

Methodist College
Executive Summary of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Passion and Prose: Making Connections through Writing

The selection of the following Quality Enhancement Plan at Methodist University was a two-year process that involved a campus-wide discussion about student needs and academic direction. What began as the preferred choice from a list of possible campus initiatives has emerged as a focused plan to improve student writing. This ambitious attempt to meaningfully affect student writing on several levels developed through many hours of brainstorming in weekly meetings, both on campus and in faculty homes. With student feedback and a lengthy process of collaborative revision in curricular committees, we streamlined the plan into one that integrates many of the University's existing resources and initiatives.

Our plan is to improve student writing skills while also improving the culture of writing on campus. We will harness the simultaneous reorganization of our freshman first-year seminar course (into a freshman and a sophomore seminar course) while adding an additional junior-level course. This allows elements of the project to span a student's freshman, sophomore, and junior years. The core of the plan is a "Passion Project." This is written work on a topic chosen by students that may or may not be in their chosen field of academic study. Through twenty pages of guided journaling, students will hone their topics. Through guided research, students will finish off their project with a five-page paper in the junior year course. To support this QEP will be faculty development in writing instruction and assessment.

We have learned many things from our successful previous QEP (on reading) and hope to build on that success. We will be assessing the project in a number of ways using student writing (as evaluated by rubrics) within cohorts and between cohorts. Beyond the assessment of improved skills, we will be assessing the culture of writing using campus writing resources, workshops, and internally generated attitudinal questionnaires and surveys.

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