

Analyzing In-the-Moment Evidence

Adapted with permission from the Colorado Department of Education

In the following example, a teacher supports a pair of middle school, English learner students in-the-moment as they read and select responses related to questions about a persuasive text. The goal of the activity is to improve reading comprehension through attention to language. The teacher focuses on key phrases from the text that point to the author's expression of either fact or opinion. She analyzes the evidence she receives from the students' responses in real-time.

Context: In pairs, the students have begun responding to a series of questions after reading a text, *America's Problem with Screens*. As they work, the teacher circulates around the pairs listening in to their conversations and checking student responses to questions.

The teacher notices that a pair of students has responded incorrectly to one of the questions. They identified the following statement as a fact, "It is time for us to change our habits and spread the word about screen time."

Teacher

[I want to understand why these students think this is a fact.] Can I ask you a question?

Students

[Nod yes.]

Teacher

Why did you choose that answer for number 10?

Student 1

Because it's real.

Teacher

What do you mean by real?

Student 1

Because the article says that we have to change our habits. And that's real because it's bad for you.

Student 2

Yeah...that's it. It's what the author tells us.

Teacher

I see. So are you saying that the author is saying that screen time is bad for you?

Students

Yeah.

Teacher

[Pointing to the sentence:] Where in the sentence does it say that screen time is bad for you?

Student

[Pause. Students are looking at the sentence.]

Teacher

Can one of you read the sentence out loud?

Student 1

[Reads out loud.]

Teacher

Now you've heard the sentence again. Do you think that fact is in the sentence?

Student 2

Umm...I guess not.

Teacher

So let's think a little bit more about what the author is telling us in the sentence. What action is the author telling us to take?

Student 2

To change our habits.

Student 1

Yeah. And like to spread the word.

Teacher

And do you think that these are facts?

Students

Maybe.

Teacher

So when the author says “it is time” to do these things, is he giving us a fact or an opinion?

Student 1

[Pause.] I think it might be an opinion ‘cause he’s saying it’s time to do it ‘cause like he thinks if we don’t do this, it’ll get bad.

Student 2

Yeah, that’s right! ‘Cause if we watch too much TV, it’ll be bad so he thinks it’s time we did something...so that’s his opinion.

Student 1

Yeah, that’s like his opinion.

Teacher

Yes, I agree. Using the phrase “it is time” gives us a clue that this is the author’s opinion about what we should do. The author is basing his opinion on the facts in the article, such as the one you mentioned earlier from the paragraph where the author is describing the research on the health effects of screen time. [The teacher then reads aloud the sentence in the article.]

Teacher

“In addition, the research has shown that people who spend more time in front of screens consume more high calorie foods, such as candy and soda.” Now that we’ve talked about your answer for number 10, I would like you to go back and think about your answers for numbers 11 and 12 and decide if you still agree with the answers you chose. Thanks.

Students

Okay

Teacher

[Moves to another pair.]