

Topical Module: Experiences with Writing

This module is a result of NSSE's ongoing collaboration with the Council of Writing Program Administrators. The questions touch on three aspects of good writing assignments: interactivity, meaning-making, and clarity. The module complements questions on the core survey about how much writing students are assigned, the nature of course assignments, and emphasis on developing written expression.



For the purpose of these questions, a writing assignment is one that you collect from students to give a grade or feedback. It is defined broadly to include not only written papers, but also lab reports, multimedia projects, blogs, online discussions, posters, PowerPoint presentations, and so on.

Earlier, you answered some questions based on one particular undergraduate course section that you are teaching or have taught during this academic year. Thinking again about that course, please respond to the following.

1. In your selected course section, for how many writing assignments did you encourage or require students to do the following?

Response options: All writing assignments, Most writing assignments, Some writing assignments, Few writing assignments, No writing assignments

- a. Talk with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop ideas before starting the assignment
- b. Receive feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in the final assignment
- c. Give feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline
- d. Summarize material they had read such as articles, books, or online publications
- e. Analyze or evaluate something they had read, researched, or observed
- f. Describe their methods or findings related to data they had collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.
- g. Argue a position using evidence and reasoning
- h. Explain in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data
- i. Write in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)
- j. Address a real or imagined audience such as their classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.

2. In your selected course section, for how many writing assignments did you do the following?

Response options: All writing assignments, Most writing assignments, Some writing assignments, Few writing assignments, No writing assignments

- a. Provide clear instructions describing what you wanted students to do
- b. Explain in advance what you wanted students to learn
- c. Explain in advance the criteria you would use to grade the assignment