

**University of Texas at El Paso**  
**RED 5340 (CRN 17967)**  
**Current Topics in Reading Education: Teaching Writing with Diverse Learners**  
**Fall 2015**

Dr. Erika Mein, Associate Professor  
Email: [elmein2@utep.edu](mailto:elmein2@utep.edu)  
Phone: 747-7673  
Office: Education 813

Mondays, 5:30-8:20 pm  
Location: Education 307  
Office hours: Mondays,  
3-5pm, and by appt

**Course Description:**

This course highlights teaching tools and strategies to help students develop as effective writers across the content areas, with a particular focus on grades 6-12. The course is based on five key principles:

- the importance of reading and writing as tools for learning across content areas;
- the view of writing as a process that is closely tied to thinking;
- the role of grammar and sentence structure in communicating meaning;
- the need for writing instruction to be responsive to students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds;
- the importance of tailoring writing instruction to meet the needs of struggling writers.

Topics to be covered include: Using reading and writing to support learning; Teaching expository and persuasive writing; Teaching narrative and literary writing; Constructing effective sentences; Engaging English Language Learners in powerful writing; and Working with struggling writers. Each of these topics will include a specific focus on working with English Language Learners and students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) Identify and implement effective strategies for teaching writing and the writing process in secondary classrooms, with a particular focus on English Language Learners and language minority students;
- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between reading and writing in support of learning;
- (3) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of second language acquisition in developing academic literacy, especially writing;
- (4) Identify and use digital technologies in meaningful ways to enhance adolescent literacy learning;
- (5) Implement highly engaging, cognitively-demanding writing lessons with students related to different genres, including expository, persuasive, literary analysis, personal narrative;
- (6) Analyze and assess student writing to identify strengths and areas of need related to content, organization, and language mechanics;
- (7) Show an understanding of inquiry-based approaches to literacy teaching and learning;
- (8) Analyze and reflect on their own teaching of writing.

**Course Readings:**

Books

Anderson, J. (2005). *Mechanically inclined: Building grammar, usage, and style into writer's workshop*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. ISBN: 978-1571104120.

Daniels, H., Zemelman, S., and Steineke, N. (2007). *Content area writing*. Heinemann. ISBN: 978-0325009728.

Olson, C.B., Scarcella, R.C., & Matuchniak, T. (2015). *Helping English Learners to write*. New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN: 978-0807756331.

Books can be purchased at the UTEP bookstore or through online vendors such as Amazon.com.

Select articles [can be found on Blackboard]

### **Course Requirements:**

**Reflective reading responses** (40 points) – You will be asked to write reflective responses to the readings on most weeks. The responses should be 400-500 words in length; they have two functions: (1) to summarize the key points from the reading; and (2) to highlight an aspect of the text that resonates with you and/or your teaching practice. The audience for these responses will be your colleagues/peers and myself; please submit online to two places in Blackboard by the Sunday before class: “Assignments” and your Writing Group discussion board. Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to do 10 reflective responses to the readings.

**Discussion postings** (5 points) – As part of this course, you will be asked to review online teaching materials developed by the Texas Education Agency as part of the Write for Texas initiative, which is aimed at improving secondary writing instruction across the state. You will have access to these materials and the opportunity to describe and reflect on these materials through four discussion postings due during online weeks of the course.

**Writing autobiography** (10 points) - The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on your own literacy history and the ways in which your history and experiences with reading and writing influence you now as a teacher. Feel free to explore various formats (i.e. short vignettes, poetry, interviews) and modalities (iMovie, Storyboard, Moviemaker, PowerPoint) for writing. The audience for this assignment will be your peers and professor. Please post a draft of your autobiography to your Writing Group in Blackboard on September 22. Peer feedback should be completed by September 24, and the final draft will be due on Blackboard on September 30.

**Video observation and reflection** (15 points) - During the second half of the semester, you should arrange to videotape a 15-minute segment of a literacy lesson in your classroom. You should then choose a 5-7 minute segment of the video to analyze for a self-reflection paper. In looking your video segment, you should first *describe* what you saw: what was being said, done, etc. You should then reflect on the lesson: what went well, what you liked, what you would do differently next time. The reflection should be 1,000-1,200 words in length, and should be posted to “Assignments” in Blackboard by November 19 at midnight.

**Pair demonstration lesson** (15 points) – You will have the opportunity to work with a partner to develop a 15-minute demonstration lesson in teaching writing. In alignment with the National Writing Project and the lesson requirements of your district, the research-based lesson should include your framework (including theory/research that informs the lesson); modeling; guided practice; involvement of your peers. On the Sunday before your lesson demonstration (11/8 or

11/22), you should post to Blackboard a 2-page handout that includes the following:

- Title
- Grade level & TEKS
- Research base for your lesson
- Learning outcomes
- Lesson outline
- Adaptations for ELLs and struggling writers
- Forms of assessing student learning (formal/informal)
- Related resources (books, websites, etc.)

After your lesson, you should prepare a 500-word summary of what transpired, what went well, and what you would have done differently. The pair demonstration summary will be due on “Assignments” in Blackboard by **December 2** at midnight.

**Final analysis paper** (15 points) – At the end of the semester you will submit a final analysis (1,000-1,500 words) that highlights key concepts and practices that you have gleaned from the readings, course activities, and your own practice. Your analysis paper should include a discussion of your core beliefs about the teaching of writing, and describe any changes in your beliefs/practices over the course of this semester. You should draw on the ideas of at least 3 authors that we have read for the course. Your final analysis paper will be due on “Assignments” in Blackboard on **December 9**.

#### **Grading:**

A	90-100 points
B	80-89 points
C	70-79 points
D	60-69 points
F	Below 59 points

#### **A Note on Research/Inquiry:**

The purpose of this course is to prepare master’s level students to be effective teachers of writing. Unless you have approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), no data collected as part of this course should under any conditions be presented in any public outlet, for example, in a conference presentation, research colloquium, or publication.

#### **Attendance Policy:**

Absences for any reason are discouraged. If extenuating circumstances make it necessary for you to miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, please let the instructor know ahead of time; excessive absences (missing more than 15% of face-to-face class time) could result in your being dropped from the course.

#### **Disability Policy:**

If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Center for Accommodations and Support (CASS) located in Union E Room 106. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with CASS on a yearly basis. Failure to report to this office will place a student on the inactive list and nullify benefits received. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of Disabled Student Services. You may call 747-5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Academic Ethics:**

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

**Additional Resources:**

The following journals can assist you in your inquiry practicum project. These are just some examples. Most of them can be found electronically using the UTEP Library website:

*Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*

*The Reading Teacher*

*Language Arts*

*Anthropology & Education Quarterly*

*International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*

*Bilingual Research Journal*

*Reading Research Quarterly*

*Linguistics & Education*

**\*\*Syllabus subject to change.\*\***

**Course Schedule:**

<b>8/24-8/30 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 1 – Introductions and introduction to the National Writing Project (Online)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 1:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore National Writing Project website: <a href="http://www.nwp.org/">http://www.nwp.org/</a></li> <li>• Lieberman &amp; Wood, Chapter 1</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post short introduction to full-class discussion board in Blackboard by 8/27 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>8/31-9/6 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 2 – Who are we as writers? Who are our students as writers? (UTEP class 8/31)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 2 (prior to class):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jiménez, Moving beyond the obvious [for 8/31 class session]</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response (on Jiménez) by 8/30 at midnight</li> </ul>

<b>9/7-9/13 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 3 - Working with culturally and linguistically diverse writers (Online)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 3:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olson, Scarcella, &amp; Matuchniak, Chapter 1</li> <li>• Valdés, Incipient bilingualism in the secondary school</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Web materials:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/write-texas-using-reading-and-writing-support-learning-standards-and-instruction">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/write-texas-using-reading-and-writing-support-learning-standards-and-instruction</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response on Olson et al. &amp; Valdés by 9/6 at midnight</li> <li>• Discussion posting on full-class discussion board in Blackboard by 9/8 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>9/14-9/20 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 4 - Using reading and writing to support learning (UTEP class 9/14)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 4 (prior to class):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graham &amp; Hebert, Writing to read (2010), pp. 1-29</li> <li>• Olson, Scarcella, &amp; Matuchniak, Chapter 2</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response on Graham &amp; Hebert and Olson et al. by 9/13 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>9/21-9/27 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 5 - Digital writing and students' multiple literacies (ONLINE)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 5:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yancey, Writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century</li> <li>• Assaf &amp; Johnson, Engaging in purposeful real-world writing</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 9/20 at midnight</li> <li>• Post draft of your literacy autobiography to online writing group in Blackboard by 9/22 at midnight</li> <li>• Post feedback on two peers' autobiography drafts by 9/24 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>9/28-10/4 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 6 - Writing to learn across the content areas (UTEP class 9/28)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 6 (prior to class):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniels, Zemelman, &amp; Steineke, Chapters 1-3</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 9/27 at midnight</li> <li>• Final draft of writing autobiography due on Blackboard by 9/30 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>10/5-10/11</b>	<b>Week 7 - Teaching expository writing (ONLINE)</b>

<b>ONLINE</b>	
	<p><b><u>Readings and resources for Week 7:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olson, Scarcella, &amp; Matuchniak, Chapter 4</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Web materials:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/writing-expository-text-summaries">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/writing-expository-text-summaries</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 10/4 at midnight</li> <li>• Discussion posting on full-class discussion board in Blackboard by 10/7 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>10/12-10/18 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 8 – Teaching personal narrative and revision strategies (UTEP class 10/12)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings for Week 8 (prior to class):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calkins, Chapter 1</li> <li>• Olson, Scarcella, &amp; Matuchniak, Chapter 3</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Web materials:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/write-texas-teaching-elements-personal-narrative-texts">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/write-texas-teaching-elements-personal-narrative-texts</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 10/11 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>10/19-10/25 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 9 – Teaching persuasive writing (ONLINE)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings and resources for Week 9:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olson, Scarcella, &amp; Matuchniak, Chapter 5</li> <li>• Felton &amp; Herko, Scaffolding adolescents’ persuasive writing</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Web materials:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/writing-persuasive-essays">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/writing-persuasive-essays</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 10/18 at midnight</li> <li>• Discussion posting on full-class discussion board in Blackboard by 10/21 at midnight</li> <li>• Collect writing samples from 3 students (any genre) to bring to class on 10/26</li> <li>• Begin on-site video observations</li> </ul>
<b>10/26-11/1 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 10 - Teaching sentence skills in context (UTEP class on 10/26)</b>
	<b><u>Readings and resources for Week 10 (prior to class):</u></b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anderson, Chapter 1 + Skim Sections 1-6</li> <li>• Williams, Phenomenology of Error</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 10/25 at midnight</li> <li>• Bring writing samples from 3 students (any genre) to class on 10/26</li> </ul>
<b>11/2-11/8 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 11 - Working with struggling writers (ONLINE)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings and resources for Week 11:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael &amp; Trezek, Universal design and multiple literacies</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Web materials:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-written-conventions-context">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-written-conventions-context</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-capitalization-context">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-capitalization-context</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-simple-and-compound-sentences-context">http://projectsharetexas.org/resource/teaching-simple-and-compound-sentences-context</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 11/1 at midnight</li> <li>• Discussion posting on full-class discussion board in Blackboard by 11/4 at midnight</li> <li>• On-site video observations</li> </ul>
<b>11/9-11/15 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 12 - Learning from other teachers: Pair demonstration lessons, Part I (UTEP class 11/9)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings and resources for Week 12:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jiménez, Smith, &amp; Teague, Transnational and community literacies</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 11/8 at midnight</li> <li>• Pair demonstration lessons in-class (6 lessons)</li> <li>• On-site video observations</li> </ul>
<b>11/16-11/22 ONLINE</b>	<b>Week 13 - Reflecting on own teaching through video observation (ONLINE)</b>
	<p><b><u>Assignment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete videotaping of lesson (if not already completed)</li> <li>• Post video observation reflection to Blackboard by 11/19 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>11/23-11/29 F-t-F</b>	<b>Week 14 - Learning from other teachers: Pair demonstration lessons, Part II (UTEP class 11/23)</b>
	<p><b><u>Readings and resources for Week 14:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elbow, A map of writing in terms of audience and response</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Assignments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post reflective reading response by 11/22 at midnight</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair demonstration lessons in-class (6 lessons)</li> </ul>
<b>11/30-12/6</b>	<b>Week 15 – Reflection on pair demo lesson (ONLINE)</b>
	<u><b>Assignments:</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500-word reflection on pair demonstration lesson due on Blackboard by 12/2 at midnight</li> </ul>
<b>12/7-12/13</b>	<b>Week 16 – Final exams</b>
	<u><b>Assignments:</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final analysis paper due on Blackboard by 12/9 at midnight</li> </ul>

### Appendix: Rubrics

#### Reflective synthesis of the readings (400-500 words) (4 possible points each)

Criteria	Possible points	Points earned
Clearly and accurately highlights the key points of the readings	2	
Clear, coherent, and well-organized	1	
Makes thoughtful connections to teaching practice	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	

#### Literacy Autobiography (10 possible points)

Criteria	Exceeds standards: Exceptional	Meets standards: Above average	Meets standards: Average	Approaching standards	Points Earned
<b>Focus on assigned topic</b>  <b>(1 point)</b>	The entire story is related to the assigned topic and allows the reader to understand much more about the topic.	Most of the story is related to the assigned topic. The story wanders off at one point, but the reader can still learn something about the topic.	Some of the story is related to the assigned topic, but a reader does not learn much about the topic.	No attempt has been made to relate the story to the assigned topic.	
<b>Thoughtful and substantive</b>	The story shows that the author has thought deeply about the topic and	The story shows that the author has thought about the topic and has	The story shows that the author put some effort into thinking	The story shows little thought or effort put into	

<b>(3 points)</b>	expressed his/her ideas in a compelling way, either through written or multi-modal text.	expressed his/her ideas well.	about the topic.	the topic.	
<b>Clarity and coherence</b>  <b>(3 points)</b>	The story is very clear and coherent and the author has communicated his/her ideas very effectively, and has no grammatical errors.	The story is basically clear and coherent, though there are points of confusion in the writing/presentation. There are few grammatical errors.	The story contains moments of clarity and coherence but is difficult to follow overall; there are several grammatical errors.	The story lacks clarity and is difficult to follow. The errors in grammar and sentence structure make the text difficult to read and understand.	
<b>Originality and creativity</b>  <b>(3 points)</b>	The story contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used his/her imagination. Author shows creative and effective use of media, if applicable.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use his/her imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.	
<b>Total</b>					

