Argument Mapping

This process essentially creates a flow chart that allows you to visually connect arguments and rationale. You can do this to better understand a document you are reading or to construct your own arguments that you intend to present in a paper.

Consider the following guidelines summarized from an argument mapping tutorial, which can be found in more detail at http://www.academia.edu/1671632/Argument_mapping_II

The important aspects to argument mapping are:

- Identify the conclusion and any sub-conclusions
- Identify the reasons in support of the conclusions
- Identify the reasons opposing the conclusions
- Identify any reasons that require qualification
- Once all the above is done – add a weighting to the reasons* (weak/strong support) as some reasons are far more convincing than others
- Make a decision regarding the conclusion – never sit on the fence.
Points to consider when weighting reasons (provided by Dr. Krista Patriquin, Dalhousie University Writing Centre):

- Is the reason based on empirical evidence or anecdotal?
- Are there possible limitations to the reason (e.g., was the study design reasonable)? Are these acknowledged/suitably addressed?