



NSSE 2020 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of New Hampshire at Durham

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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	6/5/20
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this comparison group by selecting institutions from all module participants.
Group description	Public R1

Writing Experiences (N=5)

Auburn University (Auburn, AL)

Miami University-Oxford (Oxford, OH)*

Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*

University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)

Washington State University (Pullman, WA)*

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		Writing Experiences		UNH	Writing Experiences	
				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	37	9	313	10	2.9	2.9	.05
		2	Few writing assignments	99	22	850	25			
		3	Some writing assignments	187	41	1,250	37			
		4	Most writing assignments	107	23	772	23			
		5	All writing assignments	20	5	151	5			
		Total		450	100	3,336	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	31	7	316	10	3.2	3.0 **	.13
		2	Few writing assignments	95	22	726	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	126	28	1,058	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	160	35	994	30			
		5	All writing assignments	37	8	235	7			
		Total		449	100	3,329	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	35	7	323	10	3.1	2.9 **	.15
		2	Few writing assignments	90	21	747	23			
		3	Some writing assignments	153	34	1,271	38			
		4	Most writing assignments	153	34	837	25			
		5	All writing assignments	19	4	153	5			
		Total		450	100	3,331	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	16	3	170	5	3.2	3.2	.00
		2	Few writing assignments	72	17	502	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	178	40	1,286	39			
		4	Most writing assignments	160	35	1,115	33			
		5	All writing assignments	23	5	257	8			
		Total		449	100	3,330	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	10	2	95	3	3.5	3.5	-.05
		2	Few writing assignments	48	11	359	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	149	33	988	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	201	45	1,452	43			
		5	All writing assignments	40	9	439	13			
		Total		448	100	3,333	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	61	13	434	13	2.9	2.9	-.03
		2	Few writing assignments	88	20	670	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	152	34	1,123	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	129	29	886	26			
		5	All writing assignments	18	4	213	6			
		Total		448	100	3,326	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	27	6	212	6	3.2	3.3 *	-.11
		2	Few writing assignments	72	17	456	14			
		3	Some writing assignments	163	36	1,140	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	158	35	1,180	35			
		5	All writing assignments	28	6	339	11			
		Total		448	100	3,327	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		
				UNH		Writing Experiences		UNH	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	92	20	596	17	2.7	2.7	-.08
		2	Few writing assignments	99	22	811	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	141	32	1,024	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	104	23	734	23			
		5	All writing assignments	12	3	155	5			
		Total		448	100	3,320	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	68	15	436	13	2.9	3.1 ***	-.17
		2	Few writing assignments	91	21	565	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	147	32	1,006	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	114	26	944	28			
		5	All writing assignments	27	6	370	11			
		Total		447	100	3,321	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	66	14	547	16	2.8	2.8	-.05
		2	Few writing assignments	109	24	735	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	153	35	1,074	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	97	21	722	22			
		5	All writing assignments	22	5	241	8			
		Total		447	100	3,319	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	7	2	74	2	3.8	3.7	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	30	7	258	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	96	21	801	24			
		4	Most writing assignments	228	50	1,550	46			
		5	All writing assignments	87	20	634	20			
		Total		448	100	3,317	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	11	2	141	4	3.6	3.5 *	.11
		2	Few writing assignments	45	10	404	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	129	29	1,032	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	189	42	1,225	37			
		5	All writing assignments	72	16	509	16			
		Total		446	100	3,311	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	7	2	85	3	3.9	3.8	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	25	6	235	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	100	22	755	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	184	41	1,304	39			
		5	All writing assignments	129	29	932	29			
		Total		445	100	3,311	100			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UNH		Writing Experiences		UNH	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	42	6	440	10	3.1	2.9 **	.11
		2	Few writing assignments	155	21	1,025	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	280	39	1,653	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	209	28	1,205	26			
		5	All writing assignments	39	6	264	6			
		Total		725	100	4,587	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	47	7	505	12	3.0	2.9 **	.12
		2	Few writing assignments	174	24	1,118	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	254	35	1,561	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	210	28	1,090	23			
		5	All writing assignments	39	6	306	7			
		Total		724	100	4,580	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	49	7	526	12	2.9	2.8 **	.09
		2	Few writing assignments	185	26	1,157	25			
		3	Some writing assignments	318	43	1,809	39			
		4	Most writing assignments	145	20	902	20			
		5	All writing assignments	26	4	182	4			
		Total		723	100	4,576	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	24	4	243	6	3.4	3.3 ***	.13
		2	Few writing assignments	84	12	631	14			
		3	Some writing assignments	251	35	1,557	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	288	39	1,688	35			
		5	All writing assignments	78	11	461	10			
		Total		725	100	4,580	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	9	1	138	4	3.7	3.6 ***	.12
		2	Few writing assignments	50	7	417	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	181	25	1,163	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	364	50	2,040	43			
		5	All writing assignments	122	17	824	18			
		Total		726	100	4,582	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	42	6	488	11	3.2	3.1 **	.10
		2	Few writing assignments	150	21	817	18			
		3	Some writing assignments	225	31	1,428	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	230	32	1,424	31			
		5	All writing assignments	77	11	424	9			
		Total		724	100	4,581	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	36	5	341	8	3.4	3.3 **	.11
		2	Few writing assignments	106	15	707	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	226	31	1,378	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	258	35	1,573	33			
		5	All writing assignments	98	14	578	13			
		Total		724	100	4,577	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		
				UNH		Writing Experiences		UNH	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	78	10	517	12	3.1	3.0	.05
		2	Few writing assignments	156	21	947	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	216	29	1,438	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	201	29	1,281	28			
		5	All writing assignments	74	11	394	9			
		Total		725	100	4,577	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	59	8	379	9	3.5	3.5	.03
		2	Few writing assignments	99	14	532	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	154	21	1,021	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	248	34	1,655	36			
		5	All writing assignments	166	23	989	21			
		Total		726	100	4,576	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	92	12	594	14	2.9	2.9 *	-0.08
		2	Few writing assignments	192	26	992	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	239	33	1,458	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	143	20	1,072	23			
		5	All writing assignments	58	8	460	10			
		Total		724	100	4,576	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	5	1	109	3	3.9	3.8 ***	.14
		2	Few writing assignments	30	4	281	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	157	21	1,021	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	387	53	2,285	48			
		5	All writing assignments	146	20	882	20			
		Total		725	100	4,578	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	16	2	187	5	3.6	3.5 ***	.13
		2	Few writing assignments	85	12	572	13			
		3	Some writing assignments	187	26	1,375	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	310	42	1,673	36			
		5	All writing assignments	125	18	762	17			
		Total		723	100	4,569	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	5	1	112	3	4.0	3.9 *	.08
		2	Few writing assignments	37	5	274	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	133	18	900	20			
		4	Most writing assignments	345	47	1,883	40			
		5	All writing assignments	205	29	1,401	31			
		Total		725	100	4,570	100			

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UNH	UNH	Writing Experiences	UNH	Writing Experiences	UNH	Writing Experiences			
WRI01a	452	2.93	2.87	.047	.015	0.99	1.03	555	.283	.05
WRI01b	451	3.17	3.02	.050	.016	1.07	1.09	4,831	.007	.13
WRI01c	452	3.07	2.91	.047	.015	1.01	1.02	4,831	.002	.15
WRI01d	451	3.22	3.22	.043	.015	0.90	0.98	4,833	.963	.00
WRI01e	450	3.48	3.53	.042	.014	0.88	0.95	562	.257	-.05
WRI01f	450	2.90	2.93	.051	.017	1.08	1.11	4,823	.611	-.03
WRI01g	450	3.18	3.29	.047	.016	0.99	1.04	556	.024	-.11
WRI01h	450	2.66	2.75	.053	.017	1.12	1.13	4,814	.105	-.08
WRI01i	448	2.87	3.06	.054	.018	1.14	1.19	4,820	.001	-.17
WRI01j	448	2.79	2.84	.052	.018	1.10	1.16	4,810	.336	-.05
WRI02a	450	3.80	3.74	.042	.014	0.89	0.94	556	.200	.06
WRI02b	448	3.60	3.48	.045	.016	0.96	1.03	557	.020	.11
WRI02c	447	3.90	3.85	.045	.015	0.94	1.00	554	.204	.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
	UNH	UNH	Writing Experiences	UNH	Writing Experiences	UNH	Writing Experiences	Comparisons with: Writing Experiences		
WRI01a	721	3.06	2.94	.037	.013	0.98	1.06	902	.003	.11
WRI01b	720	3.01	2.88	.038	.013	1.01	1.10	905	.001	.12
WRI01c	719	2.88	2.78	.035	.012	0.94	1.03	905	.009	.09
WRI01d	721	3.41	3.28	.035	.012	0.95	1.03	902	.001	.13
WRI01e	721	3.73	3.62	.032	.012	0.87	1.00	932	.001	.12
WRI01f	719	3.22	3.10	.040	.014	1.07	1.14	7,705	.008	.10
WRI01g	719	3.39	3.26	.039	.013	1.05	1.12	7,704	.004	.11
WRI01h	721	3.10	3.03	.043	.014	1.15	1.14	7,703	.164	.05
WRI01i	722	3.52	3.48	.045	.014	1.21	1.20	7,700	.402	.03
WRI01j	720	2.85	2.94	.042	.014	1.13	1.18	7,701	.049	-.08
WRI02a	721	3.89	3.76	.030	.011	0.80	0.94	941	.000	.14
WRI02b	719	3.62	3.48	.037	.013	0.98	1.07	902	.000	.13
WRI02c	721	3.97	3.89	.032	.012	0.86	1.01	935	.022	.08

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.