

The “Write” Way to Success
Mississippi Valley State University

The Quality Enhancement Plan Focus: The Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to improve the writing proficiency of its undergraduate students by implementing instructional enhancements throughout the general education curriculum. Typically, tremendous emphasis is placed on writing in collegiate freshman English curricula. However, academic support systems at the college level must attend to the deficiencies associated with writing and under preparation at the high school level through proper assessment and efficient evaluation techniques. Accordingly, the intention of the MVSU QEP is to systematically include writing as a major component of the general education curriculum to ensure proper attention to the practice of perfecting student writing ability while focusing on all of the necessary basic skills associated with good writing. Subsequently, our dual aim is to enhance student learning by providing: (a) enhanced writing assignments in courses taught throughout the general education core curriculum as well as in other majors/disciplines comprising the academic program; and (b) intensified pedagogical techniques through faculty development training and workshops focused on the writing process, the rhetorical situation, the writing to learn concept, and the benefits of reflective portfolios.

Goals: The learning goal of the QEP is to improve student writing proficiency through the implementation of instructional enhancements in English 101 and English 102. The central theme underlying the instructional enhancements is greater attention to the writing process and the rhetorical situation. Students will engage in low-stakes and high-stakes writing assignments and include these assignments as part of their reflective portfolio. This reflective portfolio will require students to reflect on their writing process and the written product. Students will also reflect on the peer responses they received while working on the papers, as well as the suggestions given to them by their instructor and how they acted on them. Through this process, students will become aware of the need for multiple drafts, the use of invention, and the differences between revising and editing.

In addition, the teaching goal is to facilitate enhanced teaching skills and improve students writing abilities through offering training and workshops that cover the writing process, the rhetorical situation, the writing to learn concept, and the benefits of reflective portfolios. This faculty development will be conducted for English faculty as well as for faculty teaching throughout the General Education curriculum. These workshops will also include methods for assessing and evaluating portfolios

Assessment Plan: The assessment of the student learning outcomes will use both internally developed instruments (evaluation rubrics) and externally validated instruments. Specifically, the internally developed instruments will be direct measures of student learning using a writing assessment rubric with multiple raters. This writing assessment rubric will be used to assess all writing assignments of the QEP. The results will be aggregated across courses to evaluate writing as an institutional outcome. External assessment practices will include comparing baseline data from the Proficiency Profile (formerly MAPP) with annual assessments of the Proficiency Profile during the implementation of the QEP. Subsequently, each year the assessment will be administered to students completing the general education curriculum and compared over time to ascertain the impact of the QEP intervention on students’ overall writing ability as measured by this externally validated instrument. Ultimately, the assessments will facilitate necessary modifications to the QEP intervention and determine whether the intended learning outcomes of the intervention for students are achieved. We also anticipate higher levels of proficiency and complexity in students’ overall writing ability and performance.

Contact Information: Dr. James Varn, QEP Director, jcvarn@mvsu.edu