**English 302 Introduction to Language Arts: Teaching Writing and Children’s Literature**

**Writing About Literature Project for an elementary or middle school classroom with Mentor Texts**

**in a Writing Workshop**

**Final piece due:**

**Other earlier dates for submission are listed below.**

**As we continue reading among others Lucy McCormick Calkins’ *Teaching Writing* , *Children’s Literature, Briefly* by Michael O. Tunnel and James S. Jacobs, Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese’s article “Examining Multicultural Picture Books for the Early Childhood Classroom: Possibilities and Pitfalls” and Donald Murray’s chapter from his book, *A Fresh Look at Writing* “*Conditions for Teaching* *Writing”,* we will thirst to draft a piece of our own about a writing and literature project for our future classrooms. So far, we have looked at an amazing number of texts both in and outside our major content areas all describing multicultural literature. Donna Norton in *Through the Eyes of a Child:***

***An Introduction to Children’s* *Literature* states her evaluation criteria which include questions we must ask ourselves when selecting multicultural/non-stereotypical pieces for our classrooms. These are:**

**1. Are the characters portrayed as individuals instead of as representatives of a group?**

**2. Does the book transcend stereotypes?**

**3. Does the book portray physical diversity?**

**4. Will children be able to recognize the characters in the text and illustrations?**

**5. Is the culture accurately portrayed?**

**6. Are social issues and problems depicted frankly, accurately, and without oversimplification?**

**7. Do nonwhite characters solve their problems without intervention by whites?**

**8. Are nonwhite characters shown as equals of white characters?**

**9. Does the author avoid glamorizing or glorifying nonwhite characters?**

**10. Is the setting authentic?**

**11. Are the factual and historical details accurate?**

**12. Does the author accurately describe contemporary settings?**

**13. Does the book rectify historical distortions or omissions?**

**14. Does dialect have a legitimate purpose and does it ring true?**

**15. Does the author avoid offensive or degrading vocabulary?**

**16. Are the illustrations authentic and non-stereotypical?**

**17. Does the book reflect an awareness of the changing status of females?**

**With these questions in mind, you are to choose either a genre, topic or specific author and complete a close read of at least 15 of her/his texts. Using picture book formats is highly suggested but not required. As we have researched thus far, picture books are written for infants, elementary and middle school students, high school students through all adult levels as well. Take and keep your notes as you read each text. You are to read like a writer and write like a reader. These are parallel processes. Therefore, you will read each text at least twice - once as a reader and the second time as a writer looking for a select few texts in which you could create mini-lessons in order to teach your students reading and or writing strategies. After reading and analyzing the texts, you are to choose 6 of the books to create a text set again either about the genre, a specific topic (possibly inside your content area) or a specific author or author/illustrator. Similar to the pieces you constructed in class, illustrate the middle school or elementary classroom in which the reading and writing classroom would take place. Summarize each of the texts, speak to information the children at this age/stage would want to know plus some facts we as teacher candidates need to know as well. Summarize the main concepts of Calkins’ Writing Workshop and create three mini lessons using six of the chosen mentor texts. These mini lessons will follow the format developed by Lucy McCormick Calkins. They will be purposeful for a specific group of readers and writers. You will keep everything you have developed for this project. Destroy nothing having to do with this project as you will be submitting your notes as well as the paper and lesson plans. It is critical you know who you are writing the mini lessons/lesson plans for and why. They must be purposeful for the target lessons you are engaging. You may use any type of lesson plan as long as we converse about the model you are using. I.T.I.P. is typically used by the College of Education while I use Dorothy Menosky’s more wholistic approach which will be demonstrated in class. You may wish to start with one of the texts we have utilized in class or begin anew. Your choice may or may not be inside your major but it must be clear which grade level and content area or cross-curricular areas you are setting your space. For instance, you could combine language arts and the graphic arts, language arts and mathematics plus music or without music, language arts and history, language arts and one of the sciences or language arts and speaking to the area of autism, cognitive needs, emotional needs, physical needs, etc. Each one of us will journey through this process.**

**Pieces of the Project and beginning of formulation of dates for submission:**

**No later than - Topic, genre, theme and/or author(s) to be studied**

**Wednesday, An annotated bibliography of all of the books read and analyzed with an asterisk notation of the ones to be utilized in the mini lessons or lesson plans. If the book is an award winner, this should be noted after the annotated bibliography**

**Wednesday, Map of classroom with a narrative explanation – This must be computer generated.**

**Wednesday, Complete submission of the above plus the mini-lessons and a second bibliography of all books utilized for the study itself.**

**Presentations of one of the mini-lesson plans. There will be an average of 5 ten to fifteen minute presentations per day. These dates will be drawn on a first come, first served basis beginning March 10. Emails will be encouraged from 8:00 AM on March 8th. Students who have not emailed by March 10th will be given a date during class community on the 11th. Dates may not be changed except in the case of extraordinary circumstances and my permission.**

**The project itself is 25% of your final grade and the presentation of your mini-lesson is another 10% of your final grade. The presentation takes the place of a final examination because it is a demonstration of your capacity to read, write, think and present the research inside your interest area.**

**I thank my colleague and friend, Dr. Janet Navarro for sharing her writing workshop and literature project from fall 2010. After reading it, I combined her ideas and those I designed to create this project for you, our teacher candidates. Further discussion on the project will begin on**

**Examples from a project I am creating will be shared in class as well.**

**Calkins, Lucy McCormick, *Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.**

**Graves, Donald H., *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. pages 103 to 130.**

**Norton, Donna E., *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children’s Literature*, 4th edition. Prentice-Hall, 1995. page 566.**

**Tunnell, Michael O. and Jacobs, James S., *Children’s Literature, Briefly*. New York, NY: Pearson. 2008. 9780l3l734903 (or 6).**