

one example of someone who justified his or her destructive behavior. She then invites students to share their examples with the whole class. Nathan begins:

Nathan: Sam Parkhill says to his wife on page 135 on the bottom—

Teacher: Everyone to page 135.

Nathan: (*Reading from the book*) “I’m sorry what happened,’ he said. He looked at her and then away. ‘You know it was purely the circumstances of Fate.’”

Teacher: What’s his motivation? So what’s he saying?

Nathan: It wasn’t really his fault, like that it *had* to happen.

Teacher: One way that people justify their destructive behavior is thinking that what?

Tim: It was meant to be.

Sarah: Mine was similar to Nathan’s, and it’s on page 136 . . .

Given the important connections students are able to make, elaborate on, and apply to the concept of *justification*, the class time devoted to developing deep understanding of this focus word could likely be termed *well* justified.

BOX 8.17

Sentence Detectives

When students approach confusing sentences or groups of sentences *metacognitively* and *metalinguistically*, they become “sentence detectives.” Beyond particular vocabulary that may be challenging, they look for transition words and other signals in the text that point to directions the text is taking and *relationships* between words and sentences. Questions asked by sentence detectives include the following:

- How can I use punctuation to chunk a confusing sentence?
- What are the transition words within and between sentences? Have I accounted for how they signal meaning?
- Are any specific referents unclear? If I substitute the words I think are their antecedents, do they make sense?

many Reading Apprenticeship teachers invite students to nominate confusing sentences or paragraphs for class investigation. Using reciprocal modeling, teachers can then work with students through the detective work that reveals who’s who and what’s what and how a reader can know. (Box 8.18 shows a sample passage nominated for sentence detective practice.)

Students need frequent and multiple kinds of word detective and sentence detective practice that promotes taking a metacognitive and metalinguistic