The 7 C's of Argumentation

Adapted from *Inquire: A Guide to 21st Century Learning (2012 ed.)*— King, Erickson, Sebranek
Writer's Inc.: A Student Handbook for Writing & Learning (1996 ed.)—Sebranek, Meyer, Kemper

1. Consider the situation

- What is the topic?
- What is my purpose?
- Who is my audience?
- What action do I want my audience to take?

2. Clarify your thinking

- What are you trying to prove?
- Why do you feel the way you do?
- What kind of proof do you have?
- Who will be affected by this?

Teaching Writing Strategy: Students complete one of the following: a ***Pro/Con*** chart , a ***Toulmin*** outline, or a ***Think in Threes*** graphic organizer

3. Construct a claim (thesis statement)

A claim is the position statement or the key point of your argument

- Three types of claims: ***claim of fact***—state something is true or not true; ***claim of value***—state something has or doesn't have worth; ***claim of policy***—assert something should or shouldn't be done
- Claims may contain one or more reasons you will prove
- Write claim as one coherent sentence

4. Collect evidence

- Facts
- Examples
- Definitions
- Comparison
- Statistics
- Experience
- Analysis
- Prediction
- Demonstration
- Expert opinions
- Anecdotes/Reflections/Observations
- Quotations

Teaching Writing Strategy: Students need to learn how to identify faulty logic. This is an appropriate place to discuss faulty thinking. See attached handout.

5. Consider key objections—Develop counter arguments

- Point out flaws/weaknesses in arguments on the other side or arguments you don't accept
- List objections
- Recognize or concede another viewpoint when claim has true weaknesses. This adds believability to overall claim.

Teaching Writing Strategy: Students need to learn concession starters—transitional phrases that demonstrate they understand the value of other viewpoints. These include:

Concession Starters/Transitional Phrases

I admit that	Even though	Certainly
It is true that	Perhaps	I accept
Of course	I agree that	I realize that
admittedly	granted	I cannot argue that
even though	I agree that	while it is true that

6. Craft your argument

- Use logical appeals—facts, statistics, expert opinions, anecdotes, and examples
- Avoid appeals to fear or ignorance
- Use levels of evidence—a minimum of two pieces of evidence to support each reason

7. Confirm your claim

- Conclude with a coherent restatement of main arguments
- Use a call to action

Avoid Fallacies of Thinking—Use Logic!

An argument is a chain of reasons, supported by evidence, that support a claim. Faulty logic means using evidence that is fuzzy, exaggerated, illogical, or false. Be careful to avoid faulty logic when defending claims.

Appeal to Ignorance—Claiming that since no one has ever proved a claim, it must be false. Shifts the burden of proof onto someone else. "Show me one study that proves…"

Appeal to Pity—Using excuses to ask for leniency. "Imagine what it must have been like…"

Bandwagon or Appealing to a Popular Position—Appeals to everyone's sense of wanting to belong or be accepted. "Everyone believes it or does it so you should too."

Broad Generalization—Takes in everything and everyone at once and allows for no exceptions. Using words like "all" and "everyone" are too general. "Is this claim true for all of the people being discussed, or just for some?"

Circular Thinking—Restating your claim in different words as evidence for your claim. "I hate this class because I'm never happy in this class."

Either-Or Thinking—Offering evidence that reduces examples to two possible extremes. "Are there other possibilities that should be considered?"

Half-Truths—Telling only part or half of the truth. "Is this the full story—or is there another side to this that is not being told?"

Oversimplification—Simplifying complex topics into a "simple question." "_____ is a simple question of _____."

Slanted Language or Distracting the Reader—Selecting words that have strong positive or negative connation in order to distract the reader from valid arguments. "Is this evidence dealing with the real issue?" "No one in his right mind would ever do anything that dumb."

Testimonial—Make sure the expert opinion is an authority on the topic. "What are this person's credentials?"

Exaggerating the Facts—"Is everything that is being said true and accurate?"

Using a False Cause—Making a direct link between two separate things without evidence to back it up. "Is it fair to assume that the cause of the problem is exactly what the writer says, or might there be completely different causes?"

If Only Thinking—Using evidence that cannot be tested. "How does the writer know this would have happened? Is there other evidence, or it is simply an 'if only' argument?"

Source: 2011 Utah ELA Core Academy