

Nick Porcella

Professor Heather Roberts

Teaching & Learning III

January 22, 2016

### Round #2: A Personal Reflection

I was very excited to host my second round of the year (and my first of the 2016). Whereas my first round was scheduled with my feeling that I had a figurative blindfold on, this round popped up in a rather impromptu way. Five days prior to my round, when preparing my weekly lesson plans for my ninth-graders, I realized that my Friday morning “Hot Seat” activity might be a fun first round to host. The round proved to be highly engaging and enjoyable for students and myself, and I hope, too, for those attending my round.

During pre-round, I had the opportunity to review the agenda and learning goals for the day. Several good suggestions were made for me to think about as I began the lesson. From Tom, what am I focusing on content-wise? From Grace, perhaps engaging the students as though the activity were a made-up television show would permit quicker and more authentic engagement from the audience. In trying to take up these suggestions and others, I made sure I modeled the activity well while also setting it up to succeed stylistically. I had one student become the “MC” and narrate the events of the talk show to the audience. I felt like this increased interest and engagement. Five students volunteered to act, along with me as one of the roles, and the remainder of my class became the quizzical audience.

The actual round/class period was full of energy. My biggest area of satisfaction with the lesson was that it was able to engage all students. Even some notoriously quiet and unengaged students got to add commentary and participate. On his rounds sheet, fellow MAT Mike

indicated that a couple of students really gave life and energy to the activity. I am very grateful to have several very passionate students in class, and it is gratifying when they use their energy in productive ways. I would definitely ask students in the audience, as was Tom's suggestion, how *they* might have portrayed a character in a different manner. I was pleased, finally, that students seemed on task in both groups: actor and audience. The students developing questions may have needed a little more time, and I might next time give it to them, and/or put more scaffolds in place such as having them focus on asking a broad question to the whole group and a narrow question to one character. All in all, the activity was well-received. It has the natural scaffold built in where, next time, I can step out and let them take control of the creative choices and scene.

I will surely be taking suggestions from students and my round-goers for the next time I conduct the activity. And, as part of a student's suggestion in class, perhaps this activity would be well-suited for the end of the unit when we have all read the whole book. Tom, Heather, and Pete offered a suggestion to modify the activity in such a way that allows one student-actor at a time to enter the spotlight and be interviewed, followed by others. Pete gave me the great idea to do some reflective writing after the activity to get students thinking metacognitively about characterizations. After all, the reflection at the end of class was insightful and I could easily build on that. Students clearly were grappling with asking poignant questions as the audience, or with how exactly to portray characters as an actor. Actors were posed with a very serious predicament: they were stepping into the shoes of a single character, but should they also inhabit that character's mind?