

## WR Assessment Project

### Spring 2022 Student Survey

#### Most Valuable Learning

We asked students “What is the most valuable thing you learned about writing this year?” We received 810 responses from students and used open coding to first identify themes and patterns in what students shared. After generating a list of the most common themes/skills/concepts highlighted by students as most impactful or important to their learning, we found that we were able to categorize almost all of the comments within the new program learning outcomes from the composition program.

- **Writing in Context:** Develop arguments in multiple genres that are relevant to students and to the audiences to which they’re addressed.
- **Research and Inquiry:** Engage with primary, scholarly, and public sources to enrich a process of inquiry and inform students’ writing.
- **Analysis:** Analyze how writers reflect, challenge, and transform their discourse communities, including in their relationship to formal and stylistic conventions.
- **Agency and Positionality:** Recognize lived experience as a source of authority in writing, reading, and discourse.
- **Feedback and Revision:** Give and receive constructive feedback; revise based on feedback, further research, and reflection.
- **Transferring Skills:** Apply the processes and strategies of writing to engage with new contexts and communities in the University of Oregon and beyond it.

These learning outcomes were developed in a TEP-led and supported CAIT comprised of experienced career faculty from the Composition Program/English Department. The outcomes received input and feedback from stakeholders across campus and were officially adopted by the Composition Program in early Spring 2022.

By a wide margin, students found that activities, skills, and concepts covered under “Transferring Skills” and “Writing in Context” were most valuable to their development as writers. 33% of student responses were categorized under “Transferring Skills,” which includes comments related to improved confidence, better understanding of writing as a process, and better time management.

These student comments were indicative of responses that were coded as finding “Transferring Skills” most valuable:

*“This year I have learned how to write in a different way than what was taught to me in high school and that allowed me to advance my writing much more than I thought was possible.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year is that there are multiple ways to write a successful paper.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year is the process of writing a research essay. I've never had to write a research essay until this class, and it was my first time going through the process. I thought it was useful to experience the process so I would be better prepared to do it again in the future.”*

*“It takes time and a lot of effort to be able to write a good article or essay. There are many ways to draft and start, but that a lot of research needs to be done before anything is written.”*

*“I learned that if the workload is too much, or the paper is not something I am interested in, there is always a way to change that and find an aspect of the topic that will interest me.”*

29.3% of responses fell under the “Writing in Context” learning outcome, which encompassed student comments identifying specific argumentative and academic writing elements and skills as most valuable. For example, students wrote:

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing is understanding your audience and the things they might think is very important.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing was the different styles that exist to choose from and how to implement them.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing is that your analysis is really what makes your essay as well as having solid topic sentences and thesis or enthymeme.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year is how to write a good argumentative essay in different ways and making my points very clear with evidence to support it.”*

*“I learned to become more descriptive and detailed when writing my body paragraphs and analysis.”*

11.3% of responses reflected the value students placed on the “Research and Inquiry” learning outcome, which covers skills and concepts like asking appropriate research questions, developing information literacy, and synthesizing multiple sources. Students who found learning related to “Research and Inquiry” most valuable wrote things like:

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year was that it requires extensive research and knowledge in order to make a solid and valid argument. Research is valuable because it creates a strong framework for any argument and allows you to be prepared to defend your claim.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year is the importance of coming up with a research question that is debatable and will get people thinking.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year was how to find scholarly sources and what made a source scholarly. I came into this class not knowing how helpful searching for sources through the University of Oregon library would be.”*

Students also reported finding the most value from the Agency and Positionality outcome (7.3%), the Feedback and Revision outcome (5.56%) and the Analysis outcome (also 5.6% of responses). For example, students highlighting the value of “Agency and Positionality” in their development as writers wrote:

*“Being able to write using personal experiences as evidence was a brand new thing for me in writing, and I really enjoyed learning how to use my personal expression as a point in my papers.”*

*“I learned that it is okay to involve myself in the writing”*

*“That through my writing I have a voice to spread discussion, positivity, awareness and growth.”*

Students that identified “Feedback and Revision” as their most valuable learning outcome shared comments like:

*“One of the most valuable things that I have learned during this class was how to be able to truly collaborate with others and be open to writing revisions.”*

*“The most valuable thing I learned about writing this year was the importance of a rough draft”*

*“I’ve been able to peer review other’s work and also learn from them. Comments on my essays and the revision process has given me the chance to improve my work and be able to do better.”*

When selecting learning activities and experiences related to “Analysis” as most impactful, students wrote:

*“I learned about the implicit questions an essay asks, and how they have an impact on the audience and the claim the piece makes.”*

*“I learned about sympathetic versus critical reading, which was a concept that I was not familiar with until this year.”*

*"This term the most valuable thing I learned was analyzing articles, this was very beneficial throughout the class and was something I used in other classes."*

Finally, 6.6% of respondents found that their most valuable learning experiences did not directly correspond to one of the Program learning outcomes and had their comments coded under an "Other" category. These responses usually reflect a student's better understanding of the value of writing more generally, or the student success skills that they developed in WR 121/2/3. For example, students wrote:

*"I learned that writing is useful in so many more ways than originally meets the eye. It will essentially help you with everything in life."*

*"Class Attendance means a lot or you fall behind on new skills."*

*"I learned that writing in college is a lot different from writing in high school. "*