DIRECTING STUDENT READING WITH GUIDING ANNOTATIONS AND RESPONSES

Need

You may want to direct your students' reading - particularly for difficult texts where your previous students have struggled with understanding the key points or arguments in g. Often this is done by giving students a list of questions to think about while reading. However, students may not pay attention to the reading questions carefully, or they may forget their specifics during the reading process. It may also be difficult for students to direct these questions to specific parts of the text, unless you assign individual questions to specific page numbers, paragraphs, or individual lines. How, then, can you provide directions, call out important points, or embed questions to better prepare students for a targeted discussion during your next class?

Solution

You can create Guiding Annotations on a text before students read it to embed your typical reading questions or prompts. If you have longer contextual materials you want to add, you can upload them to Responses.

Work Flow for Instructors

1. Before you assign the reading to students, go through and annotate questions for them. Make sure you make these annotations "public," and consider using the "question" category. Let students know to turn on the reading filter so they see your annotations, and even limit their view to only your annotations if they find it more helpful.
2. For longer pieces of contextual information, you canmay want to publish your own reading supplements and include them as supplemental reading for that class. You can upload these the same way you upload course materials, creating a bibliographic reference for yourself. Below is an example of reading notes that a Stanford University instructor published for their students to read before coming to class. Note how this instructor also included quick links to external sources, videos, etc.

Examples

From Reading Questions to Guiding Annotations

Below are sample annotations from an instructor at Stanford University who used Guiding Annotations for the first time. Here was the instructor's original reading prompt for the article "Death of the Author" by Roland Barthes:

> "Here are some general reading questions for you as you start reading this text and connect the

dots, especially back to Foucault's essay. (We will discuss Barthes and Foucault together again in class--keep in mind that Foucault wrote that essay as a response to Barthes' piece.) 1. Idea that writing is the deconstruction of every voice (end of first paragraph)—do you buy that? What could that mean? 2. Describe elements of the author as Barthes describes him: a modern phenomenon (not a shaman), i.e. a constructed concept and a historically changeable one, individualistic view. 3. Barthes describes some exceptions, or rather a loosening of the idea, of the author phenomenon in literature. How does today's internet culture figure in here, by comparison? See end of Michel Foucault's essay "What is an Author", too—go back to reread it in light of the recent web developments, social networks, youtube etc.).

Note the diminished readability with the longer text. There is a lot of wonderful information and guidance provided here, though it is likely that students will lose track of the specificity when they read the text itself.

On Lacuna, the instructor took similar questions and prompts for Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and embedded them into the reading experience using Guiding Annotations..

You'll notice in the image above that the "Annotation Filter" is set to just show those from the instructor. Students can use this feature if they know the instructor has annotated the text and would only like to see those annotations at that point in their reading.

For more in-depth framing, instructors can write a response linked to the reading (see example below). Responses make it possible to insert links to outside material and reference past annotations.

Example of Supplementary Information with Responses

Some notes on T.S ELIOT, The Waste Land (1922)

To experience the author's voice, see A YouTube clip of Eliot and others reading "The Waste Land " here.

GENERAL: Published first without the notes in October 1922 *The Criterion*, a UK journal edited by Eliot, then again a few days later in U.S. preeminent lit and cult journal *The Dial* (also without notes). Shortly thereafter, published in book form by independent publisher in New York. In this third version, the poem came with the notes that have accompanied it ever since (authority and status of notes have been contentiously debated). Ezra Pound heavily edited the poem (eliminated some 220 lines in total, including an opening Part 1 that was clearly indebted to Joyce's *Ulysses,* "Oxen of the Sun" and "Circe"); made Eliot compose a new beginning to Part 3.

ELIOT'S NOTES: Eliot only started working on the notes later; in August 1923 they were completed (8 months after finishing the poem). He partly wrote the notes because he wanted to have poem published as independent book, needed "fillers"!

Modernism Anthology, ed. Lawrence Rainey, p. 124: **"The reason why the notes gave been so intensely debated is simple: they made reference to 'the plan … of the poem,' so suggesting that it had been composed and ordered by a purposeful design,** perhaps obscure at first sight but ultimately discernible, a procedure very different from the more improvisational, more contingent process which, we know today, actually governed the poem's composition."

Introduction to the Norton Critical edition (ed. Michael North, 2001), Preface, p. ix: "In spite of the tremendous cultural authority that has accrued over the years to this poem, however, and in spite of the fact that it helped to shape a whole new academic discipline devoted to elucidating complex literary works, *The Waste Land* has remained difficult to read. Some of that difficulty is so intrinsic to the poem that it can never be dispelled, and much contemporary criticism has turned from the New Critical effort to explain it away and has attempted instead to account for its ineradicable mystery. […] The sheer breadth of reference within the poem was often overwhelming for the first readers, and it still rather frequently overwhelms attempts to account for it, afflicting even the simplest passages with a kind of **annotational elephantiasis**." Some notes so blatantly pointless as to suggest a hoax; others add to rather than explain the mystery of a particular illusion, etc.