

Framework for Saint Michael's College Graduate Education Syllabus Online Writing Classroom Practicum

DETAILS:

Title: Online Writing Classroom Practicum

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Classroom Location: Online, kick-off meeting at Champlain College in fall and one in the spring, and one visit during the year to each participant's classroom

Deadline for signup: Sept. 18.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE:

This course is a rigorous, year-long practicum that will quickly bring teacher participants into 21st Century Digital Teaching Practices by providing teachers knowledge on how to use an Online Writing Center to help students improve their writing skills, to engage students in their own learning processes and to experience the benefits of collaborative learning. The core of the work will take place online, with participants exploring online writing individually, collaboratively with the other participants, and with their own students. Participants will be provided a working, interactive Web site to use for instruction at their schools during the year.

This site will be where participants engage their own students in writing assignments as well as exercises designed to raise those students' digital literacy skills including using digital images, audio and video; giving peer-to-peer feedback; and using the Web for additional learning and to connect to other communities. A separate, group website will serve as a space for participants to try out the tools and practices in their own learning process, including connecting with the other participants and instructor. These sites will have full technical support from the Young Writers Project.

Participants will read leading-edge course materials and will engage in their own Web exploration for examples of how other schools around the world use digital technology to enhance student learning. The group will publish projects, findings and research to a group wiki. Participants will write up their best online classroom exercises as publishable "wiki entries" or Web-editable documents to be shared with other teachers around the state and country. They will create exercises that develop skills and knowledge around at least seven digital literacies and will also create a year-end online classroom project of their own design. Each month, participants will be required to write short reflections and assessments of their work and to contribute to the group "wiki" one of their teaching exercises. They also will be asked to assess their students' progress in writing and commenting in conjunction with a YWP survey.

Participants will be expected to assign work that requires their students to use the site; participants will:

- develop and study best practice ideas to engage students online,
- assess the results of their digital exercises; and
- assess the quality of their students' work and the effectiveness of their students' comments to each other.

The rationale behind this course is two-fold:

- Vermont students are not proficient in writing; and
- Educational leaders are pushing schools to raise students' digital literacy in order to prepare them for the demands of twenty-first century citizenship.

The three-credit Masters-level course begins in mid-September and ends May 31. There will be two in-person gatherings: One 6-hour session on October 13, and the second, in the late spring, to be determined by the group; sessions will be held at Champlain College. The instructor will visit each teacher's classroom at least once during the year. All other work and communication will be done online.

REGISTRATION:

Registration is through the Champlain Valley Educator Development Center Educational Services Agency, Champlain College, 163 So. Willard St., Burlington, VT, 05402, tel: 802-651-5933

Register on-line: cvedc.champlain.edu

For questions, contact: worth@champlain.edu

For more information, go to: www.youngwritersproject.org/wewrite or call Geoffrey Gevalt, 802.860-0570, or email him at ggevalt@youngwritersproject.org

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To increase participants' knowledge of and expertise in using a Web site as a classroom and creating and using digital media;

To increase participants' knowledge of and use of best-practice digital teaching and learning techniques;

To increase participants' knowledge of using an online classroom to enhance students' reading and writing skills;

To increase participants' students' writing and critical thinking skills;

To increase participants' ability to assess students' progress and improvement;

To increase participants' ability to express their own ideas and teaching techniques;

To increase participants' ability to innovate and try new ideas;

To show participants how digital technology can help them teach.

To develop participants' knowledge of and skills in emerging literacies.

To provide participants' with experience in using a Web site and in online communities and networks.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Will Richardson's *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Tools for Classrooms* (newest edition)(This book will be supplied to participants.)

David Weinberger's *Everything is Miscellaneous* or Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody* or Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind*

D.R. Garrison's and Terry Anderson's *E-Learning in the 21st Century*

ONLINE:

Videos of Michael Wesch (<http://www.youtube.com/user/mwesch>) and Karl Fisch (<http://youngwritersproject.org/node/16321>)

Henry Jenkins' White Paper for the MacArthur Foundation (digitalllearning.macfound.org/)

Henry Jenkin's blog (www.henryjenkins.org/)

Danah Boyd's white papers (www.danah.org/)

Barbara Ganley's resource list: (bgsocialsoftwareworkshop.pbwiki.com/Resources)

Innovateonline (innovateonline.info)

Teachers teaching teachers (teachersteachingteachers.org)

Online conferences (k12onlineconference.org/)

Vicki Davis (coolcatteacher.blogspot.com/)

Bud Hunt (budtheteacher.com/blog/)

Paul Allison (paulrallison.blogspot.com/)

Clarence Fisher (mr-fisher.edublogs.org/)

Participants' links – As part of this course, participants will develop their own resource list of examples of how other schools are using digital technology in their classrooms.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

David Warlick's *Redefining Literacy Encore*

Pamela Takayoshi's *Teaching Writing with Computers*

Jean Twenge's *Generation Me*

Ken Robinson's *Out of our Minds*

Henry Jenkins' *Convergence Culture*

Pierre Levy's *Collective Intelligence*

James Paul Gee's *Situated Language and Learning*

William Kist's *New Literacies in Action*

Howard Rheingold's *The Virtual Community*

Bertram Bruce (editor) *Literacy in the Information Age*

RECOMMENDED CONFERENCE:

Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference December 2-4, Nashua, New Hampshire (<http://www.nhcmtc.org/>)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

This course will allow participants to establish their own schedule for doing most of the exercises required for this course. In addition, participants are expected to integrate their regular course work onto the Web site. This is, after all, a practicum.

All participants will be expected to research, create and assess exercises for their monthly digital topics. The first month's topic is Commenting; May's topic is a special project developed by the participant of his or her choosing. The other topics can be covered at any time during the year by the participants. Other possible topics: Podcasting, Blogging, Collaboration, Keywording/tagging, Digital images (or video) and Connecting with the World.

Monthly Writing. Course participants will be expected to submit their monthly writings to the course Web site at ywpvt.net. These are expected to be concise and clear. Participants also will be expected to comment on other participants' work posted on the course area on ywpvt.net. Monthly Writings are due Sept. 31, Oct. 10, Oct. 30, Nov. 20, Dec. 15, Jan. 30, Feb. 28, March 31 and April 30. These will include a reflection on what was expected and what happened, an assessment on the effectiveness of the exercise – student performance and engagement, and a separate procedural summary of the exercises written in “wiki” format and at a Web-publishable level. These wiki documents will eventually be made available to all teachers who come to ywpvt.net. Participants are expected to assess student commenting each month. Participants will be provided examples of an acceptable wiki.

September – Introduction and “Commenting.” The course will formally begin in September as soon as the teacher participant signs up. The participant's Web site will be set up; participant's students will be given accounts and instructions will be sent. All of the online portion of this class will take place at ywpvt.net where all communication and work will be presented. (Main site will be completed Aug. 20; individual school sites will be set up by Sept. 19.) **Writing #1:** Due Sept. 31: Hopes, impressions and fears. Participants will write a brief piece that will include: Who they are and what experience they've had with digital learning; what fears they have about the course and about using a Web classroom; and what their initial impressions were of their new Web site to be used in their school classroom.

October. Participants will be expected to read Will Richardson's book on Blogs, to get their students acquainted with the site, to have them take a Web survey on writing (created by YWP), to give students at least one writing assignment online and to train students in peer-to-peer feedback.

Writing #2: Deadline: Oct. 10. Reflection on the beginning of the process and initial observations of the Web site. Assessment of students' early commenting. Wiki of first exercise accomplished.

Training #1: October 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Champlain College Miller Information Commons, Room 305-06. Lunch will be provided.

Topic: In-Depth exploration of Web site; Basics of Digital learning.

This conference will be held in a computer lab. Participants will be given in-depth training on the site and what they can do with it. Questions will be answered and problems that participants had in using their sites will be resolved.

The afternoon session will be on Teaching in the Digital Age (Barbara Ganley leader)

Spring: Training #3. Date and topics to be decided by participants.

Final Writing: Due May 25. This piece will be a larger document that will include the participants' reflections on the overall project, an assessment of student performance (with information from YWP's second Web survey of participants' students) and a longer wiki on the individual project of the participant. In addition, participants will write a short plan on how they will expand use of the site in their schools in the coming year.

ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS:

To get an "A" on this course, participants are expected to 1) actively integrate their regular class work onto the Web site; 2) complete their monthly writing assignments and present work that is clear and concise and that reflects learning from readings and Web research and that shows strong assessment of student results; 3) actively participate in the work of others posted on the Web site; 4) complete all required readings; and 5) innovate – devise new ideas to be tried out on the Web site. The writings represent 60 percent of the grade; assessments of each will be done online by the instructor.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Young Writers Project has considerable material on writing and writing exercises as well as materials on digital learning on its main Web site, youngwritersproject.org, under Writers' Library.

YWP also will be enlisting digital learning experts (notably Barbara Ganley, former Middlebury College professor and national expert in digital learning) and trained college interns to assist participants from time to time.