

I was Megan's faculty mentor the first year she taught for the WRD department. When I observed her teaching I could not help but be amazed at the level of confidence and poise that she displayed to her students. She presented herself as a seasoned teacher, maintaining control of the classroom while giving students the opportunity to explore and question. In other words, she was able to guide her lesson plans in a way that allowed her students to own their own learning. In this particular class, Megan had students role play a particular scenario in groups. I was able to participate, and I was impressed with how eager they were to work and report on their activities. I realized that she had already created a classroom atmosphere that was safe and exciting for students to make their voices heard. Megan is a fantastic teacher, the kind that students will remember years after they graduate, the kind that inspires even veteran teachers to recommit to the well-being of their own students.

Joshua Abboud
j.abboud@uky.edu

Division of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

MENTOR PROGRAM CLASS OBSERVATION FORM

This form is to be completed by a WRD mentor assigned to visit the TA's class. The TA should read and sign the drafted observation and offer any written response. Once the form is finalized, one copy should be placed in the TA's file in the department.

TA Megan Pillow Davis Class Topic/Text _____ Audience _____
WRD Observer Joshua Abboud
Semester (F, Sp, Su) F YR 2013 Date Observed 10/17/13 Course # 110

Evaluate the TA's performance on the following criteria according to the general guidelines provided. For each criterion, check the box indicating the statement that best characterizes the TA's performance.

■ Management

- Uses a wide range of activities to appeal to various learning styles through a balance of lecture, small groups, independent work, etc. Uses time efficiently. Successfully navigates class dynamics to insure quality instruction.
- Utilizes a fair range of activities to appeal to various learning styles. Time is used effectively, though some minor time issues may be apparent. Is able, when confronted, to navigate class dynamics to insure quality instruction.
- Uses a narrow range of class room activities. Time management is a problem (ending early, starting late). Class dynamics interfere with quality instruction.
- Major problems with activity variety, time management, and navigating class dynamics to insure quality instruction.

■ Helpfulness to Students

- Appears to actively seek ways and opportunities to be helpful. Actively inquires about potential points of confusion, can readily provide satisfactory answers/responses to student's questions/challenges.
- Appears helpful and receptive when approached. Provides answers/responses to student's questions/challenges.
- Answered questions from students but did not appear to welcome them. Seems defensive if responding to student questions/challenges.
- Appeared to discourage questions and/or belittles or berates questioner. Does not answer/respond to student's questions/challenges.

■ Knowledge

- Appears excellent
- Appears quite good, but hindered by lack of background knowledge of this particular subject
- Appears ineffective due to lack of knowledge.
- Ineffective because of lack of effort and/or interest to master subject.

■ Communication Skills

- Appears highly effective, explained difficult concepts well, could function independently.
- Appears effective, explained most concepts well, needed little follow-up.
- Appears to have some problems communicating, explains most topics to some extent but requires frequent follow-up.
- Appears very ineffective, cannot handle responsibilities requiring student interaction.

■ Ability to Engage Students with Course Content

- Readily engaged students effectively and placed proper emphasis on important points.
- Engaged students with material in a comprehensive, organized fashion. Some important points not stressed/elaborated enough.

Division of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

- Engaged students or presented material to students but not always within a proper context.
 Did not engage students successfully or present material well to students.

■ **Professionalism** (meets responsibilities and deadlines, is fair and impartial, has appropriate interactions with students, is appropriately prepared and punctual)

- Appears very professional
 Appears mostly professional, could use improvement in one or two minor areas such as
 Appears marginally professional. Needs improvement in several minor or a major areas such as
 Appears unprofessional. Needs major improvement in

Summary of primary strengths observed:

Megan's teaching was extraordinarily professional and polished. She was genuinely interested in helping the students understand and apply the important points of the topic and actively engaged them in a number of ways. I was especially impressed with the way she was able to use a large range of activities while engaging many different modes of learning. There were very few moments of only lecture; instead Megan was able to use the projector for a number of demonstrations, turn to the whiteboard for impromptu visuals, pass out handouts for a small group activity, get them interacting between themselves, and then report to the whole class what they found. There were hardly any lulls, and even during the small groups most students were alert and participating. The activities she used were unique and I came away with a number of ideas that will help in my own classes. She has an excellent presence as someone who guides the class, but doesn't impose her will in a controlling way. The result is a comfortable environment in which students took part in their own learning.

Summary of suggested areas of improvement:

I don't have much to add to this part. Really it comes down to continuing to polish what Megan does in the classroom. I can say that although I felt like the class kept moving in a good rhythm there were a number of students who had problems talking, especially at the very beginning as Megan was trying to get the conversation started. There may be a way to have them begin in small groups to discuss their thoughts in the activity that she began with. With classes as large as we have students are still afraid of being wrong until the discussion warms up a bit. I have noticed that instead of asking them questions as a class, breaking them into small groups right away can alleviate some of that stress. In any case, these are small details that I am confident that Megan will continue to improve on as she continues teaching.

TA's Response

(NOTE: TA's signature below is required by WRD and indicates that the TA has read and understood his/her evaluation; it is not an indicator of approval. The TA should use the following space to offer any general comments regarding the observation, or of agreement or disagreement, and continue in an attachment if needed.)

Class Observer: _____ Date: _____

TA: _____ Date: _____