**MS Big Questions - Lesson #6**

**Unit Name**: Debate Drills

**Topic**: Recognizing Arguments

**Essential Questions**:

1. Question 1 - What are the components of an argument?
2. Question 2 - How do journalists use arguments to inform and persuade?
3. Question 3 - How does the intended audience influence the crafting of arguments?

**Objectives**:

1. Objective 1 - Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
2. Objective 2 - Refer to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas

under discussion.

1. Objective 3 - Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

**Instructional Materials Needed**:

Copies of 2 different current event articles from respected news publications. Try to find one article designed to inform and another one to persuade on the same topic (ex. one article that informs the audience about what climate change is and one trying to persuade policy makers to take action on climate change). Articles can be chosen to complement subject matter students are working on in other classes. This is a good opportunity to discuss expository writing.

These two articles comprise one set. You can choose to have the entire class work on these two articles, give different sets to pairs of students, or divide the class into small groups and give each small group a different set. A sample set of articles about fracking are included in this lesson.

**References** *(if applicable)*:

None needed.

**Overview of Lesson** *(general outline of what will be covered)*:

Students will explore how arguments are constructed in news articles and how they are used to inform and persuade their target audiences. They will read, find elements of argument structure, annotate their articles, and then share the information gained with peers in guided questioning.

**Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson** *(be sure to include time allocation information)*:

1. Review the structure of a debate argument (claim, warrant, impact, etc. - using the same structure and terminology you have used previously)
   1. Claim - the point you are trying to prove
   2. Warrant - the evidence and analysis used to prove the point
   3. Impact - the significance/so what of the material and how it proves the claim true
2. Distribute the informative article - students can work individually or in pairs. Using a highlighter, students should mark the claims/warrants/impacts they see in the article and then label each with a C,W, I. They should also note claims that are NOT substantiated.

3. Distribute the persuasive article on the same topic area. Have students repeat the actions noted in #2.

1. Have students move to small groups. In small groups, students discuss the following:
   1. Did each of the claims have warrants and impacts?
   2. Were some of the warrants better than others? What made the warrants “better”?
   3. Was there a difference between the argument structure in the informative and the persuasive article?
   4. What is missing, if anything? What would make the arguments more compelling?
   5. Did the author acknowledge an opposing viewpoint? How did she/he respond? Was the response effective?
2. Reflection - ask the class to share the most effective and least effective arguments from the respective sets of articles. What made the arguments effective or not?

**Informal Assessment Strategies**:

Monitor work and assist students as needed. Consider adjusting difficulty of reading material and subject matter for different learners.

**Formal Assessment Strategies**:

This activity can be a stand-alone activity and used for participation and reflection or as part of a larger debate unit.

**Reflection/Review for Future**:

The teacher can take this activity a step further by showing news clips from different programs and having the students look for argument structure or lack thereof. Are the commentators making arguments or unsubstantiated assertions?