

CLASS OBSERVATION
Part-time and Graduate Student Faculty

Instructor's name: Jessica Corey

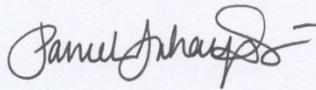
Observer's name: Pamela Takayoshi

Date of observation: March 16, 2014

Class observed: English 21011

Classroom number and building: SFH 214

Signature of Observer



Class begins on time, with 14 students in attendance. Jessica begins class discussion by asking students, "Is anything else happening on campus that we need to know about?" Students volunteer information; it's a nice, relaxed atmosphere, with an emphasis on shared community and Jessica comments, "Great, some good stuff going on. Charities, dances."

Jessica tells students about correction to the syllabus; she has worked in a review of *synthesis* "since it's become apparent that we need to go over that as a class." She connects the review to the reading (Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. She's going to show them Skloot talking about how she synthesized her sources, and she talks about her own undergraduate research practice ("I visited the archives this weekend"). This is a telling instance of the class – Jessica is very good at connecting different materials and processes in the class, and she's good at drawing from her own experience in order to help students understand concepts.

She then has the class write for 5 – 10 minutes, saying "What I'm interested in knowing from you is what do you feel you still need from me before you write this research paper? Is there something I've not mentioned, is there something we've done that you think we need to revisit?" As she collects up the slips of paper, she's looking through them to see if there are trends, and she promises to design some class time to address common concerns. She clearly is open to students and concerned about their learning, and students seem receptive to her attention.

The next segment of the class period is what Jessica introduces as "speed dating" of discussion questions about the reading. In pairs, students discuss themes, patterns, things that interest them (with Jessica pulling up a chair to make the pairs even) and when the time goes off, everyone in the room gets up and moves "to have an intellectual conversation" of about ten minutes about their topics. It's an impressive use of time and engaging students in movement around the room ensures that everyone is actively involved. The conversations I overhear are on topic and address key concerns in the book. A student says something – I can't hear it – but I hear Jessica's response: "That's why you annotate your book. Right, so you can find stuff quickly."

One of the benefits of this discussion format, it seems to me, is the possibility for being attentive to varying concerns (the main argument of the book to the ways students read) and to the way it gets everyone in the room talking. Unlike whole class discussion, where a handful of students can carry the whole discussion while others zone out, there is no chance for zoning out in this activity. As Jessica points out to the students, the idea is that students get multiple perspectives without the whole big group discussion all the time. We'll end up coming back together in the end of the class to synthesize."

There's a nice atmosphere in the class and everyone is at work. Jessica has a nice rapport with students – she smiles, laughs, jokes with them, but she also communicates a professional demeanor. She keeps records – using an attendance book at the beginning of class, she looks out at the class after talking with one of the students and says "Who snuck in?" Jessica is clearly an experienced, well prepared and dedicated teacher, and her class was a pleasure to observe.