12<sup>th</sup> ELA Socratic
Post Interview

Interviewer:    I think as far as effectiveness in communicating the purpose for the magical realism literary terms they need to know or the style of the genre, I think it's easier to give that background factual information later after they've done the experience. Often times if I spend too much time prepping a lesson with history, they have no context for it, so that's always important that the learning comes after their learning experience.

Teacher:    That's interesting, actually. I think in this case it definitely makes sense. What parts of your instruction do you think were most effective in supporting students to meet these objectives?

Interviewer:    As far as my instructional practice? What do you mean, like ...

Teacher:    I guess in this case it's the choice of the socratic method, probably.

Interviewer:    Oh, okay.

Teacher:    What is it about the socratic method I guess that helps them eventually to get to their objectives?

Interviewer:    I don't know. For the format to allow the students to be open to a variety of interpretations for literature, the socratic discussion allows for multiple voices. I like that the class allowed and kind of managed themselves and said, "No wait, let's hear from so and so first. So and so has to have a turn," and that they're practicing that. There are times where I'll have to model it, but I try to do it subtly. I almost feel like I'm an intruder in their discussion that going on, so you have to walk that fine balance for socratic discussion. It can be scary if you've never tried it, but I think spontaneous learning moments are great.

[00:02:00]

Teacher:    How do you think that links to their [inaudible 00:02:36] learning? Meaning the objectives, or even the notes and how is it ...

Interviewer:    I think it's good practice as far as for the different learners. Some of them are if they have to really internalize, they have to go back and scrutinize a literature because they came in clueless. They don't know what the birdman story was about, but by listening to their peers, their perceptions, they can go back to make that connection. I think that also mirrors life as well, especially with this technology world where you're so inundated with various opinions and sources and how do you determine which ones are credible and how do you stand on your own opinion. It's definitely important or applicable for sure. Whether they'll remember the term magical realism for the AP exam I think is not so important as far as their test scores.

Test scores are important, but the skills of communicating and monitoring their own learning is also maybe even more important.

[00:04:00]

Teacher: Again, in that situation it's okay to reiterate, it's okay you don't have to come up with a new answer if it's appropriate, you know what I mean? Some people feel like, "Oh I don't want to say this." What role did organization and planning play in setting up the classroom?

Interviewer: What role did organization and planning. I think it takes time to build the culture and the expectation, so other socratic discussions might've been failures. By taking a look at what I could've done better, so maybe giving a pop quiz to make sure that 100% of them have read, or requiring them to post their levels of questions the day before walking into the classroom has definitely helped. I've also now then included that they have to capture a bar or phrase from the text that leads them to ask that level of question, and so that also is evidence for me that they've read and they're now ready to learn.

Teacher: What role did behavior management play in this lesson as far as expectations, procedures, routines, or just [inaudible 00:05:34] ?

Interviewer: It was interesting. The students in the first round of socratic discussion I had to ask for a volunteer student leader, but the second discussion or the second half of the discussion it just naturally flowed. Somebody took leadership and they asked each other. That they

[00:06:00] manage their own behavior, that's a goal too.

Teacher: Do you think that was a skill that they learned over time?

Interviewer: I think it's a skill that needs to be commented on, it needs to be encouraged, enforced, so that they can get into the expectation. It's definitely something that you have to build at.

Teacher: How do you think the lesson went with regards to student engagement?

Interviewer: Highly successful, very happy, very proud of their engagement, the level of engagement from all of them, and that they always leave the class saying, "This was the best class," or in the next class, "This was the best class," is proof to me.

Teacher: How do you think students ... Well maybe I should ask what do you think about the additional that they brought into the discussion from out?

Interviewer: I think it was interesting. Each student brought in various historical information or they admitted to looking at SparkNotes, and they all brought in their additional info. Like, "I actually did extra homework for this homework assignment," and there was no

[00:08:00] judgement, but you do have the students questioning each other and asking each other, "Was that okay? Is that credible? Or did you get that from SparkNotes?" A little teasing going on, and that's to be expected if you're going to make a choice you have to be prepared for those kind of questions from your peers, from your organization that you represent as well.

Teacher: Not only just engagement in the content but also engagement in the process as well.

Interviewer: In the process as well, and I like how they kind of took the meta approach and then applied the lessons from the story to how they as readers of literature are symbolic of these characters or of trying to find these connections or what it represents or should it represent something. I like that they always pull themselves like, "That's the purpose of literature, good literature." I don't have to say it. It comes from them.

Teacher: What do you think students found as meaningful and relevant to them in this particular piece or discussion?

Interviewer: I know they will always remember these short pieces because they're so jarring to their expectation of what literature should be. They may not remember for a long time that so and so student brought this point up or that point, but I think they will remember how fun and the ah ha moments by listening to their peers and/or by exchanging

[00:10:00] perceptions. I think that's what they will remember from this lesson.

Teacher: How would you like to continue to develop this lesson in the future?

Interviewer: I've not had a socratic discussion for poetry. The students love poetry. In the beginning they were like [inaudible 00:10:22] but they take the same curiosity and exchange in small group discussions to deconstruct and/or to understand a very complex poem. It would be really interesting to see it done with a poem, and I wonder how long that could sustain because poetry as well is so dense. There are so many layers. I think it might be interesting to apply it to that.

Teacher: Cool. Good.

Interviewer: Thanks.