Directions:

 1 – Highlight areas which confuse you and about which you want clarification.

 2 – Demonstrate evidence of a close reading, by providing reactions, questions, and mini-summaries

**A dangerous mix: drinking, sex and college students**

[**Carol Smith**](http://invw.org/author/carol-smith/)

[**62 percent of sexual assaults are ‘drug-facilitated’**](http://invw.org/node/940)

A majority of sexual assaults involving college students also involve drugs or alcohol. Advocates say this is one reason the prevalence rate of assaults continues to be high, and also partly why so few are ever successfully prosecuted. **By Carol Smith** [InvestigateWest](http://invw.org) Sex and drinking are a dangerous mix on university campuses. A majority of sexual assaults involving college students also involve drugs or alcohol. Advocates say this is one reason the prevalence rate of assaults continues to be high, and also partly why so few are ever successfully prosecuted. While alcohol is the number one date rape drug on campus, advocates who help assault victims say students also need to worry about other drugs, including “Rohypnol” or GHB, a banned supplement. A [2006 study](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/05/060513122928.htm) funded by the National Institute of Justice found that of the estimated 100,000 sexual assaults reported in the United States each year, about 62 percent were “drug-facilitated” and 5 percent of victims were given date-rape drugs. The study was conducted by University of Illinois researchers in Chicago, and involved sexual assault victims who had come in for rape kit evidence collection in Texas, California, Minnesota and Washington. Researchers analyzed hair and urine samples for 45 drugs. The subjects in the study were all ages, not just college students. But it shows how common drug-facilitated attacks are, something that is true on campuses as well, said Trinka Poratta, a former cop with the Los Angeles Police Department, who now consults with police departments and educational institutions about the issues of drugs and sexual assaults. In fact, she said there are about 40 drugs commonly associated with campus sexual assaults. They include benzodiazepines, such as Valium and Ativan, as well as party drugs, including Ecstasy, and pain medications, such as Vicodin. All of them can significantly impair a person’s ability to consent, especially when used, or given, in conjunction with alcohol. Anything that is synergistic with alcohol can lead to a drug-facilitated assault, said Dr. Naomi Sugar, director of the Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress. “Even antihistamines.” GHB, however, is probably the most notorious. It’s a clear, odorless liquid that can be hidden in an eye drop or nasal spray bottle, then surreptitiously dropped in someone’s drink. It starts to work within five to 15 minutes, said Poratta. Its effects vary, but in combination with alcohol, it can cause amnesia. “It can be a complete loss, or bits and pieces,” she said. GHB is also a sexual stimulant, so perpetrators will often later say that the woman accusing them of assault is the one who initiated the sexual encounter. Later, the woman may not be able to piece together what happened to her in time to get herself tested. Whether a woman initiated sexual contact, or got drunk willingly, is beside the point, said Poratta. Once a woman is impaired, she is legally incapable of consent, and someone who has sex with her can be charged with rape. “I tell guys, you may get away with it a few times, but if you don’t get away with it, you are a sexual predator for life,” said Poratta. “And that is a heavy jacket to wear.” The study authors called for increased toxicology screening of rape victims, something Poratta has also lobbied for. Urine and blood are not routinely collected or screened as part of rape kits in many jurisdictions, making it difficult to later present evidence of drugging in court. “We see a lot of cases where the patient doesn’t have a complete memory, or sometimes any memory,” Sugar said. The clinic collects urine with the patient’s permission, but she said it’s unlikely any GHB would be detectable after about six hours. “Unfortunately, if it’s an episode of complete amnesia, they’re confused, maybe they talk with friends. They sometimes don’t get to the hospital for 36 to 48 hours,” she said. GHB leaves the blood in four hours, said Poratta. “Every minute you wait, you’re ticking away evidence.” Some advocates encourage women who fear they may have been drugged to produce their own urine samples, even before they have decided whether to pursue a claim, just in case. Young men can also protect themselves from charges of drug-facilitated sexual assault, said Poratta. “It’s really simple. Have sex sober.” *InvestigateWest is a non-profit investigative news organization covering the environment, health and social justice. Find out more at www.invw.org.*

Directions for reflections:

Write three one-paragraph reflections, each one placing the issue in a different context. Label each paragraph according to its context. Choose from the list of contexts below:

Cultural Health & Safety Social

Academic Generational Economic

Historical Religious Environmental

Political Moral Medical

Gender Legal Self-expression