

OBSERVATION DOCUMENTATION FORM

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Preservice Teacher: P*****

Date: 18. March, 2009

Observation #: 2

Mentor Teacher: *****

School/Subject/Grade: ***** High School, 11th Grade English

University Supervisor: Bryan Ripley Crandall

1. Brief Summary of Lesson Observed

Mr. X is continuing a unit on poetry where students write new poems, themselves, but also learn tools and literary devices for analyzing poetry. Today's lesson revolves around several, diverse poems (e.g., Maya Angelou, Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, Woodsworth) and asks students to use color -coding to mark up a poem through finding its literary elements. Students are reminded of how this is done from previous lessons. Markers are provided. The students work in pairs and are given an option to choose another poem if the one handed to them "doesn't work out." Mr. X couches this assignment in a series of activities that prepare students to think deeply about poetry and, eventually, to write expository essays that utilize cluster paragraphs to get to a poem's meaning. In addition, students are working on poetry projects to be presented next week. X, today, circulates the room and interacts with ALL students.

2. Strengths of Preservice Teacher Discussed in Conference

As discussed with Ms. G, Mr. X's classroom confidence is climbing to new heights. His use of voice and authority, today, secured his audience and demonstrated leadership in front of his students. His instructions were articulated clearly and the parameters for the lesson were explicit. Mr. X:

- Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in using approaches that sustain classroom environments in which all students respect each other, take responsibility and hold high expectations for their own learning, and cooperate in support of each other's learning (3.4)

Noting in a critically reflective pre-observation write up:

- Demonstrates the ability to reflect critically on his/her teaching practice and professional development (1.1)

the students of this particular class, first period, have a haphazard approach to arriving to school on time. As predicted, students arrived one by one throughout the class period, beginning with seven and ending with almost twenty students. Mr. X acknowledged this challenge and deliberately set out to get late students on task immediately. By welcoming all students and showing his appreciation for their arrival, he gave one-on-one time and kept the entire 70 minutes on task and working. The students were admirable in their attentiveness to the work being asked of them and their interaction with Mr. X as he coached them to think more intelligently about the poems he provided.

3. Areas of Needed Improvement Discussed in Conference

Ms. G and I also discussed with Mr. X:

- ❑ Demonstrates an increasing variety of instructional approaches, and the ability to select and apply combinations of those approaches that are most appropriate given particular learners and contexts (3.2)

Specifically, it was discussed alternative ways to list class work on a chalk board or overhead so students who arrive late have a routine place to consult when they enter the room, saving Mr. X repetitive instruction time. Also, it was mentioned that Mr. X now has phenomenal voice-control to secure his audience, but when working with one on one instruction, altering his whole class voice to a local voice may not distract other workers in the room (even if his instruction is valuable to all who listen on such one-on-one coaching).

Mr. X will want to continue his attention of varying instructional approaches and applying combinations of these approaches as he better understands the audiences he teaches. For example, what is gained from having students read instructions that are handed out over the teacher reading instructions? How does altering roles change the goal of the teacher?

4. Evidence of attention in lesson or reflection to one or more sub-proficiencies and/or dispositions.

Having full control over his junior classes, Ms. G notes Mr. X:

- ❑ Demonstrates ability to work collaboratively and respectfully with colleagues, adjusting plans to reflect and support those of his/her mentor teacher where necessary (5.1)

In addition to this, today a high school counselor pulled several students out of class to set up a schedule for next year with them. He frequently was present in today's class and Mr. X demonstrated a fluid understanding of a busy school day and the transition of students into the hallway and back in again was fluid and non-intrusive. Mr. X, too, did not cease instruction from the time the period began until its ending. He gave ALL students individual attention and several times went to students I thought might lose site of the task at hand and immediately brought that back on target. In fact, not only did the students get on task, but they seemed more excited about the task they were doing.

5. Suggested Proficiencies, Sub-Proficiencies, and/or Dispositions for Preserve Teacher to consider focusing on for the next observation

For the third and final observation of this six week placement, Mr. X might think deeply about assessment and how he thought, currently knows, and might change in regards to how students prove they have learned. Specifically, he might consider his use of assessment and its triumphs, shortcomings, frustrations and accomplishments so he:

- ❑ Demonstrates ability to develop assessment approaches of his/her own, in light of research-based principles and his/her own experience (4.4)

Additional Comments: The following is a narration of today's observation. Paul X can read this as a script to have another set of eyes on what occurred in the room.

8:00 – Students have been arriving since 7:45. A student earlier dropped perfume in the hallway and came in to report it. Mr. X's pre-observation form is extremely reflective

and serves as solid, critical thinking about the reality of first period in many schools. Ms. G discusses with me that all is going well and that she will let X work alone. A new student from NYC arrives and students around her introduce themselves. A statement from yesterday's class is on the board. Mr. X is greeting students and begins promptly at 8 o'clock. Xavier runs out to the nurse. He grabs attention. He secures the audience with a booming voice and announces a group poetry block. There are four African American girls, three African American boys and one G girl. A counselor walks in to do schedules – Kent is his name. Looking around the room, students have nothing on their desks. Another African American boy arrives late, wearing pajama bottoms. X passes out a sheet on the Group Poetry project. They are to read the poem, define the words they do not know and then mark literary elements on the poem. He recalls a previous hand out of said elements. Three students pull this out of their bag. Another African American girl comes in late. He says they should have no problem of it. (OC: Paul, what if students volunteer to read the list of six criteria and it frees you up to listen and then paraphrase the goals? It takes some of the performance pressure of the teacher so they can think about if students get it. He says, "You should be good at this, Terry. You too Bernie." Mr. X says they can work individual, in groups, or in pairs.

8:05 – A boy asks, "Are we all reading the same poem?" Mr. X says pair up, group up, and then I'll hand out the poem. Mr. X also hands out color markers and emphasizes the use of these markers and explicitly states to MAKE A COLOR KEY. Mr. X's control of the room is more obvious with this. The counselor comes in and pulls. Each duo is given a different form. Another African American girl comes in. I walk around the room to survey the choices – a solid, diverse variety all of the same length. The kids are receptive to the assignment and begin color coding. I help a boy pronounce "psalm." X asks them to give him a holler if they need any help.

8:10 – An African American boy and an African American girl (LPP student from SU over the summer who helped in the computer lab) arrive. X addresses this and gets them on task immediately. Students are reading their poems and coding. X works the room helping students out (OC: Perhaps talking quieter to the individual groups with the instruction will give them attention, and not draw the attention of other students. The students in the mini-conference give great eye contact to him and his affirmation they can do it is obvious)

8:15 – The room is silent and the girl with the "Psalm" poem is invited to pick her own poem. She picks, "Still I rise?" (OC: I wonder if these kids know the Janet Jackson film, Poetic Justice, or is that too old school. Although inappropriate with Tupac's cussing, the film has many merits." Kent walks in again and the kids say, "What up Kent?" He has good rapport with the students and it seems to parallel the same comfort that X has with the students. Another African American girl arrives, as well as an African American boy. The boy is eating a pop tart and doesn't settle in. The girl in front of me says, "I don't understand this. I don't know this." Her partner says, "You didn't read." X comes over and they say they are doing good. Her partner calls her on the lie. He instructs the two on Maya Angelou. He asks, "What might a caged bird be a symbol for?" A girl from the other side of the room yells, "Negros. Slavery." Mr. X acknowledges some of this truth.

A cell phone rings. One boy is down for the count on his desk. He catches himself and sits up, and nods his head at students. He pulls a book from under the desk and goes back down, using for a pillow after checking messages on his cell phone and texting back. He avoids the pillow, stands up and asks another boy about an event on Thursday. He returns to his seat. (OC: I am thinking about relevance in the lives of Corcoran student. How does Paul think about relevant instruction for why students deconstruct and analyze poems. Has this conversation occurred? If so, how'd it go?)

8:25 – All students but two are on task and moving along well. They work well and encourage one another. They lean over and put the color codes to use. X moves to another group to see how they are doing. He goes to the boy who has his book/pillow on the desk and engages him with the poem by leaning over his desk. Roland, the boy, says, “Why’d you text me back?” to the girl across the room. X asks him to put it away and talks about tools with the boy, making connections with an iPod, music. “His tools are words,” he discusses with the boy. “What do you think the theme is here?” The boy doesn’t answer. X suggests ideas and the boy, Roland, gets going and has much to say. X says, “Good. That’s what I want.” The boy pulls out markers and begins highlighting the poem. X talks to another group about “a broken dream.” He questions them and they answer. He compliments with, “Very good. Very good.” A girl asks if they can address internal conflict and external conflict, and X says, “Nice. Go for it.”

8:30 – He then asks her what she’s thinking about the theme. A girl, JoQuisha (spelling?) arrives and her music is loud. She asks a girl up front, “Who dat?” referring to me. I’m guessing I’m in her seat. X says “He’s hear to observe me.” The girl sits by me and the music goes louder. She positions herself in her seat with some difficulty. She taps her fingers. X returns to Roland to see the progress he’s made. He has made progress. A young man gets a poem for the girl who just arrived and she thanks him. She pulls out high lighters and goes on task. Danielle asks X to help her for the last part. He goes over what she’s accomplished and then questions what other literary devices she might address. He also asks JoQuisha to turn down her iPod.

8:35 – A boy is looking for a mood and Mr. X suggests promising. X asks for another word for promising. After a little thought, the word “hopeful” springs forward. X moves to another crew and works with them. He is springboarding to meet the needs of all students. A girl asks if they can analyze line by line or is it something for the whole poem. X says, “Line by line works.” (OC: Peeling a Grape in Slow Motion Activity – How does one Deconstruct? How does one Reconstruct? We are analytical by nature, but analyzing poetry is not an easy task. We assume it is, but nope). Another girl arrive. I go over the assignment with her.

8:40 – The girl, Tyesha, opens her notebook for the literary terms and gets to work. She tells me she doesn’t feel well. A boy is discussing with his partner the symbolism of footprints. She doesn’t get his point so he presses his fingers on her thigh as if stepping on it. It leaves a mark, he notes, but then disappears. They have a conversation about this. The room is filling up. At this time there are seventeen students and X’s instruction on a one to one basis continues.

8:45 – The girl asks, “Mr. Why you making him make us not listen to music.” Not my call, I tell her, it’s negotiated with the school and the classroom. Not my business. TyQuisha asks me about how to do the literary elements and we read the poem together and discuss the Langston Hughes poem and its uses of a wall, light, darkness. Another African American male arrives. (IDEA: What if there was a blocked place on the chalkboard for late students that says, “You’re late? Here’s what you’ve missed and we’re doing. The expectation can be set that they confer with the chalkboard so that you don’t have to repeat every three minutes when another student arrives). X says summaries can on the back.

8:50 – The students are getting closer to completion and a buzz of slight conversation begins. Then, it goes silent again. These students are modeling excellence. They are on task and working hard. The students begin working on “Cluster Paragraphs.” This is a form of expository (analytical) writing where evidence is clustered to prove a point stated in a topic sentence. It is a fancy way of saying paragraph, actually, by guiding students more towards their purpose (to cluster ideas). Mr. X is explaining this to students as they head to the end of their assignment. The three young ladies by me have excellent handwriting, but most print. Cursive handwriting, it is said, can’t be relied on as an assumed skill.

9:00 – Mr. X gets a girl focused on the poem when he hears her talking. As the class goes toward fifteen minutes left, more cell phones come out for texting and voice lift a bit. (OC: I’m wondering if students had to draw their poem if it might help them visualize the symbols). I talk briefly with X that this is a solid class of workers. This is something to sing about. A boy asks, Mr. X, if I only do five of six, what grade will I get? Mr. X says, Not good. It’s the major part of the assignment. He says, “If you don’t finish, this will be homework for Friday. Don’t forget. It is a major grade.” He announces he’ll take work that is completed. A girl says, “I have a field trip on Friday.”

9:05 – X works with Roland again. JoQuisha sings a song while texting. A boy yells out, “Dude, I’m done summarizing.” He has a grin and is proud. Another boy says, “I swear to go I better blast this.” He claps his hands and looks at his work. Mr. X collects it. A girl gives Mr. X the paper and tells him to read his horoscope. She doesn’t understand hers and he tries to explain it to her. She laughs. A boy says, “Let me see mines, bro.” A couple of bags of chips comes out. Mr. X announces six minutes left and to begin wrapping up what you’re working on.

9:15 – Students are moving towards leaving. Packing up. Ms. G returns. Items are collected and several girls show me their work and how colorful their papers are. They are proud of their work. Tynesha announces, “Nice meeting you.” I compliment her art work.