

Reflection

This project focused on discovering and recreating the beautiful work that is Shakespeare. We started the biggest portion of the project by reading *The Tragedy of Macbeth* in small groups. I was the leader in my group called 'hands'. You see, each group had to individually trace a word, and, you guessed it, our group had the word 'hands'. Besides looking out for our word in the readings, our small group read each act of *Macbeth* and analyzed it. We then took notes on our thoughts and compiled them into an act-by-act description of what our vision of the shadow puppet show might look like. After we had completely read through *Macbeth* we got into our production company groups. I was labeled as a director, and the directors got right to work at cutting the script. After that, we collaborated with the tech guys in the recording studio to create a sound track for the show. Finally, Sophie and I blocked scenes on the stage with the puppeteers, figured out lighting, and worked out which scenes required props. All this hard work was presented openly on Friday, March 1st, 2013. When it was over, I felt more accomplished and relieved than I had ever been before.

The thing I enjoyed the most about this project was "translating" Shakespeare to modern language and finishing making script cuts. When I was working in our 'hands' group, I often read ahead the night before on No Fear Shakespeare(NFS) so I would know what kinds of things to talk about and if the other members of the group understood what was happening. Doing this every day helped me so much because after I read it on NFS and then read it in Shakespeare's language, it was like it was already written in modern language. I felt that if NFS didn't exist, I would be the same as the kids who struggle through reading Shakespeare from a textbook. Another high point on this journey to success was finishing chopping the script up and putting it back together. Cutting the script is a very long, painful experience because you and the other directors aren't always on the same page. We have to state our opinion and vision, listen to

the other person's argument, and then decide what to keep and what to cut. Overall, once I understood what Shakespeare was trying to portray, then I just thought about what the audience needed to know and cut the rest. I would like to thank No Fear Shakespeare for making my job as a director so much easier.

Now that we know what went right with this project, let's talk about what went wrong. I think my weakest point in this project was directing my small reading group. When I first agreed to be a director, I was assured that I wouldn't be the only one, so there was no chance that I could lead everybody astray and put on a production the equivalent of a kindergarten choir show. Once I found out that I was the only leader of a small reading group, a sense of fear drowned me. If I led them astray, there wouldn't be another director to put them back on track. It felt as if their entire future rested on my shoulders. I eventually mustered up enough courage to teach them, but that was half the battle. The second half was making sure they knew what was going on in the play, but I also had to balance that with making sure I didn't become too strict on them and become a female Hitler. I persevered through this by thinking up interesting questions to ask them so that they wouldn't get bored and would also learn something. At least that was the goal.

The biggest thing I learned about myself during this project was that I am not cut out to be a teacher...at all. Unless the school code is going to change so that each class is taught by 3-5 teachers, I won't be teaching anyone anytime soon. Furthermore, I learned that I am more into collaboration than I thought. At my 1st semester POL I talked about how I wanted to be more collaborative and work with others rather than just independently. From this project I learned that I lean on other's advice more than I realized. Being independent is great, unless I actually have to teach someone else something. Because of this project, my future became wider with the possibilities of what I could do without being completely independent.

After heartbreaks and headaches, I come bearing the answer to the big question: *Why, 400 years later, does the English speaking world still gravitate/celebrate the works of William Shakespeare?* I can tell you with great

confidence that Shakespeare is important because in order to see where writing is going, you have to see what it has done. Shakespeare was a MASTER at the English language. I believe that he felt *confined* to the language that everyone was speaking and writing in. He wrote everything in pentameter, put new meaning to old words, he even created his own words still used to this day. Shakespeare reinvented the meaning of beautiful work by putting his everything into his work, not knowing the outcome, and gave way to new possibilities with his accurate portrayals of human truth and literary boundaries. Because of the work Shakespeare did 400 years ago, we are where we are now.

“A creature cannot survive incomplete, and literature cannot survive without William Shakespeare.” –Ashlee Jenson