

Chapter 6: The Moves of Argument in Social Media

Developing Arguments Via Social Media

To build students' mindfulness in social media spaces, we first need to help them see their participation in those networks as real reading and writing. This feat requires us to rethink the kinds of texts we ask our students to read and to write and the way we value their out-of-school literacies in the classroom. The following gateway activity, helps students to metacognitively think about their reading practices and practice seeing social media as a reading and writing space.

Weeklong Reflection: This week we will be focusing on the reading that you do on a daily basis—in your social media networks. You will work with a partner to investigate how people argue in these networks. What kinds of claims do they make? How do they respond when they don't agree with something that is said? You will collect data early in the week, and at the end of the week you will share the results of your investigation.

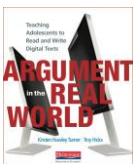
Day 1: Identify the networks where you, your partner, your peers, and adults in your lives read. Consider Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, gaming communities, and other digital spaces. Select several sample posts from different networks to analyze. Try to collect a variety of posts that range from short to long, from text-based to image-based, and from having many comments to few or none.

Day 2: Uncover the hidden arguments. Read through the sample posts and start to form a hypothesis about how people make claims, respond to claims, and provide evidence for what they say. What are the hidden (or not so hidden) ways people argue, debate, and discuss issues?

Day 3: Reflect on how people make arguments in these networks. Do you see the same argument techniques within a particular network? Across networks? Which techniques seem to be the most effective?

Days 4 and 5: Share the results of your inquiry, and listen to your peers as they share their results. As a class, develop a list of observations. Then consider what you've learned about reading posts in your social network. Make a list of tips to help other students your age see and understand the arguments embedded in social media.

(Adapted from *Connected Reading: Teaching Adolescent Readers in a Digital World*)



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