Lesson plans for teachers

using

Fourth Down and Inches:

Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment

by Carla Killough McClafferty

Published by Carolrhoda book, Lerner Publishing

NOTE: The first set of lesson plans were written by Dr. Mary Ann Cappiello,

and posted on her blog:

THE CLASSROOM BOOKSHELF

<http://classroombookshelf.blogspot.com/2014/01/fourth-down-and-inches-concussions-and.html>

**Teaching Ideas and Classroom Invitations:**

**Common Beliefs About Football.**

What do your friends and neighbors know about football? Are they aware of the prevalence of brain injuries and diseases, such as CTE and ALS, in retired players? Have your students create surveys in small groups, and have them administer the survey to a range of friends and neighbors of different ages. Your class can brainstorm the commonalities that the surveys must have. You can use plain old paper and pencil to conduct the surveys or a digital tool like Survey Monkey. When the results are in, have the students compare and contrast their findings with one another. What have they discovered? This is a great opportunity to collaborate with the math teacher on your team or within your school.

**Public Service Campaign.**

Either drawing from the surveys students completed in the above activity or as a stand-alone activity, have students develop a public service campaign on contact sports and traumatic brain injuries. Students can be divided in small groups based on target audiences, different sports, types of brain injuries, etc. Including them in the decision-making about how you create the categories for the campaign will be an important motivator. This is an ideal activity with which to collaborate with the athletic director of your school district, gym and health teachers, as well as the coaches of after school athletics.

**Are Football Players Gladiators?**

While your students are reading *Fourth Down and Inches*, have them listen to NPR commentator’s story, [“The (Very) Long Viewon the State of Football”](http://www.npr.org/2014/01/01/258668413/the-very-long-view-on-the-state-of-football)from January 1, 2014. What are the comparisons and contrasts that Deford makes between ancient Roman gladiators and football players? What connections can they make between the points made in the radio story and the points made about the game in the book?

Should Young People Play Football? After reading the book, have your students complete more research on football and traumatic brain injury drawing on the books and digital resources included below. Next, have students write editorial pieces for your local paper arguing for or against playing football at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Are there enough rules and regulations in place to avoid students getting permanently injured or killed? How so? How not? This is an ideal collaboration with the science or health teacher on your team, if it is possible to time the reading of this book with a study of the brain and how it functions.

**Contact Sport Research.**

If all of your students have read this book as a mentor text for research on concussions, traumatic brain injury and disease in football players, divide them into small groups (or have them choose their topic) to research other contact sports and the related injuries, or other sports and performing arts in general, like gymnastics and ballet. What are the risks of participating in a sport or art form that can damage the body? What are the benefits? How does one make choices at a young age? Have the small groups collaborate to conduct research and write digital or print texts modeled on *Fourth Down and Inches*.

**Reading Like a Writer**: Inform or Persuade?

Oftentimes in school, we will tell students that they are either writing to inform or writing to persuade. What is author Carla Killough McClafferty doing in *Fourth Down and Inches*? Have students consider the title of the book. What does “fourth down and inches” mean in football? Is this football’s “make or break moment?” What about the chapter titles? Opening and concluding paragraphs? Final author’s note? Is she writing merely to inform or is she writing to inform and persuade? Is there even a difference when considering a topic such as this?

**Reading Like a Writer: Capturing the Past**.

The first two pages of the book read like an action-packed commentary on a contemporary football game. We are on the field with the players, experiencing the action. It is only towards the end of the second page that we are told the game we have just read about happened in 1897. Collect several short articles on several different topics that stretch back 100 years or more, such as cars, or the telephone. Have students read the articles to learn a little more about the topic 100 years ago, and then have them try to write about it in a “timeless” way. How can they foot their reader into thinking they are reading about something happening right now? What kinds of writing techniques do they draw on? What techniques does the author model for them?

***Critical Literacy***

**Football and Concussions.**

After reading *Fourth Down and Inches*, have your students examine the ways in which the NFL, NCAA, and Pop Warner discuss the connection between football, concussions, and traumatic brain injuries and diseases. What are some of the differences in approach or language? Does the writing share the same mood or are there differences in tone? Are there inconsistencies in information? If you knew nothing about the connection, what would you learn from reading the websites? What power do they have by shaping the conversation on their website? What responsibility do football organizations have to educate the public about the connections? Do your students think these football organizations do a great, adequate, or poor job of educating the public?

Further Explorations

Carol Killough McClafferty’s Official Website

<http://www.carlamcclafferty.com/>

Sports Legacy Institute

<http://www.sportslegacy.org/>

Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy

<http://www.bu.edu/cste/>

National Institute of Health (NIH): Traumatic Brain Injury

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/tbi.htm>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) “Head’s Up Concussion in Youth Sports” Tool Kilt

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

CDC Return to Play Progression

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/return_to_play.html>

The Center of Excellence for Medical Multimedia: Traumatic Brain Injury

<http://www.cemm.org/Browse-By-Subject/Traumatic-Brain-Injury.aspx>

The Brain Injury Association of America

<http://www.biausa.org/>

Kevin Turner Foundation

<http://www.kevinturnerfoundation.org/>

“Think Taylor,” Taylor Twellma Foundation (Retired Soccer Player)

<http://www.thinktaylor.org/>

New York Times Topic: Head Injuries

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/f/football/head_injuries/>

Johns Hopkins: Traumatic Brain Injury in Professional Football: An Evidence-Based Perspective

<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/stories/tbi.html>

NFL Official Website

<http://www.nfl.com/>

NCAA Official Website

<http://www.ncaa.com/>

Pop Warner Football Official Website

<http://www.popwarner.com/football.htm>

NFL News: Head Health Challenge

<http://www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap2000000317141/article/head-health-challenge-assists-in-brain-injury-research-treatment>

NFL-NIH Brain Research Collaboration, December 2013

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/nfl-nih-collaborate-on-traumatic-brain-injury-concussion-research/>

National Public Radio (NPR): “Brain Injuries Haunt Football Players Years Later,” 2011

<http://www.npr.org/2011/01/20/133053436/brain-injuries-haunt-football-players-years-later>

NPR, Frank Deford, “The (Very) Long View on the State of Football,” January 2014

<http://www.npr.org/2014/01/01/258668413/the-very-long-view-on-the-state-of-football>

Books

Culverhouse, G. (2012). *Throwaway players: The concussion crisis from pee wee to the NFL.*North Fayette, PA: Behler Publications.

Hudson, M. A. (2014). *Concussions in sports*. Mankato, MN: ABDO Publishing.

Kamburg, M.J. (2011). *Sports concussions*. New York: Rosen.

Markle, S. (2011). *Wounded brains: True survival Stories*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications.

Lesson plans from:

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**The following lesson plans were written by Carla Killough McClafferty:**

Use technology to look up Center for Disease Control (CDC) to learn more about concussions and the Return to Play Protocol suggested by the CDC. You can order free information such as posters from this web site to use in your classroom.

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>

Use technology to find additional information on a wide variety of topics, including resources for female athletes, listed on page 93 of Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment. Web sites listed.

TO SATISFY COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS USING

FOURTH DOWN AND INCHES:

CONCUSSIONS AND FOOTBALL’S MAKE-OR-BREAK MOMENT:

**CCSS Anchor Standards for Reading:**

Read Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment, and follow up with looking at the scientific research I used in the book.

Consult “Cumulative Head Impact Burden in High School Football” by Dr. Steven Broglio et al.

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/90454/neu-2E2011-2E1825.pdf?sequence=1>

Dr. Broglio’s research is referenced in Fourth Down and Inches, pp 46-49. This research paper contains graphs and charts which can be used in class to discuss and draw conclusions about numbers of hits, severity of hits, football positions and corresponding number of hits.

#### Key Ideas and Details:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/1/)  
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/2/)  
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/3/)  
Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### Craft and Structure:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/4/)  
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/5/)  
Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/6/)  
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/7/)  
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.1

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/8/)  
Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/9/)  
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/10/)  
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**CCSS Anchor Standards for Writing**

Read Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment, and use it along with other sources found in the source notes and bibliography pages to write:

1. An argument

(example: Pros and cons of football)

2. Explanatory test

(example: Explain what a concussion is.)

3. Narrative

(example: Story about a star athlete that gets a concussion during the game—will she or he tell the coach?)

#### Text Types and Purposes1:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/1/)  
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/2/)  
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/3/)  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

#### Production and Distribution of Writing:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/4/)  
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/5/)  
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/6/)  
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/7/)  
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/8/)  
Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/9/)  
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**CCSS for Speaking and Listening**

Read Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment, then watch the following:

1. League of Denial: The NFL’s Concussion Crisis

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/league-of-denial/>

Discuss and debate the issues.

2. Intelligence Squared debate series: Should College Football be Banned?

Malcom Gladwell and Buzz Bissinger, vs. Tim Green and Jason Whitlock

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/sportingscene/2012/05/video-malcolm-gladwell-ban-college-football.html>

Allow students to debate the issues surrounding concussions in football.

#### Comprehension and Collaboration:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/1/)  
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/2/)  
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/3/)  
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/4/)  
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/5/)  
Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL/6/)  
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**CCSS Anchor Standards for Language**

Read Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football’s Make-or-Break Moment. Discuss various sections of the book and how each section connects with other parts of the book. Make lists of unfamiliar words and determine the meaning through context. Acquire understanding of domain specific words used in the text.

#### Conventions of Standard English:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/1/)  
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/2/)  
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Knowledge of Language:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/3/)  
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

#### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/4/)  
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/5/)  
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/L/6/)  
Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Lerner Publishing provides downloads on the following web site:

<https://www.lernerbooks.com/products/t/13013/9781467710671/fourth-down-and-inches#eSource>

1. CCSS Reading Assignment: Compare Two Nonfiction Accounts



2. Beyond the Football Field: CCSS Research Project



3. Book mark

