NSSE 2017 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of Toledo

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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 'UT peer Writing' column of this report.

Group label	UT peer Writing
Date submitted	5/19/17
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this comparison group by selecting institutions from all module participants.
Group description	No description provided

UT peer Writing (N=6)

Central Michigan University (Mount Pleasant, MI)

Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)*

Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA)

University of Colorado Denver (Denver, CO)*

University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO)*

University of South Alabama (Mobile, AL)*

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First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UT		UT peer Writing		UT	UT peer Writing	
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size[d]

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	46	9	181	11			
		2	Few writing assignments	143	26	415	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	209	36	605	35	2.9	2.9	.00
		4	Most writing assignments	128	22	428	23			
		5	All writing assignments	38	7	124	7			
			Total	564	100	1,753	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	44	8	162	10			
		2	Few writing assignments	107	20	331	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	187	33	518	30	3.1	3.1	.00
		4	Most writing assignments	170	29	539	30			
		5	All writing assignments	54	9	197	11			
			Total	562	100	1,747	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	57	11	169	10			
		2	Few writing assignments	112	19	345	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	204	36	603	35	3.0	3.0	-.03
		4	Most writing assignments	149	26	477	26			
		5	All writing assignments	42	7	157	9			
			Total	564	100	1,751	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	29	5	75	5			
		2	Few writing assignments	104	20	285	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	213	37	620	36	3.2	3.3	-.08
		4	Most writing assignments	167	30	606	35			
		5	All writing assignments	50	9	163	9			
			Total	563	100	1,749	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	17	3	57	3			
		2	Few writing assignments	71	13	177	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	184	32	535	31	3.5	3.5	-.07
		4	Most writing assignments	213	38	725	41			
		5	All writing assignments	79	14	258	14			
			Total	564	100	1,752	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	74	13	319	18			
		2	Few writing assignments	116	21	401	23			
		3	Some writing assignments	191	35	542	31	2.9	2.7 **	.16
		4	Most writing assignments	141	25	373	22			
		5	All writing assignments	41	7	112	6			
			Total	563	100	1,747	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	47	9	143	8			
		2	Few writing assignments	84	15	262	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	195	35	549	32	3.2	3.2	-.03
		4	Most writing assignments	185	32	611	34			
		5	All writing assignments	52	10	181	10			
			Total	563	100	1,746	100			

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

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First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UT		UT peer Writing		UT	UT peer Writing	
Item wording or description	*Variable name*	*Values*[c]	*Response options*	Count	%	Count	%	*Mean*	*Mean*	*Effect size*[d]
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	117	20	489	28	**2.7**	2.4 ***	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	129	23	443	25			
		3	Some writing assignments	162	28	462	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	121	22	264	15			
		5	All writing assignments	33	6	76	4			
			Total	562	100	1,734	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	89	15	392	22	**2.9**	2.7 *	.13
		2	Few writing assignments	118	22	354	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	166	29	471	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	145	27	361	21			
		5	All writing assignments	46	8	161	9			
			Total	564	100	1,739	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	92	16	299	17	**2.8**	2.8	.01
		2	Few writing assignments	119	21	376	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	184	33	516	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	124	23	407	23			
		5	All writing assignments	40	7	144	8			
			Total	559	100	1,742	100			

2. During the current school year, for how many of your *writing assignments* have your *instructors* done the following?

				Count	%	Count	%	*Mean*	*Mean*	*Effect size*[d]
a. Provided clear instructions describing what they wanted you to do	WRI02a	1	No writing assignments	8	1	43	3	**3.8**	3.9	-.03
		2	Few writing assignments	38	7	117	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	140	25	341	20			
		4	Most writing assignments	238	42	772	44			
		5	All writing assignments	139	25	470	27			
			Total	563	100	1,743	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	22	4	73	4	**3.7**	3.6	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	66	11	202	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	145	25	463	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	202	36	599	35			
		5	All writing assignments	129	24	405	23			
			Total	564	100	1,742	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	12	2	47	3	**3.9**	3.9	-.06
		2	Few writing assignments	50	9	126	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	126	23	340	19			
		4	Most writing assignments	196	33	628	36			
		5	All writing assignments	180	33	605	35			
			Total	564	100	1,746	100			

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Seliors

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UT		UT peer Writing		UT	UT peer Writing	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size[d]
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	50	11	400	14	**2.9**	2.9	.04
		2	Few writing assignments	118	25	712	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	154	33	1,054	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	115	24	744	23			
		5	All writing assignments	37	8	222	7			
			Total	474	100	3,132	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	72	15	481	16	**2.8**	2.8	-.01
		2	Few writing assignments	114	24	795	25			
		3	Some writing assignments	166	35	895	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	87	19	715	23			
		5	All writing assignments	33	7	234	7			
			Total	472	100	3,120	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	100	21	584	20	**2.6**	2.6	-.03
		2	Few writing assignments	112	24	819	26			
		3	Some writing assignments	169	36	1,031	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	70	14	536	17			
		5	All writing assignments	23	5	147	5			
			Total	474	100	3,117	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	38	8	230	8	**3.1**	3.2 *	-.10
		2	Few writing assignments	77	17	483	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	176	38	1,029	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	147	30	1,027	33			
		5	All writing assignments	36	7	343	11			
			Total	474	100	3,112	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	26	6	166	6	**3.4**	3.6 *	-.13
		2	Few writing assignments	57	13	306	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	144	31	815	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	176	36	1,269	41			
		5	All writing assignments	69	15	560	18			
			Total	472	100	3,116	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	71	14	452	14	**2.9**	3.0	-.04
		2	Few writing assignments	93	19	603	19			
		3	Some writing assignments	152	34	937	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	109	23	799	26			
		5	All writing assignments	44	9	324	11			
			Total	469	100	3,115	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	54	12	379	12	**3.0**	3.1	-.06
		2	Few writing assignments	92	20	537	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	157	33	970	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	125	26	873	28			
		5	All writing assignments	40	9	358	11			
			Total	468	100	3,117	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] UT Count	UT %	UT peer Writing Count	UT peer Writing %	Statistical Comparisons[b] UT Mean	UT peer Writing Mean	Effect size[d]
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	78	16	624	20			
		2	Few writing assignments	97	20	681	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	149	32	884	29	**2.9**	2.8	.09
		4	Most writing assignments	111	24	667	22			
		5	All writing assignments	35	8	241	8			
			Total	470	100	3,097	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	54	11	409	13			
		2	Few writing assignments	85	17	427	14			
		3	Some writing assignments	120	26	697	22	**3.2**	3.3	-.07
		4	Most writing assignments	129	28	882	28			
		5	All writing assignments	83	18	701	23			
			Total	471	100	3,116	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	94	20	590	19			
		2	Few writing assignments	94	20	662	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	149	32	910	29	**2.7**	2.8	-.04
		4	Most writing assignments	98	21	634	20			
		5	All writing assignments	32	7	310	10			
			Total	467	100	3,106	100			

2. During the current school year, for how many of your *writing assignments* have your *instructors* done the following?

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	UT Count	UT %	UT peer Writing Count	UT peer Writing %	UT Mean	UT peer Writing Mean	Effect size[d]
a. Provided clear instructions describing what they wanted you to do	WRI02a	1	No writing assignments	16	3	130	4			
		2	Few writing assignments	35	8	206	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	100	22	589	19	**3.8**	3.8	-.06
		4	Most writing assignments	213	46	1,345	43			
		5	All writing assignments	105	22	849	27			
			Total	469	100	3,119	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	24	5	165	5			
		2	Few writing assignments	62	13	356	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	133	28	780	25	**3.5**	3.6	-.09
		4	Most writing assignments	152	34	1,061	34			
		5	All writing assignments	93	20	757	25			
			Total	464	100	3,119	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	14	3	137	5			
		2	Few writing assignments	48	10	206	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	85	19	571	19	**3.8**	3.9	-.04
		4	Most writing assignments	177	37	1,169	37			
		5	All writing assignments	144	31	1,036	33			
			Total	468	100	3,119	100			

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error[f]		Standard deviation[g]		DF[h]	Sig.[i]	Effect size[d]
	UT	UT	UT peer Writing	UT	UT peer Writing	UT	UT peer Writing	UT peer Writing		
WRI01a	550	2.92	2.91	.04	.03	1.05	1.08	1,951	.970	.00
WRI01b	547	3.12	3.12	.05	.03	1.09	1.14	1,941	.976	.00
WRI01c	550	2.99	3.02	.05	.03	1.09	1.10	1,948	.585	-.03
WRI01d	550	3.18	3.26	.04	.03	1.01	0.99	1,948	.096	-.08
WRI01e	550	3.47	3.53	.04	.03	0.99	0.97	1,950	.190	-.07
WRI01f	548	2.92	2.74	.05	.03	1.12	1.16	1,038	.001	.16
WRI01g	548	3.20	3.23	.05	.03	1.08	1.08	1,944	.553	-.03
WRI01h	548	2.70	2.43	.05	.03	1.19	1.17	1,935	.000	.22
WRI01i	550	2.90	2.75	.05	.03	1.19	1.26	1,064	.011	.13
WRI01j	544	2.84	2.82	.05	.03	1.16	1.19	1,936	.790	.01
WRI02a	548	3.83	3.85	.04	.03	0.92	0.98	1,939	.563	-.03
WRI02b	549	3.66	3.60	.05	.03	1.07	1.09	1,941	.236	.06
WRI02c	550	3.86	3.92	.04	.03	1.03	1.04	1,945	.257	-.06

See the endnotes on the last page of this report.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error[f]		Standard deviation[g]		DF[h]	Sig.[i]	Effect size[d]
	UT	UT	UT peer Writing	UT	UT peer Writing	UT	UT peer Writing	*Comparisons with:* UT peer Writing		
WRI01a	471	2.92	2.88	.05	.02	1.11	1.13	3,217	.475	.04
WRI01b	467	2.78	2.79	.05	.02	1.13	1.17	651	.819	-.01
WRI01c	471	2.58	2.61	.05	.02	1.11	1.12	3,206	.606	-.03
WRI01d	470	3.12	3.23	.05	.02	1.04	1.08	658	.035	-.10
WRI01e	468	3.42	3.55	.05	.02	1.06	1.07	3,201	.011	-.13
WRI01f	464	2.94	2.99	.05	.02	1.17	1.20	3,196	.373	-.04
WRI01g	464	3.02	3.08	.05	.02	1.14	1.18	3,198	.247	-.06
WRI01h	466	2.88	2.78	.05	.02	1.17	1.22	651	.079	.09
WRI01i	467	3.24	3.34	.06	.03	1.25	1.32	657	.131	-.07
WRI01j	463	2.74	2.80	.06	.02	1.20	1.24	3,189	.375	-.04
WRI02a	466	3.76	3.82	.05	.02	0.98	1.05	3,201	.227	-.06
WRI02b	461	3.51	3.61	.05	.02	1.10	1.13	3,195	.075	-.09
WRI02c	464	3.84	3.88	.05	.02	1.06	1.08	3,200	.427	-.04

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 Ns 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.