**Idea Development in Argument Writing (Grades 7-12)**

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| **Writing Situation:** Your school is planning to install video cameras in every classroom as part of the new school safety plan.  **Writing Task**: Write a letter to your principal giving your opinion about his plan to install video cameras in classrooms. |

Dear Mr. Principal,

I recently heard about your plan to install video cameras in all middle school classrooms. I urge you to consider the negative impacts of this decision. Can you imagine being seated in class and having your every move invaded by the watchful eye of a video lens? First of all, it sounds very distracting. Second, it is the teacher’s role to monitor students; it is not the duty of the latest technology. Finally, we already have cameras in the halls, why spend money to get thirty more cameras for each classroom in our school?

**Flashback**

Video cameras cause students to act differently than normal. Some students get nervous and flustered, trying hard to stay focused on their work with a camera focused on them. Ninety percent of students claim that they do better work when they are calmer, and cameras are not going to help! Other students look at cameras as a source of entertainment. **I remember when we first got a camera on our bus. Half of the kids from my neighborhood wanted to sit up front so they could smile and make faces at it. It was a mess for the bus driver and he finally had to assign seats.**

**Flashback**

When students are in their classrooms, teachers should be in the classrooms too. On the rare occasion that a teacher goes out of the classroom, everything typically goes on as usual. The worst that happens is that the students get a little more talkative. Cameras aren’t needed because people talk a lot! I understand that it is a fear of something horrible happening that is making you want cameras. **Looking back, I can remember one time in my eight years of schooling when a teacher left the room and a fight happened. It literally took less than 15 seconds for the teacher next door to race in and stop the commotion.** We didn’t need a camera then, and we don’t need one now.

Finally, our school district already has a low budget, so we would be spending money on something completely unnecessary. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Flashback**

Mr. Principal, I know you are only trying to make our school a safer place. However, you could utilize the funding that is set aside for these cameras in so many more productive ways such as anti-bullying campaigns or even in preparing students to be peer mediators. Both of these programs are effective in the prevention of school discipline problems and would further increase safety at our school. We don’t need classroom cameras. They are simply a distraction, an ineffective replacement for teachers, and much too costly.

Sincerely,

A Student