The Library // Study Room 1



Summary (Sample Answers)

Topic

Attribution and context

Provides rationale for the article

Paragraph
compares his
argument to a
different
approach and
explains why his
is better

Conclusion puts the message in context

Summary Template

In his 2014 article "Digital Literacy is key to the Future," published in WIRED, Marcus Wohlsen explores the problem of what skills children today will need to be digitally literate in a future defined by big data and information technology. Drawing on ideas and opinions from several experts in technology and digital education, Wohlen argues that skills in "computational thinking" or an "algorithmic mindset" are key to digital literacy. Such thinking, informed by the logic of coding, will be necessary in a world driven by information technology, and not just for those involved directly in computer programming.

Body Paragraphs

For Wohlsen, addressing this topic is necessary to ensure we as a society, in the fields of technology, education and government, correctly define, and then provide to our children, the skills needed for digital literacy.

Drawing on ideas from different experts, Wohlsen explains why skills in "computational thinking," which include critical thinking that shows deep knowledge of the logic of coding and the ability to collaborate, are necessary. First he argues that these skills can be applied outside the context of basic computer programming to solve larger social problems, especially in a world driven by data. Second, he argues these skills will empower the next generation to be able to make technology do what they want it to do.

Wohlsen is quick to distinguish these skills in "computational thinking" from simply knowing how to use technology. Putting computers in front of children to use is not the same as developing this unique form of critical thinking that can engage with algorithms and thus manage in a data-driven world. He warns that if we mistake the ability to use computers with the ability to think within the logic of coding, we risk missing the opportunity to provide true digital literacy.

The problem, Wohlsen concludes, is that confusing the ability to use computers with truly understanding the logic of computers will continue until more teachers have the ability to teach the logic of coding. Development of digital literacy in the classroom will have to start with the teachers.

Conclusion

Wohlsen's article highlights a great challenge facing not only the education system, but also families. Young people will need a new kind of literacy, a literacy based in a knowledge of coding and algorithms, but it is not clear where or how they will be given the opportunity to develop these skills.

Example of language of attribution

Main Argument

Paragraph
outlines two
reasons
supporting his
main argument
about what skills
are necessary

Paragraph notes barriers to achieving his main idea