

CLASS OBSERVATION
Part-time and Graduate Student Faculty

Instructor's name Jessica Corey

Observer's name Lindsay Steiner

Date of observation Oct. 12, 2011

Class observed College Writing 1

Signature of Observer Lindsay Steiner

Comments

- Discussion went really well – Jessica structures the discussion so that students can talk informally in small groups and prepare ideas to contribute to a whole class discussion – I learned some things that I will be able to use in my own class discussions!
- Jessica has respect for her students – this is apparent in her informal conversations with them before class, in how she greets them as they enter the room, and how she considers and listens to their discussion input.
- She also connects the present class with previous sessions and the class theme as a whole – this allows students to make connections between their class sessions and learning as a whole.
- Since this class was focused on a discussion, the computers weren't used. If you wanted to try to integrate them into a class like this, it might be useful to have students do some informal response writing at the end of class, either on the computers or just in a handwritten journal. In addition, since the "writing process" was a focus of this session, it might be cool to have students create graphic representations of their own writing process—either handwritten or using a digital tool like Cmap or bubbl.us. This would introduce students to new tools and also allow them to think visually and make connections between their own process and the process discussed in class.

Field notes from observations (please excuse the informal nature of these notes)

While students walk in, Jessica greets them, and informally chats with them as they prepare for class. This is great – it shows that she has developed a good rapport with them and has respect for them both as students and people in general. She gives some information about what they will be doing on Friday – mentions that they can bring iPod or other music player so that they can brainstorm for a project while listening to music (if that helps their process). She then distributes the reading for Monday's class. She mentions that grades will be posted later today for a previous project.

Students get into groups, and Jessica walks around the room to help them discuss – this is a great idea, giving each group something specific to talk about. Giving them specific guidelines helps to focus the discussion rather than just asking them to talk about the reading. As they discuss in small groups, Jessica answers questions as necessary. She has prepared discussion questions to help them start thinking about the reading (which is good – shows that she prepares for the class ahead of time). A female student walks in late and Jessica greets her and asks her to join a discussion group.

Jessica then sits with the group as a whole, and asks the students how the author of the reading defines error. The late student offers her opinion first (good!) – Jessica listens and then goes to the board to write notes. She then asks how else error is defined – a student points to a passage in the text. The discussion continues – students offer their ideas, Jessica listens and responds, etc. She also tries to connect the reading to the writing process – e.g. how does the author set up his essay for the reader? In addition, she asks them to relate the reading to previous readings from earlier in the semester. Good discussion!!