EDUC 610: Theory, Research, and Practice in Teaching Composition  
Maryland Writing Project Institute  
July 13-16 & August 11-13, 2015

COE Mission Statement  
The mission of the College of Education is to inspire, educate and prepare facilitators of active learning for diverse and inclusive communities of learners in the environments that are technologically advanced.

Course Catalog Description  
This course addresses the theory, research, and practice of teaching composition across all levels (prekindergarten to adult) and disciplines. The course prepares participants to be Teacher Consultants of the Maryland Writing Project. Prerequisites: Bachelor's degree, teaching experience, and permission of the Maryland Writing Project.

Institute Objectives  
At the end of the course participants will be able to:  
1. Explain the philosophical, historical, and empirical underpinnings of different approaches to writing instruction.  
2. Explain the nature, purposes, and features of 21st century writing, including digital, collaborative, and multimodal composing.  
3. Use a variety of tools, strategies, and processes to compose personally and professionally meaningful texts.  
4. Utilize research-based digital literacy skills when composing and explain how to teach digital literacy skills to students.  
5. Explain their own professional stance for teaching writing and how it fits within and differs from various pedagogical traditions.  
6. Develop a learning experience for other teachers that provides information about research-based, 21st century writing instruction.

Institute Philosophy  
The institute is grounded in Cochran-Smith & Lytle’s (2009) framework of teacher knowledge. It addresses the three types of knowledge needed in the classroom: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-of-practice. Knowledge-for-practice is the formal knowledge of the profession that includes theory and evidence generated through research. Participants will increase their knowledge-for-practice through readings, discussion, and research into specific writing pedagogies. They will leave the institute with both broad and deep understandings of the field of writing instruction.

Knowledge-in-practice is the practical or “craft” knowledge embedded in teachers' practice. This type of knowledge is often tacit and is made explicit through inquiry and reflection. Through writing, presentations, and discussion, participants will reflect upon their own writing processes and pedagogy as a means of identifying their knowledge-for-practice. In the tradition of the National Writing Project, they will also become “teachers teaching teachers,” who share their knowledge-in-practice with one another throughout the institute.
Knowledge-of-practice is knowledge generated by teachers as they investigate teaching, learners and learning, and subject matter and curriculum. By developing their knowledge-for-practice, identifying and sharing their knowledge-in-practice, and taking an inquiry stance toward their practice, institute participants will generate knowledge-of-practice that will contribute to the professional knowledge base about effective writing instruction.

**Institute Policies & Procedures**

**Attendance**
Because we will establish a community of writers during this course, it is critical that all members attend every session. If you have an emergency that prevents you from coming to class, please notify us immediately. We will attempt to “Skype you in” or have you meet with your group online.

**Late Work**
All work must be completed by [date] in order to receive credit for the course.

**Academic Integrity**
This course follows Towson University’s academic integrity policy outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Please familiarize yourself with the policy at http://bit.ly/1rC8r3m

**Communication**
All email communication will occur through your Towson University email account. If you leave a message on our office phones, we will receive an email of your voice message.

**Class Cancellation**
If class must be cancelled for any reason, you will be notified through your TU email account.

**Students with Disabilities**
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and with Towson University policy, students with documented disabilities will receive the accommodations specified in their memo from the Office of Disability Support Services. If you have a disability, please provide the instructor with a copy of the memo because accommodations cannot be made until it is received.

**Changes to the Syllabus**
This syllabus outlines the planned course topics and assignments. However, we may need to change some activities, assignments, or due dates as the semester progresses. Any changes to the syllabus will be discussed in class and given to you in writing.
Assignments

Approaches to Writing Instruction Project (25%) [Objectives 1, 2, & 4]
Working with a group, choose an instructional approach that interests you and research its history, philosophical underpinnings, classroom implementation, and evidence of effectiveness. In addition, critically examine the usefulness of the approach in 21st century writing and its place in 21st century classrooms. Create a resource to share with other teachers and a 15-20 minute presentation to be given during the Institute.

Original Composition & Author’s Log (25%) [Objectives 2, 3, & 4]
Write and revise an original composition that accomplishes a personal or professional purpose. You will choose the topic, genre, and publication format. Throughout the Institute, we will engage in the writing process together, share our works-in-progress, and try new strategies and digital tools for composing. As you write, keep an author’s log about the processes, tools, and strategies you use and your reflections about them.

Professional Stance for Teaching Writing (25%) [Objectives 1, 2, 4, & 5]
Write and revise your professional stance for teaching writing in the 21st century. You will ground the first draft in your personal experiences with writing instruction, and then revise it to reflect the theoretical and pedagogical paradigms explored during the institute. Complete a working draft during the institute and a final draft to be published on the Maryland Writing Project website at the end of the fall course.

Plan for Professional Learning Experience (25%) [Objectives 4 & 6]
Design a plan for sharing your knowledge about 21st century writing with other teachers. Details of this assignment will be negotiated with each participant to meet his/her needs.

Grading Scale

A    95+
A-   90-94
B+   86-89
B    80-85
C    70-79
F    below 70
Course Topics & Readings

The course includes three strands related to composition theory, research, and practice: (1) approaches to writing instruction, (2) the writing process, and (3) teacher leadership for writing instruction. Each class session will include topics, listed below, from strands one and two. Topics from strand three will be added to class sessions during the second half of the institute.

We will read some common articles and book chapters that we will discuss together, and you will also self-select some readings based on your own interests and needs. See the Bibliography section of this syllabus for possible sources of self-selected books, chapters, and journal articles. Readings may also be found through your own research or suggested by other institute participants.

Strand 1: Approaches to Writing Instruction
We will examine the history, philosophical underpinnings, and research evidence for:

• The role of grammar in writing
• Process writing
• Writing-to-learn/Writing across the curriculum
• Genre theories
• Disciplinary literacy
• New Literacies pedagogies
• Cognitive strategy approaches

Everyone will read a core set of 4-5 readings about influential instructional approaches. You will also select 8-10 readings about an instructional approach that interests you.

Strand 2: The Writing Process
Through engaging in the writing process, we will examine:

• Audiences and purposes for writing
• Strategies and tools for topic selection
• Strategies and tools for research
• Strategies and tools for drafting
• Strategies and tools for revising
• Strategies and tools for giving/receiving feedback
• The role of reflection in the writing process

Everyone will read 4-5 core readings about the writing process. You will also select 2-3 readings about tools and strategies that will help you accomplish the writing projects you have chosen to complete during the institute.

Strand 3: Leadership for Writing Instruction
As we design learning experiences for other teachers, we will explore:

• Features of effective professional learning experiences
• Models of professional development for writing instruction
• Technologies to support teacher learning about writing instruction

Everyone will read 2-3 core readings about teacher learning and professional development for writing instruction. You will also choose 1-2 readings that will help you accomplish your Plan for Professional Learning Experience.
Bibliography of Additional Resources


