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My Round Reflection

After spending way too much time obsessing over my round sheet the night before, the round itself went by so fast! Although I had hoped to have more attendees to provide more feedback, having three observers there for the whole period, plus Ellen's brief visit, actually ended up working well; it felt to me like they blended in more naturally with the students, rather than sticking out as a crowd of outsiders. Since the students were working alone or in small groups, I found it so helpful to have other people there who could check in on them for me and monitor their progress. In that way, I think the lesson was well-suited for a round. While of course I can never notice everything happening in the classroom by myself, the independent work in this lesson made it especially hard for me to get around to all students.

As always, I wholeheartedly appreciated hearing everyone's observations and suggestions. One particularly helpful suggestion was Tom's mention of a time guideline for the project. He pointed out that while a range in projects allows students more creativity and choice, it also means that students will be done at different times. This is something important for me to think about as I set a deadline for this project, and as I assign future projects. I think I'm going to tell my students that they need to be ready to present on Wednesday, which means that they have finished their projects and practiced their presentations before then. I may need to adjust that depending on how much progress is made on Monday. For students who are finished early, I have some PARCC problems ready for them that will be a good challenge.

Almost all of my round participants noted that many students were verbally explaining their thinking to each other much more than writing it. That led me to think about the requirements for the project. Should I ask them to have written explanations for all three examples, or would one written explanation and two verbal explanations suffice? That also leads to the question of what exactly is an explanation. Kate suggested that I show them models of good explanations or model it myself to make my expectations more explicit. In addition, someone suggested that I incorporate some structured think, pair, share time into class, since they seem to be doing that informally already. I definitely want to start doing that, and I think it will be a good way to allow them to socialize productively.