Announcer:

Welcome to the reThink ELA podcast, hosted by English language arts teacher, Michelle waters. Prepare to receive strategies, products and expert advice tailored to help teachers feel social awareness, student agency and voice in their ELA classrooms.

Michelle:

Welcome to the reThink ELA podcast. I'm your host Michelle Waters and I am so excited to share with you a method of helping students prepare for their own class discussions. I use this method in my class with high school juniors and also in a class discussion I led with college undergraduate pre-service English teachers. My guest this week is Marisa Thompson, an English teacher at Carlsbad High School in California. You may remember her from my instructionless challenges podcasts episode. She has more than 12 years experience as a classroom teacher during which time she's taught everything from AP to remedial English.

Michelle:

She serves on several vertical teams at her district in which she develops curriculum and environmental goals, and also serves several universities as an online instructor, a cooperating teacher and guest collaborator. Marissa and I haven't met in person yet but we follow each other on Twitter and I would so love to be a fly on the wall or a student in her classroom. Short of that, I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to share her insights and my experiences with her thoughts, questions and epiphanies method for fostering deep student led discussions. In just a few moments, you'll learn how her TQEs led to more critical thinking and problem solving and collaboration in my classroom and in my university class, and how you can implement those methods in your classes. We'll be right back.

Announcer:

Encourage your high school students to share their stories, discuss building a representative society and develop their writing skills. With these set of 15 highly engaging lesson plans, you can mix and match to meet your students' needs. Download this unit at rethinkela.com/sjwp.

Michelle:

Welcome back to rethink ELA. I'm your host Michelle Waters and I am back here with Marissa again, Marissa Thompson of unlimitedteacher.com. And I have a follow-up to her Cult of Pedagogy interview. So you can head over to cultofpedagogy.com and watch the interview about TQEs or Thoughts, Questions and Epiphanes. And I had the joy of using this teaching method in both my high school junior classes and also in my graduate class in college, and I'm very excited to talk with you about my experiences and maybe get a little bit of insight from you, and maybe you have some questions for me as well.

Marisa:

Yeah. I'm really excited. I have had the opportunity to kind of exchange ideas, but it's all been through social media or through email, so it's going to be fun to sit here and chat.

Michelle:

Awesome. Can we get started? Speaking of which I learned, like I said, about your TQE method through Cult of Pedagogy. Can you tell us basically here for those of us who haven't listened to that episode yet, could you tell us what TQEs are and how they're supposed to work?

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... (Completed 12/24/19)
Transcript by Rev.com

Page 1 of 12

Marisa:

TQE stands for Thoughts, Questions and Epiphanes. It's really the thinking or the answers that I need to hear from students in order to know that they understood and really grappled with a topic, whether that topic is a text or just something that was thrown out or a current event, whatever it is, something that lets me know they've thought about it, they've grappled with some questions and the questions themselves that I'm asking for, they're lingering questions, the ones that their group members could not answer. And then the epiphanies are really thoughts that are universal about the human experience or something that can be taken and applied to their own lives.

Michelle:

Absolutely. I know my high school students, when I told them TQEs and told them what that meant, several of them looked at me and said, what's an epiphany? So had somebody look it up in the dictionary and we talked about some epiphanies and they understood after we had that conversation. So I was excited because we just had a vocabulary lesson. And then we were able to actually use that word in the context of our conversations.

Michelle:

What I really enjoyed about this is I had already started having the kids annotate their texts using sticky notes since we're reading books and we just have a class set, they'd use sticky notes. And this kind of gave me a way to scaffold, I guess, their note taking as opposed to just kind of writing random things down that some of them might have been more geared towards literary analysis and other people might have just kind of made some random comments that didn't necessarily question the book or weren't necessarily related to their thoughts or epiphanes. And I think this really helped them figure out what they needed to put into those notes as they were preparing for the later class discussion.

Marisa:

Right. And a lot of my students have said, I read it, I understood it, but I didn't know what I was supposed to write down. So TQE actually started with annotations just like you with sticky notes. I only had a class set for some of the novels that I wanted to teach and I didn't actually have sticky notes for them, so [inaudible 00:05:30] with a method that would work for us, and we had it divided into left side and right side annotations. And the left side was everything the author left for you to understand, for you to pick up on, for you to analyze. And then on the right side is all of your thinking.

Marisa:

So the students would work with those annotations and that would be their note taking system, but it also replaced quizzes, it also replaced questionless, so the students could come in and they had something to talk about. Once the groups get together, as you know, the groups get together, they discuss their notes, they discuss their reading and then they come up with their top two TQEs from the group discussion, and that's what leads our class discussion. So having that information there on the right side of their annotations makes it really simple for them to dive right in.

Michelle:

Absolutely. I know some of them as they were in their small group discussions, and this of course is at the high school level, but in their small group discussions, they kind of struggled a little bit with kind of turning the questions around from just your basic

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... (Completed 12/24/19)
Transcript by <u>Rev.com</u>

question about the plot or about the character to asking about what the author's intentions were. What do you do to help students with that?

Marisa:

Well, I'm sure that they would say it's pretty annoying in the process of trying to get them to do that, but I have them repeat the author's name 5 times, 10 times. Say Steinbeck, Steinbeck, Steinbeck, Steinbeck, and they do, and they all look at me like I'm insane. But as soon as we start adding the author's name into our discussion of the work, and it could be an author, it could be a painter, it could be a musician. It doesn't matter. As soon as we know that this was created with intention, now there's really something to discuss.

Marisa:

When the students put the TQEs up on the board, especially in the beginning, they do leave off the author. And then I will use that as a learning opportunity, and in the moment, we will revise that question or that statement to include the author. And even though it's just a matter of changing a few words, it really does shift their thinking and it pulls them out of the story to analyze the intention, not necessarily only the story or only the character itself, but a different lens, lens as a creator, as someone who is intentional.

Michelle:

Absolutely. And I think that's something that students don't necessarily get particularly when they're reading fiction. They think, Oh, I'm just experiencing this book, kind of like you would watch a movie, and I don't like it so I shouldn't have to read it or I don't like it so it must not be important. And what they need to understand is that the book is the way the author is kind of making an argument or making a statement about the world, and so it's a way for them to see a different way to view the world, look at the world or look at a person's life in a different way, and they need to understand that.

Michelle:

And at that point when it becomes an argument and something that they can have an opinion on either for or against, then that's when I think it becomes important. And I think we experienced that in my class quite a bit, especially with the TQEs and having the kids come up with their own questions and talk about the topics that they wanted to talk about related to the books, because we're doing literature circles that I gave them a choice of four books, The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas, All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, and then also a Dreamland Burning by Jennifer Latham and Tulsa Burning by Anna Myers. And kind of all around the theme in this case, racial injustice, so that's been kind of some tough conversations to have.

Michelle:

I know in my classes, in order to start the conversation, after we had them read and have them do their TQEs and had them have their small group discussions, and they had chosen their own groups, so they were meeting with people that they typically get along with. We had to have a conversation about honoring all students during these tough classroom discussions. I told them that our guidelines that we're not going to discuss something that's blatantly unconstitutional. If it's not something you'd hear being debated on the news, not just social media, it's off limits. If you're going to say something and you realize, hey, that would demean or dismiss something or dismiss someone's understandings or perspectives then don't say it.

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... (Completed 12/24/19) Transcript by Rev.com Page 3 of 12

Michelle:

And so with those guidelines, I feel like we were able to have some pretty good conversations. Of course, they're teenagers so it takes a little bit of practice and developing that understanding and developing that skill. But as part of our speaking and listening standards and it's something important for us to do, but I feel like the TQEs has really helped at the high school level, helped them have some conversations that they might not have been able to otherwise.

Marisa:

Well, that's really interesting to me because I haven't done this with lit circles yet and that is on the agenda for the spring. And I don't anticipate going thematic with it, although that's always really fun too. But I find it interesting that you said that you were able to have really difficult conversations about racial injustice, which we all agree needs to be discussed and discussed in such a way that is productive. I wonder if by ... I really do. I wonder if by using the lens of the author and analyzing his argument or her argument, and how the author created the argument and what it would have been like if they had made different choices for their novel, if that can alleviate some of the anxiety over having those discussions so that we can actually be productive. Is that what you saw?

Michelle:

That's what I'm thinking, because they were talking about the book, they were talking about the author, they were talking about the things they see in the world as opposed to this is my opinion and this is my experience. They were able to move away from just me.

Marisa:

Yeah. Were the epiphanies generally positive? I mean negative epiphanies for racial injustice, but did they have a positive or hopeful effect? Was it more connecting those epiphanies?

Michelle:

I think so. There were some kids who made some comments that I felt were affirming to all people, and especially affirming to people that are routinely oppressed in our society. They had an understanding that I felt needed to have been heard. And I feel like I kind of had to be careful with what I'm saying, just because I don't want to push a particular agenda as the teacher, but I also want them to experience the life of other people like in The Hate U Give or Like Water on Stone, for example. Whereas I'll talk about that here a little bit with regards to my college class, I'm wanting students to be able to step into somebody's other life, like Dr. Rue Dean, Sam's Bishop, and saying that books can be mirrors, but they're also windows into other people's lives, and I want students to be able to look into those windows or walk through those sliding glass doors and look around and say, Oh wow, there's a human being here and I need to be able to empathize with this person.

Michelle:

One of the things I really like about young adult literature is that it shows young people experiencing things that I know my kids experience, and it shows them being active and making hard decisions and doing what they need to do and using their voices to make a change, to make a difference. And I want my students to know that they can do that. That's pretty much my primary reason for choosing just about any literature is so my

kids can see, not only experience other people's lives, but also see that they have a voice and that they should use their voice.

Marisa: Yes. And I think for me, and we discuss it quite a bit, is whether you use it, you are

having an impact, you're having it by not speaking, there's an impact, and it may not be the impact that you want. And you have an impact when you speak, so you better be

intentional.

Michelle: It's kind of like if you're witnessing bullying and you say nothing and do nothing, you're

complicit with that bullying. And so regardless of whether you do or do not, you make

an impact.

Marisa: Yes. It's funny that we're kind of discussing it. I'm actually really excited because I just

bought my tickets for To Kill a Mockingbird on Broadway. And in To Kill a Mockingbird, my students, when we started having this conversation about what is this book really about it and we honor it and we really talked about the moment when Link Deas rises. It's so regal. He rose from the audience and said what he said in the middle of the trial. And one of my students said, well, what's up with Miss Maudie? Why isn't she saying anything? If she's such a figure of realism and a window to the adult world in such a way that the children and therefore the reader can understand some of the underlying issues of make home and of course the US, shouldn't she be standing up to you? And so

it made them not really like her in that moment.

Marisa: But yes, I think so, and I think I really would have loved to have been a fly on the wall

during some of those conversations or at least to see some of those epiphanies because I think it would be really tough to have those epiphanies brought up to the class and not have those teachable moments, which becomes so cliche, but it's not. To have those teachable moments of, yes, and this is why your author gave this to you. You need to know that you are the intended audience, you are being told this message and now it'll depend. Are you going to listen? Are you going to act, or are you just going to close the

book?

Michelle: Absolutely. And those conversations kind of reminded me of a couple of years ago when

one of my students wrote about some racial injustice that he experienced. And I had several of my students in some other classes read it and one of them replied to him and said, I had no idea that this stuff even still happened. And so by speaking up and saying something, he was able to educate one of his peers about his experience that she knew nothing about. And this book can help students see into lives that they would not see into otherwise. It can happen for any books. I mean, I could read books about the wild west or about czarist Russia or about something happening 300 years in the future and

experience humanity through a different lens in all of those books.

Marisa: Right. And I think that that's what makes TQE really work for me, for my ultimate goals as a teacher, is that I don't really need you to be able to recall this information about this novel a year down the road, 10 years down the road. I need you to be able to hear

something, read something, think about it, be able to have a conversation that is

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... Page 5 of 12

(Completed 12/24/19) Transcript by Rev.com building instead of tearing down and decide what you think about that. What does that mean for the rest of us and how will that affect you as a person? That's what I need. And I think that this allows the practice of so many of those skills that we claim we don't have time for. How am I supposed to do that? How am I supposed to fit that in? I have so much content I need to do. And I think that that's a different conversation, but since we're the ones creating it, but we can layer these skills and layer our lessons to practice everything, practice the content, practice those real life skills and really affect our students.

Michelle:

Yes. And I think it's so important that they take ownership of it because they come into class, they know that they've got their books in their hands, they know that they're going to have to talk about this, they know they're going to have to look at their TQEs and create questions. They were over in their groups. They were doing this, they were getting up on their own and writing their questions on the board and putting their names with their questions. I got pictures, by the way, doing all of this on their own. And this was the first day we did it, so I was kind of nervous and we'd already had some prior conversations where we had to have some separate conversations about how to have a dialogue and how to honor one another, just because of the personality mix in the classroom. And so we kind of had worked our way through that a little bit. So we had this conversation.

Michelle:

And then that very same day, I left school, drove 30 miles North and prepared to have the same kind of conversation over Like Water on Stone, but with my graduate class, which is actually composed of about 2 or 3 graduate students, but the other 15 people are actually juniors and seniors in college who are studying to be English teachers. And I think most of them are actually going to do their student teaching either next semester or next year. And so this is a whole new level of student that I was bringing this to, and I was kind of nervous at first because I'd signed up to lead the class discussion on this particular book. I mean, it's about the Armenian genocide in 1915. I'd never even heard of this before.

Michelle:

So I'm reading the book and reading online and listening to interviews from the author and trying to figure out what it's all about and then trying to figure out how am I going to lead this class discussion. Most of the other students in the class, when they led their discussions over their books would prepare several questions and then they would give us a quiz or something to interact with for a prereading activity and then the next week start the class discussion. They would ask a question, we kind of stared at each other for a few moments and then somebody would say something and then we'd discuss and then move on to the next question. And I thought this would be really perfect for TQEs for them to come up with the questions and then also to have that discussion. But then I kind of felt bad because I was thinking, is the professor going to think I'm trying to get out of not doing the assignment?

Michelle:

So I emailed him and told him, I'd be happy to come up with questions, but this is how I would like to hold the discussion. And he said, do it. And I said, okay. And so I had them read some articles ahead of time, some nonfiction articles over the Armenian genocide

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... (Completed 12/24/19) Transcript by Rev.com and had them do some TQEs for that. And the feedback that I received right after that prereading activity was, wow, I was way more engaged in this activity. Several people came up to me and said that they really enjoyed that activity. And then the following week when we discussed the actual book itself, they had their questions, they had them on the computer. We didn't have space to write them on the board. And so I just started with one group and they asked their questions and we had a conversation and then they just took it over. I was just sitting there listening and throwing in my ideas, and the other students would ask their questions, move on to the next group. They were all talking.

Michelle:

At the end, there was one young lady in particular who had a question about the design of the book that I wouldn't have even thought to ask. And I thought, wow, that's another reason why this is so important, because the students will often come up with a question that we didn't even think of. I was amazed at how well that went.

Marisa:

Yeah. That has been my experience with every single novel, and you can attest this and there's people who are listening can too. How many times have we read some of these novels, right, 20, 30 times at least. And have a student come up with something like that and have us look at the structure of a novel, it really does make me realize how much I accidentally limited how much the students got from the novel in years past by providing those questions, by providing the quiz, and it's completely unintentional. As teachers, we always want what's best for our kids and we want them to love and remember and get so much from these novels. It sounds so weird, but by preparing those set questions and having the students focus on particular parts, we minimize their thoughts, or ...

Marisa:

I don't want to offend anyone, I really, really don't, because I don't think it's an intention of us to limit what a student might think about a novel. But it does happen, if we're sitting here going, this is important, this is important, this is important. Did you see this plot twist here? Did you see the character develop here? As soon as we start doing that, that's where their focus goes. And they have thoughts. They have them, they can do this on their own. And we say a lot. I've all these kind of little cliches of don't do the heavy lifting, have them do the work. If they're doing the work, they're the ones that are learning. Yes. But it's always that, how do we do it? And for me, this was the answer when it comes to reading and it has completely affected the rest of my teaching.

Marisa:

One thing I do want to say, Michelle, and I love that you were using this with future teachers. I think that can be a real pathway to making some positive changes and giving education to our students by having those incoming teachers explore new methods, new approaches and really analyzing how they felt, the efficacy of them and really comparing it to what they knew as their educational experience. Because it sounds to me that what your classmates did was they went right back to what they thought school was. This is school. This is teaching. And you introduce them to something a little bit different, and it sounds to me like they were inspired.

Michelle:

They were. I mean, I did my normal teacher thing because I couldn't just sit there, and I went around and kind of touched base with each group and they were all in there reading their articles or looking through their books and coming up with their questions. A couple of them had some questions for me as I went around and most of them were just like, Oh, we're good. And then we're back right on it. And I was very happy. I was very proud of all of them.

Michelle:

One of the areas that I think where it has been hard for me is letting go of that control. One thing I've noticed about myself and may not be true for other teachers, but for me I kind of like being in control, knowing these are the questions that are going to be asked. These are where people are going to be sitting and this is what we're going to talk about and it's nice and safe. I need to let go of that control. I need to let them be students. I need to let them, like you said, have their thoughts. And this has been, like you also said, the logistics that I needed in order to be able to let go and let them.

Marisa:

Well, you're not the only one, right? I mean, it makes it sound like it was really simple for me. This was not simple at all. And especially being someone who loves to discuss books, it's very difficult for me to not, Oh, did you see this part? Or what did you think? But because I have the opportunity, like you said, to go around each group, what are you guys talking about? What are you thinking? What did she just say? Because all of you kind of reacted to that. What did she just ... Oh, that's interesting. I thought about this. Did you notice this one part? And I can do that with small groups, and now I have a community instead of that division between teacher and student. Can I bring something up?

Michelle: Absolutely.

Marisa: I'm curious for the listener, and I'm trying to kind of be devil's advocate. I would think

that there are probably some listeners who say, Oh really, it worked really well in your

college class. Who to thunk it, right?

Michelle: Yeah. Yeah.

Marisa: Oh, you're kidding. They had a discussion. But I really do find that it works for all levels

and so many special population.

Michelle: I think it's self differentiating. They do what they're capable of doing.

Marisa: Right. And they're not wrong.

Michelle: Right. And if they are not considering some things, maybe they'd have any questions

about symbolism. Okay. I noticed that. So we go have a mini lesson over symbolism and then I have them do some TQEs over the symbolism in the book or some other literary devices that maybe I noticed that they didn't talk about. Maybe we just have that discussion in class but they're still thinking about those TQEs because I given them that

framework.

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom...

Page 8 of 12

(Completed 12/24/19) Transcript by Rev.com Marisa:

Yeah, I think so. I mean that they're not wrong is a strong statement, but they're not. If they bring up a topic, good for you, and it can be thoroughly discussed by somebody else. It doesn't mean that you have to know the answers. And that's why I really do think I can assess whether or not they read and whether or not they understood the book at a particular level based on their question. I have no problem with saying, you read the book because your question proves that to me.

Michelle:

Absolutely. And I know there are some kids who just cannot speak in front of a group of people. There are some kids that maybe they don't get along with one other student in that classroom and maybe that student's rolling their eyes around in their head and that person notices it and is bothered by it, and I'm just not going to participate in this conversation because so-and-so is doing this. And if that's the case, then I also give them the option of writing up a paragraph to tell me what their thoughts are related to some of those questions. And of course they've already come up with their questions and I've heard their conversations in their small groups, so I know they've read, I know they have thoughts. Some of them show up at lunchtime and share all those thoughts with me. And so have they done the assignment? Absolutely. Do they need to be able to have conversations with the group? Yes, but we'll get there. Some of them can do that right now today and some of them is going to take some time to get there.

Marisa:

It may not be today's conversation, it might be tomorrow's that they'll participate, and that's okay. I don't need it to be perfect every single day and I don't need absolutely everyone's participation every single day. It's going to be fluid because that's real. Yeah. And I do want to say, because again considering an audience member who say, okay, well, yeah, that's high school and yes that's college. I have heard in my own district, there's a kindergarten teacher who's been using it and it seems to be most popular with fourth grade and sixth grade, which is great. But it really is being used at so many different levels and with so many different subjects.

Michelle:

Absolutely. And like I said, it's self differentiating. They do what they're capable of doing, they do what they know. And so as a teacher, I don't have to sit back and figure out, okay, how many versions of this assignment do I need to create? I give them the tools that they need and then they use the tools, and if they know how to use the hammer, they'll use the hammer, and if they know how to use the screwdriver, they'll use it. And if they don't know how to use the saw, hopefully they will ignore it right then.

Marisa:

Right. And I think that that's the same for the teachers as well. This can be tailored for your students and a lot of teachers are not using the word epiphany. They're using aha moments or realizations or something else, whatever works for your students so that they can analyze literature, have a discussion, get those soft skills practice and really be thinking, great, what do I care if it's an epiphany or a realization or an aha moment, it's great.

Michelle:

Absolutely. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to add? Any advice for new teachers or, well, even experienced teachers who have not used this method before but

Page 9 of 12

FINAL+CUT+Ep+010+Discussion+TQE+with+Marisa+Thom... (Completed 12/24/19) Transcript by Rev.com have listened to our conversation and are thinking, wow, I'd like to do this, but where do I begin?

Marisa:

My biggest advice for any teacher is go ahead and try it. Nothing bad is going to happen. Go ahead and try anything that you think is going to be good for your students or have them practice critical thinking skills or life skills, try it. It's one day, it's 50 minutes. If it's not working after half an hour, try it again next week, try it again the week after that. If it's still not working, okay, try something else. But that control or ... and you also described it as safety and I think that's true. I think that it's uncomfortable to be in front of a class of 40 and not know exactly where the discussion is going to go and not know if you all know the answer, but that's real.

Michelle:

And it's okay to not know the answer, especially in the context of these books that are dealing with real life issues that our kids are experiencing. It's okay to say, I don't know the answer to that either. Let's explore. Let's see what else we can read and find.

Marisa:

I'm so much more impressed with the questions even asked. We don't have to know the answer. And one of my most common statements is I didn't write it. I really don't know. But what do you think? And then it goes back to them, and I like that. Actually if I could ask you, Michelle, I've been doing this now for a couple of years. You've been doing this for just a little bit. What were your concerns? You said that you were nervous and I'm super interested. Had some nerves or some concerns and then you practice a little bit. Do you remember what your concerns were or do you remember when you felt like you thought it was working? What would you tell teachers that are thinking about trying it?

Michelle:

Well, first of all, you really have to know your kids and you have to know the social dynamics. I know in my eight years of experience as a teacher, there are often groups of kids that get along really well and then they don't get along with another group or there's individuals. There are some kids who if somebody says anything, they're going to react to that and then the other kid reacts and then you kind of have a bit of a mess and sometimes it takes a while to settle everybody down. Just knowing that and knowing that some kids like to push other kids buttons and those kids like to react to it, being aware of those kinds of issues or situations and heading that off of the past is something that I was concerned about and just making sure that nobody got really upset in terms of just the reactions with one another.

Michelle:

And so I felt I needed to set the ground, not really the ... I guess the ground rules for how this conversation needed to go and focus everybody on this needs to be a dialogue. And this is a conversation I'd actually had started having with kids a couple of years ago when we did Socratic Seminar is we're here to hear what other people have to say. We're here to understand what another perspective is, not to push our own perspective. And so if you find yourself talking a lot, you need to find somebody who's being quiet and ask them for their opinion to pull them out and into the conversation if they want to be brought in.

Michelle: Your goal is to hear others and not spend so much time again pushing your own agenda.

But we're here to try to understand what the author had to say and what we think about it as opposed to trying to get other people to believe our own perspective.

Marisa: Right. It's not about winning, it's not about debating, it's about thinking even more and

opening it up. I like that.

Michelle: Yes. And I think focusing them using those statements helped. And then refocusing

them when we struggled helped a lot as well. It's not perfect. I still see some situations where kids are being kids and I need to come converse with them. Sometimes I just can say something, let's move along. Or other times, I mean, I might need to talk to a kid outside of class. But again, they're kids, they're figuring this out and they've made

progress. And that's what we're looking for. We're looking for growth.

Michelle: And in terms of being able to talk about the book and talk about the topics and talk

about what they're seeing in the real world, they're doing really well with that and they're getting better each time we have a conversation. And so I'm looking forward next semester to having some different conversations over different books on different topics. And so I think that maybe some people that might not have participated as much

this time might participate more next time because the topic may be a little less

uncomfortable for them.

Marisa: Yeah. You definitely went straight for it, didn't you, with racial injustice.

Michelle: Yes. But see, I've known these kids for three years now, so it wasn't like I've never met

these kids before and then two months into school we went straight to racial injustice. They're my juniors. I've had them since freshman year. I know what their experiences have been in the context of our school, in our community. And so I felt that overall they would be able to in a mature and respectful fashion, have this conversation. Overall as a class, I felt that they would be able do this, and they've proven me right on that. The problems that we've had have been mostly interpersonal and just your typical teenager

high school issues that people have that I remember having when I was in school.

Marisa: Yeah. May I ask, what did they think about it? Because now they've done it and then

you've had them for a couple of years. Did you happen to ask how they felt about this

process versus a more traditional experience?

Michelle: I'm going to ask them that on Monday. We had the discussion on Friday and it lasted the

vast majority of both hours and so we ran out of time, so that's going to be one of our quick writes. Actually, I might just talk to them in class instead of making them write it down, just have a conversation with them and ask them, how does this compare to having me give you a list of questions and you answering that list of questions?

Marisa: Gosh, I can't wait to hear what they think.

This transcript was exported on Dec 24, 2019 - view latest version here.

Michelle: I can't wait either. All right. Well, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate

you sharing this method with us and I'm looking forward to hearing what our listeners

have to say and their experiences with TQEs.

Marisa: Me too. Thank you so much, Michelle. It was good to catch up.

Michelle: Thank you. Thank you for listening to reThink ELA podcast. I'm Michelle Waters and I

can't wait to give you a few resources I've developed to help you create a student centered, collaborative, and creative learning environment. Download these resources

when you join our mailing list at rethinkela.com/news.