



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

<p>Secondary English Education Student Teacher Screening Process and Portfolio Guidelines</p>

Timing & Process: The Final Three Semesters of the Secondary English Education Program

Here is the required sequence for moving forward into the student teaching semester:

- Semester 1: Screening Portfolio/Interview (and continued academic coursework)
- Semester 2: Observation (CI 315A with the final semester of academic coursework)
- Semester 3: Student Teaching (CI 315B/352F – full-time, 15-week student teaching)

One year before the student teaching semester, candidates for teacher certification in secondary English Language Arts must successfully pass through the English Department's student teacher screening process. Early in the second week of the semester in which the candidate intends to screen, screening applicants must submit *six copies* of their screening portfolios to the English Education screening committee. (Prof. Heather Johnson directs the screening process for the committee and collects the screening portfolios.) Committee members will evaluate the candidates' submissions and will subsequently meet to conduct individual, 30-minute interviews.

This portfolio submission and professional interview is the student teacher candidate's first step toward entering into the student teaching experience. Upon successful completion, he or she will be permitted to register for the following semester's CI 315A (observation), which leads to full-time student teaching in the final semester at SIUE. Once the candidate has successfully passed through the English Department's student-teacher screening process, the School of Education's Office of Clinical Experiences, Certification, and Advisement (OCECA) coordinates registration for CI 315A (observation) and arranges field placements at regional cooperating schools.

Information Session

At the end of the semester before the screening portfolio is due, the English Department conducts an info session for screening candidates. We typically meet in the afternoon on a Wednesday or Thursday during SIUE's exam week. Contact Dr. Johnson for details: heatjoh@siue.edu.

"B" Grade Point Average Requirement (minimum 3.0 GPA required)

To begin the student teacher screening process, a student teaching candidate must have good academic standing and an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (4.0 scale) as well as a 3.0 cumulative GPA in the English major *and* a 3.0 cumulative GPA in the speech communication education minor (with no incomplete grades on the SIUE transcript). All English and speech courses taken at all institutions count when we assess the cumulative GPA in English and in speech. All coursework (general education, English major, speech minor, and professional education) must be complete before the full-time student teaching semester.

Portfolio Submission

Applicant must collate the portfolio contents into ***six standard manila file folders*** with his or her last name written on the side tab of each folder (one folder will be distributed to each of the six members of the English Education committee). Submit the materials to Prof. Johnson at the beginning of the second week of the screening semester. This document describes all required materials. In addition, Prof. Jill K. Anderson has created a substantial packet, entitled *Useful Information about Academic Writing*, which offers advice about expository essay writing. That packet also discusses some of the professional standards of the Modern Language Association, and it has a section on mechanics that might be a helpful review of the conventions of edited standard English. An updated copy of the *Academic Writing* packet is posted at our English Education website: <http://www.siue.edu/ENGLISH/EDUC/>. **Note: All of the items in your portfolio must be revised. Do NOT include the same paper you used for a class—you have a new audience with new expectations.**

Screening Portfolio Checklist

_____ **Reflective Self-Assessment Letter**

short narrative, which gives the screening committee context and reasoning for why the applicant has chosen his/her representative pieces (1-2 pages; double-spaced); see pp. 3-4 of this document for details.

_____ **Teaching Philosophy**

concise statement of the applicant's attitudes and beliefs about teaching (maximum 2 pages, double-spaced); see pp. 4-5 of this document for details

_____ **Sample 50-Minute Class Plan**

formally written class plan, demonstrating your philosophy in action; rewrite a plan from English 475/485 or create a new class plan; use the English Department's planner; see pp. 7-11 of this document for a copy of the planning form

_____ **Literary Analysis**

essay that analyzes a work of literature (approx. 4+ pages; may include research; MLA style); see pp. 5-6 of this document for details

_____ **Essay with Research**

longer paper on any topic that incorporates research—e.g., an extended literary analysis or other form of analytical exploration (approx. 10+ pages; at least six sources; MLA style); see pp. 5-6 of this document for details

_____ **Optional Work**

additional piece of writing—only because the applicant wants to show the committee some other aspect of his/her personal writing style and ability (truly optional!)

GPA Checks and CI 315A Applications

In conjunction with the student teacher screening process, Prof. Jill K. Anderson, Secondary English Education Program Coordinator, will conduct transcript reviews and GPA checks. In addition, the School of Education's Office of Clinical Experiences, Certification, and Advisement (OCECA) collects a formal CI 315a – Pre-Student Teaching Application. Once students have submitted their portfolios, Dr. Anderson will contact screening candidates via email with instructions about OCECA's application process.

Portfolio & Screening Assessment

Candidates for student teaching should take this process very seriously. The screening portfolio is ultimately an examination of the candidate's ability to write with purpose, focus, and style according to the conventions of edited standard English and the professional standards of the Modern Language Association. Moreover, the screening interview assesses the candidate's capacity for proficient oral communication and professional comportment. If the candidate's portfolio is sloppy or immature, if the candidate does not demonstrate skill in oral communication, or if the candidate does not exhibit an understanding of basic English pedagogy, then the committee will ask the student to screen again the following semester. In extreme cases, the committee may request that the student withdraw from SIUE's Program in Secondary English Education.

Advice for Portfolio Compilers

Hints and Tips from SIUE English Faculty
Prof. Jill Anderson, Heather Johnson, and Matthew Johnson

Reflective Self-Assessment Letter

Your letter of reflection should accomplish two main goals. First, it should introduce your portfolio and its contents to its readers. Second, it should serve as a brief analysis of your experiences as an English Education major at SIUE. There are a number of ways to complete these tasks (and the following list is certainly not exhaustive). You might:

- offer a *brief* summary of your experiences as an English Education major
- discuss activities that you do outside of class that are related to English Education/teaching
- “teach” your portfolio readers how to read your papers: that is, explain what the original assignment was and how you completed it and how you've revised it; show what improvements (in analytical thinking, writing, etc.) your papers signify
- discuss explicitly how each of your papers fulfills the objective of the screening portfolio: to quote Prof. Anderson's earlier language, “The screening portfolio is ultimately an examination of the candidate's ability to write with purpose, focus, and style according to the conventions of edited standard English and the professional standards of the Modern Language Association.” (What is your purpose? What is your focus? How has your style changed? Why has it changed?)

- You may want to communicate what precisely your instructor was originally asking you to do for your papers; then again, this is a *different* audience, so the English Education Committee will have *different* expectations, which means that you should already have revised your papers for this specific writing context (which means that perhaps what your instructor originally asked you to do is still important, but only in terms of how you chose to revise your papers for this portfolio, which is also a way to self-reflect!).
- (if you are a transfer student and if applicable) compare your pedagogical experiences at SIUE and other institution(s) you attended.

The best self-assessment letters will probably include some combination of these suggestions (among other possibilities). Ultimately, you need to *consciously* show how you have *reflected* on your writing, your teaching, your learning—and how that reflection benefits you as writer/teacher. Think of your letter of reflection as an argument that makes a claim in answer to the following question: Why/how does this portfolio reveal my abilities/strengths as writer (or development as writer), future teacher, and thinker? An impossible genre, perhaps: that’s why the letter is so difficult, so important, why it takes so much time and effort. It is the first impression that you give. It colors the rest of the portfolio reading. It shapes your readers’ assessments. Be honest, but don’t sell yourself short! Make a good first impression.

Teaching Philosophy¹

Teaching philosophies are highly personalized, so it is best to write an initial draft from the heart without a specific structure in mind; for example, don’t follow a conventional five-paragraph design because pre-planned formats limit your thinking. Your own voice needs to come through. Your teaching philosophy should give the reader a solid sense of why you are (or want to be) a teacher, the kind of teacher you are (or want to be), what kind of preparation for and experience in teaching you’ve had, and what your goals are. A good teaching philosophy will succinctly and sufficiently address three specific areas: personality, philosophy, and pedagogy. It’s called a “teaching philosophy” because you are explaining your philosophy of teaching (in this case, teaching English, both literature and writing). This means you should explain why you think education is important, what you believe are the primary responsibilities of English educators, and what in your own experience and education has brought you to these conclusions. It doesn’t matter that you have not taught before; you have to claim your territory—i.e., don’t make excuses for your inexperience or say things like, “I haven’t been a teacher, but...”

Be sure to:

- Read through the document with a critical eye toward polish and professionalism—e.g., eliminate such vagaries as “I feel that...” and purge such trite expressions as “I want to help students grow....” We know you all love English and literature and writing. Move beyond that. We know you all want to inspire students and be there for them. Move beyond that, too. Illustrate those professional goals, rather than blatantly stating those obvious facts.

¹ Some of this advice is adapted from Prof. Susan Fanetti—formerly the coordinator of English Education here at SIUE, currently a member of the English Department at California State University, Sacramento.

- Add an example (“For example, in my high school English classroom, I will...”). Concrete, but brief, examples demonstrate to your reader that you have a sense of what you really may be doing in a classroom—e.g., if you say that you want a student-centered classroom, then what do you mean by that phrase? And, more to the point, what student-centered reading/writing assignments do you have in mind? What pedagogies have you demonstrated in your methods classes or planned in your academic lesson planning assignments (in such courses as ENG 475/485)?
- Be creative, but not too radical. Don’t be conservative, either, as you do not want to sound like all the other teaching philosophies out there; it’s really easy to be “vanilla” here. You might offer as an example a scholar or two who has influenced your teaching, but don’t be a carbon copy of, say, Peter Elbow—you need to communicate what *your* philosophy of teaching is, not someone else’s. If you don’t already write with a distinctive, authentic personal voice, you need to work on developing one. Although a teaching philosophy statement is a formal document and must be in academic prose, infuse yours with as much of your personality as you can.
- Do more than just storytell. You might include a specific pedagogical moment that you experienced as a teacher, if you have one, or as a student (that is, an example might be nice), but don’t dwell on it too much, and make sure it has a purpose (it demonstrates something important about you).
- If you can knowledgeably reference influential education scholars and theorists, you should—but don’t drop names gratuitously.
- Keep your audience in mind: the people who will be reading your teaching philosophy in the future will be education administrators and fellow teachers. It may well be that your teaching philosophy was heavily influenced by a negative experience, but it’s not a good idea to criticize your past teachers too strenuously or categorically; you don’t want to sound like you are accusing your readership of bad pedagogy!

While institutions differ regarding what materials they ask of job candidates, the teaching philosophy is fairly standard. The earlier you begin working on the teaching philosophy, the better, and it is good practice to continually update it as you go, perhaps even throughout your career. That said, the teaching philosophy is an impossible genre. You want to communicate what your audience wants to hear (you care about teaching and students), but in a way that sets you apart from other candidates (but not so far apart that your philosophy is “out there” or offensive).

Literary Analysis & Essay with Research

The literary analysis is your place to demonstrate your critical thinking skills, your ability to engage closely with a text, and your application of effective writing strategies (and by extension, your ability to model these skills effectively for your students). The longer essay with research does this, too, but the best researched essays will also show your ability to think independently *in spite of* the pressure of other influences (the authors whom you’ve discovered through research) and your ability to interact with others in your chosen field, as part of a larger community of scholars. No classroom is an island—or at least it *shouldn’t be*—you should be open enough to

integrate new teaching strategies and philosophies into your own practice, but independent enough to alter them to suit your needs or to reject them when necessary. In other words, these two documents demonstrate what you will aspire to be as a teacher *and* a scholar. As always, the integrated source material and the works cited page for each paper must be professionally formatted in Modern Language Association style.

When writing/revising these two papers, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Both the literary analysis and the longer essay with research must present and develop a **strong main claim or thesis** that makes an actual argument (that is, the main claim is NOT merely an opinion or a description). Think of the thesis in two parts: first, the claim itself; second, commentary on the *significance* of that claim (this latter element could be addressed in the conclusion, rather than the introduction, of the essay). Some notion of why the claim is important, what we learn from it, or how it inspires us to think differently will serve these papers well.
- Both papers must be logically and effectively organized, with well developed paragraphs and smooth transitions between them. General rule of thumb: if paragraphs can be taken out or put in multiple positions without changing the argument flow substantially or requiring major and careful revision, then the structure of the paper has not been considered carefully enough.
- Both essays must do MORE than merely summarize. In the case of the literary analysis, do *not* just summarize literary work or explain the most basic message of the text; your readers can discover this on their own—you need to give them something more, something that they can't get from a simple reading. Same goes for the longer essay with research: don't just summarize your sources, *do* something with them (see next note). You will need to very briefly summarize primary texts, just in case your new audience is unfamiliar with them, but do it *very rapidly*—just a few sentences should be sufficient, if you practice brevity.
- The essay with research must provide evidence from outside sources that you then *use* or *interpret*. A true scholar doesn't simply collect data and then report it: you need to clearly show how the research you've done helps you to develop and complicate your overall argument. In other words, the source material can be used to support claims, certainly, but also can be used to complicate, counterargue, challenge, shape, illustrate, show by metaphor/example, prove, etc. Source material cannot stand on its own, but rather must be dealt with in some way. The essay with research should NOT be a data dump nor a mere report of information. *You* are still the author, the thinker, the person with something to say.
- For the essay with research, you need to integrate at least **six** sources. Excessive use of non-academic online sources, especially websites, is highly discouraged. Try to demonstrate your ability to interact effectively with different kinds of sources, especially traditional scholarly works. *Show* your readers that you've considered the degree to which any given source can be trusted and that you've thought through its appropriate use.
- Papers should be significantly revised. Remember that you are writing in a different context and to a different audience than that for which the paper was originally intended. Don't assume that we're all familiar with specialized jargon that you might have discussed in a class or with the minutiae of particular historical periods.

- This portfolio is a specialized compilation that demonstrates your aptitude for professional writing and presentation. Your papers must maintain good diction and proper mechanics (readability) with interesting, varied sentence structure and careful, compelling word choice.
- Each essay should have an interesting and/or catchy title that somehow relates to the paper’s main claim or content in general (that is, the title needs to be informative first, clever second).
- Don’t use fancy fonts or odd spacing/layout. Since part of the task is to demonstrate your membership in the *profession*, you need to demonstrate that you understand the conventions of that profession. Scholars in English, education, and related fields don’t want flash; they want substance. Again, follow MLA style.

Sample 50-Minute Class Plan

As teachers, we make class plans for ourselves—not only to keep ourselves organized, but also to reflect on our own teaching strategies. Any class plan will implicitly answer rhetorical questions about the students we are teaching, anticipating how they will respond to the plan when it’s put into practice. Remember that, for this class plan, you have yet another audience in mind: the portfolio readers. These readers will have just read your reflective letter and your teaching philosophy, and they will expect to see your reflections and your philosophy illustrated in your class plan. Below, you’ll find the standard class planner used by English student teachers.

Daily Lesson Planner for English Student Teachers

Student Teacher’s Name:	
Day & Date:	Grade Level:
Subject: What course are you teaching?	
ELA Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary text—e.g., Mary Shelley’s <i>Frankenstein</i>, Walton’s introductory letters • Major topic/theme/concept—e.g., framing narratives <p>The ELA content consists of texts, assignments, topics—e.g., list a piece of literature, a specific writing assignment, and/or an organizing topic (as above).</p>
Context	<p>This is your evaluator’s introduction to your plan. Introduce and flesh out the plan’s context. How does this lesson fit into a larger curricular unit? Where has your class been before you have arrived at this point? Where are you headed?</p> <p>Think carefully about audience. Remember that this plan is a written document.</p>

	<p>Your evaluator has nothing other than what you include here to enable his or her comprehension of your pedagogical intentions; therefore, you must explain the context fully. As necessary, include multiple paragraphs of narrative discussion. Attach any materials that your reader requires to understand your plan, including a copy of the text upon which your lesson is based (unless too lengthy). Use parenthetical statements to refer your reader to any attachments.</p>
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Objectives and Rationale</p>	<p><i>Objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What content are you teaching your students today? • List topics, assignments, activities • etc. <p><i>Rationale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important that you cover this material? That is, what is the reasoning behind these objectives?
<p>Required Materials (Student)</p>	<p>List exactly what the students need to bring to class and, when appropriate, attach copies of any supporting materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • textbook or novel—e.g., student copy of <i>Frankenstein</i> • typical expectations—e.g., notebook, journal, binder, pen • etc.
<p>Required Materials (Teacher)</p>	<p>List exactly what you need to bring to class and, when appropriate, attach copies of any supporting materials. As mentioned above in the context section, use parenthetical statements to refer your readers to any attachments that you have included with your plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • textbook or novel—e.g., copy of <i>Frankenstein</i> • discussion notes—e.g., prepared prompts for close reading (see attached) • handouts—e.g., framing narratives graphic organizer (see attached) • etc.

<p>Illinois Learning Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with the <i>Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts</i>: http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/standards.htm. See end of this document for an explanation of how the goals and standards operate. • List key benchmarks that this plan addresses (cite and quote them exactly), and then briefly describe how this plan enables students to meet those benchmarks. Don't list too many; select the most appropriate (perhaps three?). • Clearly differentiate between the ISBE benchmark language and your explanation.
------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Opening Routines and Getting Started (5 minutes?) <i>Transitioning from...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list of the routines that you will follow at the beginning of each class period. • For example, will you take attendance? Will you post a brief plan on the board? • How will you remind students about the previous class (or classes)? • Will you have students journal? or complete any other consistent warm-up activities?

<p>Major Activities (timeline? time estimates?) <i>Your to-do list and content preparation...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a comprehensive list and fully flesh out each aspect of your plan. 2. For example, if you indicate that you want to lead a class discussion, then list your discussion prompts. How will you elicit and enable a meaningful discussion? 3. If you plan to deliver a mini-lecture on a literary concept or to give historical context, then what will you say? Include your prepared notes. 4. Think about how you will logically order the things that you need to do and how you will enable students to do what you want them to do (modeling, examples, etc.). 5. Note parenthetically when a separate handout accompanies an activity, and attach any accompanying handouts to this lesson planner. 6. Consider attaching a narrative script that delineates exactly how you imagine this class would progress over the course of a 50-minute period of instruction.

<p>Closing Routines and Homework (5 minutes?) <i>Wrapping up... Transitioning to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list of the routines that you will follow at the end of each class. • How will you prepare students for the next class (or classes)? • Will you have students journal? or complete any other consistent concluding activities?

- Will there be an accompanying homework assignment?

Student Assessments (throughout)

Measuring student progress...

- How will you assess (informally and formally) that your students are getting what they are supposed to be getting?
- etc.

Teacher Self-Evaluation (during/after class)

Self-Reflection for future revision...

- What questions should you be asking about your performance as a teacher in terms of self-assessment? Create a list of questions/prompts for self-evaluation.
- etc.

List of Sources (brief list of works cited)

Record the origins of your various ideas, activities, and materials.

For future reference, don't lose track of your sources. I have listed the ISBE website for you as an example. Include entries for any literary texts you cite in your plan. In addition, list entries for all borrowed materials (for example, borrowed handouts from teacher resource websites like the NCTE's *ReadWriteThink* or the NEH's *EdSiteMent*).

Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts website:

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/standards.htm>

Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/standards.htm>

Make sure you read the *Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts*, which are broken down into five separate, and yet interconnected, goal areas for English Language Arts (ELA) content instruction. You'll find the PDF files and MSWord documents for each ELA goal at the bottom of the main goals and standards page. It would be a very good idea to print these out and collect them into a packet for future reference. Here is the list:

Goal 1 – Reading

Goal 2 – Literature

Goal 3 – Writing

Goal 4 – Listening and Speaking

Goal 5 – Research

The Illinois benchmarks are a measure of the skills and content that we hope all students will acquire at various grade levels: early elementary (level 1), late elementary (level 2), middle/junior high (level 3), early high school (level 4), and late high school (level 5). In a formal plan, it is customary to cite the specific benchmark and to quote the content goals that the plan addresses. Use the five goal/benchmark charts, located in PDF and MSWord documents at the bottom of the front page of the *Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts* website. You must open each of the five individual goal PDFs or DOCs to see the ELA goals aligned in tables with their grade-level benchmarks. Read the table across and down by category and student level.

***Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts:
Classroom Assessments and Performance Descriptors***

If you want additional information (beyond the goal and benchmark tables described above), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) breaks down the learning standards and goals into further detail with sample assessments. See the ELA *Classroom Assessments and Performance Descriptors* section of the ISBE website: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/capd.htm>.

Additional Questions about the Student Teacher Screening Process?

Prof. Heather Johnson: heatjoh@siue.edu
Screening Director

Prof. Jill Anderson: jiander@siue.edu
Secondary English Education Program Coordinator

Contact information is posted at the Secondary English Education website:
<http://www.siue.edu/ENGLISH/EDUC/>