Eddie Chen Ways of Knowing

12/7/15 Dr. Jeranyama

Rounds Reflection – Shannon Donnellan

I attended Shannon’s round today, which was on visualizing history. One of the main goals for the day was to enable the students to think like historians by visualizing what they are learning as they go along. They are pretty far along in a unit on the Constitutional Convention, and now they have to start video recording their assignments, which will be edited and sped up. They are creating what’s called animation videos for this project.

At the beginning of the lesson, Shannon explains the plan for the class and has the students do an exercise where they draw their interpretation of what is being read aloud. The reading is about the Statue of Liberty and I see many students participating and at least getting the beginning of some details of the statue itself. She goes over some general tips for filming, which include designating roles, configuring the setup, and also ignoring small mistakes. She encouraged the students in trying their best to get the animation videos filmed in one take. It will be interesting to see what the final projects look like.

Many groups that I had observed are using the roles given to them and are recording throughout the period. Among the things I notice is the large startup time before they actually begin filming. One of the questions Shannon asks on the rounds sheet is whether they feel confident and feel prepared to film that day. Despite a couple groups not completing their work, the majority of them work through the initial issues with setup, used their roles effectively, and get a first recording done.

We had a long discussion in the pre and post round about what the conceptual understanding would look like for this situation. In the initial activity, the students could use their prior knowledge to just make their own storyboard drawing. The purpose of the exercise was intended to practice visualizing the image that is being described to them. It was quite interesting, because I think it worked in that it helped them mentally prepare for the rest of the class. Overall, I noticed several groups that got their work done and needed little help from the adults in the room. I think that this success can be attributed to Shannon’s preparation in teaching them. Also, she made the work manageable in the lessons she organized. The two groups that were having issues were either dealing with inaccurate information or reluctance for a student to take on a leadership role. This was a more common issue among all the groups, because there were few students that were willing to direct the project as it was going along. I think though having directors would have resulted in fewer retakes by the individual groups.

Overall, the lesson worked well with the students, and it’s a creative outlet too, which I like. I can see myself attempting this project having now observed her class and seeing an example. I’m not sure how I would manage it exactly, but I am certainly more willing to try.