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## CONTENT AREA LITERACY STRATEGY FOR ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The complexity in writing generally applies to all types of writing, including argumentative writing. Argumentative writing is a writing that tries to prove a truth or untruth from a statement. In writing arguments, the writer (students) must highlight at least six elements namely grounds, claim, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. In order to fulfill each of the elements, students are deemed necessary to be accompanied by right learning strategies. One of these strategies is *content area literacy*. This strategy is packaged into four stages, namely the introduction of schemes or elements of argumentation, the reading to find ideas or topic, the writing arguments, and the evaluation phase.

**Keywords:** *content area literacy*, argumentation, higher education

### INTRODUCTIONS

Writing skills are very complex language skills. Robert M. Gagne (in Syafi'ie, 1984) argues that this skill requires a number of intellectual abilities, cognitive strategies, verbal information, and great motivation. This skill also requires grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competencies and discourse competencies (Canela in Ghazali, 2012) and the ability to use language in situations where the context is reduced (Cummins in Ghazali, 2012). In addition, it is also a spatial activity that involves organizing text by leaving graphic traces on the page (Olive Thierry and Passerault Jean Michel, 2012).

Writing as a complex activity is a problem that has been studied a lot (Syafarina, 2018). Research conducted by Sadeghi and Mosalli (2013) shows that the effects of the complexity of writing assignments given to learners have an impact on the complexity of the use of linguistic aspects which include, lexical complexity, grammatical accuracy, and syntactic complexity. Masrom, Shah, & Alwi (2015) compared several research

results about the same variables on the complexity of the writing assignment. These comparisons show that the types of assignments, task conditions, and complexity of the assignments given to learners influence language performance or learners' written language productivity.

The complexity in writing shows that this skill is important to be taught at all levels of education, including in universities. In college, writing skills have an important role for students because they are closely related to the activities of actualizing ideas and ideas into various genres of writing (papers, articles, journals, theses, theses, books, etc.) relating to the field of science. In addition, students are also expected to be able to develop and disseminate knowledge through the writing skills learning in accordance with the fields of science practiced (read: Letter of Director General of Higher Education No. 152 / E / T / 2012).

In terms of the development and dissemination of science, one of the most relevant written genres is argumentative writing. Argumentative writing is the main requirement in a scientific writing genre (Wingate, 2012; Suriasumantri, 1996). Scientific writing genre reflects aspects of the use of argumentative language which is characterized by efforts to convince or persuade the reader. Toulmin, Reike, and Janik (in Nimehchisalem, Abbasi and Kalajahi, 2015) define arguments as a set of claims (statements) that are interrelated with evidence to obtain a conclusion. In argumentative writing involves the process of declaring claims, providing data to support claims, declaring counter arguments and showing refutation (Toulmin, 2003: 8-9).

Writing arguments make it possible for students to develop reasoning skills and understanding theoretical concepts. Andrews, (2010: 1) argues that writing learning arguments can help students to understand various theoretical concepts in scientific disciplines on the basis of evidence, data, or real-world experience. Writing arguments can develop analytical skills and learner evaluations effectively (Zhu Wu, 2009). Arguments make it possible for learners to be involved in the construction of knowledge by accepting something based on evidence, reasonable ideas or undeniable strength (Ford, 2008).

In writing arguments, the author expresses his opinion about a phenomenon, concept, or theory which of course in the hope that he can convince the reader of the

truth of his opinion (Choesin, 2016: 75). The tool used to influence the reader is a set of reasons or evidence that can be accepted as correct opinions and conclusions. The evidence is arranged in a reasoning, namely induction, and deduction (Keraf, 2004: 3-5). Inductive reasoning begins with the elaboration of general evidence. Conversely, deductive reasoning begins with general evidence and continues with the translation in the form of specific evidence.

Starting from the description above, learning of argumentative writing skills for students is deemed necessary to use learning strategies. One such strategy is the *content area literacy*. The *content area literacy* strategy is a combination of the use of reading, writing, and critical thinking for the purpose of learning certain subject matter content in the classroom. An important implication of this concept is that reading and writing are complementary tasks that can enhance "content area" learning (McKenna and Robinson in Eanes, 1997: 2). *Content area literacy* strategy can help students to find ideas and concepts, sharpen the power of analysis, find gaps, and strengthen arguments.

This study aims to describe the concept and application of *content area literacy* strategy for learning to write arguments in higher education. The choice of *content area literacy* strategy is based on several considerations. *First*, it is oriented to problem-solving skills. *Second*, it has the potential to maximize content acquisition. *Third*, it can encourage an understanding of context and perspective.

## DISCUSSIONS

### *Content Area Literacy*

Eanes (1997: 2) suggests that the term "content" refers to students' knowledge in a particular field of study. Fields of study such as science, social studies, literature, mathematics, art, and physical education are also known as "content area". Meanwhile, the term "literacy" is limited to the use of reading, writing, and critical thinking as a form of communication. Thus, *content area literacy* is a combination of the use of reading, writing, and critical thinking for the purpose of learning certain subject matter content in the classroom. An important implication of this concept is that reading and writing are complementary tasks that can enhance "content area" learning (McKenna and Robinson in Eanes, 1997: 2).

According to Moss (2005), *content area literacy* is a cognitive and social practice that involves the ability and desire to read, understand, critique, and write into various forms of print media. Various print media, including textbooks, novels, magazines, and other "sociotechnical". Meanwhile, Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz (in Kevin Ming, 2012) interpret *content area literacy* as the ability to use listening, speaking, reading, writing, and visual skills to get information specifically in a particular field. According to him, the five models can help learners to think critically in receiving, processing, and producing information. *Content area literacy* aims to improve reading comprehension, build conceptual knowledge, and problem-solving skills (Holloway in Kevin Ming, 2012).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that *content area literacy* is the ability to use listening, speaking, reading, writing and visual skills that aim to produce information specifically on content in a particular field of science.

### ***Content Area Literacy Framework in Writing Learning***

The framework for writing in "content area" has been developed into various teaching design experiments (Klein & Rose in Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). In this case, the framework is a set of learning design principles that can be used by teachers or lecturers to write in "content area" intensively on various content disciplines (for example, on social study content) (Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). This framework shows several elements of teaching activities in writing in the "content area", including teaching strategies, types of activities, motivation methods, and assessments (see Table 1.1) below.

**Table 1.1 *Content Area Literacy Framework for Writing Learning***

No.	Elements	Illustration of Learning Activities
1.	<i>Content area literacy</i> with a focus on writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing three times or more per week</li><li>• Reading to get used to analyzing genres and learning about content.</li><li>• Using non-text research and mixed media (for example, explanations and diagrams)</li></ul>
2.	The conception of writing as a learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing to interpret "raw" data and experience.</li><li>• Discussing the purpose of writing activities with learners.</li><li>• Reflecting on writing activities in the next learning session.</li><li>• Does not provide the same genre in writing activities.</li></ul>

3.	Learning in analyzing genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and analyzing genres</li> <li>• Building knowledge about genres and analyze models.</li> </ul>
4.	Genre analysis as a heuristic for thinking and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing arguments for critical thinking about statements expressed in writing (written text).</li> <li>• Writing content to build knowledge about theory.</li> </ul>
5.	Writing inquiry as a learning choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-writing as an experience to produce data (for example, experimenting, observing, and reading).</li> <li>• Learners are guided by the teacher for writing strategies.</li> <li>• Writing to interpret data.</li> </ul>
6.	Cognitive strategy approach to learning writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching various strategies for writing genres, for example, the genre of argumentation</li> <li>• Transferring of knowledge is done in stages, such as modeling, sharing writing, guiding when writing, writing independently (or independently).</li> <li>• Modeling self-monitoring and self-reinforcement.</li> </ul>
7.	Assessments for self-assessment scaffolding are focused on written ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions for revising writing focus on the relationship of cohesion and the intensity of ideas (for example, claims, evidence, causation).</li> <li>• Teachers as scaffolding for writing revisions.</li> <li>• Learners use the checklist to monitor the structure of the genre in their own writing.</li> </ul>
8.	Build intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics must be interesting.</li> <li>• Hands-on experiences.</li> <li>• Collaborating with colleagues.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Klein & Kirkpatrick, (2010)

This framework is based on the cognitive theory that the writing model is a problem-solving process (Hayes in Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). The model proposes writing skills and reading skills to build a scheme on various text genres (Hayes; Kintsch & Van Dijk in Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). The schema that has been built through reading activities will give an idea of the structure of the text, including the components of writing, relationship patterns, and several language markers (Hayes; Meyer & Poon in Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). For example, schema arguments can include components such as claims, proofs, and objections; creation on these components can consist of sub-goals for writing. To fulfill that sub-goal, the author needs to set content goals.

### Writing Arguments

Experts have different points of view in defining arguments. *First*, the definition proposed by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004). According to him, the argument is a social and rational verbal activity that aims to convince a reasonable criticism of the acceptance of a view by proposing a constellation of prepositions that justify or refute

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the prepositions expressed in a point of view. Argumentation is a rational activity because in general arguments are based on intellectual considerations (Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 1-2).

*Second*, the definition proposed by Rainbolt and Dwyer (2012). According to him, the argument is an attempt made to give reasons to be able to think that the reason is reliable and true (Rainbolt and Dwyer 2012: 7).

*Third*, the definition proposed by Sternberg, Kaufman, and Grigorenko and several other experts. According to him, arguments or argumentation are a series of premises (i.e. reasons) organized in a way that can provide support for a conclusion (Sternberg, Kaufman, and Grigorenko 2008: 277). This view is in line with Bassham, et. Al., (2011: 29). According to him, arguments are a number of statements, one or more of which (called premise) are intended to prove or support other statements (called conclusions).

*Fourth*, the definition put forward by D 'Angelo (1980). According to him, the argument is a social activity whose purpose is rational interpersonal persuasion. More precisely the argument exists if some people — the delivery of arguments — try to convince certain individuals who are the target, to act or believe in something interested in reasons or evidence. Thus, the argument is an attempt by the writer or speaker at the level of rational persuasion (D 'Angelo, 1980: 241).

With regard to the description above, it can be concluded that argumentation is a statement or proposition with motivation to influence and convince others, both in oral and written form. The tool used to influence is evidence or the reason for which the validity has been received.

### **Argumentation Elements**

Toulmin (2003: 89-100) suggests that an argument must consist of six elements. The six elements in question are grounds (or basic data) (G), claims (C), warrant (W), backing (B), a qualifier (Q), and rebuttal (R). Three main elements are ground, claim, and warrant. The following three elements, namely backing (B), a qualifier (Q), and rebuttal (R) are complementary elements. The six elements are related to each other. An explanation of the relationship of each of these elements is stated below.

Grounds are all data or information that we have that can be used as a basis for making a statement (claim). Grounds are the same as evidence that can be observed objectively, belief or premise that has been accepted, or conclusions that have been previously established (Dawud, 1998).

The claim is a conclusion or thesis statement that is raised and believed to be true by the author. The claim is a central point in an argument. In writing arguments, claims will always be clarified and maintained by the author. Efforts to clarify and maintain the claim can succeed when supported by grounds as the basis of evidence. If the evidence is not strong enough to support the claim, a warrant can be issued.

A warrant is a statement that connects a claim with existing grounds. Warrants are rules, principles, or agreements in certain fields of science (Dawud, 1998). In other words, a warrant specifies what data is considered appropriate or needed to make certain statements. Sometimes the warrant used by the author is questioned by the reader so he must prove that the warrant is indeed valid. The evidence to support this warrant is called backing. Meanwhile, the Qualifier and rebuttal functions to limit the scope of the claims made. Renkema (2004: 204) mentions qualifiers as a condition. A qualifier is a statement that shows the magnitude of the possibility of a claim (usually marked with the words "partially", "several", or others); whereas rebuttal is a rejection or exception to the claim.

Renkema (2004: 204) emphasizes that in compiling the elements of the argument, Toulmin places more emphasis on the statements that construct these arguments. It means that after the claim is obtained, the question will arise why there is such a claim or what is the proof of claim. Then, the data is displayed. After the data is obtained, what questions appear again are the ones that reinforce the claim and connect the data with the claim. For that, a warrant appears. The warrant was then questioned again, namely what was the background of the warrants. So, backing is displayed. When the elements of the claim, data, warrant, and backing allow for opposite conditions to emerge, a rebuttal can also arise which is generally required by the qualifier. The emergence of both can make claims rejected or even stronger. The six elements of the interconnected Toulmin argument can be seen in Figure 1 below (Toulmin, 2003: 97).

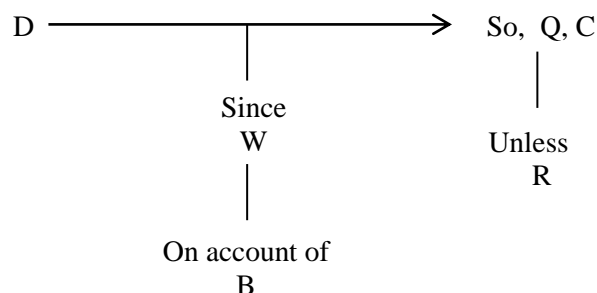


Figure 1. The relationship between elements of the Toulmin argument

In the context of learning to write arguments in higher education, the elements of the Toulmin argument can be a guide for students before or when composing a paper. For this reason, an example of things that need to be thought and done is shown (see Table 1.2), as follows.

**Table 1.2 Elements of the Toulmin Argument**

Argumentation Elements	Explanation
<i>Claim</i> It is best to buy a Volvo car ...	Things you want to convey to the reader. Are there grounds for things to say? Is there a possibility the reader refuses or disagrees.
<i>Stated Reason</i> ... because it is one of the safest cars.	A claim can be submitted for a number of different reasons. Choice of reasons will depend on grounds owned, and different stated reasons otherwise become new sentiments. therefore, avoid stated reason that is plural (avoid the word "and" in deciding it).
<i>Grounds</i> The results of research on the level of safety of the driver or passenger of the Volvo car ...	Does the data that is owned support the claim to be submitted?
<i>Warrant</i> The most important thing in the car is the level of safety offered ...	A warrant is rarely disclosed because the author often assumes that the very basic thing is certainly known and accepted by the reader. Here the author must study the possibility of another warrant followed by the reader.
<i>Becking</i> The results of the study show that even accidents at low speeds can endanger the life of the driver or passenger of the car...	<i>Becking</i> is needed by the author if the author sees the possibility that the reader's warrant is different from what he himself has. If the writing is intended for readers who are known to follow the same warrant, becking is not needed and can disturb the flow of writing.
<i>Qualifier</i> The statement that the Volvo car "... is one of the safest cars"	The author must take the claim space by choosing the right words. Absolute words (all, every, sure) must be avoided. On the other hand, excessive qualifications will make the argument too narrow and insignificant.
<i>Condition for rebuttal</i> Words like "except if the car is used for off-road or racing" or similar ...	The author needs to disclose in what conditions the claim is invalid, which can be added with an explanation that these conditions are not relevant to the claim submitted.

Source: Ramage and Bean (in Choessin, 2016: 80-81)

In compiling arguments using the Toulmin argument scheme, it can encourage learners to first question what they will write. Learners can see which parts will invite readers' questions.

### ***Content Area Literacy Strategy for Learning Writing Arguments***

*Content area literacy* strategy for learning to write arguments in higher education can be developed by using reading as a tool for processing and learning. Writing becomes a learning concept to get information specifically on content in a particular field of science.

The steps in the *content area literacy* strategy for learning to write arguments for students are designed into four stages. The four stages are the scheme recognition stage or elements of argumentation, the reading stage to find ideas or topics, the stage of writing arguments, and the evaluation stage. The four stages are presented below.

*The first stage* is the introduction of argumentation schemes. At this stage, the lecturer first introduces the building elements of a text argumentation genre (see Table 1.2). This introduction aims to make students understand the elements that must be contained in a genre of text argumentation. By this introduction, it is possible to help students during the process of drafting arguments.

*The second stage*, reading to find ideas is the preparation stage for writing argument texts. At this stage, lecturers must play an important role in guiding and motivating students in choosing topics, thinking about goals, and collecting data. The three forms of activity are presented below.

- (1) choose a topic. In selecting topics, lecturers can direct students to do three techniques of reading activities, namely skimming, scanning and critical reading.
  - (a) skimming reading is used to be able to quickly see a writing while thinking of keywords.
  - (b) Scanning is used to search for specific information about keywords relating to the topic/issue to be raised.
  - (c) critical reading used to digest, think and discuss critically the reference text.

Critical reading is a process where students gain meaning from the text. Students who have good critical reading skills will be able to "find information

in detail by asking questions, making hypotheses, looking for evidence, and validating assumptions" (Danger, in Marschall and Davis, 2013). By reading critically, students can cover things related to theme selection, argument formulation, determination of authenticity or originality of writing that is being prepared.

- (2) think of goals and audiences. In this case, students are directed to be able to consider or recognize the reader. For example, whether the claim (statement) on the issue to be raised aims to cause the reaction of the reader and so forth.
- (3) collect data to describe the claim. The process of collecting data to support claims can be made in the form of a checklist. Data collected in the form of a checklist can facilitate students in the process of decomposing the claim.

*The third stage* is the process of writing arguments. At this stage, students begin to develop the organization of ideas that they arranged in the previous stage. In this stage, there are several things that must be considered and carried out by students. The following points are stated: (1) give an interesting opening to the later part of the writing; (2) develop a paragraph body that contains elements of argumentation; (3) provide interesting conclusions; (4) reread what has been written and revised; (5) consider what has not been written and make revisions; (6) point or show work results; (7) re-edit the results of work, and; (8) submit the final results of the writing (adapted from Bassham, et. Al., 2011).

*The fourth stage*, evaluation. In this stage, the lecturer has a role to assess the results of student argument writing. The assessment indicators are presented below: (1) the relationship between themes and content; (2) the accuracy of the use of linguistic aspects (vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation); and (3) the relationship between elements of argumentation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Argumentation is a writing that attempts to prove a truth or untruth from a statement. In writing arguments, the writer (students) must emphasize at least six elements namely grounds, claim, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. In order to fulfill each element, students are deemed necessary to be accompanied by the right

learning strategies. One of these strategies is to *content area literacy*. This strategy is packaged into four stages, namely the introduction of the scheme or elements of argumentation, the reading stage to find ideas or topics, the stage of writing arguments, and the evaluation phase. The design of this strategy, in principle, is the conceptual notion of the author. For this reason, suggestions and criticism are needed to sharpen the learning strategy.

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