

New York City College of Technology  
of the City University of New York

CLASS OBSERVATION REPORT

Name: Rebecca Devers

Rank: Assistant Professor

Department: English

Course/Section: ENG 1101, sec 5379

Date of Observation: Tues, 11/02/11

Room: N605

Lesson Topic and Brief Summary:

Dr. Devers' class was part of a first year learning community on "Blind Justice," and focused on critically exploring two pieces from the text *The Writers' Presence* for an exercise in close reading. The class addressed the topics of personal responsibility and addiction using Vidal's "Drugs" and Winn's "TV addiction," and she asked the students to begin to comparatively analyze the arguments in small groups, or "teams." Dr. Devers also discussed using sources and quoting material.

1. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (prompt start; efficient attendance check)

( X ) Satisfactory

( ) Unsatisfactory

The class began with a review of the highlights of the last class—the students had been asked to compare the use of source material with music "sampling." Dr. Devers then moved on to the topic of analysis and close reading. She demonstrated familiarity with the students' names during class discussion, managed the time well, and was clear on what she expected the class to accomplish during the period. She made sure to remind students of the essay that was due on the next class meeting, and made logistic announcements regarding learning community business during the last few minutes of class.

2. PROFESSIONAL TRAITS RELEVANT TO TEACHING  
(professional appearance and demeanor)

( X ) Satisfactory

( ) Unsatisfactory

Dr. Devers' appearance was professional, and her demeanor was appropriate. The students were clearly responding to her, and a community had been created.

3.SUBJECT MASTERY (accuracy of presented material; use of appropriate terminology)

(  )Excellent ( )Very Good ( ) Satisfactory ( ) Unsatisfactory

The syllabus illustrated a well-thought-out plan for the semester, and covered a variety of interesting essays and topics. Dr. Devers guided students and used appropriate terminology, defining terms that she thought might be unfamiliar, and directing discussion toward comparison of the two points of view presented. The central topic for discussion—the regulation of addictive forces as different as drugs or television in our lives—was met with lively discussion.

4.ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL (clear statement of objectives; logical sequence; budgeting of time; review, summary, and outside assignments as appropriate)

( )Excellent (  )Very Good ( ) Satisfactory ( ) Unsatisfactory

Dr. Devers was engaged with student responses and questions, both while they were in their groups and when they were presenting their material, and she had a good rapport with them. She kept the class moving through her use of a variety of pedagogical styles, shifting between small group work and class discussion. In order to have the students practice critical reading, at one point she had the groups define every word in a sample passage using the applications on their mobile phones; this was an exercise that lasted a few minutes in order to draw the students' attention to the particulars of language. They then moved to key words and phrases, and shared their findings.

5.PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL (level and clarity of presentation; appropriate use of learning aids; clarity, volume, and pace of speech; relevance, variety, and clarity of questions; choice of modality of instruction; use of instructional technology as appropriate)

Excellent  Very Good  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Dr. Devers engaged the students by having them get into groups and discuss a topic for short periods of time (10-15 minutes) using poster board and other props to help them organize their ideas. She had students work in various groups in order to encounter different perspectives, and then had each group present their ideas. Thoughtful questions were asked and answered by both student and instructor in order to facilitate thinking.

6. STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION (appropriate recognition of student contributions; establishment of rapport with students)

Excellent  Very Good  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Dr. Devers' techniques helped students brainstorm together in preparation for their writing assignments, and she went through the groups in order to engage their ideas.

7. OVERALL EVALUATION (categories 1 through 6)

Excellent  Very Good  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

8. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT (use additional pages if necessary).

The class went well, and while I do think the group work was useful and the props were engaging, group work can often be tough to manage, and there were some distractions that made the class feel fragmented at points. When Dr. Devers would have each group report their findings to the class, often other groups would still be working rather than listening, which was distracting to both the other students and to the professor, and these groups who were still working would be missing important information. I think Dr. Devers handled this well, asking the students to work quietly, but I wonder if having students stop working at the same time would allow them to come together for discussion more smoothly and learn from the other groups.

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.

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Signature of Observee

Date

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Signature of Observer

Date