

## **Assignment 1: Website Development and Maintenance** **ED 440, Liz Homan**

As one of the major requirements of this course, you will design a professional website that you can take with you into your professions as teachers, if you choose to do so. My primary goals for this assignment are for you to:

- Gain digital literacy strategies and skills over the course of the semester.
- Critically consider the role of digital writing technologies in your teaching.
- Develop an online space in which you present yourself as a professional educator and archive evidence of your preparation to teach.

Though these are my biggest goals for the project, you may find that you learn other things about yourself as a writer, teacher, or professional in the process of developing your site. I hope you'll find the development of your site a generative learning experience as we move through the semester. **I am always available to help you troubleshoot issues or to help you realize your vision for your webspace – never hesitate to ask for help!**

### **Requirements and Options for developing your site:**

1. You may use any of the following web platforms to develop your webspace:
  - a. Wordpress (which I strongly recommend): [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)
  - b. GoogleSites: [sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)
  - c. Blogger: [blogger.com](http://blogger.com)
  - d. There are others, OR (if you already know how to do this!) you can html code your own site. OR if you already have a site you want to tie this into, you can do that, too.
2. You **must include** the following “pages” on your website:
  - a. **About Me page** with a picture and description of you and the site
  - b. **Teaching Artifacts Space that Contains:**
    - i. **Sample/favorite lesson plans** (with your reading and writing mini lessons, at least, plus any others you would like to include)
    - ii. **Unit plan calendar and rationale**
    - iii. **Sample/favorite assignments** (with your writing prompt, at least, plus any others you would like to include)
    - iv. **Practice videos and reflections** (with *either* your discussion lesson video *or* your reading mini-lesson video, at least, plus any others you would like to include).
  - c. **Teaching Philosophy** (you may also include a discipline philosophy! Good for when you're on the job market).
  - d. **Resources** that you find throughout the semester. Lists of good books to read? Readings that inspire you?
  - e. **Reflections** about your experiences in the field. Emily and Marcy will tell you more about their expectations for these.

### **A few tips and helpful hints to get you started:**

- A “page” is a stagnant page that doesn't change. In contrast, a “post” is like a blog post – any subsequent “posts” will show up over the previous post in your blogroll. We are going to treat Wordpress and Blogger like website development spaces, when in fact they are designed for bloggers. That's okay – they actually do a great job making websites, too!
  - o In your Wordpress dashboard, go to Pages → Add New to add a new page.
  - o To set a page as the homepage, go to Settings → Reading, click “A static Page” under “Front Page Displays,” and pick which page will be your homepage

- You can also treat your “homepage” as a blog space for reflecting on your teaching experiences. This might be the best way to handle posting reflections for 307.
- Yes, you *can* “attach” documents and PDF files to these webpages that your reader/viewer would need to download in order to view. However, Internet viewers tend to skip over things that require a download, so as often as possible, place the actual text of your lesson plan or unit plan *in the page*.
- Remember, this is a professional space. Thus, you should think carefully about the theme you choose, the design of your site, and what you choose to include and say. You’re putting yourself out there for the world to see who you are as a professional. This requires you to make professional choices!
- In Wordpress, the “Dashboard” is where you make changes to your site. You can also view your site by clicking on its name in the upper left-hand corner. In GoogleSites, clicking “edit” or the little pencil in the upper right corner of any page will enable you to edit that page.
- You will not break your website by clicking around and experimenting. It’s easy to worry that by clicking on something “wrong,” you might mess up your site – the good news is, even if you make a mistake, we can fix it! One of the fastest ways to learn about digital spaces is to experiment with them. Play around with settings, themes, etc., and if you hit a snag, come see me.
- You can monitor how many people view your site! Under “site stats,” it will tell you if people are viewing your stuff, what pages they are viewing, etc.
- Team up with a buddy to design the site initially, or to have “website study sessions” where you add material to your site – it helps, when dealing with tech, to have someone with whom you can troubleshoot.

A few sample teacher webspaces:

- A class website to keep students up-to-date about what’s going on, by “Doc Z,” a teacher in Boulder, CO, using GoogleSites: <https://sites.google.com/a/bvsd.org/doc-z-s-slcc/>
- Troy Hicks’, a professor at CMU, professional website/blog: <http://hickstro.org/>
- A class website to keep students up-to-date and archive curricular materials, by a teacher in Okemos Michigan, Dawn Reed: <http://reedd.edublogs.org/>
- A “blarchive” of my own teaching materials plus blog posts, by me (not because I think this is a perfect sample, just another sample): <http://lizhoman.wordpress.com/>

I’ll continue updating this list as I come across more examples! However, you should make your webspace your own. Don’t rely too much on what others have done – make it meaningful to you and your teaching!