

Evidence of Teaching Ability (Peer Observation)

Guttman Community College at CUNY Observation of Teaching

OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

Candidate: Nicole Beveridge

**Rank: Instructor English
November 19, 2015**

Date of Visit:

Observer: Nicola Blake, Ph.D.

Course & Section: ENGL 203

Teaching Report:

This observation took place on Tuesday November 10, 2015. This lesson was an exemplary lesson and I have no suggestions for improvements. In fact, I have asked Dr. Beveridge to contact the Associate Dean regarding possibly leading a workshop on IFAT (an activity used at KBCC) that she currently uses at Guttman.

The class began promptly and students began the lesson after a brief check in. The agenda of the lesson was clearly posted on the board and student seemed to understand the rhythm of the course. The central aim of the lesson was to explore a series of questions related to food sustainability. For example:

- How do environmental thinkers approach the construction of the future, and how has this construction informed the present debates on the impact of industrialization, urbanization, farming, food production and societal challenges, and the environment?

Students were asked to read "Barry Eastbrook's *Organic Can Feed the World* and Deena Shanker's *Chicken is Killing the Planet*. Students had to find 5 major points that resonated with them relating these findings to the previous class lesson which focused on *Food Inc.* Dr. Beveridge incorporated multimedia to teach students how to map critical concepts presented in an article to documentaries and advertisements. Students practiced critical reading and writing techniques such as summary, using context clues, decoding words, making comparison, and contrasting ideas. The lesson was a lively discussion; students were able to demonstrate the understanding of the articles in relation to their own lives.

Dr. Beveridge began the class with a lunch survey that she designed to relate many of these concepts back to students' own consumption. She showed a small clip of a video of Mark

Bittman "Where Does Our Food Come From." Post discussion, students transitioned to a 6 question quiz related to the articles they read. This quiz was to reinforce close reading and to assess whether students had fully understood the articles. Students then went into groups to discuss the articles and take a group quiz. Students were given scratch cards using the IFAT method to choose the answers to the same quiz they had done individually. Students paired and shared. This ongoing discussion is also continued on students' eportfolios and the course facebook page (developed by Dr. Beveridge).

Dr. Beveridge uses Team Based Learning in her course which is aligned with Guttman's teaching principles. TBL allows students to work as both individuals and in permanent groups- there is a greater responsibility for acquiring and using information.

Dr. Beveridge indicated that she "assigned two research based articles in the last class meeting and I also posted them on the course facebook page. I think most instructors struggle with the fact that our students are not reading, and we spend a lot of time trying to dissect a reading in class that was assigned for homework." She provided the following information to me on TBL:

TBL in a course

1. A substantial reading assignment (outside of class).
2. Graded individual "readiness assessment" test on the reading (in class).
3. Graded team "readiness assessment" (in class).
4. Availability of team scores, comparison of results (in class).
5. Brief lecture, if needed, to clarify confusion made visible by the tests (in class).

Benefits

Students enjoy working with the immediate feedback assessment test (IFAT) cards. They work on the same quiz they did individually, and then as a group and make a decision on the answer they think is correct and scratch it off using a coin. The correct answer usually has a star in the box.

1. The assessment is immediate- students can tally their scores at the end and not have to wait on the professor to grade and return their quiz.
2. Raises performance levels
3. Fosters creativity
4. Students learn best when feedback is frequent and timely.
5. Very little instructor management.
6. Groups are able to respond to more challenges than most individuals can.

The course was at level, rigorous, interactive, and had a wonderful pace (this is especially important for a late evening course 6:45 pm – 8 pm). It is always a pleasure to sit in an observation where the teaching demo becomes a learning experience for both observer and

observee. Dr. Beveridge is a master teacher who uses technology well. She also uses the whiteboards and understands the importance of individual and group work, pre class preparation for students, and student post reflection. Dr. Beveridge discussed the final exam worksheet/prompt which was clearly written. Students ended class by discussing the homework (a fact sheet for Food Inc.) and worksheets for preparing their final literature review essay and group project.

Dr. Beveridge has a clear command of her classroom. It was evident that she and the students had a good rapport and that by setting the expectations of each class over the course of the semester. Students were engaged and they were very intentional as they grappled with concepts they covered during the course of the semester. Dr. Beveridge walked around the room and gave students individual attention when needed.

Dr. Beveridge's assignments and lesson plan exceeds the expectations of the course. Her passion is infectious and it is clear that students appreciate her talent in the classroom. Given the level of skill showcased in this lesson, I would encourage Dr. Beveridge to develop a series of PDs on active learning strategies for Guttman. I encourage her to seek out resources at Guttman and opportunities for her to contribute to our community of shared practice. Overall this was an exceptional lesson and I look forward to seeing her continued growth and mastery in the classroom at Guttman.