

The following is a portion of a blog post that can be found at this link:
<http://www.grandviewcetl.org/tools-for-teaching-social-annotation/>

Tools for Teaching: Social Annotation

By Kevin Gannon | September 3, 2019

This week's Tools for Teaching entry is actually about several different tools, but one particular technique they can be used for: social annotation. Social annotation takes the usually-solitary act of reading and allows students to do it in community with one another. By using digital tools to highlight, comment, or otherwise annotate a text, students "do the reading," but do so in conversation with their peers. The results can be powerful: [studies have found social annotation practices increased reading comprehension and motivation to do reading assignments](#), for example. More [recent research, which has been written up preliminarily](#), has also found social annotation tools and practices help build not only better learning, but an increased sense of belonging and community as well.

So what does social annotation look like? The two easiest and most useful tools are Google Docs and [Hypothesis](#). As long as students have common access to the same document or text, they can enter their annotations so that they'll be visible to the community. In Google Docs, that could involve sharing a link to a document (make sure the sharing sessions are set to those with the link "can edit") and having students go in and mark up the text. The comments feature in Google Docs is intuitive and easy to use (and very similar to MS Word). Moreover, since the document is in the cloud, there's no need to worry about saving different versions: Google Docs save automatically, and you can even use the "revision history" tool to peel back layers of annotation to find a particular student or annotation time if you wish.

Hypothesis is a web annotation tool that works with the Google Chrome browser to make an "overlay" on any webpage to enable annotation. Once an account is created and the browser extension is installed (a process which takes less than five minutes), the annotation tools are available with the click of a button in Chrome. The webpage with the annotations overlay enabled has a special Hypothesis web URL, and once you share that with students, they simply click that link to get to the page where they'll be reading and annotating. Here's what it looks like when students are doing annotations together (click the image to enlarge):

For information on the more recent looting in Iraq, see "Taking Stock in Baghdad," April-July 2003.

Note: Thumbnails are provided for only a few photographs, as most of the reliefs are barely legible when reduced to thumbnail size. Captioned images may be accessed through buttons in the text, a clickable plan of the throne room suite, or a comprehensive [list of illustrations](#).

*The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.
(Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib," 1815)*

So wrote Byron of the siege of Jerusalem, undertaken by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 701 B.C. from Nineveh [\[IMAGE: 37K\]](#), capital of the greatest empire the world had ever known. **For two and one-half millennia, the only known account of this momentous event was in II Kings 18-19**, which reports that Sennacherib's invincible army was laid low by the angel of the Lord, after which Sennacherib returned to Nineveh where he was murdered by his sons. Nineveh itself fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C., its splendor buried under the shifting dust of northern Mesopotamia.



General view of Kuyunjik, the palace mound of Nineveh. (Courtesy John M. Russell) [\[LARGER IMAGE: 37K\]](#)

In 1847 the young British adventurer Austen Henry Layard explored the ruins of Nineveh and rediscovered the lost palace of Sennacherib across the Tigris River from modern Mosul in northern Iraq. **Inscribed in cuneiform on the colossal sculptures in the doorway of its throne room was Sennacherib's own account of his siege of Jerusalem**; it differed in detail from the biblical one but confirmed that Sennacherib did not capture the city. This find generated an excitement that is difficult to imagine today, because amid the increasing religious doubt and scriptural revisionism of the mid-nineteenth century, **it gave Christian fundamentalists an independent eyewitness corroboration of a biblical event, written in the doorway of the very room where Sennacherib may have issued his order to attack**. The palace's interior walls were paneled with huge stone slabs, carved in relief with images of Sennacherib's victories. Here one could see the king and army, foreign landscapes, and conquered enemy cities, including a remarkably accurate depiction of the Judean city of Lachish, whose destruction by the Assyrians was recorded in II Kings 18:13-14.

Considering that the palace had been destroyed by an intense conflagration during the sack of Nineveh in 612 B.C., the massive walls and many of the relief sculptures of Sennacherib's throne-room suite were surprisingly well preserved. In the 1960s, because of the palace's historical importance and unique preservation, the Iraq Department of Antiquities consolidated the walls and sculptures and roofed the site over as the Sennacherib Palace Site Museum [\[IMAGE: 37K\]](#) at Nineveh, where visitors could tour one of only two preserved Assyrian palaces in the world. (The other is the palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, also restored as a site museum.) The four restored rooms of the throne-room suite, designated H, I, IV, and V by Layard, contained some 100 sculptured slabs in various states of preservation. In two of these rooms, IV and V [\[IMAGE: 51K\]](#), parts of nearly every slab survived, making these the most completely preserved decorative cycles in the palace. Most of these reliefs have never been published. Some show unusual subjects and provide valuable information on visual narrative composition in Assyrian palace decoration. **These reliefs needed to be documented in case the originals were lost or damaged and to guide future conservation efforts.**

GVU HIST103OL

River from modern Mosul in northern Iraq

How did the city get lost in the first place? This reminds me to the Temple of Luxor which was lost for 1000 years. How did they go to find this lost Palace? I think that would be hard to find if they are not sure where to start looking.

Show replies (3)

Jan 24

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Inscribed in cuneiform on the colossal sculptures in the doorway of its throne room was Sennacherib's own account of his siege of Jerusalem.

It is cool that even more recently we are finding new information about this era. Found this picture of Austen Henry Layard https://www.google.com/search?q=austen+henry+layard&safe=off&dz=1C1CHBF_enUS779US779&source=images&itbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwC3JqT2ofgAhVFM6wKHekDDmkQ_AUJDygC&biw=1212&bih=580#imgc=cuk5IDJluhGcw4M.

Jan 25

GVU HIST103OL

Inscribed in cuneiform on the colossal sculptures in the doorway of its throne room was Sennacherib's own account of his siege of Jerusalem.

As someone who grew up in a primary school that had learning basic Cuneiform as a term assignment, I think it ought to be brought back. Check out Dr Irving, giving a youtube lesson on how to read and write cuneiform.

Irving Finkel Teaches Us C...

Notice how students can not only insert comments, but include links and images (including embedded video) in those comments as well. They can also reply to one another, so that a particular individual comment might generate its own conversation thread.

Social annotation can be a powerful tool indeed, but it's also something that has to be intentional and incentivized in a course. It's also most effective when the instructor is alongside students, participating in the annotations and conversations. There are a number of educators using social annotation tools with their students, and their perspectives are an excellent place to begin thinking about how you might incorporate them into your own teaching, if appropriate.

For an excellent overview of social annotation and a brief discussion of a few tools, check out [this post from Edutopia](#).

This [session outline and blog post](#) from the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Western University in Ontario provides a useful overview and a set of resources as well.