

Megan Jennings

I was responsible for observing *Name Removed*. *Name Removed* is a UTA for ENGL391 with *Name Removed*. There is also another UTA in the course, named *Name Removed*. It was very interesting to observe another English course, mostly because the professor had a very different teaching style than the professor I am a UTA for.

I arrived at 9:20 AM (for the 9:30 class) and the professor and UTAs were already there. I sat down in a corner to observe the class. Before the students arrived, the UTAs were conversing with each other. The professor talked to them for a few minutes to give them tips on what was expected of them during the class period.

According to the professor, the purpose of the class was to have the students workshop their “problem statements” that they wrote for homework. The classroom was set-up with the desks in a large circle. The UTAs and professors were situated at the front of the circle. There was an article projected on the screen. Students were not actively reading it, so I assumed that they had read it for homework.

The professor introduced a warm-up, which was to identify the claim of the article projected on the screen. The students volunteered to answer this eagerly. It seemed like they had mastered this part of Toulmin theory. After the warm-up, she introduced the purpose of the class. The professor stated that they would be workshopping their “white papers” in partners. She said that she and the UTAs would come to each pair to work with them. Two of the students, at this point, shared that they did not have hard-copies of their workshops. One student claimed that she “did not like paper.” The professor was *very* angry, but the UTAs helped show them how to track revisions on a computer, so that they could still participate in the activity.

The workshop did not seem to have any guidelines, and there was nothing displayed on the screen. I think that the class would have benefitted from a list of guidelines projected on the screen; therefore, the students could understand what they were supposed to be looking for during the peer-review time.

One UTA covered one half of the room while the other UTA covered the other half. They approached the students, made casual small talk to establish a comfortable environment, and then observed the students peer-review commentary. The UTA did not ask if they had any questions, and if the students looked confused as to why the UTA was watching, he just said “I’m just listening. Don’t mind me.” This is different than how I round on the classroom, but I thought it was effective. I usually ask the students if they have any questions, they usually say no, and then I feel obligated to leave them alone. *Name Removed*, however, seemed to make them more comfortable and they started to ask him questions a few minutes after he sat and observed. I thought this was interesting.

Once the students were wrapping up the “white paper,” the professor asked if the students seemed prepared to submit them the next day at midnight. The students said they did not at all feel ready to submit, and the professor took a minute to discuss with the UTAs. After their short discussion, the UTAs announced that there would be a 5 day extension for their assignment. The students were very

relieved, but not surprised. This led me to believe that they might have these extensions frequently.

After the workshop discussion was over, the professor told students that they had a lot of run-ons in their previous assignments, and that they need to be more careful in their next major assignment. The professor then told them how they could view feedback on their assignments on ELMS. Then, she cold-called one of the students to pull up their last assignment and find a critique on a run-on sentence. She instructed the student to write the run-on on the board, and then asked the entire class how they could fix the run-on. I thought this was a nice activity because the students were working with a realistic example.

After this assignment, students were told that they had free time to work on projects. They were given two options: 1) work on their website 2) work on their "white papers." During this time period, the UTAs were not walking around the classroom. The professor pulled up the course website on the projector and began clicking on each student's link to their site. I saw the students get nervous once she started doing this, because a lot of them had not started their websites. She didn't make any comments. She clicked on each link one-by-one while they were working on their projects independently.

The UTA gave the closing comments about the plans for Thursday's online class. He stated that the students were to form groups for web conferences on Thursday and the professor and UTAs would be present in their conferences. I thought this was really neat because I didn't know that ELMS had the ability to set up video conferences. I think this is a neat feature that could be applied in the blended class I TA for. He also mentioned that students were being docked for arriving to class late, because attendance is a factor in their grade. Some of the students were very angry about this because it was not mentioned in class until today. The professor responded that the attendance policy has always been in the syllabus. I thought her answer was respectable, but some students were very mad.

Overall, I think the UTA was eager to answer questions and had a great understanding of the material. I really enjoyed that he seemed comfortable with the students, like a peer giving friendly advice. I think that the students respect him and he has done a great job establishing respectable authority in the course.

Megan Jennings Observing *Name Removed*

Sep 20 at 9:30 AM Course Code: ENGL391

(My notes were illegible because I write really fast, so I thought typing them up was the best option)

Familiarity with subject Interest and current knowledge	Answers questions eagerly. Was able to help students with things they were confused on
Teaching Presentation used Clarity, organization, preparation, speaking voice, delivery, manner	After workshop, professor wrote student example grammar mistakes on the board. Students worked as a class to critique them. After revision, students were given open lab time to work. UTA gave closing comments about coming Thursday's activities. UTA said that there are going to be web conferences on Thursday that the UTAs and professor are going to be dropping in on.
Teaching methods used Flexibility, variety, appropriateness, audiovisual aids	Projector was used for warm-up. No visual aids during workshop. Students critiqued a run-on sentence on the board. Professor struggled with internet for a while Professor pulled up class website and explained what they were adding to the personal page. Webpage for course has a honeycomb design and each student's picture in it that links to their personal web page.
Classroom management Promptness, control, area of focus [L/R, all sides of class], calling on diverse students, discussion, engagement	One TA focused on one side of the room, and the other TA focused on the other side of the room. TA engaged in friendly small talk with students to establish a more comfortable environment.
Creativity Adjusts class to learning needs of students, enthusiasm, stimulation of interest	UTA seemed very creative with students. UTA helped with technical issues when the internet was not working. Walked to IT department for help to get their next assignment started.
Availability for students Answers questions, conveys interest in students	During workshop, rounded classroom and worked with students. "On the same level" as students and seemed very approachable. Sat behind students and observed. Was available for questions if they had them, otherwise observed and gave positive comments on things they did well.
Purpose of the class is clear Outline at beginning, 'tells them what they will learn, tell them, then tell them what they learned'	Professor established purpose at beginning of course. Class started with warm-up. Students seemed a little nervous to speak up, but professor cold-called. Students were to workshop their problem statements that they had written for homework. Students were to work with one partner. Students seemed disengaged after 20 min of workshop.
Things the instructor does well	UTAs seem comfortable with each other and do a great job engaging students. UTA mentioned attendance policy during

	class. One student was angry because she commutes and she raised her voice at the professor!!
Student Engagement	Students seemed disengaged after 20 min of workshop, but lasted for 30 min.
Other	Two students did not print out a hard-copy of their work and the professor was angry, but TA helped them to still be able to participate and benefit from the workshop.
Classroom Environment	Desks are set up in a large circle. Professor and TAs are situated at the front of the circle. TAs and professor are conversing before class begins, but not with students. TAs have their laptops out. Students are work-shopping parts of their papers together.