Grant writing 101 for graduate students

Presented by the CLA Office of Research & Graduate Education
Dr. Bradley Dilger — October 25, 2016

Thank you to Dr. Melissa Remis, Terri Donald, and Michelle McMullin for helping with today's workshop.

The seven elements of grant writing

- **Research:** understand the grant and its contexts.
- **Networking:** build the team necessary for success.
- **Evaluation:** consider (and improve) your winning chances.
- **Drafting:** outline, draft, revise, and edit the grant.
- **Reviewing:** get feedback from relevant parties.
- **Submission:** receive approval for, then submit grant.
- **Follow-up:** communicate with stakeholders as needed.

The grant writing cycle

Every grant is different, but they all involve moving through the seven elements.
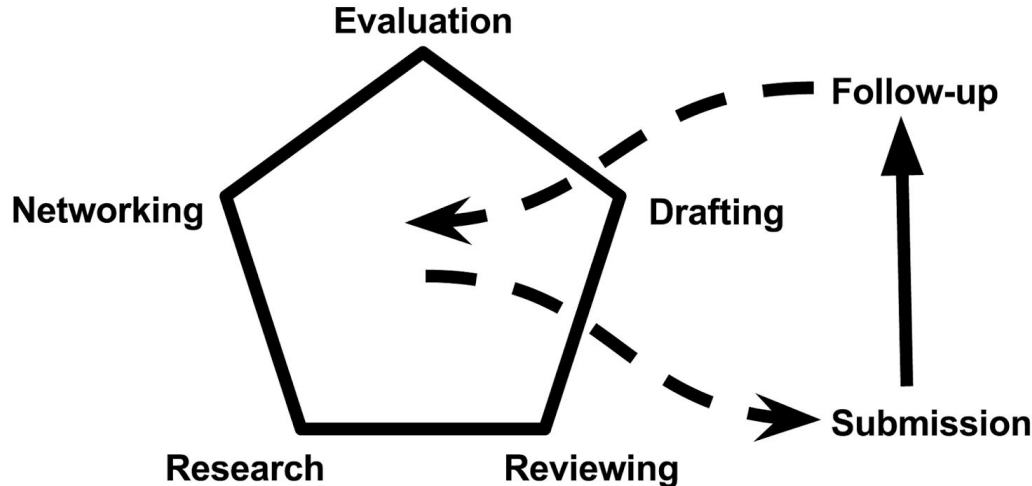
Consider the balance of each which is required for the particular grant you're working on — an internal travel grant will still need research, in order to create an accurate budget, but won't require a lot of networking. On the other hand, seeking funding for a collaborative project will require extensive networking and will mandate care to include everyone in the drafting process.

Best practices for grant development

1. Read the RFP! And then read it again.
2. Think long term — don't be afraid to start small and/or wait until next year.
3. Make and use checklists and calendars.
4. Be methodical about backup, file name conventions, and record-keeping.
5. Work with your advisors to develop an approach to moving from smaller grants to larger funding streams.
6. Ask program officers and grant administrators questions you can't answer — they want to read good proposals!
7. Pay special attention to: (a) summaries or abstracts; (b) budgets (and budget justifications if required).
8. Never underestimate the value of a review from an honest, constructive reader.
9. Take follow-up seriously — allow time for it and use it to make your work better on the long term.

We'd appreciate your feedback

How else can we help you write grants, now and in the future? Please complete this survey about today's workshop! goo.gl/igYe1w

See my web site (dtext.org) for today's slide deck and more.

Questions? Comments? Get in touch.
Bradley Dilger ~ dilger@purdue.edu ~ 309–259–0328

Table 1: Summary of General and Targeted Funding Opportunities

	General Research	Targeted Research
Research emphasis / funding source	Research that addresses important issues for WPAs and other writing-instruction professionals.	Research projects that explore the core mission elements of CWPA.
Funds available, number of awards, maximum award	$5000 awarded to four to eight recipients; average award about $1000; maximum award $1500.	$4000 awarded to one or two recipients; average award between $2000 and $4000; maximum award $4000.
Eligibility	Applicants must be current CWPA members. Proposals from CWPA Executive Board or Research Grants Committee members who have served during the current year or previous three years will not be considered.	
Special considerations	We encourage proposals • from individuals or groups working at two-year colleges and from colleges that service historically underrepresented groups; • with budgets that include matching funds from their institution or other funding agencies.	
Deadline	Proposals are due Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 11:59pm.	

Organization of the Proposal

Please organize your proposal into the following sections:

1. **Cover page** separate from actual proposal:
    a. Names and institutional affiliations of all investigators. (Do not identify yourself or your institution in any other part of the proposal);
    b. Project title;
    c. Contact information: mailing address, email address, and phone number for main contact person;
    d. Funding Preference: state whether you want your proposal to be considered for "General Research" or "Targeted Research" funding.
2. **Project overview (two pages maximum),** single-spaced, in which you do the following:
    a. Explain the problem or question your research project will investigate or attempt to solve, and make clear, if necessary, why this is a significant problem/question for the field.
    b. Clearly outline the methodology you plan to use to approach the problem. Make sure we understand how your methods will yield findings/data that will address the problem you have identified.
    c. Provide a timetable detailing how the project will proceed.
    d. Connect the project to previously published research and scholarship.
    e. Describe your (and/or your team's) expertise and experience in this area.
    f. Describe how the results will be shared professionally (see "Expectations of Reward Recipients" page 5).
3. **Realistic, detailed budget and timeline (two pages maximum)**. For grants over $1000, in-kind budget items or alternative budget sources must be included in the budget. State whether you will accept partial funding. Include a realistic timeline for your project.

Notes on CWPA grant CFP

Deadline Jan 30. Numbers in () are citations to CFP.
1. "much-discussed" problem (1)
2. We want to do targeted for $4000. Need to be "RAD" (Haswell) (1) and examine high school college connection (1-2)
3. Need to make plans for $1000 award; can get less than we ask for. (2)
4. Must be CWPA member. http://wpacouncil.org/join-renew (2)
5. 2011 special considerations include matching funds; we have those (URC; E&J pays for RA in 2012-13; may have decision on CCCRI by deadline). (2)

Formatting

1. **Cover page: 1pp (2)**
    a. only place where identifying info goes
    b. name, institutional affiliation
    c. project title
    d. contact info for main contact
    e. funding preference
2. **Overview: 2pp single spaced (2-3)**
    a. Explain problem and argue for significance
    b. Brief sketch of method {ooh Smagorinsky would not approve}
    c. **<u>Connect project and problem</u>**
    d. Timetable
    e. Connect to previous scholarship
    f. Describe expertise
    g. Describe sharing of results
3. **Budget: 1pp (3)**
    a. Include in-kind items & alternative sources
    b. Detailed!
    c. State if partial funding okay

Selection criteria

1. CWPA mission statement (3)
2. Significance (3)
    a. Important, relevant problem?
    b. Original, significant?
    c. How does it help WPAs?
    d. Generalizes outside of institutional context?
3. Innovation (3)
    a. Original and innovative? Challenging?

Overview

We are in the first year of a multi-year study which seeks to better understand writing transfer at the "2+2" university, focusing on student writers as they begin writing in their majors. Our research focuses on barriers to transfer: what prevents transfer students from being able to transfer writing skills and knowledge between institutional learning contexts? Given the growing influence of the "2+2" model, we believe our research will offer strong contributions to WPAs who work at institutions where transfer credit plays an important role.

Research Question(s) and Significance

In the last five years, research in writing studies has more frequently asked questions about transfer: the movement of abilities, methods, skills, and knowledge from one domain to another. As Bergmann & Zepernick argue in *WPA* 31.1-2 (2007), we have too long assumed students can easily apply learning from general writing courses like first-year writing (FYW) to courses in their major where discipline-specific writing is required. Transfer can be even more complicated for transfer students, who move between academic cultures of two-year or for-profit colleges and universities. Under direct or indirect pressure from legislatures, many institutions like ours are embracing the "2+2" model, where students complete most of their first two years of coursework at community colleges and transfer to universities for work in their majors. The changes brought by the 2+2 model—increased heterogeneity among student writing ability and experience, potential tensions between academic cultures, less vertical writing curricula—make questions about transfer of skills and knowledge even more important, as they increase demands on students and faculty alike.

Our research seeks to learn what differences exist between traditional and "2+2" students ask they learn to write in their majors. Also writing in *WPA* 31.1-2, Nelms and Dively have begun to identify barriers to transfer. We seek to extend their work by investigating barriers to transfer for "2+2" students beginning to write in their majors. How can writing instructors help students negotiate these barriers? What implications do observed patterns of transfer have for writing program design in universities using the "2+2" model?

Research Methods

To answer the questions we outline above, we have designed a three-year case study of 14 to 16 students that draws heavily on interviews and stimulated recall through discourse-based interviews. Our research design emerges from activity theory, a framework that seeks to highlight the ways tools and communication systems are mediated in practice. We believe that students' writing lives are deeply impacted by their movement through multiple activity systems, educational and otherwise.

Our first interviews with participants have allowed us to learn about their writing experiences in FYW, in writing courses for the major, and outside of academic contexts. A series of discourse-based interviews based on a portfolio of writing submitted halfway through the first year will focus on issues specific to each student, while chronicling their experiences in the second half of the year. The combination of literacy history, interviews and close analysis of student writing will enable us to construct thick descriptions of our participants' history in multiple activity systems impact writing in new contexts.

For AY2011–2, we were awarded an internal seed grant large enough to begin the first year of study with 10 participants. We intend to use CWPA funding to continue working with interested current case study participants available for a second year. We will recruit additional participants to replace those who graduate or do not wish to continue. While we cannot currently detail our research design for the second and third year of our study, given that we are shaping our approach to best investigate our first year of findings, we will certainly work in a manner, after Haswell, which offers "RAD" results via generalizable, well-documented methods.

Winning PROMISE grant from 2016

Thank you to Michelle McMullin for sharing this with me.

Budget
1. Air travel and transportation: $360.00
2. Conference Registration Fees: $145.00
3. Hotel Cost: $125 X 4 Nights = $500.00
4. Per Diem 4 days X $32 = $128.00

Total Cost of Conference attendance:
$1,133 – $500 ATTW Support = $633 request from PROMISE Award.

Participant's role
Attend Research Workshop at ATTW, Present at CCCCs
Build professional networks, etc.

Please describe the conference/project/activity and detail the intellectual significance and the benefit of your participation to your degree progress and professional development. Please limit to 250 words.

I am attending back-to-back conferences in Houston, TX in April. These conferences will give me an opportunity to develop my empirical research, present on ongoing projects, and build the professional networks that will lead to further research and professional opportunities in my field.

At the conference for the Association for Teachers of Technical Writing I will continue my current research on technical communication. This is an ongoing empirical project that examines the technical communication of public health workers during crisis, and their impacts on policy and decision making. My initial case study involves the outbreak of HIV in Southeastern Indiana. I am one of a small group of researchers invited to present and further develop my work at a methods workshop with Clay Spinuzzi at the ATTW conference.

The Conference on College Composition and Communication takes place one day after the ATTW conference. I will be presenting with other colleagues from Purdue and St. Edward's College on the value of academic networks when doing activist, social justice and community engagement work. My colleagues and I will be continuing a participatory project by working with other scholars to map current work in the field and develop a website to serve as an interactive, intercollegiate map to facilitate communication among practitioners, community groups and academics.

Both of these conferences are essential to my professional development in terms of networking opportunities and furthering my research goals. Because both conferences are in Houston I can effectively double the value of this funding award.