**Courtney Napleton**

**Kenwood Academy High School**

**English IV—Honors World Literature—Period 8**

**First Observation—February 6, 2013**

**Peg Kritzler, Field Supervisor**

Courtney, before I even entered your classroom, I met Assistant Principal Hatoum who said how impressed she was with your meaningful contributions to the conversations during the professional development day. She reported that several teachers made very positive comments about you.

For this observation, I visited your 8th period, World Literature class where the lesson involved an examination of figurative language in poetry. You began class right at the bell by asking students to take out their word maps and work independently on them*.* As students worked, you quickly walked through the room to make sure they were on task and all cell phones had been put away. Next, you asked for a volunteer to lead the class through the word map exercise for the word *misanthrope*, and one student quickly volunteered. This well-designed activity, which you projected on the screen, asked students to provide a definition, offer an example, (Dr. Hyde was a good choice), offer a non-example, identify parts of the word that may indicate meaning (They cited the prefix *mis*) and explain why they would need to use this word. Here you might want to stress the pleasure in using sophisticated vocabulary. It’s a great way to impress friends. Also, be sure to capitalize on opportunities to reinforce earlier learning. A student brought up the word *malevolent,* and you might have paused to review it with the rest of the class. You then asked students to applaud for your volunteer. Nice touch.

Next, you asked if anyone had brought a poem to share with the class, and a student volunteered to read “Angels Among Us.” Students seemed to really enjoy the poem and made thoughtful comments about its meaning. You were particularly pleased that the volunteer reader, who had been a management challenge earlier in the quarter, chose to participate in this way. Consider this a victory.

You then provided the rationale for the lesson: to study figurative language in poetry utilizing the T.S.O.A.P.S. analytical approach. You wisely reviewed this acronym: Tone, Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, and Subject. As part of this discussion, a student said he had an *epiphany*, and you congratulated him on the use of that word—an effective way to encourage student usage of vocabulary words. Next, you referenced a poem from the previous class, which employed an extended metaphor. (Good way to connect to and reinforce prior learning.) You then wrote the key terms on the board and asked a student volunteer to write the definitions offered by her classmates. During this time, you distributed the Pablo Neruda poem “Song of Despair” (an effective use of class time). Students were able to define metaphor, simile, and personification. (Be sure to set the expectation that they should be writing these definitions in their notes.) You led a brief discussion on why poets use figurative language and asked a student to read a short biography of Neruda. Then, employing an excellent strategy, you asked what students could infer about the poet from his biography and required that they use textual evidence to support their inferences. You offered positive affirmation for their good responses.

After students read the poem aloud, you led them through a brief T.S.O.A.P.S. analysis of it; you then modeled identification of figurative language through a discussion of the metaphor found in the line “The rustling belt of the sea girdles the shore.” You asked students why the poet would use this metaphor and what impact it has on the reader. Then you broke students into groups, assigning each group a couplet and asking them to identify figurative language and suggest why it was employed. Students then began their task.

As class drew to a close, you announced the homework which provided students a choice of three writing prompts: to write a poem using figurative language; to write a short story that includes metaphor; to identify a visual metaphor in a work of art or poem; or create a work of art based on an image. This was a good range of assignments that would appeal to most students and provided student choice. Class ended at this point, but I am assuming that you will spend some time explaining and scaffolding this assignment. The short story option probably needs more scaffolding than the others.

Courtney, there were many effective aspects to this lesson. You have a very good rapport with the students, and you bring a great deal of energy to your teaching. Your lesson moved at a lively pace which fostered student engagement. Your regular use of student volunteers to lead class discussion is an excellent technique, which involved students in active learning and seemed to be appreciated by the class as a whole. You offered students positive affirmation for their good work. Your lesson was also well designed; you opened the class with a clear rationale, your transitions were smooth, and you consistently built upon and reinforced prior learning. Well done.

Prior to the observation, you asked me to offer suggestions on effective management. I anticipated a much different problem than I observed. Your students are interested and engaged. There do not seem to be any negative intentions on the part of the students—just a lack of self-regulation, so you must provide that for them. At each point in your lesson, you must set your expectations and then give students time to get quiet. Thinking back at this lesson—when the student came to the front of the class to lead the word map discussion, you could have paused, stood still, and asked the class to give him their full attention. Then *waited* for it. There is a common fear that you will be standing forever, waiting for students to quiet themselves, but you won’t. There were students who were working with you to quiet the class. They will continue to do so in your wait time. The same strategies could have been employed when the student got up to read her poem. Set the tone and the expectations: “Please offer your respectful attention,” and then *wait* for it. And do not begin until you have total quiet. You never got them there. Each time you asked for student attention, they quieted, but it never got silent. Therefore, the noise level just kept escalating, and you kept talking louder and working harder in order to be heard. Anticipate that at each transition in a lesson, you will have to reset the tone and regain students’ attention. It is true for all students—even graduate students. So plan for it, and wait for it. In the last moments of class, you asked for quiet to explain the homework, and you almost got there, but you began talking before you had stillness, which put the burden of being heard on you. I really think that deliberate transitions will be very helpful with management. As you said, worrying about management makes it hard for you to think, and it takes away class time. It is my hope that if you get students accustomed to this new procedure, it will remedy much of the problem.

In watching you teach, it is clear that you are working hard. Your plan gives evidence of a great deal of thought and care. You said you are excited to improve your teaching, but you are happy with the progress you have made and the small rewards involved. And well you should be.