

# ISU Writing Program

## Assessment & Research Projects for Fall 2014

Illinois State University Writing Program, Joyce R. Walker, Director

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### Program-Wide Assessments in 2013/2014

In Fall 2013 and Spring 2014, The Illinois State University completed program-wide assessments of both our ENG 145 series courses and our ENG 101 series courses. The data collection from this assessment was exceptionally rich, and we expect to be using it for our research, and as a tool to better understand our teaching and our students, for the next several years.

While we don't expect to do another program-wide assessment until fall/spring 2016/17, we will continue to engage in program assessment during the interim period. These smaller projects will focus on particular skills/concepts/content we want to help student acquire, or measurements of uptake (understanding how students are taking up new learning and using it) both in our courses and beyond.

Links to the reports generated from both Assessments are available on our program website:

<http://isuwriting.com/2014/03/26/wp-documents-forms-reports/>

### Small Scale Assessment Projects

In Fall 2014, we're going to be working on a "self-assessment" project that experiments with ways to help students better understand how a genre/CHAT approach to *practical writing research* can be a useful way to both understand one's own writing knowledge and gain knowledge about different genre situations. Our program-wide assessment (as well as other, current research in the field<sup>1</sup>) indicates that the antecedent understanding of "school genres" students bring to the 101 classroom has a significant impact on the success of their uptake and transfer efforts. In addition, a pilot study that we completed (with Kayla Bruce and Laurenn Jarema) here at ISU indicated that an early exposure to their own **lack** of knowledge about diverse genres created a fairly clear impetus for students to attend to the intricacies of practical writing research as a way to become more adept at writing in multiple genres. Our self-assessment works to shape students' attitudes toward the work of ENG 101. Students in both ENG 101 and ENG 101.10 will be completing the self-assessment, as well as a "control" group who will complete short pre/post surveys but will not participate in the assessment. We'll have additional information about the self-assessment project available on our website by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Our goal is to work towards a program-wide self-assessment activity, but we expect that work to take several semesters. Those interested in participating in the project can email Joyce Walker (Program Director) or Summer Qabazard (Data & Research Coordinator).

### Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Research Project

In Fall 2014, Deb Rigger-Keiffer will be conducting WAC research that surveys instructors across ISU about the types of writing they assign in their courses (with the added ability for instructors to send us samples of both assignments and exemplary student work. We'll begin with College of Business instructors, but in spring we'll move to a survey of instructors across campus. Those interested can contact Deb for more information.

### Longitudinal Study of Student Writers

In Fall 2014, we're also going to be conducting interviews with students who took ENG 101 in the spring of 2014. Katy Stein and Laura Skokan will be working with Summer Qabazard to interview up to 20 students about the writing they are encountering in their coursework and how the work of ENG 101 does (or doesn't) provide useful information to them as they negotiate these new writing spaces. We expect to follow at least some of these students through their entire undergraduate careers at ISU.

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<sup>1</sup> For very recent discussion of this issue, See *Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*, by Kathleen Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak. Utah State University Press, Logan: Utah, 2014.