ARGUMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication literacy curricula
Workshop number 6

Name of the institution: CSA – Consulta Sviluppo Aziende e Professioni
Date: March 2016

Goal of the workshop:
The goal of the workshop is to make students getting acquainted with the “argumentative communication” topic. Man cannot do but communicate: communication it’s a fundamental quality to interrelate with the external world and it is very important to be able to express oneself and develop correctly one’s own thesis in order to persuade the audience about the thesis. With this workshop, teacher’s aim is to encourage participants to state their opinions by using support arguments on their thesis. This way they can improve their awareness about the importance of arguments during the discussion process.

Being able to debate about something means being able to detect the other side, identify the topic and exploit the emotions of the audience to capture the largest number of approvals.

Learning outcomes: The learning outcomes of the students will be based on cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains:

1. The cognitive domain (knowledge-based):
   - define the general principles of communication
   - define the general principles of argumentative communication
   - define the meaning of "to debate"
   - define the main goal of the argumentative communication
   - define the key elements for rafting an argumentative text
   - define main mistakes that make an argumentative text non effective

2. The affective domain (emotive-based):
   - to assimilate and receive information provided to them by the teacher
   - interpret and assess the information and knowledge received from the speaker
   - reprocess the general principles of argumentative communication
   - understand the importance of an argumentative text in a communicative context

3. The psychomotor domain (action-based):
   - being able to approach any argumentative speech in the most effective possible way
   - being able to produce a short, effective argumentative text
   - being able to recognize and “protect” from an argumentative text
Teacher qualifications:
- general professional knowledge and skills (teaching, psychological development, sociological, legislative-legal).
- knowledge and use of the learning and teaching processes (cross-curricular and subject-planning, programming, learning and teaching focused on learning and student achievement).
- knowledge and application of new methods of learning and teaching (ICT), knowledge and application of methods of evaluation and self-evaluation.
- knowledge of principles and features of argumentative communication, at least those that can be gained through this workshop.

Anticipated age of participants: The workshop is appropriate to be used with all students between 14 and 18 years old.

Class methodology:

Didactical type of class: The teacher will address the whole class simultaneously. Students will get knowledge and information as a unique and wide group.

Sociological form of class: The teacher will explain the “Argumentative Communication” topic during the most part of the lesson, using ICT facilities, concrete examples and a continuous interaction with the class. After presentation, there are two practical exercises to be conducted. In the last part students will be given a test to assess knowledge, abilities and competences acquired.

Working methods: During the lesson formal class will be mixed with interactive tools: concrete examples and videos will be used, thus integrating ICT in lesson. In the second part of the lesson, students will experience a “Elevator Pitch Challenge” and “The Edible Argument – Battle bars” exercise.

Being divided in groups and having to produce a final output together, we can consider this phase peer education and cooperative learning, too.

Finally, a non-structured test will be submitted to students at the end of the workshop: they will have to answer to 3 given questions and recognize, among two given texts, which is the argumentative one. So, the learning by doing method will be used, too.

Class resources and supplies:
- visual resources such as PowerPoint presentations, video demonstrations, textual resources, examples of argumentative and non-argumentative texts
- supplies such as computers and /or students’ smart phones
- Internet access
- projector
- a 20-piece bag (approx.) of Snickers Fun Size candy bars
- a 20-piece bag (approx.) of Kit Kat Fun Size candy bars
- chalkboard or dry erase board and chalk/marker
- writing utensils and paper

Cost estimate: There can be costs for hiring/buying ICT facilities (projector or laptop) if not present.

Time schedule: min 120’ max 135’, depending on how many sub-groups for practical exercises.

Courses: Being able to debate is a key skill that students should acquire, independently from the course
(vocational or general) they are enrolled in: we consider this competence as a crucial skill for being better placed in the labour market in the near and far future of the student. Thus the present workshop is conceived for all high school students and can be included as a module within a wider communication curriculum, but also be organized as an extracurricular activity. Beside this, the “Argumentative communication” topic can be included as part of regular Mother Tongue lessons, Foreign Language lessons, Citizenship and law lessons, Psychology and Sociology lessons: the “Argumentative Communication” topic is thus open to several cross-curricular connections.

**Evaluation:** The learning outcomes will be assessed through an individual test.

**Literature:**

**For the students:** No need of further reading for students: slides and interactive material used during the workshop will be enough.

**For the teachers:**
- La scrittura argomentativa. Dal saggio breve alla tesi di dottorato; C. Dell’Aversano; Mondadori Education, Roma; 2005
- HAPU’ Manuale di tecnica della comunicazione pubblicitaria; M. Vecchia; Lupetti editore, Milano; 2003
- Nuovo manualetto di linguistica italiana; M. Dardano; Zanichelli editore Spa, Bologna; 2005
- La nuova retorica; C. Perelman; Einaudi editore, Torino; 1966
WORKSHOP ARTICULATION

INTRODUCTION:

Time: 5’ + 15’ exercise

Content: During this phase the teacher will give a general outlook to the “Argumentative Communication” topic, introducing it to students. The teacher will explain to students what the workshop will be about and how the time will be used until the end of the lesson.

PRACTICAL ARGUMENTATION EXERCISE:

Teacher states few debatable claims, for example:

- The most beautiful woman in the world is my neighbour, Sara.
- The most important person to have ever lived is Jesus.
- There’s really no contest — the best food in the world is tacos.
- The number one best job on the planet is the one that I have: teaching you.
- The most relaxing way to spend a rainy day is by curling up on the couch with a good book.
- The absolute worst song in the history of mankind is "Call Me Maybe".

After having shared each arguable claim, the teacher will ask students to give a thumbs up or thumbs down on whether it is debatable. The teacher will then call on students and ask them to make a counterclaim. Once the teacher has modelled this and a few students have successfully done it, he/she will ask them to go to work writing their own claims that tell something about them. Each student has to think of five or so clear and precise arguable claims that tell the rest of the class something about them.

After five minutes, the teacher will have them share all of their draft claims in groups of 3, and will ask triad-mates to help each member choose which claim they should read to the whole class. Finally, each student will read a claim to the whole class.

DEVELOPMENT:

Phase I

Time: 20’

Content: Teacher uses attached PowerPoint presentation.

Argumentative personality

First of all, what does word argumentative mean? Argumentative is an adjective that means often arguing or wanting to argue. Do you feel like some people you know enjoy arguing just for the sake of arguing? While some people like to debate ideas and opinions, others argue out of habit. They can’t help themselves, they always need to be right and will make a fuss about the most trivial things, just to cause conflict. They are almost always on the defensive, even about what might seem like the most insignificant things. Those people have argumentative personality and will find fault with others or a situation just to engage with someone in seemingly pointless verbal sparring matches.
Negatives of being around argumentative personality person

- Habitual ‘argument stokers’ can drive you crazy, especially when you live or work with them; it’s hard to have a conflict-free conversation with them, even about trivial matters.
- Many, if not most, of them have strong narcissistic tendencies; in other words, they are very self-absorbed.
- They have little, or hardly any, insight into how their behaviours impact others.
- When they come across people whose views differ from their own, they feel threatened, and go on the defensive.
- They are chronic blamers: others, or the world, are always at fault.

Positives of being around argumentative personality person

- Being consistently at the mercy of an Argumentative Personality can help build motivation to stand up for yourself.
- We can learn debate techniques from those who passionately defend their views.

How do I deal with the argumentative personality?

It takes lots of energy to defend yourself and maintain self-esteem when you have to deal with a person that sees you as the source of wrongdoing. Here are some suggestions on how to maintain your sanity when working or living with an argumentative person:

- Chronic argument seekers use an outmoded style of relating that might have worked for them in the past; realizing they use an immature defense mechanism to protect themselves can make you more understanding and tolerant when in their company.
- Try not to ask their opinion on anything – “I need this done in two hours” is better than “Do you think you can do this in two hours?”
- Avoid using phrases like: “Let’s talk about this peacefully” or “I don’t want to argue with you, but …”
- People who constantly argue seek control and power over others. You cannot reason with them, so it’s best to withdraw from an argument than try to prove them wrong
- Remind yourself that chronic arguing is an ingrained defense mechanism that, with time and patience, can be unlearned.

What is argumentative communication?

We must not be mistaken thinking that argumentative communication is communication of an argumentative person, meaning arguing and fighting with others. In everyday life humans make decisions that decisively affect their future, individual and collective. They: vote in crucial issues; decide to adopt (or not) a set of global measures to preserve the environment; decide to start a certain medical treatment that has an uncertain outcome; switch off a machine supporting the life system of someone in deep coma; decide that someone is guilty and put that person in jail for years; choose (if they can) to pay a huge sum for their children’s education having the free public education at their disposal; buy and sell all sort of things and services. They do all that, and more, believing that they are serving their own best interests, or of their families, or of some group.

Although all these decisions are supposed to be rationally grounded, they are taken in a way that: tangles up reason and uncertainty; allows for better or worse; requires context sensitivity. And, in short, are defeasible.

Modern approach to making decisions considers real argumentations where rational communicators do the
best they can to justify their standpoints in a certain context. This is considered to be argumentative communication, the art of persuading based on reason, on facts and not emotions. It considers the following:

- **Debating**: explaining reasons (thesis) why a certain theory can (or cannot) be considered persuading
- **Argumenting**: persuading the audience to support the speaker’s thesis
- **Audience**: it’s the core focus around which an effective debate is conceived and formulated

**Argumentation theory**

Communication is very important for human beings. In fact, through communication the human beings begin to express their thoughts and thus played a good role in our evolution. While communicating the speaker will share the information and the listener will listen to it. Here the listener must be able to differentiate the trustworthy reliable information with the lies and treachery. The listener must be able to filter the messages and he must vigilant attitude towards the information that he/she gets. For example, we believe the news coming in the Internet because we trust the source. Here instead of just trusting, we work out different ways to be vigilant in filtering the trustworthy news with treachery. Argument is a method to increase the reliability in communication. Here speaker gives a validation to receive the conclusion. But the listener can check this validation to accept the given conclusion.

**Stephen Toulmin’s structure of Argumentation**

Stephen Toulmin an English philosopher and logician has come up with the elements of arguments which generate categories through which an argument can be evaluated.

- Claim
- Ground
- Warrant
- Backing
- Qualifier
- Rebuttal

**Claim** is nothing but a statement. It is put forward by a speaker or listener in order to accept the information as true. If someone asks you to do something you will not agree to do anything what they want. You need to ask and also you need to know why you have to do it. You will ask them to prove their claim and that is when ground comes in.

**Ground** is the reasoning behind the claim, information used to persuade the listener and the proof for reasoning. Here information can be a very powerful element of persuasion. Each person has their unique way of thinking as thus has a unique way of accepting information. For men who think more logically will accept factual information than women who accept things more emotionally. Some will accept without questioning, others will ignore it and some will research the facts even more for better explanation. Here warrant, the next step become important.

**Warrant** justifies the claim by making the ground to be appropriate. A warrant can be a small statement or a pursuing argument. It may be accurate, implicit or unspoken.

**Backing** – When the backing is given for an argument, it gives additional support to the warrant.

**Qualifier** – It restricts the comprehensiveness of the claim. They usually use words such as ‘most’, ‘usually’, ‘always’ and ‘sometimes’. Another alternative of qualifier is reservation. It is a term which might
Rebuttal — Even in a perfectly stated argument there still can be counter arguments. The rebuttal can be given during the early stages of presentation or through a prolonged discourse.

Example

1. Women make excellent administrators—(claim)—argument
2. Women are multitasking and are good organizers—(grounds)
3. Women mostly are good listeners and are more sensitive in approaching problems. This helps in the smooth functioning of the organization—(warrant)
4. Women today are well educated—(backing)
5. Women are home makers so most of them will have the ability to manage any organization or country, in a better way—(qualifier)
6. Women cannot be good administrators unless they are given good education and exposure—(rebuttal)

Scope

Argumentation theory is an important area which is important to the scholars, philosophers and logicians. It comes under interpersonal communication as it is vocal but also can be applied to group and written communication.

Argumentative vs aggressive communication

Argumentative communication is considered to be a subset of assertiveness, and verbally aggressive communication a subset of hostile communication. Clearly from the words used to define these various types of communication, we can discern that assertiveness may be more desirable, while hostile communication may be much less desirable to give and/or receive. Assertiveness is constructive, while hostility is destructive to communication exchanges, relationships, and, in fact, even the self-identities of the participants.

Assertive communication

In assertive communication, the speaker is interpersonally dominant and forceful, and uses assertiveness to achieve personal goals, while at the same time creating positive feelings in others. Assertiveness uses verbal and nonverbal cues to exert control, obtain justified rewards, and avoid violating someone else's rights. When people are assertive, they stand up for, and express, their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in appropriate ways that are direct and honest -- and they don't violate others' rights. Assertive behaviors include openness, refusal of unreasonable requests, refusal to be intimidated, absence of interpersonal anxiety, initiation of requests, spontaneous expressions, outgoingness, and disagreeing actively, rather than passively.

Some research claims assertive people are those predisposed to verbal behavior, as opposed to experiencing communication anxiety, and are precise, not easily persuadable, as well as contentious, which can sometimes mean overly quarrelsome. They also tend to be talkative, leave impressions on and are generally memorable to others who may communicate with them, and can hold their own in their interpersonal relationships. Assertive people defend their own beliefs, are independent, forceful, dominant, willing to take a stand, competitive, and are often leaders. This is considered a personality trait, but one which can be learned and improved.
Argumentative communication

**Argumentative** communication is considered a subset of assertiveness because, while all argumentation is assertive, not all assertiveness is argumentative. Here argumentative individuals advocate positions on controversial issues and verbally attack other people's contradictory perspectives. In a word, it is an underlying motivation to argue. However, it is important to note that it is the person's position that is under attack in argumentativeness, and not the individual.

Hostile communication

Turning from constructive communication to destructive communication, **hostility** seeks to destroy the other. Hostile people use verbal and nonverbal messages to express irritability, negativity, resentment, and suspicion. They tend to have a quick temper, little patience, are moody, and become exasperated quickly. They have a tendency toward pessimism about outcomes that others find more favorable, refuse to cooperate, and be antagonistic toward authority, rules, and social conventions. Expressions of jealousy and hatred are common resentments, and they often sulk about real or imagined slights, which causes anger to escalate. They are distrustful of others and believe that others want to harm them, reflecting underlying suspiciousness.

Hostility has been explained as "an attitude, a dislike of a particular person, object, or issue, accompanied by a desire to see this target injured or even destroyed." People demonstrating predispositions to hostility are often classified as having hostile personalities. These people tend to exhibit common themes: They perceive themselves as victims of persecution from others (everyone's mean to me), view their world as a mean one (people like to do things just to upset me), view themselves as more aggressive than others (you don't want to mess with me).

Aggressive communication

**Aggressive** communication is a subset of hostility and also considered a trait of neuroticism. Verbal aggressiveness means a tendency to attack the self-concepts of others, rather than, or in addition to, their positions on issues. Research has shown three main areas of self-concept attacks: group membership (your family is a bunch of nuts), personal failings (why should I listen to you? How many cars have you totaled?), and relationship failings (you might have more credibility if your list of exes wasn't so long).

In addition to self-concept attacks, verbal aggressiveness includes competence attacks, or attacks on another person's ability to do something (you can't do anything right), which can still hurt, cause pain, and embarrassment. In fact, competence attacks that are focused in one area can actually lead to diminished competence in that area and weaken that person's desire to continue to perform that task.

Verbal aggressiveness also includes character attacks (you're an idiot), which also result in embarrassment, hurt, and psychological pain. Verbal aggressiveness often includes profanity, and involves the use of obscene words, epithets, and vulgarities. Calling someone an idiot fits in this category. Further, aggressiveness involves teasing, ridicule and wishing someone ill.

In general, research has shown time and again that argumentative and assertive communication traits serve to construct positive communication environments and positive affect and the self and others, while hostile and aggressive communication behaviors destroy. This is true in the contexts of parent-child, married couples, dating couples, siblings, work and colleague relationships, and instructor-student relationships. Specific to a work environment, employees with argumentative supervisors report much greater job satisfaction than do employees with aggressive supervisors.
Constructive feedback and criticism

In the context of giving and receiving constructive feedback and criticism, it is important to understand the differences between assertive/argumentative communication, and hostile/aggressive communication. The fundamental difference is the locus of attack. When attacks are focused on a person's position, they fall under the category of assertive or argumentative. When attacks are focused on a person's characteristics, history, behaviors, or any other component of the individual, they are considered hostile, and possibly aggressive.

If you want your feedback and critique to be constructive, then it is necessary that you use constructive communication behaviors when delivering it. If your feedback and/or critique includes commentary such as, "Don't be an idiot," "What did you do it this way for?" (implies something's wrong with you), "I know your dad's not a great writer, but I hoped for more from you," (attack on significant others), "Let's see if you got it right this time," (implies a history of getting it wrong), "These expectations aren't hard for most people, but I know they're kind of hard for you," (implies incompetence), or, "All right, you got it done! There's hope for you after all!" (mockery, implies incompetence), you are engaging in verbally aggressive behavior, which is not at all constructive. For your feedback and critique to be actually constructive, not only do these types of comments need to be avoided, but the entire focus of the discussion needs to center around the work product, itself.

Argumentative writing

Many people struggle with putting their ideas and thoughts on paper and delivering a message. It's a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. With the increase of email and working with people in remote places, delivering clear and persuasive communication is becoming more and more important. Perhaps the biggest problem with this is that when you write, you often don't get a second chance to make your point in a different way. You get one shot, and if you lose your reader, it is difficult to get them back. This is why you need to pick and choose your words carefully, and present your points in a style, manner and sequence that best suits the message you are sending.

The Rhetorical Triangle is a useful way of formulating your thoughts and presenting your position.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the ancient art of using language to persuade. If you use it well, your audience will easily understand what you're saying, and will be influenced by your message. By taking the time to understand how rhetorical arguments are structured and presented, you can vastly improve your own writing, and make your points clearly, efficiently and effectively.

The term "rhetoric" in modern language has been used to refer to arguments that are designed to obscure the truth. The word has therefore taken on a negative connotation ("All that politician does is spew rhetoric.") This is not the sense that we're using here when we talk about the Rhetorical Triangle.

Applying the principles of rhetoric helps you structure an argument so the truth becomes immediately apparent to your audience. With the Rhetorical Triangle approach, we focus on the three things that have the greatest impact on an argument:

- The writer.
- The audience.
- The context.

These three elements form the points of the Rhetorical Triangle:
According to this approach, these three factors determine the persuasiveness of your argument. Your writing – and any other form of communication – needs to take all three into consideration.

The Writer

Whether consciously or sub-consciously, your audience wants to know what your motives are for your communication. If you don’t make it clear why you are presenting information, some people will assume that you are not being totally candid, or that you are hiding something. Members of your audience may ask themselves:

- Are you providing information?
- Are you trying to educate?
- Are you making a call for action?
- Are you attempting to persuade others to change a perspective or firmly held belief?
- Are you presenting ideas for problem solving or analysis? Or
- Are you just trying to entertain?

The way in which the identity of the writer (or speaker) affects the argument is known as ethos. The audience wants to know who they are dealing with. So make sure you clarify:

- Who you are.
- Why you are competent to speak on the issue.
- Where your authority comes from.

Your audience will also be trying to figure out what your motives are and what you believe, value, and assume. This information helps them determine your credibility and decide whether you are being sincere.

The Audience

When you communicate, in writing or verbally, you need to understand your audience. Knowing who you're speaking to helps you avoid using technical terms when speaking to lay people, or "dumbing down" the content if your message is intended for professionals. Things to consider here include:

- What are the audience’s expectations?
- How will they use the information you provide?
- What is the audience hoping to take away after reading/listening?
- Why are you communicating to this audience in the first place?

This part of the triangle is concerned with appealing to the emotions of the audience, which is known as pathos. The audience needs to be moved by what you are saying. Ask yourself:
What emotion do you want to evoke? Fear, trust, loyalty...?
Do you have shared values you want to draw on?
How do your audience's beliefs fit with your message?

Connecting with your audience through pathos is a strong means of gaining support.

The Context

Finally, your audience analyzes the content and circumstances of your communication.

What events preceded the communication?
What types of arguments are used?
Are they logical and well thought out?
How are they delivered?
Where is the document or speech delivered?
Is this communication necessary?

Here the emphasis is on logic and reason, or logos. Your audience needs to be able to follow what you are saying for it to be believable. Ask yourself:

Have I presented a logical, well-constructed argument?
How do I support my claims?
What evidence do I have?
What are the counterarguments?

The three points of the Rhetorical Triangle relate directly to the three classic appeals you should consider when communicating.

Ethos – Building trust by establishing your credibility and authority (Writer).
Pathos – Appealing to emotion by connecting with your audience through their values and interests (Audience).
Logos – Appeal to intelligence with well-constructed and clearly argued ideas (Context).

To be fully effective and persuasive, your communication must appeal to all three of the elements of the Rhetorical Triangle. An argument that is purely based on emotion won’t last for very long. Likewise, if all you do is present facts and figures, you will lose your audience's interest and they won't be able to relate to what you are saying. Finally, you can be the most credible person going, but if you don’t make sense, or your arguments aren’t logical, you won't be considered credible for very long.

Using the Rhetorical Triangle

When preparing a written document, speech or presentation you should first consider the three elements required for effective persuasion. If your communication is lacking in any of the three areas, then you’ll decrease the overall impact your message will have on your audience.

Argumentative speech

An argumentative speech persuades the audience to take the side of the speaker, and the speaker generally discusses a topic he or she feels strongly about. The speaker makes a specific claim and then addresses points that support the claim. At the end of the speech, the audience should be clear on an action that should or should not be taken and why.
Argumentative speeches are often about hot topics, and they encourage the audience to change their views or opinions on a topic. The speaker shows an obvious problem at the beginning of the speech and then moves on to show proof of that problem and then suggests a solution in the body. The conclusion sums up the speech’s main idea and supporting points and should leave the audience ready to make a decision based on what they just heard.

When delivering an argumentative speech, the speaker must be careful to use facts rather than emotions to support the chosen claim, and it’s important to avoid bias.

**Argumentative vs persuasive**

**Persuasive Discussion** - the author focuses mostly on using emotions to convince the audience of their claim.

**Argumentative Discussion** - the author uses facts to back up their claim. Argumentative discussion does not mean that the author is angry. There is no anger in an argumentative discussion as defined above.

**Directions:** Watch the following videos and identify which one is argumentative and which one is persuasive.

Examples of persuasive commercials:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJxOjTio0Bk

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5G9z90LPvE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlPvfXNR1j4

Examples of argumentative commercials:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux3KH3q3_DE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5G9z90LPvE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_Makmoo5lw

**Phase II - Elevator Pitch Contest**

Time: 30’ + 2’ per each group (we considered 10 groups made by 3 students each)

Content:

An elevator pitch is a short summary used to quickly and simply define a process, product, service, organization, or event and its value proposition, very common in marketing strategy, but also used by project managers, salespeople, evangelists, and policy-makers to get their points across quickly. The term itself comes from a scenario of an accidental meeting with someone important in the elevator. If the conversation inside the elevator in those few seconds is interesting and value adding, the conversation will either continue after the elevator ride, or end in exchange of business cards or a scheduled meeting. Students will be divided in groups and a topic to develop will be assigned to each group: the group will choose a pitcher among its members who has to persuade the teacher about the group thesis in a 2-minute speech. They will be given
20’ to develop the thesis and look for effective and evidence-based arguments to persuade the teacher (who is the audience).

Students will be divided in groups of 3 and will be given a topic: each topic will cover a different subject (Contemporary history/Current affairs, Natural Sciences/Ethics, Philosophy, Economics, etc.) thus being very adapt for cross curricular themes. They will have to make an online research on the given topic such as "Fastest animal in the world" and develop a thesis, with supporting evidences and arguments. 30’ will be devoted to this cooperative task. Each group will choose a "pitcher" among its members who will be responsible of performing the pitch.

The 30’ being passed, each group will perform the pitch using the argumentative communication techniques that have been learned during the theoretical part.

**Phase III - The Edible Argument – Battle Bars**

**Time:** 50’

**Content:** This exercise can be used to teach the beginning stages of argument. Students use their writing skills to describe how their group's Snickers are a better buy than another group's Kit Kats, while the other group describes how its Kit Kats are a better buy than Snickers. Students use examples of price, advertising appeal, ease of consumption, appearance, dangers, nutrition facts, feel, smell, and taste to support their topic.

**Objectives:**
1. Students will be able to develop a thesis statement and two paragraphs which support that thesis statement using appropriate forms, conventions and styles to communicate ideas and information to an audience (for the purposes of persuasion and argumentation).
2. Students will be able to write a paragraph identifying one opposing viewpoint and write another paragraph that attempts to challenge that viewpoint.

**Procedure:**
Inform students that they are to begin a unit about argumentation. Find out how many students like to argue and how many do not. Tell them that they are going to argue about something very important today -- candy bars! Inform students that the class is going to be split down the middle, and students on one side will receive Kit Kats while students on the other side will receive Snickers. You may allow students to choose sides, but you must have (closely) equal representation on each side. Also, tell students not to eat the candy bars.

Lay a candy bar on each student's desk, or pass the bags around and allow the students to choose their own. Tell the students that they need to imagine that there are only two brands of candy bars in the world -- the ones being discussed. Tell them that their candy bar is the best value, and it is their job to come up with as many "logical" reasons why their candy bars are the best value. Tell them not to consider that the other group is working on doing the same project for another brand. Rather, have them just focus on the question, "Why is my candy bar the best value?" Encourage them to work together to make a list of the top 10 points for why their candy bars are the best.

After they have come up with their lists, have each group elect a representative to write their 10 reasons on the board. The result will be a split board with Kit Kat best-buy points on one side and Snickers best buy points on the other side. Next, have students vote on which of their side's three reasons best represent why their respective candy bars are the better value. Erase all the others. This will result in a split board with three...
strong points for each side. Then, tell the groups that they are to individually, or in teams of two or three, write a thesis statement which expresses the idea that their candy bar is the best value. Then they are to craft two short paragraphs of three or more sentences (the paragraphs must be linked with transitional expressions) for each point they’ve chosen for their side. While students are working, assist each group and view their progress. The result will be a thesis statement and two paragraphs which support it. Allow students to eat their candy bars if they choose at this time. (Sugar may help them write faster!)

After the paragraphing is complete, tell the students how important it is when arguing to be fair and to demonstrate that others may have differing opinions. Then, direct them to individually, or in teams of two or three, assume the position of the other side and identify what they consider to be that side’s strongest point about why they have the best value bar. Kit Kat groups will write a paragraph supporting Snickers and vice versa. Encourage students to spend a few minutes in discussion with members of the opposing groups, so they can adequately explain and support their points. Kit Kat members will solicit information from Snickers members and vice versa. While they are working, assist each group and view their progress. The result will be one paragraph, linked to the first two, which demonstrates the opposing position. If students request an opposing side’s candy bar, allow them to have one (if there are ones left) to eat.

Finally, explain to students that their job after identifying a strong differing opinion is to directly and convincingly challenge it. Using what they know about candy bars, nutrition, packaging, and logic, they must try to construct one short paragraph (including transitional element) to disprove the other side. Kit Kats will challenge Snickers' strongest point and vice versa. While students are working, assist each group and view their progress. The result will be one challenge paragraph linked to the previous three paragraphs. Encourage students to share their completed paragraphs.

**CONCLUSION:**

**Time:** 20’

**Content:** 5’ will be devoted to summarize the topics addressed during the workshop, comment the exercises and to answer to students’ questions and doubts, if any. The remaining 15’ will be used to assess the knowledge and competences acquired by students with the attached test. Assessment will be carried on also collecting students’ paragraphs to assess completeness and students’ ability to logically demonstrate argumentation in writing.

The attitude and participation of the students can be evaluated with the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENTS</th>
<th>NEEDS TO IMPROVE 1</th>
<th>SATISFACTORY 2</th>
<th>GOOD 3</th>
<th>EXCELLENT 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE (25%)</td>
<td>Often has a negative attitude towards the task.</td>
<td>Usually has a negative attitude towards the task.</td>
<td>Often has a positive attitude towards the task.</td>
<td>Always has a positive attitude towards the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION (25%)</td>
<td>Not engaged. Needs frequent reminders to stay on task, often not prepared.</td>
<td>Peripherally engaged and usually cooperative, respectful and prepared.</td>
<td>Actively engaged in pair and group work. Generally cooperative, respectful and prepared.</td>
<td>Actively engaged and may take a leadership role. Always cooperative, respectful and well prepared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### “The New Literacy Set” Project
2015-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIVING INSTRUCTIONS (25%)</th>
<th>Students give incorrect instructions.</th>
<th>Some instructions are confusing.</th>
<th>The instructions are quite clear.</th>
<th>The instructions are very clear. There is extra clarification.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESPECT OTHER MEMBERS’ IDEAS / DECISIONS (25%)</td>
<td>Verbally disparages ideas of other classmates, wants things his way.</td>
<td>Usually sides with a member who has ideas similar to his own.</td>
<td>Usually withholds disparaging remarks about the ideas of others; supports others’ ideas.</td>
<td>Respects opinions of classmates, supports group decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Argumentative communication.pptx
- Final test for assessment.docx