NSSE 2019 Topical Module Report

Experiences with Writing

University of Houston-Downtown

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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 'Texas Schools' column of this report.

Group label	Texas Schools
Date submitted	5/13/19
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this comparison group by selecting institutions from all module participants.
Group description	Texas Public 4-year Institutions similar in demographics, size and/or level as UHD.

Texas Schools (N=5)

Tarleton State University (Stephenville, TX)

Texas A&M International University (Laredo, TX)*

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

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

Texas College (Tyler, TX)

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First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UHD		Texas Schools		UHD	Texas Schools	
				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	8	51	8	**3.2**	3.1	.09
		2	Few writing assignments	33	18	123	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	54	31	212	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	55	31	193	30			
		5	All writing assignments	23	13	75	10			
			Total	178	100	654	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	5	44	8	**3.3**	3.2	.06
		2	Few writing assignments	35	20	129	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	50	30	185	29			
		4	Most writing assignments	59	33	199	30			
		5	All writing assignments	24	12	93	13			
			Total	178	100	650	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	12	7	40	7	**3.2**	3.1	.10
		2	Few writing assignments	28	15	140	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	61	36	224	35			
		4	Most writing assignments	54	30	174	26			
		5	All writing assignments	23	12	75	11			
			Total	178	100	653	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	6	4	28	5	**3.5**	3.3 * △	.21
		2	Few writing assignments	23	13	102	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	48	28	231	36			
		4	Most writing assignments	70	37	210	32			
		5	All writing assignments	31	17	82	12			
			Total	178	100	653	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	4	3	17	3	**3.7**	3.5	.15
		2	Few writing assignments	15	9	70	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	41	24	199	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	81	44	256	39			
		5	All writing assignments	36	20	109	16			
			Total	177	100	651	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	15	8	81	12	**3.2**	3.0	.14
		2	Few writing assignments	31	18	124	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	52	29	204	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	60	34	157	24			
		5	All writing assignments	19	10	84	12			
			Total	177	100	650	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	4	3	48	7	**3.7**	3.3 *** ▲	.34
		2	Few writing assignments	18	11	103	16			
		3	Some writing assignments	40	23	204	32			
		4	Most writing assignments	81	45	205	32			
		5	All writing assignments	34	18	88	13			
			Total	177	100	648	100			

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

First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UHD		Texas Schools		UHD	Texas Schools	
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	36	20	138	20	**2.8**	2.7	.09
		2	Few writing assignments	38	22	165	27			
		3	Some writing assignments	44	24	170	27			
		4	Most writing assignments	43	25	124	19			
		5	All writing assignments	15	8	52	7			
			Total	176	100	649	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	30	18	82	12	**2.9**	3.1	-.14
		2	Few writing assignments	34	19	132	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	45	25	177	27			
		4	Most writing assignments	50	28	173	28			
		5	All writing assignments	18	9	86	13			
			Total	177	100	650	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	20	12	89	13	**3.2** △	3.0 *	.17
		2	Few writing assignments	28	17	143	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	55	30	197	31			
		4	Most writing assignments	48	28	155	25			
		5	All writing assignments	25	14	64	9			
			Total	176	100	648	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	4	3	19	3	**3.8**	3.8	-.04
		2	Few writing assignments	13	8	51	8			
		3	Some writing assignments	39	21	156	24			
		4	Most writing assignments	80	45	242	37			
		5	All writing assignments	39	23	180	28			
			Total	175	100	648	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	4	3	25	4	**3.8**	3.7	.07
		2	Few writing assignments	11	6	68	11			
		3	Some writing assignments	50	28	169	26			
		4	Most writing assignments	70	39	218	33			
		5	All writing assignments	42	24	168	27			
			Total	177	100	648	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	4	3	23	4	**3.9**	3.9	.01
		2	Few writing assignments	14	9	48	7			
		3	Some writing assignments	38	21	142	23			
		4	Most writing assignments	61	34	207	30			
		5	All writing assignments	61	34	229	36			
			Total	178	100	649	100			

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Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons
University of Houston-Downtown

Seniors

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

1. During the current school year, for how many *writing assignments* have you done the following?

Item	Variable	Value	Response	UHD Count	UHD %	TX Count	TX %	UHD Mean	TX Mean	Effect size
a. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before starting your assignment	WRI01a	1	No writing assignments	143	14	87	11			
		2	Few writing assignments	219	21	175	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	335	32	258	31	2.9	3.1 *	-.10
		4	Most writing assignments	248	23	233	27		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	107	10	87	11			
			Total	1,052	100	840	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	208	21	118	14			
		2	Few writing assignments	237	22	185	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	306	29	254	31	2.7	2.9 ***	-.18
		4	Most writing assignments	222	21	185	22		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	77	8	88	11			
			Total	1,050	100	830	100			
c. Given feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline	WRI01c	1	No writing assignments	241	24	167	21			
		2	Few writing assignments	241	23	173	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	313	30	280	33	2.6	2.7 **	-.11
		4	Most writing assignments	200	19	155	18		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	53	5	63	8			
			Total	1,048	100	838	100			
d. Summarized material you read such as articles, books, or online publications	WRI01d	1	No writing assignments	101	11	49	6			
		2	Few writing assignments	162	15	123	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	340	32	265	32	3.2	3.3 **	-.13
		4	Most writing assignments	306	29	281	33		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	140	13	116	14			
			Total	1,049	100	834	100			
e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed	WRI01e	1	No writing assignments	69	7	32	4			
		2	Few writing assignments	112	11	98	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	276	27	212	25	3.5	3.6 *	-.08
		4	Most writing assignments	395	37	334	39		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	195	19	163	20			
			Total	1,047	100	839	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	177	18	112	14			
		2	Few writing assignments	177	17	127	15			
		3	Some writing assignments	289	27	265	32	3.0	3.1 *	-.10
		4	Most writing assignments	277	26	226	27		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	126	12	105	13			
			Total	1,046	100	835	100			
g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning	WRI01g	1	No writing assignments	163	16	106	13			
		2	Few writing assignments	165	15	148	17			
		3	Some writing assignments	293	28	267	32	3.0	3.1	-.02
		4	Most writing assignments	300	28	210	25			
		5	All writing assignments	128	12	107	13			
			Total	1,049	100	838	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] UHD Count	%	Texas Schools Count	%	Statistical Comparisons [b] UHD Mean	Texas Schools Mean	Effect size [d]
h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data	WRI01h	1	No writing assignments	249	24	168	20			
		2	Few writing assignments	208	20	185	22			
		3	Some writing assignments	295	28	235	28	2.7	2.8 *	-.08
		4	Most writing assignments	218	21	167	20		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	71	7	78	9			
			Total	1,041	100	833	100			
i. Written in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)	WRI01i	1	No writing assignments	205	20	110	13			
		2	Few writing assignments	184	17	103	12			
		3	Some writing assignments	221	21	183	22	3.0	3.4 ***	-.29
		4	Most writing assignments	260	25	232	28		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	176	16	208	25			
			Total	1,046	100	836	100			
j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.	WRI01j	1	No writing assignments	230	23	150	18			
		2	Few writing assignments	195	19	169	20			
		3	Some writing assignments	301	28	245	30	2.8	2.9 *	-.10
		4	Most writing assignments	224	21	177	22		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	97	9	94	11			
			Total	1,047	100	835	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	UHD Count	%	Texas Schools Count	%	UHD Mean	Texas Schools Mean	Effect size [d]
a. Provided clear instructions describing what they wanted you to do	WRI02a	1	No writing assignments	46	5	27	4			
		2	Few writing assignments	101	10	74	9			
		3	Some writing assignments	224	21	156	19	3.7	3.8 *	-.08
		4	Most writing assignments	367	34	325	39		▽	
		5	All writing assignments	312	30	254	30			
			Total	1,050	100	836	100			
b. Explained in advance what they wanted you to learn	WRI02b	1	No writing assignments	56	6	42	5			
		2	Few writing assignments	110	11	81	10			
		3	Some writing assignments	239	23	187	23	3.7	3.7	-.05
		4	Most writing assignments	362	34	272	33			
		5	All writing assignments	283	27	252	29			
			Total	1,050	100	834	100			
c. Explained in advance the criteria they would use to grade your assignment	WRI02c	1	No writing assignments	50	5	30	4			
		2	Few writing assignments	83	8	55	6			
		3	Some writing assignments	191	18	155	18	3.9	4.0	-.07
		4	Most writing assignments	317	30	271	33			
		5	All writing assignments	406	39	325	39			
			Total	1,047	100	836	100			

NSSE 2019 Experiences with Writing
Detailed Statistics[e]
University of Houston-Downtown

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error[f]		Standard deviation[g]		DF[h]	Sig.[i]	Effect size[d]
									Comparisons with:	
	UHD	UHD	Texas Schools	UHD	Texas Schools	UHD	Texas Schools		Texas Schools	
WRI01a	175	3.23	3.13	.085	.033	1.13	1.11	1,303	.287	.09
WRI01b	175	3.27	3.20	.082	.034	1.08	1.15	1,295	.465	.06
WRI01c	175	3.24	3.12	.081	.032	1.08	1.08	1,301	.197	.10
WRI01d	175	3.50	3.29	.080	.030	1.06	1.02	1,301	.011	.21
WRI01e	175	3.69	3.54	.075	.029	0.98	0.98	1,298	.067	.15
WRI01f	175	3.20	3.04	.083	.036	1.10	1.19	1,295	.088	.14
WRI01g	175	3.66	3.29	.075	.033	0.99	1.09	244	.000	.34
WRI01h	173	2.78	2.68	.095	.036	1.25	1.20	1,292	.284	.09
WRI01i	175	2.92	3.09	.095	.036	1.26	1.21	1,294	.083	-.14
WRI01j	173	3.15	2.95	.091	.035	1.20	1.16	1,289	.034	.17
WRI02a	173	3.77	3.80	.075	.031	0.98	1.02	1,290	.656	-.04
WRI02b	175	3.75	3.68	.074	.033	0.98	1.09	245	.387	.07
WRI02c	175	3.88	3.87	.080	.033	1.06	1.10	1,295	.941	.01

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]
									Comparisons with:	
	UHD	UHD	Texas Schools	UHD	Texas Schools	UHD	Texas Schools		Texas Schools	
WRI01a	1,051	2.93	3.05	.037	.031	1.19	1.15	2,401	.012	-.10
WRI01b	1,048	2.72	2.93	.038	.033	1.22	1.20	2,233	.000	-.18
WRI01c	1,046	2.59	2.72	.037	.033	1.19	1.20	2,392	.008	-.11
WRI01d	1,047	3.19	3.34	.036	.030	1.17	1.08	2,384	.002	-.13
WRI01e	1,045	3.49	3.59	.035	.029	1.13	1.06	2,171	.044	-.08
WRI01f	1,043	2.97	3.09	.039	.033	1.27	1.22	2,190	.021	-.10
WRI01g	1,047	3.05	3.07	.039	.033	1.26	1.21	2,198	.612	-.02
WRI01h	1,039	2.67	2.77	.038	.034	1.24	1.24	2,376	.049	-.08
WRI01i	1,043	3.01	3.40	.043	.036	1.37	1.33	2,385	.000	-.29
WRI01j	1,044	2.76	2.88	.039	.034	1.27	1.25	2,219	.015	-.10
WRI02a	1,048	3.75	3.84	.035	.029	1.13	1.06	2,175	.047	-.08
WRI02b	1,048	3.65	3.71	.036	.031	1.15	1.15	2,386	.216	-.05
WRI02c	1,045	3.89	3.96	.036	.029	1.16	1.08	2,162	.118	-.07

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.