

**Final Dialogue Response for Semester 1 (Fall 2004) – On Co-teaching**  
1/12/2005

Patrick Reimer begins...

O.k. so I have been in your 9<sup>th</sup> grade class for 3 days now and I feel we have a much better working repore in that class than we do in our 11<sup>th</sup> grade class. So why is it working with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and not working as well with the 11<sup>th</sup> graders?

I was thinking about this question all day yesterday what is the difference? The first thing I thought of was the content. The regents class, is so much content, and its really doesn't have anything to do with focusing on a specific concept for a period time, but it is a variety of concepts, all presented to the students in the most efficient way.

I think we are approaching the two classes from two differ places. We put some much energy in planning the regents class, and trying to get it right. First we tried the book, and went chapter by chapter, but then we realized we had such a range of kids, then we decided to have the kids work in the book from the point they were at. That was crazy because we had everyone at a different place. Even if kids were on the same chapter inevitably they were at different places in the chapters. While I tink that was a step in the right direction is was clear the book was not great for individual learning. I think that when we went to individual sheets that was great.

I think kids have just takin pieces and co-opted them I see that Cristina is still using her dictionary and the other days was great when they all rememberd translations.

Maybe we didn't do such a bad job at co-teaching that class.

To me, there are two issues. I think one is that we are not in the right place (physical location) to be able to do this. It's hard for me to be in a room that doesn't feel like my own. We also are battling the fact that these kids have had horrible experiences in math so far. Are we really making this any different for the regents kids? It's about a test. But then, my ninth graders are wonderful. They love you, they are totally accepting of you being there. I know they defer to me occasionally, like Linuel only moving when I say it, but Nerysha is going to listen to both of us. Their climate and culture is completely different. For most of them, math is a really positive experience. It's structured. And that space has become a space that they feel safe in. And I don't know how I mean safe. They know that cursing's not ok, they know that there are high, but not unreasonable expectations. And I think they feel like you and I are going to help them succeed, but we're going to be hard on them when they don't meet behavioral expectations. I don't know that the 11<sup>th</sup> graders have that same feeling of report with us.

Have we failed as co-teachers in that class of regents? I don't think so. I think you're right, we are giving students choices (we didn't call it that at first) but we are. And frankly, they know more math now than they did when they came to us. We are actually

getting them to do math, and not easy stuff. I think the calculator was a good addition. But there is still something in me that comes back to this whole thing around the climate and culture of the classroom place. I don't get excited to go into that classroom everyday with you. But I'm excited to go into ninth grade with you. I don't know if that's mostly because I feel like it's my place more, I feel like they have helped to create that place. They can go into the closet and I'm not worried about them messing up someone else's stuff. I feel like we try to minimize our impact on the spatial relationships in the other classroom. We try to make it seem like we were never there when we leave.

I'm excited for us to do ninth grade and an eleventh grade, I just wish that it could be in one room so that we could feel like we had the time and the space to do this reflection. Where we could walk to the spots where students were/are working and say this is great, or we need to change this. I feel like crying right now or I'm angry, I don't know what I just don't feel like co-teaching is structurally supported, or we have ways to make it work in this environment. Ahh, I'm all over the place today with this reflection.

Good stuff: students are responding to us, they are doing really well the past couple days with going over the problems for the regents. We are a part of that, I just don't know what part. The structure isn't very creative, but I guess we're not necessarily thinking about creativity, we're thinking about what will work.

Here's the question: Did we meet our goal? I said last night no. I still think we haven't met our goal, but we're closer to understanding what we need to in order to change.