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

FACULTY CLASS ROOM OBSERVATION REPORT
        Year____Fall 2014_____

( ) Tenured   ( ) (x) Untenured

Department____ENGLISH____Course: ENG 3401____Section: D554 1_____

Name of observee_Rebecca Devers_____
        Rank___Assistant Professor_____

Name of Observer _Kate Falvey_____
        Rank___Associate Professor_____

Date of Observation October 15, 2014   Room   505A Namm_____

Lesson Topic & Brief Summary

The lesson was focused on closely reading and analyzing key sections of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, using specific literary terms. Students were responsible for appropriately applying these previously learned six basic literary terms: plot, style, point of view, character, theme, and setting. The fundamental importance of supporting observations with textual evidence was stressed as students practiced engaging critically with the literature.

Please complete each item. This report will be returned unless each category contains supporting comments. Use additional pages if necessary.
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   1. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (prompt start, efficient attendance check):
      (X) Satisfactory   ( ) Unsatisfactory

      In this advanced-level Literature through Law class, Professor Devers created a
      supportive learning environment in which students were prompted to think critically

about course topics and assigned readings. The quiz required that students determine how four different literary elements were evident in a short excerpt from *In Cold Blood*. They were also asked to cite the exact "words or phrases in the passage that communicate that element," thereby underscoring the importance of closely observing textual nuance. Professor Devers urged students to "show me your evidence" -- which is especially appropriate for a course focused on law. She overtly stressed the connection to law: "You want to pretend you're a lawyer.... This is the only evidence you have before you." Topics covered, based on student presentations and specifically generative passages from the text, included the complex nature of truth and perspective, self-editing, storytelling, and the limits of language itself.

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

Professor Devers is personable, clear, engaging, and obviously experienced. She knows how to prompt student interest and participation, how to focus on the lesson's key points, and how to help students trust their own judgments and understanding.

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

Professor Dever's expertise was clearly evident throughout the session.

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

The class was exceptionally well organized, with enough time allotted for a review of "literary elements," a quiz, discussion of the quiz; student presentations on "new journalism" and "true crime films"; an extended discussion of new journalism in relation to Capote's *In Cold Blood*; and an attentive analysis of several excerpts from the book. Professor Devers continually emphasized the importance of close reading and led the

class to compelling insights, including how Capote creates suspense in his book and whether or not truth can be absolute: "Can we look at one of these passages and try to work out way through it?" "Capote is using these tricks to help us understand the killers." "We're getting at the question of whether In Cold Blood is fiction." "Is it possible for anyone ever to be absolutely truthful about what we observe?" "The process of storytelling involves fictionalization." A measure of student involvement was that no one was shuffling and raring to bolt out the door at 5:15, when class ended. Instead, students lingered to finish the challenging discussion and to receive homework instructions.

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

Professor Devers is a dynamic, engaging, thoughtful facilitator, with a seemingly effortless way of remaining in charge of her classroom. There were clear class routines and expectations for professional behavior and courtesy – such as papers being turned in complete with staples, respectful attention paid to peers, the use of the course's Open Lab site to present material, and the use of power point for the well-organized, informative student presentations.

6. STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION (relevance, variety, and clarity of questions, appropriate recognition of student contributions)

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

Students were animated and responsive, clearly used to the focused, attentive reading of the text, the literary terminology and methods employed, and the combination of individual writing on their quiz, peer projects, and spirited discussion.

7. OVERALL EVALUATION (categories 1 through 6)
   (x) Excellent
   ( ) Very Good
   ( ) Satisfactory
   ( ) Unsatisfactory

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

My only recommendation is for Professor Devers to continue to guide her students to do more of this kind of text-based, topical, critically engaged work with her students.

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

1/04