Chapter 1: What is Annotation?

Introduction

Transcript:

Have you ever seen students read an entire passage of a textbook, but be unable to remember anything about what they read?

Have you ever read something as a class and then tried to start a discussion about it, only to be met with blank stares?

In this module, you will learn about a strategy that will help students engage with any text more deeply and increase their comprehension.

It’s called annotation.

Definition

Annotation is:

a reader’s “dialogue with the text”

Purpose of Annotation:

• to create a visible record of thoughts
• to assist in making sense of reading
• helps students pause with purpose
Annotation is a reader’s “dialogue with the text” (Probst, 1988, p. 35). It is an interactive strategy in which students record their thoughts as they attempt to make sense of what they read. Annotation helps to address a common problem among novice readers, which is simply reading words without pausing to consider ideas or monitor one’s own comprehension (Porter-O’Donnell, 2014). Annotation helps students pause with a purpose, and it has other benefits as well.

Benefits

Benefits of Annotation

- Raises Level of Engagement
  - Students see themselves as active readers.
  - Students work to make sense of ideas.
- Invites Divergent Thinking
  - Students may react to text in different ways.
  - Divergent thoughts can lead to collaborative discussions.
- Provides an avenue for differentiation
  - Annotations provide a window into a student’s thinking.
  - Teachers can provide tailored coaching to support the student.

Transcript:

Take a moment to review three benefits of annotation.

Chapter 2: How do we do Annotate?

Facilitating

How to Facilitate Annotation

- Prepare for Annotation
- Model How to Annotate
- Monitor Student Practice
- Extend Meaning
Transcript:

Not only is annotation beneficial, but it’s also a relatively easy skill to teach your students. You just need to follow a few simple steps.

First, prepare. Select the text you want your students to annotate (Beers & Probst, 2013). Determine why you want students to annotate the text and explain the reason to them (McLaughlin, 2013). One reason might be that the text is challenging, and you want them to annotate as a way of recording their thinking as they read. Another reason might be that you’ve recently taught a comprehension skill like asking questions or making inferences. By annotating the text, they can apply that skill as they read.

The next step is to model with examples. Show students how to read, pause, and write down their thinking (Brown, 2007; Fisher & Frey, 2014; Porter-O’Donnell, 2004). For example, using a think-aloud, you might read a short passage, highlight a line of text that led you to a question, then annotate the question in the margin.

After you model how to annotate, monitor students as they practice. Examine their annotations and provide coaching. For example, you can ask questions for clarification or encourage students to refer back to the text for evidence.

Finally, explain to students what they’ll do with their annotations when they finish. For example, if students are annotating questions, they might compare their questions with one another when they’re done.

If you would like to see an example of how to model annotation, click “Exemplar.” Otherwise, click “Proceed.”

Model Annotation

Modeling Annotations
Transcript:

Class, today we’re going to read and annotate a section of “The Good Soldier” by David Finkel.

I’m going to begin by modeling how to annotate. Annotation is a way to ‘dialogue with the text’ so you’re going to see me have a conversation with the story as I read it. I’m going to use my background knowledge to make connections and then write them down.

The reason why it’s helpful to write down our thoughts is that it causes us to pay more attention to what we’re reading, and how we’re making sense of it. That way we’re not just reading words without understanding what the text is about.

Here’s how it’s done.

Take a moment to read the selection of text that the teacher plans to annotate. Click “Proceed” to hear how she models her first annotation.

Example 1

If Kauzlarich were to pick a favorite among the Iraqis he had met, Clasim would be there, and so would Mr. Timmi, the civil manager, who day after day did whatever he did in his office with the big desk and the broken cushion chair.

But Izzy, his interpreter, was the one Kauzlarich had grown closest to and who had come to represent all the reasons Kauzlarich continued to find faith in the goodness of Iraqis, even after eleven deaths. Six years older than Kauzlarich, Izzy was a thin man with a melancholy face, the face of someone who understood life as something to be resigned to. At one point, he had lived for a few years in New York City, as part of Iraq’s delegation to the United Nations, which was when he became fluent in English. Now his job was to interpret everything said in Arabic to Kauzlarich, as well as what Kauzlarich wanted to say to Iraqis, no matter what it was.

Transcript:

As you can see I highlighted the text, “Izzy, his interpreter, was the one Kauzlarich had grown closest to.”

Given the circumstances that brought these two men together, I annotated this text by writing, “This reminds me of what it’s like to be in a country where I don’t speak the language, and have to rely on others for help.”

I can relate to Kauzlarich because I’ve lived and traveled in countries where English is not the first language. I found it hard to get around sometimes and needed help from others. Kauzlarich’s need for Izzy’s help probably caused the two of them to develop a bond.

Later in the text, I made another annotation.
Example 2

Transcript:

At the end of this paragraph, I felt a connection with Izzy. I wrote, “It must be difficult to translate what is being said if he doesn’t agree with it.”

The text reminded me of a time when my friends weren’t getting along with each other and they used me as an “in-between” to pass messages. I did it, but I didn’t like it. Sometimes I just wanted to tell them what I thought so they could get along again.

Izzy doesn’t have that option. He’s required to translate the message whether he agrees with it or not.

Practice

Transcript:

After modeling the process of reading and annotating, the teacher should have students practice (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Students should read a section of text alone or with a partner, and pause periodically to annotate their thinking.

As students work, the teacher should check in with learners, review their annotations, and consider one key question:

What do these annotations tell me about what this student’s mind is doing as he reads?

The answers to this question become the basis for coaching.
**Coaching**

### Monitor Practice

**Coaching moves are key:**

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<tr>
<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions for clarification</td>
<td>Create annotations for the students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build off of annotations</td>
<td>Allow students to opt out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage students to refer back to text for evidence</td>
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**Transcript:**

Your students’ annotations may be superficial at first. This is why your coaching moves are key. Ask questions for clarification if the annotations are unclear (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Build on the thoughts they write down and encourage students to refer back to the text (McLaughlin, 2012).

Resist creating annotations for students or allowing them to opt out because it’s too difficult (Brown, 2004).

With practice, students will improve, and your guidance is crucial to their success.

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**Extend Meaning**

**Extend Meaning**

**Possible ways to extend meaning:**

- Ask questions for closure
- Facilitate a discussion
- Form a debate
- Invite students to write (reflection, reaction, and argument)
Transcript:

Reading and annotating a text should be followed by time in which students can share their thinking, compare their observations, and synthesize meaning (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

A simple way to extend meaning is to ask questions for closure. For example, how do your annotations compare with your peers?

Students could engage in a discussion or debate about themes that emerged from the reading and use their annotations to initiate or support their ideas.

Another idea is to have students complete a writing activity - like a reflection or an argument - in which they use ideas captured in their annotations.

Call to Action

Transcript:

Author and educator Kelly Gallagher reminds us, “If we simply assign complex reading instead of teaching students how to read, we’ll get poor reading” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 7).

Annotation is a tool for engaging in the process of making meaning with text. By teaching students how to do it, giving them opportunities to practice, and providing timely coaching, we can help them develop greater independence as readers.