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# **Curriculum Study**

TOPIC: Enhancing Argumentative Writing and Critical Literacy  
in a Privileged Middle School Classroom:  
Blending ICTs and Dialogic Approaches with  
Explicit Instruction

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**Running head: ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING**

**ENHANCING ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AND CRITICAL LITERACY IN A  
PRIVILEGED MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM: BLENDING ICT AND DIALOGIC  
APPROACHES WITH EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION**

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**Abstract**

A pretest-posttest comparison design was used to explore the effectiveness of blending critical pedagogy, dialogic Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) literacy, and explicit instruction in improving the argumentative writing performance of a grade 8 class in a private school. Firstly, students were taught point of view using procedures outlined by noted critical literacy experts. Then, via ICTs students engaged in dialogical discourse. The class participated in a series of online synchronous chatting alternated with asynchronous blogging. Lastly, students learnt the process of composing a five-paragraph argumentative essay by a combination of model, shared, guided and independent writing. The introduction, body and conclusion were each taught explicitly in separate lessons. Results demonstrated the value of the combined approach as an enabling bridge between speaking and writing, and thus as a writing intervention. Fourteen students made gains related to the quality of their argumentative writing. Two students had decreased posttest qualitative scores that fell below the minimum satisfactory score. Almost all students showed improvements on the quantitative measures. The researcher concludes that critical literacy, dialogic approaches <sup>using</sup> in ICTs and explicit instruction are useful teacher strategies for the teaching of argumentative writing, but may not be enough when teaching adolescents with learning difficulties.