



How to Redesign Writing -Intensive Courses in Your Discipline

A Departmental Approach to Improve Student Writing Across Multiple Programs

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Overview & Timeline
- Survey Development, Analysis, and Key Findings
- Focus Group Development, Analysis, and Key Findings
- Current Action & Future Plans



Introductions

- Name
- Department
- Classes you teach
- What brings you here today?
- What can we help you address?



Overview

- Department has two undergraduate programs offering a total of 12 -14 sections of PH & RECL 100W each semester. Our courses are cross -listed in NUFS & NURS.
- The Public Health program has recently undergone a curricular revision that began implementation in the Fall 2020 semester, and the Recreation program anticipates a similar revision to its curriculum in the next 2 -3 years.
- In anticipation of supporting new, more rigorous courses, program leadership worked with key 100W instructors to strengthen the 100W course and improve student writing skills across the curriculum.



Goals

Provide:

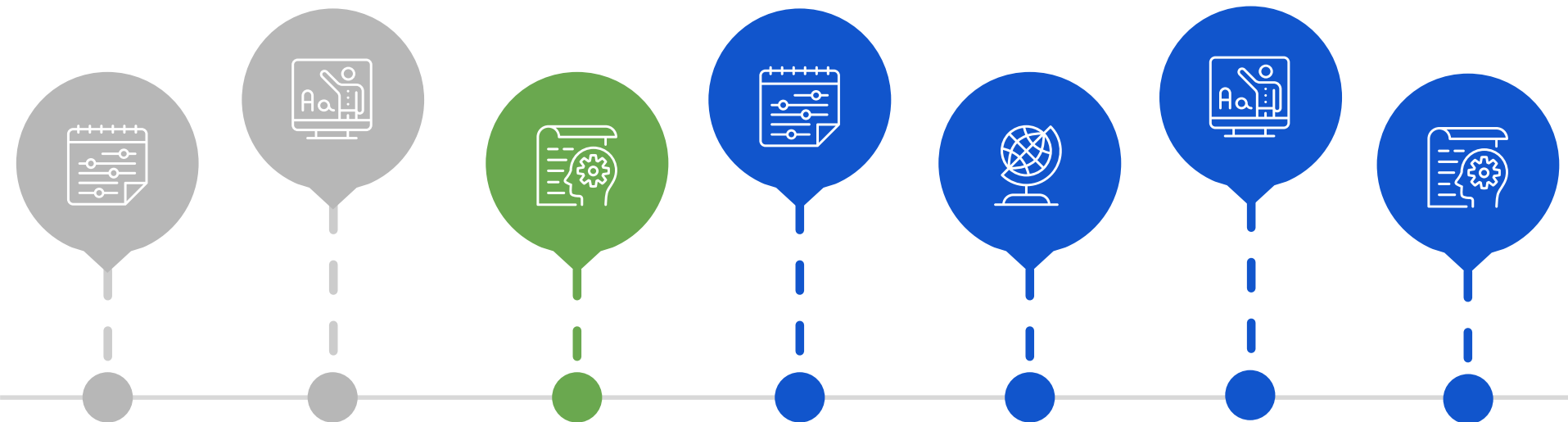
- Scaffolding of writing knowledge and faculty expectations
- Uniform standards for writing in lower and upper division courses
- A template for assignments and rubrics
- Tools for supporting faculty in better guiding and assessing student writing



Steps

- Survey all PHR undergraduate faculty to capture experiences, needs, best practices, insights, and recommendations for students' writing
- Conduct focus groups of instructors of writing intensive courses
- Develop assessment plan for all 100W sections
- Establish minimum qualifications for 100W instructors
- Develop onboarding materials for new 100W instructors and ongoing materials for current faculty

Timeline



Summer 20

Draft survey
Submit IRB
Application

Fall 20

Faculty survey
Faculty interviews
Analyze survey data

Spring 21

Design assessments,
rubrics & syllabus
Design assessment
plan
Pilot assignments,
rubric & syllabus

Summer 21

Test assessments,
rubrics & syllabus
Test assessment
plan
Revise assignments,
rubrics, syllabus

Fall 21

Implement new &
revised
assignments, rubrics
and syllabus
Collect data on new
assessment plan

Spring 22

Analyze assessment
data
Develop onboarding
process
Assessment
standards for WAC

Fall 22

Design assessments,
rubrics & syllabus
Implement
onboarding process
Implement
standards



Survey

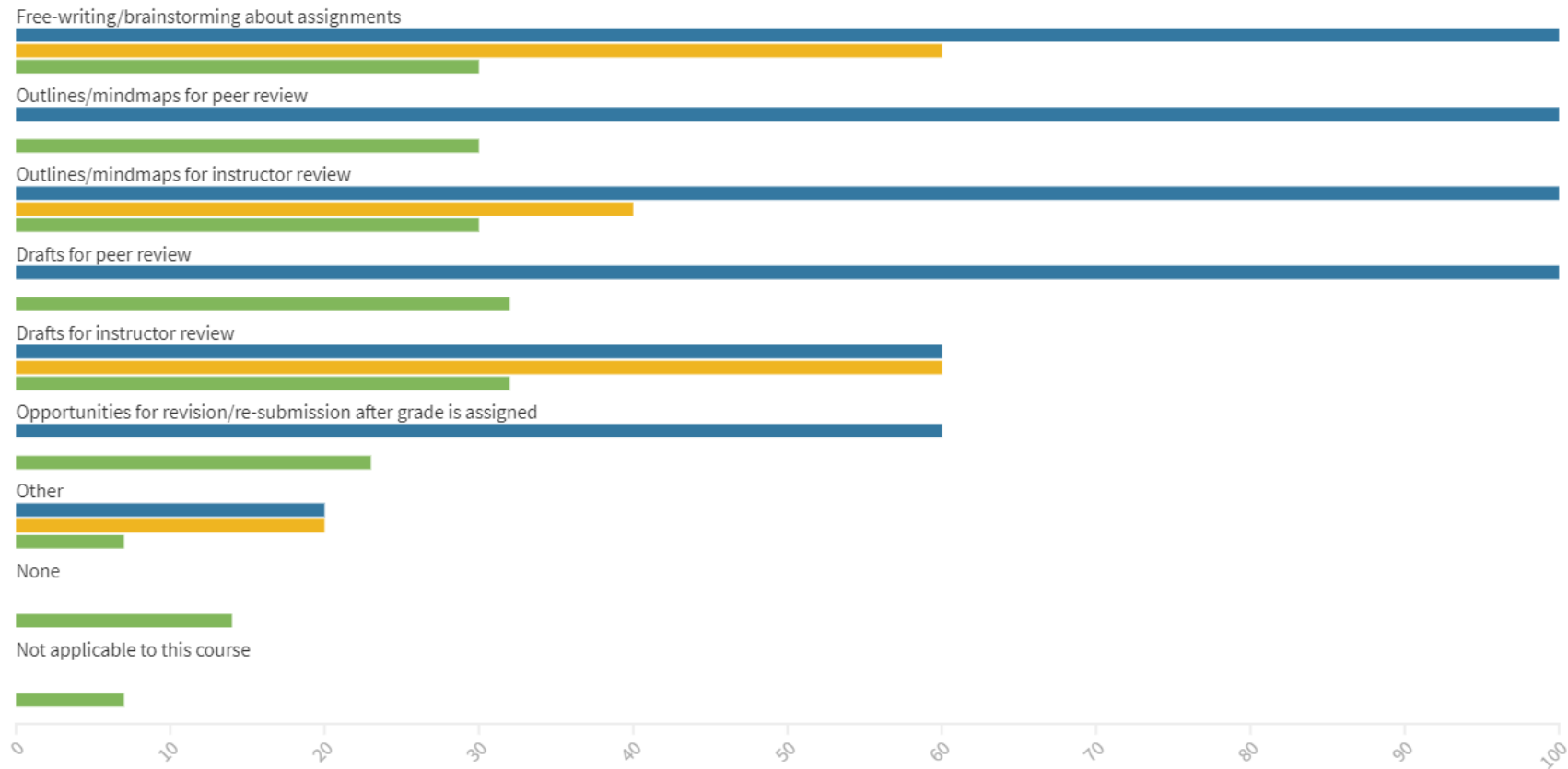
- Modified survey previously developed by School of Social Work
- Surveyed all undergraduate instructors in department
 - 40 responses (80% response rate)
- Questions designed to identify current in-class instructional support, writing processes, areas for development, and types of support needed to help students improve their writing
- Survey available here: https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6LK1A4VT5PTIzoF



How do you incorporate the writing process?

(Percent of responses)

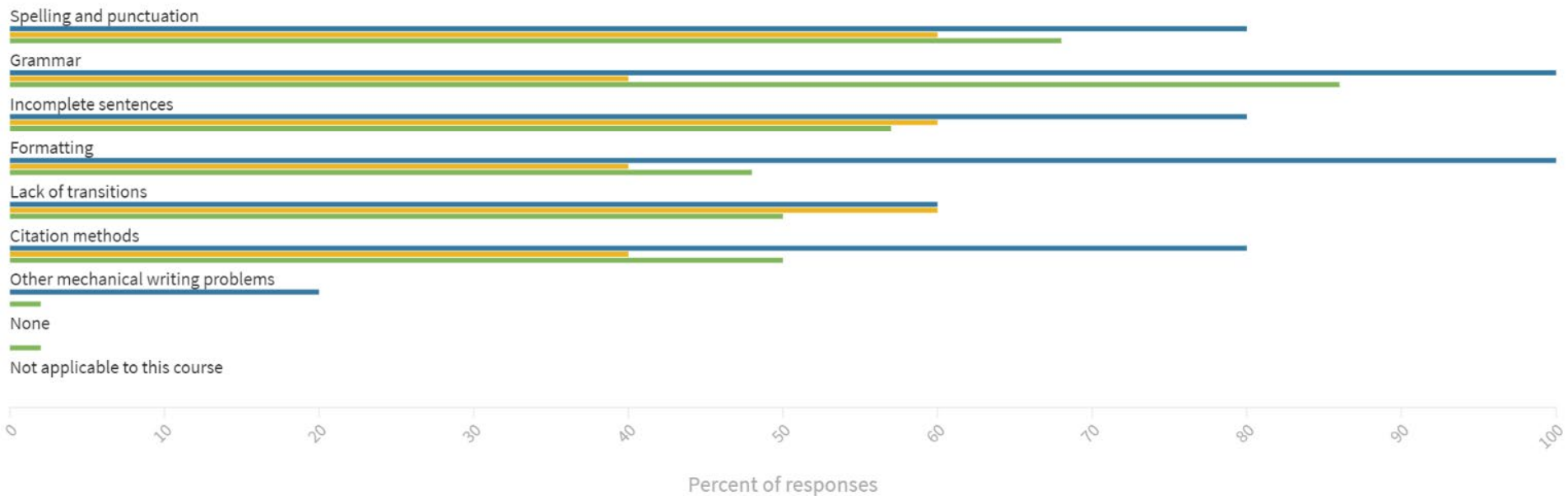
100W (n = 5) SJSU Studies (n = 5) Other Upper Division (n = 44)



Number of responses

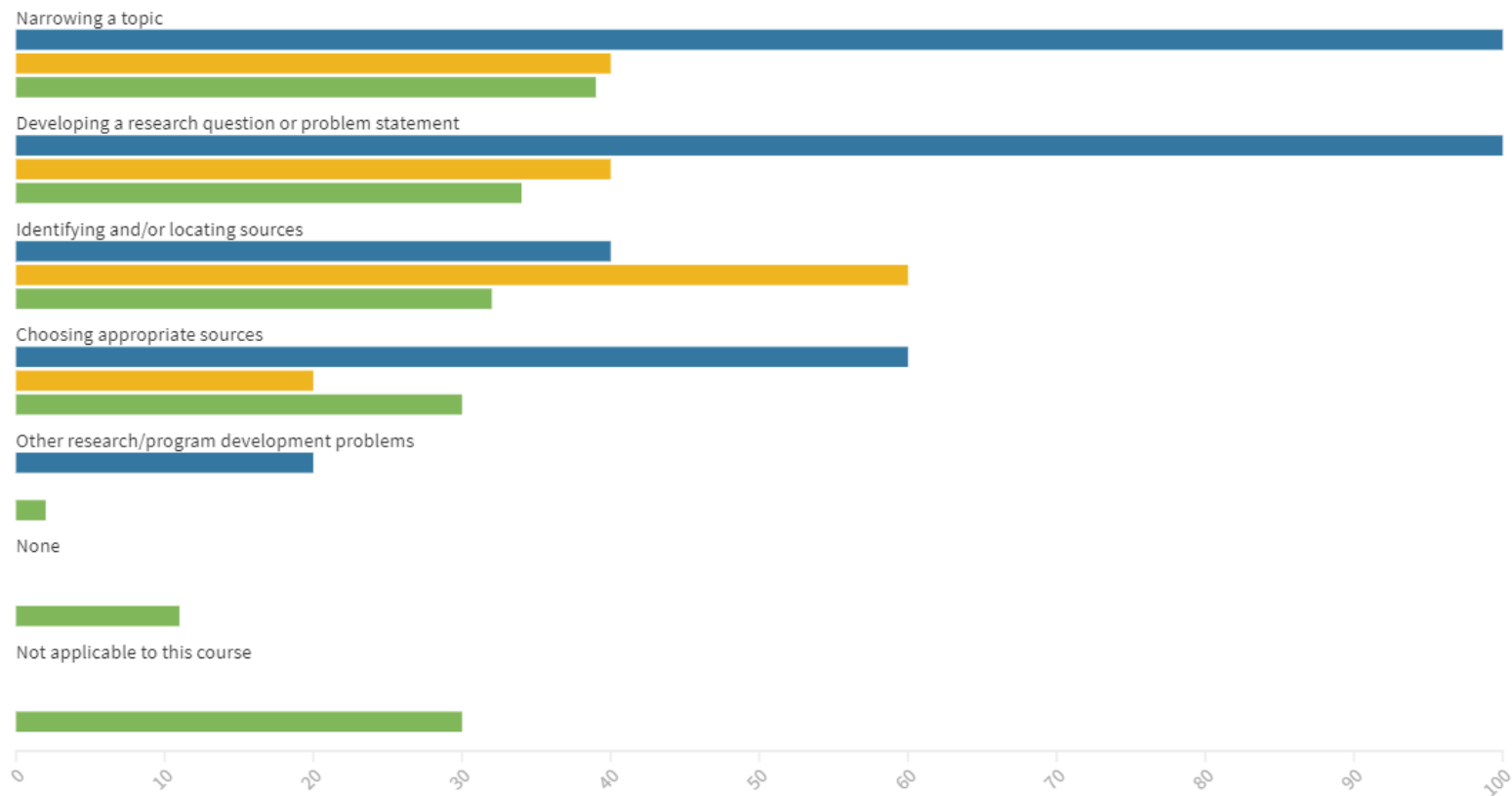
Please select the most common types of mechanical writing problems you encounter.

■ Writing Courses (n=5) ■ SJSU Studies (n=5) ■ Other (n=44)



Common research/program proposal development problems (Percent of responses)

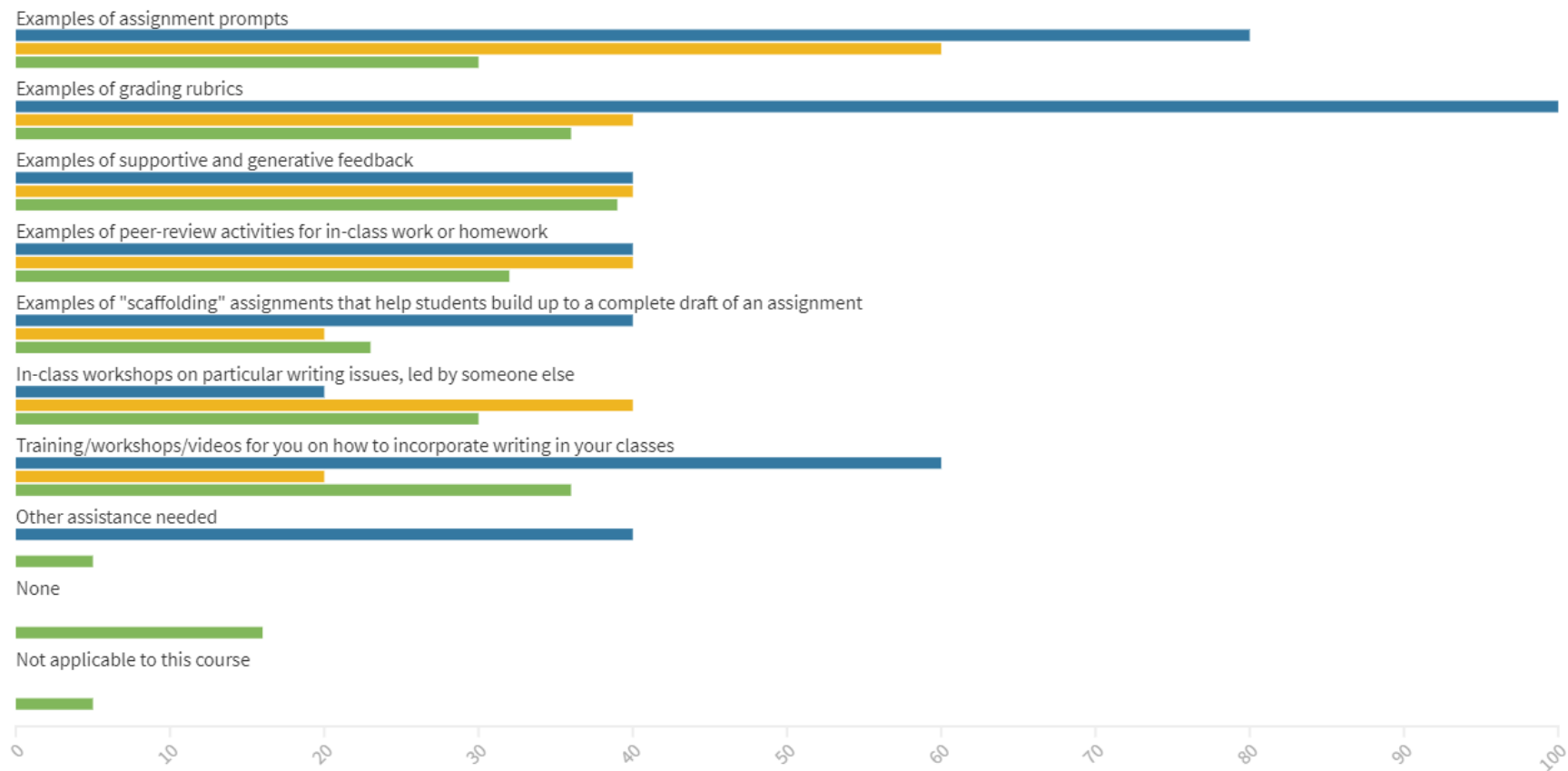
■ 100W (n = 5) ■ SJSU Studies (n = 5) ■ Other Upper Division (n = 44)



What would help you work better with students on writing skills?

(Percent of responses)

100W (n = 5) SJSU Studies (n = 5) Other Upper Division (n = 44)



Number of responses



Skills Instructors Want Students to Have Gained by the End

- Clear and precise essays that follow the given rubrics
- Clear and concise sentence and paragraph structure; formulating thoughts clearly and concisely
- Correct in-text and reference citations in APA format
- Proper APA formatting: margins, font, title page
- Correct application of upper-division grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Improving skills in analysis and synthesis of content, and the application of evidence to support the narrative writing
- Deconstruct and follow a detailed rubric. Conceptualizing ideas and developing the flow of writing



Suggestions for in-class or other workshops

- Sample papers to critique and review
- Library tutorials and have Adriana Poo talk to the class
- Writing basics: grammar, punctuation, spelling & vocabulary
- Writing with clarity and brevity. Developing outlines, narratives, and revisions
- APA format should be standard for all instructors to follow (title page, citations and references should have standardized handouts/"cheat sheets" for all to follow)



Focus Groups

- Purpose: After the survey was completed by faculty, we held 2 follow up focus groups to gain additional insight about challenges and opportunities specific to our writing intensive courses.
- Population: All PH & RECL instructors who teach writing intensive courses.
 - For the purpose of this project, we defined writing intensive courses as upper division SJSU Studies courses and capstone courses.
- Sample: 10 instructors (group 1); 6 instructors (group 2)
- Data/transcription: Transcription is expensive and difficult to coordinate



Focus Group Questions

1. Do you have any comments or reactions that you would like to share after viewing a summary of the survey results.
2. After reviewing the survey, what are your ideas regarding how we can improve these problems in individual courses and across the curriculum?
3. Can you tell us more about where you feel you need additional support with writing instruction in your classes?
4. Tell us about your feedback process and specifically, what has worked?
5. We have been talking with others on campus about creating a standardized rubric for writing across our curriculum and have received a lot of positive support for this idea. Do you foresee any concerns with this idea?
6. What do we want students to be able to do with their writing? (Where do we want them to be?)



Preliminary Findings

Challenges

- Writing Skills
 - Grammar
 - Active voice
- Conceptual
 - Critical thinking
 - Argumentation
 - Synthesizing
- Supporting the writing process
 - Reading (in general)
 - Reading assignments
 - Time management & balance
 - Motivation
- Faculty knowledge and ability to correctly identify writing errors

Strengths

- Providing feedback in many ways
 - Multi -section courses
 - Inter -rater
 - Audio feedback
 - Sandwich feedback (*positive, constructive, positive*)
- Increasing reading comprehension in earlier courses in the program
- Use of rubrics and interest in standardized writing rubric



Faculty Myths and Assumptions

- Writing problems start in K -12
- 100W should fix them
- My course doesn't have a writing component
- No writing instruction should happen in my course
- Writing may be unimportant in the students' job
 - Writing skills = essays



Example 1 - 100W

- Created an APA Style Guide with essential APA 7th Edition information for upper division students. It is currently being reviewed by the curriculum committee.
- Determined core standard assignments which are currently being piloted in 6/11 sections of 100W.
 - Rhetorical Analysis of an article in the popular literature
 - Focus Paper (for Literature Review)
 - Critical Analysis of a peer-reviewed journal article
 - Literature Review (with graded draft)
 - Op-ed (on literature review issue)
- Created a shared rubric for all assignments based on PH Master upper division rubric.
- Developing shared APA exam question banks.
- Currently piloting a textbook and OER/APA Manual-based version of the course.



Example 2 - PH135

- Health Issues in a Multicultural Society
- Upper Division GE Course, required for PH Majors
- PH135 WAC Activities:
 - Develop core standardized assignments that offer students opportunities to meet the 3,000 word writing requirement
 - Support and enhance student writing through writing practice and feedback throughout the semester



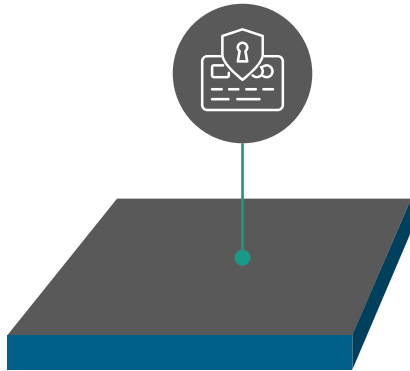
PH 135 Final Paper Assignment

The Final Paper Assignment is designed to encourage students to reflect and explore their personal views regarding a selected population that they have an active identity with.

- The assignment is broken down into four smaller tasks **(10-12 pages)**
 - (1) Choose a cultural group that they have an active identity with (2 pages)
 - (2) Identify and describe a disparity experienced by this group (2 pages)
 - (3) Present data that illustrates who experiences the disparity, significance, and factors (3 - 4 pages)
 - (4) Identify a public health initiative that has been implemented for the disparity in the identified cultural group (3 - 4 pages)

Next Steps

Spring 2021



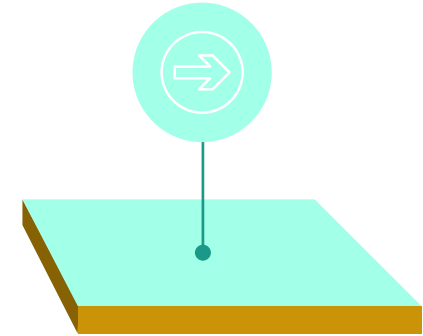
- Invite faculty to review and provide feedback on the rubrics

Fall 2021



- Implement changes to all 100W sections
- Implement standardized rubrics for UD and LD courses

Spring 2022



- Analyze assessment data
- Develop onboarding process
- Assessment standards for WAC



Thank You!

Questions?