

Mark Curcio

9 November 2008

Reflection #4

#### Practicing Grammar Using ~~The~~ (My) Past

For some reason, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the 10<sup>th</sup> graders more than the seniors thus far my pre-service teaching experience. I don't know, I prefer working with Seniors because I feel I can do more with them, but it seems like the 10<sup>th</sup> graders want to do more and are open to more. Whether it is Senioritis or not, I still prefer creating lessons for the seniors, but I have more fun with the 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Being my second time with them, I knew what I had to work on to be more understood and I knew what they would like and what they would find "boring." Taking all of these things into consideration, I put together a solid lesson that taught, entertained, and opened up Mr. Long's 10<sup>th</sup> grade Academic English class for two straight periods.

Reading literature and responding to it, I feel that I am very qualified. Writing Creatively and reflecting on poetry, I feel that my skills are above the average English teacher. Having a can-do attitude and relating to the students through media connections and interests, I feel that I am in a class of my own. But when it comes to grammar, I'm still a rookie. In high school, my teachers never really went over grammar. We read stories, poetry, and handouts, and were graded on grammar on our papers, but we never really were "taught" grammar. If we were, then I forget. In college, I took a grammar class, however I studied it for the exams, not necessarily for intellectual growth. My mistake. Now, I'm not going to completely bash my grammar knowledge because I am a writing tutor and through my experience as a tutor I have gained an abundance of knowledge in grammar, but do I feel completely comfortable teaching it? The answer is no. With this being mentioned though, I put together a good lesson I think that the students enjoyed, I learned from, and Mr. Long seemed pretty impressed by.

During the first part of the class, I gave them a choice between all my 10<sup>th</sup> grade papers and we went over it. I feel that this was a good idea because it put me down to their level and allowed them to realize that yes, I was a 10<sup>th</sup> grader before and no, I wasn't always such a strong writer. After going over the paper of their choice, I received a decent amount of positive feedback from them including, "You're a good writer, Mr. C," and "That's funny how we went over a paper of yours that you wrote when you were my age!" All was well heading into the home stretch.

The last part of the class was more interesting. I found a game online called, "Grammar Gorilla" so we played it individually. The students really seemed to like it because if they got a perfect 10 out of 10 correct, they received a lollipop. But if they missed one, they had to quit and were not given a lollipop. You could really tell the difference in enthusiasm as the game went along because they really wanted to get 10 out of 10 and impress themselves as well as their fellow classmates (and for a lollipop too, of course.)

The only real thing I found to make a note of between the two classes was that the students enjoyed the game more when it was played individually rather than on teams. Period two, I played the game individually, but then during Period three, I played in groups. Mr. Long made a note that they seemed to enjoy it more the first way and after analyzing the comparisons between the two periods, I found out that he was right. This was the first time in my experience that I have learned from my mistake, and I'm glad that I did.

Overall, the lesson was a success and I hope to work with the 10<sup>th</sup> graders again soon. I might have to brush up on my grammar in between time though. ☺