Digital Teaching Portfolio

Flexible due Date:

#1 Friday, Dec. 2nd before 5pm

Hard due date: Friday, Dec. 9th before 5pm

Email: ms.beccahay@gmail.com

Total points: 150

Teaching Philosophy (50)

Writing Program (25)

2 Lesson Plans (50 total points; 25 points per lesson plan)

Web Site Presentation/Aesthetics (25)

**Task:** You will compile a professional online portfolio to use in your future job search and teaching. In the portfolio, you will describe your philosophies for teaching writing and design a realistic two week-long writing unit for the grade of your choice.

**Purpose:** To help you clarify your philosophies and approaches to teaching writing. This project will also provide you with a usable professional portfolio as you prepare to enter the job market.

**Standards:** Your program should meet educational standards. Please refer to corestandards.org and uen.org/core to find information on these standards. Your lesson plans should reflect at least one of those objectives.

**Audience:** The audience here is complex. You are presenting your teaching beliefs and abilities to a potential employer, your writing program to other teachers, and your indirect audience is the children in your classroom. Be sure to consider each audience carefully.

**Quality:** Your program should be innovative, original, and realistic. The writing in your portfolio should be concise, detailed, engaging, and lively. The site itself should be accessible and visually pleasing. Proper formatting and grammar is critical as this document is presenting your ethos as an educator.

This portfolio should include:

* **Teaching Philosophy**: in 1ish single-spaced page, explain your key beliefs for teaching writing as well as the theory or reasoning behind them. How do you think writing should be taught to children? Why should it be taught that way?
* **Writing Program:** Formulate your own two week writing unit for children in elementary school. Your two-week unit will cover one specific unit topic, potential lesson principles, and possible activities and/or assignments to teach your unit topic. This program will be formatted mostly as a list or chart.
* **2 Lesson Plans:** Included on your site should be 2 sample lesson plans (created solely of your own volition). Each lesson plan should include 1) an objective 2) background information 3) activity to engage learning 4) a component of writing 5) and explanation of how the writing component will assist in the overall outcome of the unit.

**Teaching Philosophy (50 possible points)**

About 1 web page’s length—minimal to no scrolling. Concision is your best friend here. However, beware that the paragraphs must be that: paragraphs. Fully developed (5-8 sentences) and rich paragraphs.

**What is it?**

A teaching philosophy is a self-reflective statement of your beliefs about teaching and learning. In addition to general comments, your teaching philosophy should discuss how you put your beliefs into practice by including concrete examples of what you do or anticipate doing in the classroom.

Good statements and bad statements frequently start the same (with a broad philosophical declaration), but good ones anchor the *general* in something *concrete* (in an example that one can visualize; think showing vs. telling through use of a metaphor). Anyone can talk about teaching in an idyllic sense; you need to give examples.

If you say you work to encourage collaboration in the classroom, then explain how you do that, or if you're a new teacher, how you would do that. It's easy to say, 'I want to encourage collaboration in the classroom,' or 'I want to get students to think more critically' and leave it at that. But who doesn't want to do that?

“Empty statements are a dime a dozen,” says David Haney, chairman of the English department at Appalachian State University. "Ninety percent of the statements I see include the sentence, 'I run a student-centered classroom.' My response to that is, 'Duh. If you don't, there's something wrong with you.' Do not ever use that phrase, unless you plan to follow it up with what kinds of things you have students do, what specific teaching techniques you've found successful. Otherwise it sounds like you're just saying what you think I want to hear." In other words, for every statement you give, follow it up with a mental or actual “because…” FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR KICK!

**Getting Started Exercise**

1. Your concept of learning: Ask yourself such questions as "What do I mean by learning?" and "What happens in a successful learning situation?" Make sure to note what constitutes "learning" or "mastery" in your discipline.
2. Your concept of teaching: Note your values, beliefs, and aspirations as a teacher. (For example, do you wish to encourage mastery, competency, transformational learning, life-long learning, general transference of skills, critical thinking, etc.) What does a perfect teaching situation look like to you? Why do you consider this "perfect"? What is your role as a teacher? Are you a coach, a general, an evangelist, an entertainer?
3. Your goals for students: What skills should students obtain as the result of your teaching? You may think about your ideal student and what the outcomes of your teaching would be in terms of this student's knowledge or behavior. You may address the goals you have for specific classes or curricula and the rationale behind them (i.e., critical thinking, writing, or problem solving).
4. What methods will you consider to reach these goals and objectives? What are your beliefs regarding learning theory and specific strategies you would use such as case studies, group work, simulations, interactive lectures, etc.? You might also include any new ideas or strategies you have used or want to try.
5. Your interaction with students: What are your attitudes toward advising and mentoring students? How would an observer see you interact with students? Why do you want to work with students?
6. Specific examples: How are the values and beliefs noted above realized in classroom activities? You may discuss course materials, lesson plans, activities, assignments, assessment instruments, etc.
7. How will you assess student understanding? What are your beliefs about grading? Do you grade students on a percentage scale (criterion referenced) or on a curve (norm referenced)? What different types of assessment will you use: traditional tests, projects, portfolios, or presentations?
8. Professional growth: How will you continue growing as a teacher? What goals do you have for yourself and how will you reach them? How have your attitudes toward teaching and learning changed over time? How will you use your student evaluations to improve your teaching? How might you learn new skills? How do you know when you have taught effectively?

**Be Specific!**

In your paper, you'll want to use concrete examples.  "As a teacher of writing, I am committed to using peer review in my classes. By reading and commenting on other students' work in small cooperative groups, my students learn to find their voice through mastering dialogue used in critiquing writing. The act of critiquing others’ writings helps my students to understand the important connection between writer and audience, and to hone their editing skills. Small group work is indispensible in the writing classroom."

Given the statement above, how would you describe what happens in your classroom? Is your description specific enough to bring the scene to life in a teaching philosophy?

**Teaching Philosophy Checklist**

*Purpose & Audience*

Given the intended audience and purpose that the writer has shared with you:

1. Is there a clear focus or theme(s)?
2. Are the language and tone appropriate without relying on trite phrases or jargon?
3. Would it hold the audience's attention?

*Voice*

1. Is it “authentic?” That is to say, is it focused on the writer and personal? Do you have an idea of who this person is as a teacher (or aspires to be)?
2. Does the writer reveal self and personal/political/pedagogical commitments?
3. Is enthusiasm for teaching evident?
4. Does it sound as though the writer cares about the beliefs expressed and the arguments being made?
5. Would you like to take a course taught by the writer?

*Beliefs/Arguments/Claims & Illustrative Support*

1. Does it detail what the writer believes in a way that is engaging, specific, and easy to understand?
2. Does it detail why these beliefs are held?
3. Does it detail how these beliefs came to be held?
4. Does it define the writer's goals for and expectations of learners?
5. Are the beliefs/arguments/claims grounded in the writer's discipline?
6. Is the relationship between the writer's discipline and beliefs about teaching and learning made clear?
7. Does the organization/structure support the arguments/claims being made?
8. Are the beliefs/arguments/claims supported by evidence, examples, anecdotes, etc.?
9. Are there specific examples of strategies, methods, or theories used to achieve teaching and learning goals and to help students meet or exceed expectations?

*Conventions*

1. Are headings, transitions, and paragraph design appropriate to the content?
2. Are length and thematic structure appropriate to the content?
3. Are the elements presented in a parallel style and format across and within sections/paragraphs?
4. Are there any distracting grammatical, typographical, or spelling errors?

Teaching Philosophy Examples

**Teaching Philosophy**

Jane Doe

Many young writers feel like hikers embarking on a steep climb. Whether they struggle with forming complete sentences or finding something interesting to write about, some students feel that writing is a daunting task. As a writing instructor, it is my responsibility to transform each set of dragging feet to small skips up the mountain. I want to be right by their sides, encouraging them and making the same journey myself.

I believe that every student can find pleasure in writing. To help students enjoy writing, I will expose them to several genres: narratives, news reports, interviews, poetry, reviews, journals, comics, memorials, emails, letters, etc. Sometimes students just don’t know all the genres to explore! Students are not only more likely to take an interest in one of these several genres, but they will also see how writing can be relevant to their lives. The world around them is filled with writing, and pointing this out through different genres gives them a greater purpose for writing.

It is important to me that students think of themselves as writers. When students self-identify with writers, they invest in their abilities and adopt an attitude of personal application. To encourage this mindset, I will teach my students how real writers write and have them take up the same practice in the classroom. For example, after teaching my students that professional writers always have others read their work for feedback, we will set up a writer’s workshop. Students will exchange whatever drafts they have been working on and give verbal compliments and suggestions. The students will then go back and make revisions based on peer responses.

Since everyone is sharing, knowing that all writers share and revise, it makes for a safe writing community. Students can become comfortable sharing their own work with others, another fear that many students harbor.

Another concept I like to share with my students is that if they want to be good writers, they must write. Writing is not something to be learned from the sidelines—it has to be practiced! This is a concept that every writing instructor needs to encourage. But I also believe that in order to be a good writing teacher, I must *also* write. When I ask my students to write a journal entry, I pull out my notebook and write; when I ask my students to try their hands at haikus, I start silently counting syllables too. It is beneficial for students to see their teacher also experiment with writing, to see his or her successes, failures, and places to revise so that they can model the behavior.

I hope that through sharing in my students’ journey to becoming a writer, my students will gain confidence, pleasure, and a good role model that is willing to walk alongside them. This kind of drive will help to facilitate mastery of all the writing principles required in the core standards of the state. But more importantly, I hope that their writing skills will follow them wherever they go in their lives.

**Teaching Philosophy**

Jane Doe

Good teaching has the power and capability to unlock new worlds for the students. Worlds that are already there – the student just needs to discover them. Through effectively presenting information, helping students develop skills, and encouraging and assisting the students to push themselves a little harder and a little farther, a teacher has the capacity to foster learning. Metaphorically, good teaching is leading students to the door, giving them the key, and helping them open the door to worlds of ideas, abilities, and knowledge. Lives can be changed through effective teaching and successful learning.

For the students to truly, successfully learn, they need to have a desire and excitement about learning. My goal as a teacher is to help foster this desire and excitement. To do that, I will show enthusiasm about the various topics and assignments, always encourage and praise the efforts of the students, and help them feel like they can move on to greater heights. When a student struggles with a specific area or assignment, I will work with that student on a more individual level to help them improve and achieve.

Additionally, I feel that the environment of the classroom is a very important factor in successful learning. To help the students feel that they are in a friendly and supportive environment, I will have group activities to help the students become acquainted with each other and learn to work together. I will rearrange the groups frequently to promote interaction with everyone in the classroom. Through working together and getting to know the other students, bonds and unity will help the students feel they are in a place where they can all participate and succeed.

I feel that projects are an effective way for students to learn and have “hands on” experience. Over the course of the semester I will have several projects for the students to work on over a period of time that will require applying various things they have learned in class. For example, over a period of weeks they will practice different skills in writing, such as creating characters and using dialogue. They will use these skills to write a narrative and then put it in book format. Putting the narrative in book format is an activity to help promote excitement and enthusiasm about writing, and to help them feel that they have truly accomplished something lasting and worthwhile.

I have had teachers that have changed my life and strongly influenced my educational desires. One of my most influential teachers once told me that he considered his teaching was successful when his students left the classroom with a desire to further learn and build their knowledge on the foundation he had laid for them. My desire and goal is to help students move beyond what I have done, and yearn to explore the new worlds they have been introduced to. I believe that they can feel that way if they have a teacher who supports, encourages, and assists them in their quest for knowledge and education.

**Writing Program (25 possible points)**

Target Length: One tab, typically in a table or chart format identifying what the unit and subsequent lessons attempt to teach and what the final outcome will be.

**Introduction**: Write a substantial paragraph (5-8 sentences) introducing the concepts and content of your writing program. Give your reader an idea of how your program is structured. Think of this critical introduction as an abstract to help your reader know what to expect of your students by the end of the unit.

**Writing Program**: Your writing program should be two weeks in length, with M/W/F as writing days and T/Th as “writing days” where your students can have previous concepts enforced and have time to practice those concepts. You should consult the writing standards (corestandards.org or uen.org/core) to make sure your program addresses your students to an acceptable standard for their grade. Your program will cover unit topics, potential lesson principles, and possible activities and/or assignments.

The format of your writing program will be mostly bulleted lists or tables (however you prefer to format it. I tend to think charts are more reader-friendly for writing programs). This is a chance to more fully show your teaching philosophy in action without having to create a step-by-step lesson plan. Think of your writing program as an overview of your writing classroom, zooming in on specific units and principles that are representative of your writing classroom as a whole.

**Writing Program Checklist**

*Introduction*

1. Does the introduction effectively summarize the program?
2. Does it explain how core standards will be met?
3. Does it reference parts of the teaching philosophy that serve as the foundation of this writing program?
4. Does it identify the key writerly skills which will be developed by the end of the unit?

*Writing Program*

1. Are the units and principles appropriate for the grade level?
2. Do the activities or assignments help the students grasp the writing principle?
3. Are the units and activities varied and interesting?
4. Are your lesson titles and any subsequent detailing specific enough that you reader can see the progression of the student’s learning?

*Conventions*

1. Are headings and chart design appropriate to the content?
2. Are length and thematic structure appropriate to the content?
3. Are the elements presented in a parallel style and format?
4. Are there any distracting grammatical, typographical, or spelling errors?

**Two Lesson Plans (25 points each total of 50 possible points)**

Purpose: The reason to include specifics in your portfolio is to show in detail how you would go about teaching and implementing your two week unit.

Target Length: Around a web page plus a scroll or two if you format your lesson plans on the actual web page. If you create a link to download a Word document, the Word document should be approximately 1-1.5 pages, single spaced. Remember, concision and detail are not mutually exclusive. This is your challenge here: keep your reader’s attention and lead their eye, through bullet points, bolding, font size, through the progression of your lesson.

Take two of the writing days and create lesson plans for those two days. These are similar to what you did earlier in the semester when you created and presented your lesson plans however these will not include a rubric for each lesson.

**Components to Include:**

1. Objective: clearly and specifically explain what goals you hope the children will achieve from the assignment. Begins with a referent to the student: “Students will…” and a specific activity “Through (activity)...”

2.  Background: in this section, you will give the necessary information to inform and excite students about the genre of writing or writing skill that you will be assigning. It should also include the concepts students should be familiar with to successfully complete the directed learning.

3. Activity: What will you do as a class to learn the concept? This can be as simple as having students construct prepositional phrases together in small groups and as a class create a prepositional phrase poem on the board or as fun as a competition where verbally each students gets a chance to enact the concept taught.

4.  Writing Assignment: Think “directed, hands-on learning”--In this section, you need to accurately explain the proposed assignment. Give a detailed description of student’s writing outcome for that specific lesson.

5.  Explanation: This last element takes element #4 and explains how students will utilize the small writing they completed that class period in their larger end-of-the-unit work. This is a hearty paragraph (5-8 sentences) explaining not only the concepts presented but how students will utilize the writing later on in the unit (it must go beyond “And now they have sentences to use when they write their big story…ya, we hope so! What else do we use these sentences for? How to they play a role in revision? Experimentation? Collaborative learning? Journal shares? Meaningful homework?).

**OPTIONAL 6.  Example: Include a brief example of what you would expect as a finished product.**

**Web Site Presentation/Aesthetics (25 points)**

When you first encounter a site you must think, “What asks my audience to keep looking?” As a guideline, ask yourself the following questions to create a reader-friendly, inviting and concise presentation:

1. Do my readers have to scroll too much to understand my content?
2. Do I use font size, bolding, italics, etc. to lead my reader to the important highlighted points?
3. Do I use font which is reader-friendly?
4. Does my site have any distractions (music, flashing words, too much movement) which detract from my reader’s attention to the literature I’m presenting?
5. Do I humanize my site through use of professional pictures?

Your site must contain:

1. A “Contact Me” tab with information on how you can professionally be reached (I suggest not putting out you private email, but rather your work email).
2. A professional-looking picture (I get that we don’t all have professional shots of ourselves) of me on the first page.
3. Multiple tabs which are clearly indicative of what the viewer will find when switching to that tab.
4. You must not have more than three colors (not including pictures). Think: highlight, background and text.

Remember: wix.com and weebly.com are two of the best sites I’ve found. If you decide to use a different forum that’s fine as long as you clear it with me first.

If you want to have fun and add some additional tabs such as a “Favorite Class Reads” tab or a video of you teaching that’s so fun and great! Know that will not be taken into account when I grade. You will be graded on the elements I have outlined above. Anything additional just makes the site more YOU!