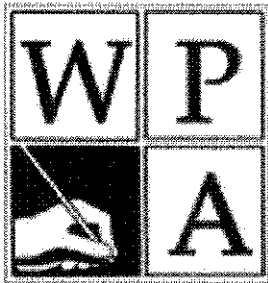


Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing

Developed by

Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, & National Writing Project



Executive Summary

The concept of “college readiness” is increasingly important in discussions about students’ preparation for postsecondary education.

This Framework describes the rhetorical and twenty-first-century skills as well as habits of mind and experiences that are critical for college success. Based in current research in writing and writing pedagogy, the Framework was written and reviewed by two- and four-year college and high school writing faculty nationwide and is endorsed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project.

Habits of mind refers to ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical and that will support students’ success in a variety of fields and disciplines. The Framework identifies eight habits of mind essential for success in college writing:

- Curiosity – the desire to know more about the world.
- Openness – the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world.
- Engagement – a sense of investment and involvement in learning.
- Creativity – the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas.
- Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.
- Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others.
- Flexibility – the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.
- Metacognition – the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.

The Framework then explains how teachers can foster these habits of mind through **writing, reading, and critical analysis** experiences. These experiences aim to develop students’

- Rhetorical knowledge – the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts;
- Critical thinking – the ability to analyze a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research;
- Writing processes – multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research;
- Knowledge of conventions – the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing; and
- Ability to compose in multiple environments – from traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies.

Introduction

The ability to write well is basic to student success in college and beyond. Students can become better writers when they have multiple opportunities to write in classes across the curriculum throughout their education—from elementary school through university.

Students' abilities to enroll in credit-bearing, college-level courses are increasingly associated with the idea of "college readiness." This document, written and reviewed by two- and four-year college and high school writing teachers nationwide, describes **habits of mind and experiences with writing, reading, and critical analysis** that serve as foundations for writing in college-level, credit-bearing courses. Students who come to college writing with these habits of mind and these experiences will be well positioned to meet the writing challenges in the full spectrum of academic courses and later in their careers.

This document takes as a central premise that teaching writing and learning to write are central to education and to the development of a literate citizenry. Writing development takes place over time as students encounter different contexts, tasks, audiences, and purposes.

Audience for the Framework

The primary audience for this Framework is instructors who teach writing and include writing in their classes at all levels and in all subjects. Additionally, because writing is of concern for those inside and outside education, audiences beyond the classroom—including parents, policymakers, employers, and the general public—also can use this document.

Context for the Framework

To describe the habits of mind and experiences that are central to success in college and beyond, this document uses language and ideas from research in academic fields such as composition and rhetoric, writing across the curriculum, and English education that focus on the development of writing, reading, and analysis abilities inside and outside of school. This Framework is also informed by statements from national organizations representing English language arts and writing instruction, K–college, including the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and the National Writing Project (NWP). This Framework thus seeks to connect expectations across educational levels and institutions.

Because this Framework is concerned primarily with foundations for college-level, credit-bearing writing courses, it is based on outcomes included in the CWPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year

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Composition. Adopted (or adapted) by hundreds of two- and four-year institutions nationwide, the CWPA Outcomes Statement was developed by postsecondary writing instructors and scholars. (More information about the CWPA Outcomes Statement can be found at <http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html>.) The Outcomes Statement expresses what students should know and be able to do at the end of a first-year composition or writing course, a common general education requirement at most two- and four-year institutions. This Framework identifies the habits of mind and the kinds of writing experiences that will best prepare students for success as they enter courses in which they will work to achieve those outcomes.

The responsibility for preparing students for college writing is shared by teachers, schools, students, and families. This document emphasizes what teachers and schools can do to foster and reinforce the habits of mind and experiences described on the following pages. At its essence, the Framework suggests that writing activities and assignments should be designed with genuine purposes and audiences in mind (from teachers and other students to community groups, local or national officials, commercial interests, students' friends and relatives, and other potential readers) in order to foster flexibility and rhetorical versatility. Standardized writing curricula or assessment instruments that emphasize formulaic writing for nonauthentic audiences will not reinforce the habits of mind and the experiences necessary for success as students encounter the writing demands of postsecondary education.

Habits of Mind

Habits of mind—ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical—are crucial for all college-level learners. Beyond knowing particular facts or completing mandatory readings, students who develop these habits of mind approach learning from an active stance. These habits help students succeed in a variety of fields and disciplines. They are cultivated both inside and outside school. Teachers can do much to develop activities and assignments that foster the kind of thinking that lies behind these habits and prepare students for the learning they will experience in college and beyond. These habits include:

Curiosity – the desire to know more about the world.

Curiosity is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- use inquiry as a process to develop questions relevant for authentic audiences within a variety of disciplines;
- seek relevant authoritative information and recognize the meaning and value of that information;
- conduct research using methods for investigating questions appropriate to the discipline; and
- communicate their findings in writing to multiple audiences inside and outside school using discipline-appropriate conventions.

Openness – the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world.

Openness is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- examine their own perspectives to find connections with the perspectives of others;
- practice different ways of gathering, investigating, developing, and presenting information; and
- listen to and reflect on the ideas and responses of others—both peers and instructors—to their writing.

Engagement – a sense of investment and involvement in learning.

Engagement is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- make connections between their own ideas and those of others;
- find meanings new to them or build on existing meanings as a result of new connections; and
- act upon the new knowledge that they have discovered.

Creativity – the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas.

Creativity is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- take risks by exploring questions, topics, and ideas that are new to them;

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- use methods that are new to them to investigate questions, topics, and ideas;
- represent what they have learned in a variety of ways; and
- evaluate the effects or consequences of their creative choices.

Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.

Persistence is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- commit to exploring, in writing, a topic, idea, or demanding task;
- grapple with challenging ideas, texts, processes, or projects;
- follow through, over time, to complete tasks, processes, or projects; and
- consistently take advantage of in-class (peer and instructor responses) and out-of-class (writing or learning center support) opportunities to improve and refine their work.

Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others.

Responsibility is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- recognize their own role in learning;
- act on the understanding that learning is shared among the writer and others—students, instructors, and the institution, as well as those engaged in the questions and/or fields in which the writer is interested; and
- engage and incorporate the ideas of others, giving credit to those ideas by using appropriate attribution.

Flexibility – the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.

Flexibility is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- approach writing assignments in multiple ways, depending on the task and the writer’s purpose and audience;
- recognize that conventions (such as formal and informal rules of content, organization, style, evidence, citation, mechanics, usage, register, and dialect) are dependent on discipline and context; and
- reflect on the choices they make in light of context, purpose, and audience.

Metacognition – the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes and systems used to structure knowledge.

Metacognition is fostered when writers are encouraged to

- examine processes they use to think and write in a variety of disciplines and contexts;
- reflect on the texts that they have produced in a variety of contexts;
- connect choices they have made in texts to audiences and purposes for which texts are intended; and
- use what they learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects.