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Observation # 3
November 19, 2003
Reflection

I tried Yvonne's anticipation guide strategy in order to introduce a new unit on immigration and to jumpstart critical thinking before reading a poem about cultural identity. I also followed Yvonne's lead and set norms for the discussion regarding participation and encouraged students to call on each other after they had spoken. I was very pleased with how the discussion went. My students tend to be passive (with the exception of two) but the anticipation guide definitely created controversy and debate. As I monitored the small groups discussing the anticipation guide, nearly all students were engaged in discussion with their group members, arguing over answers. I asked students to choose their own groups of three but that at least one student had to be a different race, gender or ethnicity. I should have limited it to race or gender because several groups of all white students claimed (somewhat accurately) that they all had different ethnicities (Irish, German, etc.). Nevertheless, the small group discussions were rich and generated insightful thoughts that students shared with the whole class.

One stipulation for our whole class discussion was that each student could only speak twice until all students had spoken once. This changed the power dynamics of the class- my strong oral students were shut down after the first five minutes. More students felt comfortable participating, and a handful of students voluntarily participated in the whole class discussion for *the first time all semester*. I suspect that by establishing a norm that all students would participate and by shutting out those students who typically dominate, I created a safe space for my quieter students to share their ideas and opinions.

In addition, I encouraged active participation by asking students to stand up if they agreed with something and asking them to imagine a situation. I also have finally established the norm that I will wait to speak until everyone is quiet. This took about a month to do because I did not set this standard at the beginning of the school year.

My goal is that by the end of the year, my students will be able to lead their own discussions, both within a small group and as a whole class. The next step to reach that goal is to encourage students to address each other with their comments, to build on each other's comments, rather than talk directly at me. One way to do this is to require students to paraphrase what the previous student said before adding their own opinion, or to require students to agree or disagree with the previous student's comments before adding their own.

I need to consciously try to take my students to a deeper understanding by prodding them to think deeper about my discussion questions. When I said, "Imagine a situation when you have to change your behavior or your language as you change social contexts," and only two students responded, I should have pushed the rest of the class more. I could have asked, "Do you talk the same way around me as you do around your friends? Do you act the same way around the principal as you do around your parents?" in order to get more responses. Also, I need to work on smoother transitions that make explicit how I think the activities build on each other and flow together. My students don't always know my logic, and it is helpful to them to understand why I've planned the lesson that day. So, when I ended the discussion and moved into the closure activity, I should have summarized the discussion in a few sentences and then explained why we

were going to do the closure activity. Instead, I mentioned "you're anxious for grades" and that was a signal that it was okay to chat. I lost them there.

Watching myself on the video tape was interesting - I sustain eye contact with the student who is speaking during the discussion, because I think that is polite, but then I don't see the students on the other side of the room who are off task. I think it's apparent just by watching where my eyes are in the room (usually only on the student speaking) that I am not as aware as I perhaps need to be of all that is going on in the classroom.

