

Argumentation Evidence Card Sort

Argumentation: A process for presenting and weighing evidence

Argumentation is the practice that that scientists, engineers and even social scientists like historians, use to present, dispute and weigh their evidence in order to find answers to questions and solve real-world problems.

Of course, as classroom teachers we know all too well that getting students to do this , especially younger learners is challenging and requires lots of scaffolding.

Evidence Card Sort

Let's say that, after learning about the characteristics of different energy sources, you want your students to WEIGH the advantages and disadvantages of different types of energy and make a claim about which type of energy or combination of types might be the best for powering their particular town.

To get started, you need to create:

- One set of colored cards with the names of the possible energy **sources** on them.
- A second set of cards with the **characteristics** of these types of energy on them.

Now it's time to get your students involved. You introduce the activity by telling your students that they will be working in pairs to sort a set of cards in two piles a particular way.

Goal: Respectful Argumentation

- You have set the expectation that respectful discussion is the goal of this activity and not necessarily agreement.
- You ask them to be sure that both partners have a voice and that their ideas get heard.
- You explain that they can put cards in the middle if they cannot come to agreement.

Gradual Release of Responsibility: " I Do, We Do, You Do"

For success we have found that it is very important to use the "Gradual Release of Responsibility" process . "I do", "We Do", "You Do".

Step 1: "I Do" (Then cut to table with cards and voice-over)

Instead of telling them the directions you show them the directions with the help of a document camera or the camera on your computer

You are going to first choose two of the source cards and place them as "headers" at the top of their desk. For example: nuclear and wind.

Then I'm going to draw a card from the deck of black cards and decide whether it goes in category one or category two while talking to my partner.

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Step 2: “ We Do”

Then you ask for one of your students to come up with you and model what “partner work” is going to look and sound like.

Step 3: “ You Do”

Finally , after asking if there are any clarifying questions , you set the class loose to work in pairs.

While walking around the room you need to.....

Monitor for off-task behavior

- Engage quieter students using prompts
- Listen for common misconceptions & record them
- Solicit alternative explanations
- Record exemplars of quality argumentation

Follow Up

It is important in the end to pull the class back together for a few minutes of whole class instruction and do some of the following things.

- Share examples of strong argumentation
- Ask which cards were easiest or most difficult to sort and why.
- Set them loose to try different combinations of energy sources.

SUMMARY

Let’s take a minute to recap the important points of using this tool for argumentation

- Evidence Card sorts:
 - Can be used to argue evidence while sorting it.
 - Provide a structure that stimulates Critical thinking and Productive Argumentative Talk
 - Provide a platform that gets students actively involved in a way that promotes respect and safety
- It is important to follow a gradual release model when employing this tool

For more: Go to Argumentation Toolkit: <http://www.argumentationtoolkit.org/>

To watch a video explaining this activity, go to <http://energyteacher.org/>