Arguments, Opinions, & UGs, oh my!

Argument Writing Across Content Areas

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Overview of Today's Session

- **Develop a shared understanding of schemas for opinions-arguments-critique**

- **Consider 3 types of arguments in your content area**

- **Planning Tools posted at www.Karin-hess.com under Event Materials, Topic #2**
  - **Password:**

What's an argument?

- Discuss
  - What's an argument/critique? What's an opinion? What's an "UG"?
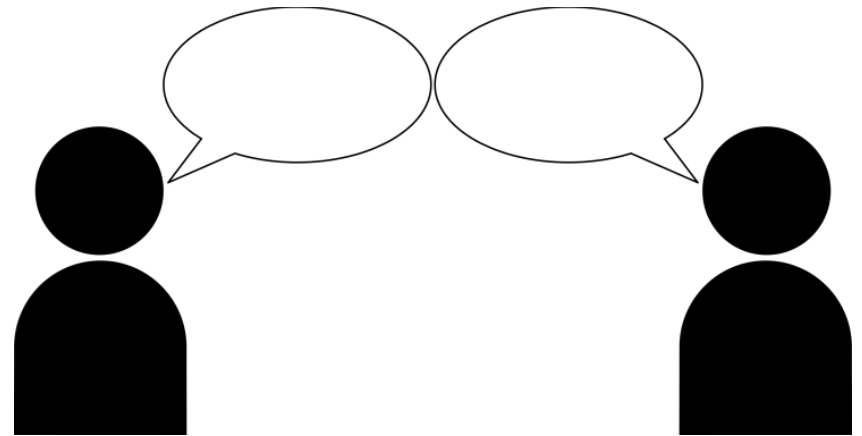 - How are they alike/different?

What's an argument?

- Sort the examples on your tables - use sticky notes to label or make notes about them
- Be ready to defend why you put them into each pile

Turn & Talk…

- What new ideas or understandings have emerged *about building schema*?

What's the difference?????

Continuum

Opinions

- Claim – stated opinion

- ?

- ?

- ?

- ?

Arguments & Critiques

- Claim

- Grounds

- Backing

- Qualifiers

- Conclusions

What's the difference?????

Continuum

Opinions

- **Claim –opinion/focus**

  (stated versus implied or inferred as in political cartoons)

- **Give Reasons**

- **Support claim & elaborate: text evidence, facts, anecdotes for each reason**

- **? *Would make it stronger***

- **Conclusion**

Arguments & Critiques

- **Claim –thesis**

- **Grounds ("warrants") – context, appeals**
  - Why is this claim true or believable? (define criteria)

- **Backing – analysis, elaboration, & reasoning**
  - Support with "hard evidence" & analysis providing legitimacy for the claim

- **Qualifiers (*not always true*)**
  - Address counter claims; exceptions/conditions
  - Provide rebuttal

- **Conclusions – summary, text to world/text, call to action**

Analyzing Opinions & Arguments

- **<u>Handout</u>: Anatomy of an Opinion-Argument**
  - **Sample text**
  - **Discuss**: What evidence of elements of opinion or argument do you see?

- **Table groups choose one example (prompt or text) to analyze**

Exploring connections between *research* (learning to write) & instructional practice

1. Ability to understand the topic/texts deeply enough to see more than one side/perspective
   - Close, critical reading, discussion, & researching
   - Gather information & organize for relevance
   - Well-constructed arguments begin with analysis and interpretation of data/evidence, giving rise to a claim
2. Exposure to many forms/formats to **develop schemas** of how this genre is different from other genre (claim-grounds-backing-qualifiers)
3. Audience & Peer Conferencing – most effective at the end of the writing/development process

Deepening our understanding of opinions-arguments …

Teaching Argument Writing: Supporting Claims with Relevant Evidence and Clear Reasoning
George Hillocks, Jr. (2011)

Teach simple to more complex arguments, starting with…

1. **Arguments of fact** – explore "the facts of the case"
2. **Arguments of judgment** – provide relevant evidence in support of rules/criteria used to make a judgment
3. **Arguments of policy** – make a case to establish, amend, or abolish a rule, procedure, etc. that affects people's lives- criteria (and evidence) used to examine impact

Provide Instructional Scaffolding – one type of argument builds to the next

- Examine facts of the topic deeply – read, discuss, interpret
- Identify perspectives
- Use evidence to build criteria/rules & reasoning for judgment

Teaching Argument Writing *(cont.)*

- **Arguments of fact:** students use the knowledge they possess to derive warrants (rules/criteria/reasons) and use evidence to develop basic arguments (e.g., solve a mystery)

- **Arguments of judgment:** begin with simple, concrete problems, helping students decide the criteria for making judgments
  - Less complex: what should we choose as the new school mascot?
  - More complex: (abstract ideas) what is courage? What makes a good leader?

- **Arguments of policy:** students clarify the nature of a problem (e.g., change of policy); investigate/collect or analyze data (not summarize the issue), draw conclusions based on data and make recommendations