



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Department of Writing and Rhetoric

P.O. Box 161345

Orlando, FL 32816-1345

Class Observation Letter

Instructor Name: L. Corinne Jones

Observer Name: Lissa Pompos Mansfield

Course Observed (Title and Number): ENC 1102 (Composition II)

Date and Time of Observation: Wednesday, August 29, 2018, 1:30-2:20

Location of Observation: BHC Room 126

Narrative of Class Session:

Corinne arrived to class early, prepared for the lesson by displaying her presentation slides, and chatted with her students about their weekends and any questions they had about the class. Although this was only the fifth class of the semester, Corinne already knew her students' names and had established a good rapport with them, as evidenced by the fact that so many were willing to ask her questions and, later, participate during class discussion. At 1:30 pm, Corinne began class by acknowledging that some students had trouble purchasing the required handbook, so she had scanned a portion of the assigned reading for them and uploaded this file to the class Webcourse. She then demonstrated how to find the document.

For the next ten minutes, Corinne recapped announcements and content from the prior week, which included reviewing the Research Proposal assignment sheet and reminding students about the course calendar (i.e., showing when students would be able to start collecting their data). This provided a nice transition to the next section of the class: discussing methods of primary and secondary research.

To capture students' contributions, Corinne pulled up a blank Google document and asked for volunteers to name different types of evidence that could be used in a research paper. Students responded with examples such as statistics, interviews, photographs, and quotes from authoritative sources. Corinne then directed the class' attention to a quote about contextualized research from the *Easy Writer* handbook. After a student read this section aloud, the class discussed some of the differences between primary and secondary sources and listed examples of each (e.g., interviews and case studies; websites, books, newspapers, and academic articles).

For the next fifteen minutes, Corinne continued to ask prompting questions from her presentation slides, students responded, and she acknowledged their answers and included them in the class notes document. Throughout this discussion, the class defined and discussed the benefits and drawbacks of ethnography (e.g., people behave differently when they know they're being observed, outsiders stereotyping communities), case studies,

surveys (e.g., surveys can be biased if they're targeting a particular demographic), archival research, and textual analysis (which includes three kinds: rhetorical analysis, genre analysis, multimodal analysis). As students responded, Corinne mentioned the pages of the handbook where these descriptions appeared. To wrap up this discussion, Corinne asked her students to recall which methods various Writing Studies scholars (such as Stuart Greene and Deborah Brandt) had used in their articles; students listed methods such as interviews, case studies, and textual analyses. Thus, this discussion relied heavily on the required reading and student participation.

The next major activity of this class session was an explanation of an upcoming assignment, the Annotated Bibliography, and some of the related scaffolding activities that students would complete. At 2:05, Corinne reminded the class about the library visit. She also displayed the course calendar and previewed some activities that would occur between the library visit and the peer review session of the Annotated Bibliography (i.e., completing CITI Training Modules, attending individual conferences). At this point, Corinne showed a digital conference sign up sheet and explained how students could access it and reserve their preferred slot.

During the last few minutes of class, Corinne answered students' questions about the Research Proposal assignment (which they would be turning in later that week). After some final reminders (e.g., how students could use questions they had created during a previous brainstorming activity, how students could model their own research methods and questions after other scholars'), Corinne ended class and released her students.

Overall Thoughts and Impressions:

This was a well organized and informative class session. As suggested by the descriptions above, Corinne took great care to ensure that students were understanding multiple aspects of the course, including: how to navigate the online learning management system, the sequence of upcoming activities, the pros and cons of various research methods, and the requirements of the major assignments. While observing Corinne interact with her class, I noticed the attention she paid to each individual student; this was evident by the way she called students by name (an impressive feat for the second week of class!), her practice of acknowledging (and—when needed—gently correcting) every response, and the fact that she built in multiple opportunities for students to ask questions and get immediate help. Throughout the entire fifty minutes, Corinne demonstrated genuine caring and respect for her students.

Another aspect of Corinne's teaching that deserves attention is her use of technology to organize the lesson and facilitate the learning process. As mentioned above, Corinne took notes during the whole-class discussion that captured students' examples and understandings. I believe students will benefit from referencing these notes as they continue to develop their research projects. The notes also serve as proof of the collaborative learning that took place during class.

Corinne is clearly comfortable with technology, and this was evident in her use of Google docs (for notes), Google Slides (for her visual aid) and a Google spreadsheet (for facilitating the conference sign up process). I appreciated the way she integrated these supplementary tools within the existing class Webcourse.

In sum, it was a pleasure to watch Corinne teach. I know her students will benefit from her organizational skills, attention to detail, and the individualized attention they will receive as a student in her course.