



## Introduction to Teaching Writing in Resilient Ways

Writing is an important way that faculty across curricula teach course content, encourage deep thinking, and track and assess student learning. Though the prospect of teaching writing across in-person, hybrid, and online contexts might seem daunting, there are several steps you can take when designing writing assignments to make this high-impact practice more efficient and flexible for use in these different spaces. With some careful planning, writing assignments can be designed for use across in-person distanced, hybrid, and online teaching situations.

There are many different ways to design, use, and assess writing in classes across the curriculum, ranging from low-stakes writing (that take less instructor time to evaluate but can have a big impact on student learning) to high-stakes writing (that take several weeks or months for students to complete and more instructor time to evaluate). Writing assignments and the learning experiences surrounding them can be delivered via written documents, video, or audio, so they can be created or adapted for different instructional models. Most students have laptops (and those who don't can get access to them from media services) and cell phones, devices they can use to access writing assignments, participate in peer-response, and collaborate in physically-distanced, hybrid, and online situations.

The handouts shared here are designed to help you teach writing in resilient ways. Taken together, they walk you through the process of designing writing assignments for use across the disciplines, offers some suggestions for consideration when teaching writing in potentially shifting contexts, and notes some ways you might use technology to make the teaching of writing more efficient. You can read the handouts in order as you design a new assignment or redesign an existing assignment, or you may just select individual handouts based on topic.

Here are a few main points, discussed more in the handouts, about how you might approach designing flexible and resilient writing assignments:

- Follow best practices in writing assignment design, **increasing the likelihood that students understand the assignment and what is expected of them. While always helpful, a well-designed assignment is especially important in potentially shifting hybrid and online contexts.**
- Put all documents, supporting information, and processes (such as the assignment handout, evaluation criteria, explanations, and peer-response workshop guidelines and procedures) into written, audio, or video form, **so you're prepared to shift your class between socially-distanced, hybrid, or online environments.**
- Deliver **all writing assignment materials in the same online location** (such as Moodle) and develop consistent procedures for peer-response and submitting drafts, to increase efficiency and decrease confusion.

- Consider incorporating more **writing-to-learn** and **more short or medium-length writing assignments**. Research shows a correlation between students' frequent, low-stakes writing and increases in critical thinking, deep learning, and satisfaction with their learning. Writing-to-learn activities, short, and medium-length writing assignments are more **flexible** if you need to shift to hybrid or online spaces, and students may find them more achievable and flexible as well (because they are shorter, both in length and time required to complete).
- **Facilitate conversations, encourage collaboration, and create community among students by using informal writing activities** that can be shared in physically-distanced in-person, hybrid, or online classrooms.
- Consider including **informal multimodal writing-to-learn activities or short assignments** too (such as podcasts, voice memos, short response videos). Students can complete these activities in low-tech ways with their phones and they add variety to the way students write and interact with their peers and instructors.
- **Break longer, high-stakes writing assignments into shorter sections, making them more manageable for students and more flexible in the case of potential shifts between teaching contexts.**
- **Peer-response** is always a valuable writing pedagogy, and, in the case of a shift to hybrid or online teaching, is an especially **effective way to build community and to facilitate student interaction.**
- **Develop detailed evaluation criteria for writing assignments** and consider **using rubrics for grading**. Rubrics show students what constitutes excellent writing in a discipline or field. In all teaching contexts, **they clarify expectations and reduce uncertainty and confusion about writing assignments.**
- **Use rubrics to comment and grade efficiently.**
- Take advantage of **software for planning peer-response workshops, collaborative projects, and for commenting on and grading student writing**. Using software with which you're already familiar is helpful, too.