

Writing Ourselves In: NOVA's Quality Enhancement Plan 2022-2027

Each Fall, nearly 12,000 students enroll in English 111, College Composition I, which is required for all academic degrees and applied programs at NOVA and provides students with essential instruction in writing, reading, and rhetorical knowledge. Success in English 111 can improve students' future academic performance and their ability to persist through coursework to complete a credential.

The QEP's Goals: *Writing Ourselves In* is designed to increase student success and reduce equity gaps in first-year English composition, to prepare students for college writing, and to improve their sense of belonging.

The QEP's Actions: To achieve the QEP's goals, the QEP Team, composed of English faculty, led by Dean Jen Daniels, and supervised by Dr. Eun-Woo Chang, Vice President for Academic Affairs, have designed a systematic plan:

1. **Comprehensive professional development** in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), Transparent Assignment Design (TAD), and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for English faculty and stakeholders who support student learning (e.g., librarians, tutors, and instructional designers).
 - *Writing Ourselves In* Institutes—offered in-person and asynchronously via Canvas--where faculty and stakeholders learn about evidence-based practices to improve student learning and sense of belonging in order to foster deeper engagement and build persistence.
 - Professional Learning Communities—offered each year as follow up to Institute learning or as stand-alone development to provide continual learning and support for English faculty and stakeholders in small-group, monthly workshops in CRP, TAD, and PBL practices.
 - Online resources through the QEP Canvas Resource Site--supports ongoing course redesign through access to current scholarship, assignment examples, and instructional modules, as well as discussion forums for asynchronous conversations, idea sharing, and problem solving.
2. **Inclusive teaching and learning environments** using the three equity-based practices.
 - Faculty design classes using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), Transparent Assignment Design (TAD), and Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which have been shown to improve outcomes for all students and to particularly benefit FTIC (first-time in college), low-income, and historically marginalized students who may be new to the “vocabulary of college.”
 - Students learn in a supportive environment where their personal experiences and identities are valued and incorporated as part of their learning. Students are offered opportunities to collaborate, explore, and engage in real-world issues that are important to them. Students' needs are considered as part of the curriculum, which offers challenging material that effectively prepares them to write for college.
3. **Meaningful assessment** for student learning outcomes and program improvement for intutional impact.
 - The QEP's Student Learning Outcomes are focused on honing transferable writing skills and building forward momentum for success in and beyond English 111.
 - SLO 1: By the end of ENG 111, students will produce writing that is effective for the audience and purpose of the assignment.
 - SLO 2: By the end of ENG 111, students will express key components of sense of belonging.By aligning the SLOs to goals important to success in English 111 as well as to key skills and behaviors students need to keep doing well in their college courses, *Writing Ourselves In* fosters learning that goes beyond a single course.
 - The QEP Assessment Team has developed a consistent, sustainable, and transparent cycle of assessment that builds on effective practices in composition, such as norming and use of rubrics, as well as practices more common in institutional assessments, such as surveys and quantitative data. Important to the cycle is the use of reporting and results and redeveloping processes, professional development, teaching and learning practices, and assessment procedures to provide continual improvement to the QEP and ultimately for student success in English 111 and beyond.

NOVA's QEP cultivates teaching practices that keep the standards high while facilitating inclusivity and

equity to meet students where they are and provide the support they need. Together, a strong sense of belonging and a solid foundation in writing make NOVA students more likely to earn higher GPAs and to have better overall academic persistence and success. Understanding how to apply writing knowledge across academic contexts makes students more likely to be successful in other college courses with high literacy demands, such as biology, history, and psychology. Students who feel valued by their college community and have strong peer relationships are more likely to attend classes and do well in them. By supporting faculty and stakeholders who share in the practices of equity, seeking improvement through meaningful assessment, and intentionally creating opportunities that foster belonging, NOVA can reach its goal of success for all English 111 students.

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