Article Review Essay, Research Paper

Motherly Advice

Did your mother read to you when you were six weeks old? Did she teach you how to do math problems when you were two? Recently, I read the Wisconsin Journal Sentinel and found an editorial on child development. Kathleen Parker s article, First Three Years Aren t That Critical tells us that parents today are putting to much emphasis on what the media and medical journals are saying, instead of using common sense. The article emphasizes that parents are going overboard on these new studies using good argumentative techniques. Although I found not all of what she said was accurate, I still felt she got her point across. Parker uses evidence from scientists and medical books, to further persuade the reader to side with her opinion. Parker uses good persuasive techniques by showing that not everything you read in the media about child development is true or factual. Parker also shows that she is not one-sided on the issue and gives a personal comment about the opposing viewpoint. I feel the author proved her point that parents are being ridiculous in how they are raising their child these days.

In the first few paragraphs, author attracts the attention of the reader and explains the main point of the article. The author begins the article saying that she Pity[s] today s parents who want to do the right thing. The sentence attracts the audience to continue reading the article because the sentence sparks curiosity in why the author pities today s parents. The article continues, They [parents] buy child-rearing books, explore over psychology articles, play Mozart in nurseries festooned with alphabet cards and the periodic table. Parker shows good persuasive technique by describing an exaggerated scenario of what parents are doing these days to try to develop their child s mind.

Although the scenario is not believable, the exaggeration helps to prove that parents are being excessive in the way they develop their children. Parker states her position clearly when she comments that parenting should not be that challenging nor as ridiculous as parents are making it. She states that by buying books and playing Mozart to children would be going overboard. This argument could offend people who believe that reading and teaching kids early is a better way to develop their minds or people that spend their time following the latest trends. The author acknowledges the fact that parents are trying to do the right thing. By acknowledging the other viewpoint, the author can still present her argument and not offend the reader so much that they would quickly side against her. Using these techniques, the author effectively attracts the readers attention and explains the main point of the rest of the article.

I noticed that in this article, Parker challenges the media s representation on the effectiveness of early childhood development by stating that you should not change how you raise your child based on trivial news articles. Parker lists sources: Newsweek, the Clintons, and books about early development, as causes for parents to go overboard on developing their young children. The point that Parker is trying to get across is that these articles are not reasons for society to change their parental habits. The author is saying that the news articles can not prove one way or the other that teaching your child early in life gives them the advantage. Just because an article says that in some cases child development is effective, it doesn t mean that it is true or appropriate to change the way you are teaching your two-year old. Parker s technique is to debunk the idea of these sources, and to get the reader to believe in her side.To further her persuasive article, the author wanted to show that the media can not prove one way or the other that teaching your child early will affect how smart they become in life. Parker mentions that Thomas Jefferson s mother never spent time to teach her child s early development, and yet her son turned out to be a genius. I can see how this would be a good point, but it can be easily refuted. First of all, Parker does not know how Thomas Jefferson s mother raised her son. Parker can not make that statement because she has no evidence to show how Mrs. Jefferson raised her son. This flaw is known as an ignorance fallacy because it the statement can not be proved one way or the other. Maybe Mrs. Jefferson did read and try to teach Thomas when he was very young. Parker made a good point by saying that Mrs. Jefferson did not rely on scientific findings but rather on instinct when raising her child. My only problem is the ignorance fallacy, which causes the reader to become skeptical about the truth of the article.

The article provides evidence to why current technology cannot accurately tell us whether a child s brain develops faster or better. Parker provides the reader with evidence from scientists and from medical literature to show that despite all the technology we have, nobody knows for sure how much it will help to teach your kid in the first three years. By providing evidence to Parker s statement, the reader is more likely to accept the fact that these medical findings are not concrete. By showing this evidence, the author can show that the information from these news sources cannot be said to be fact, which further helps her overall thesis.

To show that her argument is not completely one-sided, Parker includes a statement near the end of the article. The other side that I am talking about is the parents who do teach their child early in life. The author writes this statement about the other side of her argument, in order to show that she doesn t want to bash parents for trying to do the best for their children, but Parker wants them to use common sense. In this paragraph, Parker says that the, Purpose in debunking the myth [that early child development will give your child an edge] isn t to diminish the importance of good parenting in early infancy, but to suggest that public policies need to be based on sound, not wishful, science. By including this statement, Parker shows that she understands the desire of parents to help their children develop better and she shows that raising a child shouldn t be based on wishful thinking, but on scientific proof. This is a good persuasive technique because it shows that Parker is not one-sided or insensitive to parents that are trying to do what they can for their children. Parker is just ultimately saying that public policies on child rearing should be based on more than a few articles in a newspaper but rather scientific evidence.

Kathleen Parker s article was a well thought out editorial to persuade people in thinking that parenting these days has gone too far. Parker s thesis was clear; she knows parents want to do the right thing for their children, but reading and teaching them in their early years is ridiculous. Parker effectively gave evidence to her argument by quoting from scientists and medical literature. Using evidence to support Parker s overall point made the article more persuasive and convincing. Although she gave some information without evidence, such as in the Jefferson story, she still makes a point in the argument. I felt that Kathleen Parker was persuasive in showing that parents are believing too much what the media and what new medical findings are saying and not using common sense during the first few years of a child s life. As a parent you should be concentrating on loving and nourishing your child rather than trying to teach it algebra. Parents have been raising their children for thousands of years and I do not believe that these news articles should change the way people are raising their children now. How did your mother raise you? I am sure she did not have a periodic table on hand when she was rocking you to sleep. Parents have other things to worry about rather than trying to change their parental habits because what some controversial news article said. Let parents use what their mother and father used when raising them: common sense.

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