **BLOG:** [Tennessee Students Advocate at the State Capitol](#) (written by the students of ET-TN's EmpowerED Network)
- **OP-ED:** [Tennessee censorship laws directly affect children's ability to learn to read | Opinion](#)
- **OP-ED:** [Memphis' budget needs to redirect funds to empower and uplift our students | Opinion](#)
- **OP-ED:** [COMMENTARY: Successful '3rd Grade Commitment' on literacy requires resources, support](#)

Tips to keep in mind

- Know who your audience is
- Research and know the background of outlet and editor you are sharing with
- Make it real and relevant (all news is timely and has a story)
- Come with the facts and solutions!



Collaborative Brainstorm Session

Let's put this into practice!

In your zoom breakout rooms you will:

- Choose a template of your choosing:
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UzoOzu84tX-clgiZVxplsvO2ZFG4dg8pybwa12ObU2g/copy>
- Pick an issue/topic you want to speak to
 - Educator diversity/shortages (recruit, support, retain)
 - Social-emotional and academic learning/development
 - Equitable School Funding
 - Access to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum and coursework
 - Access to postsecondary opportunities
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Early Literacy/ECE
- Begin ideating with your group

Questions to guide you:

- Who is my audience? What do they value?
- What story do I want to tell and what message/point do I want to get across? What evidence or research supports this?
- What will move my audience to action?

Examples of places that take teacher authored blogs & op-eds

Blogs:

- [We Are Teachers](#)
- [The Educators Room](#)
- [Edutopia](#)
- [Cult of Pedagogy](#)
- [EdSurge](#)

Op-Eds:

- **Local audience:**
 - Check which community/city news outlets are reporting on education and who might have an opinion section
- **State audience:**
 - **Check which state news outlets are reporting on education and have an opinion section**
 - Texas Tribune, LA Times,
 - Some states might have strictly education news outlets: North Carolina has <https://www.ednc.org/>
 - **Some have education labs:**
 - Seattle Times: <https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/>
- **National audience:**
 - **Trade outlets:**
 - Education Week
 - Hechinger Report
 - The 74
 - K-12 Dive
 - EdSource
 - **Non-trade:**
 - Teen Vogue, Essence
 - HuffPost
 - The Griot
 - Word in Black
 - Washington Post, New York Times, USA Today

Group Poll: Feedback & Thoughts

Please take one minute to answer the following poll questions at the bottom of your zoom screen!

Once poll feedback is received, we will spend a few minutes sharing resources and NEXT STEPS

Wrap-up & Next Steps:

Share outs, Feedback, Next Steps

Share outs! What are some takeaways you'd like to share with the group?

So what's next?

- **Identify an issue in your school community** you are extremely passionate about and build your story while remembering to frame your argument, highlight your solutions, and have a call to action
- **Share your blog or op-ed** with an identified organization/editor of a media outlet of your intended audience to see if they are interested in publishing
- Need feedback? Reach out to **schedule a 1:1** with us
- Interested in writing a blog for our EdTrust ["Why I Teach, Where I Teach"](#) series? Email us!

Where can I learn more or begin my advocacy through writing?

EdTrust Resources

- [Blogging 101](#)
- [Ed Trust Blog and Op-ed Guidance](#)
- [Pitching Op-Eds](#)

The Op-Ed Project

- [Community Resources](#)
- [Op-Ed Writing Tips & Tricks](#)
- [Pitching 101](#)
- [Submission & List of Publications](#)

The Learning Agency

- [How To Write An Op-Ed: A Step By Step Guide](#)

Teach PLUS

- [Op-Eds for Impact](#)
- [Blog Articles](#)

Other Resources


- **Kent University:** ["What is an Op-Ed"](#)
- **School Board School:** ["How To Write an Op-Ed and Letter to the Editor " Resource](#)
- **ACLU:** [Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor](#)

NEXT TRAINING SESSION: Monday February 26 (6-7PM ET)

Registration Link: https://edtrust.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3c66E40fTLyRoYD98stRqQ

- Follow us on socials!

- Instagram: @edtrust
- Twitter: @edtrust
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/edtrust>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/education-trust/>









EDTRUST PRESENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIERCE ADVOCACY

A WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES FOR EDUCATORS OF COLOR

Crafting Effective Messaging to Reach Your Target Audience

 FEBRUARY 26, 2024
MONDAY  AT 06.00 PM
- 07.00 PM ET  REGISTER ON ZOOM

MORE INFORMATION:  @edtrust  @edtrust  www.edtrust.org