Annotating a Text for What it Says / Does

Adapted from the work of Katie Hughes and Missy Watson

What is meant by "Annotating a Text for What it Says / Does"?

- This involves annotating a text in order to show the "work" each paragraph or section (made up of multiple paragraphs) is doing.

- Imagine an author is sitting down to write and they come up with different "moves" they'll make, and why. Annotating a text for what it says / does thus means trying to decipher those writerly choices and "moves."

Why should we annotate a text for what it says / does?

- it helps students to identify what authors are *doing* in various parts of the text rather than simply what s/he is *saying* (and this helps students to move away from summarizing and into analyzing);

- it can serve as a way to thoroughly understand in a detailed way how a text is put together;

- it brings rhetorical awareness of the specific choices and deliberate "moves" made by authors throughout a text.

How do we annotate a text for what it says / does?

- Break down texts by section or paragraph to analyze what each section/paragraph is *doing* for the overall argument. Ask, what is the *purpose* of the section/paragraph? What is the author *doing*, *how*, and *why*?

- It's important to select strong **verbs** to describe what authors *do*.
    - For instance, maybe the author
        - o **makes** a claim,
        - o **supports** a claim,
        - o **illustrates** with examples/anecdotes,
        - o **describes** issues,
        - o **contextualizes** the topic,
        - o **clarifies** misconceptions,
        - o **rebuts** counter arguments,
        - o **criticizes** previous work,
        - o **appeals** to the audience (to their emotions or sense of logic),
        - o **builds** credibility for him/herself,
        - o **outlines** what happens next in the text, etc.

Sample Verbs Depicting What Authors Do

Try to avoid these verbs as they are not as precise:
thinks, believes, says/states, discusses

Acknowledges	Concludes	Exemplifies	Problematizes
Advocates	Contrasts	Explains	Proposes
Amplifies	Contradicts	Extends	Qualifies
Analyzes	(Presents)	Forecasts	Questions
Argues	Counterarguments	Faults	Rebuts
(Constructs an)	(Presents)	Frames	Refines
Analogy	Counterexamples	Identifies	Repeats
Asserts	Debates	Illustrates	Reframes
Assumes	Deconstructs	Introduces	Ridicules
Attacks	Defines	Implies	Satirizes
Challenges	Defends	Infers	Stresses
Claims	Discusses	Investigates	Summarizes
Clarifies	Distinguishes	Justifies	Supports
Compares	(between)	Outlines	Synthesizes
Complicates	Exaggerates	Parodies	Theorizes
Concedes	Examines	Predicts	

Add some of your own:

Try this format: The author [VERB] [IDEA] by [EXPLAIN HOW].

Para-graph(s) #	What is the author _saying_?	What is the author _doing_?