

IOI Narrative for Dean Ramser, Spring Semester 2018

Classroom Observation

I visited the second hour of Dean's TTH 8:00-11:05 AM English 1B class in Quad 119 on Tuesday, May 22. When I arrived at 9 AM, twenty students were actively engaged in a thesis statement activity in preparation for their upcoming Essay 4. Each student wrote his or her working thesis statement on a form and then passed it to another student who wrote down what he or she thought the thesis statement was arguing and what the main points were likely to be. Once the students had finished and had traded back, Dean began calling on them to share the results of the activity and what they planned on doing with what they had learned. He pointed out how the activity illustrated the difference between what a writer intends to communicate and what a reader perceives. He reinforced this concept with some apt analogies and pop culture references and then had the students work on a second, similar exercise that focused on body paragraph development. This activity lasted until the end of class. The students held on to both forms to use as drafting resources, picked up their graded Essay 3, and left for the day.

Dean's classroom was a vibrant learning space—the students were grouped, the whiteboard was full of rhetorical tips and strategies, the projector was on, and the tables were full of resources, including a stack of academic journals. Dean regularly moved around the room, called on his students by name, and offered ample encouragement and advice. The students were awake, engaged, and respectful of their instructor and each other.

Syllabi and Course Materials

I reviewed Dean's English 1B syllabus, a variety of his writing prompts and class materials, and his website. The syllabus was thorough, professional, and included every required and recommended element, including current SLOs, descriptions of the class and department policies, grading breakdown, campus resources, and detailed schedule. I appreciated the "in other words..." section that put the SLOs into plain English, and I also appreciated the clear, direct tone that the syllabus maintained. The classroom materials were also clear, direct, detailed, and sensitive to the particular class in which they served. They were full of reading tips, success strategies, and checklists. Many assignments also included advice from former students. The materials were up-to-date and were not only distributed in class but also made available online. Dean also showed me examples of his grading and record-keeping methods, all of which was thorough, logical, and very much in line with RCCD standards. He also shared with me that he was driven to keep his students' costs down and therefore contacted the publisher of one of his required texts (the novel) and, as a result, it had been provided free of charge to all of his students.

Student Evaluations

It was clear during the observation that Dean's students genuinely appreciated everything he has to offer, and this impression was reinforced by the overwhelmingly positive comments his students left for him. Students repeatedly praised him for his excitement about the subject matter and his interesting and fun approach to teaching. They expressed appreciation for his helpfulness and respect in class and his accessibility out of class (he holds regular office hours in the associate faculty resource center), including his rapid response to emails. They offered very little criticism, and even that was gentle, their main suggestion for improvement being their desire for a LMS, such as Canvas, so that they could better access their grades and track their progress.

Other

We briefly chatted on the day of the observation and plan on chatting again soon about a variety of subjects, including AB 705, Canvas, the WRC, the bookstore, department policies, and more. Dean said he had completed Canvas training but because his classes weren't designated as Web-Enhanced, he didn't have access to Canvas this semester. We talked about TAs and the DE opt-in feature on WebAdvisor. Dean also expressed concern that because he joined us after the fall semester was underway, he might not be as familiar with campus and department and discipline protocol as he needed to be; however, based on everything I heard, observed, and reviewed, I was able to reassure him that he was following along nicely.

Recommendation

Based on my classroom observation, my review of his materials and student evaluations, and my interactions with him, I am happy to forward a completely satisfactory recommendation for Dean Ramser.

Submitted on Tuesday, May 29, 2018, by

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