

Friday Reflection

1/25/2019

Twelve students were acting angry all week. They couldn't seem to get along and complete the work assigned to them. Prejudice and doubt dominated their interactions that got so heated at some points, it looked as though we would have a large-scale fight on our hands. These students were not only seen in this state during the day on Tuesday, but their intensity carried on into the evening on Wednesday and Thursday night. It appears we will be dealing with a similar dynamic tonight.

For those wondering how such a scenario would make it into my Friday Reflection, the explanation is simple. Our Advanced Theatre Arts students performed the play, *Twelve Angry Jurors* by Reginald Rose. 14 students actually appeared on stage, but there was a cast of others behind the scenes to create this impressive production. Ms. Markley, the instructor for this class, provided her students with a significant challenge by selecting this piece. It was an incredibly rigorous play for high school students, and they rose to the occasion, delivering riveting performances throughout the week.

The play was a fascinating look into the minds of people faced with the difficult task of determining the fate of a 19-year-old who may, or may not have, killed his father. Prejudiced assumptions were made on the part of jurors, and it was interesting to see the shift in the room when one person was willing to challenge the group think and ask people to think critically and consider the evidence more deeply. The dramatic scenes rose and fell on heavy dialog that required active listening on the part of the audience. The number of lines that were memorized was impressive, but what was even more impactful was the concentration required to stay in character for almost two hours. The students transformed into believable characters who made me wonder how much was an act and how much reflected the individual personalities of the students.

From the set to the costumes to the hair designs, it was evident that students dedicated a great deal of thought and time into creating this high-quality production. I have watched many of these students the past two years, and I was blown away by their acting and growth. Not only do we have some talented students, but we also have students who are invested and passionate, willing to work to grow their skills. Ms. Markley has taught these students so much about the nuances of creating a moment, a scene, and a play. All those in attendance this week to observe *Twelve Angry Jurors* were treated to an intense, thoughtful, and sophisticated offering of a well-known play.

While the play created a lot of focus for students involved, we had a productive week athletically as well. Our girls' soccer team not only won their game on Tuesday in convincing fashion, but they also celebrated their seniors. The low-key, but powerful ceremony occurred off to the side of the stadium after the game and provided a meaningful expression of gratitude for these impressive young ladies.

Later that night, our girls' basketball team took on an opponent that beat them just a couple of weeks earlier. Coach Gocke made some adjustments, and the girls showed up focused and determined. The girls won by 18 points and demonstrated the potential that exists when games are approached with such intentionality. They also appreciated the support of the boys' and girls' volleyball program who set their intentions on supporting fellow Tillers.

While that game was happening, the boys' basketball team took on the same school that had blown them out just a couple of weeks before. Again, Coach Bossenmeyer created a plan and the boys stepped up to deliver. With just a few minutes left in the game, it was tied 54 to 54. Unfortunately, it ended with the other team scoring slightly more points, but they showed as well what happens when everyone is focused.

On the same night, our boys' soccer team chalked up another league win putting them closer to a showdown for first place. This group of young men have shown a great deal of focus and determination all year, and it has them in a position to challenge for the league title.

Whether on the athletic field, on stage, or in the classroom, I was very proud of our students this week. They brought a great deal of intensity and focus, showing what happens when people work together for a common cause. This was a week like many others where memories were made. Those memories didn't just happen; They were created by students and adults who invested hours to preparation and planning. There were showtimes, game times, and class times that required full attention, and our students delivered. It was a good week to be a Tiller!

Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin

Tustin High School Principal