



HGSE Student Experiences in HPL

SET Project Team Members: Salome Bhatta, Hanabi Ito, Gabriela Dumancela

SET Coordinators: Gabriela Dumancela, Sienna Xu

SET Advisors: Nicole Nash, Katherine Farrar

Purpose

To understand how well HPL PoPs supported students' transition into academic writing expectations at HGSE.

To understand how relevant PoPs are to the diversifying student population at HGSE.

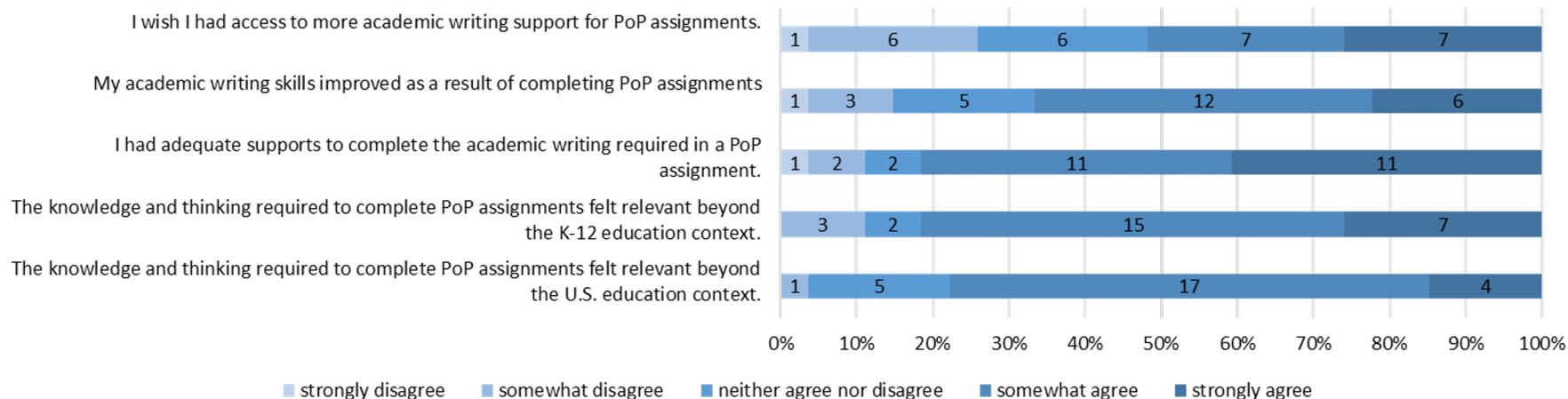
Research Process



- 27 Responses
 - Targeting larger population of students
- 10 participants in two separate groups
 - All HGSE students who took HPL in Summer 2023
- Prepare and analyze data
 - Summarize and interpret results
 - Prepare final report

Survey Responses

"Please rate your agreement with the following statements"



Focus Group Research Questions

01

Academic Writing Supports

How can PoPs support academic writing skills?

02

Relevancy of PoP Prompts

How can PoPs feel more relevant to students outside of K-12 education or beyond the U.S?



01

Academic Writing Supports

How can PoPs support academic writing skills?

3.1. POP support in preparation for academic writing



Preparation for the
academic life at HGSE

*"It helped me to be a
student again"*

*"Science and education are similar
but different. HPL aided my move
to HGSE."*



Academic reading and writing

*"HPL prepared me for the readings and
learning how to skim, read abstracts."*



*"All the readings we went through, the HPL canvas pages, the
article summed up, helped me construct the writing. I was very
motivated to write that academic piece of paper. My undergrad
was in engineering and I had not ever done that. So I did google
and read many other writing resources by Purdue, so I was really
motivated to come up with a piece of writing."*

3.2. Resources that scaffolded academic writing skills



Rubrics

- Specificity of criterias
- POP expectation
- Familiarization on assignment expectations at HGSE



Examples

- Format, structure & tone
- Understanding expectations
- ...just an example of what it looks like



Teaching Fellows

- Availability
- Constructive feedback
- Guide

"The rubrics were explicit and a good segue into HGSE."

"POP examples were really helpful."

"For the POP outline, the feedback I got were very specific and constructive, It went well."

"Rubric and Sample examples were really helpful."

"I was not looking for writing support, I wanted more support to understand POP. Tell me what needs to happen, and give me more exemplars."

"I was not able to find slot with the writing center before submission so the Head TF offered to help."

3.3. Opportunities to improve support



Writing Center

Access barriers

“the writing center, it felt like adding another layer to access, email and communicate since HPL overall is a weird time.”

“ I would have known about the writing center but I would not have time to go. I remember there was a resource there, before HPL but I don't remember what it was.”



TF Support

Unclear expectations, TF feedback was not entirely useful. TF sessions could be more productive.

*“TF is generous and kind with their feedback *I wish for more constructive feedback.”*

*“More structured time with TF. *A lot of time was spent getting to know each other rather than the content and constructive feedback.”*



More information on the POP Nature

What exactly is a POP?

“was it a report? Was it a journal? what type of paper exactly is a POP?”

3.4 Use of Technology Tools to Support POP writing



Tech Tools Used

Chat GPT, Grammarly, Purdue OWL

"Grammarly helped me a lot, especially to edit"

"Purdue OWL has a lot of resources to improve citations"



Fear of using AI

No clear guidelines

"I got very scared. I knew we were not supposed to use any AI because of the academic conduct materials we read. However, someone put some materials on ChatGPT and this person got notified not to do that. I knew Harvard wanted us to provide our own creative work so I got scared and I did not use any more ChatGPT"

Recommendations



1. Clarifying what a POP is



2. Implementing quizzes and guiding questions



3. Increase the visibility of rubrics

Recommendations



4.Reduce the barriers to
accessing the Writing
Center



5. Improve TF sessions



6. Create a list of links

Recommendations



7. Support to understand examples



8. Guide to use AI tools



9. Support to understand examples

Recommendations

Clarifying what a POP is “**NOT**”

“I struggled with writing the POP because I have been writing scientific reports, it's pretty black and white. Education has more grey, you along with evidence also write your perspective. I wrote a research paper first and then an essay second. I was not looking for writing support, I wanted more support to understand POP.”

“I did not know that it is a strategy document and I was given ‘this is wrong’ and they were like this is not a POP.”

Assignment descriptions and live PoP sessions can explain explicitly how a PoP differs from a traditional report or essay

Module 1

Problem of Practice Annotation Assignment Overview

In the field of education, problems of practice are central to professional life, where we have to make tough and important decisions all the time. That's why we've designed **HPL** to give you lots of practice putting what you are learning “into action” with real-world situations and challenges. The Problem of Practice (PoP) Assignments in Modules 2–4 of **HPL** will ask you to synthesize your thoughts about how module concepts help you address a PoP facing educators at the Field Study sites.

Recommendations

Rubrics & Exemplars

In the field of education, problems of practice are central to professional life, where we have to make tough and important decisions all the time. That's why we've designed *HPL* to give you lots of practice putting what you are learning "into action" with real-world situations and challenges. The Problem of Practice (PoP) Assignments in Modules 2–4 of *HPL* will ask you to synthesize your thoughts about how module concepts help you address a PoP facing educators at the Field Study sites.

In this module, to help you prepare for these future PoP Assignments and scaffold your experience in *HPL*, you will complete an exercise in annotating an example PoP Assignment. That is, you will add comments to a completed PoP Assignment that we will provide, and your comments will contain your reflections on how this example assignment is effective and where it could be improved. This will help you see how you might connect module concepts to field-based puzzles and present these ideas in your own written work later in *HPL*. (You are welcome to review an informal [list of Module 1 concepts](#).)

To be clear, in **Module 1** you will not write your own PoP Assignment, but rather you will submit annotations of an example assignment submission. Your TF will provide feedback on your annotations. For the PoP Annotation Assignment, you will:

- Part 1: Confirm Your Level of Practice
- Part 2: Review an Example Problem of Practice
- Part 3: Annotate an Example Problem of Practice response

Writing Center

Demonstrate booking a session

- TF session
- Onboarding session
- Writing center office hours

Recommendations

TF support & TF Sessions

“Host sessions on writing during the beginning of HPL”

*More structured time with TF. *A lot of time was spent getting to know each other rather than the content and constructive feedback.”*

“I think students' varied experiences were also dependent on the TF. At times the TF's wanted to help us but did not know how to help us. I skimmed through the content. There would be times when I would not have read and seen anything. IF the discussion questions were based on the readings....”

TF led field study sessions:

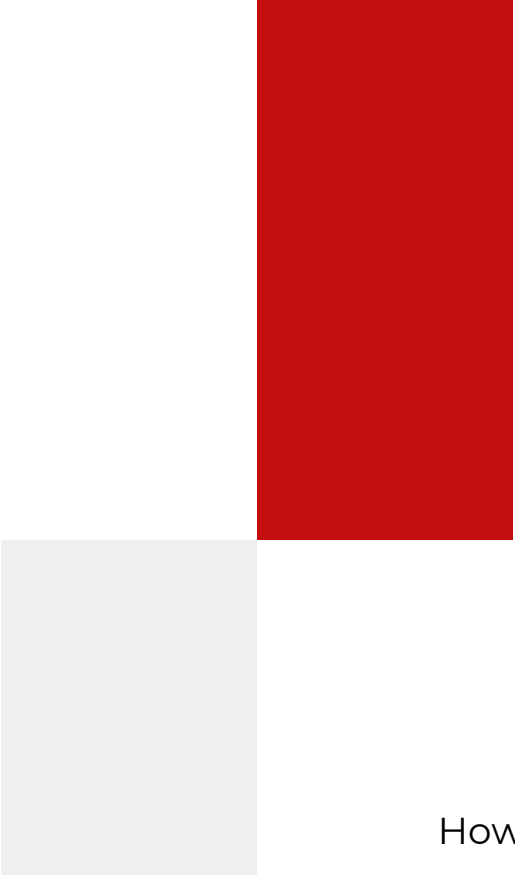
A session that is dedicated to discussing the case studies. Can be separated into system level, program level, and learner level sessions.

TF session activities:

Keeping icebreakers and games to minimum during POP sessions. Using POP FAQs as icebreakers?

Timings of POP session:

“I remember the TF doing a session on the POP, things to cover and how depth we should go into. This was towards the end and I wished it were done during the beginning.”



02

Relevancy of PoP Prompts

How can PoPs feel more relevant to students outside of
K-12 education or beyond the U.S?

Focus Group Questions

Activity

Directly onto the prompt sheet provided, please underline parts of the prompt that you think are applicable outside of the K-12 setting. Then, please circle parts of the prompt that you think are applicable outside of the U.S. context.

Relevance outside of K-12

How might these prompts be posed differently to be more inclusive to those outside of the K-12 setting? What can we add to it, and what can we do differently?

Relevance outside of U.S.

How might these prompts be posed differently to be more inclusive to those outside of the U.S. context? What can we add to it, and what can we do differently?

Relevance Outside of the K-12 Setting

Learner Level Prompt

The Facing History approach reimagines **teaching history as a series of choices that individuals make, all of which shape society**, and helps students **reflect on the choices in their lives** and how they can make a difference. You are a high school history teacher in the U.S. and want to set your students up to be **informed, engaged citizens**. While you're unable to overhaul the curriculum, you're considering implementing a couple of strategies next year that might help **prepare them to be global citizens**.

Should you teach a FHAO case study for a six-week unit, which can be tied to **regional history and current events**? Or do you opt to use that same amount of time to have students research and propose solutions to current problems in the U.S.? Explain to the department head which approach is more likely to effectively meet the learning goals related to being **engaged citizens**.

System Level Prompt

One of the goals of the Facing History approach is for **students to understand and relate to the impact an individual's choices can have on the community**. You are the superintendent of the district and have just **received a proposal from a well-funded donor** that would have students shadow local political or special interest groups in their first year of high school with primarily **experience-based learning** in lieu of a ninth-grade history class. This could take place before any **study of individual and group identities, racism, prejudice, historical decisions, or conflicts**.

Make a recommendation to the district leadership to **accept or reject the donor proposal** and explain why.

Relevance Outside of the U.S. Context

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Voices Related to Terminology

“I am not sure what the ‘Superintendent’ of the ‘district’ is. We do not use ‘high school.’ ‘District’ has a completely different meaning in India, it’s simply a large city in India. So more specificity would be helpful.”

“What is a well-funded donor? How much would they cover?”

“What is the practice of ‘shadowing’?”

“Terms like ‘ninth-grade’ are confusing. A specific age range or more context would be helpful.”

Voices Related to Teacher Autonomy

“In my country, teachers do not have much autonomy in the curriculum they teach, it is different in the U.S. How much autonomy do the teachers in the U.S. have? Do the teachers have to convince the board? Or the department head? How does that work?”

“I did a lot of PoPs on the System-Level because the autonomy [of the teacher] differs around the world, so assuming the same level of autonomy existing isn’t helpful.”

“A lot of things are relevant outside of the U.S., but I’m not sure if it’s [implementable] in schools.”

Voices Related to Differences in Historical Background

"I did not understand identities and racism... I could not connect with the prompt because those things do not connect with me, I have not had those experiences."

"There is a lot of focus on racism, outside of the U.S. context, there are other issues related to religion and caste systems."

Recommendations

Use more descriptive language

Age groups can be used instead of grade levels and ambiguous and more broadly interpretable terms like “well-funded” should be avoided.

Include international students in the prompt revision process

Terms and concepts that may seem clear to those of us coming from the U.S. education context may not be as clear to our international students. Involving such students in the process of writing and revising prompts will help with the use of descriptive language.

Recommendations

Provide an Overview of U.S. Educational Structure

Focus group participants found it important for them to have a general understanding of the U.S. educational structure as many of their class content and discussions revolve around the U.S. system, especially in *Leading Change*. An infographic or video explaining the system with terms like *district*, *superintendent*, *charter school*, and *school board* would enhance student understanding.

Further Dissemination and Simplification of Existing Resources

The Office of Student Affairs provide a well thought out and detailed explanation of the U.S. Education Guides, but many students did not use this resource until *Leading Change*. We recommend this resource to be included in the “list of links” from our prior recommendation.

Recommendation / Missed Opportunity

Further Exploration in Future Years of OEL Students

Though our survey link was sent out via email to all HGSE students, a majority of our responses were gathered in person at Gutman and both focus groups were conducted in person. OEL students, especially international students, may have further thoughts on both of the context relevancy so we recommend further exploration for our online cohort of students.

Revised Prompts

Learner Level Prompt

The Facing History approach reimagines teaching history as a series of choices that individuals make, all of which shape society, and helps students reflect on the choices in their lives and how they can make a difference. You are a high school (approx. age 14 - 18) history teacher in the U.S. and want to set your students up to be informed, engaged citizens. While you're unable to overhaul the curriculum, you have the choice of implementing a couple of strategies next year that might help prepare them to be global citizens.

Should you teach a FHO case study for a six-week unit, which can be tied to regional history and current events? Or do you opt to use that same amount of time to have students research and propose solutions to current problems in the U.S.? Explain to the department head which approach is more likely to effectively meet the learning goals related to being engaged citizens.

System Level Prompt

One of the goals of the Facing History approach is for students to understand and relate to the impact an individual's choices can have on the community. You are the superintendent of the district, overseeing all schools within your city, and have just received a proposal from a donor willing to fund the entirety of the program that would have students closely observe and interact with local political or special interest groups in their first year of high school (approx. age 14 - 18) with primarily experience-based learning in lieu of a ninth-grade history class (approx age 14 - 15). This could take place before any study of individual and group identities, racism, prejudice, historical decisions, or conflicts.

Make a recommendation to your team of district leadership to accept or reject the donor proposal and explain why.

Thank you!

Questions & Open Discussion