

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Developing Questions that Promote Discussion Video Transcript

Student:

"Ernest Hemingway referred to the generation of men that came of age during World War I as the Lost Generation. What evidence from the text you have read support this claim?"

Addie Male:

One thing we're working a lot with them in tenth grade is pulling evidence.

Student:

In the article, it says, like, Belgium was neutral. It didn't really want the Germans to pass through, but...

Male:

You can make a lot of great claims, but how do you back those up? So that's sort of how they prepare to go into seminar. From there, we engage students in mini lessons about crafting the right kinds of questions so that there's multiple responses to the questions that they craft and it can be supported with evidence from the text.

Student:

They talk about militarism. I think that's one important one because they...

Raeann McElveen:

For the very first seminar, the teacher crafts the questions and the teacher is the moderator. So the first thing that students are actually doing is really trying to cite evidence.

Male:

And then we'll define the three -- factual, analytical, interpretive. We'll look at a passage together. Examples of factual versus analytical versus interpretive. And then for assignments, for a while we'd have them do that on their own-- coming in with the three different kinds of questions.

Yeah, Rashon.

Rashon:

Does our open-ended question have to do with these stories, or can it be about anything about World War I?

Male:

It can be completely about the topic, it can be thematic, absolutely. But hopefully, the text, you can pull a piece of evidence right now to support whatever question, thematically or a larger scale question, that you have about World War I. Does that make sense?

Student:

Yes.

Male:

Okay, great.

McElveen:

And make sure that you're citing your source. Last time, when we discussed "The Jungle," you just had to say the page number. For this time, we have multiple different sources that you're synthesizing information from. So make sure that you make note of that on your goal sheet.

McElveen:

So interpretive kind of questioning may be where students were unclear. They need clarifications to something that happened in the text. So when asking questions, we teach students to lift passages from the text to read out loud and interpret.

Student:

Kind of segueing into more of the soldier's experience, to head to question one. So, "Ernest Hemingway referred to the generation of men that came of age during World War I as the Lost Generation. What evidence from the text you have read support this claim?"

Student:

How were soldiers affected during the war? Like, mentally, not just physically?

Student:

Well, as we saw in the video, one of the main psychological problems that they developed was, like, shell shock, which is pretty much just like a whole mental disorientation from, like, bomb shells, from the noise. And if not affected immediately in the field, they can develop, like, PTSD when coming home. And so overall, it's just very damaging to them, either in present or past.

Student:

In the text, in, like, the second paragraph towards the ending when it says, "How is Ernie Taylor?" And it says, "Ernie? He's gone. Have you seen Albert Paternoster? Albert? He's gone." So it kind of shows that, like, the Lost Generation, it's kind of, like, literal in a sense. Like, the generation is kind of dying out fast, Like, people that you grew up with and you go into war, you might not see them or hear from them ever again.

McElveen:

So that's an interpretive kind of question. Analytical questioning is much, much deeper.

So we've addressed the question from a literal sense. It was called the Lost Generation because many of the men who went to war were dying, but how could Hemingway refer to this generation of men from a metaphor, or metaphorical sense?

Student:

They're basically lost in, like, a battlefield. They have, like, no other future except for that.

McElveen:

One way that we support teaching students how to ask and respond to those kind of questions is by using a graphic organizer that says, "It says, I say." So in the "It says" column, students take passages directly from the text. Then on the right hand column, there's room for "I say." When we teach the structure of analysis in argumentative writing, we teach claim, context, evidence, explanation. So when we talk about the "It says, I say," the "It says" becomes your evidence in your writing and the "I say" is the analysis or the explanation piece.

Student:

It is really the Lost Generation because, like, you know, everybody, like, disappeared and wasn't really remembered.

Student:

Yeah, to piggyback off from Martin, in the "Suffolk Farmhand at Gallipoli" it says...

McElveen:

You heard a lot today of the, "I'm going to piggyback on so-and-so."

Student:

I want to piggyback on what Antonio said...

McElveen:

Or, "I disagree with so-and-so because..." We teach a lot of the language that the students can use in the conversation.

Student:

To go back to the text of "Suffolk Farmhand at Gallipoli," the first paragraph towards the end, it says, "I never seen a dead man before and here I was looking at two or three hundred of them. It was our first fear."

McElveen:

At this point by second semester sophomore year, students can independently carry on the discussion with minimal support from us.

Student:

So they could have enlisted thinking that war was kind of like, "Stand up for the country," but they didn't know it was so bad. Like, how it was when they actually got there and saw, like, the death and having to be in the trench kind of, like, all day for, like, long periods of time.