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Students' Perceptions on the Explicit Teaching of Argumentative Writing

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Abstract

Argumentative writing is a prominent meta-genre in tertiary-level education, both in writing courses and in the disciplines. The structure of argumentative writing reflects the skills of a critical thinker to organize information with the aim of constructing a piece of writing by providing arguments with data to support them in a logical way. Although argumentative writing is important to achieve success in academia and life in general, arguing a case is quite challenging. When shifting from secondary education to tertiary level, many students are expected to be able to write good arguments. However, not all of them have been exposed to argumentative writing in pre-university education. In the education system in Kosovo, students are rarely exposed to any formal knowledge of argumentative writing in the pre-university education system. The writing practice in their native tongue is mainly related to creative writing or narration. Similar practices apply in English classes, in which teachers predominantly focus on short descriptive or narrative writing assignments, thus failing to develop any argumentative skills among students. This research aimed to investigate students' perceptions on the explicit teaching of argumentative writing that they have been exposed to for one semester. Data were collected through focus group interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. Findings suggest that explicit instruction is essential in providing students with the skills needed to construct their written arguments. Hence, it is proposed that explicit instruction be included as a method to teach argumentative writing skills to tertiary students.

Keywords: argumentation, benefits, challenges, development, new