Appendix B: Suggested Guidelines for Pre- and Post-Observation Meetings

The following suggested guidelines are taken from the Yale-NUS College Centre for Teaching and Learning's *Peer Observation of Teaching Guidelines: A Sourcebook for the International Liberal Arts Context*.

Summative observations should follow a four-part process: **pre-observation conversation, classroom observation(s), post-observation conversation, reflection and feedback**.

1. **Pre-Observation Conversation**: Meet to discuss pre-observation questions, establish ground- rules and clarify expectations. Observer should review the course syllabus and other course materials to learn how the class to be observed fits into the larger course design. (One week prior to classroom observation.)
2. **Classroom Observation**: Observer attends class and quietly observes, taking notes on teaching strategies and evidence of student learning.
3. **Post-Observation Conversation**: Observer and faculty member meet, faculty member shares own experience and self-assessment. Observer shares observations and feedback verbally and/or in writing, and invites faculty member to share concerns and points of clarification. (Two/three days after observation.)
4. **Feedback**: Observer writes a formal letter based on classroom observations and pre- and post-observation conversations. This letter should include an overall assessment of the teaching observed. Observer sends a summative letter to the faculty member, who then uploads the letter to their review and/or tenure and promotion file, along with his or her own reflections and elaborations if they so choose.

Step 1: Pre-Observation Conversation

To avoid mapping their own goals unproductively on their peers, observers need to understand their colleague's own teaching aims. The goal of the pre-observation conversation is for the observer to learn the faculty member's overarching goals for student learning, for the class(es) being observed, and the strategies they use to achieve those objectives. *We also recommend that the syllabus is shared and the broader context of the course is made clear to the observer.* Reviewing the syllabus will help the observer situate the specific class to be observed within a broader learning trajectory. Sharing the syllabus will also enable the observer to offer feedback on teaching effectiveness which is sensitive to their colleague's course design.

The pre-observation conversation is also an opportunity for the observer to learn about areas of particular pride or concern to the faculty member, so they can be sure to concentrate, document, and if appropriate offer suggestions in these areas.

In clarifying expectations prior to the observation, the faculty member should explain whether they are inviting the observer to perform a formative or summative observation. While the process is likely to be relatively similar, the outcome is different. And while ideally a formative observation would be done with the same care as a summative, given time constraints it is possible that observers will be more thorough when performing a summative observation. For that reason, it is important to clarify early on what the end result will be. A formative class visit should not retroactively be turned into a summative letter.

This conversation should be given time and attention. It should not be held five minutes before class when both parties will be rushed and distracted. Instead, this conversation should be scheduled a few days to a week before the class to-be observed, giving both observer and faculty member time to process and prepare. The observer might want to share some of their own answers to the following questions as well to establish some trust and reciprocity during the process.

Suggested Pre-Observation Conversation Questions

Context of The Course Being Observed
1. Is this your first time teaching this course and class subject?
2. What level is this course? Are there pre-requisites or expectations of prior knowledge?
3. What will be the format for the class being observed? What are the learning activities and assignments for this class – reading, writing, group projects, etc.?
4. In the syllabus, what came immediately before and comes after the class being observed?
5. How would you describe this group of students?
6. Is this your first time teaching this course? If you have taught this course before, are you doing anything different this semester than previous times taught?
7. Are there ways you run this course differently than others (more introductory, more advanced, etc.)?
8. How much autonomy do you have in designing and executing this course (e.g. personal elective vs. common curriculum section).

Professor's Broad Goals
9. What are your goals as a teacher *in general*?
10. What are your overall learning goals *for this course*?
11. What are your goals *at this point in the term*?
12. What are your goals and desired learning outcomes *specific to this class/ session*?
13. Are there materials I can look at ahead of time that will help me understand what I will be watching when I come to observe? (You may want to ask for access to the Canvas course site, discussion boards or course blog posts, assignments, and of course the syllabus.)

Professor's Teaching Strategy and Learning Expectations
14. What is your role as a teacher in this course? What is your persona, or desired persona, in the classroom? Transmitter of knowledge, facilitator of discussion? Is yours more of a lead from the front or lead from behind approach, or a combination?
15. How do you envision readings, lectures, and discussion interacting to produce learning? How do you conceive of the role each dimension plays?
16. Have you integrated your research into your teaching, and if so how?
17. What are your hopes and expectations regarding student participation and involvement?

18. What does a good day look like for you? What in your mind are the indicators or observables of the kind of student learning you aspire to create?

Directing Observer's Attention
19. Is there anything specific you would like me to focus on?
20. Are there areas of pride I should be attentive to and document?
21. Are there areas of concern for this class or difficult elements you have been facing?
22. Are there any specific classroom dynamics you are working on?
23. Are there things you'll be trying for the first time in this session where you would like feedback?

Observation Expectations and Logistics
24. How can this peer observation exercise be most useful for you?
25. Is there anything about my visit that makes you nervous? How can we mitigate those issues?
26. How will you introduce me and my reason for being there?
27. Where should I sit in the room to be most out-of-view and least disruptive?

28. Do you have a preference in terms of my taking notes with a computer or by hand?
29. What are our expectations of each other in terms of interacting during the observation?

Recommendations to Observed Faculty

It is ***normal to be nervous*** about being observed, especially if you are new to this process. Try to pinpoint what is making you nervous and talk to your observer beforehand about those issues.

Alert your students before the classroom visit so that they will not be surprised or behave strangely. Students, especially those giving presentations, should be assured that the observer is not assessing them. The faculty member may want to explain in advance that these visits are a part of the faculty's on-going goal to learn from each other's practices and experience each other's teaching styles.

Step 2: Teaching Observation(s)

Following the pre-observation conversation, the observer will then visit the class on a pre-determined date or dates that the faculty member chooses. See above under "What We Observe" for specific guidance on what to focus on and look for during an observation.

What to Do as an Observer

Most importantly, ***observers should be documenting evidence of student learning***. Additionally,

during the observation, the observer should:

1. ***Record what is happening*** as well as any notable successes, innovations, or concerns.

2. ***Describe the student experience*** of the class, e.g. did it start on time; what is the tone; is material presented visually, orally, both; what seem to be the expectations and customs around participation; use of technology, etc.

3. ***Pay attention to student behaviour*** and responses to the faculty member's teaching, not just what the faculty member is doing.

4. ***Record questions*** to ask later at the post-observation conversation.

For formative observation, the observation itself can consist of informal data collection and distillation or adhere to a more structured process as one would in a summative observation. For summative observations, we strongly recommend using some type of structured note-taking approach to ensure a thorough observation.

What *not to do* as an Observer

1. The observer ***should not participate*** in classroom discussion or activities.[17]

2. In general, the observer should ***avoid focusing on the content*** and instead look for evidence of overall instructional experience and the quality of student learning.[18] When observing a class outside their discipline, for example, observers might learn very little but should be looking for indicators and processes of *student* engagement (e.g. questions and comments, note-taking, energy of small group discussions).

3. The observer should ***not ask students about the class*** or treat their visit as an interview or focus group. Student feedback is collected separately through end-of-semester student evaluations.

4. Observers should ***avoid mapping their own teaching style and cultural expectations*** onto the faculty member being observed. Instead of looking for your own teaching style, assess how well the faculty member is achieving *their own* teaching goals as articulated in the pre-observation conversation.

See below for "Observation Organisers" to further help focus and systematise observations and note taking. These will also help structure your feedback and letter writing process after the observation.

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[17] If there is lab work or small group activities, the observer may want to move around the classroom to get a better vantage of what is happening, but should do so as unobtrusively as possible.

[18] Adapted from Northeastern University Center for Advanced Teaching and Learning Through Research, "Faculty Peer Observation and Feedback."

Step 3: Post-Observation Conversation

A post-observation conversation is required for summative observations and is optional but highly encouraged for formative observations. Whether the ultimate outcome of the observation is for formative or for summative purposes, the post-observation conversation should ideally be framed as *a collegial exchange of ideas on teaching practices, learning outcomes, and classroom management*.

The post-observation conversation is *an opportunity for the observer to share their thoughts, but also for the faculty member to reflect and articulate their experience*. The observer shares their observations and collaborates with the faculty member in brainstorming or troubleshooting. The post-observation conversation is also an opportunity for the faculty member to share their concerns and to describe steps they will take in subsequent classes to address problem areas. While the majority of the conversation is likely to focus on the faculty member rather than the observer's teaching, both parties will get more out of the experience if they treat it as a mutual exchange of experience and ideas.

This meeting should occur within a week of the classroom visit, and ideally a day or two following the visit. We discourage faculty from meeting immediately following the classroom observation, as both parties should have time to process their experience and the observer should review notes and organise feedback before sharing with the faculty member. For summative observations, the observer then will prepare a formal letter for submission to the faculty member's file.

For a summative observation, the faculty member may ask the observer to attend another class in the future, so they can observe their implementation of correctives to these problem areas.

Note: Not all topics or details discussed in the post-observation conversation need to go into the summative letter. In fact, much of the *conversation* may be spent brainstorming new techniques to try in the future, while the *letter* will focus on what the observer saw in the specific class they visited.

What to do in a Post-Observation Conversation

1. Observer **asks about faculty member's own experience** of and reflections about the class.
   - Would you say this was a typical or unusual class?
   - What went particularly well in your mind?
   - Was there anything that you were disappointed with or wish you had done differently?
      - What was it like having me in the room? Is there anything you wish I had done differently to be less disruptive or distracting?

2. Observer **shares observations of what happened** during the class – format, learning activities, flow. Share observations of student participation and indicators of student engagement, student-teacher and student-to-student dynamics, instructional techniques used and classroom environment. Share any perceived gaps between the faculty member's self-perception and your perception of their own priorities and teaching strategies.

3. Observer **describes indicators of successful learning**. What were the notable achievements?

What new ideas did you take away which you may apply in your own teaching practice? The observer should highlight areas where the faculty member appears to be achieving their learning aims, and the successes consistent with generally good practices in undergraduate education (see above under "What We Observe"). Observers may want to ask how faculty members achieved particularly successful outcomes, e.g. "I noticed the student presentation was particularly clear and easy to follow both in verbal and visual communication. Is that something you coached them on and how?" When possible, observers should offer specific evidence or indicators for their observations.

4. Observer **describes any concerns or areas that could be improved** and **asks about teaching techniques** or student behaviours they found puzzling. You may want to start with critical feedback on areas that the faculty member themselves expressed concern or uncertainty about in the pre-observation conversation. Share observations about areas where they may not be achieving their own learning goals, or where student learning seems to be generally compromised. (E.g. this group was very engaged but the group on the right was not talking to each other at all.)

5. Observer and faculty member collaborate to **identify possible solutions or new techniques** to try in trouble-areas. What new approaches or techniques could they experiment with to achieve even greater success in their teaching and student learning? Ask the faculty member to think about how they could do things differently in the future.

What <u>not to do</u> in a Post-Observation Conversation

1. Observer immediately lists what you would have done differently.

2. Observer focuses exclusively on problems and ignores/downplays strengths. Try to find something good they can further develop even if you have concerns about their teaching in general.

3. Observer focuses exclusively on flattery and praise. Try to give the faculty member something to consider or work on even if you think they are already excellent.

4. Observer compares faculty to specific other colleagues, either positively or negatively.

5. Observer points out weaknesses without suggesting any strategies for improvement. This will leave the faculty member frustrated and discouraged.[19]

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[19] Newman, Lori R., David H. Roberts, and Richard M. Schwartzstein, *Peer Observation of Teaching Handbook* (Boston: Carl J. Shapiro Institute for Education and Research, 2012), accessed February 26, 2018, from https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/Academy/files/MedEdPortalPeer%20observation%20handbook.pdf.

Guidance to Observers on Giving Constructive Critical Feedback

First, the more *open-ended and non-judgemental* your observations, the more likely the faculty member is to integrate your feedback into their future teaching. Instead of "you should give students more opportunities to ask questions" you could instead say "I noticed students were never explicitly invited to ask questions. Was that an intentional choice?" Second, in conveying critical feedback, you may also want to *focus on one or two* of the most important areas for improvement and experimentation, rather than offering a laundry list of concerns. It is most important to highlight areas where the faculty member is not achieving their own core learning goals. Lastly, we recommend that *your post-observation conversation happen prior to sending a formal write-up* to the observed faculty member. This gives the faculty member an opportunity to understand, respond to, and even challenge the observer's feedback. Sending written notes before discussing the observation in-person risks misunderstanding or defensiveness on the part of the faculty member. However, the right approach will depend on the relationship and personalities of the participants.

Step 4: Reflection and Reporting

Reporting Formative Observations

All faculty will be invited to list the classes they visited (faculty name, course title, date) in the annual review online process. They will also be asked to list their experiences of being formatively observed (name of the observing faculty, class title, and date). They will also be able to select "No observation Completed" with space to explain why – e.g. medical leave.

Observers may also want to write a summary for the faculty member they observed, highlighting important descriptions, successes, and ideas for innovation and improvement. One can even think of the formative observation as practice and preparation for summative observations for both observers and faculty being observed. However, to maintain trust and collegiality, when conducting a formative observation any feedback provided to the faculty member, even if in writing, should not be submitted as part of third-year review or tenure and promotion dossier. The faculty member being observed will be responsible for uploading summative observation letters as part of their separate formal review process.[20]

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[20] Recommended but note required -- *Faculty Member Reflection:* Though this is not required, we recommend that the faculty member who was observed do a quick write up of what they learned from the experience about their own teaching philosophy, their priorities as an educator, their pedagogy, successes, strengths, and areas for future experimentation and improvement. The act of writing this down will help consolidate the experience and lessons learned and be a useful point of reference when writing teaching portfolio materials for review and promotion purposes. *Observer Reflection:* Similarly, we encourage observers to write a quick reflection on the experience of observing their colleague, what they learned about their own practice, and strategies they want to experiment with and possibly incorporate into their own teaching as a result. Writing this down will help consolidate the experience and be a useful point of reference when writing teaching portfolio materials for review and promotion purposes.

Appendix C: Model Peer Observation Reports

Sample Peer Observation Letter I

Participant: Luise Ahrens   **Date of Observation:** February 18, 2019

Observer: Sophal Pan   **Course Title**: WRT 100/ *Clearing Customs: Locations and*

Dislocations in Travel Literature

On February 18, 2019 I attended Luise Ahren's Writing 100 class; Luise teaches a section entitled *Clearing Customs: Locations and Dislocations in Travel Literature*. I observed an extremely effective class on "Discerning the Colonial Gaze in Post-Colonial Travel Writing." The class content was pedagogically sound and quite compelling: Luise was prepared, professional and engaging; and the students were motivated and involved. Prior to my observing her class, Luise provided me with her syllabus, reading list, assignments and rubrics which we discussed at length. These materials were clear and detailed, presenting her learning goals and work expectations for her students, all of which reflected the stated goals of Writing 100. The readings she has chosen for her students are varied and appropriately challenging for this entry level course, comprised primarily of first year students.   Additionally, Luise had received mid-semester feedback on an earlier iteration of this course and was eager to learn whether her skills in facilitating class discussions had improved.

Luise arrived early for her class and, after making sure her Moodle page and PowerPoint presentation were working, chatted with her students. She obviously has a rapport with them, and they are comfortable with her. The class began with Luise directing her students to the class Moodle page so that they could see the day's outline. Then, Luise segued into the main focus of this class: how to identify, analyze, and write about the complex interactions that travelers from the Global North often have with the residents and places of the Global South.

In preparation for this class, the students had read a range of texts: a scholarly anthropological analysis, two published travel essays, and a monetized "adventure" blog. Prior to class, the students had written short answers to assigned questions about these readings, identifying the main themes of each text and then commenting on how the texts informed each other. Luise urged the students to discuss their written answers with one another in small groups and then report to the whole class. Luise wrote the students' main findings on the board, and then she and

they organized them into more complex and meaningful themes that gave more shape to the discussion and, by extension, to their thinking and writing.

At one point in the discussion, the students discussed the ethical issues in travel writing as a strictly contemporary problem. They repeatedly returned to examples in Jamaica Kincaid's *The Ugly Tourist*, one of the texts they had read. Luise supported their insights, but also urged them to consider another reading: the work of Stephanie Lai from the journal *Overland*. Luise mentioned Lai's observation that in the earliest travel writing, Herodotus, "writing of his travels in the Mediterranean around 440 BC, [was] a classic example of the flawed travel writer, viewing and consuming 'the other' for one's own benefit."

The discussion continued with Luise urging her students to think more deeply about the historical roots that contribute to the contemporary "traveler's gaze, assumptions, intentions and actions." She encouraged her students to share their thoughts, even those that were "half-formed." Whenever Luise changed examples, topics, or directions, she always made sure to check in with her students, making sure they asked any questions that they had. I noted that many students asked questions and made connections, and all were attentive.

With these classroom activities, not only was Luise able to teach important lessons in critical thinking, but she also made sure to link critical thinking to clear and cogent writing. She read pertinent examples of such from each text and asked her students to locate other good examples. At one point, she reassured her students that their own struggle and success with thinking and writing using different historical and contemporary perspectives would allow them to anticipate and ultimately address their readers' struggle with such understanding. Thus, she reinforced that her students' work could be valuable in the public sphere.

The point of this portion of the class was apparent: Luise wanted her students to discover—through their readings, their written responses, and their small-group and all-class discussions—how to interrogate the texts and draw connections and conclusions. Additionally, she provided guidance to them in ways they could generate potential thesis statements, working outlines, and suitable evidence for their essays.

Luise then directed her students to the class Moodle page and noted an updated schedule, highlighting some logistics and due dates. In this way, she kept her students on track in the class. She also highlighted portions of the readings the students had completed and key elements of the discussion as a way to recap what the class members had covered. This review of core concepts was a very effective way for Luise to reinforce her learning goals for her students.

The final twenty minutes of class was devoted to a grammar lesson, which is a regular feature of this course. The subject in the class I observed was modifiers, and Luise wrote several examples

of misplaced and dangling modifiers on the board that her students worked to revise. The students participated actively and seemed quite confident about the concepts by the lesson's end.

In our post-observation discussion, I told Luise that I thought her handling of the class discussion was quite deft and seemed to be productive. She concurred, and showed me some of her students' revised essays, which had benefited notably from the ideas they developed and pursued during the class I saw. Luise is committed to enhancing this aspect of her teaching (among other aspects) as a learning tool for her students. In my opinion, Luise Ahrens is a superior instructor and a genuine asset to the Writing 100 program.

Sample Peer Observation Letter II

Participant: Andrew Evans **Date of Observation:** October 11, 2018

Observer: Robert Alvarez **Course Title:** *Geography 101—Cartography in the Digital*

Age

Andrew Evans of the Department of Geography asked me to observe one of his classes. Andrew developed *Cartography in the Digital Age*, a new introductory course for his department, and taught it for the first time last fall. During our pre-observation meeting, Andrew told me that his final student evaluations for the course had been "mixed." Although the students were very interested in the course content and praised many elements of the course itself, a significant number of his students asked him to "teach more" and "help them learn better." Andrew told me he was confused by their comments and looking for some guidance on his teaching methods and materials. Because I am not a geographer and have no expertise in his field, I agreed to focus on his teaching style and strategies as well as the classroom dynamics I observed. I tried to put myself in the position of being a learner in his class.

From Andrew's very clear syllabus and some of his Moodle materials, I understand that the field of Geography has altered significantly with the digital revolution. In Andrew's course, the students learn to utilize OpenStreetMap, which is "the worldwide mapping effort that includes over two million volunteers around the globe," the goal of which is to "create a free editable map of the world." Andrew's course aims to provide instruction and practice in how to contribute to the mapping project by accessing and analyzing new geographic data to make maps more accurate. In order to facilitate students' gaining this expertise, Andrew has each student select a geographic site in the Pioneer Valley to which they can travel. The students work with a range of data—from their own observations of places, to GPS data, to satellite imagery—with which to make maps. They work on their individual projects throughout the semester.

On the day I attended Andrew's class, 17 of 21 students were in attendance in a classroom where each has a computer and large screen on their desks. Andrew's lesson was on ways to use tools, specifically the "Web Map Framework," "Editing API" and "Overpass API," to improve and build maps. Andrew projected a presentation onto the classroom's large central screen that involved a map of the downtown area of Greenfield, Massachusetts. I know that Andrew's intent was to show a finished map and then work backwards to the original OpenStreetMap to demonstrate updating the map. From this demonstration, he hoped the students would gain insight into how to use new data and tools to improve the maps of the individual geographic areas that they were each studying.

Andrew is visibly and sincerely enthusiastic about the subject matter and shows an ease and fluency with the technology. However, I noted that as he proceeded in this demonstration, he began to look less and less at this students while he became immersed in exhibiting different ways to use new data sources to improve his map. At times he seemed to digress from his stated learning objectives in his desire to show editing tools and functions. As noted, in addition to not looking at his students, when he did look up from his computer screen, he did so to point to the large central screen. Thus, he failed to notice that more than half of his students seemed confused and frustrated; he missed a few students raising their hands with questions; and he only shifted his attention from the screen to his class when a student called out (politely) and asked him to slow down.

Andrew was at once responsive, but as he began to answer students' questions, it became clear that he had moved too quickly in his explanations and would need to back up. Andrew suggested that they all go back to the beginning, and he asked that individual students come up to the front of the class and demonstrate and/or discuss how they were constructing their own maps. The first student who accepted Andrew's invitation was nearly as confident as Andrew. After that, no other students volunteered to come to the front. Andrew then asked the students to open their maps on their individual computer screens. He instructed the students to pair up and work together to assess their sources of new data and use it to build their maps. While they did this, he began to visit each student pair to evaluate their needs and offer guidance. This activity continued until the class ended. I noted that the student pairs working on their own made good faith efforts to critique each other's work, but many often quickly reached the threshold of their knowledge and ability and simply sat and waited for Andrew. When the class ended, the students left the room mostly in silence.

In our debriefing conversation after this observation, Andrew was disappointed in his own performance, but also bewildered by his students. He knew he should have been more attuned to them, pausing more often and giving them space for questions. However, he also wondered why they weren't able to follow his demonstration, and he was unclear how to help them. As we talked, it became apparent that although the course has no prerequisites, Andrew had not anticipated that many of the students would need considerably more scaffolding than he currently provided. He was relying too much on their learning independently, via readings,

videos and practice, outside of class. To address the dilemma this semester, we discussed his having his students work in teams of three on the same geographic area so that he could meet with teams instead of individuals during class to assist their learning, and also so that they could assist each other more directly. He will also offer more office hours and schedule individual appointments with the teams during these times. In future semesters, Andrew will continue team projects, but also slow down his instruction, breaking his explanations about how to work with new data so as to contribute to OpenStreetMap into smaller, more discrete parts. He will show how the process works with an all-class example and then let his students experiment using that portion of the instruction on their own projects. Given the importance of the course content to the field of geography and students' interest in the subject, Andrew will also request TA assistance for his class. I shared with Andrew that my own teaching improved considerably after I took advantage of Sherrerd Center sponsored teaching workshops and consultations. Andrew plans to pursue these opportunities.

Sample Peer Observation Letter III (Source: Yale-NUS)

Peer Observation of Jin Schmin's Understanding Pies and Tarts Course Observation

Participant: Jin Schmin   **Date(s) of Observation:** 7 March 2017
Observer: Adita Bobita   **Class Title**: PS206: Pies and Tarts

I observed a three-hour Pies and Tarts course taught by Jin Schmin on 7 March 2017. Prior to the observation I met with Jin to learn about his goals for the course, for this specific session, and aims regarding student learning outcomes and in-class participation. I also met with him after the observation to discuss his reflections on how the session unfolded.

Overall Learning Goals for This Course
    Disciplinary Content: Pies and Tarts is a required theory course for the Pastry and Desserts major. In Jin's own framing, it is a modernized "great pies" course with additional critiques and expansions of the established literature that intentionally seeks to create conversation and synthesis across diverse authors and theoretical perspectives. A core goal for the course is for students to learn key works within the pastry literature, to understand how those works relate to their historical and national context, and also to be able to critique these highly established theories.
    Research, Writing, and Analytical Skills:Jin provides students with the theoretical landscape needed to read bakery literature. His writing assignments require students to put

theoretical works into conversation with each other. Jin equips students to create their own arguments and define their own research questions.

      Intellectual Independence: High participation and active student learning are key to Jin's teaching. He aims for students to have ownership – to set the agenda, push the conversation forward, and inject their own creativity into the discussion.

Course Format

      Setup and Introduction: Jin began class by rearranging the desks to make sure all students were sitting in a circle where they could see each other and have a conversation among the group. Jin then led with a roughly five-minute overview of the class, situating it within the larger syllabus and outlining key themes from that section of the course, and reminding the students of the day's format.

      Student Presentation: There was an hour-long presentation led by three students. The student presenters are asked to do additional research beyond the required readings required, which makes them surrogate experts on the topic for the week. It was clear from their body language, note- taking, and subsequent questions that all students paid close attention to the presentation, suggesting that Jin's goal of developing a culture of active listening and engagement was quite ingrained.

      Discussion: When they returned from break, Jin began the discussion by posing an initial question about the arguments employed by the day's assigned authors. In keeping with the emphasis on student-led discussion, there were long periods (5-10 minutes on average) where Jin did not speak at all and the conversation flowed on its own. If the discussion got too off-topic or stuck in minutia Jin would redirect or remind students of the big-picture agenda topics.

      Conclusion and Wrap Up: The last five minutes of class allowed Jin to foreshadow next week's reading and assignments, connect the day's readings with upcoming literature, and remind students to take advantage of his office hours.

Achievements of Core Learning Aims

      In keeping with Jin's goal of <u>inducting students into the Pastry literature</u>, the student-led presentation and subsequent discussion made it clear that the students are learning the key arguments in this literature and how they fit together. For example, the presentation on Martha Stewart explicitly put her work in conversation with Michael Fields.

      I also saw considerable evidence that Jin's goal of students learning to <u>analyze and critique </u>is being achieved. The questions students asked of the presenters made it clear that they are learning to probe, analyse, and identify underlying assumptions in assigned readings and each other's interpretations. This was also evident in the questions students posed to each other during the free- flowing discussion.

      Students are also developing the <u>communication and creative thinking skills </u>Jin has prioritized by giving students so much autonomy over class discussion. I was particularly impressed by how well the students had learned to listen to each other and to disagree with each other, marshalling specific text, logics, and unpacking each other's underlying

assumptions. Students had clearly done the readings and had learned to distinguish the most important points.

Additional Achievements

Through his syllabus design and classroom management, Jin has achieved his core learning goals. Jin is dedicated and highly adaptable and attentive to students' changing needs. In our post-observation conversation, Jin explored a number of possible new exercises he could integrate in order to boost participation even further and bring even more voices into the conversation.

Jin has created a space of inclusive intellectual community. He always names students contribution – e.g. "as Teo said" or "would you agree with Sara that...." Proportionally to the class composition, female students and students representing minority or traditionally marginalized ethnic or racial groups participated as often and energetically as male students and those from more privileged identities. Local and international students also participated equally. No one student dominated the discussion and those who were prone to speaking more often would often defer to those who were entering conversation for the first time.

Areas for Improvement and Experimentation

Student Presentations: One area where Jin did not seem to be fully achieving his own learning goals is in the student presentation. Jin had explained that for this upper level course he wanted to minimize lecturing in favor of structured discussion and student-led inquiry. However, by encouraging or allowing student presentations to follow lecture format, he has not removed lecture so much as out-sourced it to the designated student presenters. In our post-observation conversation Jin and I discussed the pros and cons of having students lecture versus lead discussion as part of their presentations. In future courses Jin plans to experiment with the instructions he gives to student presenters, perhaps requiring them to have some form of interactive exercise or discussion.

Tone: Jin is self-aware and knows that he has a very informal and collegial persona vis-à-vis students. This creates some risk that his authority may be compromised and students will not be as attentive to his assignments and deadlines. We discussed whether this was a problem vis-à-vis his learning goals and steps he could take to improve course discipline.

Student Participation: In our pre-observation discussion Jin alerted me to the fact that one of his struggles this semester has been to coax two or three students who are persistently silent to contribute to class discussion. He has experimented with techniques during class, such as allowing longer silences to give those students room to enter that conversation. Jin has also proactively reached out to these students outside of class to talk through the impediments they may experience to participation. But despite these efforts, a small number of students continued to abstain from participating. During the first 45 minutes of the discussion part of class, 8 out of 12 students did not talk once. During the last 45 minutes five of those eight students started talking (but three of those only spoke once).

In our post-observation conversation, we discussed how Jin may want to experiment with some new tactics to invite even more even participation from these students, such as starting with short writing exercises, or creating smaller circles within the main conversation

circle and having students rotate in-and-out of that smaller circle. Jin was responsive to these ideas and seems excited to experiment with new techniques in his more introductory-level course next semester.

Concluding Thoughts

Jin is very thoughtful and intentional in his goals for student learning, and his in-class practices align very deliberately and effectively with those priorities. He is a dedicated and innovative educator who elevates students to the next level in their analytical thinking and communication skills. Perhaps most significantly, this course is both firmly a Pastry major course and a Liberal Arts course. Jin's course design and pedagogical approach achieves the aims we have for our students both in terms of the depth we hope they get in the major, and the breadth achieved from a liberal education.