

## Different types of argumentation and control questions

Below you will find the types of argumentation that are used regularly in academic writing. The control questions are based on the book *Leren Communiceren* (Steehouder et al. (1993), pp. 102–107). If you want to dig a bit deeper into the rules of argumentation, take a look at <http://skepdic.com/refuge/ctlessons/ch5.pdf>

### Deduction

Supporting a statement by showing that a rule, or premise, is relevant in this particular case. For example:

John Williams must be happy with the tutoring sessions at the writing centre. After all, all students are very enthusiastic.

Control questions:

- 1 Is the rule generally valid?
- 2 Can you think of arguments for why this case might be an exception to the general rule?

### Induction

Supporting a statement by showing that some cases or examples lead to a general rule. For example:

We should advise tutoring at the writing centre for all students because students in the humanities and in the social sciences find this support very useful.

Control questions:

- 1 Are there enough examples to justify the conclusion?
- 2 Do the examples cover all the possible situations this statement is about?
- 3 Have exceptions been taken into account?
- 4 Is the conclusion formulated with enough prudence (hedging)?

### Final reasoning – goals and means

Advocating in favour of a strategy or policy because of a positive effect. For example:

Tutoring sessions at the writing centre should be made mandatory in order to unburden professors and supervisors.

Control questions:

- 1 Is the goal desirable?
- 2 Will the strategy or policy lead to the goal?
- 3 What are negative side effects of the strategy or policy and do they outweigh the advantages?
- 4 Is the strategy or policy feasible? Is it better than other strategies or policies?
- 5 Is the strategy or policy ethical?

## Dilemma

Advocating in favour of a strategy or policy by showing the disadvantages of an alternative. For example:

We need to cut the budgets. We can do two things: keep the writing centre or fire the staff. We cannot do without the knowledge of the staff, so we will have to close the writing centre.

Control questions:

- 1 Are there other options besides just those two?
- 2 Should it be one of the two or could they be combined?

## Pros and cons

Advocating in favour of a strategy or policy by arguing that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. For example:

A writing centre helps students develop their writing skills which enables them to complete their writing assignments and, in the end, graduate. This is priceless so we should not complain about the cost of a writing centre.

Control questions:

- 1 Will the strategy have the effects predicted?
- 2 Are the advantages actually advantages? If yes, for whom?
- 3 Are the disadvantages actually disadvantages? If yes, for whom?
- 4 Have all relevant advantages and disadvantages been considered?
- 5 Is the weighing of advantages and disadvantages acceptable?

## Authority

Supporting a statement by referring to someone else who has claimed the statement or is the source of your idea. For example:

'As shown by Williams (1987), (...)'.

Control questions:

- 1 Is it clear who the source is? Who has said what and at what event? Who has written what in which publication?
- 2 Is the authority an expert in the field of your statement?
- 3 Are you quoting accurately?