
NSSE 2017 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of San Francisco

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	5/17/17
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution retained the default comparison group (all module participants).
Group description	All other current- and prior-year NSSE institutions who administered module "Experiences with Writing"

Writing Experiences (N=95)

Adams State University (Alamosa, CO)*	La Roche College (Pittsburgh, PA)*
Adventist University of Health Sciences (Orlando, FL)	Lees-McRae College (Banner Elk, NC)*
Ashford University (San Diego, CA)*	Lindsey Wilson College (Columbia, KY)
Baldwin Wallace University (Berea, OH)	Longwood University (Farmville, VA)
Bennett College (Greensboro, NC)	Lynchburg College (Lynchburg, VA)*
Bluefield College (Bluefield, VA)*	Mayville State University (Mayville, ND)
Bryant University (Smithfield, RI)*	McGill University (Montreal, QC)
Bryn Athyn College of the New Church (Bryn Athyn, PA)	Metropolitan State University of Denver (Denver, CO)
Buena Vista University (Storm Lake, IA)*	Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)*
California Lutheran University (Thousand Oaks, CA)	Missouri State University (Springfield, MO)*
Capella University (Minneapolis, MN)	Mount St. Mary's University (Emmitsburg, MD)*
Central Methodist University (Fayette, MO)	Nova Southeastern University (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
Central Michigan University (Mount Pleasant, MI)	Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA)
Colby College (Waterville, ME)	Radford University (Radford, VA)
College of Idaho, The (Caldwell, ID)	Reinhardt University (Waleska, GA)*
Culver-Stockton College (Canton, MO)	Rocky Mountain College (Billings, MT)
Dakota Wesleyan University (Mitchell, SD)	Sage Colleges, The (Troy, NY)*
Denison University (Granville, OH)	Saint Anselm College (Manchester, NH)
Doane University (Crete, NE)*	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (Winona, MN)*
Elon University (Elon, NC)*	Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC)
Fairfield University (Fairfield, CT)	Southeastern University (Lakeland, FL)
Florida International University (Miami, FL)*	Southern Utah University (Cedar City, UT)*
Fontbonne University (Saint Louis, MO)*	Spalding University (Louisville, KY)
Fort Lewis College (Durango, CO)*	Stonehill College (Easton, MA)
Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, GA)	SUNY College at Old Westbury (Old Westbury, NY)
Harvey Mudd College (Claremont, CA)	Tarleton State University (Stephenville, TX)
Henderson State University (Arkadelphia, AR)	Taylor University (Upland, IN)
Holy Cross College (Notre Dame, IN)	Texas A&M University - Texarkana (Texarkana, TX)

Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago, IL)*
Johnson University (Knoxville, TN)

Texas A&M University-Central Texas (Killeen, TX)
Texas A&M University-Kingsville (Kingsville, TX)

Writing Experiences (N=95), continued

Texas College (Tyler, TX)
Union University (Jackson, TN)
University at Albany, SUNY, The (Albany, NY)
University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)
University of Arkansas - Fort Smith (Fort Smith, AR)
University of Colorado Boulder (Boulder, CO)
University of Colorado Denver (Denver, CO)*
University of Dubuque (Dubuque, IA)*
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Urbana, IL)*
University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO)*
University of Mobile (Mobile, AL)*
University of Mount Union (Alliance, OH)*
University of North Carolina at Pembroke (Pembroke, NC)
University of North Florida (Jacksonville, FL)
University of Northern British Columbia (Prince George, BC)*
University of Phoenix - Colorado (Lone Tree, CO)
University of Phoenix - Florida (Orlando, FL)
University of Phoenix - Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)
University of South Alabama (Mobile, AL)*
University of St. Francis (Joliet, IL)*
University of St. Thomas (Houston, TX)
University of Tampa, The (Tampa, FL)
University of the Cumberlands (Williamsburg, KY)
University of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX)*
University of Toledo (Toledo, OH)
University of Waterloo (Waterloo, ON)
University of West Florida, The (Pensacola, FL)
University of West Georgia (Carrollton, GA)
Utah Valley University (Orem, UT)
Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, NY)
Virginia Wesleyan College (Norfolk, VA)*
Western Oregon University (Monmouth, OR)
Western Washington University (Bellingham, WA)
Westminster College (Fulton, MO)
Young Harris College (Young Harris, GA)*

*2016 participant

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of San Francisco

First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				USF_CA		Writing Experiences		USF_CA	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	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	18	11	2,196	10	3.0	3.0	-.01
		2	Few writing assignments	31	18	5,364	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	61	38	8,760	35			
		4	Most writing assignments	42	26	6,578	26			
		5	All writing assignments	11	6	1,887	7			
		Total		163	100	24,785	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	10	6	2,342	10	3.2	3.1	.12
		2	Few writing assignments	30	19	4,994	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	54	33	7,776	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	48	32	7,143	28			
		5	All writing assignments	16	10	2,369	10			
		Total		158	100	24,624	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	6	4	2,602	12	3.2	2.9 **	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	34	21	5,362	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	63	39	9,073	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	48	30	6,143	24			
		5	All writing assignments	10	6	1,524	6			
		Total		161	100	24,704	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	4	2	1,464	6	3.5	3.2 **	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	18	10	4,035	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	64	41	8,717	35			
		4	Most writing assignments	55	34	8,125	32			
		5	All writing assignments	20	13	2,350	10			
		Total		161	100	24,691	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	2	1	875	4	3.7	3.5 **	.21
		2	Few writing assignments	12	7	2,551	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	43	27	7,198	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	75	46	10,248	41			
		5	All writing assignments	30	19	3,801	16			
		Total		162	100	24,673	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	26	15	4,040	17	2.7	2.8	-.08
		2	Few writing assignments	45	27	4,976	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	53	33	7,766	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	26	16	6,059	24			
		5	All writing assignments	12	9	1,814	7			
		Total		162	100	24,655	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	2	1	1,760	8	3.7	3.3 ***	.33
		2	Few writing assignments	13	8	3,333	14			
		3	Some writing assignments	55	34	7,466	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	54	33	8,830	35			
		5	All writing assignments	38	23	3,274	13			
		Total		162	100	24,663	100			
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	35	19	5,609	23	2.6	2.6	.01
		2	Few writing assignments	46	28	5,931	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	53	33	6,929	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	19	12	4,688	19			

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

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of San Francisco

First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				USF_CA		Writing Experiences		USF_CA	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
		5	All writing assignments	9	7	1,416	6			
			Total	162	100	24,573	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	25	15	4,049	17	2.8	2.9	-.10
		2	Few writing assignments	43	26	4,533	19			
		3	Some writing assignments	51	33	6,895	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	26	15	6,197	24			
		5	All writing assignments	16	11	2,953	12			
			Total	161	100	24,627	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	17	10	4,242	18	3.1	2.8 **	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	33	20	5,204	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	59	36	7,497	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	30	19	5,537	22			
		5	All writing assignments	23	15	2,114	9			
			Total	162	100	24,594	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	0	0	575	2	3.9	3.8	.11
		2	Few writing assignments	8	5	1,686	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	34	20	5,345	21			
		4	Most writing assignments	78	49	11,133	44			
		5	All writing assignments	42	26	5,904	26			
			Total	162	100	24,643	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	1	1	1,033	4	3.8	3.6 **	.21
		2	Few writing assignments	12	7	3,060	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	41	26	6,904	27			
		4	Most writing assignments	74	46	8,636	35			
		5	All writing assignments	34	21	4,982	22			
			Total	162	100	24,615	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	0	0	721	3	3.9	3.8	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	12	7	2,013	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	34	24	5,406	21			
		4	Most writing assignments	68	41	9,197	37			
		5	All writing assignments	48	28	7,288	31			
			Total	162	100	24,625	100			

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of San Francisco

Seniors

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				USF_CA		Writing Experiences		USF_CA		Writing Experiences	
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	13	10	3,248	12	2.9	2.9		.01
		2	Few writing assignments	31	22	6,750	23				
		3	Some writing assignments	52	39	10,351	34				
		4	Most writing assignments	32	24	7,446	24				
		5	All writing assignments	7	5	2,334	8				
		Total	135	100	30,129	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	30	22	4,490	16	2.6	2.8		-.12
		2	Few writing assignments	31	23	7,463	25				
		3	Some writing assignments	40	29	9,350	31				
		4	Most writing assignments	28	22	6,507	21				
		5	All writing assignments	6	5	2,166	7				
		Total	135	100	29,976	100					
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	29	21	5,253	19	2.5	2.6		-.09
		2	Few writing assignments	37	27	7,848	26				
		3	Some writing assignments	48	35	10,589	34				
		4	Most writing assignments	19	15	5,059	17				
		5	All writing assignments	3	2	1,295	4				
		Total	136	100	30,044	100					
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	10	7	1,878	7	3.2	3.3		-.06
		2	Few writing assignments	22	16	4,254	14				
		3	Some writing assignments	44	32	9,921	33				
		4	Most writing assignments	48	36	10,266	34				
		5	All writing assignments	12	9	3,723	12				
		Total	136	100	30,042	100					
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	3	2	1,131	4	3.7	3.6		.10
		2	Few writing assignments	10	7	2,663	9				
		3	Some writing assignments	34	25	7,593	25				
		4	Most writing assignments	62	45	12,710	42				
		5	All writing assignments	27	20	5,942	20				
		Total	136	100	30,039	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	18	12	4,088	14	3.0	3.0		.01
		2	Few writing assignments	26	19	5,526	18				
		3	Some writing assignments	43	32	8,948	30				
		4	Most writing assignments	34	25	8,389	28				
		5	All writing assignments	15	12	3,083	11				
		Total	136	100	30,034	100					
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	9	6	2,604	9	3.5	3.3 *		.19
		2	Few writing assignments	19	13	4,383	15				
		3	Some writing assignments	38	28	8,964	30				
		4	Most writing assignments	40	30	9,544	31				
		5	All writing assignments	30	22	4,537	15				
		Total	136	100	30,032	100					
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	24	16	5,113	17	2.8	2.8		-.07
		2	Few writing assignments	36	26	6,775	22				
		3	Some writing assignments	41	30	8,867	30				
		4	Most writing assignments	26	20	6,781	23				

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

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of San Francisco

Seniors

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				USF_CA		Writing Experiences		USF_CA	Writing Experiences	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
		5	All writing assignments	9	7	2,376	8			
		Total		136	100	29,912	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	21	15	3,204	11	3.2	3.4	-.16
		2	Few writing assignments	22	16	3,892	13			
		3	Some writing assignments	33	25	6,580	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	30	23	9,112	30			
		5	All writing assignments	30	22	7,201	24			
		Total		136	100	29,989	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	23	16	4,906	17	2.9	2.9	.03
		2	Few writing assignments	29	20	6,214	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	40	29	9,076	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	30	24	6,587	22			
		5	All writing assignments	13	10	3,130	10			
		Total		135	100	29,913	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	1	798	3	4.0	3.9	.14
		2	Few writing assignments	9	6	1,717	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	17	13	5,900	19			
		4	Most writing assignments	68	50	13,945	45			
		5	All writing assignments	38	29	7,641	26			
		Total		134	100	30,001	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	4	3	1,320	5	3.7	3.6	.12
		2	Few writing assignments	17	13	3,562	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	24	19	7,854	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	55	41	10,505	34			
		5	All writing assignments	33	25	6,728	23			
		Total		133	100	29,969	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	2	1	941	4	3.9	3.9	.00
		2	Few writing assignments	12	9	2,085	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	24	18	5,629	19			
		4	Most writing assignments	55	41	11,393	37			
		5	All writing assignments	42	31	9,945	34			
		Total		135	100	29,993	100			

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Detailed Statistics^e

University of San Francisco

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	USF_CA	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	Comparisons with: Writing Experiences		
WRI01a	164	2.98	2.98	.08	.01	1.07	1.08	16,569	.930	-.01
WRI01b	159	3.20	3.07	.08	.01	1.05	1.13	16,457	.137	.12
WRI01c	161	3.15	2.92	.07	.01	0.94	1.08	16,512	.006	.22
WRI01d	162	3.45	3.22	.07	.01	0.91	1.04	16,505	.004	.22
WRI01e	163	3.75	3.53	.07	.01	0.88	1.00	166	.002	.21
WRI01f	163	2.75	2.84	.09	.01	1.16	1.18	16,477	.339	-.08
WRI01g	163	3.69	3.33	.07	.01	0.95	1.10	166	.000	.33
WRI01h	163	2.60	2.59	.09	.01	1.14	1.19	16,424	.943	.01
WRI01i	162	2.81	2.94	.09	.01	1.18	1.26	16,454	.207	-.10
WRI01j	163	3.09	2.83	.09	.01	1.17	1.21	16,441	.006	.22
WRI02a	163	3.95	3.84	.06	.01	0.82	0.96	166	.094	.11
WRI02b	163	3.80	3.58	.07	.01	0.86	1.08	167	.001	.21
WRI02c	163	3.91	3.85	.07	.01	0.89	1.05	166	.381	.06

See the endnotes on the last page of this report.

NSSE 2017 Experiences with Writing

Detailed Statistics^e

University of San Francisco

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	USF_CA	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	USF_CA	Writing Experiences	Comparisons with: Writing Experiences		
WRI01a	133	2.94	2.93	.09	.01	1.03	1.12	17,099	.936	.01
WRI01b	133	2.65	2.79	.10	.01	1.17	1.16	17,018	.162	-.12
WRI01c	134	2.52	2.62	.09	.01	1.06	1.10	17,058	.282	-.09
WRI01d	134	3.24	3.30	.09	.01	1.06	1.08	17,055	.524	-.06
WRI01e	134	3.74	3.63	.08	.01	0.93	1.03	136	.197	.10
WRI01f	134	3.04	3.03	.10	.01	1.19	1.20	17,050	.868	.01
WRI01g	134	3.49	3.27	.10	.01	1.16	1.16	17,046	.032	.19
WRI01h	134	2.75	2.84	.10	.01	1.16	1.20	16,976	.439	-.07
WRI01i	134	3.22	3.42	.12	.01	1.35	1.29	17,020	.071	-.16
WRI01j	133	2.91	2.88	.11	.01	1.22	1.23	16,975	.757	.03
WRI02a	132	3.99	3.86	.08	.01	0.90	0.97	134	.088	.14
WRI02b	131	3.73	3.59	.09	.01	1.06	1.11	17,002	.170	.12
WRI02c	133	3.91	3.91	.09	.01	0.98	1.05	17,019	.989	.00

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.