

**COURSE TITLE:** WRITING & READING WORKSHOP: Engaging the Adolescent

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 60

**NO. OF CREDITS:** 6 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

**OREGON PDUs:** 60

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 60

**INSTRUCTOR:** Deb Lund  
deb@deblund.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

We know student choice in reading materials and writing topics increases lifelong literacy, but how can one teacher manage it all? Using Nancie Atwell's third edition of her popular text *In the Middle* (wit 80% new material), we'll explore details and procedures for organizing, launching, and maintaining successful writing and reading workshops. With hundreds of mini-lessons, mentor texts, techniques for teaching multiple genres and for conferring with students on their reading and writing, Atwell's new edition "is everything I've learned over the past three decades that makes writing-reading workshop the only logical way to teach English." Author and creativity coach Deb Lund (who began teaching writing/reading workshops a few years before Nancie) is excited to be your guided and invisible teaching partner in this writing intensive, transformational course.

Appropriate for teachers grades 4-12. The Atwell text is about \$50.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Articulated the reasons for and benefits of teaching writing and reading in classroom workshop settings.
2. Developed procedures, activities, and expectations for reading and writing workshops.
3. Acquired techniques for respectfully conferring with students about their reading and writing.
4. Designed lessons to address writing topic development, genre features, and techniques of craft, conventions, and spelling.
5. Designed lessons to address procedures, craft, conventions, and spelling.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

---

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

---

---

---

**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
- 
- 
- 

**CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor

numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

*In the Middle, Third Edition: A Lifetime of Learning About Writing, Reading, and Adolescents.* ISBN# 0325028133 by Nancie Atwell Heinemann. Available through Amazon for approximately \$50.

None. All reading is online.

### **MATERIALS FEE**

\$40-50 text fee (or \$20 to rent) to be paid to amazon.com. or another bookseller of your choice. The text may also be available at local and school libraries for free.

## **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Course Forum - Learning How to Teach**

**Chapter One: Learning How to Teach.** Read the first chapter of *In the Middle*.

Using the statements and questions below as guidelines, thoroughly reflect on the information covered in each section of this chapter, considering how it conflicts or aligns with your teaching style and philosophy, how you might apply what you learn, and what effects any changes you make may have on your students.

1. Compare and contrast your experiences in teaching writing to the experiences of Nancie Atwell in the section "Learning How to Teach." Which, if any, ideas presented in this section of the chapter are you ready to incorporate into your teaching of writing?
2. In "Finding a Balance," Atwell covers the school she founded and the writing workshop research conducted there. What did she learn from this experience that can help you achieve balance in your teaching?
3. Teaching reading also requires balance. In "What About Reading," Atwell discusses literary conversations. What implications do her ideas on teaching writing have for your reading classes?
4. Do you have other thoughts you'd like to include about learning how to teach?

#### **Assignment #2: Course Forum - Getting Ready**

Chapter Two: Getting Ready

Consider the following questions as you design organizational and management tools and techniques for your own reading and writing workshop, using the examples from this chapter as models (also see the Appendix in our text). Comment on any existing posts and share your thoughts and student responses to the tools and techniques you may have incorporated into your workshops.

1. In "Making Time," Atwell discusses the structure of her writing and reading workshop block.
  - What elements will you include in your daily progression of activities?
  - Which of these elements are new to you, and how will you introduce them to your students?

2. What physical space considerations will you incorporate in your classroom setting to make your writing & reading workshops more successful?
  - If you've already made changes, reflect on what is working or not working and why.
  - What materials and supplies do you need to incorporate the changes you want to make?
  - How will you organize everything?
  - What might help students take ownership in keeping things flowing smoothly?
3. How will you establish order in your workshops?
  - What rules will you use in your workshops?
  - How will you track and record students writing and reading information?
  - Do you have ideas for other ways to organize and manage your workshops?

### Assignment #3: Course Forum

1. Before reading Chapter Three of *In the Middle*, jot down your concerns about launching a writing and reading workshop. As you read, reflect on how the material did and did not address your concerns.
2. Using Atwell's reading and writing surveys as models, design your own survey(s). Administer a student survey you created and analyze the results.
  - Did you see value in surveying the students? Why or why not?
  - How could you use survey results to revise your workshop practices?
  - What have you and/or your students learned from your experience in designing, analyzing, or incorporating writing and reading surveys?
3. Atwell discusses "writing territories" and her use of them in classroom settings.
  - What are your writing territories?
  - How will you use this concept with students?
4. Determine the elements Atwell includes in her book talks.
  - Write and then present at least three sample book-talks to your students.
  - Design a Book Talk lesson for students to assist them in creating their own book talks. Include a template for student use, and a step-by-step process for them to follow which may include questions, a chart, or other organizational tools. How will these book-talks be shared or presented?
  - Share 2-3 student samples of book-talks and a 2-3 page reflection on these book-talk activities.

### Assignment #4: Course Forum - Essential Lessons for Writers

1. Writing Workshop Procedure Mini-lessons:
  - Read Atwell's list of 21 possible topics for teaching writing-workshop procedures (pages 103-104).
  - Select three of these related topics and create mini-lessons for them.
2. Writing Craft Mini-lessons:
  - In the section "Craft," Atwell covers a variety of genres and mini-lesson possibilities (page 107), along with many anecdotes, notes, and results.
  - Create three "craft" mini-lessons using Atwell's topics (or your own).
  - Include instructions and samples by you (and students if possible).
3. Writing Convention Mini-lessons:
  - Select at least three mini-lesson conventions-of-writing topics from Atwell's list (pages 142-144).
  - Write three mini-lessons on the topics you selected. Include examples, materials, and instructions.

### Assignment #5: Course Forum

1. Listen to Penny Kittle in the video below, and as you complete this assignment, also consider how you will nurture lifelong reading in your students.  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/q-MQmMjNwGs?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>
2. Read Chapter Five of *In the Middle*. "Essential Lessons for Readers"
3. Consider Atwell's list of reading workshop mini-lesson about procedures and the sample mini-lessons that follow them.
  - Determine which topics would make up your top five.
  - Create specific reading workshop procedures for each of those five topics.

- Design lessons for teaching those procedures to your students.
4. Choose three topics from Atwell's list on "practice" and write mini-lessons for each of them.
  5. Share the "Readers Bill of Rights" with your students or colleagues.
    - What do they think of it? Do they believe anything should be deleted or added?
    - Reflect on the responses you received about the "Readers Bill of Rights" in a 1-2 page paper.
  6. A psycholinguistic model can explain what happens when we read.
    - After studying the information on this, write your own version of what happens in a 1-2 page paper.
    - What reading goals do you have for your students based on this psycholinguistic theory
  7. As you read through Atwell's suggested list of mini-lessons about literature, select and list topics
    - to present to your reading-workshop students.
    - In a 2-3 page paper, discuss how would you teach these to writers.
    - How could you use each of these three topics in a writing activity?
  8. Summarize Atwell's teaching of poetry.
    - Which ideas and activities will you incorporate in your classroom and why?

#### **Assignment #6: Course Forum - Responding to Writers & Writing**

1. Read Chapter Six of *In the Middle*. "Responding to Writers and Writing"  
 Watch Nancie Atwell conferring with students on this video or others you may find online:  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/yHnwLXdte4M?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>
2. Read Chapter Six of *In the Middle*. "Responding to Writers and Writing"  
 As you read, jot down any insights or ideas you want to remember for conferring with your own students.
3. This chapter begins with a list of ten student survey results about the types of responses that help them with their writing. Create at least one sample response for each of these ten results.
4. Design tools and techniques to help in conferring with students about their writing.  
 As you determine what to create, consider these questions:
  - How will you track which students you have spoken to and what you covered with them?
  - What do you think are the most critical aspects to consider while conferring with students about their writing?
  - How will you gain student trust and cooperation to ensure successful writing conferences?
  - What strategies will you incorporate to keep things moving smoothly in your classroom as you hold conferences with individual students?
5. Study Atwell's "Writing Conference Guidelines."  
 - Restate her nine points in your own words.  
 - Convert these guidelines into a list that you can refer to for inspiration.  
 - Where will you post and how will you use your personalized guidelines?  
 - Using the revised guidelines you created above, evaluate your progress in facilitating writing workshop conferences. Where do you feel successful and where would you like to see improvement?
6. Atwell addresses several "Red Flags and Responses" in this chapter. What did you learn that will be especially helpful for you in your teaching situation?

#### **Assignment #7: Course Forum - Responding to Readers & Reading**

Read Chapter Seven of *In the Middle*. "Responding to Readers and Reading"

1. In 2-3 pages, discuss what might a reading "check in" look like.
  - What topics might be covered?
  - What outcomes or results might you see from a "check in?"
2. What are "Letter Essays About Literature?"
  - What insights did you gain from the examples in the reading?
  - How could you incorporate these letters into your teaching?
3. Record and/or notate at least one conversation you have with a student about his/her reading.

4. Share an anecdote about your experience implementing the ideas in this chapter, whether it occurred in a conversation or in a different type of experience with teachers, parents, administrators, students, and/or other individuals.
5. Respond to the essay content of other participants in this course.

### **Assignment #8: Course Forum - Valuing & Evaluating**

Read chapter eight of *In the Middle*. "Valuing and Evaluating"

Write a 2-3 page essay that includes responses to each of the following questions:

- Have your beliefs on evaluating students changed at all through this course?
- How can student writing and reading be most effectively evaluated in a workshop setting?
- In your opinion, what are the pros and cons of evaluating students in a manner that is consistent with this text?
- What is most critical to you in evaluating your students?
- How can you more easily incorporate district, state, and national standards, rubrics, benchmarks, testing, etc. into your workshop evaluation process?
- How will you evaluate your teaching?

### **Assignment #9: Part II: Genres**

Part II of *In the Middle* focuses on various genres: Poetry, Memoir, Short Fiction, Business (reviews, essays, advocacy journalism, and profiles) and Humor and Homage make up this second part of the text. This is an extensive assignment, covering a large amount of material. Though it could have been made into four separate assignments, I put them all together to give you an opportunity to see the variety in your own writing and to more easily look at pieces by other participants. Think "first draft" unless you really want to perfect each piece, but please don't judge yourself. Enjoy the process!

#### 1. Chapter Nine: Poetry

- What elements of poetry make it such a good teaching tool?
- Select and describe five forms of poetry covered in Chapter Nine of the text.
- Write your own poems for each of these five forms to use as examples.

#### 2. Chapter Ten: Memoir.

- Pay attention to the voice in each memoir piece you read in Chapter Ten.
- Write a short memoir of your own. Atwell's "Questions for Memoirists" can help you get started.
- Use the questions listed in Atwell's "Genre Study of Memoirs: Responding to Readings" to help you revise your memoir. Find the best conclusion for your memoir by considering the information in Atwell's "A Dozen Approaches to Memoir Conclusions."

#### 3. Chapter Eleven: Short Fiction

- Create a character using Atwell's "Main Character Questionnaire"
- Write your own fiction piece using the examples given as mentor texts, and using Atwell's "Features of Effective Microfiction" as guidelines for your writing.
- Fiction needs conflict and suspense. The optional card deck Fiction Magic: Card Tricks & Tips for Writers is designed to help writers keep tension in their writing.
- How can you increase the tension in your story? Revise your story with that in mind.

#### 4. Chapter Twelve: Taking Care of Business

- Reviews: The guidelines and examples for book, movie, and TV show reviews in this chapter are extensive. How could you use them in lessons with your students?
- Essays: Use Atwell's "Features of an Effective Essay" and "How Do I Scratch the Itch?" to create a 1-3 page essay on any topic related to the teaching of writing and/or reading. Comment on the essays of others.
- Advocacy Journalism (Persuasive Essay): Using "Features of Effective Advocacy Journalism" as guidelines and the process outlined by Atwell in this text, write a 1-3 page essay that contains at least one interview with quotes.
- Profiles: Using Atwell's "Features of an Effective Profile," her outline of the process for writing one, and her idea lists and checklist, write a profile.
- Humor and Homage: Using Pablo Neruda's odes as examples, and the guidelines and ideas from Atwell, create your own ode of at least 12 lines.

5. Write specific comments on at least five pieces by other course participants.

## ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

---

#### Assignment #10: Modeling (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

1. Nancie Atwell, Lucy Calkins, and other current writing workshop teachers you may know are not the originals. People like Donald Graves, who you will hear in the video below, provided the shoulders for Nancie and others to stand on. Writing teachers need to write. In this video, Graves tells you how to get a writing class started. Notice and take to heart his first words:

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/cZ\\_sXJKiiSA?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/cZ_sXJKiiSA?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0)

2. How will you model reading and writing in your workshops? In your discussion, make sure these questions are addressed:
  - How will or have you used mentor texts?
  - How will or have you used demonstrations?
  - If you've watched Atwell's videos (and/or others), how will you use what you've learned?
  - Have you found helpful websites or other resources on modeling the writing process for students?
  - How will you incorporate more modeling of the writing process?
  - How has it been to write in front of your students in whole class (white board or projector) and small group settings, sharing your internal thoughts as you write?
3. You have completed several writing projects in this course. Write a 1-2 page essay about that experience using specific information about your actual writing, and your process, thoughts, and feelings as you completed the work. Share your essay with your students to get their feedback, revise with their help, and then share your final version in our forum. Give specific feedback to at least five other participant essays.
4. Create or revise at least three mini-lessons using your own writing and current published literature as mentor texts for each of these three lessons. Include student verbal or written responses and at least one student example of work related to each mini-lesson. Upload your lesson plans when you finish.

#### Assignment #11: Lessons to Share (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Now it's your time to share what you've learned to benefit not only your students, but students everywhere.

1. Write up 1-3 additional writing and/or reading lesson plans you created and taught during this course, complete with mini-lessons, conferences, and other activities that may have taken place. Provide at least one student-writing sample from your classroom if possible (with each student's name changed and with their permission) for each lesson you submit. Upload these plans below.
2. Answer the following questions about your experience with each of the plans you created and shared:
  - Do you feel this lesson was effective?
  - Why or why not?
  - What would you do differently?
3. Select a piece of student writing.
  - Assess the student writing using evaluation tools and techniques you used or developed in this course.
  - Comment on the effectiveness of the tools and techniques you employed.
  - What, if any, adjustments would you make to the tools or techniques you used?
4. Throughout this course, you have explored and created tools to help you manage your writing and reading workshops.
  - Of these tools you created or revised, which were the most effective and why?
  - How did you teach your students to use them?
  - What management issues need to be further addressed? What are your ideas for fixing them?

5. Write a lesson plan that includes at least one of the tools and/or techniques discussed above. Take us step by step through the use of the tools or techniques from their introduction to students through the student outcomes. Upload the lesson plan, including any tools you focused on in the lesson.

### **Assignment #12: Evaluating Your Success (Required for 400 and 500 Level)**

1. Write a 2-3 page essay on how your views and/or teaching methods have evolved throughout this course. Include references to specific course reading and activities, along with anecdotes from classroom activities. As you write, these questions may help you:
  - What changes have you made?
  - Have any of your perceptions about teaching writing changed?
  - What do you wish you had known earlier?
  - What areas covered in this course will you continue to focus on?
2. Create and assign a student survey on the current state of your workshops, including any changes you have made in your writing and reading teaching practices. Collect and discuss their responses in class. Write a 2-3 page paper about this experience using the following questions as guidelines only:
  - What did the students appreciate about your class, especially any changes you've made?
  - What frustrated them?
  - Have your students' attitudes about writing and reading changed? If so, how?
  - What insights did you gain from this activity?
  - Does their feedback suggest areas you might continue to work on?

### **Assignment #13: (500 Level ONLY)**

Select and complete ONE of the three following assignments:

1. Write a 2-3 page essay on the writing-reading workshop to share with other teachers. Include your struggles, successes, surprises, and student outcomes. Address any concerns or issues you initially had and/or your peers may have. Plan how you will share this information—at a meeting, or in a flier, magazine, newsletter, email, blog post, video, or other.
2. Read a text from the syllabus bibliography (or one pre-approved by the instructor), summarize your findings, and write a paper on how you will incorporate the ideas from the chosen material into your teaching.
3. Another assignment of your own choosing with the instructor's prior approval.

### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #14: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
  2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
  3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
  4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
  5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
- 
- 

#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

**Deb Lund** is a bestselling children's author, a creativity coach who partners with those who want more joy and meaning in their lives, and a past classroom and music teacher, teacher-librarian, and founding director of an arts-based school. Deb is a popular presenter at schools, libraries, and conferences. Her master's project focused on teaching writing, and for the past few decades, she has taught teachers, students, and writers of all ages. Deb is especially passionate about supporting those who share her commitment to getting kids reading and writing. Learn more about Deb at [www.deblund.com](http://www.deblund.com)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WRITING & READING WORKSHOP: Engaging the Adolescent

**Atwell, Nancie**, *Lessons That Change Writers*, Heinemann, 2002, 3-ring binder, 1080 pages, ISBN 978-0-86709-506-7  
Mini-lessons have become a popular vehicle for writing workshop teachers to use to support student learning. Atwell, author of the popular book *In the Middle*, provides over one hundred mini-lessons grouped by categories, accompanied by the theories behind them, with student examples, and hundreds of reproducibles.

**Atwell, Nancie**, *Writing in the Middle Third Edition*, Heinemann, 2015, 629 pages and DVD, ISBN 978-0-325-02813-2  
Atwell guides writing workshop participants through the methods she covers in this edition of her celebrated classic, *In the Middle*. Atwell says this comprehensive text "is everything I've learned over the past three decades that makes writing-reading workshop the only logical way to teach English." Among other skills, this edition helps teachers set rules and expectations, confer with students, present mini-lessons, and inspire young writers.

**Calkins, Lucy**, *Units of Study in Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing, Middle School Series Bundle: A Common Core Workshop Curriculum, grades 6-8*, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2014, ISBN 978-0-325-05375-2  
The tools in these units of study will help you meet the Common Core standards for your writing program.

**Calkins, Lucy McCormick**, *The Art of Teaching Writing, New Edition*, Heinemann, 1994, paperback, 564 pages, ISBN 0-435-08809-2  
In the past couple of decades that writing workshops have spread like wildfire through classrooms around the world, Calkins' text assists teachers at all grade levels and levels of writing teaching experience. This new edition is almost an entirely new book, containing everything from setting up your writing classroom and motivating students to assessment and integrating writing throughout the school day and beyond.

**Hicks, Troy**, *The Digital Writing Workshop*, Heinemann, 2009, paperback, 176 pages, ISBN 978-0-325-02674-9  
Hicks shows grade 7-12 teachers how to use technology to enhance the writing teaching they already do. Popular writing workshop topics like student choice, revision, author craft, revision, and publication are included in this exploration of online resources and guidance for incorporating new technologies.

**Kittle, Penny**, *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice, and Clarity in High School Writing*, Heinemann, 2008, 272 pages, DVD, ISBN 978-0-325-01097-7  
Kittle honors the gifts of teachers when it comes to modeling writing to students. This award-winning book and DVD will give teachers confidence in all facets of teaching writing.

**Lehman, Christopher**, *A Quick Guide to Reviving Disengaged Writers, grades 5-8*, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011, 96 pages, ISBN 978-0-325-04280-0  
Middle schoolers can be the masters of disengagement. Recognizing that all students, adept and struggling writers alike, lose steam at times and need a revitalizing jump start, Christopher Lehman offers effective, developmentally-appropriate fixes for addressing situations that frequently sidetrack or distract adolescent writers.