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Teaching & Learning III

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Round Reflection #3, Spring 2016

I took another trip over to University Park Campus School to visit Jennifer Manglass, this time with her freshmen group. I saw her last time with the juniors and so it was a good experience to visit both of her classes this year. I found this particularly helpful because I am in a similar situation in the MAT program as Jen, as both she and I have a section of ninth grade and a section of eleventh grade students.

During her pre-round, Jen gave us an idea of where she was with her freshmen. They are reading *Romeo and Juliet*, and today's class aimed to tackle Act IV, Scene III. Again, I found the lesson today very helpful from the standpoint that I will be teaching this play to my freshmen beginning in two weeks. Jen's pre-round emphasized her desire to have students working cooperatively in small groups to decode Juliet's soliloquy in this scene. She wanted students working together to uncover the difficult meaning in Shakespeare's often very challenging texts. Jen also underscored that she wanted her rounds-goers to observe how much meaning students were extracting from their work with the passage.

The round began and students quickly found their groups of three or four. Jen made heterogeneous groupings for today, which played an important role in groups staying on pace with each other. Groups first received pieces of scrap paper to engage with image/word associations that Jen provided to get students thinking (visualizing) key elements in the passage. She included a tomb and a corpse and asked students to write what came to mind when looking

at the images. Students were then supposed to use this word association in their group work. Once transitioned into the group work, trios and quads received a copy of the passage as well as instructions. I really liked how Jen scaffolded the reading by giving it to groups, but also that she had students write a paraphrase on the left side of the page and then connecting ideas and meaning on the right side. After, students had some additional questions to answer, though we ran out of time for this.

The most effective piece of Jen's lesson was her printing out of the soliloquy and having students write something on the left and on the right. Students could visualize this well when writing ideas and it provided an opportunity for students to see what they understood. Moreover, this format also allowed Jen to see what students understood or did not understand. For teaching Shakespeare, it is very important to let students process all of the lines, and any tools to help them see the meaning, or which gently force students to explain what they understand, is beneficial. Jen was able to give students a lot of tools for success, even if they still struggled to get access to the whole meaning.

One thing I would do differently—and that I will steal as a scaffolding idea for my Shakespeare teaching—is to incorporate some additional questions into the lesson to help students connect the whole lesson plan. For instance, giving students an exit slip to check in before they leave could give a better picture of student understanding. I also think having a connecting question about the image/word association will help students, but Jen can certainly do this in subsequent lessons. There is plenty of time for it all.