Grace Waker, Gwilym Goss, Molly Pratt, Hanna Rowe

Steyning Grammar school is a large comprehensive of over 2000 children, all of whom sit GCSE RE at either short course or full course level. Four team members contributed to the project, with the aim being to begin to institute Toulmin's principles in different ways across a KS4 year group, and in doing so compare successes and points for development. All of us found differentiating the concepts of warrant, fact, backing and conclusion a difficult task for KS4, particularly when applying it to the typical short exam-style responses students need to produce. The conversations and learning that resulted, however, were very powerful in helping students to develop their responses, and we saw improvements in both the critical thinking of students around the concepts they were studying, as well as improvements in their exam technique and consequent results.

One positive approach was to simplify Toulmin's model of argument into easy 3 sentence frameworks for children to use. This had the benefit of being easy to remember, applicable in exams, and also similar enough to a system of paragraphs used in English so as to be quick to pick up. Supported by debate and modelling, we introduced a "What, Why, How" model approach to key beliefs, roughly analogous to flipping Toulmin's model on its head. Students would start a paragraph with a conclusion (the 'What' – e.g. "Some Christians, such as Quakers, are generally against violence and believe warfare is wrong"), move onto an explanation justifying/warranting this (the 'Why' - "They believe that violence goes against God's wishes, and only leads to more suffering and harm"), and finishing with a statement of fact ('How', or rather how it impacts the life of the individual concerned - "Quakers consequently are often conscientious objectors").

We also found that coupling this with irrelevant but funny stimulus questions and paired for/against analysis in response helped tease out stronger responses and establish when backing was required. For instance, the question 'T-rexes were the coolest dinosaur' might elicit an against column of "Couldn't run fast/high metabolic requirements/bad at volleyball," which segued very nicely into qualifying which of these were significant: how detrimental was a low top speed? Were T-rexes looking silly in weekly volleyball tournaments against longer limbed dinosaurs and therefore uniquely compromised? Repeating this approach for different questions didn't feel like hard work or study for students, but established quickly an analytical approach to warrant and backing that was easy to grasp and use. At its best, this approach provided a framework for weaker students, whilst also stretching high achievers by making them engage critically with the reasoning and warrant they were employing.

'T-Rexes were the Coolest Dinosaur' - Discuss	
FOR	**AGAINST**
Massive jaws	Slow
Moves well for a big guy	Always hungry
Apex predator	Picked last for volleyball
Ate Jeff Goldblum	Ate Jeff Goldblum