

Faculty Debrief Part A:

PHIL TUCHER: That really was a treat. Thank you so much for letting me be in the class. Why don't we just take a few minutes. There's – anytime we're talking about kids and about learning, there's always so much that we can talk about. Let's take a few minutes individually and just take some quick notes on what you felt were some of the highlights of the class for you or for the kids, and some questions that came up for you as well as you look back at what happened. Um, I'm going to do the same thing and then we'll start with the highlights and identify some of the strengths that we felt were there, and then we'll pick a question or two to look at together in our conversation.

BARBARA SHREVE: Okay.

PHIL TUCHER: Strengths, things that impressed you from what you saw.

BARBARA SHREVE: So I felt, um, in the opening and when I was looking around the room like there was reasonably broad participation. I saw a few kids sitting back or going through the motions of leaning in, but I saw a lot of students who seemed to be engaging in thinking, whether that was out loud or...I could tell that they were carefully reading, and from what I know now of their facial expressions since I've known them for a little while, that they were engaged with that. And I liked that the way they accessed the activity, they seem to have some focused chunks of time and took it upon themselves to say, "Okay, we're going to find an answer. We're going to come up with at least an opinion." So they seemed to start pretty quickly today and had reasons to think out loud that I don't always see them taking advantage of. So sometimes when they need to work through all the steps, they get very focused on their own papers. And it was exciting today to have me, for me to see them really start to do that thinking out loud because there was less that they were trying to write down. Although I noticed some kids still did go to writing and try to puzzle through and "What would I put here if I kept going with this person's work?" And it was interesting for me to see who was able, who wanted to think about problems in that way and think about them and...who would just talk through the first step and be happy stopping their conversation there.

PHIL TUCHER: You only see these students every other day. I thought it was amazing the way you started with "Here's what we're trying to accomplish today and here's where we last left off." The specificity of "Here are the notes that I took." I mean you just really emphasized these are the things that you did so well, and by starting with that, um, it had to give kids the feeling that "She's listening to us, she's seeing us, she's really recognizing what we're contributing." It's the data that you showed them on Wednesday but here it is Friday morning and you're kicking off with that. What a great way to make the connection. I thought that was a perfect way to start.

BARBARA SHREVE: Thanks.

PHIL TUCHER: What else do you have on your list?

BARBARA SHREVE: Um, overall I think I was impressed by the focus in the room. I mean this group of students definitely goes back and forth in terms of their confidence and then how that plays out in how

much they're willing to push themselves. And I saw students persevering when they looked at something and it was confusing. And their reactions when I came over and said, "This one, not quite." "We're still -- okay, I can think about that and I'll keep talking to you about it," and not like, "okay, I'm done." And I think everyone of us as humans go through that moment and I think these students know their inner room, where they want some extra support and they're getting some extra support, but that presents its unique challenges. And I didn't see those challenges ringing in their head in the same way today.

PHIL TUCHER: Do you have a hunch – just a lucky day? A curriculum that they were ready for? A particular lesson that was organized? The dynamic that's in the room right now? What do you attribute some of that extra focus to?

BARBARA SHREVE: Some of it I attribute to the idea of going back and forth between a focused prompt that they're to talk about, and then something where they get input to be able to make sense of it if they haven't been able to. So they're not left on their own too long and not start. Um, but some of it I actually attribute a lot of it that their current Algebra B classes are in very much the same place. And so when those classes...they're learning about the same things and having similar questions but not quite. Like the fact that some Algebra B classes have really attacked the quadratic formula and some are just beginning to; they have really genuine things to give input to each other on. And I think that they all feel that same sense of mixed confidence and that the place is solidifying ideas in a way that just came together really nicely today in terms of timing.

PHIL TUCHER: Was it Luis? There was one student that you had said just kind of jumped out at you as – he had a chance to shine today exactly on this idea that he had.

BARBARA SHREVE: Yeah. Luis sharing this idea of "I know I can use the quadratic formula because I'm trying to find x-intercepts" was just huge for me. He had confidence raising his hand and he had this idea that other people in the room weren't sure about yet, and that's a big moment for him, I think.

PHIL TUCHER: That's not Luis every day, that's a special moment today.

BARBARA SHREVE: Yeah, he's one who's always engaged and always concentrating, and has great questions. Um, but he doesn't always raise those whole class, and doesn't always jump in there with something when he's the only one who might have it. So he often hears another voice first before he talks.

PHIL TUCHER: One of the highlights for me was this way in which questions show up in your class. Kids have questions, teachers have questions, um, good questions exist, not so good questions. At one point you said, "This isn't a..." You didn't say, "This isn't a." What did you say? I don't think I have it in my notes. You were working the conversation and...

BARBARA SHREVE: Oh, you're talking about "It's not mathematically illegal?"

PHIL TUCHER: It's not mathematically – and you asked a question and you pushed them, but you weren't getting some of the responses that you expected. And so you questioned your own question,

and um, I think it's clear that you're emphasizing the power of a good question and the way that a good question can organize an important conversation. That was a real highlight for me seeing, both from you and from the kids, these questions as they came up.

BARBARA SHREVE: I've been trying also to work with them on saying when the question doesn't make sense. So I've been trying to model that more and Lupita right in front of me has been fabulous. If I say, "Does this make, like do you know what I'm asking?" She'll say, "No," really vocally and this great expression on her face.

PHIL TUCHER: To your left, right in the middle?

BARBARA SHREVE: Yeah, right across, right now. Because I see them ask questions of each other and want to try to answer them, and not really get what they're talking about yet because they're working on forming those questions.

PHIL TUCHER: Yeah.

BARBARA SHREVE: And so I'm trying to create a space where we can respectfully push each other to say "We don't make sense." But we don't, this happens all the time.

PHIL TUCHER: Got a couple more?

BARBARA SHREVE: Um, no.

PHIL TUCHER: I have a few more.

BARBARA SHREVE: Go ahead.

PHIL TUCHER: Um, I love what was happening curricularly. I thought the way in which you are allowing kids to...sometimes you emphasize the mechanics but today you emphasized "it's not just the mechanics, it's to make sure you know the first step. If you know your first step then you can put your mechanics to work, and if you know what the answer is going to look like." And I just thought the way that you're mixing lines into quadratics, the way that you're selecting the numbers, the "who's right" with different examples of mechanics. Over and over there were these ways that I thought you were mixing different strategies in, different concepts in, yeah, just example, one after another. Um, this idea that kids can factor and solve an equation and yet sometimes they go too far. Um, the word that I had in my mind today was just mixing; the way you're mixing things in was just, I thought terrific.