

COURSE SYLLABUS

ELA 913: Teaching Writing

Instructor: Luetta Reimer

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Number of Units: 3 Semester Units

Grade Level: 3-12

Course Description:

Teachers recognize that equipping students with the necessary tools for writing well shapes students into strong and effective communicators. This practical and enriching skill will always be valued, no matter what career or vocational field students choose.

This course is designed to explore the writing process, as well as the types, styles, and mechanics of writing. The text provides useful strategies for managing a classroom of writing students and includes ready-to-use reproducible activities that reinforce the key elements of each lesson. By reading the text, responding to its ideas, and creating lesson plans for use in the classroom, teachers will explore how to teach writing more effectively, creatively, and efficiently.

Participants in this course will be asked to read and respond to the text. In addition, they will design and teach four lessons incorporating the concepts and strategies presented.

This course is designed to meet the objectives identified in the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts and the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These national standards undergird the activities of the course. Students will be asked to make connections between their work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

Course Dates:

This course is self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to a year to complete assignments. No course should be completed in less than three weeks (one week per credit).

Course Materials:

Text (Included): Muschla, Gary R. *Writing Workshop Survival Kit*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass, 2nd edition, 2006.

Materials include a folder with instructions for completing this course, information about Fresno Pacific University, the Center for Professional Development, and the instructor, plus specifics on course policies and procedures.

Course Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, participants must submit

1. a one page response to Sections 1 and 2 of the text.
2. a one to two page response to questions generated by Sections 3 - 7.
3. a lesson plan for teaching an element of the writing process, plus an evaluation of that lesson.
4. plans for three writing units, plus evaluations of each.

See the "Schedule of Topics and Assignments" for more details on these assignments.

All work should be typed and sent to the instructor at one time when the course is completed. Please make a copy of all work; it will not be returned. Students have one full year to finish the course but should not send completed work in less than three weeks from registration.

Send completed work by email attachments to: Lmreimer@fresno.edu

OR

Mail all the above items to:

Luetta Reimer
1549 S. Lind Avenue
Fresno, California 93727

IN EITHER CASE, request online grading: <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>

National Standards:

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). The standards offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.

Students shall

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards)
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently, as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Specific information on standards for each grade level is available at <http://www.corestandards.org/>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.
- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.
- They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

Learning Outcomes:

Participants will be able to

- 1) describe and illustrate the role and value of the stages of the writing process. (NBPTS Props 2 & 3)
- 2) clearly identify the distinct types and purposes of writing. (CCSS)
- 3) teach writing with confidence and skill. (NBPTS Props 1-5)
- 4) tailor writing instruction to students' needs. (NBPTS Props 1-4)
- 5) build a practical collection of effective writing learning activities. (CCSS)
- 6) connect lessons to state or national standards. (NBPTS Prop 5)

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Teaching Writing

1. Read Sections 1 and 2 (pages 3-34) of the text, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit*.

Whether or not you run a writing workshop similar to the format described by Muschla, there are, most likely, in-class writing times for your students. Reflect on the strategies that Muschla shares and consider them in the context of your classroom. What did you find helpful in his overview of the writing workshop? What would be difficult about incorporating a writing workshop such as this in your classroom? What would be the benefits? In a one-page response, list three insights you gained from these text sections and comment briefly on each.

2. Read Sections 3-7 (pages 37-109) of the text, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit*.

These sections focus specifically on the stages of the writing process, explaining the purpose of each stage and providing practical ways to help students incorporate the strategies into their own writing. As you read, take note of any ideas that you would like to try in your classroom. Respond to the following questions with a one-two page reflection.

- a. Students often complain that they don't know what to write. In what ways can prewriting help students get ideas? Which prewriting strategies described in the text might work well in your classroom? Why?
 - b. Revising and editing are often considered the most difficult and time-consuming stages of the writing process. According to the text, how can teacher and peer conferences help students develop their skills? How have you seen these methods at work in your classroom? What would you do to improve the effectiveness of the process?
 - c. Muschla emphasizes the importance of giving students the opportunity to "publish." List five places where your students could be published.
3. Develop and teach a lesson that focuses on an aspect of the writing process that you have noticed is particularly difficult for your students to master. Create a brief lesson plan (30-45 minutes of class time) that concentrates on one element of the writing process. You may incorporate activities, examples, or handouts from the text in your lesson, adapting them according to your classroom's grade level and ability.

You may follow the accepted lesson plan format for your district or a format that is functional for your teaching situation. While it should be specific and detailed, it need not be more than one or two pages. Each plan should include (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- a. Grade level
- b. Date presented
- c. Learning objectives
- d. Teaching strategies (list materials and activities)
- e. Methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth
- f. State or national standards addressed

Evaluate the success of this lesson. Write three short paragraphs responding to these questions.*

- a. What were the strengths of the lesson? How could it be improved?
- b. How did students respond to the lesson? What were their questions?
- c. How will the objectives of this lesson continue to be reinforced throughout the school year?

4. Review Part III of the text, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit*. This section provides mini-lessons that focus on three elements of writing: the types of writing, the art of writing, and the mechanics of writing. As you glance through these sections, take note of particular lessons and topics that you think would be of special interest and help to your students. The mini-lessons and sample activities may require slight alterations to meet the specific needs of your students, but they provide a base from which to build your writing units.

After examining Part III, develop and teach* **three** short units that incorporate mini-lessons from the text. By "short unit," this course refers to a teaching unit that would require approximately two hours of class time. This may be spread over several days or organized as your schedule allows.

Each of your three units should include the three following components:

- a. one type of writing (pages 113-150) for your lesson's focus.
- b. one mini-lesson from the art of writing section (pages 151-209)
- c. one mini-lesson from the mechanics of writing section (pages 211- 274)

For example, you could develop a unit on writing fiction (page 136) that would explore the writing of dialogue (page 189) and avoiding the overuse of so and then (page 254).

As before, you may follow the accepted lesson plan format for your district or a format that is functional for your teaching situation. While it should be specific and detailed, it need not be more than one or two pages. Each plan should include (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- a. Grade level
- b. Date presented
- c. Learning objectives
- d. Procedures:
 - 1) type of writing
 - 2) mini-lesson on art of writing
 - 3) mini-lesson on mechanics
- e. Methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth
- f. State or national standards addressed

Evaluate the success of these three units. For each lesson, write one page responding to these questions.*

- a. How were student understandings of the writing process enriched?
- b. What were the strengths of your lesson? Were your objectives met?
- c. How would you improve this lesson before teaching it again?
- d. How will the writing skills highlighted in your lesson continue to be reinforced?

***NOTE: If you are completing this course during summer break or when you are not teaching, you should prepare all of the assigned lessons but you may omit the teaching and evaluation of the lessons in #3 and #4 without penalty by preparing one additional lesson as described in #3 of "Schedule of Topics and Assignments."**

Evidence of Learning:

- Instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6)
- Student demonstrated his/her understanding of effective design of lesson plans. (Outcomes 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Student included the use of critical thinking skills and made connections to state content and/or professional teaching standards. (Outcome 2, 6)
- Student demonstrated an understanding of course objectives by identifying how course content and terminology may be used in his/her teaching. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5)

Grading Policies and Rubric:

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Response to Sections 1 and 2 of the text: 15%

Response to questions generated by Sections 3 – 7: 15%

Lesson plan on the writing process and evaluation: 25%

Three writing units plans: 30%

Three writing unit evaluations : 15%

Responses and lessons will be evaluated to determine thoughtful, engaged reflection, incorporation of current writing concepts, and effective, creative classroom procedures. Coursework is to be typed. Instructions regarding reading and writing requirements should be followed carefully.

Total scores determine the final grade:

90 - 100% = A

80 - 89% = B

79% or below = no credit

All coursework must reflect a minimum "B" quality to receive credit. The discernment between an A and a B is at the discretion of the instructor, based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubric). Participants may request either a letter grade (A or B) or credit (CR). Coursework falling short of a "B" or CR grade will be returned with further instructions. Every person with a score of 80% or above will receive three semester units of credit.

Scoring Rubric

| Type of Assignment | 90 – 100 points Exceptional | 80 – 89 points Adequate | 70 – 79 points Not Acceptable |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Written responses | Student's written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts. | Student's written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the readings. | Student's written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort. |
| Lesson design | Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches. | Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches. | Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals. |
| Lesson evaluations | Student includes the use of critical thinking and reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented. | Student includes the use of reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented, but may lack sufficient detailed analysis. | Student does not demonstrate critical thinking or reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented. |
| Presentation | Student effectively organizes key insights into a thoughtful and well-written presentation. | Student includes several key insights in an adequately written response. | Student response lacks key insights and is carelessly written. |

Instructor/Student Contact

Students are warmly invited to contact the instructor at any time with concerns, questions, or comments related to course work. They are specifically asked to do so after finishing Assignment #2. At the completion of the course, the instructor will comment on the student's work and make suggestions, if needed.

Policy on Plagiarism

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog.

University Information

Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:

- Oral and written communication in individual and group settings
- Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student's area of interest to affect change
- Reflection for personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking
- Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems