

## **Strategy for Teaching 'Progressive Argument:' If-Then**

### **Using Children's Books, Fairy Tales and Newspapers**

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The paramount requisite component for teaching expository writing is the implementation of a strategy that uses progressive logic to create an argument that will persuade readers.

Teaching organization and the use of coordinating conjunctions take a back seat to weaving a powerful 'progressive argument' into the presentation of the writer's thinking.

One strategy for teaching 'progressive argument' is to use the 'if-then' statements found in the children's book *If You Give a Cat a Cupcake* as a model for persuasive writing. The strategy works for students of all ages. After having students experience the book, ask them to create a series of 'if-then' arguments.

- Invite younger students to have fun while offering them opportunities to make a few logical connections:
  - If you give an elephant a bathing suit, then she will jump into a swimming pool...
  - If she jumps into a swimming pool, then all the water will splash out...
- Older students can add additional 'if-then' logic, perhaps turning a fairy tale into 'if-then' statements or using news photos, ads or other less complex informational text in newspapers:
  - If Hansel and Gretel go into the forest, then they will mark their return path with breadcrumbs...
  - If they mark their return path with breadcrumbs, then the birds in the forest will eat the breadcrumbs...
- High school students can adapt a current events topic into an 'if-then' statement using newspaper archives to breakdown a recent news story which will impact teenage learners:
  - If Congress does not act, then the interest rate on student loans will increase.
  - If student loan interest rates increase, then fewer students will be able to pay for college.
- Choose content from newspapers that address students' needs and interests and involve practical concerns.
  - If one person were not in the photo or another person were added to the photo, then...
  - If the price of an item in an ad jumped by 200%, (or decreased by 200%), then...
  - If the action were taken by a leader in X county, state or country or Y continent, then...

***The above strategy also offers an opportunity for students to infuse their writings with humor and parody.***