



NSSE 2017 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of West Georgia

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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 'National' column of this report.

Group label	National
Date submitted	5/19/17
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this group by selecting institutional characteristics as follows: Sector (Pub); UG Enrollment (10-20K)
Group description	NSSE generated group using 2015 criteria

National (N=13)

Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, GA)
Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)*
Missouri State University (Springfield, MO)*
Tarleton State University (Stephenville, TX)
University at Albany, SUNY, The (Albany, NY)
University at Buffalo, State University of New York (Buffalo, NY)
University of Colorado Denver (Denver, CO)*
University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO)*
University of North Florida (Jacksonville, FL)
University of South Alabama (Mobile, AL)*
University of Toledo (Toledo, OH)
University of West Florida, The (Pensacola, FL)
Western Washington University (Bellingham, WA)

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UWG		National		UWG	National	
				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	61	8	567	10	3.2	3.0 ***	.20
		2	Few writing assignments	147	19	1,387	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	273	34	2,213	35			
		4	Most writing assignments	214	27	1,602	24			
		5	All writing assignments	94	12	470	7			
		Total		789	100	6,239	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	6	518	9	3.4	3.1 ***	.23
		2	Few writing assignments	122	16	1,191	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	237	30	1,950	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	253	33	1,905	30			
		5	All writing assignments	125	16	635	10			
		Total		784	100	6,199	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	63	8	587	10	3.2	3.0 ***	.22
		2	Few writing assignments	130	16	1,255	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	264	33	2,225	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	233	30	1,710	26			
		5	All writing assignments	98	12	448	7			
		Total		788	100	6,225	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	41	5	321	6	3.4	3.2 ***	.18
		2	Few writing assignments	101	13	977	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	258	34	2,286	37			
		4	Most writing assignments	273	34	2,056	32			
		5	All writing assignments	113	14	582	9			
		Total		786	100	6,222	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	16	2	217	4	3.8	3.5 ***	.24
		2	Few writing assignments	51	6	640	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	211	27	1,863	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	341	43	2,595	41			
		5	All writing assignments	170	21	903	15			
		Total		789	100	6,218	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	120	15	904	15	3.0	2.9 ***	.14
		2	Few writing assignments	116	14	1,260	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	259	33	2,053	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	206	26	1,538	24			
		5	All writing assignments	87	11	453	7			
		Total		788	100	6,208	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	32	4	436	8	3.7	3.3 ***	.35
		2	Few writing assignments	67	9	888	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	206	26	1,995	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	312	40	2,171	34			
		5	All writing assignments	170	21	719	11			
		Total		787	100	6,209	100			
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	219	27	1,371	22	2.6	2.6	-.02
		2	Few writing assignments	168	21	1,489	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	192	25	1,790	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	146	19	1,184	19			
		5	All writing assignments	60	8	359	6			
		Total		787	100	6,209	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		
				UWG		National		UWG	National	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
			Total	785	100	6,193	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	148	18	1,189	19	2.9	2.8	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	134	17	1,224	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	246	32	1,758	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	169	22	1,433	23			
		5	All writing assignments	89	11	599	9			
			Total	786	100	6,203	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	118	15	916	16	2.9	2.9	.05
		2	Few writing assignments	167	21	1,264	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	242	31	1,956	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	173	22	1,508	23			
		5	All writing assignments	84	11	543	8			
			Total	784	100	6,187	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	11	1	140	2	4.0	3.8 ***	.19
		2	Few writing assignments	47	6	443	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	154	19	1,401	22			
		4	Most writing assignments	306	39	2,731	44			
		5	All writing assignments	269	34	1,486	24			
			Total	787	100	6,201	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	22	3	233	4	3.8	3.6 ***	.23
		2	Few writing assignments	59	8	683	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	188	24	1,720	27			
		4	Most writing assignments	268	34	2,254	36			
		5	All writing assignments	250	32	1,309	22			
			Total	787	100	6,199	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	12	2	161	3	4.1	3.9 ***	.19
		2	Few writing assignments	44	5	471	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	155	20	1,308	21			
		4	Most writing assignments	249	32	2,320	37			
		5	All writing assignments	327	41	1,938	31			
			Total	787	100	6,198	100			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UWG		National		UWG	National	
				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	49	12	928	13	3.0	2.9	.05
		2	Few writing assignments	103	25	1,748	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	122	29	2,766	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	101	24	2,011	24			
		5	All writing assignments	48	11	655	8			
		Total		423	100	8,108	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	64	15	1,196	16	3.0	2.8 *	.12
		2	Few writing assignments	85	21	1,864	24			
		3	Some writing assignments	118	28	2,494	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	94	22	1,844	22			
		5	All writing assignments	58	13	662	8			
		Total		419	100	8,060	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	66	16	1,416	19	2.8	2.7 **	.15
		2	Few writing assignments	88	21	1,977	25			
		3	Some writing assignments	149	35	2,756	34			
		4	Most writing assignments	85	20	1,481	18			
		5	All writing assignments	36	8	453	5			
		Total		424	100	8,083	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	35	8	605	8	3.3	3.2	.04
		2	Few writing assignments	68	16	1,211	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	116	28	2,689	33			
		4	Most writing assignments	149	35	2,638	32			
		5	All writing assignments	55	13	937	11			
		Total		423	100	8,080	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	23	6	404	5	3.6	3.6	.07
		2	Few writing assignments	39	9	802	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	100	24	2,103	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	163	39	3,255	40			
		5	All writing assignments	97	22	1,520	19			
		Total		422	100	8,084	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	70	17	1,178	15	3.0	3.0	-.02
		2	Few writing assignments	77	19	1,523	19			
		3	Some writing assignments	116	28	2,294	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	105	25	2,188	27			
		5	All writing assignments	51	12	899	11			
		Total		419	100	8,082	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	47	11	911	12	3.3	3.1 **	.17
		2	Few writing assignments	55	13	1,303	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	123	29	2,483	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	109	26	2,345	28			
		5	All writing assignments	89	21	1,041	13			
		Total		423	100	8,083	100			
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	96	22	1,490	19	2.6	2.8 ***	-.17
		2	Few writing assignments	106	25	1,753	21			
		3	Some writing assignments	116	28	2,311	28			
		4	Most writing assignments	73	18	1,785	23			
		5	All writing assignments	30	7	709	9			
		Total		423	100	8,083	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		
				UWG		National		UWG	National	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
			Total	421	100	8,048	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	58	14	1,017	13	3.4	3.3	.01
		2	Few writing assignments	54	13	1,055	13			
		3	Some writing assignments	91	22	1,827	23			
		4	Most writing assignments	116	28	2,301	28			
		5	All writing assignments	105	24	1,872	23			
			Total	424	100	8,072	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	83	20	1,430	18	2.8	2.8	-.01
		2	Few writing assignments	83	19	1,607	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	126	30	2,464	30			
		4	Most writing assignments	83	20	1,711	21			
		5	All writing assignments	46	11	832	10			
			Total	421	100	8,044	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	18	4	286	4	3.9	3.8 *	.10
		2	Few writing assignments	32	7	522	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	71	17	1,657	20			
		4	Most writing assignments	155	37	3,552	44			
		5	All writing assignments	147	34	2,057	26			
			Total	423	100	8,074	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	19	4	406	5	3.8	3.6 ***	.21
		2	Few writing assignments	39	9	912	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	82	19	2,119	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	149	35	2,802	34			
		5	All writing assignments	133	32	1,828	23			
			Total	422	100	8,067	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	19	5	312	4	4.0	3.9 **	.13
		2	Few writing assignments	18	4	572	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	68	16	1,494	19			
		4	Most writing assignments	149	36	2,990	37			
		5	All writing assignments	167	39	2,702	33			
			Total	421	100	8,070	100			

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
	UWG	UWG	National	UWG	National	UWG	National	Comparisons with: National		
WRI01a	786	3.17	2.95	.04	.01	1.11	1.07	904	.000	.20
WRI01b	780	3.36	3.10	.04	.01	1.10	1.11	10,834	.000	.23
WRI01c	785	3.22	2.98	.04	.01	1.11	1.08	903	.000	.22
WRI01d	784	3.39	3.22	.04	.01	1.05	1.01	900	.000	.18
WRI01e	786	3.75	3.51	.03	.01	0.94	1.00	930	.000	.24
WRI01f	785	3.04	2.87	.04	.01	1.20	1.15	10,847	.000	.14
WRI01g	784	3.65	3.27	.04	.01	1.03	1.08	10,845	.000	.35
WRI01h	782	2.59	2.61	.05	.01	1.27	1.18	889	.676	-.02
WRI01i	782	2.91	2.83	.04	.01	1.25	1.24	10,835	.082	.06
WRI01j	781	2.93	2.87	.04	.01	1.20	1.18	10,811	.202	.05
WRI02a	784	3.99	3.80	.03	.01	0.96	0.97	914	.000	.19
WRI02b	784	3.85	3.60	.04	.01	1.04	1.06	915	.000	.23
WRI02c	784	4.06	3.86	.04	.01	0.98	1.04	10,832	.000	.19

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
	UWG	UWG	National	UWG	National	UWG	National			
WRI01a	424	2.97	2.92	.06	.01	1.18	1.12	13,654	.329	.05
WRI01b	420	2.97	2.83	.06	.01	1.26	1.17	13,577	.013	.12
WRI01c	425	2.84	2.67	.06	.01	1.15	1.13	13,616	.002	.15
WRI01d	424	3.28	3.23	.06	.01	1.13	1.09	13,611	.369	.04
WRI01e	423	3.63	3.56	.05	.01	1.10	1.07	13,611	.171	.07
WRI01f	420	2.97	2.99	.06	.01	1.26	1.23	13,602	.680	-.02
WRI01g	424	3.33	3.14	.06	.01	1.25	1.19	448	.001	.17
WRI01h	422	2.61	2.82	.06	.01	1.21	1.23	13,552	.001	-.17
WRI01i	425	3.37	3.35	.06	.01	1.34	1.31	13,600	.811	.01
WRI01j	422	2.82	2.84	.06	.01	1.26	1.23	13,541	.825	-.01
WRI02a	424	3.91	3.80	.05	.01	1.08	1.01	13,596	.043	.10
WRI02b	423	3.81	3.57	.05	.01	1.11	1.12	13,575	.000	.21
WRI02c	422	4.01	3.86	.05	.01	1.07	1.08	13,583	.006	.13

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.