3.2 Formulating Your Stance on an Issue

Objectives

Create a proposal in the IPOS (Issue, Purpose, Obstacle, Scope) format for a document addressing a particular social justice issue.

Analyze the relevant factors as listed above.

Synthesize information into a full report.

Materials needed

Pen and paper

Copies of the handout

Reference materials

Time needed

Sixty minutes or more, depending on variation

Instructor directions

Have your students choose specific issues relevant to difference, power, and discrimination and formulate their positions on them.

Have them write a one-page proposal (outline) for a report using the IPOS (Issue, Purpose, Obstacle, Scope) format:

Issue: In two to four sentences, identify the issue, describe its relevance to social justice, and clearly state your position on it.

Purpose: Using an active, "key task" verb, relate the effect you intend to have *on your target audience.*

Obstacle: Identify any potential problems or barriers *outside of the report itself* that might interfere with your stated purpose.

Scope: Explain exactly which aspects of the issue you will and won't address in your report.

Variation

After they complete the IPOS statement (outline), have your students continue with the full report. Ask them to include relevant visual elements (graphs, illustrations) that support the content of the reports and include a bibliography or source list. Have them turn the reports in to you for feedback.

3.2 Formulating Your Stance on an Issue Handout

Directions

Choose a specific issue relevant to difference, power, and discrimination and formulate your position on it.

Write a one-page proposal (outline) for a report using the IPOS (Issue, Purpose, Obstacle, Scope) format.

Issue: In two to four sentences, identify the issue, describe its relevance to social justice, and clearly state your position on it.

Purpose: Using an active, "key task" verb, relate the effect you intend to have *on your target audience*. (Examples of key task verbs include *persuade, demonstrate, educate, inform, motivate, convince, teach, compare, contrast.*) Make sure the verb matches your intended purpose. If you present factual information with little interpretation, "inform" may be appropriate. If you present information plus your interpret or agenda, "convince" or "motivate" will be more appropriate.

Obstacle: Identify any potential problems or barriers *outside of the report itself* that might interfere with your stated purpose. Why might your audience not go along with your position or carry out your recommendations on the issue? Obstacles could include an audience bias against your position; a lack of access to information necessary to make your point; inadequate funds, personnel, or time for your audience to carry out your recommendations; and laws or regulations prohibiting the course of action you suggest. (Note: Don't confuse obstacle statements with the issue statement, above. The issue is *internal* to the document; obstacles are *external* to it. Example: Your stated purpose is to persuade your audience, state legislators, to mandate statewide newborn hearing screenings. The legislators may actually agree on and pass your recommendation into statute, but a potential obstacle would be the lack of a funding source for the screening procedures; which could prevent your recommendation from being carried out.)

Scope: Explain exactly which aspects of the issue you will and won't address in your report. Create a list of three to a dozen items (depending on the intended length of your report) that clearly identifies the points you intend to cover. Remember that fewer points, covered thoroughly, are better than more points, covered inadequately.

Variation

After you complete the IPOS statement (outline), continue with the full report. Include relevant visual elements (graphs, illustrations) that support the content of your report. Include a bibliography or source list. Turn the report in to your instructor for feedback.