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Dear Jim,

You asked me to tell you how using ByteSize in my Shakespeare classroom affected student learning and response. I resisted using ByteSize in my classroom because I usually don't like to use a lot of technology, especially in a literature classroom. I also didn't want to have to learn a new program and try to teach it to my students. Bob Hoel provided great support, however, and made the process as painless as possible. Bob also provided excellent support for my students, especially the technologically challenged ones. One of them, the one we both thought would never get it, even turned in an assignment using ByteSize -- quite an accomplishment for both you and the student, I think!

I used ByteSize for four plays last semester: *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Twelfth Night*. I sent ByteSize annotations of the plays to all of the students in both classes, one for English majors, and one for general education. Students were allowed to substitute their own ByteSize annotations for one of the paper assignments in each class. I found that in the general education class, ByteSize helped me reach students who had some fear of approaching Shakespeare or who were not very interested in any kind of literature. They were interested in the technology which led them to an interest in Shakespeare. The ByteSize annotations they turned in were more thorough and analytical than the papers they submitted for their other assignments. For that group, ByteSize was an approach to the subject that really worked.

Other students in the general education class tended to make good use of the ByteSize annotations I sent them for study purposes. I also found that when I had them do readings in class, they would read from the projected ByteSize Reader rather than from their books; this meant that the whole class could hear them because they had their heads up and could project their voices. On the whole, they appreciated having the play projected on the screen during class.

In the Shakespeare class for English majors, students were more resistant to using ByteSize themselves and preferred using a paper book to reading from the screen, but when I was going to stop using ByteSize for them, they asked me to continue so that they could use the ByteSize annotations to study for the final exam. Some of them were also interested in substituting ByteSize annotations for one of the assigned papers. Students in that class who were Secondary Education majors expressed interest in ByteSize for use in high school classes as an approach for literature-resistant students. One member of the class was a graduate student who was also a high school teacher. He commuted from a town about two hours away from the University. He appreciated ByteSize because the emailed ByteSize annotations provided some distance learning opportunities for him. He also thought that the program could be useful in a high school setting.

ByteSize is a useful tool in a literature classroom; I think it would be even more useful for distance learning.

Yours truly,

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