



NSSE 2020 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of Holy Cross

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About This Topical Module

This module is the result of an ongoing collaboration between NSSE and the Council of Writing Program Administrators. The questions touch on three aspects of good writing assignments—interactivity, meaning-making, and clarity. It complements questions on the core survey about how much writing students do, the nature of their course assignments, and perceived gains in written expression. Complementary FSSE set available.

Comparison Group

This section summarizes how this module's comparison group was identified, including selection criteria and whether the default option was taken. This is followed by the resulting list of institutions represented in the 'Writing Experiences' column of this report.

Group label	Writing Experiences
Date submitted	5/26/20
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution retained the default comparison group (all module participants).
Group description	All other current- and prior-year (if applicable) NSSE institutions who administered module "Experiences with Writing"

Writing Experiences (N=69)

Allegheny College (Meadville, PA)	Nova Southeastern University (Fort Lauderdale, FL)*
Anna Maria College (Paxton, MA)*	Occidental College (Los Angeles, CA)*
Ashford University (San Diego, CA)	Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*
Auburn University (Auburn, AL)	Ouachita Baptist University (Arkadelphia, AR)
Augsburg University (Minneapolis, MN)*	Pitzer College (Claremont, CA)
Bethany College (Lindsborg, KS)*	Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View, TX)
Bluefield College (Bluefield, VA)*	Queens University of Charlotte (Charlotte, NC)
Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, OH)*	Redeemer University College (Ancaster, ON)*
California Lutheran University (Thousand Oaks, CA)	Rocky Mountain College (Billings, MT)*
California State University-Dominguez Hills (Carson, CA)	Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH)*
Capital University (Columbus, OH)*	Savannah College of Art and Design (Savannah, GA)*
Carroll University (Waukesha, WI)*	Savannah State University (Savannah, GA)
Colgate University (Hamilton, NY)	School of Visual Arts (New York, NY)
College of Saint Rose, The (Albany, NY)*	Southern Utah University (Cedar City, UT)*
College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, MA)	Spalding University (Louisville, KY)
Columbia College (Columbia, SC)	St. Catherine University (Saint Paul, MN)
Columbia Southern University (Orange Beach, AL)*	SUNY Cortland (Cortland, NY)
Concordia University Chicago (River Forest, IL)	Tabor College (Hillsboro, KS)*
Francis Marion University (Florence, SC)	Tarleton State University (Stephenville, TX)*
Georgian Court University (Lakewood, NJ)*	Texas A&M International University (Laredo, TX)
Governors State University (University Park, IL)	Texas A&M University-Central Texas (Killeen, TX)*
Grand Canyon University (Phoenix, AZ)	Texas A&M University-Kingsville (Kingsville, TX)*
Henderson State University (Arkadelphia, AR)*	Texas A&M University-San Antonio (San Antonio, TX)
Hiram College (Hiram, OH)*	Texas College (Tyler, TX)*
Juniata College (Huntingdon, PA)	Union University (Jackson, TN)*
Kentucky Wesleyan College (Owensboro, KY)*	University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)
Lees-McRae College (Banner Elk, NC)*	University of Houston-Downtown (Houston, TX)*
Miami University-Oxford (Oxford, OH)*	University of New Hampshire at Durham (Durham, NH)
Nichols College (Dudley, MA)	University of North Carolina at Pembroke (Pembroke, NC)
Norfolk State University (Norfolk, VA)	University of North Florida (Jacksonville, FL)*

Writing Experiences (N=69), continued

University of Southern Indiana (Evansville, IN)*
University of Tampa, The (Tampa, FL)
University of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX)*
University of Toledo (Toledo, OH)*
University of West Florida, The (Pensacola, FL)
Virginia State University (Petersburg, VA)*
Virginia Wesleyan University (Virginia Beach, VA)*
Washington State University (Pullman, WA)*
West Texas A&M University (Canyon, TX)

*2019 participant

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UHC		Writing Experiences		UHC	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
1. During the current school year, for how many writing assignments have you done the following?										
a. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before starting your assignment	WRI01a	1	No writing assignments	2	7	1,515	9	3.2	3.0	.24
		2	Few writing assignments	5	20	3,910	23			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	27	6,471	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	9	35	4,431	24			
		5	All writing assignments	3	11	1,293	7			
		Total		26	100	17,620	100			
b. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment	WRI01b	1	No writing assignments	4	16	1,515	9	3.0	3.1	-.10
		2	Few writing assignments	5	19	3,385	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	27	5,697	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	7	26	5,142	29			
		5	All writing assignments	3	12	1,838	10			
		Total		26	100	17,577	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	2	8	1,860	11	2.9	2.9	-.02
		2	Few writing assignments	7	27	3,682	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	9	36	6,410	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	5	20	4,462	25			
		5	All writing assignments	2	8	1,196	7			
		Total		25	100	17,610	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	1	4	735	4	3.6	3.3	.27
		2	Few writing assignments	1	4	2,637	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	9	35	6,410	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	12	45	5,901	33			
		5	All writing assignments	3	12	1,913	11			
		Total		26	100	17,596	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	1	4	425	3	4.0	3.6 *	.39
		2	Few writing assignments	0	0	1,731	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	5	20	5,269	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	13	49	7,268	40			
		5	All writing assignments	7	27	2,902	17			
		Total		26	100	17,595	100			
f. Described your methods or findings related to data you collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.	WRI01f	1	No writing assignments	4	16	2,766	15	3.0	2.9	.07
		2	Few writing assignments	6	24	3,533	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	6	23	5,593	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	6	23	4,274	24			
		5	All writing assignments	4	16	1,403	8			
		Total		26	100	17,569	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	3	12	1,066	6	3.5	3.3	.11
		2	Few writing assignments	1	4	2,407	14			
		3	Some writing assignments	8	31	5,723	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	9	34	6,078	34			
		5	All writing assignments	5	19	2,294	13			
		Total		26	100	17,568	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UHC		Writing Experiences		UHC	Writing Experiences	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	7	27	4,247	23	2.6	2.6	.05
		2	Few writing assignments	5	19	4,250	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	26	5,011	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	4	15	3,106	18			
		5	All writing assignments	3	12	941	6			
		Total		26	100	17,555	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	4	16	3,003	17	3.2	2.9	.18
		2	Few writing assignments	5	19	3,275	19			
		3	Some writing assignments	5	20	5,045	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	6	23	4,211	24			
		5	All writing assignments	6	22	2,015	12			
		Total		26	100	17,549	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	6	24	2,793	16	2.9	2.9	-.01
		2	Few writing assignments	4	15	3,664	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	26	5,515	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	5	19	3,936	22			
		5	All writing assignments	4	16	1,626	10			
		Total		26	100	17,534	100			
2. During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments have your instructors done the following?										
a. Provided clear instructions describing what they wanted you to do	WRI02a	1	No writing assignments	1	4	361	2	4.1	3.8	.25
		2	Few writing assignments	1	4	1,229	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	4	16	3,964	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	9	35	7,510	42			
		5	All writing assignments	11	42	4,477	26			
		Total		26	100	17,541	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	2	8	591	4	4.0	3.6	.31
		2	Few writing assignments	1	4	1,937	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	3	11	4,779	27			
		4	Most writing assignments	10	38	6,156	35			
		5	All writing assignments	10	39	4,051	24			
		Total		26	100	17,514	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	2	8	417	3	4.0	3.9	.10
		2	Few writing assignments	1	4	1,178	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	2	7	3,634	21			
		4	Most writing assignments	10	38	6,240	35			
		5	All writing assignments	11	43	6,032	35			
		Total		26	100	17,501	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UHC		Writing Experiences		UHC	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
1. During the current school year, for how many writing assignments have you done the following?										
a. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before starting your assignment	WRI01a	1	No writing assignments	8	17	2,485	11	3.0	3.0	.04
		2	Few writing assignments	10	23	4,996	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	8	18	8,103	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	12	26	5,846	24			
		5	All writing assignments	7	16	1,989	9			
		Total		45	100	23,419	100			
b. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment	WRI01b	1	No writing assignments	9	19	3,439	15	3.1	2.8	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	8	18	5,576	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	15	7,269	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	14	31	5,215	22			
		5	All writing assignments	7	16	1,860	8			
		Total		45	100	23,359	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	9	19	4,417	19	2.9	2.6	.20
		2	Few writing assignments	9	20	5,648	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	10	23	7,955	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	13	29	4,139	17			
		5	All writing assignments	4	9	1,221	5			
		Total		45	100	23,380	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	3	7	1,222	6	3.4	3.4	.01
		2	Few writing assignments	6	13	3,034	13			
		3	Some writing assignments	12	26	7,476	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	18	40	8,333	35			
		5	All writing assignments	6	14	3,294	14			
		Total		45	100	23,359	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	3	7	747	3	3.6	3.7	-.13
		2	Few writing assignments	6	13	1,930	9			
		3	Some writing assignments	7	15	5,764	25			
		4	Most writing assignments	21	46	9,988	42			
		5	All writing assignments	8	19	4,944	21			
		Total		45	100	23,373	100			
f. Described your methods or findings related to data you collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.	WRI01f	1	No writing assignments	9	20	2,842	12	3.1	3.1	-.06
		2	Few writing assignments	6	13	3,929	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	10	21	6,984	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	14	31	6,764	29			
		5	All writing assignments	6	14	2,828	12			
		Total		45	100	23,347	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	12	26	1,981	9	2.8	3.3 *	-.42 ▼
		2	Few writing assignments	5	12	3,385	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	14	31	7,158	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	8	17	7,477	32			
		5	All writing assignments	6	14	3,348	15			
		Total		45	100	23,349	100			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UHC		Writing Experiences		UHC	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	13	29	3,822	16	2.4	2.9 *	▼ -.38
		2	Few writing assignments	12	28	5,185	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	10	22	7,213	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	8	17	5,155	23			
		5	All writing assignments	2	5	1,950	9			
		Total		45	100	23,325	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	9	19	2,798	12	3.1	3.4	-.24
		2	Few writing assignments	9	21	3,097	13			
		3	Some writing assignments	6	13	5,271	23			
		4	Most writing assignments	12	26	6,822	29			
		5	All writing assignments	9	20	5,338	23			
		Total		45	100	23,326	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	9	19	3,608	15	2.8	2.9	-.08
		2	Few writing assignments	11	25	4,641	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	11	25	7,330	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	7	15	5,173	22			
		5	All writing assignments	7	16	2,560	11			
		Total		45	100	23,312	100			
2. During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments have your instructors done the following?										
a. Provided clear instructions describing what they wanted you to do	WRI02a	1	No writing assignments	2	5	545	3	4.1	3.9	.24
		2	Few writing assignments	4	9	1,440	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	5	11	4,490	19			
		4	Most writing assignments	10	22	10,238	43			
		5	All writing assignments	24	54	6,628	29			
		Total		45	100	23,341	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	3	7	831	4	4.1	3.7 *	▲ .35
		2	Few writing assignments	4	9	2,230	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	2	4	5,587	24			
		4	Most writing assignments	13	28	8,277	35			
		5	All writing assignments	23	53	6,396	28			
		Total		45	100	23,321	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	3	7	612	3	4.2	4.0	.14
		2	Few writing assignments	4	9	1,306	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	5	11	4,018	17			
		4	Most writing assignments	4	8	8,226	35			
		5	All writing assignments	29	65	9,167	40			
		Total		45	100	23,329	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

NSSE 2020 Experiences with Writing

Detailed Statistics^e

University of Holy Cross

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UHC	UHC	Writing Experiences	UHC	Writing Experiences	UHC	Writing Experiences			
WRI01a	26	3.23	2.98	.221	.006	1.13	1.07	28,483	.217	.24
WRI01b	26	3.00	3.11	.249	.007	1.27	1.12	28,412	.612	-.10
WRI01c	25	2.93	2.95	.216	.006	1.08	1.09	28,461	.916	-.02
WRI01d	26	3.57	3.30	.178	.006	0.91	1.01	28,446	.168	.27
WRI01e	26	3.96	3.58	.180	.006	0.92	0.97	25	.043	.39
WRI01f	26	2.99	2.90	.261	.007	1.34	1.17	28,393	.706	.07
WRI01g	26	3.45	3.33	.237	.006	1.21	1.07	28,385	.559	.11
WRI01h	26	2.65	2.59	.267	.007	1.36	1.19	28,365	.813	.05
WRI01i	26	3.17	2.94	.276	.007	1.41	1.26	28,356	.347	.18
WRI01j	26	2.88	2.89	.275	.007	1.41	1.20	28,328	.967	-.01
WRI02a	26	4.07	3.83	.207	.006	1.06	0.97	28,353	.207	.25
WRI02b	26	3.98	3.65	.233	.006	1.19	1.07	28,315	.116	.31
WRI02c	26	4.04	3.93	.233	.006	1.19	1.03	28,284	.592	.10

NSSE 2020 Experiences with Writing

Detailed Statistics^e

University of Holy Cross

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UHC	UHC	Writing Experiences	UHC	Writing Experiences	UHC	Writing Experiences	Comparisons with: Writing Experiences		
WRI01a	45	3.02	2.98	.204	.006	1.36	1.12	44	.814	.04
WRI01b	45	3.08	2.83	.208	.006	1.39	1.17	44	.229	.22
WRI01c	45	2.87	2.65	.191	.006	1.28	1.13	37,244	.181	.20
WRI01d	45	3.41	3.39	.166	.005	1.11	1.06	37,202	.933	.01
WRI01e	45	3.56	3.69	.172	.005	1.15	1.01	37,226	.379	-.13
WRI01f	45	3.06	3.13	.203	.006	1.36	1.19	37,182	.687	-.06
WRI01g	45	2.81	3.29	.207	.006	1.38	1.14	44	.024	-.42
WRI01h	45	2.41	2.87	.181	.006	1.21	1.18	37,155	.010	-.38
WRI01i	45	3.07	3.38	.216	.007	1.45	1.29	37,151	.116	-.24
WRI01j	45	2.84	2.94	.203	.006	1.36	1.22	37,138	.584	-.08
WRI02a	45	4.13	3.89	.179	.005	1.20	0.98	44	.190	.24
WRI02b	45	4.11	3.73	.186	.006	1.25	1.09	37,148	.019	.35
WRI02c	45	4.17	4.03	.197	.005	1.32	1.03	44	.482	.14

Endnotes

- a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts.
- b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.
- c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.
- d. Effect size for independent t -tests uses Cohen's d ; z -tests use Cohen's h .
- e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.
- f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.
- g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.
- h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the t -tests. Values differ from N s due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.
- i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests or z -tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.
- j. Statistical comparison uses z -test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.
- k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

- ▲ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.
- △ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▽ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context.