ANALYSIS BUDDY PROCESS WRITING 1: MELANIE

I asked Melanie to do something a bit odd for my dissertation pilot data (the project I am doing for this class), since she's mid-quals and I wanted her to... well, not-die from overwork. My interviews have subjects responding to short versions of each other's narratives (if I may use the binary words of reseacher/subject for convenience). In other words, I'm not sitting there asking them questions; they're reading a condensed version of someone else's story and then starting the telling of their own based on that.

Since Melanie is also a teacher, I asked her to read both narratives (narrative A, and narrative B responding to A) and write her own narrative C responding to both. I'll use Melanie's response as the document to analyze in my data corpus -- it's very different than the data I got through interview (and I will only be interviewing people in my dissertation, since the data I get is far richer in extended conversations).

The mind-flip came towards the end, when she started painting pictures of what she thought my interview subjects (A and B) were like. I suddenly realized that I hadn't put identifiying information like gender, age, etc. in the interview -- and it was fascinating to see what her guesses were. She pegged A accurately as a creative-minded, initially-unsure but growing-in-confidence grad student, but thought B was a man because of "his" adamant declamations (both, in fact, were female). We ended up having a discussion on what it would have done to her perceptions of the story to know that B was also female, and what information I might want to put in the narratives for when the faculty read it. I hadn't been conscious of this before, and now I'll make the conscious choice to not include a bio at the start of every narrative, because then the subjects will be responding more directly to the stories rather than some mental image of a person that fits into certain categories.