

Using Evidence from the Text

Dave Riesenfeld: The Common Core standards have prompted me to completely rethink how I teach social studies to my students. The big difference I'm seeing with my instruction that includes more complex text is that I suppose that it's no longer a situation where I'm delivering information to students, it's a situation where students are looking to the text for information as opposed to looking for me. What does...

Student: Gorevitch.

Student: Say about the openness of the Hutu preparation for their actions?

Student: They were treating it like, it if was any other news.

Student: "The announcement on the radio and the newspapers spoke openly of the week before the killing began in Rwanda's capital. Hutus who opposed the Hutu power ideology were publicly denounced as accomplices."

Annie Seifullah: I think we're coming out of an era where teachers really grappled with how to get kids to interact with text that they either weren't interested in, or was way above the reading level. And so we went through a period of time where we saw a lot of teachers doing a lot of the processing of the text for kids. So instead of having kids just read to the textbook, oftentimes my teachers would create PowerPoint presentations or would create resource sheets or work sheets that basically condense the information out of the textbook and gave it to them in a simpler form. And I think what we found overtime was that was not necessarily supporting our students in their literacy development. I think that if you spoke to the students who were in their classrooms, they'll find that their work has shifted dramatically this year, where a question you hear a lot when you go on those classrooms is "Where is the evidence?" and "Show me in the text".

Dave Riesenfeld: And when you gather, you're taking direct information from the text and using that as the center of each one of your answers. So again, it's not necessarily a direct quote that you're providing but it's a discussion of "in the text here I found this idea and here's what I'm going to say about it". So make sure that the evidence reflects that kind of process as you go through this.

Carlos Paulino: Sometimes when they ask us questions and we answer, he asks us to support it with text, so I think it's just the way to show connections of the text and what we're actually talking about. So just to show how important the text is to the topic.

Student: I was going to say that it showed that there was nowhere safe in the country.

Male Speaker 1: Yup. There is no safety. What was the example... he used a good example to show us this one.

Student: He talks about the mayor and how the mayor sent them to the church and they were just killed either way.

Dave Riesenfeld: Students are no longer afraid of jumping into a text. I really see our kids becoming more prepared to enter college at a level of understanding with any material that they're going to get and I really think that it's like, we talk a lot about college and career readiness but this is what it's going to take. It's giving the kids consistent and continual access to complex text that's going to allow them to kind of advance their own selves with the work, as opposed to us pushing them into it.