

Program Coalescence Report

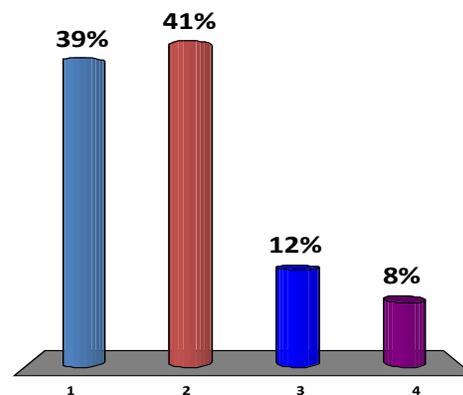
Fall 2013
ISU Writing Program

Genre Analysis

In the area of genre analysis, the coalescence is pretty high – that is to say, many of us seem to be doing the same kinds of things in our classrooms. Especially in the first two questions, there was a great deal of agreement. 80% of teachers agreed that they did genre analysis throughout the semester (although some do it project-by-project and some do an analysis that extends as part of its own “research” genre throughout the semester. The other 20% did genre analysis only intermittently. Teachers also indicated that they had an overall method for having students do this kind of analysis, although only 35% have a set method they use for each project.

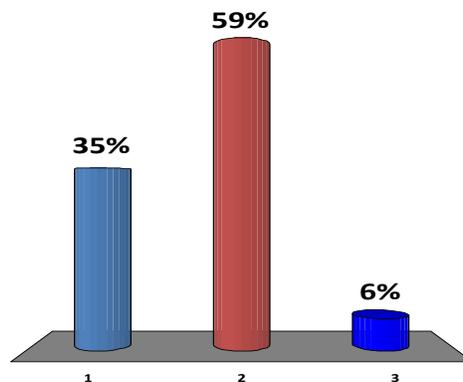
Question #1: How often during the semester do your students do work that specifically asks them to break down genres to understand their features. This would include having to go out and find examples of genres to analyze.

1. They do this as part of an ongoing process (keeping a log or journal), so it’s incorporated throughout the semester.
2. This kind of activity is a specific part of each project (and is graded with the project).
3. They do this activity as part of a project or other writing at least 1-3 times during the semester (but not for every project).
4. They do this activity as part of a project or other writing 4-6 times during the semester (but not for every project).



Question #2 Do you have a set method for doing this kind of research and analysis?

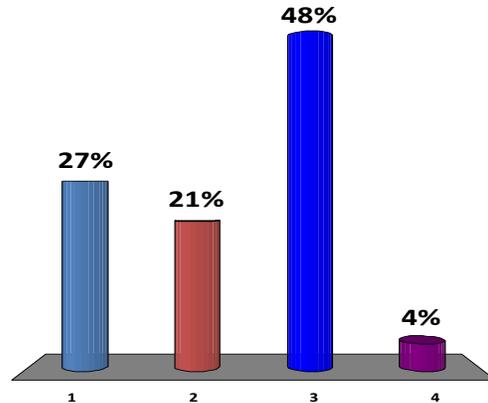
5. I have a set method for doing “genre analysis” (so students do it multiple times in the same way throughout the semester).
6. I have a general method for looking at genres (when we do this) but there isn’t really a set procedure for looking at a genre.
7. I don’t have a set procedure for looking at genres.



Question #3 Do you look at sentence level linguistic and style issues when you analyze genres in your class?

Note: On this question there was some agreement – 48% of instructors don't really look at sentence level linguistic analysis as part of project grades. Another 48% did do this on some or all of their projects (answers 1 & 2). If we are looking for ways to increase the rigor of our analysis, this might be one area we could explore, and we also may want to see input from experts on how to incorporate more different kinds of linguistic analysis into our courses.

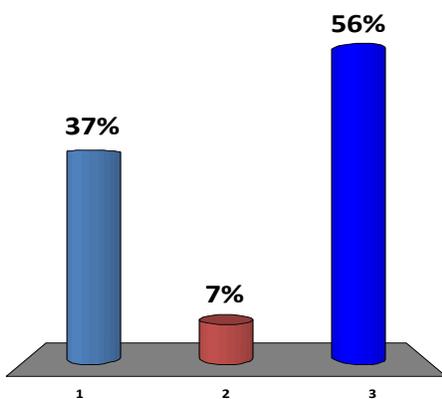
1. I have multiple projects and activities that ask students to do a linguistic analysis that compares grammar/style/word choice across genres or between examples of a particular genre.
2. I have at least one project or activity that ask students to do a linguistic analysis that compares grammar/style/word choice across genres or between examples of a particular genre.
3. We talk about these issues, but it's not a specific part (graded aspect) of any of my projects or writing activities.
4. I don't really do this kind of close looking at language in any systematic way in any of my projects or activities.



Genre Juxtaposition and Mashup

The two questions in the Genre Juxtaposition section revealed much less overall agreement. In question one, teachers seemed, at least, to split between having students focus on cultural/social kinds of analysis and analysis that focuses specifically on genres. But we're ok with this level of diversity, as these different methods all tend to get at ways to make students see how content can change in different genres and settings.

Question #4 Do you work with genre juxtaposition or genre mashups in your class?

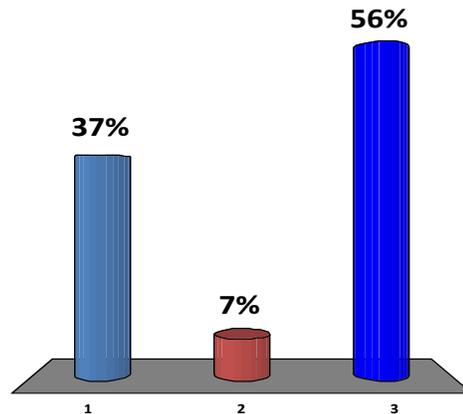


1. Students do specific analyses of the different genres in order to understand the movement between them.
2. Students do word/sentence based analysis of the content within the different genres.
3. Students do analysis of cultural/social differences that affect how content works in the different genres.

Question #5 For those of you who do genre mashups, how many of these required students to do explicit analysis of how the content moves between genres?

Note: Teachers also seemed to differ on where they placed their focus when they asked students to write across different genres:

1. Students do specific analyses of the different genres in order to understand the movement between them.
2. Students do word/sentence based analysis of the content within the different genres.
3. Students do analysis of cultural/social differences that affect how content works in the different genres.

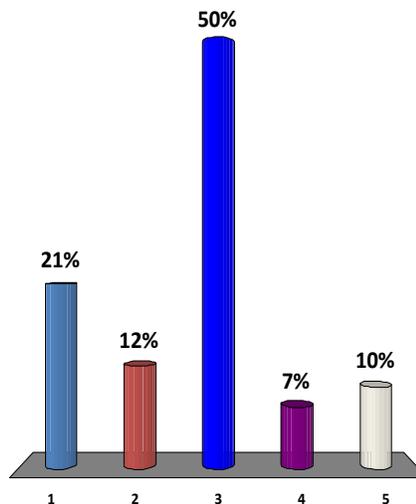


Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

This question was not designed to be an either/or answer. Rather, we asked instructors to select the specific learning activity related to CHAT that they felt was most important in their classrooms. This question did not allow us to ask how many instructors didn't use CHAT at all, so we can't be sure if there are some instructors who are not doing CHAT-based activities at all.

Question #6 Do you do specific work with CHAT in your classroom? What kinds of activities do you do?

1. We read articles on CHAT from the GWRJ or other sources.
2. We discuss CHAT in class.
3. We do activities that specifically relate to understanding literate activity from a CHAT perspective (like creating CHAT maps or doing genre analyses from a CHAT perspective).
4. We do a project length piece of writing that focuses on researching literate activity from a CHAT perspective.
5. We use the CHAT white paper (or I use it) to discuss and understand how CHAT might apply to studying writing situations in the world.

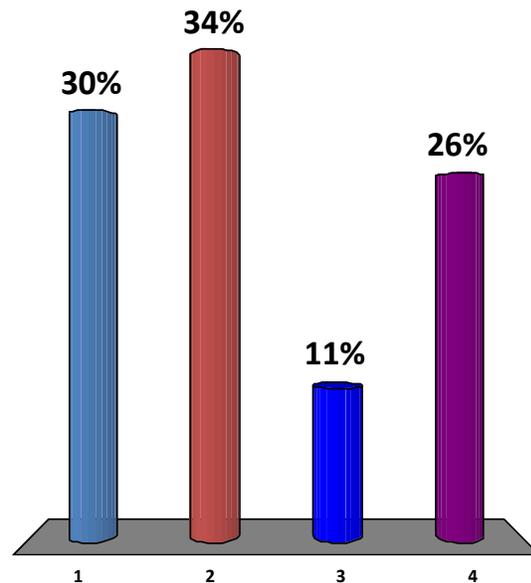


Notes: We think it's fine that instructors use these different methods. It's interesting to note that the most popular method was talking about it in class – with less agreement about different resources.

Research

There were three questions related to research, and all of them showed that instructors had different attitudes and activities related to research in their classrooms. The question about “Writing Research” was particularly diverse.

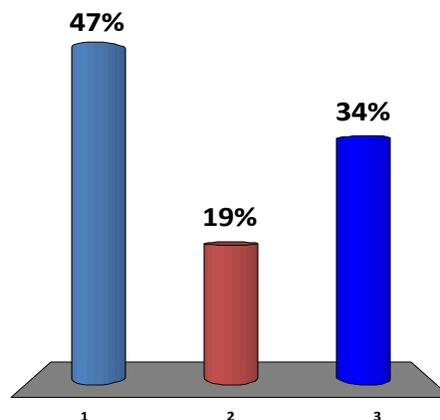
1. I use the term “writing research” in my classroom and I specifically teach students how to do “writing research” as part of their work in understanding how to write in a new or different situation.
2. Students do “writing research” for projects (like doing genre analysis), but we don’t really talk about that term specifically or focus on writing research as a way to deal with new writing situations.
3. Students do a large project where investigating how writing/genres work in particular situations (this would include writing an article for the GWRJ, but might include other kinds of writing research also).
4. Students learn how to do writing research (that is, we do a project that asks students to do writing research and we spend time talking about research methods for investigating literate practices in the world).



Note: This is an area where we like to see more “coalescence.” If you look at the new course requirements for ENG 101 and ENG 145, you’ll see that we’ve asked instructors to become a bit more formal in the ways they incorporate genre-and-writing research into their courses.

Question #8 Do you deal specifically with Research Methods in your course?

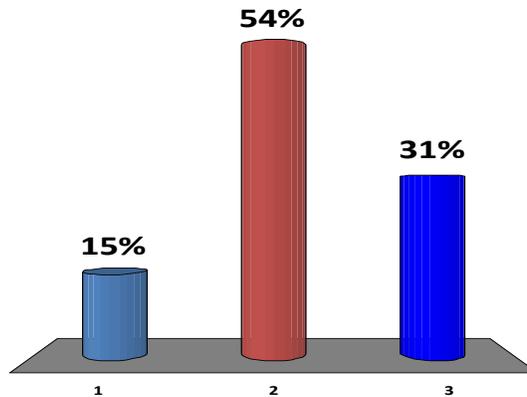
1. We talk about doing research and different ways of doing research, but I don’t teach research methods specifically.
2. We do at least one project or activity that requires a specific research method (that is, doing ethnographic research, doing archival research, doing case study interviews, etc.), and I explicitly discuss how to do this kind of research with my students.
3. We discuss different kinds of research and we actually study more than one different way to collect information or data.



Note: This is another area where we’d like to encourage movement – with more instructors moving into category 3.

Question #9 How do you teach “information literacy” to your students?

1. We do a library visit where the librarian talks about how to find information.
2. I specifically do one or more activities that help students to understand how to find information in online settings.
3. This kind of work is very important to my class, and we spend a significant amount of time discussing (and doing activities that relate to) how to find information and evaluate it.



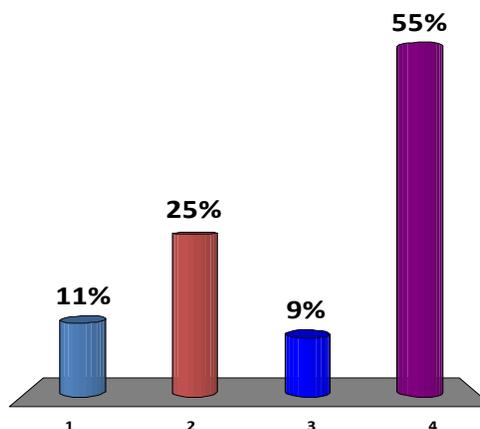
Note: In the area of “information literacy” we think our agreement is actually fairly high. We were glad to see that only 15% of our instructors saw the library visit as their significant interaction with information literacy. We’d definitely like to see all of our instructors in categories 2 & 3.

Global Culture/Language

As you will see when you review the new course requirements for ENG 101 and ENG 145, we would like to incorporate more activities that ask students to consider more broadly the implications of literate activity across cultural and geographical boundaries. This is an area we’ve marked for improvement in the program, because there are quite a few of us who are not incorporating these elements, or perhaps not integrating them fully. We think it also marks an area where we might seek advice from ESL/EFL folks about course designs that deal with global culture and language more robustly.

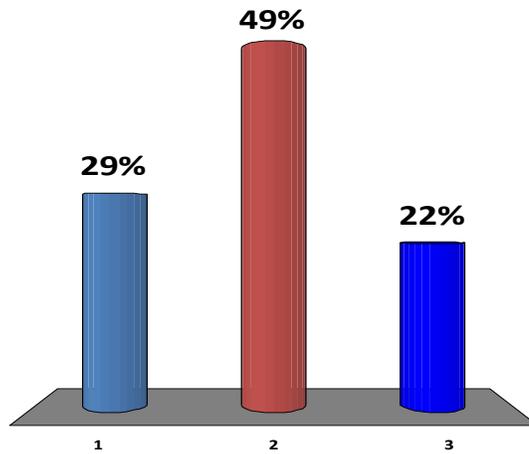
Question #9 Do you work with global writing settings?

1. I have a project (at least one) where we specifically consider a global concept for writing.
2. We discuss issues related to global writing settings, but we don’t do a specific project that’s devoted specifically to global writing.
3. We really spend a significant amount of time related to writing in global settings.
4. This topic sometimes comes up in relation to different writing projects, but it’s not a significant component of my class.



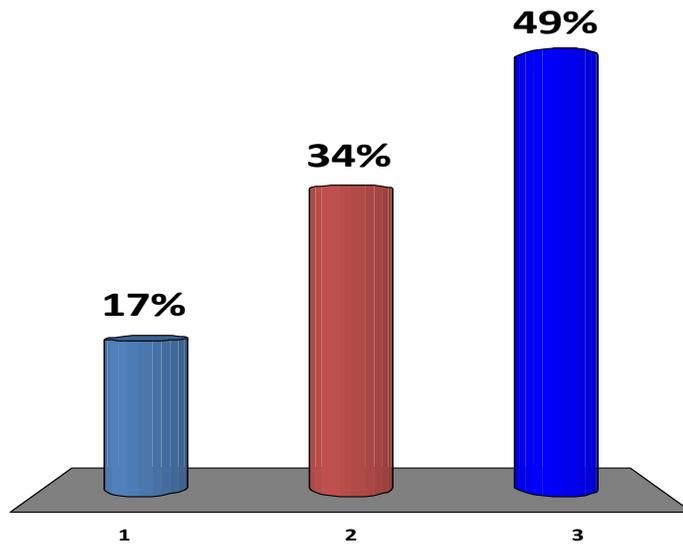
Question #10 Culture/Language and Considerations

1. I have a project that specifically asks students to consider issues of culture and language in respect to specific writing situations.
2. I spend class time in one or more projects discussing specific issues of culture/language, but I don't have a project that is specifically related to these issues.
3. Work on culture/language considerations isn't really a significant part of my course.



Question #11 Culture/Language and Minorities

1. I have a project that specifically asks students to consider issues of culture and language that focus on minority or disenfranchised citizens.
2. I spend class time in one or more projects discussing specific issues of culture/language related to minorities or disenfranchised citizens, but I don't have a project that is specifically related to these issues.
3. Work on minority or disenfranchised citizens isn't really a significant part of my course.

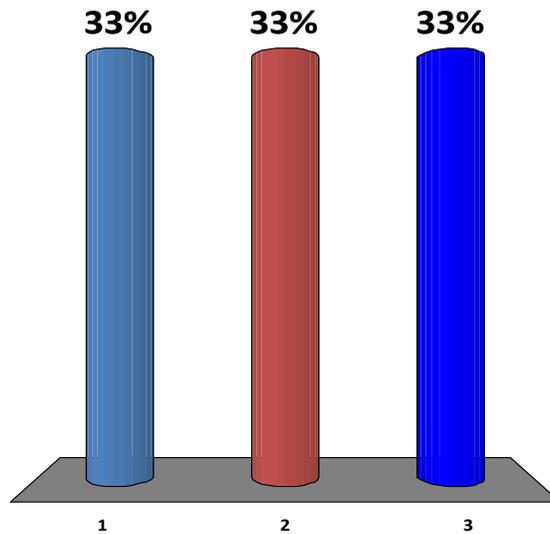


Public Writing

Question #12 Do you have a specific writing project with a “public trajectory”?

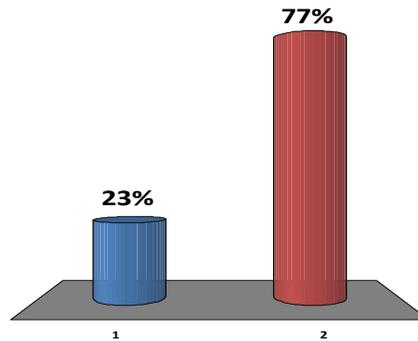
Notes: We think the answers to this question represent a good range of different ways to approach the issue of trajectories that have “public” impact.

1. I have a project (at least one) that focuses on a “non-school” trajectory (that is, the text is a kind of text that exists outside of school settings).
2. I have a project (at least one) where students could (although they don’t have to) publish or submit their writing to some kind of outside audience.
3. I have a project (at least one) that includes a significant component of “outside trajectories”—that is, student writing moves out into the world and is received (in some way) by and outside audience (other than the instructor).



Question #13 Does your class include any kinds of interactive writing situations?

1. I have a major project (at least one) where texts are responded to by audiences outside of the classrooms and then returned (for revision) to the students.
2. I have classroom activities where feedback occurs outside of the classroom.



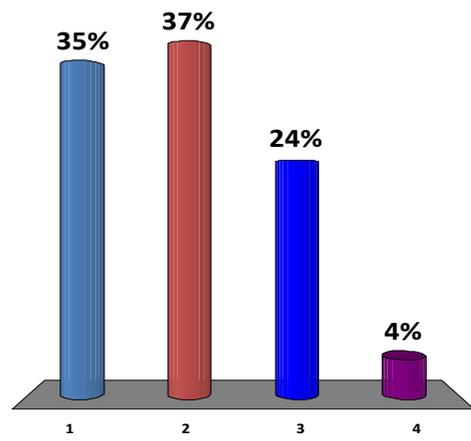
Notes: The answer to #13 isn’t really surprising. While instructors work to include a public trajectory, explicit feedback-response-revision cycles outside of the classroom are not common. We might want talk about how to increase opportunities for this kind of work?

Multimodal or Multimedia Project or Technology

Answers to the questions in these categories did have some significant range. While they showed that, for the most part, instructors are interested in working with technology, they also showed that instructors don’t really spend much time learning specific technologies in the classroom.

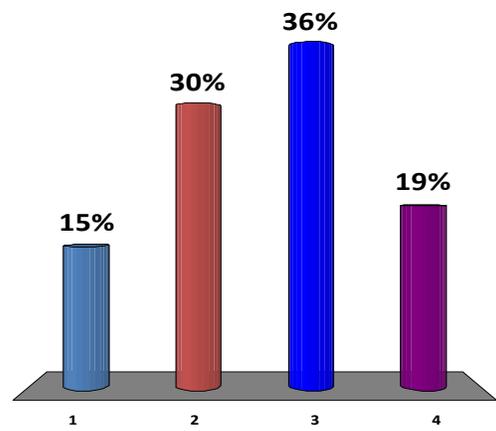
Question #14 Do you work with multimodal or multimedia genres?

1. Doing a multimedia or multimodal genre is an option that students can select in at least one or more of the major assignment in my class.
2. I have at least one major assignment that requires students to produce some kind of multimodal or multimedia genre, but I don't specifically teach students how to use technology.
3. I have at least one major assignment that requires students to produce some kind of multimodal or multimedia genre, and we spend specific class time learning to use the necessary technology.
4. I have some activities where students work with multimodal genres, but none of my projects include this kind of work.



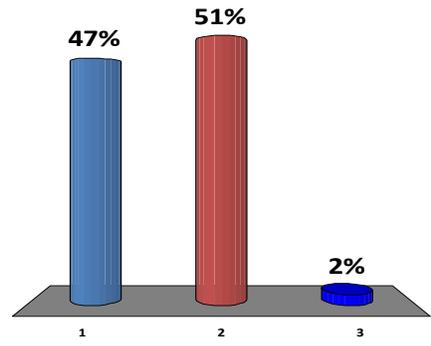
Question #15 Do your students use digital technology?

1. Outside of using the web to search and word processing to compose, my students don't make specific use of the technology in the 250 classrooms.
2. I have a project where students need to use digital technologies is an option (but not required).
3. I have a project where students need to use digital technologies beyond web searching or word processing, but I don't teach them how to use the technology specifically.
4. I have a project where we all work to understand how to use a particular technology to compose, and we spend significant class time learning to use the technology and discussing it.



Question #16 Do you assign a visual/aural/or video project?

1. I have a major project (at least one) that includes a significant visual, aural, or video component.
2. I have projects that could include images, audio or video components, but it's not required.
3. I don't use these kinds of technologies in my class and I don't accept any student work composed in these modes.

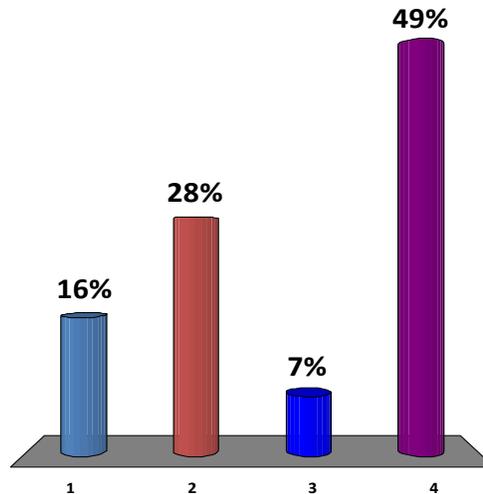


Assessment

This area is another where we've identified a lack of coalescence that we'd like to address. While instructors' answers showed that they moved across a range of assessment activities, we would like to see movement (as a program) towards the incorporation of more "student-centered" assessment activities.

Question #17 How involved are students in creating grading criteria for projects?

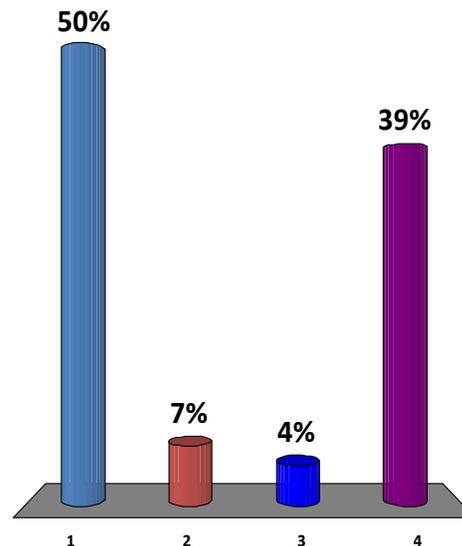
1. Students (primarily as a large group) compose or help to compose grading criteria for one or more of the projects in my class.
2. Students compose or help to compose grading criteria for all of the major projects in my course.
3. Students compose or help to compose grading criteria for at least one (but not all) of the projects in my course.
4. Students are offered an opportunity to comment or help revise the grading criteria for one or more projects in my course.



Notes: Here we'd definitely like to see the number "flip," with more instructors involving students in actually composing grading criteria for projects.

Question #18 How would you describe your general method of assessment?

1. Assessment is primarily teacher-driven. While students may have some input in developing criteria for grading, I am the one who ultimately decides on and awards grades for major work in the course.
2. Assessment is primarily student-driven. Students compose criteria for major projects and individual students are able to argue for particular grades based on the criteria for at least one (or possibly all) of the major projects. I may have SOME impact on grades (agreeing or disputing student self-assessment), but students do much of the work to grade themselves.
3. Assessment is primarily peer-driven. Students essentially grade each other in many (if not all) of the projects in the course.
4. I do some student-driven or peer-driven kinds of grading activities, but I'd say the majority of work is still assessed primarily by me.



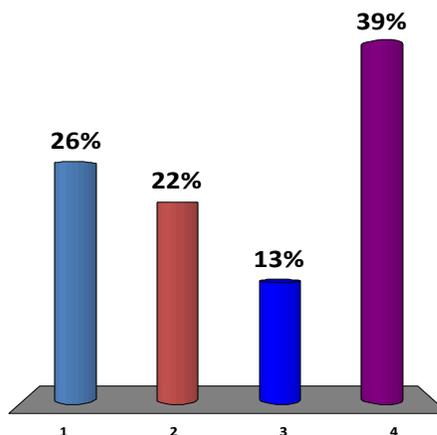
Note: Most 89% of instructors answered that assessment is all (or primarily) teacher driven. We'd definitely like to see that shift over the next couple of years.

Using the Grassroots Journal

We want to continue to recognize instructors' diversity – using the journal differently and in different ways. But in order to do that we need to achieve changes in two areas: (1) We need instructors to think carefully about how they could use the journal, and how the journal would need to adapt in order to meet their needs, and (2) we need to encourage more authors (both within and outside of ISU) to submit the kinds of articles we need for the journal to be most useful in our classes. This is an effort we'll all need to work on together. Seeing how the distribution fell in these last questions may help us to do this.

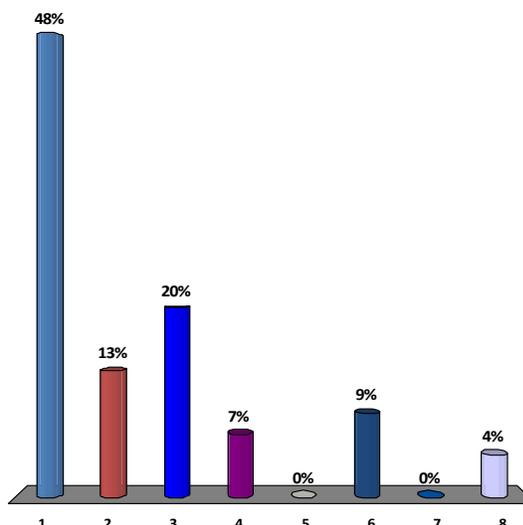
Question #19 Do you spend time working on writing projects that are (or could be) appropriate for the Grassroots Journal?

1. I have a project that specifically focuses on creating writing research scholarship that is (or might be) appropriate for the GWRJ.
2. I have a project that asks students to engage in writing research, but it's not always "written up" in ways that would be appropriate for the journal.
3. I have a project that asks students to engage in writing research, and they have an option to create a GWRJ article, but they can also create other kinds of genres.
4. I don't really work with writing research projects that would be appropriate for the journal specifically, but we do discuss ideas for possible articles (related to coursework) in class.



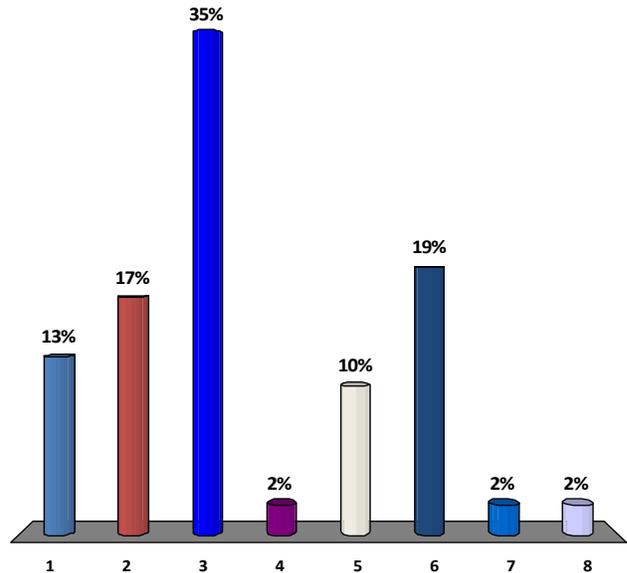
Question #20 How do you use GWRJ articles?

1. We use theoretical articles to discuss concepts and terms I want the students to become familiar with.
2. We use articles on specific genres that the students will be working with—to help students understand that genre.
3. We use articles on different kinds of writing research to help students understand (more generally) how to investigate literate activity.
4. We study GWRJ articles as a genre, because students write GWRJ articles as a project.
5. We use articles to discuss concepts related to grammar and mechanics.
6. We use articles to discuss different kinds of writing strategies and skills.
7. We use articles to discuss issues of authorship and author identity.
8. Other (tell us about it at grassrootswriting@gmail.com).



Question #21 What would you like to see more of in the GWRJ?

1. I'd like to see more theoretical articles that discuss concepts and terms.
2. I'd like to see more articles on specific genres that the students need to work with or understand.
3. I'd like to see more articles that focus specifically on different kinds of writing research and more complex investigations of literate activity.
4. I'd like to see more information on "how to" do writing research for the journal.
5. I'd like to see more articles that discuss concepts related to grammar and mechanics.
6. I'd like to see more articles that discuss different kinds of writing strategies and skills.
7. I'd like to see more articles that discuss issues of authorship and author identity.
8. Other (tell us about it at grassrootswriting@gmail.com).



An Overall Notes: In general, we think that the specific areas we need (as a program) to address as soon as we can include:

- (1) In general, we need to consider our focus on both "genre" and "content" research skills, strategies and activities.
- (2) We need to think about the ways that we ask students to document research, and also how we incorporate research methods into our assignments.
- (3) We also need to work on our assessment practices. How can we include more student-centered assessments (both formative and summative) into our classes.