

**Level 1: Student identifies new relevant supporting evidence in an argument (but doesn't explain how or why it is relevant, or how another piece of evidence is irrelevant)**

### **Teaching Strategy A:** Card Sort

**Goal:** Offer students more practice explaining why relevant and irrelevant evidence does or does not support a claim

**Works Best With:** Small groups or pairs

#### **Details:**

#### **Preparation:**

- Create a claim that can be supported with evidence.
- Create several pieces of evidence that support the claim, and write each piece of evidence on a card. Also include a few pieces of irrelevant evidence that do not support the claim. Make sure that some of the evidence includes data.
- Print or write the claim and each piece of evidence on separate cards or small pieces of paper (See example). Make copies so that each pair or group of students has a set.
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#### **Teaching:**

- If students haven't done a card sort for evidence before, introduce the idea using only one claim as follows:
  - Explain that students should sort the evidence into two categories: evidence that supports the claim (relevant evidence/supporting) and evidence that does not support the claim (irrelevant/non-supporting evidence). They should do this by placing relevant evidence with the claim and placing the irrelevant evidence off to the side.
  - Emphasize that students should only move evidence into the category of relevant or irrelevant after they have discussed *why* they are making this distinction with their partner. Both partners should agree on where the evidence goes, or should be able to explain why they do not agree.
- After at least one opportunity to sort with one claim, provide student pairs with **two claims** and a set of evidence. Ask them to sort the evidence according to which claim it supports the best and why.
- After each activity, spend time debriefing the discussions students had. Emphasize the thinking and reasoning students did as they made their choices, rather than whether each choice was right or wrong.
- Explain that this is the kind of thinking you want them to do when reading or writing their own arguments in this class.

**Resources:**

- **Card Sort Exemplar**
- **Card Sort Template**

**Why This Matters:**

Students who can identify irrelevant evidence and/or relevant supporting evidence but cannot express why this evidence is either irrelevant or supportive, likely need more practice analyzing the relationship between evidence and possible claims. Make sure that these students have a clear understanding of what the parts of an argument are and how they relate to one and other by using the card sort activity to prompt them to explain exactly how different pieces of evidence support or do not support a claim.

**Level 1: Student identifies new relevant supporting evidence in an argument (but doesn't explain how or why it is relevant, or how another piece of evidence is irrelevant)**

**Goal:** Offer students guided practice in explaining why or how relevant evidence is supportive of a given claim in order to prepare them to critique this evidence (Level 2)

**Teaching Strategy:** Read and analyze simple arguments; introducing critique as an element of analysis; supporting students as they read new arguments

**Works Best With:** **Whole group, with follow-up work with small groups or individuals.**

**Details:**

- Using a simple argument about familiar content such as the Sample Argument with Irrelevant Evidence, ask students to review aloud what claims and evidence are and how they work together in an argument. (If do not use the Sample Argument with Irrelevant Evidence, make sure the argument you choose or create has at least once irrelevant idea included.)
- Guided by student responses, address any confusions students have about how an argument works during the discussion. For example, if students are unclear about the relationship between the claim and supporting evidence, discuss how evidence included in an argument should support the claim.
- Ask students to explain their thinking about how each piece of evidence included does or does not support the claim.
- Explain that one way an argument can be judged as stronger than another is whether or not the evidence included is both *relevant* and *supportive*.
- Ask students to go back and identify each piece of evidence as either relevant, supportive, or both. Have them mark each piece with an R (relevant), S (supportive), I (irrelevant) or RS (relevant, supportive).
- Have students suggest ways the argument might be made stronger (for instance, if the irrelevant evidence were left out).
- To further students' understandings, continue to work with them closely as they read new arguments that are provided during class. Ask them to read

the argument once first, to gain a general understanding. Then, they should reread the argument and ensure that they can explain how a given piece of evidence does or does not support the claim and mark potential evidence with an R, S, I or RS.

- You can circulate around the room and support students thinking as they work independently, or you could pull a select group of students together and have them read the text aloud together, stopping to discuss their thinking about the evidence and how it supports the claim.
- As you work with students, model your own thinking aloud so they can see the kinds of thinking processes you go through to not only find relevant, supporting evidence, but to be able to explain how or why this evidence is supportive of the claim. Model your thinking with irrelevant evidence as well.

**Resources:**

· **Model Argument**

**Why This Matters:**

Using a simple arguments about familiar topics is essential when focusing students on internalizing the components and relational structures of arguments and then focusing on which evidence is supportive or not. Reading familiar arguments lessens the cognitive load for students, as it eliminates the difficulty of the content as a factor in how they comprehend the text. This will make it easier for students to focus on learning the aspects of argumentation that you are trying to help them to understand. In addition, providing students with some beginning experiences with critiquing arguments for relevancy or support with regard to evidence will help them become more sophisticated at analyzing arguments later on.