

Final Teaching Project Assignment Sheet

Overview: This assignment asks you to conceptualize some teaching ideas centered on one focal text and a minimum of four other related texts. By focal text, I mean a short story, a poem, a novel, a play, or a piece of non-fiction that is substantial and textured enough to warrant close study in a literature classroom. For your supporting texts, you might choose a combination of types of texts; for example, you might choose a children's picture book, a song, a comic strip, a film, a commercial, a poem, a quotation, a newspaper/magazine article, etc. You have the freedom to choose any texts you would like. I encourage you to think of texts you have been exposed to in this or other classes, texts that appear in any of the literature anthology textbooks we assessed in class, or any other literature that you are familiar with that would be appropriate for a middle or high school language arts classroom. You may want to select a text that is commonly used or you may want to consider a text that you believe would be a positive addition to the established English curriculum. I or the Curriculum librarians (Paula or Sara) can help you if you need suggestions.

Requirements:

1. *Studying and understanding the texts.* (3-4 pages, double-spaced) In this section, you will be explaining the positive characteristics of the focal text you have chosen, plus a brief overview of the supplementary texts you have chosen. This portion should include the elements that you think will emerge from a reading of the focal text in the context of a language arts class. These elements might include literary devices, significance of the title, unusual or interesting stylistic techniques of the author, relevant themes, etc. In other words, what is interesting about this particular text? This section should include a couple (2-3) textual passages that you feel demonstrate some of the qualities you are claiming this focal text possesses. If you have chosen a short focal text (a short story or a poem), you will likely need to be more detailed than if you are writing about a whole novel, in which case you will likely need to focus on overarching elements you wish to highlight. For the supporting texts, you will write an abbreviated version of the analysis you have done for the focal text.
2. *Teaching rationale.* (2-3 pages, double-spaced) In this section, you will be explaining how your chosen text fits within a larger unit. This rationale should discuss the following points:
 - a. The broader scope of your unit, including how your focal text conceptually fits into this unit plan. What are your goals for this unit? In other words, what do you want your students to learn by the end of the unit? How will you approach this unit, and on which two or three aspects do you wish to focus? With what grade level/group of students do you see this unit working best? Why? How does this unit align itself with your own beliefs and assumptions about literacy, reading, and literature?
 - b. A listing and explanation of the supplementary texts that you will teach with this unit, and a brief explanation of your rationale in choosing each text. How does each text align itself with your focal text and your overall goals for this unit? (For novels, please include a bibliographic citation; for short stories, poems, or other short selections, please include a copy when turning in your project.)
3. *Teaching ideas.* (5-6 pages, double-spaced). Imagine that you are teaching your focal text, and describe at least three activities you would employ to teach this text. These may include a class discussion, a form of assessment, a writing activity, or a final project. These teaching ideas may be intended for use before, during, or after the students have read the text. These activities should help students make meaning of the

text and to help them interact with it in a way that encourages further consideration of the text by itself and in relation to your broader unit goals. Think about the type of instruction you would use to introduce the reading of the text. What teaching strategies would you incorporate as students were reading the text? How are you going to get the students to discuss it and make meaning of it? If you plan to orchestrate a class discussion, how are you going to do this? Ask yourself the following question: what do my students need from me to make sense of the text that I have chosen? How can I help them to appreciate and understand the text? How can I assess what they have gotten out of the text? Remember, you want variety in your teaching ideas. You should aim for activities that somehow encompass your overarching goals, but also activities that make students accountable for reading and comprehension. For each activity, include the following:

- a. *A description* of the activity with enough sample questions/directions so your reader can imagine it.
 - b. *An explanation* of the purpose in employing this teaching idea. What will students gain by engaging in such an activity?
4. *Synthesis.* (2-4 pages, double-spaced) This section is a reflection of how your ideas, beliefs, and experiences about reading, literacy, and literature as you explained them in your reading autobiography are reflected in your teaching plans for this unit. This needs to be a thoughtful, reflective, and critical section. Though this section is comparatively short, it is an important part of this assignment, and it will be weighted more heavily than other sections of comparable length.
 5. *One-page overview* of your final project for the entire class (please make 34 copies; alternatively I can have the copies made for you, but you will have to get me your master copy by Monday, December 6th by 10:00 AM). You will hand out this overview during your poster presentation so that all of your classmates have unit lesson ideas that they might use in their teaching careers. Please include a copy of the handout with this paper when you hand it in, even though you will be giving me the same handout during your poster presentation.

Poster Presentation

On the last day of class, Wednesday, December 8th, we will be meeting in Jones Commons (3rd floor of Lindquist) to have a class poster presentation conference. I will provide the poster boards, pins, and other supplies; you need to come to class that day with your materials for your poster and a plan for how you will put it together. We will begin class with a fifteen-minute set up time, during which everyone will put together their posters and place them on easels (I will provide the easels). After those 15 minutes, we will begin with our first round of eleven poster presentations. The people presenting will each speak for two to three minutes, while people in the class circulate and listen, each picking up the one-page handouts. We will have three rounds with eleven people each. Your presentation will be assessed on your content, your preparedness, and your professionalism.