**Observation #3 Second Year Seminar – Delivered by Principal Lecturer (Interview #4) (14.11.17 between 13:00-14:00) (University B)**

🡪 Small seminar room. There is a clock on the wall. Tables are arranged in rows; there are two rows facing the front of the room and one row along the right-hand side of the room facing the opposite wall.

🡪 Students choose to sit along the back row, or the side row, all of them avoid the front row. Students all tap in electronically when they arrive.

🡪 Students get their belongings out, ready to begin. Most of them then sit and play on their phones; one student is listening to music.

🡪 The lecturer arrives and says a greeting. The lecturer then moves the tables around so that the front row is joined to the side row to form a horseshoe shape. The lecturer sits on what was the front row, alone.

🡪 The lecturer reminds the students that their marks have been released; all students go to their phones (assume they are looking at their grades on Blackboard).

🡪 There are 8 students in the room – the lecturer makes a note that there are normally 11 or so.

🡪 A student comes in and pulls the chair out quietly and says “Sorry” under her breath, so quietly that the lecturer does not notice, despite being the closest to the student.

🡪 The lecturer tells the students that the marks were released 2 days early and to “remember that in your evaluations”.

🡪 The class are talking about grades and a student asks a lecturer what mark they would consider to be a “good” mark. The lecturer says the normal mark that’s thought of as “good” is 60. The lecturer goes on to talk about league tables and universities like Oxford and Cambridge whose students have a leg up because they start with high grades. The lecturer tells the students that if a student is failing when they begin and end up achieving a 2:2 degree then that is a massive achievement in their eyes.

🡪 A student asks the lecturer what mark they would consider to represent someone who has understood the learning and the lecturer says 50ish. With that mark, the student has technically fulfilled the criteria, they’ve understood and performed the task.

🡪 The lecturer then begins the seminar are 5 minutes of talking about assessment. The lecturer begins from where the lecture stopped the previous day. The lecturer asks which students were looking at a particular set of lines and says, “It was you two wasn’t it?” The two students laugh sheepishly and agree that it was them.

🡪 One of the student starts talking about what they’d discussed yesterday in their groups. After a while, the lecturer interrupts and says, “So pause” and then asks the student a question, she answers the question and the lecturer says, “Good” and the student carries on from where she was interrupted.

🡪 The other student in the group has a conflicting interpretation to the first and says, “I would be wrong. I am wrong” before telling the lecturer how they interpreted those lines in the poem. The lecturer says, “It’s difficult to be wrong in this poem” and “I don’t think you’re wrong”.

🡪 The lecturer makes a reference to an old film and no students react. The lecturer says, “This is what happens when I use all these cultural references that you’re too young to understand, I’m sorry”.

🡪The lecturer often uses slang phrases like “Dob him in” when discussing the poem with the students.

🡪 In the first 20 minutes, only 2 students have spoken.

🡪 The lecturer goes off on a tangent and starts talking about gardening with the students and the lecturer makes another joke that references their age before returning to the poem.

🡪 The lecturer says to the students, “Anything worth saying about this?” and is met with silence, all the students are looking down. The lecturer rephrases and gives the students a prompt to follow; a student responds.

🡪 The lecturer talks to the 2 students from the beginning discussion; the female student tells the lecturer that she did not understand the point in something the lecturer did the previous day in the lecture. She speaks confidently to the lecturer: “You could have picked anything, didn’t get your reference to the Holy Grail”. The lecturer explains their reasoning and then says, “So you clearly struggled. Anything?” and the student responds with “We just went literal and forgot to go deeper” and the lecturer replies with “That’s okay, I’ve kind of done it for you”.

🡪 The lecturer then tells the students, “I just want to do one myself” and proceeds to read a section of the poem and then analyse it. The lecturer has done the majority of the talking in this session.

🡪 A student says to the lecturer, “Can I ask you why you think…?” The lecturer says, “Yes you can”. The student asks her question and the lecturer says they have their own ideas but does anyone else have anything to answer with. The student who asked the question says she has her own thoughts and then proceeds to answer her own question. The lecturer gently corrects her answer by responding with, “Ah but he’s not doing that though” and then explains what is going on.

🡪 A lot of students leaning back and folding their arms.

🡪 Another student responds when a student asks a question, before the lecturer can speak.

🡪 The lecturer says, “Any other questions?” and the student who asked the previous question that she then answered herself says, “Sorry, I’m being really annoying” and the lecturer says, “No not at all” before she asks her question.

🡪 The same student mentions that she had an argument with a lecturer about something, the lecturer laughs and says, “Lecturer?” and the student says, “No, yeah, like an actual lecturer” and the lecturer says, “Yeah, a lecturer who’ll remain anonymous?” and the student says, “Oh yeah definitely”.

🡪 The lecturer responds to that student’s original question with “I’m not sure there’s an answer to that question”.

🡪 The lecturer returns to the poem and reads a section. Some students read along with the lecturer using their own texts. One student stares into space and plays with her hair, she looks very bored.

🡪 As the seminar draws to a close, the lecturer says, “We’ve only got 5 minutes, but you can look all of this up”.

🡪 After explaining a point, the lecturer says, “Anyway never mind, I’m no good at all that stuff” in reference to a Greek myth.

🡪 As the seminar finishes, the lecturer says, “We need to draw to a close but that was really interesting, thank you”. All students begin to pack up. The lecturer says, “Thank you very much, see you next week”, no one responds.

🡪 A student stays at the end and approaches the lecturer: “Sorry, I’ll be quick, I know you have another class” and proceeds to discuss an upcoming assignment with the lecturer and how he can improve his essay plan.