

**Class Observation Report**  
**Enwr 106**  
**Stacey Morrison**  
**3-29-2011**

On Tuesday, March 29, I, Aaron McClendon, observed Stacey Morrison's Enwr 106-88 course. Prior to the beginning of class at 5:30pm, Professor Morrison chatted with students about various things related and unrelated to class. I mention this, because it established what was to become clear throughout my observation, that Morrison was on excellent terms with her students, and that students were comfortable talking to Morrison. As 5:30 arrived, all but two students were present. Those students arrived a handful of minutes later. Professor Morrison began class with a concise overview of what was coming up during the next several meetings, a draft of an essay for the next class, and a screening of *Fight Club* the following week, along with two readings to accompany the film. She then proceeded to tell students what they were going to discuss in the class that I attended: transitions and Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find." Morrison's start to class was very effective; it gave students an idea of where they were going, and gave her course a structure that has been lacking in other courses that I have observed thus far at Montclair. Morrison passed around a handout on transitions to the class, and before reading several moments from it, she asked students "what transitions meant to them." Several hands went up immediately. Students offered up a few ideas, such as transitions being about flow, coherence, and relationships. Morrison picked up on and extended the ideas of students quite well, at once validated what they said, and adding a bit more for them to consider in the process. She then began to read a few key passages from the handout. After reading several passages, Morrison built upon student ideas by noting that transitions directed the reader, connected things, and signaled what was coming up in the essay. Transitions were signposts, as Morrison continued on. Morrison gave a few specific examples from the handout, and pointed students toward and discussed some key words that could help them develop successful transitions. This initial discussion on transitions took about 15 minutes, which, in my estimation, was an appropriate time. Her tone throughout was excellent, and I believe that students had a better sense of transitions after this brief exercise. They took her advice seriously, and I believe will apply it in future papers. Additionally, it was evident from this exercise that Morrison is confident in front of a classroom. She talked with ease, control, and flexibility depending upon what students has said. After going over some basics on transitions, Morrison briefly discussed some MLA formatting updates, such as needing italics instead of underlines for work titles, no longer needing a url for electronic sources, and a few other tidbits. It was a brief move, and perhaps could have used a bit more time in another class, but calling attention to to style changes was a good idea and students were absorbing what she said, a point that I could surmise because they were glad to hear that they simply had to italicize things and didn't have to worry about dreadfully long urls. Morrison's first twenty to twenty-two minutes of class were effective. There was some Q & A, and some lecturing. This mixture would account for different learning styles, and it kept class moving forward. After this initial intro to class, Morrison shifted the students' attention to the reading for the day: O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find."

To begin their work on O'Conner's story, Morrison announced that they were going to do some writing. To this end, Morrison directed students to question 1 of the end-of-text questions following O'Conner's story. As a class, they read the question together, and Morrison had them begin writing. Morrison did not tell them how much time they would be given, but all students began thinking and writing promptly. Students wrote for the entire 15 minutes--which is what I timed the writing session at--and it appears that they had instruction before to write for the duration of time allotted, as everyone remained on task for the full time. To my mind, this is a great way to start a story as it gets people thinking and engaged with the story that they have read for the day. As students were writing, Morrison jotted a few things on the board about an upcoming draft that she drew their attention to later on. Here she was managing the class time efficiently. After students were given 15 minutes, Morrison asked them to stop writing and they began to discuss the story. Morrison began with a basic question about the plot, and then asked a few questions about the basics of the characters. Starting with these types of questions got students involved in thinking about the contours of the story before they dug into the more abstract concerns of it. Upon asking the questions, several