



BOSTON COLLEGE

Observation of Paul Brown's Class
by
Heather T. Rowan-Kenyon, Ph.D.
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ED977-Advanced Field Experience

I observed Paul's Field Experience class from 7-9:30 on April 10th. It was the last time the class would meet for the semester, and it was focused on wrapping up the year. There are approximately 20 students in the class. Four of the students are finishing their first year and the remaining students are finishing the program in either May or August. There was good attendance and only one student was late, which surprised me due to the point of the semester when I was observing. The room was set up with desks in a circle to promote sharing among the class members. Paul was included in the circle which symbolized his role as a co-participant in the course.

The first hour of the course was devoted to check ins since the students had not met in approximately a month. Paul used an open format where students could share when they wanted-not in a particular order based on where they were sitting. Paul brought a bag of conference "swag" that he had from a recent conference that students could choose from after they spoke to encourage early participants. He asked students to share how they were doing and recommended topics such as the job search, conference attendance, or asking the class for advice. He also invited the other members of the class to ask questions of the speaker. Students gave each other good advice. A good example of this is when one student asked for advice about on-campus interviewing for multiple jobs at the same institution-Paul threw it out to the class, and a student with more full-time work experience gave her great advice. Paul let students steer the conversation and he provided follow-up when he felt it was needed. A little more feedback for some of the students for check-in would have been helpful -to help draw them out. For example, one student shared that he was not sure about plans for the following year, and about how wrapping up the year will be different based on if he is coming back or not. Another example was when one student commented at length about NEVER reading the *Chronicle*. Paul gave his own update at the end which was helpful for the students to hear about the future path that one might have in the profession-especially related to professional association participation. The check-ins took approximately the time he had allotted for this activity.

Paul transitioned to the next part of class, which was titled advice. He asked students to get together in small groups of 2 or 3 by 1st year or second year. He put 2 questions up on the PPT- 1st year students were asked to come up with questions for second years, while second years were asked to develop advice for the 1st years. Paul had the students make a list to hand in. Students were given 10 minutes and he put up a stopwatch slide to keep time. I would

recommend that he give the students time to look at the questions on the slide before starting the watch-because the 2 groups sitting near me were confused at first since they were not able to see the questions. The small groups interacted well and even bled into their predetermined break time. Paul spoke with 2 of the small groups, but I would recommend talking with each of the groups. Also, students for the most part split into their friend groups-and one or two students seemed a little stuck finding a partner.

After the break, about 40 minutes was spent processing the advice. Most students participated, but some students were checked out and did not add anything to the conversation. (Some of these students have been like this all year). This activity seemed a little drawn out towards the end. Paul did a nice job wrapping up this section and transitioning into the next one.

He then wrapped up the class with a Hopes and Fears activity. He connected this to the readings for the class-which he mentioned but did not talk about in detail. One recommendation may be to get students to give some thoughts about what that they took away from the readings. He asked students to think about one hope and one fear for the next year. He did a good job giving the students a minute of quiet time to reflect on this before sharing began. Not all students shared and it was obvious from the body language of a few students that this was too “fluffy” or personal-felt a little forced and there was a lot of silence. He may want to rethink this activity for the future-maybe share in small groups.

Overall, the class was cohesive and students shared freely across the board. Only a few were quiet and no one monopolized the conversation-which is a bit of a shift from last semester. Paul might want to think about ways to engage the quiet or the checked out-particularly when the advice section went a little long. One other recommendation is to try to shift out of some of the “student affairs” language when have higher ed admin students in the class. For a large class there was a lot of sharing which showed trust among the students in the class. This was a strong class, and I am thankful that Paul is teaching this course.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Rowan-Kenyon".

Heather Rowan-Kenyon, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Lynch School of Education
Boston College