CONSTRUCTING SUPPORT (GRAPHIC ORGANIZER and DEBATE)

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick (Scholastic Press, 1st Ed, 2007).

CONTEXT: This graphic organizer is a “during reading” strategy that would be done after the students have read through to at least chapter 12, but could also be done at any time after this point.

PURPOSE: Graphic organizers both allow students to organize their thoughts in a clear fashion as well as provide them with something concrete that they can quickly reference in order to review information that they have learned. Dunston (1991) has also stated that “the organizer itself facilitates the learning and retention of information from the text.” Completing this graphic organizer will allow students to more easily participate in group discussions and debates. Another purpose of this assignment is to allow students to reflect on and develop their own opinions on the morality or immorality of theft, which is a pertinent and recurrent theme in The Invention of Hugo Cabret.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A copy of The Invention of Hugo Cabret for each student, a copy of the worksheet (included below) for each student.

TIME ALLOCATED: This activity will most likely take several class periods, depending on whether or not the graphic organizer worksheet is assigned as homework.

DIRECTIONS:
- After the students have read through at least chapter 12, pass out the worksheet found at the end of this document.
- Describe to students the purpose of a debate and what your expectations are for their participation in the debate:
  - A debate is a formal method of presenting arguments that support or oppose a stance on a specific issue. Two teams with opposing viewpoints interact with each other with the objective of persuading an audience that their position on the topic is the correct one. A formal debate is governed by set rules, and debaters must follow these rules during the debate (International Debate Education Association).
- Explain that this graphic organizer will help students to organize their thoughts in order to prepare for a class debate that will take place the following class period.
- Before you tell students the topic they will be arguing, model how to use the graphic organizer by reading a short argumentative article with them. Place this article on the overhead and using different colored pens, underline the position statement of the article in one color, and the supporting statements and facts in another color. The place a copy of the graphic organizer on the overhead and have students help you fill out the graphic organizer according to the information in the article.
- After you finish modeling the process, explain to students that they have two options for their “position statement,” which is the position that they will argue during the class debate. These options are: “Stealing is Morally Wrong” or “Stealing is Acceptable in
Some Situations.” Explain that during the debate, they will have to defend their position on the topic of stealing.

- Again review with students how students how to fill out the graphic organizer:
  - In the “position statement box” they will either write “Stealing is Morally Wrong” or “Stealing is Acceptable in Some Situations,” depending on which position they want to argue in favor of.
  - In the “reasons” box students will write their three main points which they feel support their position. These points are based on personal opinion.
  - In the “facts” box, students will write examples from the text, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, which they feel support their position. For example, if the student is arguing that stealing is acceptable in some situations, then they could write down that Hugo only steals because he has no money to buy food. Students will also include the page number for each example that they include.

After the students have completed their graphic organizers (perhaps the following class period), conduct a class debate. Split the students into two teams, depending on the side they chose to argue. Have the two teams sit in desks facing each other.

- Make sure students know that they can (and should) refer to their graphic organizers during the debate in order to help them remember the points they want to make.
- Explain to students some basic rules for the debate:
  1. Courtesy: in order for each student to feel comfortable, courtesy is essential.
  2. Do not look at the teacher: this discussion is for your benefit, not the teacher’s.
  3. Tolerate silence: it takes time to think of what or how to say something. (Grierson)

- Explain to students that when they want to comment, they need to raise their hand. Holding up a fist indicates that this is their first comment; one finger indicates that they have spoken one time; two fingers, two times, and so on. The person who has finished speaking will choose who is to speak next. They need to decide who has spoken the least amount of times. Make sure that the students know that they each need to speak at least twice to get full credit for their participation in the debate.

- Clarify to students that their comments must be meaningful and add to the discussion. Make sure that they know that their comments need be focused on ideas. Rather than just saying things like “that was interesting” or “I agree,” students are to back these statements up with why they agree or disagree, or think something is interesting in order to receive participation points. Remind them that only one person can talk at a time (Grierson).
- With you as the mediator, let the debate run from 20-30 minutes (depending on class size, length of class period, engagement of students, etc.).
- After the debate, conduct a brief class discussion in which students discuss what they learned from the activity, whether or not their opinions changed during the debate, and what their final opinions on stealing in the context of the novel.
  - Has anyone’s opinion changed after the debate? Why?
  - Are there any situations in which you personally would steal?
  - How do you think those who steal should be punished? Does it depend? Should everyone who steals be punished?

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How would you feel if someone stole from you? What if it was something that they needed?

ASSESSMENT:
During the debate, make sure that each student contributes by speaking at least twice to get full credit for the debate portion of the assignment. After the class debate, collect the students’ graphic organizers and check to make sure that the students properly filled out the graphic organizer in order to receive the full credit for the worksheet portion of the assignment.