

Classroom Observation Report

Instructor evaluated _____ Paul Brown _____

Observer(s) Dr. Ana M. Martinez-Aleman, Chair, Dept of Educational Leadership & Higher Education

Number of students present _____ Course ____ ED976 Field Experience _____

Date __ Fall 2012 _____

Instructions. Several days prior to the classroom visit, the instructor should provide the observer(s) with a copy of the course syllabus containing course objectives, content, and organization.

Procedure. The observer(s) should meet with the instructor several days **in advance** of the visit to learn the instructor's classroom objectives as well as the teaching methods to be used. Within several days **after** the visit, the observer(s) should meet with the instructor to discuss observations and conclusions.

Please feel free to use the reverse side of this page to elaborate on your comments

1. Describe the instructor's content mastery, breadth, and depth.

Field Experience is a team taught class in which the central objectives include developing Higher Education MA students' professional identities through professional, scholarly and research literature, case study, interactive discussion and group projects. Paul's strengths as the instructor of this course are his mastery of the content knowledge and his ability to link theory and practice through case studies and by providing studies with "real world" examples of professional dilemmas, etc. Throughout this particular observation, Paul very confidently moved students from overviews of the assigned readings to a discussion of relevant examples, and back to reflective conversation about the points raised in the readings. In this particular class, the students were asked to think about the notion of a "cultural audit" of an institution as the foundation for making professional decisions. In particular, students were to consider (from the reading) how, as professionals, they are to direct their actions when their values were inconsistent with their employers'.

2. Describe the method(s) of instruction.

Paul uses PowerPoint slides to frame the discussion. The slides are clear and typically present a question or two to guide the conversation, or present the thesis from the reading. He speaks to students "from" these slides, i.e. he refers to them as a matter of keeping focused. He does not engage in long explanations but rather, presents questions and asks for student input. Students respond readily and their responses were largely on target. Paul is supportive of their responses/comments, often embellishing them or providing further information to strengthen the point. Though this portion of the class was not meant to have free-flowing, open discussion by students, the students appeared at ease and eager to respond to Paul's questions. At the completion of a short video Paul shared to introduce the concept of a "cultural audit" (and that would be supplemented later by a values inventory and case study group work), Paul presented guiding questions for students on a PowerPoint slide and began a short discussion

of the video and the idea that professionals should engage in a “cultural audit” of an institution in order to understand their positions as professionals. Students willingly engaged in the discussion; Paul nodded in approval of comments made by students.

3. How clear and well organized is the presentation?

The class was very well organized (especially given that it is the team-taught) and coherent. The sections, discussions, group and individual work were clearly correlated and reinforced the class’ principle goal that evening.

Paul presents as a confident and knowledgeable instructor who appropriately mines his own professional experience as a student affairs officer to support and inform required readings and class discussion. He does not rely solely on his experiences; he merely uses them to make the texts and concepts more concrete for new professionals.

4. What specific suggestions would you make to improve this instructor’s teaching?

A few suggestions:

1. I encourage Paul to call on students by name. This is an important piece of the faculty-student learning relationship. This will strengthen the exchanges between you and the student, encouraging the student to push further, etc. Personalizing the teaching-learning relationship is very important and using a student’s name is the first step.
2. Be more deliberate about connecting the discussion and points raised by the students to concepts in the required readings. Say where this idea is raised in the reading and how that idea/proposition is or isn’t supported by the experts (the authors).
3. Reinforce a student’s comment or assessment more personally and more emphatically. Show how (very explicitly) that student’s comment/point correlates to the readings or goal of an exercise or group work.
4. Move around a bit more; enter student space. Paul situated himself in one spot throughout the class and remained there. Move a bit more and move around students, all the while keeping eye contact. The students were in rows in this class and I suggest that Paul think about moving them to a more open arrangement, perhaps a circle or horseshoe so that students can see each other, can focus on students speaking, and can engage each other when they are not doing group work.