

Eastern Michigan University
Division of Academic Affairs

Request for Inclusion of a Course in the
General Education Program:
Education for Participation in the Global Community

Department/School: English Language and Literature College: Arts and Sciences

Department Contact: Cathy Fleischer Contact Phone: 487-0151

1. Subject Code, Number, and Title: Writing for Writing Teachers

2. Credit Hours: 3

3. Catalog Description:

A writing course for students preparing to teach English in secondary schools. Students develop their skills as writers and learn how to teach writing. Special focus on recent composition research, theory, and practices, and on strategies, materials, and evaluation techniques.

4. This course is an existing course with no revisions (need not go through the input system)

5. General Education requirement this course is intended to meet: Writing Intensive
(WI designation)

6. Rationale. Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free justification of how the course meets the outcomes for this requirement (1 paragraph, 100 words or fewer). This rationale should appear on the general course syllabus provided here and should be included in specific course syllabi given to students.

English 408 serves as a WI course for the major and minor of Language, Literature, and Writing for Teachers. The course meets the WI outcomes through a range of writing and reading projects. Through immersing themselves in the life of the writer and the writing teacher, students develop research questions, conduct research of various kinds (including teacher-research, collaborative research, and text-based research), and write and read in a wide range of genres.

7. Clearly and concisely explain how this course meets each of the General Education Course Outcomes for the requirement checked above. To do this, (1) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the course meets each outcome; and (2) explain the method(s) of evaluation to be used in the course and how these methods evaluate the degree to which students have met the General Education outcomes for this requirement.

Develop and employ successful, flexible writing and reading strategies that support sustained inquiry in a discipline.

(1) English 408 is a course with dual purposes: to help students think about themselves as writers and to help them learn about best ways of teaching writing. Students use multiple writing and reading strategies to engage in inquiry in both areas. As they pursue their study of themselves as writers, students generally inquire into their own writing history: They use multiple brainstorming techniques (freewrites, webs, discussions, etc.) to recall occasions of writing from pre-school through college.

Students share these brainstorming sessions with other students to receive feedback and then compose memoirs about their literacy histories. Other assignments that meet the first goal of the course (inquiring into their own stances as writers) include writing in multiple genres—some that are self-selected and some that are assigned by the instructor; some that are familiar and some that are new or unfamiliar. As they write, students use all aspects of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) and confer regularly with the instructor and peers to receive feedback. These writings are generally collected in a portfolio.

Students inquire into the discipline as well through an immersion in best ways of teaching writing, pursuing a variety of inquiry projects into specific areas of interest. Generally, students choose an individual or group inquiry project—ranging from best ways to teach grammar to connecting literature and writing to portfolio assessment—and conduct research into that topic. Students receive instruction in conducting multiple kinds of research: Internet searches, book and journal reviews, surveys, observations and interviews. Again, students take their findings and follow process writing strategies in order to turn their research into multiple genres of writing designed for specific audiences: sometimes research reports, sometimes newsletters for parents, sometimes instructional guides for other teachers. As students pursue their research, they use various reading strategies (i.e., comparing claims of various authors, analyzing arguments, etc.) in order to both assess the appropriateness of the information they've gathered and learn more about their chosen genres.

(2) Evaluation strategies: In order to evaluate students' use of flexible reading and writing strategies that support their sustained inquiry into the discipline of English education, instructors use both formative and final assessment strategies. First, students are required to complete multiple stages of the writing process for all of the longer pieces in the course (i.e. drafts are due on particular days and completion of these steps is noted in the final grade for a project). This formative evaluation allows the instructor and peers to provide pertinent feedback along the way. Second, students are asked to write reflective responses to their writing for all assignment. In these reflections, students write about both the strengths and challenges of composing the particular piece (i.e., the strategies involved in composing the text), as well as what they learned about the topic (i.e., the content). Finally, rubrics that reflect the goals of inquiry-based teaching are developed with the students for all individual writing projects and for portfolios.

Use writing strategies that achieve the purpose(s) for writing and address the expectations of audiences(s) within a disciplinary context.

(1) We view the disciplinary context for the field of English education as a complex and varied one. In part, the context centers around the secondary students our students will teach; in part it focuses on the parents of the students they will teach, or even the principals in their future schools. But the disciplinary context is also situated in the scholarly work of the field found in the journals, the conferences, and the books. In this course we try to introduce our students to the writing strategies that are particular to all the varied audiences that make up the disciplinary context. For example, when students compose pieces that would be appropriate for parent audiences, we discuss the expectations of that audience and how to shape and craft their message so it will be meaningful in that context. Understanding the rhetorical nature of any writing task entails a conscious consideration of the choices authors make, and this notion is stressed throughout the course.

(2) Evaluation strategies: In order to evaluate how students have addressed the purposes and audience expectations within our discipline, instructors include criteria about audience and purpose on the rubrics developed for the individual/group inquiry project. These sections ask students to address specific questions about audience and purpose, to evaluate what they have done to reach those audiences.

Formulate research questions and employ strategies for researching and responding to those questions.

(1) While student continually formulate questions and research those questions throughout the course, 2 assignments in particular speak to this outcome: the individual/group inquiry project and the case study of a writer. In the inquiry project, students pose questions based on their own wonderings about the teaching of writing (i.e., how to best teach grammar, how to connect literature and writing, how to teach creative writing, how to use portfolio assessment); share those questions with peers and teacher in order to refine their research; engage in online, library, and classroom-based research; and synthesize and analyze data towards producing written documents briefly described above. In the case study, students partner with high school writers and exchange letters and drafts of writing with them throughout the semester. As they spend time with their pen pal's writing, students are asked to formulate questions about their high school writers: what are their strengths, what are their challenges, how does their writer feel about writing, what strategies seem to work for the writer? They then use discourse analysis strategies to analyze the texts of their writers as they attempt to discover answers to their questions.

(2) Evaluation strategies: In order to evaluate how well students form research questions and respond to those questions, the instructor provides ongoing feedback on students' efforts and provides opportunities for peer review and response. One particular form of peer response on question development is The Circle of Knowledge. Peers form groups of 5, write their research question at the top of the page and pass it to their peer on the left. The peer then writes a response the question: asking for points of clarification, raising related questions, suggesting additional resources. The papers continue to be passed around the circle, so that each writer receives 4 full responses to his/her question by the end of the exercise. Writers then revisit and revise their questions. In addition, the final assessment again arises from a rubric specifically designed for this project. The rubric evaluates how well students respond to their research question by looking specifically at both the organization of their responses, the content knowledge they have gained in the discipline, and the way they've connected disciplinary content knowledge to pedagogical content knowledge.

Use discipline-specific genres to communicate information.

(1) Because all of the course projects demand attention to audience, students continually are composing in genres appropriate for their selected purpose and audience, in order to communicate their research findings appropriately and effectively (i.e., to their peers in the class, to secondary student partners, to parents, to secondary teachers, etc.). One specific example of this arises from their Case Study of a Writer project in which students form partnerships with high school writers over the course of the semester. They eventually write about their experiences in two different discipline-specific genres: a case study of their student writer and an overall analysis of the writers in the class, based in their readings of their peers' cases studies. Students in the class, thus, rely on the case study writing of their peers (a typical genre in our

discipline) to communicate sufficient information so that they are able to write their overall analysis, raising the stakes and creating a “real-world” writing project for them.

(2) Evaluation strategies: In order to evaluate our students’ use of discipline-specific genres to communicate information, attention is again paid to the conventions of various genres as reflected in the rubrics developed for each assignment. For example, the rubric for the case study assesses certain specific qualities of writing characteristic of case studies in the discipline: writing history of their pen pal, quotes from their pen pal’s writing, changes they notice in their partner’s writing over the course of the semester, personal characteristics of the partner’s writing, etc. A second evaluation strategy arises from the rubric developed for the presentation of their individual/group inquiry projects in which students are assessed on both their overall content knowledge and their ability to translate that knowledge to real world applications.

Understand conventions for communicating, disseminating, and interpreting information within a discipline.

(1) Throughout the course, students engage in extensive reading in the field of English education: research reports, case studies, narrative accounts of classrooms, genres that weave classroom-based research into more scholarly pieces. As they read, students are introduced to the conventions of these various genres (i.e., organizational strategies, use of support material, level of diction, use of examples) and called upon to talk about the differences, the strengths and challenges of these conventions and their disciplines. These conventions are then used by students as they compose their own varied pieces throughout the course. One student, for example, may write a literacy memoir, a short story, a poem, a case study of a student writer, and a classroom presentation. Throughout this work, students will identify the purposes and audiences for these pieces in order to compose appropriate and effective writing.

(2) Evaluation strategies: In order to assess students’ understanding of conventions within the discipline, students are assessed in multiple ways (many of them mentioned above), including written and oral responses from the teacher, inclusion of the projects in a portfolio, and through self-reflective essays.