Title

Teaching Writing in the Content Areas

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades 6-12.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:
- Have access to a classroom and students to implement a lesson plan.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS "Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine" course.
- Be familiar with elementary, middle, or high school educational content.

Course Description

In this course we empower content area teachers to embrace writing as an integral part of their curriculum. Learners will have an opportunity to read some of the findings from years of research on using writing in the classroom and explore strategies for incorporating writing in the content area curriculum. Learners will examine four interrelated elements: finding the time to write, assessing writing, integrating technology, and modeling writing for students to know how writing-to-learn affects both teaching and student learning. Learners will have an opportunity to either create and implement a lesson plan that integrates writing-to-learn strategies and write a reflection on the experience or write a journal article or educational blog on the topic of writing in the content areas.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credits

To be determined by college or university

Goals

The overall goal of this course is for learners to develop a collection of resources that will help them better understand and apply the research that supports writing-to-learn in any content area.
By the end of this course, learners will:
- Understand the important relationship between learning and the written word;
- Become familiar with research on both writing and writing–to–learn;
- Recognize the four elements that affect writing and learning in the content areas and the role of each;
- Be familiar with writing as process; and
- Demonstrate their understanding of writing may be integrated into their specific content area.

Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information section, learners will proceed to the Assignments section to complete the six sessions described below, working through each in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are expected to articulate their ideas in various forms: reflections on their ideas and experiences in their online journals, online discussions that allow learners to gather information from other learners, and written responses that are submitted to the facilitator. Learners have a choice of two final

projects. They may implement and reflect on teaching a lesson with students or they may write an educational blog or journal article.

This course is designed to address ISTE's Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

This course specifically addresses the following ISTE NETS*T:

I. Technology Operations and Concepts
Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of technology operations and concepts. Teachers:
    A. Demonstrate introductory knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts related to technology (as described in the ISTE National Education Technology Standards for Students)

II. Planning and Designing Learning Environments and Experiences
Teachers plan and design effective learning environments and experiences supported by technology. Teachers:
    A. Design developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies to support the diverse needs of learners.
    C. Identify and locate technology resources and evaluate them for accuracy and suitability.
    D. Plan for the management of technology resources within the context of learning activities.

III. Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum
Teachers implement curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for applying technology to maximize student learning. Teachers:
    B. Use technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the diverse needs of students.

V. Productivity and Professional Practice
Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice. Teachers:
    C. Apply technology to increase productivity.

Visit cnets.iste.org for a full list of the ISTE's Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers and more information about these standards.

Session 1: Research about Writing and Learning

In this session learners will begin to think about ways that writing helps students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. They also will begin to think about ways that writing helps students problem solve.

Learners will:

- Define professional goals and expectations.
- Explain prior knowledge and experiences about including writing in content area instruction.
- Discuss how to organize four elements that affect writing and learning, by using the Four Elements interactive.
- Compare the four elements by completing a double–entry journal.

Read
- "Challenges Ahead"
- "Teaching Composition: Research on Effective Practices"
- Your state's content area standards
- Your level (III or IV) Language Arts Writing Standard 1 in Content Knowledge

Write in online journal
- Reflect on prior knowledge, expectations and goals for this course.
- Reflect on how your students use writing on a daily basis, the kinds of writing projects you have implemented that support those purposes, and the barriers or challenges you experienced when implementing those writing projects.

Participate in an online discussion
- Introduce yourself to other learners.
- Think about your understanding of the relationship of the four elements: time, assessment, technology, teachers and explain the organizational method you selected in the interactive to represent the relationship or suggest a different model and give a rationale for your decision.

Complete activities and assignments
- Examine the relationship of four elements using an interactive to explore linear, hierarchical, or interrelated models.
- Complete double-entry journal entries.
- Match content benchmarks and standards with writing benchmarks and standards.

Additional resources/activities (not required)
- Read current articles of choice from professional journals.
- Standards for the English Language Arts
- Because Writing Matters

Session 2: The Role of Time

In this session learners will study the role of time, especially how to manage it and how to find time for students to write. They also will investigate a key benefit to writing in a content area classroom—the connection between writing and problem solving.

Learners will:
- Discuss the results of a Class Writing Survey and ways to make time for writing in the classroom.
- Discuss opportunities for including a writing activity in a mathematics lesson plan.
- Identify the benefits of reviewing and revising lesson plans to include writing activities.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of making time for writing and problem solving.

Read
- "Formal Writing"
- "Cognitively Oriented Instruction"
- "Cell Cycle Museum Exhibit"

Write in online journal
- In what ways will reviewing and revising lesson plans to include writing activities benefit students? What will be the benefits to you? How will you apply this process to your existing lesson plans?
- How could you convince a fellow teacher that the pros outweigh the cons when it comes to making time for writing?

Participate in an online discussion
- What was surprising about the actual frequency and number of minutes you recorded in the Class Writing Survey? What message are you sending students about the importance of writing and about the writing process? Given the time crunch that most teachers face, how can teachers make time for writing?

Complete activities and assignments
- Examine a two-week lesson plan and complete a Class Writing Survey, recording students' writing and writing-related activities over a two-week period.
- Writing in the Content Areas – Review a mathematics lesson plan, post your idea to the discussion board, then collaborate to revise your lesson plan to include writing-to-learn activities.

View Videos
- "Writing in Science"
- "Getting Started Writing"

Session 3: The Role of Assessment

In this session learners will examine some effective methods and tools for assessing writing and learning. They also will select which final project to complete.

Learners will:
- Discuss the ways in which writing is a meaning-making process for students.
- Analyze the results of aligning a unit test with activities and content standards.
- Reflect on how you can implement writing and rubrics in your assessments and how you might overcome any challenges.
- Revise a rubric to evaluate writing–to–learn in a content area.

Read
- "Assessment, Evaluation, and Grading"
- "Reading, Writing, and Understanding"
- "Broken Chains and Tangled Webs"
- "Seven Literacy Strategies that Work" (not required)
- Teaching Writing in the Content Areas (not required)

Write in online journal
- Which columns or entries are blank in your Blow Apart the Test chart? What would it take to fully complete the chart? How can you implement writing and rubrics into your assessments? What challenges do you think you might face, and how could you overcome them?

Participate in an online discussion
- In what ways is writing a meaning-making process? What strategies do you use to engage students in the process of making their own meaning?

Complete activities and assignments
- Score writing samples using the Holistic Scoring Interactive.
- Complete the "Blow Apart the Test!" alignment chart.
- Revise a generic rubric to use with a science lesson plan.

Session 4: The Role of Technology

In this session learners will discover ways to integrate technology, writing, and content area instruction. They also will explore new thinking about the uses of technology in the classroom.

Learners will:
- Explain the impact of technology on student learning in light of the assets it offers students and teachers.
- Write and post a Web site review using an evaluation checklist.

PBS TeacherLine®

- Describe how to integrate research-based practices, technology, and writing in their teaching practices.
- Design a lesson plan that incorporates technology resources within the context of writing and learning.

Read
- "Content Area Literacy Lessons Go High Tech"
- "Building Better Instruction"

Listen to audio file
- Todd Brendel

Explore
- Online resources for students and teachers to assess quality of web sites
- "Electronic Editing" video
- Todd's Graphic Organizer
- Todd's Venn Diagram (Flash)

Write in online journal
- Describe techniques modeled in the video that you can use. What changes will you make in the future for using technology with writing?

Participate in an online discussion
- Discuss the impact of technology on student learning based on the benefits it offers to students and teachers.

Complete activities and assignments
- Complete a Teacher Technology Survey.
- Evaluate a Web site using an evaluation guide, and write a review (150–250 words) that recommends the Web site or dissuades others from it.
- Create a lesson plan that incorporates three elements: research-based instructional strategy, technology resource, and writing activity.

Session 5: The Role of the Teacher

In this session learners will think about how to create classrooms that support writing. They also will think about ways to help all students become better learners and writers and identify specific ways to help struggling writers.

Learners will:

- Explain how creating an interactive reading guide will effect their instruction.
- Discuss their knowledge of writing-to-learn and apply it to a role-playing situation.
- Compose a possible teacher-student dialogue for a writing conference.
- Describe how to create opportunities for students to write.

Read
- "Using young-Adult Literature to Enhance Comprehension in the Content Areas"
- Interactive Reading Guide

Review
- Review discussion board items to see how the role playing scenario played out in other groups.

View video

- "NOW" of Barbara Kingsolver interview

Write in online journal
- In what ways did creating the reading guide have an impact on your instruction and approach to implementing texts with students? How could you use an interactive reading guide with other texts?
- If you are not already doing so, how might you create opportunities for your students to write to read and to read to write? Describe the assignment you might give. If you already integrate writing-to-learn and reading-to-learn, what advice can you give to other content area teachers on how to use journals to connect writing, reading, and learning?

Participate in an online discussion
- Role-play, with others who are assigned by the facilitator, what your character would say to the other teachers about teaching writing in his or her class.

Complete activities and assignments
- Interactive Reading Guide- review and select a section of content area text for students to read, write questions about the text, and design various Interactive Reading Guide activities.
- Script Writing - Review a student-teacher conference template and write a script (one–two pages) of a hypothetical student-teacher writing conference and submit it to the facilitator.

Session 6: Connecting Teaching, Writing, and Learning

In this session learners will complete their final project and revisit the role of the fours elements that relate to students' writing. Learners also will reflect on their acquired knowledge and how this course has had an impact on their professional practice.

Learners will:

- Discuss the relationship among the four elements that affect students' writing.
- Describe their experience in teaching a lesson that incorporates technology resources within the context of writing and learning and explain changes they would make to the lesson using concepts and theories presented in the course [Final Project Option 1].
- Create four educational blogs or one journal article that reflects the concepts and theories presented in this course [Final Project Option 2].
- Assess their learning in this course by comparing their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge in their online journal.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting on their professional goals and expectations.

Final Project Option 1
Learners will implement the lesson created in Session 4. Elements of the lesson plan will include:
- Goals
- Objectives
- Standards addressed
- Prior knowledge
- Materials
- Lesson overview
- Lesson procedures
- Assessment

Learners will write and submit a reflection paper (250–350 words) that describes their experience in teaching the lesson they created.

Final Project Option 2
> Learners will visit the Web site of a professional journal in their content area or the news section of a general education Web log to read articles about time, assessment, technology, or the role of the teacher and write four original 250-word articles or one four-page journal article in the same tone and style of the journal or blog that they read. Each article will cite the national and state standards for their content area.

Participate in an online discussion
- How did our depiction of the relationship among the four elements (See Session 1) compare to your arrangement? How did your depiction change as you completed Sessions 1-5?
- Revisit the quote at the beginning of this session. What do you think the next line might be?

Write in online journal
- What have you learned and what skills have you acquired from the course? How will you incorporate the essential ideas and strategies from this course into your current or future classroom?
- How does this learning experience compare with your goals and expectations? Were there any professional goals you were unable to achieve? Why? How do you plan to address these areas of professional development in the future?

Schedule

This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections, and a final project.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:
- Complete all assignments.
- Maintain an online journal.
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it.

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements
- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

Evaluation

This course can be taken for graduate credit on a pass/fail basis, or for a letter grade and graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

Last Update: November 17, 2005