
Exploring Argumentation Inquiry

Team Tool 5.11 from *Leading for Literacy*

Purpose

With a topic-focused text set, disciplinary teams explore the reading and thinking processes they engage in to develop claims across the texts and then to build an argument for a claim. Their experience informs ways they may want to scaffold their own classroom instruction.

Procedure

- In advance, invite discipline-alike members of the team to create a topic-specific set of two or three short texts they might want to use with students.
- Provide copies of the texts to all team members and ask them to read and Talk to the Texts. Teachers may expect more of a “purpose” for reading multiple documents, but invite them to explore — to wade in and see what they find.
- Bring the team together and create a Reading Multiple Texts Strategy List:
 - What did we find interesting?
 - What connections did we make?
 - What problems in reading the texts did we have to solve and how did we do that?
 - What questions do we still have?
 - What issues are raised?
- Have teachers work individually to make two or three claims based on their reading. Ask them to pay close attention to what they have to do to make a claim.
- Have teachers gather in discipline-alike small groups to share with a partner their claims and the processes they used to make them.
- Bring everyone together and begin an Argumentation Strategy List:
 - What did we do to make a claim?
 - What problems did we have to solve and how did we do that?
 - What questions do we still have?
 - What issues are raised?

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- Have each disciplinary small group choose a claim for which they will develop an argument.
- Ask teachers to work individually to begin to develop an argument.
- After a few minutes, ask teachers to reflect on their process of developing an argument and discuss this stage of their process with their partner, and then their small group.
- Bring everyone together and debrief by adding to the Argumentation Strategy List:
 - How did we go about identifying evidence to use?
 - What makes particular excerpts from the text helpful in supporting a claim? Less helpful? How do we know?
 - What else are we doing to develop our argument? What are the internal argumentative voices we hear and respond to as we work? What actions do we take mentally?
- Facilitate a discussion of how team members can use this experience in their classrooms.