

# READING RESPONSE FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION IN AN ENGLISH METHODS COURSE

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## Abstract

The author describes the impetus and context for a change to her in-class reading response learning activities and shares a reading response framework that prepared students to lead class discussions.

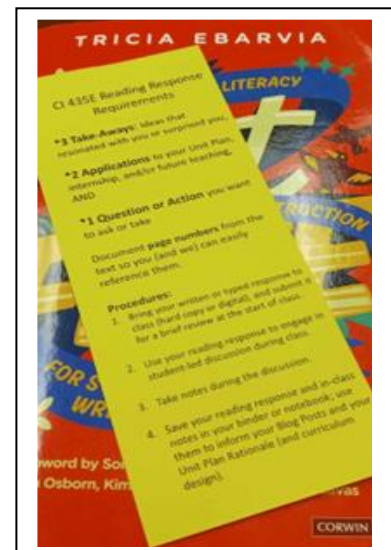
**Keywords:** reading response framework, student-led discussion, teacher education course

Over the past few years, I have made significant revisions to most of the courses in Wichita State University's middle/secondary English education program, which I have overseen since 2010. From designing an applied learning experience for my young adult literature course in collaboration with program graduates who are also local English language arts teachers to proposing and building a brand new course on teaching grammar in context, the past 30 months have been filled with exciting changes to my program! For this Teaching Tip, I want to share about a small change I made to my newly revised CI 435E English Methods II course in fall 2024. But first, some context:

CI 435E is a 3-credit course my students take during fall semester of their senior year directly before their full-time teaching internship (a.k.a. "student teaching") in the spring. Prior to this course, students have completed three English methods courses with me—one on curriculum design (with a focus on backward design), one on grammar instruction, and one on literature for adolescents. They've taken numerous general methods and education courses in my department (School of Education), and they also complete a course on theories and methods of composition, as well as various literature and linguistics courses with my colleagues in the English Department. So, they have a good deal of content and pedagogical knowledge prior to their senior year.

In fall 2024, I updated the CI 435E textbook to Tricia Ebarvia's 2023 *Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers* and revamped the course assessments. I also decided to redesign the structure for our weekly class meetings, which are approximately three hours with two 10-minute breaks.

Instead of my leading the discussion and learning activities as I do in most of my English methods courses, I wanted this course to rely on student-led discussion during the reading response portion of each class meeting (usually about 40-60 minutes each week). And I wanted students to arrive to class already prepared with their discussion points (rather than allotting think time/write time, as I do in most of my class meetings). So, I designed the framework below and shared it with students on the first day of



class; I also printed it on bright yellow cardstock in “bookmark” form, so they could keep it with their textbook and other required readings for the class.

When students arrived for class each week, I quickly (five minutes) reviewed their preparation and made note of completion (or not) in my class meeting notes while they reviewed the text and gathered their thoughts. (Caveat: this in-class review would be more time-consuming in a larger class, and I can envision revising the reading response to be submitted via our Learning Management System prior to class for my review.) We then sat in a circle, and I invited a volunteer to start the discussion.

I was delighted to discover that my students were not only eager to share their insights and questions about the reading, but they were enthusiastic about *leading* our discussion while I participated alongside them. Instead of my preparing slides and discussion prompts for the readings each week, I engaged as a fellow discussant, took notes on their contributions, and offered up my own. The student-led discussion allowed me to see what my students found most meaningful to their practice, rather than my determining that for them in advance.

This reading response framework invited students, who’ve already taken several courses with me, to share more ownership in the direction and success of our weekly class meetings, and it’s something I will continue to use and develop in future iterations of this course.

### CI 435E Reading Response Requirements

**\*3 Take-Aways:** Ideas that resonated with you or surprised you,

**\*2 Applications** to your Unit Plan, internship, and/or future teaching, AND

**\*1 Question or Action** you want to ask or take

Document **page numbers** from the text so you (and we) can easily reference them.

#### Procedures:

1. Bring your written or typed response to class (hard copy or digital), and submit it for a brief review at the start of class.
2. Use your reading response to engage in student-led discussion during class.
3. Take notes during the discussion.
4. Save your reading response and in-class notes in your binder or notebook; use them to inform your Blog Posts and your Unit Plan Rationale (and curriculum design).

### Author Biography

Katherine (Katie) Mason Cramer, Ph.D. (she/her) is starting her 16<sup>th</sup> year as Program Chair and Professor of English Education in Wichita State University’s School of Education. Prior to earning her doctorate, Katie was a middle school English teacher in Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools. She has been a member of KATE and on the Executive Board since moving back to Kansas (from Arizona and Georgia) in 2010, and she has served as Editor of *Kansas English* since 2017. Under her leadership, *Kansas English* has been honored with NCTE’s Affiliate Journal of Excellence Award in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. Katie’s research and publications center the use of young adult literature to recognize, affirm, and teach diverse genders and sexualities in ELA classrooms and curricula. She can be reached at [Katie.Cramer@wichita.edu](mailto:Katie.Cramer@wichita.edu).