"Stop buying toys and games": An Appraisal analysis of persuasive texts written by high achieving young writers

By Damon Thomas
### Phases of development

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<th>Late childhood – Early adolescence</th>
<th>Mid adolescence</th>
<th>Late adolescence +</th>
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<td>6 to 8 years</td>
<td>9 to 12 years</td>
<td>13 to 15 years</td>
<td>16 to 18 years +</td>
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<td>Subject areas and key genres</td>
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## Subject areas and key genres

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Late adolescence +
“We have some evidence in our corpus for the writing of expositions and discussions by early adolescence in history, though they gain greater importance as adolescents move up the years of secondary school” (p. 133).
Too much money is spent on toys and games
Year 3 Content Descriptions

Text structure and organisation
Understand how different imaginative, informative and persuasive texts vary in use of language choices, depending on their purpose and context

Expressing and developing ideas
Learn extended and technical vocabulary and ways of expressing opinion including modal verbs and adverbs

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating
Identify the audience and purpose of imaginative, informative and persuasive texts

Language for interaction
Examine how evaluative language can be varied to be more or less forceful

Creating texts
Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features

Texts in context
Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view

http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/English/Curriculum/F-10
There’s a gap
Year 3 student = 8 to 9 years old

Early childhood phase
15 highest scoring Year 3 texts

10 argued that too much is being spent on toys
5 argued that too much is not being spent on toys
10 argued that too much is being spent on toys

5 highest scoring texts
Limitations
Why this study is worthwhile
ATTITUDE

Early childhood writing in subject English and History is Attitudinally simple (p. 225) while in Science it is Attitudinally neutral (p. 236)

Too much money is spent on toys and games
Frequency of ATTITUDE resources by category

Year 3

- Affect: 16
- Judgement: 70
- Appreciation: 18
Positive and negative ATTITUDE resources by category

- Affect positive: 8
- Affect negative: 8
- Judgement positive: 7
- Judgement negative: 63
- Appreciation positive: 9
- Appreciation negative: 9
Inscribed and invoked ATTITUDE resources by category

- Affect inscribed: 5
- Affect invoked: 11
- Judgement inscribed: 12
- Judgement invoked: 58
- Appreciation inscribed: 6
- Appreciation invoked: 12
Invoked JUDGEMENT

3.4: Some people don't spend their money on useful things like food or clothes! (TENACITY)

3.4: They forget about the children in need who don't get any presents at all (PROPRIETY)

Inscribed JUDGEMENT

3.4: Some people never go outside and never get fresh air which can make you very sick (CAPACITY)

3.5: You are crazy if you think you should spend so much money on toys and games (TENACITY)
Frequency of ATTITUDE resources

- Inclination: 1
- Happiness: 3
- Security: 4
- Satisfaction: 8
- Normality: 0
- Capacity: 17
- Tenacity: 40
- Veracity: 0
- Propriety: 13
- Reaction: 3
- Composition: 0
- Valuation: 15
**Reckless**

3.3: If you spend too much money on toys and games you sometimes can’t pay for your electrical bills or water bills.

3.4: When you buy toys and games a lot, you can go broke and not have enough money for essentials like fruit and veg which will mean you will get less nutrients and you could die of starvation.

**Undependable**

3.2: Parents should not waste their money because kids will get bored with the toys and parents will end up with a very messy house.

3.3: When they get home children play with their new toy and when they have finished they put it in a cupboard and forget about it and never play with it again.
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**Capacity**

3.4: If you stare at screens all day long your eyes could have trouble seeing.

3.5: You wouldn't learn things as much at school because you will be thinking about your toys.

**Valuation**

3.3: Toys and games are a waste of money.

**Propriety**

3.2: Money could be used for more important things like homeless children or for terrible earthquakes.
Too much money is spent on toys and games
Frequency of GRADUATION resources by category

- Force: Quantification: 34
- Force: Intensification: 35
- Focus: 0

Year 3 texts
Frequency of GRADUATION resources

- Number: 14
- Mass/presence: 17
- Extent: Proximity: 0
- Extent: Distribution: 3
- Quality: 21
- Process: 14
- Sharpened: 0
- Softened: 0
**Quality:**

3.1: Too much money is spent on toys and games. It is really terrible to do this.

3.4: Some people never go outside and never get fresh air which can make you very sick.

**Process:**

3.3: Most children beg and beg parents for games and toys.

3.4: Some parents spoil their children rotten.

**Mass/presence:**

3.2: And if you do that then you'll end up with a lot of money!

**Number:**

3.2: Start sending your children outside and send all your children's toys back.
Upscaling and downscaling of ATTITUDE resources

- Upscaled negative ATTITUDE: 46
- Upscaled positive ATTITUDE: 8
- Downscaled negative ATTITUDE: 2
- Downscaled positive ATTITUDE: 0
ENGAGEMENT

Early childhood students possess “limited awareness of audience” (p. 221).

In late adolescence “a major development is the recognition of alternative viewpoints and conflicting accounts” (p. 148).
Frequency of ENGAGEMENT resources by category

- Monogloss: 36
- Contractive: 25
- Expansive: 24

Year 3 texts
Frequency of ENGAGEMENT resources

- Mono Assert: 36
- Mono Presume: 0
- Entertain: 24
- Acknowledge: 0
- Distance: 0
- Pronounce: 2
- Justify: 9
- Concede: 1
- Affirm: 0
- Counter: 1
- Deny: 12
Monoglossic assertion
3.1: Kids need to get active.
3.3: Too much money is being spent on toys and games.

Entertain
3.2: Money should be spent wisely.
3.5: You can make up really fun games without toys.

Justify
3.4: I agree because some people spend all their money on games and toys.

Deny
3.2: Children will get stuck inside and will not get enough fresh air.
3.5: You wouldn't learn things as much at school because you will be thinking about your toys.
Summary

Students used a broad range of ATTITUDE resources, most commonly invoked negative JUDGEMENTS.

Students used a range of GRADUATION resources from the QUANTIFICATION and INTENSIFICATION subcategories, yet there is no use of FOCUS resources to sharpen or soften meanings, and most involved upscaling ATTITUDINAL meanings.
Students almost exclusively used four core ENGAGEMENT resources to cater for the needs of a potentially divided readership.

There was no evidence of resources that introduce other voices into the text.
Building on School Discourse
How are these findings useful for teachers?
Thank you for your time

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