



## USING TASK-BASED LEARNING TO TEACH ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the theoretical foundations of task-based learning (TBL) and its effectiveness in enhancing argumentative writing and critical thinking skills among university students. TBL emphasizes engaging learners through meaningful tasks that mirror real-life communication, fostering linguistic competence and critical thinking—essential skills for constructing coherent and persuasive arguments. The study addresses key concepts in argumentation, such as claims, evidence, and reasoning, and underscores their significance in developing well-supported, logical arguments. Furthermore, it focuses on the exploration of (1) definition and core principles of task-based learning and its application in writing, (2) benefits of task-based learning for language and writing skills development, (3) the role of critical thinking in argumentative writing, (4) key concepts in argumentation (claims, evidence, reasoning), (5) explanation of clarity, precision, relevance, and logic (as standards of thought) in the context of argumentative writing, and (6) the relationship between critical thinking and standards of thought. This integrated framework highlights the interconnections between TBL, critical thinking, and argumentative writing and provides actionable insights for English lecturers on implementing TBL strategies in their curricula to better support students' academic development.

**Keywords:** *logical argument; writing proficiency; and curriculum development*

### INTRODUCTION

University students need critical thinking and argumentative writing to examine, evaluate, and build strong arguments. These abilities let students think deeply about complicated concepts in writing and debates. Argumentative writing encourages intellectual independence and critical thinking by requiring students to offer clear, coherent, and logical arguments. Critical thinking, which entails systematic information assessment to guide belief or action, is essential to higher education. According to Alsaleh (2020), well-reasoned arguments are essential to academic achievement across fields. Students who grasp argumentative writing can express ideas, critically interact with information, and contribute to scholarship. Critical thinking also helps students examine assumptions and spot logical errors in academic assignments. Critical thinking encourages introspective and

autonomous thought, which is essential for academic success and personal growth.

Employers increasingly value argumentative writing and critical thinking abilities outside the university for problem-solving, decision-making, and communication (Cruz et al., 2020; Raj et al., 2022; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Including these abilities in university education boosts academic performance and professional readiness. Task-based methods use real-world activities and challenges to teach critical thinking and argumentation in academic and professional settings. Teaching these abilities is difficult due to students' diverse past knowledge and experience. University instructors struggle to design a uniform curriculum since students have different degrees of argumentation and critical analysis experience (Islamiyah & Al Fajri, 2020; Kaepfel, 2021; Liyanage et al., 2021). Students may need fundamental help or more complex tasks (Minkos

**Erwin Pohan, Emi Emilia, Ika Lestari Damayanti**

*Using task-based learning to teach argumentative writing and critical thinking in higher education*

& Gelbar, 2021; Oke & Fernandes, 2020; Trinidad, 2020).

Encouraging pupils to analyze evidence and link complicated concepts beyond recognizing and summarizing arguments is a significant difficulty in teaching critical thinking. Many students focus on finding the “right answer” rather than critically analyzing numerous views, which hinders argumentation. Traditional grading rubrics concentrate on language over logic and rhetoric, making it challenging to grade argumentative writing and critical thinking. (Tan, 2023; Xie & Lei, 2022; Yuanzheng & Chinokul, 2024). The mismatch between instruction and evaluation might hamper students’ critical thinking. The ideal training techniques for these abilities are also debated. Some favor explicit instruction, while others prefer student-centered, task-based methods (Adjei-mensah, 2024; Dinh Nghia, Vu Nguyen; Quang, 2021). This disagreement makes it difficult to create a curriculum that promotes argumentative writing and critical thinking across disciplines.

Task-based language and writing teaching engages students in real-world communication and problem-solving scenarios. Instead of lecture-based instruction, this technique promotes active learning via hands-on activities where students use their language abilities in meaningful circumstances (Ellis, 2020). Task-based learning stresses applying critical thinking and persuasive writing abilities to practical projects that require students to study, discuss, and convey ideas. In a task-based approach, pupils are given a challenge or situation that simulates academic or professional tasks. Students may be assigned to debates, write persuasive essays on contemporary social issues, or work on challenging group projects. Students learn to analyze critically, organize their thoughts, and offer cogent arguments while writing and communicating authentically (Moonma & Kaweera, 2021).

The technique has three phases: pre-task, task, and post-task. In the pre-task stage, students learn about the topic and get background information. Students complete the project utilizing language and critical thinking in the task phase. In the post-task stage, students evaluate their performance, get comments, and discuss how to improve (Prasad Bhandari, 2020). Task-based techniques focus on real-world applications and create a more participatory and collaborative classroom, which motivates and retains students (Waluyo & Wangdi, 2024). This strategy promotes argumentative writing and critical thinking by encouraging students to apply their learning in compelling and

relevant ways to their academic and professional life.

This article examines how task-based learning (TBL) improves university students’ argumentative writing and critical thinking. Analytical abilities are increasingly valued in higher education; thus, it is important to find practical teaching approaches. TBL, which engages students in actual, real-world projects, may help students build persuasive argumentation and critical analytical abilities. This article investigates how TBL might help university students acquire these critical skills. This presentation will discuss task-based learning and its applications to writing and critical thinking. TBL promotes active learning, application, and collaboration. In this hands-on approach to argumentative writing, students learn critical thinking by assessing facts, developing reasoned arguments, and anticipating counterarguments. TBL’s iterative structure encourages reflection, helping students improve their writing and thinking through feedback and self-assessment (Kunnel, 2021).

This article will review task-based learning (TBL) research in writing and critical thinking development and use university course case studies to demonstrate how TBL may be integrated into the academic curriculum. The necessity for clear instructor direction and student readiness will also be addressed. Students will learn how TBL improves argumentative writing and critical thinking for academic and professional success. Effective argumentation and critical thinking require clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic (Franco-Mariscal et al., 2024; Setyarini et al., 2021).

## **DISCUSSION**

Task-based learning (TBL) improves language and writing abilities by concentrating on real-life communication activities. Students’ linguistic and critical thinking skills increase, especially in argumentative writing. Structured exercises help students utilize language and critical thinking to develop persuasive arguments. Claims, evidence, and logic are key to convincing arguments. Argumentative writing requires clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic to support ideas. Students use critical thinking to analyze information, pick evidence, and reason (Hardini et al., 2020; Paul & Elder, 2020). Students strengthen their communication and reasoning skills by integrating TBL, critical thinking, and these writing standards, laying the groundwork for college success.

*Definition and core principles of task-based learning and its application in writing*

Task-based learning (TBL) is popular in language and writing teaching. Its focus on real-world problems to engage students improves argumentative writing and critical thinking (Bagheridoust & Al-Sultani, 2023; Maftuna, Yuldashaeva; Sohib, 2024). Task-based learning's theoretical framework helps us comprehend how it develops these abilities in university education, notably argumentative writing. Task-based learning is founded on the premise that students learn best when they engage in meaningful, real-world activities that simulate academic and professional duties (Yundayani & Sri Ardiasih, 2021). Traditional teaching methods emphasize grammar and vocabulary, whereas TBL emphasizes communication and problem-solving. Students are taught to utilize writing to think critically and offer well-reasoned arguments, not just practice writing.

Authentic tasks are important to task-based learning. These projects simulate real-world issues students may experience in their academic, professional, or personal lives. Examples of argumentative writing are social problem essays, persuasive letters, and debates. These assignments require students to engage with the issue, apply critical thinking, analyze evidence, and build strong arguments. Lowell and Moore (2020) say realistic projects connect learning to real-world applications, making students' abilities transferable. The significance of realistic projects in TBL means that before the form is another TBL idea. In traditional writing training, grammar, and linguistic forms come before meaningful communication. Instead, task-based learning emphasizes writing substance and purpose (Yundayani & Sri Ardiasih, 2021). This method lets students build arguments, evaluate sources, and organize ideas before polishing their language. This idea promotes critical thinking by encouraging students to analyze the issue before caring about grammar or style (Crookes & Ziegler, 2021; Ellis, 2020).

Task-Based Learning (TBL) improves writing by emphasizing interaction and cooperation. Students learn multiple perspectives through peer evaluations, group debates, and collaborative research, which improves their argumentative writing. These collaborative projects help students analyze their and others' arguments, improving critical thinking. TBL encourages students to reflect on their performance, find areas for

development, and build metacognitive abilities. This continual reflection improves writing and critical thinking (Prasansaph, 2024). TBL helps students evaluate sources, recognize logical fallacies, and write persuasively in argumentative writing. These techniques build writing and critical thinking abilities.

*Benefits of task-based learning for language and writing skills development*

Task-based learning (TBL) is widely recognized for improving language and writing abilities. This method promotes language and writing development through real-world tasks and active student interaction. How TBL improves these abilities shows why it is so effective at helping students write logically, think critically, and communicate effectively (Nussbaum, 2021).

Task-Based Learning (TBL) emphasizes genuine language use, a significant benefit. Instead of grammar and vocabulary drills, TBL emphasizes real-world tasks like writing essays and debating. Relevance makes language learning fun and valuable, improving retention and application (Khan Milon et al., 2023). TBL emphasizes problem-solving and decision-making, which promotes critical thinking. Writing exercises that analyze complicated situations evaluate evidence, and form arguments help students improve their logic and persuasive writing abilities. Academic and professional success requires independent thinking and analysis, which this strategy fosters (Wenas et al., 2023).

Collaboration and peer contact are essential benefits of Task-Based Learning (TBL). TBL exercises often feature group work, allowing students to discuss, provide comments, and improve their writing (Ellis, 2020; Ho et al., 2020). Peer input on flaws and work helps students gain confidence and drive. Collaborative assignments give students varied viewpoints, improving their arguments. TBL encourages students to plan, execute, and reflect on projects. This liberty motivates and deepens learning, allowing students to explore, make errors, and improve their writing.

Task-based learning (TBL) provides instant feedback, promoting language and writing development. Unlike traditional training, TBL gives feedback throughout the process. Students may use peer, instructor, or self-assessment feedback to change their work in real-time. Continuous feedback improves writing and critical thinking (HUSEYN, 2023). TBL also improves language fluency by having students quickly write

**Erwin Pohan, Emi Emilia, Ika Lestari Damayanti**

*Using task-based learning to teach argumentative writing and critical thinking in higher education*

explicit, organized material. Enhancing language fluency and its positive effect on writing confidence boosts writing confidence, making TBL an excellent language development method.

#### *The role of critical thinking in argumentative writing*

Critical thinking helps students examine, evaluate, and build strong arguments in argumentative writing. Argumentative writing involves a careful analysis of evidence and viewpoints to form a convincing argument (Traga Philippakos & MacArthur, 2020; Walková & Bradford, 2022). Critical thinking helps students connect deeply with their subject matter, uncover logical fallacies, assess sources, and express their views in a clear, compelling manner (Heard et al., 2020).

Assessing and organizing material is key to persuasive writing. Critical thinking helps authors assess evidence's trustworthiness, relevance, and adequacy for a solid argument (Alsaleh, 2020; Heard et al., 2020). Writing without critical thinking may use weak or irrelevant sources to build a weak argument without persuasive force. Critical thinking helps students identify biased or inaccurate sources while writing on challenging topics. This source evaluation helps them choose the most substantial evidence to support their thesis and avoid erroneous thinking like anecdotal evidence or emotional appeals. Writing arguments based on facts and logic requires examining the quality and validity of the evidence (Hann, 2020).

Critical thinking lets pupils debate opposing views as well as evaluate evidence. Counterarguments are crucial to argumentative writing (Wang et al., 2023). Critical thinking helps authors discover and respectfully confront objections to their stance. Intellectual rigor and argument credibility depend on this procedure. By rationally refuting opposing views, authors demonstrate their profound understanding of the matter and ability to anticipate others. When advocating for a policy change, a writer may critically evaluate the arguments against it, uncover faults, and present evidence-based rebuttals. The critical evaluation and rebuttal process undertaken by the writer shows that the writer has examined the issue from different perspectives, strengthening the argument (Wale & Bishaw, 2020).

Critical thinking improves argument logic. Every point in a well-organized argument builds on the last. Critical thinking helps authors arrange their thoughts and prevent illogical arguments that fail to persuade (Malak, 2021). Logical thinking

helps students organize evidence to support their argument and analyze their reasoning. The writer must support each claim with facts and draw inferences from the premises. By concentrating on logical structure, critical thinking avoids logical fallacies, including false dichotomies, straw man arguments, and premature generalizations, which weaken arguments and reduce persuasiveness (Hoffmann & Catrambone, 2025).

Critical thinking requires students to write effectively, which improves writing. Argumentative writing requires accuracy since imprecise statements damage it (Lavery et al., 2020). Critically assessing their work helps students clarify their views, eliminating misunderstanding. Critical thinking advocates clear definitions of phrases like "global warming" to minimize confusion while writing about climate change. It also helps authors identify and evaluate assumptions, ensuring trustworthy arguments (Kleemola et al., 2022). Critical thinkers can correct assumptions to improve their work (Monteiro et al., 2020; Paul & Elder, 2020).

#### *Key concepts in argumentation (claims, evidence, reasoning)*

Argumentation is an organized way to prove or disprove something. Essential for academic writing, persuasive communication, and critical thinking. Argumentation relies on claims, evidence, and reasoning. Well-supported and compelling arguments require understanding these ideas and their interactions (Morris et al., 2024).

A claim is an argumentative statement. The writer or speaker uses it to argue their main point. From basic facts to controversial opinions, claims can vary in complexity and breadth (Yang, 2022). Claims might range from "Climate change is a significant global issue" to "Government intervention is necessary to reduce income inequality." The argument's power, clarity, evidence, and reasoning determine its legitimacy. Specific and clearly stated claims lead the argument and help the audience grasp the writer's stance (Huang & Jun Zhang, 2020).

In argumentative writing, the assertion must be arguable. A proposition that is apparent or uncontroversial prevents meaningful reasoning (Prakken, 2020). The proposition "The Earth orbits the Sun" is undisputed in an argument because it is commonly acknowledged. However, social, political, and ethical claims are typically more complicated and debatable. Evidence is information, facts, statistics, or examples that support a claim. Arguments need evidence to

convince the listener that they are legitimate or likely to be true (Nussbaum, 2021). Strong arguments require relevant, believable, and adequate evidence. The relevance and trustworthiness of evidence determine its strength. Weak or irrelevant evidence weakens claims and reduces their persuasiveness. Critical thinking and persuasive writing need evidence evaluation (Giri & Paily, 2020).

Reasoning links evidence to a claim. The logical framework illustrates how the evidence supports the argument and convinces the audience (Sinatra & Lombardi, 2020). Any argument needs reasoning to avoid relying on claims rather than logical connections between concepts. Sound reasoning enhances the case by linking evidence to the claim. It lets the writer show how the evidence supports the assertion, addressing counterarguments and reasoning flaws.

*Explanation of clarity, precision, relevance, and logic (as standards of thought) in the context of argumentative writing*

Argumentative writing relies on clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic to be successful and intellectually rigorous. These principles assist authors in delivering clear, well-supported, and convincing ideas. These principles are essential to building strong, legitimate arguments, and integrating them helps writers communicate effectively and convincingly (Zou & Hyland, 2022).

Clarity is how easily the argument is understood. Argumentative writing requires clarity to avoid ambiguity, confusion, and difficulty. The writer must use simple language and proper structure (Jagaiah et al., 2020). The audience may struggle to understand the writer's ideas, and even the most logical argument may fail. An ambiguous thesis statement or argument might confuse readers about the essay's direction. Authors must organize their thoughts rationally, make obvious transitions, and utilize short language to be intelligible. Avoiding jargon and technical vocabulary can also make writing more accessible. Clarity helps the writer convey their point to the target audience.

Precision is similar to clarity but stresses correctness and exact details in reasoning. Precision in argumentative writing involves utilizing well-defined phrases and precise, well-supported examples to support assertions. It lacks ambiguity, overgeneralizations, and unclear wording that undermine statements. A precise argument has distinct, well-considered claims, evidence, and reasoning (Jaakkola, 2020). If a

writer claims that "poverty is increasing in the United States," they must include facts, research, or reports to show how poverty rates have changed. Defined language makes a writer's argument more compelling and authoritative. Precision helps prevent misunderstanding and weak or unwarranted generalizations.

Relevance is the importance and applicability of the argument's supporting information. Argumentative writing requires facts, examples, and logic to support the assertion. While fascinating or helpful, irrelevant content might distract from the main point and weaken the writing (Reed et al., 2023). The writer must choose facts and logic supporting their stance rather than presenting irrelevant information. In an argumentative essay about climate change, treating other environmental themes might distract the reader. Instead, the writer should give climate change statistics, examples, and research on its causes, consequences, and remedies. Structure matters, too—each point should build on the preceding one and stay on topic. This guideline keeps the argument focused, logical, and persuasive.

Any good argument starts with logic. It is the methodical, logical reasoning that links evidence to assertions. Logic guarantees argumentative writing is internally consistent, avoids inconsistencies, and follows a cohesive path of thought (Caret, 2021). Logical reasoning strengthens the argument and persuades the reader. Hasty generalizations, incorrect dichotomies, and emotional appeals can weaken an argument. To prevent these, writers must apply solid thinking, make correct conclusions from facts, and avoid unsubstantiated statements. A logical essay calling for stricter gun control regulations would include statistical information, expert testimony, and rigorous reasoning concerning gun access and violence. However, an illogical argument may use emotional appeals or flawed reasoning without solid evidence. Logical reasoning avoids errors and carefully structures premises and conclusions. Evidence must back each assertion, and the argument should flow logically. This logical flow improves the argument and persuades the listener by showing that it is well-reasoned and founded on excellent thinking.

*The relationship between critical thinking and standards of thought*

Building and assessing arguments requires critical thinking and thought criteria, including clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic. Critical thinking

## **Erwin Pohan, Emi Emilia, Ika Lestari Damayanti**

### *Using task-based learning to teach argumentative writing and critical thinking in higher education*

entails assessing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, which helps writers apply these criteria. Clarity clarifies concepts, accuracy defines arguments, relevance aligns evidence with the fundamental assertion, and logic maintains internal consistency. Critical thinking helps authors evaluate sources, avoid pitfalls, and improve their arguments. Critical thinking and these principles are essential for convincing arguments.

#### *Clarity and Critical Thinking*

Critical thinking is linked to clarity, which helps readers understand a writer's point. Critical writers assess and organize their thoughts to communicate coherently (Dekker, 2020). Critical thinking entails challenging assumptions, identifying ambiguities, and maintaining logical consistency throughout the argument (Braun et al., 2020; Islamiyah & Al Fajri, 2020). A critical thinker will carefully explore how to express and structure information clearly to minimize misunderstanding or ambiguity. Critical thinkers may check their arguments to make sure their main point is clear, and their supporting evidence is easy to understand (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). They will also anticipate and improve their language to avoid misunderstandings. Thus, critical thinking helps authors make their arguments clear and well-constructed (May Oo & Okada, 2024).

#### *Precision and critical thinking*

Argumentative writing requires precise language and well-considered examples. Writing precisely involves critical thinking to determine the meaning of terminology and the validity of examples (Heard et al., 2020). Critical thinkers must avoid broad or generalized assertions and argue precisely, supporting each claim with pertinent, explicit evidence (Paul & Elder, 2020). If a writer says "poverty is a serious problem," critical thinking advises them to define "poverty" explicitly, offer figures or studies to support their assertion, and avoid sweeping generalizations that might mislead the audience. Critical thinkers recognize imprecise language and work to clarify their views. Precision keeps the argument focused and trustworthy by providing particular facts that appeal to the audience (Allchin & Zemplén, 2020).

#### *Relevance and critical thinking*

Relevance includes material that directly supports the main point. In critical thinking, authors evaluate the significance of material and present only evidence that supports their thesis (Reynders et al., 2020). Critical thinking demands that authors

sort through large volumes of material, choose the most important facts, and include them in their argument. Critical thinking encourages writers to choose evidence that directly addresses climate change's causes, effects, and possible solutions rather than general environmental issues or scientific theories (Eilam, 2022). Critical thinking involves identifying and eliminating extraneous information to keep the argument focused and compelling (Allchin & Zemplén, 2020).

#### *Logic and critical thinking*

Logic is the most closely aligned standard with critical thinking. Logical reasoning underpins all critical thought, as it systematically draws conclusions based on evidence and sound principles (Heard et al., 2020). Critical thinkers evaluate the internal consistency of an argument and ensure that it is logically valid (Giri & Paily, 2020). This includes avoiding logical fallacies, such as false equivalencies or ad hominem attacks, which can undermine the strength of the argument (Friedman, Hershey H.; Kaganovskiy, 2015; Rapanta & Macagno, 2019). Critical thinking allows writers to construct sound arguments by ensuring that each claim follows logically from the previous one, supported by appropriate evidence and reasoning (Heard et al., 2020). For instance, in making a case for stricter environmental regulations, a critical thinker will ensure that each premise—such as the role of pollution in climate change—leads logically to the conclusion, backed by scientific data and causal reasoning. Writers who apply logic through critical thinking can construct coherent, valid arguments and resist counterarguments (Jimola & Olaniyan, 2021).

#### *Interdependence of critical thinking and the standards*

Critical thinking and thought standards strengthen reasoning. These criteria improve critical thinking by enhancing clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic. Clarity conveys ideas, accuracy defines arguments, relevance emphasizes the main point, and logic maintains consistency and validity. Critical thinking helps authors apply these rules consistently, avoiding extraneous information and unjustified assertions. Questioning assumptions, assessing facts, and answering counterarguments are encouraged. Overall, clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic increase arguments and reasoning (Allagui, 2021; Rivas et al., 2022).

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, task-based learning (TBL) improves language and writing abilities in higher education. TBL increases language skills and critical thinking, essential to argumentative writing, by engaging students in meaningful assignments. Claims, facts, and reasoning must be integrated to make logical, well-supported arguments. Clarity, accuracy, relevancy, and logic ensure clear, coherent, and convincing arguments. Students need critical thinking to analyze information, choose relevant evidence, and reason logically to apply these criteria. Thus, task-based learning, critical thinking, and norms of thought work together to improve argumentative writing. Students learn to make convincing, logical arguments and progress intellectually using this complete framework. Using these ideas in academic training can help students improve their writing, reasoning, and critical thinking for college and beyond.

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**Erwin Pohan, Emi Emilia, Ika Lestari Damayanti**

*Using task-based learning to teach argumentative writing and critical thinking in higher education*

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**Erwin Pohan, Emi Emilia, Ika Lestari Damayanti**

*Using task-based learning to teach argumentative writing and critical thinking in higher education*

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