

Reading Activity

Argumentative Writing – Using a Graphic Organizer (Fishbone)*

K. Elango

Objective

To enable readers to enhance their comprehension skill and, more importantly, retention skill, as it has become challenging these days.

Participation: Individual

Material

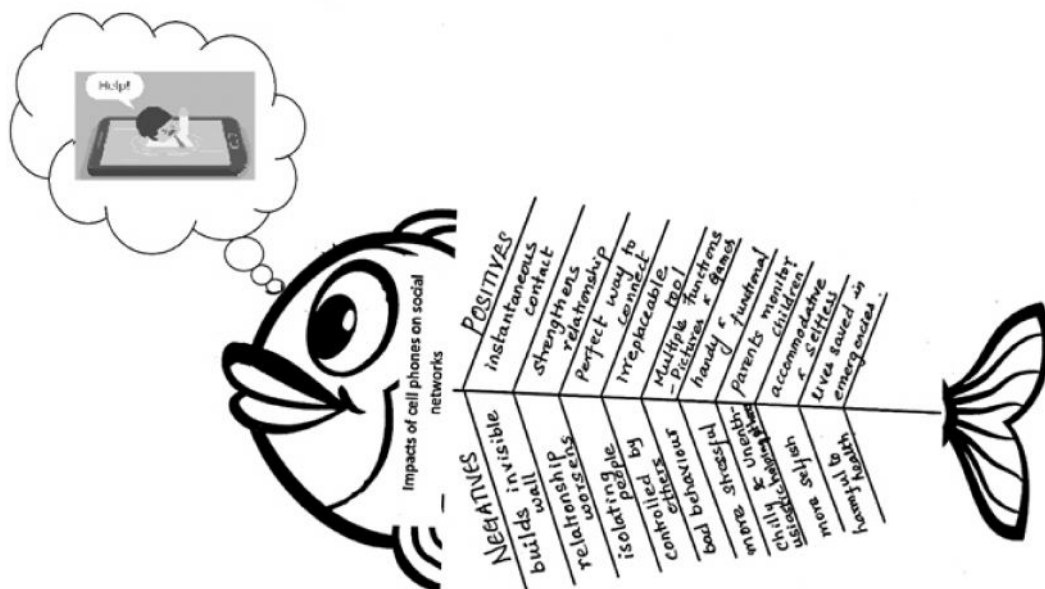
Any argumentative piece of writing, for example, “Impacts on Social Network Using Cell Phone” Source: <https://ifpgod.wordpress.com/about/impact-on-social-network/>

Procedure

- Go through the essay rapidly to get a sense of the writer’s ideas, for and against the impact of cell phones on our social networking, the way they are structured,

and his standpoint.

- Make your second reading intensive and take notes by sorting ideas on both sides.
- Arrange the ideas of for and against and match the exact contradictions, even if they appear in different parts of the text.
- Download/draw a fishbone diagram and place these ideas along each bone – all the ideas supporting the proposition at the top and those against it at the bottom. Take care to place the ideas opposing each other on either side. You may retain interesting expressions of the writer for their original flavour.
- The finished fishbone organizer enables you to make the writer’s standpoint clear and to infer whether it is balanced or lopsided.
- You may either agree or disagree with the



views of the writer and understand the strength of his arguments.

- As a reflective reader, you can build up his arguments on the topic. The benefit of familiarizing yourself with others' ideas is that they can act as prompts to formulate and expand your own ideas.

Learning Outcomes

1. Readers realize that they need to read carefully to identify whether the writer has any viewpoint and drives it home to influence the readers, albeit implicitly. The writer's arguments can play a catalytic role in making one formulate one's own ideas.
2. Readers recognize that a collective presentation of them in a visual form rather than the arrangement of ideas in a linear form can help them to hold on to them in their memory for long.

Further Reading

Any polemical text, consciously focusing on identifying the writer's position and generating one's own views.

***Fishbone diagram:**

This graphic organiser is ideal for visually representing argumentative ideas, identifying the writer's standpoint and expressing one's own views.

Note on the essay: "Impacts on Social Network Using Cell Phone".

Source: <https://ifpgod.wordpress.com/about/impact-on-social-network/>

It is an interesting essay, which examines the impact of cell phones on our social networking. Against the popular surveys sponsored by cell phone companies, the writer attempts to dig beneath the data to

establish the negative impact. It is a balanced piece of writing, which considers both the sides. Reading it is rewarding.

Significance of Retention

A feature that characterizes good learning is the ability to store information in long term memory and recall it promptly when required. This has become a real challenge to a majority of learners in the tech-driven age. Besides, the West does not emphasize it much as a learning process and the technological devices have now become more handy to store, with the result that more and more learners seem to be losing their ability to retain information as knowledge. Hence, this skill has to be cultivated rigorously among learners to make them better learners and leading to better communication skills.

The following research-proven strategies can effectively improve memory, enhance recall, and increase retention of information:

1. Focus your attention.
2. Avoid cramming.
3. Structure and organize.
4. Use mnemonic devices.
5. Elaborate and rehearse.
6. Visualize concepts.
7. Relate new information to things you already know.
8. Read out loud.

(Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/great-ways-to-improve-your-memory-2795356>)

Dr. K. Elango, National Secretary, ELTAI & (Formerly) Professor of English, Anna University.

Email: elangoela@rediffmail.com