

How do I create a culture of virtual annotation?

Methods

The following sample activities involve rigorous close reading by way of collaborative annotation online. These activities are intended to be done asynchronously in order to allow students flexibility with their reading and writing time.

Low Tech, Google Docs in Pairs

Tech Needs

Google Docs, Chat app (i.e. gchat, whatsapp)

Materials

Typed Google Docs copy of passage

Process

- 1) Divide the class reading into shorter excerpts or chapters.
- 2) Assign students partners so that they are working in pairs. Each pair is given an excerpt of the reading (copied and pasted into a GoogleDoc).
- 3) Pairs are asked to do the following (within a week):
 - a) Brainstorm and discuss (via chat) how you think you should read the assigned passage. What should you be reading *for*?
 - b) Create a shared annotation key or guide. Have fun with this and make it as visual as you'd like as long as it can be included in the GoogleDoc.
 - c) Students begin by reading and annotating independently in the same GoogleDoc. They then revisit the text multiple times in an effort to try to help each other know the text. For example, if one of the annotation methods is to ask questions, then students should try to answer their partner's questions.
 - d) All students submit one question that they are still thinking about (to use for discussion) and a short reflective summary on how they understand their passage.
 - e) All GoogleDocs are shared with the entire class in order to create a fully annotated work to draw on.