Class Discussion Notes “On ‘Not Reading’”

* Kids not passing when they aren’t reading – taking easy way out in order to comply with NCLB by pushing kids through – kids pick up on complacency, self-perpetuating cycle 🡪 ways to make this clear to kids
* Sometimes we conflate “failing” with “giving up on” students – It may be important for them to realize this early in the semester so they can change their ways.
* Sparknotes: “I don’t have time or motivation or I can get away with it.” – Kids’ schedules are demanding. What about asking kids to get insight into their scheduling? What about some in-class time, in necessary. Can we lighten the load students have? It’s impossible to get it all done for all classes (results in skimming or selecting only a few texts to read). We can be translucent with that. We will have to teach them how to skim. What if we have them read for a portion of text, then discuss? *ON THE OTHER HAND*…if we lighten the load, it takes away the skills they’re going to need.
* Boredom factor: Failing can result if teaching approach isn’t creative (engaging?). Some examples are multimodal projects, projects that integrate 21st-c. learning film, other texts that relate to the novel, etc. Let students know the project at the beginning so they will address them throughout the unit. You have to read these in order to complete the project at the end.
* There are ways to inspire students to read a text without just failing them. Sometimes book choices are also a problem (in re “classics”).
* Engaging assignments: student choice of some books/texts that they are excited to read about, that are relevant to their lives. Keep some of the classics or get some related contemporary texts that are more accessible. Change it up, even though you might have to get rid of (some of?) the classics.
* Prepping kids for college classes – How do we hold students accountable for lecture-oriented class? Is there a balance?
* Re-reading books – We need to consult with colleagues as far as this is possible to avoid this if we can.
* Teaching the canon – Teach other texts, too, that are related. This can motivate students to make connections.
* “Faking it till you make it” – How do you avoid this?
* What if we are fundamentally assigning reading wrong? What if you gave them an end-date? What about pacing? Can we do checkpoints?

[STRATEGIES TO MENTION FOR NEXT TIME:

* Write your own Sparknotes
* Calendar bookmarks