Teaching Argumentative Writing to Thai Students

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เนื่องจากภาษาเป็นจุดเริ่มต้นของความหมาย ผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศจำเป็นต้องมีตัวภาษาเพื่อเป็นเครื่องมือสำหรับการเขียน ด้วยเหตุนี้การสอนการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศซึ่งยึดแนวการสอนแบบกึ่งเก่าใหม่ (current-traditional pedagogy) จึงเน้นไวยากรณ์และรูปแบบการเขียนมากกว่าสถานการณ์การเขียน แนวทางการสอนแบบนี้ทำให้เกิดงานเขียนที่มีลักษณะเป็นเพียงการให้ข้อมูล ราบเรียบ และไม่น่าสนใจ สำหรับแนวการสอนการเขียนแบบกระบวนการ (process pedagogy)   ได้ช่วยให้ผู้เรียนเรียนการเขียนแบบมีการพัฒนาต้นฉบับขึ้นหลายๆ ครั้งให้เหมาะสมกับสถานการณ์การเขียนนั้นๆ การสอนงานเขียนเชิงโต้แย้งอาจถูกมองว่าเป็นรูปแบบหนึ่งของการเขียนแบบกระบวนการเพราะการเขียนเป็นศิลปของการใช้โวหารโน้มน้าวผู้อ่านให้คล้อยตาม อย่างไรก็ดีมีเทคนิคหรือกลยุทธ์ของการโต้แย้งที่ผู้เรียนต้องฝึกหัดโดยเฉพาะ บทความนี้อธิบายองค์ประกอบและแนะนำเทคนิคหรือกลยุทธ์ของการโต้แย้งที่จำเป็นต่อการเขียนเชิงโต้แย้ง

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ, แนวการสอนแบบกึ่งเก่าใหม่, การเขียนแบบกระบวนการ, การเขียนแบบการโต้แย้ง

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Abstract

As language is the primary source of meaning, learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) need the language as the main tool for writing. As a result, the teaching of EFL writing, which adopts current-traditional pedagogy, focuses more on grammar and form than on the rhetorical situation of the writing. This results in writings that are mostly informative, plain and uninteresting. Process pedagogy has introduced the development of drafts to teach students to adjust to rhetorical situations. Teaching argumentative writing could be seen as subsumed under process pedagogy, for it also teaches students that writing is rhetorical. However, there are techniques and strategies or argument that students need to practice. The present paper discusses the elements of argument and introduces techniques and strategies useful for writing argumentative essays.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Current – traditional pedagogy, Process pedagogy,
Argumentative writing

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Introduction

The real teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) writing in Thailand mostly takes place at university, and in the author's experience, Thai students' writing of this level demonstrates more how they can write than how they can think. In the EFL setting, the struggle to acquire the source of meaning, language, is primary, while the learning of the nature of writing is secondary. Without language, or for Thai students, without grammar, one cannot express him/herself. Most teaching, as a result, is geared toward helping students to acquire the language. Still, in the teaching and studying of EFL writing, the obsession with language is coupled with the difficulty of writing itself; writing is naturally recursive, discursive, and contingent. The best way to help students to cope with such difficulty and to write effectively, it seems, is to have them imitate patterns or genres of writing.

There are different forms and levels of organizations. For example, for writing an expository paragraph, the teacher may require the students to always start with a topic sentence with a controlling idea. The teacher may even ask the students to do more than that—to have clear major and minor details inside the paragraph. Other forms or genres of writing include, for instance, cause-effect paragraphs, spatial-order paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, five-paragraph essays, and so on. Students are usually taught how to construct each of these types of writing before they imitate it.

When we consider theories or approaches in the field of composition, we are assured that much of the teaching of English writing in Thailand, as a matter of fact, adopts current-traditional pedagogy. Crowley (1998) points out that this pedagogy pays attention to form only; it "forces students to repeatedly display their use of institutionally sanctioned forms" (p. 95). Textbooks of this pedagogy focus on usage and grammar and nearly always begin with consideration of the smallest units of discourse: words and sentences. Although grammar is an important tool of writing and genres could help reduce EFL students' anxiety, making them less stressed, the formalism of current-traditional rhetoric, according to Crowley, deprives students of thinking about the argument and rhetorical situation of the writing.

This present paper is not a rebuttal of current-traditional pedagogy. In fact, after many years of teaching English writing to EFL students, the author strongly supports the principle that we teach grammar and form. It's agonizing to see that students still produce numerous errors, such as "I can't to do," "We went to bought," and

"I am go"--simple errors, all of which should have been polished a long time ago, not at university. However, when Selinker (1984)'s argument that very few second learners can master the target language is coupled with that fact that EFL students still produce abundant errors despite the long time spent studying it, the author believes that the instruction of grammar, and form as well, is crucial in the EFL context and should be viewed as a life-long process. Teachers should teach grammar continuously, perhaps one or two rules per class.

This present paper aims to explore and discuss strategies or techniques of argument, and also to look into how we, university EFL writing teachers, might teach argument in a way suitable for EFL students. The scenario above about grammar and form may be considered out of place, unrelated, but it indeed affects students writing an argument; when students are preoccupied with grammar and form, they do not normally think of how their writing affects their readers. Teachers of EFL writing should be aware of this condition before they try a new way of teaching. Even helping students choose a topic requires an understanding of this situation. For example, writing about a father's kindness may not be interesting. It is easy to think of discrete points to support how one's father is kind, but the

explanation of such a topic will be mostly informative. In addition, the aim of argument is not just to interest readers but also to move them, or to change their attitude toward something. Topics such as the disadvantages of technology and social inequality invoke more critical thinking on the part of the writer and urge readers to judge whether to agree or disagree with the writers. Thai students, because of their limited knowledge of English and inexperience in writing, usually choose topics they are familiar with, not ones that their readers can share. This is where the teacher can come in. Being aware of the current circumstance and factors involved with the Thai EFL writing classroom, therefore, is important; teachers will know how to bridge the old teaching method with the new one.

As for teaching argumentative writing, however, helping students choose workable topics is just one of many techniques. To teach argumentative writing successfully, teachers not only need to be knowledgeable about techniques of argument but also must know how argument works and what it comprises. In addition, as argument is a more advanced kind of writing than the other kinds or genres taught in the writing classroom, teachers must know how to move their students to this level. For EFL teachers especially, the shift from the classroom

orientated towards building language competence to one that emphasizes critical and analytical skills is important but hard to achieve. Teaching argumentative writing is one way, in fact the best way, to accomplish this mission. The sections below, thus, summarize the author's proposed project of teaching argument. The first section explains argument. Teachers and students need to know the elements of argument before they teach and learn it. The second section discusses some strategies of argument. The author picks only the strategies the author thinks are necessary for Thai students learning to argue in their writing. The third section discusses and concludes how we might teach argumentative writing to Thai students.

Understanding Argument

All kinds of writing are to some degree persuasive. Readers are usually sympathetic with the writer of a narrative if, for example, he/she faces difficulties or does good deeds but is still not successful. Descriptive writing can move readers if the details, such as storms and snow, make them recall their past happiness or sadness. While reading, readers cast their minds to the places or events they used to go to or experience, so the writing can calm down, agitate, or excite their minds. Finally, expository writing explains a point,

a topic sentence, or a thesis, using reasons, examples, or specific evidence to prove that what the writer is saying is true.

Argumentative writing is in a way more advanced than narrative, descriptive, and expository writing. In fact, these three kinds of writing may be thought of as subsumed within argumentative writing; they can be good tools in arguments. Argumentative writing is different than those three types of writing in that its engagement with audience is more obvious; it is more intentionally directed to an audience. The goal of argumentative writing is to get the reader to side or identify with us on a particular topic for the reasons that we present (Dobbins, 2003). Argument usually blends with persuasion (Hirschberg, 1990). Using evidence such as reasons, examples, and details, the writer can appeal to the reader's mind, emotion, and character to get the reader to respond as the writer wishes (Memering & Palmer, 2006). However, although the writer aims to share opinions and emotions with readers, the support used to prove the writer's claim or thesis is not assertions based on likes, dislikes, or personal taste. Instead, it objectively proves or disproves the thesis with facts, examples, experts' testimonies, or statistics (Hirschberg, 1990).

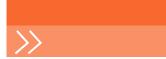Thus, an argument is a rhetorical act. "Rhetoric" originally meant "the art of

persuasive speaking," which at present has been applied in writing. The art of persuasive speaking, and also in persuasive writing, must include principles for organizing arguments, anticipating the needs of the audience, using logical evidence, and polishing style and language (Crusius & Channell, 1995). Here, argument is depicted as a process of clarification involving exploring points in order to come up with conclusions that can convince, please, and negotiate with the audience (Smith, 1998). Aristotle identified three basic types of appeals which may be used to attain those and which still remain useful: "logos," "pathos," and "ethos." Logos is the appeal to the audience's reason. Pathos refers to the appeal to the audience's emotion. Ethos is the degree of confidence that the speaker or writer could inspire in the audience (Barnet & Bedau, 1999; Hirschberg, 1990). Another element that may be considered along with Aristotle's is "kairos."Kairos is "the opportune moment," or the perfect moment for speaking on a particular topic (Cuti & Smith, 2004). From this explanation about a rhetorical act, we can see that the writer of an argument must perform multifarious tasks, such as setting a purpose, anticipating the audience's needs, choosing an organization, and fusing logos, pathos, ethos, and kairos together, in such a way that the writer might be able to reach the writing goal. This is why the

author thinks argument is a higher level of writing than description, exposition, and narration.

Strategies of Argument

The strategies or techniques for producing a strong argument may be classified into two levels: technical and discourse. At the technical level, we consider the organization, that is, the external, superficial, or easily visible features of the argument. At the discourse level, we look into the internal features, or the language or content used to connect with the audience.

At the technical level, we may start by choosing a topic, setting a purpose, and choosing an appropriate claim. Unlike people writing in the real world, EFL students need to be well-informed of why they are writing. In fact, they must be given texts to formulate claims. After reading some texts related to each other, they should be able to offer some claims. This approach of teaching adopts both product and process methodologies. It is product in that students have to foresee the direction of their writing, and usually the details or main points to be included as support. An imaginary outline is created in their minds. It is process because students will learn that texts are rhetorically and socially constructed. They

will learn that different details and opinions found in texts not only vary meanings but also construct knowledge. It is also process because after they set a purpose and claim, they will anticipate the specific details or even sources (journals, articles, books, etc) they will use as support of their claim. They will also adapt their writing to meet the purpose and audience from the beginning.

The purpose of an argument should be specific or narrow. For example, it could be as specific as to convince the owner of a company to refund a defective product, or to convince an employer that an applicant is the right person. Crusius and Channell (1995) identify four main aims of argument: inquiry, convincing, negotiation, and persuasion. We may write to form opinions, to question opinions, to gain assent of an audience, to move readers to do something, or to reduce or eliminate a conflict. Argument papers could be directed to specific groups such as teachers, parents, teenagers, and company guards. The purpose and audience of an argument should be well-related. The writer should analyze the audience by considering their values, beliefs, hopes, dreams, expectations, marital statuses, incomes, ages, education levels, geographical locations, and so on (Smith & Seible, 2005). After considering these, the writer will have a better understanding

about what information, details, or words to use in order to achieve the purpose, for example, details that are not against the audience's value, or that do not insult their education level. Considerations about the audience, in other words, are made simultaneously with considerations about the four persuasive elements (logos, pathos, ethos, and kairos). These, woven together, help to produce a strong argument.

Like the purpose, the claim of an argument should be specific. The benefit of the claim for novice writers is that it helps control the writing. Most college writing courses teach the five-paragraph theme that starts with an introductory paragraph with a thesis or a controlling idea that is usually a three-point structure. Each of the points is to be explained in one body paragraph. Thus, including the concluding paragraph, the essay consists of five paragraphs. The five-paragraph theme is usually used for an analysis of a subject. The claim of an argument is similar to the thesis or controlling idea of a five-paragraph essay, but it extends beyond understanding the subject. The writer takes a stand in relation to the subject and tries to convince the audience that his/her claim is true (Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004). By focusing on a subject and taking a stand about it, the writer can make specific claims such as that small businesses

should invest in advertising, or that column X in a newspaper should be removed. Having a specific claim helps the writer foresee what specific evidence is useful for supporting the claim, thus producing a strong argument.

At the technical level, it is also useful to consider the type of claim of writing to be used in the argument. The type of claim chosen can guide the writing. Hirschberg (1990) identifies four kinds of claims: factual, causal, value, and policy. Similarly, Ramage and Bean (1997) identify claims related to definitional issues, causal issues, evaluation issues, and policy issues. Factual claims "seek to answer the question, what is the nature of [something]?" Causal claims "try to answer the questions, what caused [something] to be the way it is? Or what will happen as a result of something?" Value claims "seek to answer the question, is [something] good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral, practical or impractical?" (Hirschberg, 1990, pp. 35-36). Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi (2004) mentioned several genres of argument papers such as problem-solution papers, proposals, letters to authorities, editorials, complaint letters, letters to the editor, letters of application, and resumes. After we know what type of claim or what genre to use, the purpose and audience become clear. For example, if the argument is a complaint about something,

the writer makes a value claim. The purpose is to explain that something is wrong, and the audience is a person or persons that the writer knows. The writer then searches for the bad points of that thing and must soften down the tone of the writing so that he/she will not be immediately rejected by the audience. To sum up, knowing the type of claim and genre of writing is useful.

The last stage of the technical level, the author believes, is the structure of the argument.In fact, the five-paragraph theme - consisting one introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and one concluding paragraph—can be a structure of an argument, if the argument is not intricate. In five paragraphs, we can convince, for example, residents of a community that they must spare a community forest. The five-paragraph theme is widely used in exams by test-takers due to time limit. The writing at college, however, often requires a level of analysis and complexity that five paragraphs is insufficient. The general organization of argument papers includes seven parts: introduction, statement of the case, proposition statement, refutation, conformation, digression, and conclusion (Dobbins, 2003).

The introduction begins with a general reference to the topic and narrows down to the claim within four to six

sentences. The statement of the case presents all the support of the argument; in this section at least one paragraph is dedicated to one point or one element of the argument. The proposition statement is much like the thesis statement. The statement "should clearly define and detail the scope of the argument but it should also be a debatable statement" (Dobbins, Section "General Organization" para 3). For example, telecommunication in the present age weakens the relationship of family members because it takes away values of relationship, interdependence, and collaboration. In the refutation, we try to argue against any claims made against our argument. We make our claim stronger by showing that opposing ideas have been considered and disproved; we used researched data to refute opposing claims. In the conformation, we reinforce the elements of our argument (ibid.). All three areas, the proposition statement, the refutation section, and the conformation, should be parallel. The digression is optional. We may use an anecdote, a case study, or a personal story, factual and well-documented, to support our argument. The conclusion sums up the points and restates our claim.

At the discourse level, we specifically consider how the use of words and details affects the rhetorical situation of the argument. We consider whether we use words that cause anger or ones that create a warm relationship with the audience. People share much of the same culture, and the use of particular words in that culture can cause anger, pleasure, pride, inferiority, and so on. Such emotions are derived through the use of linguistic tools such as metaphors, similes, allegories, and denotations (See Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These can create strong, soft, harsh, polite, or impolite language that can directly affects the audience. It depends on the writer what effect of the language the writer wants to have on the readers. Words such as "contamination of our people," "black parasites," and "blood poisoning" can trigger hatred (Bosmajian, 1983). Expressions such as "Life has cheated me" and "Inflation is eating up our profits" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) can turn abstract nouns into concrete ones. The use of metaphor allows the writer to give more supporting details, ones that create pictures, ones that are strong in meaning. In fact, the use of metaphorical words and expressions influences the audience more than grammar. For example, Wilson (2006) finds that writings expressing feelings impress her better than ones that satisfy organizational expectations. One African student's writing that portrays her childhood hard times especially arouse Wilson's sympathy for her.

Adjustments made at the discourse level revolve around the three elements suggested by Aristotle: logos, pathos, and ethos. Through the use of linguistic tools to create emotions and considerations of these elements, we can produce a strong argument. All these can coexist even in a short paragraph. Study the following three pieces of writing:

… It reminds me of a thunder storm

Because of the colors gray and darkness

Because of the noises are loud and hectic

The rain is like some one crying for an answer

It reminds me of everything bad or sad that has happened to me

I am thankful for everything because in away when any one makes me feel missed place

Or unwanted I don't let it get the beast of me because I feel like that has happened to me a lot when I was a kid and know times have to change for me and I need to stay strong (Wilson, 2006).

The old bridge out of town is weak and may soon collapse. It should be repaired or replaced. We need taxes to pay for this work. (Memering & Palmer, 2006).

The old bridge is not safe. The school bus must cross it twice daily. Think of it—a busload of our children crossing over the steep ravine under that shaky bridge. The bridge is old and rusting. It creaks and groans—it moves. One day soon it *will* give way. Our kids may crash through and fall screaming to their death. A small increase in taxes can prevent an enormous tragedy. If we don't act now, we will be responsible for what is sure to happen. (Memering & Palmer, 2006).

In the first excerpt, the writer's ethos is clearly expressed; the writer is seen as a strong-willed person deserving sympathy as well as admiration from the reader. In order to be able to move the reader, the writer must portray him/herself as polite, educated, simplistic, determined, or down-to-the-earth—good characters—and these are the writer's ethos. According to Aristotle, ethos is the moral quality of a person. In the first excerpt, the writer gains respect for being strong-willed from the metaphorical use of rain, darkness, thunders, and storms as hard times in her life. Sympathy and admiration are kinds of emotion.The first piece of writing, therefore, consists of both ethos, and pathos as the result of ethos.

Two terms closely related to ethos and pathos are tone and voice. A tone is "a quality of voice expressing a particular

emotion, attitude, etc" (Crowther, Kavanagh, & Ashby, 1995). Voice is "the sound of a writer's personality on the page" (Memering & Palmer, 2006). The writer may be heard by the reader as a polite, impolite, aggressive, selfish, philanthropic, patient, or impatient. The writer, consequently, must be careful in portraying him/herself. To maintain ethos, the writer must try to sound good.

The second piece of writing is a short paragraph with no pathos and ethos. It may be thought of containing logos because the first sentence may be viewed as the reason for the second sentence. But just one reason is not enough to empower writing. The third piece of writing adds more logos. The second, third, and fourth sentences are the reasons why the bridge should be repaired. The third paragraph, however, also appeals to the reader with pathos. It tries the reader's sympathy for the children, though not for the writer him/herself. The writer's ethos, as a person caring about others' safety, is not clear, but if this paragraph is part of a longer piece of writing, it should be clearer.

The three pieces of writing above demonstrate that pathos, logos, and ethos normally coexist to produce a strong argument. However, argument is more about using reasons (logos) to move readers than about trying to engage readers emotionally (pathos and ethos). In addition, at university, especially at the advanced level, students are more taught to write academically. The support of a claim in academic writing tends to be secondary sources, e.g. books, journal articles, interviews, testimonies, quotations, statistics, graphs, and so forth. Gage (1991) identifies three kinds of appeal: the appeal to authority, the appeal to emotion, and the appeal to the logic of the case. The first kind ranges from the writer's expertise, experience, or observation to citations from known persons who are believable on the subject. The second kind is the manipulation of the reader's feelings, or the construction of reasons out of shared moral principles. The first and second kinds of appeal are, in fact, the application of pathos and ethos. The third kind ranges from "the use of proven experimental data to the suggestion that one idea follows directly from the acceptance of another one" (p. 107). This last kind of appeal is the construction of logos. Gage points out that the third kind of appeal is the best for creating credibility and reliability. Flachmann and Flachmann (2008) characterizes this last kind of appeal as "someone else's thoughts and observations" (p. 551) that must be cited in order not commit plagiarism. This third kind of appeal commonly appears in research papers. It must be searched for because we cannot create it ourselves. For

example, we cannot say, "Half of all marriages end in divorce" without citing a source. This claim must be backed up with evidence. Secondary sources, the third kind of appeal, are widely used in research papers and they must be documented according to the requirement of the teacher, or the forum where the paper will appear.

One important skill especially useful for EFL writers when writing an argument paper is using specific evidence. One big problem of novice writers is a lack of words or details to support a point. Specific details should occur in the minds of writers fast and naturally. For example, if the author aimed at persuading his folks living in the same community with him from the past, some thirty years ago, to help preserve the diminishing community forest, the author would cast his mind to the past, to the things he and his friends were happy with together. The disappearance of "Tubkah" birds, "Yagad" grass, clear flowing water in the stream, sounds of grasshoppers, and wild rabbits would be specific evidence to support the author's claim that the community forest, the habitat of valued animals and things, should be preserved. Memering and Palmer (2006) point out that apart from valid opinions specific evidence such as the sizzling of red peppers in a pan and the sound of boiling pasta can appeal to the

reader's senses of sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste and thus create clear communication and persuasion.

Crafting a strong argument, from the above explanations, is, therefore, a complicated task; writing is like cooking, to borrow James Berlin's words, which involves mixing ingredients together to get delicious food. Just as there are many creative ways to cook, so there are many other ways or techniques than those mentioned above to write an argument. There are techniques or suggestions to find a topic, to generate ideas, to write a thesis, to think about an audience, to connect with an audience, to find support, and to conclude an essay. We can do free-writing, listing, diagramming, rewriting, revising, and editing. We can use both deductive and inductive reasoning to improve the logic of the argument. In the use of language, we can use satires, ironies, parodies, and caricatures to create a particular tone (Hirschberg, 1990). All these are useful for argument, but they take time to practice. Argumentative writing is, in short, an interrelated task requiring many skills.

Teaching Implications and Conclusion

Now, it is time to think about how we should teach argument. The author wants to offer one way. Firstly, think once again about the two approaches to teaching

writing––current-traditional and process. They both conflict and identify with each other. While current-traditional pedagogy and process pedagogy share one tenet–– that individuals are born with transcendental skills which allow them to make judgments about their use of language in terms of its correctness, politeness, logic, connection with audience, etc., the former focuses on correctness and form but the latter values writers' freedom. Because of that, the former may be viewed as suppressing students, while the latter as liberating them.

Both pedagogies, however, are useful for EFL students, and thus should be combined. As said above, current-traditional pedagogy emphasizes grammar and form. The teaching of grammar must, as noted above, be taken as a gradual continuous process in the EFL context, due to insufficient availability of the language. It is the teaching of organization that greatly benefits EFL students. Students' writings are always judged on whether they are well-organized. Having students adopt a writing pattern may force them to leave out some information they want to say. On the contrary, for EFL students, mostly novice writers who are not competent and confident about their language ability, patterns of writing can reduce their nervousness about their writing ability and

diminish the difficulties due to the contingent nature of writing.

Process pedagogy is useful too. This pedagogy recommends that students be given absolute freedom to choose their own topics and formats of writing, a teaching philosophy also held by theorists of student-centeredness. We often hear that students will not produce anything interesting if they are not interested in it, not emotionally engaged with it. The excerpt given by Wilson (2006) above shows that the student, being deeply involved with the writing, could use words that effectively draw readers. Process pedagogy is also useful in that it encourages students to develop several drafts to fit the rhetorical situation of the writing. This pedagogy, thus, fulfills the real purpose of teaching writing; we teach writing for communication, and communication involves audience, purpose, and occasion.

One concept that we should incorporate in the project of teaching argument is that writing generates knowledge and true understanding of phenomena. Emig (2003) in "Writing as a Mode of Learning" states that "writing through its inherent reinforcing cycle involving hand, eye, and brain marks a uniquely powerful multi-representational mode of learning" (p.10). Therefore, writing

should be practiced, through development of drafts, in order for the learner to truly understand the topic. True knowledge, however, is best created through collaboration. Bruffee (2003) states that it is exactly the blind leading the blind to adopt the Cartesian model of knowledge, in which one person is supposed to be knowledgeable and to have the duty to give it to others. On the other hand, knowledge constructed within a community is authorized by the community itself, more reliable than knowledge given by individuals. Many pedagogies, thus, support collaborative learning. Progressive pedagogy (Dewey, 1938), collaborative learning, (Bruffee, 1993), critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1992), and pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 2005) all support that learning together creates knowledge.

From the above discussion, the best way of incorporating argument into EFL writing classrooms, the author's believes, is a triple task. First, the teacher must be open-minded by accepting that building language competence is a gradual process and that students do not learn to polish all their errors in just a few pieces of writing. The teacher should not expect that his/her students will not produce the errors or types of errors he/she has already taught or corrected for them again. The sustainability of knowledge requires both repetition and sufficient practice. In addition, as the

excerpt by Wilson shows, writing laden with errors, still works rhetorically.

Second, the teacher must adopt process pedagogy. In this pedagogy, Murray (1997) states that students are greatly respected; they find their own subjects, use their own language, and attempt any form of writing. Furthermore, there are no rules as well as forms imposed on them at the beginning, until they finally choose the one they like best. One advantage of this pedagogy is that students learn about rhetorical situations as they develop drafts, as they tailor their writing to fit the purpose, audience, and occasion of the writing. Students thus learn that writing is a social activity, before they finally shape and polish the last draft. Another advantage is that the teacher can add in peer review activities, thus supporting the idea that knowledge is socially constructed. Process teaching also allows more time for students to find support for their writing from various sources, both primary and secondary. This way of teaching, as a result, facilitates students to incorporate all kinds of appeals necessary for argument.

Third, the teacher must teach strategies or techniques of argumentation. Argumentative writing is a step higher than informative writing. When students describe a scene or narrate a story, they mostly make use of facts existing in the

phenomenal world. On the contrary, in argumentative writing, the writer thinks critically and analytically and uses his/her imagination, drawing on metaphorical concepts and thus making his/her writing powerful. While some tactics of argument, such as using metaphors and transitional words or using specific evidence, are applied naturally by many great speakers and writers, Thai students, with their insufficient writing experience and their limited English knowledge, should learn them explicitly.

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