

gerald graff they say i say

Gerald Graff: Mastering the Art of "They Say, I Say" in Academic Discourse

In the realm of academic writing and critical thinking, understanding how to engage with existing ideas and formulate one's own arguments is paramount. Gerald Graff's seminal work, "They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing," has revolutionized how students and scholars approach the often-intimidating task of academic discourse. This guide delves deep into the core principles of Graff's methodology, exploring its significance, practical applications, and enduring impact on effective communication. We will unpack the power of "they say, I say" templates, analyze how to effectively summarize, paraphrase, and quote, and discuss the importance of identifying and responding to counterarguments. By mastering these techniques, you can transform your writing from passive reporting to active, persuasive engagement, a skill that is invaluable not only in academic settings but also in professional life. Prepare to discover how "They Say, I Say" empowers you to enter the ongoing conversation of your field.

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- The Core Concepts of "They Say, I Say"
- Understanding the "They Say" Component
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Understanding Gerald Graff and the "They Say, I Say" Philosophy

Gerald Graff, a distinguished professor and author, is widely recognized for his contributions to composition studies and his insightful work on academic writing. His book, "They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing," has become an indispensable resource for students at all levels. Graff's central thesis is that effective academic writing involves more than simply presenting information; it requires actively engaging with the ideas of others. He posits that all academic discourse operates within a framework of ongoing conversations, where writers must first understand what "they say" – the prevailing viewpoints, arguments, and discussions in a particular field – before they can effectively articulate what "I say" – their own original contribution or perspective. This foundational understanding is crucial for developing critical thinking skills and producing persuasive, well-supported arguments. The "they say, I say" model provides a clear roadmap for navigating these complex intellectual landscapes.

Who is Gerald Graff?

Gerald Graff is a prominent figure in the field of English and composition. He has held numerous academic positions, most notably as a professor at the University of Illinois and later as a visiting professor at various institutions. His career has been dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of writing, particularly in higher education. Graff's work often addresses the challenges students face in academic writing, focusing on how to move beyond superficial understanding to a more engaged and critical form of intellectual participation. His emphasis on the social and conversational nature of academic writing has profoundly influenced pedagogical approaches. Graff's extensive research and experience have made him a leading authority on how writers can effectively enter and contribute to academic conversations.

The Core Message of "They Say, I Say"

The fundamental premise of Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" is that academic writing is inherently dialogical. It's not about writing in a vacuum; it's about responding to, building upon, or challenging existing ideas. The book argues that the most effective academic writers are those who can clearly identify the "they say" – the viewpoints of others – and then pivot to their own "I say" – their unique contribution, analysis, or argument. This process involves a series of critical moves, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, all while maintaining a clear connection to the original source. By mastering these moves, writers can demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of their subject matter and position their own ideas within a larger intellectual context. The "they say, I say" framework provides a structured approach to this essential academic skill.

The "They Say" Component: Understanding the

Conversation

In the framework of "They Say, I Say," the "they say" component is the crucial first step in any academic argument. It refers to the need to acknowledge and represent the existing ideas, arguments, or viewpoints within a particular field or discourse. Without properly understanding and articulating what others are saying, an argument can appear isolated, uninformed, or even arrogant. Graff emphasizes that engaging with "they say" is not merely a formality but an integral part of building a strong and credible argument. It demonstrates that the writer has done their research, understands the context of the discussion, and is prepared to enter the conversation meaningfully. This involves accurately summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting the positions of others, ensuring that their ideas are presented fairly and in their proper context.

Identifying the Prevailing Arguments

Before one can effectively articulate their own "I say," they must first immerse themselves in the existing discourse. This involves identifying the dominant perspectives, common assumptions, and ongoing debates within a specific academic discipline or on a particular topic. Graff suggests that this often requires extensive reading and research, paying close attention to scholarly articles, books, and other relevant sources. The goal is to understand the intellectual landscape, to know what has already been said, and to identify the key players and their positions. This foundational understanding allows a writer to situate their own argument within this broader conversation, demonstrating awareness of the existing intellectual terrain. Without this awareness, an argument risks being irrelevant or repetitive.

Accurately Representing Others' Views

A critical aspect of the "they say" component is the ability to represent the views of others accurately and fairly. This means avoiding misinterpretations, distortions, or straw man arguments. Graff stresses the importance of summarizing and paraphrasing with fidelity, capturing the essence of the original argument without injecting personal bias or opinion. This requires careful reading, close attention to detail, and a commitment to intellectual honesty. When a writer can demonstrate that they understand and can articulate the positions of others effectively, they build credibility and establish a solid foundation for presenting their own contrasting or complementary perspective. This skill is central to respectful and productive academic engagement.

The "I Say" Component: Articulating Your Own Voice

Following the critical step of understanding "they say," the "I say" component of Gerald Graff's model is where the writer introduces their own unique contribution to the conversation. This is the heart of academic argumentation – presenting an original perspective, analysis, or solution that builds upon, challenges, or refines the ideas previously discussed. The "I say" is not simply a statement of opinion; it is a well-reasoned and supported argument that directly engages with the "they say." Graff's framework emphasizes that the "I say" must clearly follow from the "they say," creating a logical

connection that demonstrates the writer's critical engagement and intellectual agency. It's about entering the dialogue with something valuable to contribute.

Formulating a Clear Thesis Statement

The "I say" often manifests in the form of a thesis statement, which is the central claim or argument the writer intends to make. A strong thesis statement in the "They Say, I Say" context not only presents the writer's own position but also implicitly or explicitly responds to the "they say." It acts as a roadmap for the reader, indicating the direction of the argument and the writer's unique contribution to the ongoing discussion. Graff's approach encourages writers to see their thesis not as a static declaration but as a dynamic response to existing ideas, thus imbuing it with greater relevance and impact. Crafting a clear and compelling "I say" thesis is fundamental to effective academic writing.

Providing Evidence and Support for Your Claims

Simply stating an "I say" is insufficient; it must be substantiated with credible evidence and logical reasoning. This involves drawing upon research, data, examples, and expert opinions to support the writer's claims. The "they say" often provides the context for this evidence, as the writer might use it to demonstrate why their perspective is needed or how it addresses a gap in existing arguments. Graff's emphasis on the dialogical nature of writing means that the evidence presented for the "I say" should directly address or engage with the points raised in the "they say." This creates a cohesive and persuasive argument that convinces the reader of the validity of the writer's contribution.

Key Moves That Matter: Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" highlights essential techniques for effectively incorporating the "they say" into one's writing. These are not just stylistic choices but fundamental rhetorical moves that allow writers to accurately represent the ideas of others while maintaining control of their own narrative. Mastering summarization, paraphrasing, and quoting enables writers to engage in intellectual dialogue, build credibility, and transition smoothly into their own "I say." These techniques are the building blocks for constructing persuasive arguments that are grounded in existing knowledge and contribute meaningfully to academic conversations. Understanding when and how to use each of these moves is crucial for effective academic discourse.

Summarizing Effectively

Summarization involves condensing the main points of a larger work or argument into a brief overview. In the context of "They Say, I Say," effective summarization means capturing the essence of someone else's position without misrepresenting it or adding your own interpretations prematurely.

Graff advises that summaries should be neutral and objective, focusing on accurately conveying the original author's ideas. This often involves identifying the core thesis and supporting arguments. A well-crafted summary demonstrates that the writer has understood the material and sets the stage for their own response, clearly indicating what "they say" before moving to their "I say."

Paraphrasing with Precision

Paraphrasing means restating someone else's ideas or information in your own words. Unlike summarization, paraphrasing often involves rephrasing a specific passage or concept in greater detail. Graff emphasizes that accurate paraphrasing requires not only using different words but also reorganizing the sentence structure. Crucially, all paraphrases must be properly cited to avoid plagiarism. The goal of paraphrasing within the "They Say, I Say" framework is to integrate another's ideas smoothly into your own writing, making them accessible to your audience while clearly attributing them to the original source. This demonstrates comprehension and allows for seamless integration into your argument.

Quoting Strategically

Quoting involves using the exact words of another author. Graff suggests that quoting is most effective when the original wording is particularly impactful, memorable, or when precise language is crucial for analysis. However, he cautions against over-quoting. When quotes are used, they must be introduced and explained. The writer must provide context for the quote and then analyze its significance in relation to their own argument. Simply dropping a quote into the text without explanation is a common pitfall. The "They Say, I Say" approach encourages writers to use quotes strategically to support their "I say," demonstrating how the original author's words contribute to or are addressed by the writer's own point.

Responding to Others: Agreeing, Disagreeing, and Combining

A pivotal aspect of Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" model is the nuanced way writers can respond to the ideas of others. It's not enough to simply present what "they say" and then state your "I say"; the relationship between these two components must be explicit. Graff outlines three primary ways to respond: agreement, disagreement, and a combination of both. Each of these response types requires specific rhetorical strategies to convey the writer's stance clearly and persuasively. By mastering these response modes, writers can effectively engage with existing arguments and position their own contributions within the broader academic conversation, demonstrating critical thinking and intellectual maturity.

Agreeing with the "They Say"

Agreeing with what "they say" involves acknowledging the validity of another's argument and perhaps building upon it or extending it. When agreeing, writers should be specific about what they are agreeing with and why. Graff suggests that simply saying "I agree" is not enough; the writer needs to explain the grounds for their agreement. This might involve offering additional evidence, elaborating on a point, or showing how the original argument supports the writer's own thesis. Agreement, when executed thoughtfully, strengthens the writer's position by demonstrating alignment with credible sources and contributing to a collective understanding.

Disagreeing with the "They Say"

Disagreeing with "they say" is a common and often necessary part of academic discourse. However, Graff stresses that disagreement should be respectful and well-reasoned. It's important to clearly articulate what you disagree with and provide solid reasons for your dissent. Avoid personal attacks or dismissive language. Instead, focus on the specific points of contention, offer counter-evidence, or present an alternative interpretation. A strong disagreement often begins by acknowledging the merits of the opposing view before presenting the reasons for your differing perspective. This approach maintains intellectual integrity and fosters a more productive debate.

Combining Agreement and Disagreement

Often, academic arguments involve a more complex relationship with existing ideas, where a writer might agree with some aspects of an argument while disagreeing with others. This nuanced approach, often termed "qualified agreement" or "qualified disagreement," is a hallmark of sophisticated critical thinking. Graff encourages writers to find ways to synthesize different viewpoints, acknowledging common ground while highlighting points of divergence. This can involve agreeing with the premise of an argument but disagreeing with its conclusion, or vice versa. By combining agreement and disagreement, writers can offer a more balanced and comprehensive analysis, demonstrating a deep understanding of the complexities of the issue.

Introducing and Concluding Arguments with "They Say, I Say"

The structure of an academic argument, as outlined by Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say," places significant importance on how writers introduce and conclude their contributions. The introduction must effectively set up the "they say" and clearly present the "I say," while the conclusion should reinforce the "I say" and its relationship to the "they say." These framing elements are crucial for guiding the reader through the argument and ensuring that the writer's unique voice and contribution are understood within the broader intellectual context. Proper introductions and conclusions act as the essential bookends that hold a persuasive academic argument together.

Crafting Effective Introductions

An effective introduction in the "They Say, I Say" model typically begins by establishing the "they say"—the prevailing conversation or background context. This can involve summarizing a common viewpoint, posing a question that the topic addresses, or describing a problem that needs solving. Once the "they say" is established, the writer then transitions to their own "I say," which is usually presented as a thesis statement. This thesis should clearly indicate the writer's position and how it relates to the preceding "they say." Graff's templates provide useful structures for guiding the reader from the general conversation to the specific argument being made.

Writing Strong Conclusions

The conclusion of an academic argument, according to "They Say, I Say," should not merely restate the thesis. Instead, it should reinforce the writer's "I say" and its significance in relation to the "they say." This might involve summarizing the main points, reiterating the argument's importance, or suggesting future directions for research. Graff emphasizes that a strong conclusion should remind readers of the conversation they are a part of and how the writer's "I say" has advanced or modified that conversation. It's an opportunity to leave a lasting impression and underscore the value of the writer's contribution to the ongoing intellectual dialogue.

The Importance of Signaling Who Is Saying What

A recurring theme in Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" is the necessity of "signposting" or clearly indicating who is speaking and whose ideas are being presented. This is crucial for maintaining clarity, avoiding confusion, and establishing the writer's intellectual authority. In academic writing, it's imperative that readers can distinguish between the writer's own voice and the voices of the sources they engage with. Without clear signaling, arguments can become muddled, and the writer's own contributions might be lost amidst a sea of borrowed ideas. This attention to attribution is fundamental to academic integrity and persuasive communication.

Using Metacommunicative Language

Metacommunicative language, or "metacommentary," refers to language that comments on the discourse itself. In the context of "They Say, I Say," this involves using phrases that explicitly guide the reader's understanding of who is saying what and how their ideas relate to each other. Examples include phrases like "According to X," "As Y argues," or "This suggests that." Graff emphasizes that such signaling words and phrases act as signposts, helping readers navigate complex arguments and understand the relationships between different ideas. They clarify the author's intentions and prevent misinterpretations of sources or the writer's own stance.

Attributing Ideas and Arguments

Proper attribution is the bedrock of ethical and effective academic writing. This means giving credit where credit is due by citing all sources of information, ideas, and direct quotations. Within the "They Say, I Say" framework, clear attribution is essential for establishing the "they say" component accurately. It allows readers to identify the sources of the arguments being discussed and to verify the information if necessary. Graff's approach reinforces that attribution is not just about avoiding plagiarism; it's about participating responsibly in the intellectual community by acknowledging the contributions of others and demonstrating a commitment to scholarly integrity.

Practical Applications of "They Say, I Say"

The principles outlined in Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" are not confined to the theoretical discussions of composition studies; they have profound practical applications across a wide range of academic disciplines and professional contexts. By internalizing the "they say, I say" model, students and professionals can significantly enhance their ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and contribute meaningfully to their respective fields. This framework provides a clear and actionable method for engaging with complex ideas and developing persuasive arguments that resonate with audiences. Its versatility makes it an invaluable tool for anyone seeking to improve their communication skills.

Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills

At its core, "They Say, I Say" is a tool for developing critical thinking. By requiring writers to first understand and accurately represent the views of others ("they say"), the model encourages deep analysis and comprehension. Then, by demanding a clear articulation of the writer's own perspective ("I say"), it promotes independent thought, evaluation, and the formulation of reasoned arguments. This process forces writers to move beyond simple memorization or summary, pushing them to engage actively with the material, identify assumptions, and develop their own informed positions. The ability to critically engage with existing ideas is a hallmark of intellectual maturity.

Improving Essay and Research Paper Writing

For students, "They Say, I Say" offers a practical structure for approaching essays and research papers. The model provides a clear roadmap for how to begin, develop, and conclude an argument. By emphasizing the need to engage with existing scholarship (the "they say") before presenting their own thesis (the "I say"), it helps students avoid writing isolated or unsupported papers. The various templates and techniques for summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and responding provide concrete strategies for integrating sources effectively and building a cohesive, persuasive narrative. This leads to more robust and impactful academic writing.

Success in Different Academic Disciplines

The "They Say, I Say" framework is remarkably adaptable and beneficial across all academic disciplines, from the humanities and social sciences to the sciences and engineering. Regardless of the subject matter, academic discourse fundamentally involves engaging with existing research, theories, and findings. Whether a student is writing a history paper, a literary analysis, a scientific report, or a philosophical essay, the ability to understand and respond to the work of others is essential. "They Say, I Say" provides a universal method for entering these disciplinary conversations and making a well-supported contribution, demonstrating a mastery of academic expectations.

Overcoming Common Writing Challenges with "They Say, I Say"

Many students grapple with common writing challenges, such as feeling unsure how to start, struggling to integrate source material, or having difficulty formulating their own arguments. Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" directly addresses these issues by providing a clear, step-by-step approach to academic writing. The book demystifies the process of engaging with complex ideas and equips writers with the tools they need to overcome common obstacles. By internalizing the core principles of the "they say, I say" model, writers can gain confidence and produce more coherent, persuasive, and well-supported work, transforming their approach to academic tasks.

Avoiding the "Drop Quote" Syndrome

One of the most frequent challenges in academic writing is the "drop quote" syndrome, where students insert quotations into their essays without adequate context or explanation. Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" combats this by emphasizing the need to introduce quotes properly and, crucially, to explain their significance. The "I say" component following the "they say" quote is vital for demonstrating how the quote supports the writer's argument. By using templates and focusing on the analytical connection between the quote and their own thesis, writers can move beyond simply presenting borrowed words to actively integrating them into their own discourse.

Developing a Stronger Voice and Argument

A common complaint about student writing is a lack of a distinct voice or a clear, compelling argument. "They Say, I Say" empowers writers by teaching them how to move from merely reporting on what others have said to actively participating in a conversation. By structuring their writing around the dynamic interplay of "they say" and "I say," writers learn to articulate their own perspectives clearly and persuasively. This model encourages them to think critically about the material, develop their own positions, and support those positions with evidence, thereby fostering a stronger, more authoritative voice in their writing.

Engaging with Counterarguments Effectively

Effectively addressing counterarguments is a crucial aspect of persuasive writing, and "They Say, I Say" provides a framework for doing so. By first acknowledging and understanding the "they say," writers are better equipped to anticipate potential objections or opposing viewpoints. The model encourages writers to engage directly with these counterarguments, either by agreeing with them, disagreeing with them, or finding a way to synthesize them with their own position. This direct engagement demonstrates intellectual rigor and strengthens the overall credibility of the writer's argument, showing that they have considered alternative perspectives.

Gerald Graff's Contribution to Composition Studies

Gerald Graff's work, particularly "They Say, I Say," has had a profound and lasting impact on the field of composition studies. His insights have reshaped how educators teach writing and how students approach the task of academic discourse. By focusing on the rhetorical moves that are essential for effective communication in academic contexts, Graff has provided a clear and accessible framework for understanding and mastering the art of argumentation. His emphasis on the social and conversational nature of writing has influenced pedagogical approaches, encouraging more student-centered and interactive learning environments.

Shaping Modern Writing Pedagogy

Graff's influential book has become a cornerstone of modern writing pedagogy. Its practical approach and emphasis on transferable skills have made it a staple in composition classrooms across the country. By providing students with explicit instruction on how to engage with existing ideas, articulate their own arguments, and participate in academic conversations, "They Say, I Say" has empowered countless students to become more confident and effective writers. Educators have adopted its principles to create curricula that prioritize critical thinking, evidence-based argumentation, and the development of a strong authorial voice, fundamentally changing how writing is taught.

Promoting Intellectual Engagement

A significant contribution of Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say" is its promotion of deeper intellectual engagement. The model encourages students to see writing not as an isolated task but as an opportunity to join ongoing dialogues and contribute to a larger body of knowledge. By framing writing as a process of responding to and building upon the ideas of others, Graff fosters a sense of intellectual curiosity and active participation. This approach helps students develop a more profound understanding of their subject matter and cultivates a lifelong habit of critical inquiry and thoughtful communication, enriching their academic and personal lives.

Conclusion: Mastering Academic Discourse with "They Say, I Say"

Conclusion

Gerald Graff's "They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing" offers an indispensable framework for navigating the complexities of academic discourse. By understanding and applying the core principles of engaging with what "they say" before articulating what "I say," writers can transform their ability to think critically and communicate effectively. The techniques of summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and responding to others—whether through agreement, disagreement, or a combination of both—are essential tools for crafting persuasive and impactful arguments. Mastering these moves allows writers to clearly signal their ideas, build credibility, and confidently enter the ongoing conversations within their chosen fields. Ultimately, the "They Say, I Say" model empowers individuals to move beyond passive reception of information to active, articulate participation, a skill that is vital for success in academia and beyond.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the core concept of Gerald Graff's 'They Say / I Say'?

The core concept is that academic writing, and indeed much effective communication, involves engaging with existing conversations and arguments. It emphasizes understanding what 'they say' (others' views) before articulating 'I say' (your own argument).

Why is the 'They Say / I Say' framework useful for students?

It provides a clear structure for understanding and participating in academic discourse. It helps students move beyond simply stating their opinions to demonstrating how their ideas connect with, respond to, or build upon the work of others.

What are some common 'templates' offered in 'They Say / I Say'?

The book offers various templates for introducing others' views (e.g., 'Many people believe that...'), summarizing arguments (e.g., 'In short, they argue that...'), and introducing one's own argument in response (e.g., 'Although they are right about X, they are wrong about Y').

How does 'They Say / I Say' address the concept of 'voice' in writing?

By encouraging writers to engage with others' ideas, the framework helps them develop their own 'voice' as a distinct perspective within a larger conversation. It's not just about having an opinion, but about articulating it meaningfully in relation to existing discourse.

What does Graff mean by 'disagreement' in the context of academic writing?

Disagreement, in this context, isn't just about stating an opposing view. It's about understanding the nuances of the opposing argument and offering a reasoned, evidence-based counter-argument that acknowledges the complexities of the issue.

How does the book help writers avoid common pitfalls like generalizations or stating the obvious?

By requiring engagement with 'they say,' the framework pushes writers to be more specific and analytical. It encourages them to move beyond simplistic statements by showing how their argument is informed by and contributes to a broader discussion.

What is the role of evidence and support in the 'They Say / I Say' model?

Evidence and support are crucial for substantiating the 'I say.' The framework emphasizes that a strong 'I say' is not just a declaration but an argument that is backed by credible evidence and explanation, often in response to or in conjunction with supporting evidence for 'they say.'

Can the 'They Say / I Say' approach be applied to disciplines other than English or humanities?

Absolutely. The principle of engaging with existing knowledge and conversations is fundamental to all academic disciplines. Whether in science, history, or social sciences, understanding prior research and contributing to ongoing debates is essential.

What are some criticisms or limitations of the 'They Say / I Say' framework?

Some critics argue that an over-reliance on templates might stifle creativity or lead to formulaic writing. Others suggest that the framework could be interpreted as prioritizing argument over exploration or that it might not fully capture the complexities of certain research methodologies.

How does 'They Say / I Say' encourage critical thinking?

It fosters critical thinking by requiring students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the ideas of others. By learning to identify assumptions, biases, and strengths in different viewpoints, students develop a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of complex issues.

Additional Resources

Here is a numbered list of 9 book titles related to Gerald Graff's *They Say / I Say*, with short descriptions:

1. They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing

This foundational text by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein introduces students to the crucial concept of academic discourse as a conversation. It provides templates and strategies for engaging with existing arguments, making claims, and supporting them effectively. The book emphasizes the importance of understanding what "they say" (prevailing opinions, research) before articulating "I say" (one's own thesis).

2. They Say / I Say with Readings

An expanded version of the original, this edition includes a collection of essays and articles that demonstrate the principles of "They Say / I Say" in practice. It offers diverse examples of how writers engage with different viewpoints, providing students with models for their own writing. This version is particularly useful for courses that incorporate reading and analysis alongside writing instruction.

3. A Writer's Reference

While not exclusively focused on "They Say / I Say," this widely used writing handbook by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers often incorporates the underlying principles of academic argumentation and engaging with sources. It provides comprehensive guidance on grammar, punctuation, research, and citation, all essential skills for effectively participating in academic conversations. The book implicitly supports the idea of building on existing knowledge and contributing one's own insights.

4. They Say / I Say: Writing with Conversations

This title suggests a focus on the conversational nature of academic writing, aligning with Graff's core message. Books with this focus would likely explore how to frame arguments by acknowledging and responding to others' ideas. They would emphasize the dynamic interplay of different perspectives in shaping a writer's own position.

5. The Craft of Research

Authored by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, this book delves into the fundamental practices of conducting and presenting research. It emphasizes the importance of understanding existing scholarship and situating one's own work within that broader context. The text implicitly encourages writers to engage with what "they say" by critically evaluating and building upon prior research.

6. On Writing Well

William Zinsser's classic guide to writing non-fiction stresses clarity, simplicity, and voice. While it doesn't directly teach the "They Say / I Say" framework, its emphasis on thoughtful communication and engaging the reader aligns with the goal of making one's own arguments persuasive and accessible. Good writing, as Zinsser argues, involves making a clear point that resonates with others.

7. They Say / I Say: Mastering the Art of Academic Debate

This hypothetical title highlights the argumentative aspect of Graff's work. Such a book would likely provide practical strategies for constructing effective counterarguments, synthesizing differing viewpoints, and presenting a well-supported thesis. It would focus on the skills needed to effectively participate in and contribute to academic debates.

8. The Norton Field Guide to Writing

This comprehensive writing guide often includes sections on understanding academic audiences, developing a thesis, and integrating sources. It teaches students how to engage with the ideas of others in a responsible and analytical manner, fostering the skills necessary to articulate their own "I say" in relation to existing scholarship. The guide supports the development of critical thinking and argumentation.

9. _They Say / I Say: Building Your Argumentative Voice_

This title emphasizes the development of individual authority within academic discourse. It would likely guide writers in confidently presenting their own ideas by first understanding and engaging with the arguments of others. The focus would be on cultivating a distinct academic voice that contributes meaningfully to ongoing conversations.

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