

Action Research Project & Proposal

Present on 4/10

Overview

For this project, you will explore a particular topic from class as it relates to the Ball State Writing Program. You will use a combination of secondary and primary research for this project including: key sources from composition journals and books, peer institution research, and local research such as surveys and/or interviews.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is create a well-informed proposal that may used by the Ball State Writing Program in the future.

This project specifically meets the following course goals:

- Be familiar with key topics and readings in Writing Program Administration
- Learn to conduct action research, including peer institution research
- Be able to write and present a proposal to address an issue in a writing program.

Steps

1) Choose a general topic

Topic options: Curriculum Development, Assessment, Placement, Retention, TA Prep, Faculty Development, Labor, Other as Approved

2) Complete Secondary Research. Become an expert on your topic.

Recommended Databases & Journals: Comppile, Communication & Mass Media Complete, WPA Journal, CCCCs, Composition Forum, Journal of Writing Assessment, WAC Clearinghouse

3) Become familiar with how the BSU Writing Program approaches your topic.

Make an appointment with one of the Writing Program Administrators.
Jennifer Grouling, Director

Mary Clark-Flynn: Associate Director
TA Prep, some placement

Adrienne Bliss, Assistant Director
Dual Credit, Faculty Development

Leo Huisman, Assistant Director
Assessment, Curriculum Development (esp. textbooks)

4) Conduct Peer Institution Research. Learn how they approach this topic.

List of potential schools:

<https://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/effectiveness/frequentlyaskedquestions>

You may get enough information online, or you may need to contact their staff.

5) Prepare literature review report.

Synthesize the academic research on this topic and what peer institutions are doing in a report due 4/10.

6) Brainstorm Proposal Options.

What do you think we should change at BSU? Why? Think of several options/changes.

7) Prepare 1-page handout and presentation.

Simply state the issues and possible solutions for your audience of WP Staff members.

8) Present to the WP staff on 4/10

Focus on getting their input on the direction of your proposal.

9) Choose a direction for your proposal based on feedback

From the changes you brainstormed, which direction do you want to go? What will work best for BSU?

10) Conduct additional research, including surveys or interviews at BSU

Follow up by getting input and information from WP staff, faculty, and TAs. Melissa Hull, Administrative Assistant, mhull@bsu.edu can put you in touch with faculty and TAs.

11) Revise Part One of your project

Do more secondary and peer research as needed. Reframe literature review to lead to your proposal.

12) Write Part Two—the Proposal

Propose the changes you've come up to for the writing program. Add this part on to the literature review paper.

13) Present the final proposal to your peers at the final exam on 5/1

We will pretend to be the Writing Committee and will hear your proposal. You will also turn in the full project at this time.

Format

We will use a common format as a class. Here is my suggestion, but we can modify it as we go.

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Peer Institution Research
- Local Research
- Proposal

Grading

This project will be graded at two separate points.

4/10: Part One is the literature review that includes both secondary sources and peer institution research. This part also includes a one-page handout and presentation to the writing program visitors in class. I'll be looking to see how thoroughly you've covered the topic and if you have a good sense of what common practice is related to your issue. (Hint: Recent sources are key!) I'll also look at how well you synthesize the work on this topic and divide it into subtopics for clear presentation. Your proposed solutions should clearly follow from the research that you've done.

5/1: Part Two is the entire project, including the literature review and proposal. I'll be looking to see how you have responded to the feedback from the writing program staff and the additional research you've gathered from the BSU faculty and TAs. You'll need to incorporate a new section for this research into your paper. The most important part of the project at this point, however, is the proposal. A strong project will have a proposal that clearly comes from all of the research that has been gathered and that makes sense at BSU.

Collaboration

You may collaborate on this project. However, there may only be ONE project per topic. Either way, you will likely collaborate with someone from the writing program administrative staff.

If you choose to collaborate, I will expect that you both work on ALL aspects of the project. This means that you BOTH read all of the sources, interview transcripts, etc. If you take the lead on one part of the research, you share that with your partner. And you write everything together, not piecemeal. If one partner does not equally contribute, they may receive a different grade.