UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
The Literacy, Language, and Culture Program

EDU 557:
Teaching Writing to Multilingual Learners

Spring 2015 / Portland
Mondays, 4.10-6.40pm, Luther Bonney 509

Course description

This course focuses on developing and improving writing skills for English language learners (ELLs), by examining second language acquisition and writing theories and how they inform classroom practice. It is designed to equip teachers with the dispositions, knowledge, skills, and strategies to implement writing instruction for ELLs at all levels of proficiency. Students gain firsthand experience using the writing process. They will draw on current research, theory, and classroom practice, leading to the development of instructional programs that will meet the needs of their ELLs.

Course outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Better understand ELLs by examining their social, educational and cultural backgrounds, in order to further support English language development.
2. Examine how second language acquisition theories inform ELLs’ learning.
3. Examine the multiple writing theories that influence writing pedagogy in K-12 schools.
4. Create a lesson plan in which the teacher and students are metacognitively aware of specific strategies and adaptations for ELLs.
5. Use and teach all stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing/sharing.
6. Develop a polished piece of writing that uses the process model, involving active participation in peer response groups.
7. Link writing assessment to further instruction.
8. Examine the current research in writing development and be able to translate theory into practice.

Course values

- Democracy – Students will be exposed to multiple views and perspectives with regard to teaching ESL literacy in general and ESL writing in particular. They will utilize inclusive dialogue and be encouraged to express their views through active participation in class discussion.
- Civility and Caring – The instructor will model the use of constructive communication, protection of individual dignity, and empathy, compassion, and openness. Students will be expected to demonstrate these qualities in their interactions with the instructor and peers.
Evidence of differentiation for students will be expected to be included in the final products created by students in this course.

- **Equity and Diversity** – Course content will include ways to differentiate for a variety of learner types including struggling readers and individuals from different cultures and L1 backgrounds. Students will be expected to include differentiated elements in their lesson plans.
- **Social Justice** – Students will adjust instruction, as needed, to empower all learners to develop literacy skills in order to be active members of society. Aspects of culture and cultural communication are presented and modeled, with students practicing them through experiential learning activities as well as dialogue with the readings and classmates.
- **Ethical Practice** – Instructor will engage in and insist on the highest level of professional practice. Students demonstrate culturally sensitive ESL writing-focused practices through their classroom instruction.
- **Scholarship** – Students will examine research, theory, and best practices to guide their own content area instruction and assessment. Students will be able to explore ESL writing as well as to relate to the community of practice which extends beyond the walls of the classroom.
- **Professional Learning and Continuous Improvement** – Students and instructor will participate in ongoing dialogue to exchange ideas for mutual and continuing professional growth.

**Method**

Knowledge is socially constructed. In this class, we will construct personally meaningful knowledge through interaction, discussion, reading, and writing. You will be actively involved in this process by working with your peers and me and also by critically reading the required texts.

**Required materials**

3) Articles (see the course outline, below). These have been posted on Blackboard. Log in and then open the folder “Articles.” Please print them out (optional but recommended), read them, and be ready to discuss them.

**Requirements, attendance, and grading policy**

- Discussion/participation = 40%

You will be asked to actively participate in the classroom discussion each time we meet. Therefore, you are expected to:

1) read the chapter and articles for that day before coming to class;
2) take notes in your journal as you read and think about what you will contribute to the classroom discussion when you come to class;
3) talk about the readings and your projects and exchange information with your peers.
Because you must be physically present in order to participate in the discussion, **missing more than two classes will result in failing the class.** If an emergency comes up, please email me.

- ESL writing lesson plan = 30% (no word limit, 500-1000 words expected)

You will create an ESL writing-centered lesson plan that will demonstrate your investment in the process of learning about L2 writing. It is an excellent learning opportunity for you. You will work with a peer response group to improve it. You will share the lesson plan with your classmates (everyone will get a copy) on 3/9/15.

- Final paper = 30% (2000-2500 words, excluding references)

This is a literature-based research paper that will focus on one particular aspect of ESL writing. I recommend picking a topic that is immediately relevant to your needs in the field. We will work, as a team, on helping you improve your manuscript. We will also discuss submitting your work to a conference. A formal PowerPoint presentation (10-15 minutes) is required, along with a handout to be given to your classmates. Submit a hard copy of the paper on 4/27/15.

**OPTIONAL (but highly recommended):** Keep a journal/researcher’s log. It is a learning and teaching tool that one uses to document one’s own progress. The journal is an opportunity to interact with the readings and record your thoughts and ideas in response to the stimuli that the readings provide. In fact, ESL writers are often required to keep one. The journal is also a professional development tool, i.e., it can serve as a foundation for your current and future scholarly work.

All of the above will be explained and discussed in class, and you will receive a detailed set of instructions and rubrics for each of the assignments. Don’t forget that you can always email me.

Furthermore, plagiarism is prohibited. It is unethical and will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question or for the whole course. When working with sources and using other researchers’ ideas, give credit. Cite your sources using the APA (6th edition) format: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%

**Academic support**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. At any point, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, consult with me.

Students experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a tutor at USM Learning Commons Tutoring (780-4228), [http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/tutoring-services](http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/tutoring-services). Help is also available in Portland through the Counseling Center, 105 Payson Smith (780-4050), and the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities, 242 Luther Bonney (780-4706).
Technology support (including Blackboard-specific questions and issues)

USM Help Desk: send an email to helpdesk@usm.maine.edu or call 780-4029.

Library support

Live support is available during business hours. Go to http://usm.maine.edu/library and click on “Ask us / A librarian is only a click away” to chat with a librarian. You can also call the USM Library in Portland (780-4270), Gorham (780-5345), or at LAC (753-6540). Remember that, as a USM student, you have already paid for access to online article databases through our library’s website (EBSCO Host/Academic Search Complete, JStor, and others).

Course outline

1/12  Introduction: L2 writing – Needs, goals, and challenges

1/19  MLK Day – No class

1/26  L2 writing and ESL/“mainstream” teachers: A socio-historical analysis of the field
3) LCDO & S, Chapter 8 (Larsen)
4) LCDO & S, Chapter 11 (Seloni)
5) Hyland, Chapter 1

2/2  L2 writers’ identity: Culture, language, and second language acquisition (SLA)
1) Hyland, Ch. 2
2) LCDO & S, Ch. 2 (Ortmeier-Hooper)
3) LCDO & S, Ch. 4 (Kibler)

2/9  Curriculum design: The writing process and ESL writers
2) Hyland, Ch. 3
3) LCDO & S, Ch. 9 (Yi)
4) LCDO & S, Ch. 3 (Enright)
2/16-2/22 Winter break (USM) – No class

2/23 Discourse analysis: Designing ESL writing materials and going beyond the basics
1) Hyland, Ch. 4
2) LCDO & S, Ch. 6 (Wilson)

3/2 Task-based learning and ESL writing
2) Hyland, Ch. 5
3) LCDO & S, Ch. 5 (Hirvela)

3/9 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and ESL writing
Submit your lesson plan. Give a copy to everyone in our class.
1) LCDO & S, Ch. 7 (Niiya et al)
2) Hyland, Ch. 6

3/16 Feedback and the treatment of error in TESOL contexts
1) Hyland, Ch. 7

3/23 ESL writing assessment: A conversation continued
Hyland, Ch. 8

3/30-4/5 Spring break (USM) – No class
4/6 Emergent experts: ESL students and teachers doing research  
1) LCDO & S, Ch. 10 (Athanasies et al)  
2) Hyland, Ch. 9

4/13 Looking into the future: ESL writing in the 21st century  

4/20 Conclusion + Final paper presentations (PowerPoint)

4/27 Final paper presentations (PowerPoint)  
Submit a hard copy of your final paper.