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Preparing for ED 403 Class on March 3rd, 2008

In class, on March 3rd, we will turn our attentions to facilitating learning through text-based discussions. The following assignments are due for class on March 3rd. All other reading assignments on the syllabus for our next session are cancelled.

1. The transcript of your text-based discussion (which we will begin to code and analyze in class)
2. In preparation for learning how to lead text-based discussions that support students' learning from text, we are going to read the first five chapters of a book entitled, *Improving Comprehension with Questioning the Author (QtA)*. This is the instructional technique that we will study to help us learn how to engage in text-based discussions. Please respond to the following, in writing, as you read:
 - a. On page 9, the authors describe the changes that take place in classrooms in which teachers have introduced QtA. Choose two of the changes that they describe and relate these to the text-based discussion you have had with your students in your field placement. In each case, please provide examples from your transcript to illustrate your point. You may choose the characteristics because (for example):
 - i. You are most eager to see these changes in your own instruction.
 - ii. You were surprised at how difficult it was to get this kind of discussion going.
 - iii. You saw evidence that this was already happening in your text-based discussion.
 - b. On page 21, the authors describe what constitutes successful reading comprehension. How has your understanding of comprehension has been developing over the course of this semester? Write a brief description that you could share with a group of parents in which you explain what successful comprehenders do. It may be helpful to think about the think-aloud activity we did; the reading you did in Fountas and Pinnell, as well as the description on p. 21.
 - c. How is QtA distinguished from other forms of questioning and discussion techniques?
 - d. What role does the idea of "author fallibility" play in QtA?
 - e. Why do the authors of QtA suggest that the discussion be conducted *during* the reading of text (rather than *after*)?
 - f. As you read Chapter 2 and learn about queries, think about your first text-based discussion, were you engaged in the use of queries or questions? Provide examples from your transcript.
 - g. As you read the examples in Chapter 2, try to anticipate what you would say if you were the teacher supporting your students' reading of these text excerpts. (No writing here)
 - h. As you read the chapter on planning (Chapter 3), please compare the process these authors describe with the process that you used when you were planning for your text-based discussion. What did you do that was the same as the process these authors are describing? What did you do that was different than the process these authors are recommending?
 - i. Again, as you read the examples in Chapter 3, try to plan along with the authors. (no writing here)
 - j. In chapter 4, the authors describe a set of *discussion moves* that teachers can productively make to facilitate a discussion that is focused on collaboratively

building the meaning of the text. Look at the transcript of your own discussion. Do you see examples where you have used any of the discussion moves that are described in this chapter (i.e., marking, turning back, revoicing, recapping, modeling, and annotating).

- k. Chapter 5 deals with issues germane to basic implementation of Q&A. As you read this description, think about the characteristics of the classroom in which you were implementing your discussion. How did these characteristics help and how did they hinder? (For example, how were the children seated? How did you set up the discussion? What do you know about the students' experiences with classroom discussion and what role do you think these prior experiences might have played in how your discussion went?