



Invention Critique and Response Activity

Overview

Critiquing the work of others is a form of argumentation, as is responding to or refuting a critique. When we critique another's work, we think critically about it and we offer either some form of analytical criticism or praise, supplying backing (evidence or reasoning) to support the critique offer. When we respond to a critique from a peer or classmate, we either refute it or concede it – or respond with a specific combination of refutation and concession – also supplying backing (evidence or reasoning) that supports our response. These are argument-based operations because they are rooted and founded in critical thinking (which comprises refutation) and the use of evidence to support ideas and viewpoints, the twin pillars of argument.

Method and Procedure

This argument-based activity is a component of the overall Invention Convention project, and should be implemented after students have completed their inventions and turned in their finished products.

1. The students' inventions should be positioned around the classroom. Each should be named and numbered (but students' names should not be attached to the inventions).
2. Begin with a gallery walk. Students should walk around to observe and try to figure out each of the inventions made by classmates.
3. Students should then be given an Invention Critique Form. They should each be assigned two inventions by number to critique.

4. Students should then go to their two assigned inventions and critique them, completing the form for each. Students should go through the questions to try to find some weakness or flaw in the invention, even if they believe that the invention as a whole is a very good one. They should also do their best to supply fact-based evidence and their own analytical reasoning to support each of their critique claims.
5. Students should submit their Invention Critique Form. These can be formatively assessed. They then should be distributed to the inventors.
6. All students should be given an Invention Response Form. They should complete this form in response to the two critiques that they are given.
7. This activity culminates in students presenting their responses to the critiques that their classmates direct to them. They should each present for up to 3 – 4 minutes. Their presentation should include a summary of their own invention – its problem, functioning, and utility – and a summary of the two critiques. Each critique should be followed by the response. Students can submit their Response Form. They can be assessed on both the form and the presentation.