



Western Massachusetts Writing Project
Department of English
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Certificate in the Teaching of Writing

Overview: The Certificate in the Teaching of Writing is sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, a professional development program within the Department of English, and the Division of Continuing and Professional Education. Participants complete courses totaling 15 graduate credits in writing and literacy pedagogy courses to develop their capacity as teachers and teacher-leaders in the field. **NOTE: Certificate recipients may go on to receive an M.A. in English from UMass by completing 6 additional courses.**

Purpose and Goals: K-16 educators enrolled in the Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program receive a strong grounding in writing and reflective teaching, while developing a framework for teaching writing and literacy across the curriculum. Participants gain a deep understanding of literacy learning through a combination of working on their own writing, reflecting on their teaching practices, and reading current research in composition, literacy, and writing pedagogy. Following the National Writing Project model of “teachers teaching teachers,” participants share successful writing activities and develop and implement curriculum. They formulate research questions about their teaching practices and document the effects of their instruction by collecting and analyzing student work.

Need: High-quality professional development in the field of literacy (including literacy in the disciplines) is in high demand. Many schools and districts in western and central Massachusetts – and sometimes the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – look to WMWP to provide courses and workshops for teachers. All of WMWP’s programs for teachers are led by teachers, and the certificate is an avenue for teacher-consultants to develop expertise, confidence, and flexibility as teacher-leaders in their schools and in WMWP programs.

Curriculum: There are three required courses totaling 9 credits, usually taken in this order:

- English 591AA WMWP: Summer Institute (3 credits)
- English 591AB WMWP: Summer Institute Inquiry (3 credits)
- English 712 Writing and the Teaching of Writing (3 credits)

There are several electives that can fulfill the remaining 6 credits:

- English 591C Writing Teachers Writing (1 credit)
- English 591G Professional Writing (1 credit)
- English 591T Teaching with Technology (3 credits)
- English 591LL Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits)
- English 591P ELL Leadership Institute (3 credits)
- English 592D Principles/Practices of Effective Content Literacy Curriculum Design (3 credits)
- English 592E Teaching Social Justice through the Lens of the Holocaust (3 credits)
- English 592K Collaborative Coaching (1 credit)
- English 592L Civics Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits) (Pathways to Leadership)
- English 592R Reading and Teaching Literary Nonfiction and Informational Texts (3 credits)
- English 592S Science Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits) (Pathways to Leadership)
- English 592T Topics in Literacy Education (1 credit) (may be repeated for up to 3 credits)
- English 593C College, Career, and Community Writers Program (3 credits) (Pathways to Leadership)
- English 593R Reaching and Teaching All Learners (3 credits) (over)

Other courses offered through the WMWP professional development program and the English Department Composition and Rhetoric Program are also eligible as electives, and relevant courses from the College of Education and other departments or institutions may be counted by permission of the WMWP director.

The Summer Leadership Institute (591AA), which is normally the starting point of the Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program, is open by application to teachers at all levels of education and in all subjects. Admission to the Summer Leadership Institute includes acceptance into the certificate program, which is an optional extension. The institute engages participants in three key activities: personal writing and peer response, reflection on and sharing of literacy teaching practices, and inquiry into pedagogical questions in the educational literature. Participants develop from this experience an inquiry stance and an inquiry question to be examined in action research in their classrooms the following year (591AB). Having completed these two steps, they are deemed WMWP teacher-consultants, eligible to lead professional development programs.

Those who wish to go deeper may pursue the remaining requirements for the certificate. Writing and the Teaching of Writing (712) offers a theoretical foundation and explores practical questions in the teaching of writing, and the electives enable participants to develop particular areas of expertise while building their leadership skills in literacy education and their capacity to have an impact on colleagues in their schools, districts, and region. **The primary objective of the program is to develop teacher-leaders** who not only demonstrate effective teaching practices in their own classrooms but also influence other teachers and administrators through leadership of professional development programs and peer-to-peer interactions. The certificate program can be completed in as little as two years, depending on course availability and participants' own schedules. The Summer Leadership Institute and Inquiry courses are a full-year sequence, and the remaining courses can be taken beginning the following year.

While the sequence outlined above is typical, it is not the only possibility. Sometimes teachers are introduced to WMWP through professional development courses offered in their schools, in which case, they might complete an elective before enrolling in the Summer Leadership Institute. The exact sequence of courses is less important than the overall objective of teacher leadership.

Process: Summer Leadership Institute fellows who wish to pursue the certificate program should declare their intentions to site director Bruce Penniman by the conclusion of the inquiry course (591AB) including documentation of any requirements already fulfilled. Certificate candidates are responsible for monitoring their progress and notifying the director when all requirements are completed, supplying transcripts as needed. Certificates will be awarded at the annual Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing Conference.

Availability: The Summer Leadership Institute and Inquiry courses are offered annually. Writing and the Teaching of Writing is offered every other year. Elective courses are offered regularly through the sponsorship of school districts and/or Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or by open enrollment through Continuing and Professional Education. While not guaranteed, the following courses would lead to completion of the certificate program by 2019. Other courses may be substituted for the proposed electives.

Semester	WMWP Course Possibilities	Typical Cost
Fall/Spring/Summer	1-credit courses: English 591C, 591G, 592K, 592T (electives)	\$147 + \$0–250 fee*
Fall/Spring 2018/19	Pathways to Leadership: C3WP, Civics, Science (electives)	\$347 + \$500 fee*
Spring 2019	English 712: Writing and the Teaching of Writing (elective)	\$347 + ~\$375 fee*
Summer 2019	English 592E: Teaching SJ thru Lens of Holocaust (elective) †	\$347 + parking fee
Summer 2019	English 591AA: Summer Leadership Institute (required)	\$347 + \$500 fee*
Fall/Spring 2019/20	English 591AB: Summer Institute Inquiry (required)	\$347 (591AA fee)
TOTALS	15 credits (3 required courses plus 6 credits of electives)	Variable Net Cost

*Fees pay for teaching of courses. Fees are waived when courses are supported by grants or schools. †Tentative.

Please contact site director Bruce Penniman (penniman@english.umass.edu) if you have questions about the certificate program or would like to join the new cohort of certificate candidates. Please state the courses you have completed and the years you enrolled in them.