# Professional Development Institute

## Flex Course Syllabus

## Effective Strategies to Improve Student Writing (4-12)

**PDI Course Number: 42T02**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC41465**

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, please click here.

## Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

## Course Description

Are you looking for effective ways to help your student writers? Do you find that your students dread the writing process? This online course provides teachers with strategies that are sure to improve students' writing skills. Teachers will be provided with effective ways to teach students how to write successful narrative essays, persuasive essays, and informative essays. The course also focuses on teaching students a step-by-step process for writing research reports, including note-taking and outlining skills. Technology is another area of focus addressing digital research, information literacy, digital storytelling, and iPad writing apps. Teachers will also learn ways to help struggling writers as well as motivate reluctant writers. Strategies for using literature as an inspiration for writing will be shared as well as using the six traits to expand and improve writing. Tips for teaching writing to English language learners will be shared in order to expand the skills of this special population. Writer's workshop is introduced within the context of the writing process. A variety of assessment options are explored and shared. Finally, ideas for using writing across the curriculum and presented and explored. By the end of this course, teachers will have the tools they need to help their students become better and more effective writers.

## Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will become familiar with the Common Core State Standards for Writing.
2. Teachers will learn the value of using picture books to teach literary elements.
3. Teachers will learn how literature can be used to inspire writers
4. Teachers will learn how to take advantage of technology available to them to aide student writers.
5. Teachers will become familiar with strategies for teaching narrative writing.
6. Teachers will become familiar with strategies for teaching informative writing.
7. Teachers will become familiar with strategies for teaching persuasive writing.
8. Teachers will become familiar with strategies for teaching students to write research reports.
9. Teachers will learn strategies to improve student writing.
10. Teachers will review organizational patterns students can use to improve writing.
11. Teachers will learn how to teach students to conduct online research.
12. Teachers will learn effective note-taking strategies that help students organize their research.
13. Teachers will learn all the steps of the writing process and successful ways to introduce each step to students.
14. Teachers will learn specific strategies for every stage of the writing process.
15. Teachers will learn about the six traits of writing.
16. Teachers will learn strategies to help struggling writers.
17. Teachers will learn ways to motivate writers.
18. Teachers will learn how to effectively integrate writing into all content areas.
19. Teachers will learn how to develop a plan to implement a writer's workshop.
20. Teachers will learn how to conduct writing workshops.
21. Teachers will discover ways to assess writing.
22. Teachers will learn tips for working with ESL writers.
23. Teachers will learn how to use digital storytelling strategies and software with their students.
24. Teachers will learn how to use writing apps to help students become better writers.

## Instructional Media

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

# Evaluation

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Writing Lesson for Each Domain (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

# Topical Outline

## Unit One

- Writing Standards in the Classroom
- Writing and Technology
- Literature as an Inspiration for Writing
- **Assignment #1**
  *Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about ways to improve student writing . Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

## Unit Two

- Focus on Narrative Writing
- Focus on Persuasive Writing
- Focus on Informative Writing
- **Assignment #2**
  *As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.*
- **Test #2**

## Unit Three

- Focus on Research Reports
- Information Literacy and Digital Research

- Note Taking and Outlining Skills
- **Assignment #3**
  *Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to improving student writing and will make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to easily follow. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom.*
- **Test #3**

## Unit Four

- The Writing Process
- Six Traits of Writing
- Helping Struggling Writers
- **Test #4**

## Unit Five

- Writer's Workshop
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Writing Assessment
- **Test #5**

## Unit Six

- Tips for Working with English Language Learners
- Digital Storytelling
- Writing Apps
- **Assignment #4**
  *Develop a writing assignment based on your grade-level content for each of the three areas of writing: narrative, persuasive, and informative. Explain each assignment with great detail in a minimum of eight sentences. The assignments should be detailed enough that another teacher could use them.*
- **Assignment #5**
  *The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have*

*had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.*

## Bibliography

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