***Statistics, Star Statements and Stories Feedback***

*During the 2012-2013 school year, the sixth grade science team at Salem Middle School had their students experiment with several different nonfiction reading strategies. One of those strategies was* ***Statistics, Star Statements and Stories*** *– which involved looking at the usefulness of different kinds of evidence shared in nonfiction science texts. This document contains a summary of the perceptions that students had about the Statistics, Star Statements and Stories activity.*

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| ***By the Numbers:*** | |
| **87**  *Percentage of students who rated Evaluating the Reliability of Experts as “Helpful” or “Very Helpful” as a reading strategy.* | ***Percentage Breakdown:***  *Very Helpful – 6%*  *Helpful - 81%*  *Not Helpful – 11%*  *Very Unhelpful – 2%* |
| ***Summary of Strategy’s Strengths:***  *Common Patterns found across student comments* | ***Sample Student Comments:*** |
| A recurring theme in the comments from students who found this strategy to be helpful thought that having to look for statistics, star statements and stories helped them to consider the credibility of an article – something they hadn’t ever considered before. By looking for tangible evidence, they could determine whether or not a text was worth believing. | “I thought it was interesting to look for statistics, star statments and stories. It was a great strategy for finding and noticing bias. It also helps to identify which side I am on and the way the author thinks about the event.” |
| “Looking for statistic, star statements and stories helped me find out if a artical was creditable. it also gave me more knowledge about the topic.” |
| “You did think more about the facts and opinions in articles, and who to trust. Ex: Statistics are easy to find and can be proven wrong, but sometimes they don't match the topic. Stories are more persuading, but you have to know who is telling the story. To be sure of a star statement, you must know who said it. So it is helpful to think about if the article is trustworthy or not.” |
| ***Summary of Strategy’s Weaknesses:***  *Common Patterns found across student comments* | ***Sample Student Comments:*** |
| One of the most common weaknesses of this strategy reported by students was that they couldn’t always find each type of evidence in the nonfiction article that they were reading. In these cases, accomplishing the task – finding different types of evidence – became more important to the students than determining how different types of evidence have a different impact on readers.  Students also reported being frustrated by having to write things down while reading. To them, answering questions while reading was seen as an interruption to the process of thinking. This took additional time – and students weren’t happy about that. Instead, they wanted to be reading. | “Sometimes it was a little hard to find the stactics star staments and stories in the article that i was a reading.” |
| “Most of the time this is a good nonfiction reading strategy but…it could be negative because some people read it and understand it very well and so getting into fiding things might destract the reader from the reading and they might forget what the text is about because they are trying to just read the text for the questions and not reading it to understand it.” |
| “It takes much longer in order to complete the assignment. Other than that, it was really helpful.” |
| ***Summary Thoughts:***  We should be thrilled that students see statistics, star statements and stories as a tool for determining the reliability of nonfiction text. This is an important lesson for students to learn in order to be literate consumers of scientific texts and current events connected to science. That trend in the positive comments left by students is proof positive that this strategy is worth introducing kids to.  A trend that we are seeing in the feedback students are giving us on our nonfiction reading strategies is that completing the worksheet feels like an interruption to the actual task of reading and understanding a text. That’s the same kind of comments we’ve seen mentioned as negatives in our previous activities too. To address this, we need to be clear from the beginning that “completing the worksheet” doesn’t mean “filling in every blank.” Instead, we need to get kids to see the worksheet as a guide – a collection of thoughts worth considering while reading instead of as a task that has to be completed. We’re trying to teach kids the behaviors necessary to tackle nonfiction texts – not trying to teach them to complete handouts. That’s an instructional message we need to repeat over and over again. | |