NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM

Date of Discussion: September 26, 2019

Observation Date: September 24, 2019

Candidate's Name: JASON ELLIS

Department: English

Course & Section: ENGLISH 2575 / E270

Name of Observer: C. Goodison

Observation filed with department: September 26, 2019

Professor
_____
Observer   Title

I understand that my signature means only that I have read this memorandum and that I may attach any comments I wish.

_____ Sept. 26. 2019 ___
Jason Ellis   Date

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

FACULTY CLASSROOM OBSERVATION REPORT   Year   <u>2019</u>

(X) Untenured   ( ) Tenured

Department: English   Course/Section: 2575 / E270
Date of Observation: September 24, 2019   Room: General 603

Name of Observee: ELLIS, JASON   Rank: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Lesson Topic & Brief Summary: Students engaged in a "fun but challenging" in-class writing assignment. They were asked to write a brief summary of an article they read, using Simple Writer. Simple Writer is an online program that restricts users to the one thousand most used words. Through direct hands-on experience, students practiced writing about complex, technical subjects without using jargon. For the second half of the class, students researched and wrote about the lexical history of a particular word of their choosing, culminating in writing a 750-word expanded definition. This would be posted to the class online OpenLab site.

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1.   CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (prompt start, efficient attendance check):
      (X) Satisfactory   ( )Unsatisfactory

The class began on time. Professor Ellis welcomed students before giving a brief outline of the day's lesson. He then spent a little time at the start informing students of professional opportunities that he felt could be of benefit to students: free, quality resources for continuing technical education, media subscriptions available free of cost to students, campus organizations seeking student writers etc. For example, in encouraging students to submit their work to *City Tech Writer*, Prof. Ellis entered into a conversation with his students about how such venues could be helpful on the job market through building a resume or offering proof of skills to a potential employer. He also mentioned other practicalities worthy of consideration, such as, the esteem of seeing your work published and sharing that work with a community of peers; adding quality work to a writing portfolio; or winning money in the case of writing contests where cash prizes are on offer. Prof. Ellis took this time to further acquaint students with the "Opportunities" section of the class' OpenLab website.

2. PROFESSIONAL TRAITS (professional appearance and demeanor, clarity, volume, and pace of speech; establishment of rapport with students)
(X) Satisfactory ( )Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis communicated with his students in a clear, informed, frank, and down-to-earth way. He had a no-nonsense approach that was respectful of everyone's time and presence. He was open to his students' questions and provided direct, meaningful responses. I felt he embodied what he was teaching: professionalism, results, and attention to detail. He was clear about what he expected from the students, and the students were clear about what was required of them. I felt he modeled the value of direct, open communication, the very thing he was teaching.

3. SUBJECT MASTERY (accuracy of presented material, use of appropriate terminology, competence in use of equipment)
(X) Excellent ( )Very Good ( )Satisfactory ( )Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis' command of his subject (technical writing) was very evident. He monitored his students as they worked on their in-class writing assignment. This meant he was frequently involved in one-on-one conversations with students. I appreciated his ability to offer technical expertise in the areas of technology, communication, and the mechanics of language use. He was able to go back and forth on any of these topics, effortlessly, depending on the need of the student. He gave individualized attention to students of varying abilities and interests. He was able to make adjustments to effectively instruct each student, whatever the situation. He clearly has an impressive range of knowledge and is versatile in adapting to a wide variety of classroom situations.

4. ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL (clear statement of objectives, logical sequence, budgeting of time, review, summary, and outside assignments as appropriate)
(X) Excellent ( )Very Good ( )Satisfactory ( )Unsatisfactory

Class started with an introduction to the professional world of technical writing that most students will seek to enter, i.e., practical advice on the job market and on careers. The session then moved into a module of writing on technical subjects without using jargonistic language. The instructions, available on the students' computer screens, and also projected from a large screen at the front of the classroom, were accompanied by writing samples and a class discussion. Students were then left to write their own summaries based on an article they read beforehand. The students chose articles from *Popular Mechanics, Forbes,* and other print journals in the fields of finance, science, and technology. A few students used online journals. The students then received individualized feedback on their work which they read out loud. Before students read their work, Professor Ellis gave his students enough time and individual assistance so they could produce their best work. He provided appropriate, knowledgeable feedback. The second half of the class featured a writing

exercise of greater complexity, if not greater difficulty. Students would begin their research and writing in class before posting the final work on the class' OpenLab site. I thought this day's lesson plan was an effective class in the fundamentals of technical writing, and an effective setup while working with such a large group of students, and with a range of skills and English language proficiency.

5.   PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL (level and clarity of presentation, appropriate use of learning aids)
(X) Excellent ( )Very Good   ( )Satisfactory   ( )Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis' syllabi includes everything students need to know for the course. Everything is carefully and thoroughly laid out on the OpenLab site. Students easily accessed the links and materials needed to work. I was impressed by their diligence as they worked. I saw students following Professor Ellis' suggestion on using the online dictionary (OED), if they got stumped for words, for the exercise in concise tech writing. All the materials required to complete the class exercises were carefully prepared, available in one sure place, and ready for students' use. The students knew where to go and what to do. I think this helps build trust in the classroom between Professor Ellis and his students, and the students and each other. It allows for more room to concentrate on the lessons at hand. I believe Professor Ellis' classroom professionalism encourages positive student-teacher interaction. There's little in the way of surprise and students know the instructor has made their learning materials available for use.

6.   STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION (relevance, variety, and clarity of questions, appropriate recognition of student contributions)
(X) Excellent ( )Very Good ( )Satisfactory   ( )Unsatisfactory

Professor Ellis works closely with his students. I found him to be attentive and mindful of their needs. He was approachable, and generous with his time and expertise. He was also firm when he felt he needed to be. He was responsive to the concerns or challenges of his students, and proved a calm, reassuring presence. I enjoyed his interaction with his students. They felt free to ask any question; they were open to their professor's feedback, and in general, seemed very respectful of his experience and field knowledege.

7.   OVERALL EVALUATION
(X) Excellent

8.   POST-CONFERENCE NOTES I enjoyed Professor Ellis' interaction with his students: his calm, reasoned approach to the job at hand, and the ease with which he made himself available to his students when they required help. Despite the challenges of teaching a writing class of this nature, I felt the students were granted quality instruction through Professor Ellis' combined gifts of professionalism, realities about the challenges of the classroom, and his expert skills.

I have read and have been given a copy of the above report, and so signify by my signature below. I understand that I may attach additional comments to this document.

	September 26, 2019
Jason Ellis	date

	September 26, 2019
Signature of Observer	date