KA6 MA English (Teaching) Learning Reflection

Candidates in the MA English (Teaching) program take core courses from one of two professors. While the Learning Reflection is fundamentally the same, each professor approaches this assessment from a unique perspective. The two perspectives are noted below.

Self-reflection is one of the most complex acts of cognition. It is multiply layered with tasks of analysis, argument, synthesis, summary, evaluation, and review. Different from self-expression in which you might express whatever is on your mind, self-reflection requires interpretation of your experience through meaningful intellectual activity. Self-reflection expects that you take stock of your experience and learning and allow the writing to enact the shape of thought rather than presenting it as already arrived. Self-reflection demonstrates the transformation of thought played out in the process of writing and the resulting meaning discovered in factual materials. When you self-reflect, you attempt to draw together the roles of observer and maker, accommodating several viewpoints and thereby negotiating academic discourse. Self-reflection demonstrates your mind at work, the process of mindfulness working on the page itself; it portrays your subjective view of an objective phenomenon.

For example, you might be asked to reflect upon several readings you have completed in your African-American women’s literature course and to demonstrate how your thoughts on a particular theme, topic, or idea have shifted in light not only of the reading you have done, but also in light of your own experiences inhabiting the represented textual worlds of African-American women writing. Or you might be asked to reflect upon the genetic experiments on hybrid shrimp you have been studying in your Introduction to Aquaculture class in relation to the work of Gregor Mendel or Barbara McClintock and to negotiate your own learning through the accounts of the inhabited worlds of their genetic revelations. Whatever the task, the job of self-reflection generally requires both inward musing and outward observation. It requires that you be of several minds on an issue, both subjectively inhabiting an idea and objectively reframing the possibilities. Self-reflection demonstrates the process of discursive negotiation on the page, and therefore is inherently more protean and tentative in its assertions than perhaps the work you might do to complete an analysis or argument assignment.

**Purpose of the assignment:**

To practice the skills of self-reflection and to get an idea about your progress in considering yourself as a teacher, a person developing toward critical literacy, a person responsible for teaching reading and literature, and your students as readers, this assignment asks you to assume a self-reflective stance on your growth and development during the course of this Theories of Literary Criticism for Teachers class. This assignment asks that you join in, continue, and/or transgress the ways in which you have accounted for “ways of behaving” like a teacher/student yourself, like a reading, literature and critical teacher committed (or not) to social justice, and for your (future/current) students as readers/writers/justice advocates or detractors with your own “self-reflective” representation of your experiences over the course of this class. What empirical evidence of your own experience do you wish to reflect upon and
fold into the conversation with people like Blau; Salvatori & Donahue; the folks in Graff & Phelan—Shakespeare and Twain from the great beyond; your author in the single author study, Womack, Buell, Appleman and Soter et al. are having about the value of critical theory, social justice and the teaching of reading and literature? What questions, problems, assertions have arisen in your experience that you might wish them to consider as they prepare to teach the next group of graduate students/teachers in their classes?

The purpose of this assignment is fourfold: It is intended (1) to give you an opportunity to take stock of and interpret your growth and development in this class and to reflect upon any transformation; (2) to provide you with an opportunity to represent your subjective views of your own development as a student of literature, critical theory and social justice; (3) to join in, continue, and/or transgress the conversations about literature, critical theory and social justice that appear in professional material; and 4) to reflect upon the grade you think you have earned in terms of criteria laid out in the syllabus (see p. 11-13 and the self-evaluation forms), which outline expectations for attendance and participation, speculative writing, formal writing assignments—the Transforming Hate exhibit and issues of peacebuilding we have thought about throughout the year, and the reading assignment expectations.

The organization for this writing may take any form and should grow out of your reflection. You may find yourself following some of the suggestions given in any of the other assignments depending on the form your reflection takes. This assignment allows for shifts in forms and approach because of the reflective, transgressive and evaluative nature of the form. You may find it helpful as you write to consider what form will best demonstrate your thinking-in-progress on this topic.

Think about the purpose of the assignment (see above) and the audience (me) and write thoughtfully and critically about the issues the assignment asks you to address. Another way to think about this rhetorical situation is to consider that I am a professional reader and writer...and your “Theories of Literary Criticism for Teachers” professor. What do you think I should know about your growth as a user of language, as a reader, a writer, a critical theorist or valuer of critical theory as someone who commits or not to the ideals of teaching for social justice during this course that will help me to plan for my class the next time I teach it.

Tell me where you think the class has succeeded, tell me where you think the class could use some improvement.... [I know you are constrained by this because I will give you a grade, but if you can be honest about these things, they will be the most helpful to me and perhaps to you as well....] Think about your own level of participation.... Tell me what you’ve learned about yourself as a rhetorical reader/writer/critic/scholar and where you stand on the matter of teaching for social justice that you are pleased about and tell me what you think you’ve learned about yourself as a student that might serve as a statement of your personal goals for growth...
FINAL SYNTHESIS AND REFLECTION PAPER ON LEARNING OUTCOMES

The purpose of this final synthesis paper is to summarize, reflect, and evaluate your knowledge, experience, and learning outcomes in young adult literature. To prepare for this paper, you should

-- re-read the course description and syllabus
-- gather all the young adult books we read in this course
-- review the course textbook, LITERATURE FOR TODAY’S YOUNG ADULTS
-- re-read all your response papers to the books
-- review all the presentation handouts
-- review the many teaching strategies you’ve experienced throughout the course
-- re-read your individual self-assessments on your own presentations
-- review the class presentations by the instructor and guest speakers

Write a 4-5 page, single-spaced paper in which you describe how your knowledge, experience, and attitudes with young adult literature have changed or expanded as a result of this course. Please be specific and include examples in your discussion of the following questions. You do not have to re-type the questions, but please number your responses to each question.

1. What background knowledge, experience, and attitudes did you have about young adult literature at the beginning of this course? How have these ideas about young adult literature changed or expanded as a result of this course?

2. Sometimes our ideas about books change when we talk with other readers. Identify at least two books in which your ideas changed as a result of our classroom discussions and/or teaching presentations. Discuss how your understanding and/or appreciation of the books evolved from your first encounters with the books to now.

3. From your perspective as both a presenter and a participant, what did you learn about reader response to literature, literary analysis, censorship issues, and teaching strategies? Which teaching strategies/presentations (identify the presenters, please) were most engaging for you? Why?

4. As a result of this course, what insights do you have about your own reading processes and preferences? How do these insights contribute to your development as an English language arts teacher?

5. Consider the books, discussions, and teaching strategies in this course. In what ways did this course address a commitment to diversity, equity, and fairness (e.g., multicultural and global education, Indian Education for All, gender equality, social justice issues, etc.)? How does your experience in our course inform your own teaching philosophy, practices, and commitment to diversity, equity, and fairness?
6. How would you describe the learning environment of this class? How did the instructor and students collaboratively create this environment? In what ways did the learning environment support diverse reader responses to literature? How do these insights contribute to your ability to create positive, respectful learning environments for your own students?

7. In what ways did this course embody the UM College of Education Conceptual Framework through the 3 essential elements of learning communities: Integration of Ideas, Cooperative Endeavors, and Respect for Individual Worth.
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<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>ABOVE AVERAGE</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
<th>BELOW AVERAGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of learning outcomes related to content; Values learning</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence of learning related to course objectives and content; detailed and appropriate evidence that candidate values learning in the discipline.</td>
<td>Good evidence of learning related to course objectives and content; clear evidence that candidate values learning in the discipline.</td>
<td>Some evidence of learning related to course objectives and content; some evidence that candidate sees his/her learning progress in the discipline.</td>
<td>Weak evidence of learning related to course objectives and content. No evidence that candidate values own learning in the discipline.</td>
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<td>Knowledge of learning outcomes related to literacy teaching strategies; Values professionalism to inform teaching practices</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence that candidate has learned multiple strategies for teaching literacy; detailed and appropriate evidence that candidate values professionalism to inform teaching practices.</td>
<td>Good evidence that candidate has learned several strategies for teaching literacy; appropriate evidence that candidate values professionalism to inform teaching practices.</td>
<td>Some evidence that candidate has learned a few strategies for teaching literacy; some evidence that candidate values professionalism and improve teaching practices.</td>
<td>Weak evidence that candidate has learned strategies for teaching literacy; weak evidence that candidate values professionalism and improve teaching practices.</td>
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<td>Knows and values learning outcomes related to instructional plans and resources, classroom management, decision-making; Values integration of ideas</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence that candidate values and knows how to plan instruction and select/use appropriate resources, manage the classroom, and make effective decisions. Strong evidence that candidate values integration of ideas.</td>
<td>Good evidence that candidate values and knows how to plan instruction and select instructional resources, manage the classroom, and make effective decisions. Clear and appropriate evidence that candidate values integration of ideas.</td>
<td>Some evidence that candidate values or knows how to plan instruction or select instructional resources, manage the classroom, and make decisions. Some evidence that candidate values integration of ideas.</td>
<td>Weak evidence that candidate knows how to plan instruction, manage the classroom, or make decisions. Weak evidence that candidate values integration of ideas.</td>
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<td>Values diversity, equity, fairness, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners; Values personal integrity.</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence that candidate values diversity, equity, fairness, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence of candidate’s commitment to personal integrity.</td>
<td>Good evidence that candidate values diversity, equity, fairness, and/or differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Good evidence of candidate’s commitment to personal integrity.</td>
<td>Some evidence that candidate values diversity, equity, fairness, and/or differentiated instruction. Some evidence of candidate’s commitment to personal integrity.</td>
<td>Weak evidence that candidate values diversity, equity, fairness, or differentiated instruction. Weak evidence of candidate’s commitment to personal integrity.</td>
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<td>Values collaboration, learning environment, professional behaviors</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence that candidate values collaboration, positive learning environments, and professional behaviors.</td>
<td>Good evidence that candidate values collaboration, positive learning environments, and professional behaviors.</td>
<td>Some evidence that candidate values collaboration, positive learning environments, and professional behaviors.</td>
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<td>Values Integration of Ideas, Cooperative Endeavors, and Respect for Individual Worth</td>
<td>Clear, consistent, and compelling evidence that candidate values integration of ideas, cooperative endeavors and respect for individual work of each learner.</td>
<td>Good evidence that candidate values integration of ideas, cooperative endeavors, and respect for individual worth of each learner.</td>
<td>Some evidence that candidate values integration of ideas, cooperative endeavors, and respect for individual worth of each learner.</td>
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COMMENTS: