

ENG/EDU 501: TOPICS IN TEACHING WRITING (2 credits)

Tell Me About It: Responding to Student Writing

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Missouri Western State University

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG/EDU 501 Topics in Teaching Writing (1-2 credits each; may be repeated for a total of four credits)

Writing seminar for teachers or pre-service teachers with senior standing at MWSU which addresses a particular issue related to literacy teaching.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

“Tell Me about It” is an inquiry-based workshop for teachers, K through 13, interested in studying the ways they respond to student writing. Through reading and discussing professional publications, sharing their own teaching stories, and examining student writing, the participating teachers will examine how they respond to student work and why these ways of response work and discover additional methods that could make response more effective. During this inquiry, teachers will explore the following questions:

- Do students understand teacher responses and apply them in future writing?
- Do teachers respond to encourage critical thinking, to spark revision, to assure correctness, to justify grades or to all of the above?
- How do teachers overwhelmed by the paper load find time to respond to individual student needs?
- What role does class environment play in responding to student writing?
- How do teachers respond to sensitive personal writing, even if such works are off topic?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Conduct a literature review of texts, theories, and teaching suggestions on ways to respond to student writing. Critically read selected articles. Complete an annotated bibliographic entry for each selection (Summary. Assessment. Reflection.) Select several essential articles for course reading and lead these discussions.
2. Participate in class activities.
3. Practice ways to read student writing. (“Protocol.” Rubric. Trait. Assignment.)
4. Write an essay describing your philosophy of responding to student writing.
5. Post the class bibliography and individual essays on the Prairie Lands Writing Project web site.

GRADING POLICY

No individual grades will be assigned for any activity, writing or inquiry demonstration; however, each activity, writing, and inquiry demonstration will receive critical responses from the instructor and from the workshop teachers. The purpose of this Prairie Lands Writing Project course is to bring teachers together to improve the teaching of literacy; those who have joined this institute demonstrate a commitment to a reflective inquiry of their own teaching. Frequent grades—an outside assessment of quality or effort—may damage the reflective inquiry community that Prairie Lands hopes to establish.

We plan, therefore, to assign only the grade of A. An “A” represents the following characteristics have been achieved:

- **Community:** The teacher has participated fully in the activities of the course. The teacher has shared writings, ideas, thoughts, and reactions, and has raised questions to enhance the learning and understanding of the other participants in this course. The teacher has contributed to the creation of a strong and memorable course.
- **Expectations:** The teacher has met all course requirements or expectations published in this syllabus.
- **Reflection:** The teacher's writing and conversation explore connections between this course and the teacher's classroom and between this course and the art of teaching.

If the instructor feels that a teacher is not achieving the characteristics of Community, Expectations, and Reflection as described above due to absences, late or missing work, inconsistent effort, or disruptive actions, the instructor will meet with the workshop participant to discuss his concerns. A failing grade will only be assigned to a teacher who fails to meet or refuses to meet the characteristics of Community, Expectations and Reflection.

POLICIES

Academic Honesty Policy and Due Process:

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student's grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms. Please see the Western Student Handbook and Calendar for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>

Attendance:

We expect you to participate fully in every session. If you cannot make a session, please call the instructor so he will know not to expect you. See Grading Policy above.

Student Disability:

Any workshop participant who has a disability that prevents the fullest expressions of abilities should contact the directors as soon as possible so that we can work to provide assistance as needed