

Survey: Writing Assignment Practices of DU Faculty  
134 out of 321 respondents (41.7%)  
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Note: nr = non-response

1. In which college/school/division do you teach? (nr 0.7%)

- Arts and Humanities (41.8%)
- Social Sciences (20.9%)
- Natural Sciences and Mathematics (14.2%)
- Engineering and Computer Science (3.7%)
- Business (15.7%)
- International Studies (3.0%)

Think of the **most recent undergraduate course** you taught (including the present quarter). Answer questions 2 -13 based on that course. Even if you assigned no writing, complete all of the questions; you'll see places to enter "0" or "none."

2. What was the level of this course? (nr 0)

- 1000 (35.8%)
- 2000 (38.1%)
- 3000 (26.1%)

3. Was this course (nr 0.7%)

- taken mostly by undergraduate majors? (59.7%)
- taken mostly by nonmajors (as a foundations, core, or similar course)? (39.6%)

4. What was the enrollment in the course? (nr 0.7%)

- 15 or fewer (35.1%)
- 16 – 24 (18.7%)
- 25 – 40 (32.1%)
- 41 – 60 (6.7%)
- 61 or more (6.7%)

5. How many times did you assign the following formal writing assignments?

	0	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 or more
Short Essay (1 – 3 pages) (nr 11.9%)	29.1%	14.2%	23.9%	7.5%	6.7%	6.7%
Longer Essay (4 or more pages) (nr 18.7%)	41.8%	28.4%	9.0%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Short Research Paper (1 – 5 pages) (nr 27.6%)	51.5%	17.9%	1.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%
Mid-Length Research Paper (6 – 10 pages) (nr 23.9%)	45.5%	29.9%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Longer Research Paper (11 or more pages) (nr 27.6%)	55.2%	15.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%
Creative work (short stories, poems, plays, etc.) (nr 28.4%)	56.7%	9.7%	3.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Other:* (nr 55.2%)	30.6%	6.7%	1.5%	1.5%	3.7%	0.7%

\*Written responses to Other:

"4-10 page case studies"

"50 to 60 page papers for a team of 3 to 4 students"

"Artist statements to accompany visual material (photographs)"

"bi-weekly written arguments, supported by citations to empirical research, that ultimately were part of a larger research project that took the form of a website in which students had to present pro vs. con arguments"

"Blackboard discussion responses"

"book review"

"Case study financial analysis and decision worth 30% of the course grade."

- “Data analysis and scientific reporting”
- “in-class response papers”
- “lab reports”
- “Lab Write Up”
- “oral presentations”
- “Personal Reflections Paper 5-7 pages”
- “Poster presentation”
- “Read and comment on Scientific Journal Article”
- “reading journal”
- “research paper with repeated revisions”
- “Research papers of 10 pages or so are routine in upper division courses using either primary literature or data from class projects.”
- “Thesis Statement, Preliminary Bibliography”

6. How many times did you assign the following writing tasks to test or report knowledge?

	0	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 or more
Essay Exams (nr 12.7%)	37.3%	40.3%	9.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Short-answer quizzes (nr 11.2%)	47.8%	17.2%	13.4%	8.2%	1.5%	0.7%
Reading or lecture summaries (nr 17.9%)	56.7%	9.7%	5.2%	4.5%	1.5%	4.5%
Lab reports or Case studies (nr 17.9%)	56.7%	9.7%	6.0%	3.7%	3.7%	2.2%
Letters, memos, etc. (nr 23.9%)	69.4%	4.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Other:* (nr 59.0%)	32.8%	3.7%	3.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%

\*Written responses to Other:

- “assessment papers”
- “Blackboard Discussion Board Bulletin Board Posts”
- “Blackboard discussion responses”
- “blackboard online discussion of films”
- “each bi-weekly set of arguments were accompanied with an annotation paper assignment in which students evaluated the strength of the arguments that created and the credibility of the research they used to support their arguments”
- “extra credit - summaries of talks or journal articles”
- “Group projects”
- “Marketing Proposal”
- “multiple choice”
- “PowerPoint Decks”
- “Screening reports”
- “See # 5, above”
- “short answer exam questions worth 30% of the course grade.”
- “Short-answer exams (few sentences to a paragraph), 8 pages or so”

7. How many times did you assign the following writing tasks to facilitate student learning, exploration, or discussion?

	0	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 or more
Journal or notebook (nr 11.9%)	70.9%	7.5%	0.0%	1.5%	1.5%	3.7%
Informal in-class writing (nr 18.7%)	50.0%	14.9%	11.2%	8.2%	2.2%	1.5%
Class forum posts (discussion board, listserv) (nr 27.6%)	66.4%	6.7%	2.2%	1.5%	1.5%	3.7%
Reading response/reaction (nr 23.9%)	49.3%	13.4%	14.9%	6.7%	4.5%	5.2%
Other:* (nr 55.2%)	32.8%	0.7%	2.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%

\*Written responses to Other:

- “Article Evaluation and Synthesis”
- “Extra credit assignments to explore disabilities, neuroscience areas or websites”
- “oral presentations”
- “Review of another student's research draft”
- “The case studies were both for analysis and discussion”

"The School of Art and Art History requires that students attend 3 cultural events per class and compose short (1-2 page) analyses of each event"

8. How many times did you assign the following writing tasks to support research or projects?

	0	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 or more
Outline (nr 11.9%)	57.5%	24.6%	2.2%	2.2%	0.7%	0.7%
Proposal or prospectus (nr 13.4%)	61.2%	23.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%
Abstract or précis (nr 16.4%)	70.1%	10.4%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Annotated Bibliography (nr 14.9%)	61.9%	19.4%	2.2%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Survey or interview questions (nr 17.9%)	70.9%	10.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Other:* (nr 60.4%)	36.6%	2.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

\*Written responses to Other:

"case brief"

"journal"

"Presentation of research findings and final presentation of project."

"Revision of draft based on my comments/suggestions"

"Series of questions related to analysis of data"

"written peer-review of classmates' written projects"

9. How many times did you assign any of the following multi-media projects that involved writing?

	0	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 or more
Oral presentation/PowerPoint (nr 7.5%)	38.8%	44.8%	6.0%	1.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Website or page (nr 17.2%)	72.4%	8.2%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Audio or Visual project (e.g., podcast, slideshow, video, photo/image essay) (nr 15.7%)	65.7%	13.4%	3.7%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Poster (nr 19.4%)	75.4%	4.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other:* (nr 57.5%)	41.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

\*Written responses to Other:

"Advanced courses in major involve one oral presentation/powerpoint"

"Installations"

10. What was the *total number of pages* of writing (formal and informal) assigned in the course?

(nr 2.2%)

0 (0.7%)

1 – 10 (4.5%)

11 – 20 (33.6%)

21 – 30 (33.6%)

31 – 40 (14.2%)

41 or more (11.2%)

11. Approximately what *percentage of the final course grade* was based on writing assignments?

(nr 0.7%)

0 (0.7%)

1 – 20 (10.4%)

21 – 40 (21.6%)

41 – 60 (16.4%)

61 – 80 (27.6%)

81 – 100 (22.4%)

12. Was this course typical of the undergraduate courses you teach in terms of the AMOUNT of writing assigned? (nr 1.5%)

yes (75.4%)

no (19.4%)

If "no" please explain: (3.7%)

- "I assigned a significant amount of writing because the course was a First Year Seminar. Other undergraduate courses I teach are survey courses with large course enrollment, which prelude--for reasons of student's time, content and my time constraints--such intensive writing."
- "I gave these students more than usual because this was a FYSEM course."
- "I offer a First Year Seminar that has three short writing assignments and a 10-page term paper. I also offer a graduate seminar that requires that all students give one oral presentation. I also supervise independent study projects in which student write term papers that vary in length from 10 to 20 pages. I also supervise Honors students working in my lab. These students will write an Honors thesis."
- "it was a First-Year Seminar course, where writing was to be emphasized"
- "It was an honors course with 11 students."
- "It's close to typical. However, the course included service learning, which meant a "longer paper" was not that long. My courses occasionally include service learning."
- "More writing in this course than most of my other courses"
- "Most of the undergrad courses I teach are seminar level and thus require more writing in essay format -- this was an AHUM discovery course."
- "Much less in a large Foundations of Social Science class. Similar in other upper level courses."
- "My other undergrad course (a 3000-level) requires more writing."
- "No writing assignments are possible in one of my courses because of 160 student enrollment. The focus of my other course is on lab skills rather than writing."
- "On average the amount of writing is slightly less in this course than in others."
- "papers range from 10 pages per person to 75+ per team of 4 students"
- "since it was an introductory, foundations course for non-majors there was less writing than if it had been a regular departmental course"
- "Somewhat less. I usually assign 8 inquiry papers but am using Blackboard instead this term."
- "Teaching writing in the discipline is a primary goal of the course. The course is smaller than typical -- to facilitate teaching of writing."
- "The 5 written cases are significantly more individual work than I normally have. Other classes are more in the neighborhood of 15 written pages."
- "The course is designated as writing-intensive. In other courses, depending on the level, I might assign take-home or in-class essay exams, a 15-page research paper, or two shorter papers."
- "This course requires students to write specifications, detailed product plans, and product descriptions for their projects. Other courses have more problem sets and writing."
- "This information reflects my CORE class; I have more writing in my major classes."
- "This is a large foundations class. The others I teach are all smaller and involve more writing."
- "This is a writing course and the only undergraduate course I teach."
- "This was a first-year seminar billed as writing intensive."
- "This was a first-year seminar in which critical thinking and writing were skills that were emphasized in this course. The other undergraduate classes I teach are typically larger and include 3 exams (composed of multiple-choice, short-answer and one essay) and a 10-12 page written project."
- "This was a foundations math course that was being taught for the last time. With my other course I do try to incorporate a little writing - even though it is a math course."
- "This was a lab course. In some other courses I assign a paper. In other courses there is essentially no writing of essays or papers, just solutions of engineering problems. There is narrative expected in problem solutions, but I wouldn't call them essays."
- "This was a NATS course. In the Engineering Design Course that I taught the same quarter, students wrote formal reports that were typically 21-40 pages in length. In both classes, students worked in teams of 3 to 5."
- "This was a writing intensive Core class."
- "This was an advanced class, in a less advanced class there is some in class writing and maybe fewer overall pages, but not too many fewer."
- "Used exam format more than typically"
- "Well, this is an introductory level course, one up from foundations. In the 3000 level courses I assign more writing and presentations."
- "writing assignment in this class is much more than I have assigned in any other undergrad class"
- "Writing is implicit to many of the activities, but I've been teaching visual literacies and expression, so this is actually more writing than I normally require."

13. Was this course typical of the undergraduate courses you teach in terms of the KIND(S) of writing assigned? (nr 2.2%)

yes (81.3%)

no (14.2%)

If "no" please explain: (2.2%)

"As a writing-intensive, first-year seminar, I tried to vary the kinds of writing assignments as much as possible. This was to provide these students with a broad exposure to the sorts of writing assignments they might encounter in the future."

"however, the class reported above was a nonmajors class (I usually teach 5 of these a year), and I also teach several majors classes each year and these sometimes include lengthy term projects/reports"

"I don't assign "labs" or "reports" in any other class."

"I don't usually use the variety of writing assignments used here."

"I often do tutorials, but didn't this time."

"i tend to vary assignments, dependent on the language of instruction"

"In departmental course I assign a wider variety of assignments, frequently including final projects, creative work, etc. These courses are smaller and therefore I can take more time with each student's creative output."

"Much more remedial work and revision of short papers."

"Of the courses I teach, this is the only course with a writing assignment."

"Papers were fewer and shorter than in 2000 or 3000 level courses I would teach."

"see 12"

"See above"

"See above"

"See above. Also, I experiment with different formats reading responses. Sometimes they are more formal and done out of class."

"See answer to number 12."

"See my comment above."

"The class I am including is our capstone course. I strongly believe that individual grades, assessment and student analysis are critical to undergraduates at that point in their curriculum."

"The primary writing assignment was specifically designed to encourage students to take the bi-weekly feedback from the instructor, along with peer-review from their classmates, to revise and critically evaluate their project throughout the quarter, rather than the typical model of producing a final paper without feedback along the way. Other writing assignments were designed for students to focus on paragraph development, logic, and clarity of expression."

"This course was more writing intensive than my upper level courses, which are much larger classes."

"This had more short and long reading-based papers. Most other classes are more exam-based writing."

"this is the only undergrad class I teach which requires a research paper plus a book review"

"This was a course focused on how library archives are shifting toward the electronic; therefore, the paper topics were geared specifically toward an inquiry into collections and book history."

"Typically I teach Engineering Design. Students report detailed engineering specifications, analysis and test results for that class."

"Well, this is an introductory level course, one up from foundations. In the 3000 level courses I assign more in depth and critical analysis writing and presentations."

"When I teach a 3000 level course, writing assignments include (a) discussion questions about assigned readings that students post to a discussion board, and (b) two long essay exams."

Now please consider ALL of your undergraduate courses and respond to the remaining questions based on your general practices regarding writing.

14. When you assign writing, how often do you ask students to complete the following activities?

	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Spend class time generating topics, developing ideas, or talking about writing strategies (nr 2.2%)	26.9%	41.0%	15.7%	14.2%
Participate in workshops or discussions with other students about their work in progress (nr 3.7%)	16.4%	35.1%	24.6%	20.1%
Meet with you individually outside of class to discuss their writing (nr 2.2%)	37.3%	32.1%	23.1%	5.2%
Revise their work based on your feedback <i>before</i> they receive a grade (nr 2.2%)	28.4%	38.8%	18.7%	11.9%
Revise based on your feedback <i>after</i> they receive a grade (nr 3.0%)	20.1%	26.1%	26.1%	24.6%
Meet with your teaching assistant to discuss their writing (nr 11.9%)	11.2%	11.2%	10.4%	55.2%
Meet with a consultant in the Writing Center (nr 7.5%)	6.7%	20.1%	23.9%	41.8%
Share final drafts with the class (reading work in class, posting them on Blackboard, distributing copies, etc.) (nr 6.0%)	14.2%	26.1%	17.2%	36.6%

15. Many factors contribute to the quality of writing. Please identify the 7 features you think are most important by clicking on the TOP SEVEN CRITERIA you apply in your evaluations of student writing.

- Appropriateness to audience and purpose (32.1%)
- Citation and documentation (34.3%)
- Clarity (76.1%)
- Coverage of subject matter/depth of understanding (68.7%)
- Creativity/originality (27.6%)
- Format and presentation (24.6%)
- Grammar, usage, and punctuation (57.5%)
- Integration of source materials (38.8%)
- Language, word choice, and vocabulary (27.6%)
- Logical development/reasoning (72.4%)
- Organization, including opening, closing, and transitions (51.5%)
- Quality of analysis or explanations (73.1%)
- Strength of argument (44.8%)
- Style, tone, and voice (17.9%)
- Supporting details/evidence (53.0%)
- Other (2.2%)

16. What are the characteristics of the most successful writing that students have produced for your courses?

- “\*\*\*well organized; \*\*demonstrates comprehension of course material; \*\*analytically sound; \*\*application of core concepts and ideas”
- “1) Essays that have a clearly articulated thesis statement; 2) Essays that are well-organized; 3) Essays that are analytical, that reflect a close, insightful reading of the text(s) (including films) under discussion.”
- “1) writing reflects significant critical analytical thinking and reflection; 2) writer develops ideas through the use of specific and relevant detail and examples; 3) writing reflects significant effort on the part of the writer to clearly and logically present her/his ideas; 4) writing reflects the fact the the writer paid attention to the specific parameters (including audience) of a given assignment”
- “1)Development of clear concise arguments with no superfluous discussion of irrelevant details. 2)arguments supported with relevant references.”

- "A clear and concise memorandum is what I am looking for. My students need to follow directions and then create a logical argument that they can express clearly in writing."
- "A good flow of logic supporting their decisions."
- "A specific argument, undergirded by an explicit thesis sentence that lays out a particular claim and supported by detailed reasons. The body of the essay is punctuated with clear topic sentences and acute transitions. Each paragraph is aptly supported with pertinent evidence that the author both comments on and extrapolates from. The language is vivid with active verbs, and the syntax is neither convoluted nor labored."
- "Ability to ask questions of material; ability to write clearly; nuance."
- "Ability to summarize sources fluidly, closely read well-chosen passages, and make new connections."
- "All of the items from 15 are important for effective writing. The key is to expect great things, and our students will deliver. Students can and will write well if required. Our requirements at DU are at the high school level, at best!!"
- "Applied assignments that ask students to collect data in the field and then write up a report. This could be the development of a case study or alternatively an in-depth interview with a leader or entrepreneur."
- "Appropriate use of references, logical sequence of organization and logic, demonstration of clear understanding of the topic or question and the references used to work with it. Concise and correct mechanics are also valuable."
- "Clarity and depth of understanding"
- "Clarity and thoroughness of exposition."
- "Clarity of exposition. Formulation of, and dedication to, appropriate thesis. Clear arguments with supporting evidence and attempts to handle possible objections or weaknesses."
- "Clarity of idea, good organization of material (sources), proper grammar and usage"
- "clarity, concise, well referenced"
- "Clarity, content, reasoning, command of language, capacity to elaborate or expand on ideas or personal judgement."
- "Clarity, methodology, coherent"
- "Clarity, precision, accurate, and there is a smooth logical flow when reading the document."
- "Clarity. As I teach in the humanities, I frequently tell the students that there may not be a definitive 'correct' answer for many issues/problems, but that the articulation of a clear, well-supported argument is frequently the most convincing. I urge them to maintain the internal logic of their argument and to develop it in the fullest, clearest manner possible. Frequently, I find that the best papers are those that have been outlined and well-considered prior to writing and then edited and proofread after the initial drafting phase"
- "clear and concise, carefully proof-read, arguments well supported with evidence, great organization"
- "Clear and organized, integrating in source material in a meaningful and directed way"
- "Clear and to the point, understandable"
- "clear and well reasoned"
- "Clear argument, excellent use of evidence from a variety of sources, attention to the types of questions that can be answered by specific kinds of evidence. Careful thinking about how to develop a problem or question, and how to best to answer that question. Original thinking and a creative approach."
- "Clear evidence of deep reading and research, well organized and coherent framework, sound technical presentation."
- "Clear expression of ideas in a logical order, and an obvious effort to understand the topic by considerable outside reading."
- "Clear presentation that includes a brief introduction, the main story, and a conclusion/summary."
- "Clear, well organized, error free."
- "Clearly articulated ideas. Excellent sentence structure and organization."
- "Complexity of ideas, acknowledgment of opposing positions, understanding of the rhetorical context, engagement in issue, thoroughness of explanations."
- "Concerning reports on concerts attended, I am most pleased when students' reports reflect knowledge gained in class."
- "Concise and thorough (simultaneously), clear (organization and grammar)."
- "critical analysis"
- "demonstration of thorough consideration of assigned topic with logical flow of arguments and clear statement of conclusions"
- "Exploration of available alternative data sources to flesh out their previous data analysis."

- "First, clarity and precision of word choice and phrasing. Second, imaginative thinking, adventurous but convincing argument."
- "First, it should be said that I teach mathematics. Thus, the amount of writing is less than that required in many other courses. The major writing portion is a project that the students must produce for which they are given a description of a "real-world" problem. They must determine the solution to the problem and write a detailed description of that solution. The students are either asked to choose or are given an "audience" for whom they are supposed to produce the report. Interestingly, the more successful writing (and explanation of the mathematics) is generally done by those students who take their audience seriously."
- "Getting the message across at the appropriate level and doing so in an engaging manner."
- "Good organization, clarity, thoughtful, thorough coverage of the topic and material, evidence of analytical thinking"
- "Good organization, undergirding good understanding and clear explanation. Lively language."
- "Good, documented research that supports the conclusions that are reached in the paper."
- "I ask them to write a final paper which is a critical analysis of a primary source research article. Throughout the class there are building assignments leading up to this project. The paper has 3 parts: 1) Research background in which they have to provide an additional 3 sources (not their texts or websites) to provide the theoretical and neuroanatomical background to their topic; 2) A critical analysis of a primary source research article that includes a summary of the paper with its questions, methods and conclusions as well as a critical analysis of what was done; 3) Develop an original experiment to run on the same subjects tested in the article as a follow up experiment saying what this new experiment would contribute to the literature."
- "I don't assign writing"
- "I enjoy most the papers where I can see the student's DISCOVERY moments. I like papers that take risks in writing, especially when the student is bright, understands how to develop a unified, organized, coherent essay of substance that is interesting--and departs from this safe knowledge into something perhaps a bit messy, yet I get to see the mind at work as he or she pushes toward something he or she might not have previously known. I like papers that teach me something I hadn't thought about."
- "I find myself constantly lecturing them that no one produces a great first draft. No one. I try to instill the idea that a quality college paper can't be done in one sitting, probably can't be done at 3 am, and requires that you think about it for more than 3 minutes. A few buy into this idea and produce excellent work, but most give me a challenging look as if I am wrong. THEY can produce great work in one sitting at 4 am--of course they are usually stunned later on by their very poor grades supporting my argument."
- "in-depth analysis; clarity of writing; proofreading for grammar and typos"
- "Innovative, bold and well-supported"
- "Logical with good transitions between topics and strong use of supporting evidentiary resources."
- "My students write on legal topics, so clear analysis and logic are the key characteristics for success. Analysis includes identification of the status of the relevant law and application of that law to the facts presented."
- "Organized"
- "originality of argument, ability to use evidence in a convincing manner and ability to use evidence to construct an argument"
- "Personal engagement with the subject."
- "persuasive argument supported by pertinent evidence; continuity; lucid prose"
- "quality research, with a good analytical presentation and organization of materials"
- "Relevance to the topic, Organization, Major Points, Evidence, English usage, Creativity."
- "See items checked in #15."
- "Strong, clear thesis statement; carefully-developed argument that is logical and convincing; adequate and appropriate citations (lack of plagiarism); communication of breadth and depth of knowledge on the topic; few, if any, mechanical (spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation) errors. Some of the best papers are original and creative, those that avoid the Reader's Digest melange of citations from sources. Better papers avoid the slow warm-up (eg. the history of a particular subject) and jump right into analysis, research, and argument."
- "Students state a clear thesis linking sources/research/interview data/service as appropriate. They support arguments with evidence."
- "Successful students have the basics down pat (grammar, vocabulary, organization, and citations). They are able to excel by explaining/integrating complex ideas clearly and logically."

"Successfully accomplishing items in 15"

"The ability to describe sympathetically the foreign culture and behaviors of the readings of the course."

"The ability to formulate a thesis, support it with arguments, and distinguish what is relevant to the argument from what is superfluous or just padding."

"The best writers add strong argument and creativity in addition to the criteria I checked above, however it is rare enough that I ask them to master these more fundamental skills first."

"The best writing always come from students who plan in advance, produce drafts, are willing to take criticisms and get feedback, and understand the meaning of writing multiple drafts."

"The most successful undergraduate writing usually comes as the result of rewriting and responsiveness to my comments. So the writing ends up covering the kinds of formal and creative aspects mentioned above in #15."

"The most successful writing that students have produced involves the criteria that I checked in the last question, along with creativity/originality (I wish you would have asked for the top 8 criteria!)."

"The students write papers that are clear, concise, and precise. They use appropriate business language (a company is referred to as it" for example). They provide the appropriate and correct evidence for their assertions. The marketing plan presentation is professional and uses business style with one voice. The plan has been proofread; it uses headings where appropriate as guideposts to help the reader. The executive summary can stand alone."

"The writing is clear and succinct and conveys an understanding of the subject matter"

"They are clearly written, engaging, and I learn from them."

"They are well read and able to adapt others' styles to their own strenghts!"

"They have a clear thesis with some sort of binary concept or some structure that allows them to find resonance/play/tension/paradox in the topic. They see the overview of the argument, and they proceed with clarity and depth of thought and purpose to prove their points, to persuade."

"Thinking before writing"

"thorough research, well organized, clearly written"

"Thorough, analytical, documented"

"Those attributes checked above."

"Thoughtful, related to course materials, and presented in student's own voice"

"Thoughtful; Evaluative; Synthesized; Organized; Clear; Detailed"

"Understanding covered material in depth and articulating it in their own words in an organized way that is based on a logical development/reasoning."

"Well focused strong position with supporting evidence synthesized from multiple sources/chapters."

"Well organized, original, and on topic."

"Well-argued essays that address the heart of the assigned question."

"Well-organized, grounded in the texts to be analyzed, with a clear thesis/argument upfront."

"Well-organized, well-argued, good supporting details and evidence, original and fun to read."

"Well-written prose (occasionally complemented by poetry) that is extremely well-researched, using primarily original, library, and/or web sources -- the latter being the least important."

"Writing that expresses the voice of the student within the context of a greater expectation: students write for the audience and understand their own limitations."

"Writing that is clear, passionate, and independent in thought and expression."

17. Is there anything else that you'd like to share about your teaching or about student writing?

"Class sizes at DU are too big to do effective writing development. Also, the lack of consistent faculty responses to plagiarism teaches our students that learning how to develop one's own ideas, express them clearly, and support them with reasons and evidence, is not the real goal."

"Every homework assignment can be revised (one time) if turned in on time. In-class writing prior to assignment helps students understand the assignment a little bit better."

"For me, it is important that students learn how to describe and integrate visual materials."

"given the work loads we are expected to carry it is difficult to review, evaluate and critique written assignments."

"I abandoned multiple choice testing more than a decade ago. I use short in-class writing exercises to break up the lecture format and gain feedback on their state of thinking about new topics. I use out-of-class writing (1-3 pp) to assure timely and thoughtful reading of selected essays that in turn can help to foster in-class discussions. Exams consist of short-answer questions that evaluate understanding of essential concepts, arguments (including some factual detail), and terminology and generally are taken without time limits."

- "I am one of the few NSM Professors to assign essay questions in exams for large first year subjects....I believe thinking and writing in sentences is a weakness of incoming freshmen and needs to be addressed early and frequently."
- "I am working on and studying ways of developing critical writing skills."
- "I ask students to use historical sources to reflect on and respond to current controversies."
- "I assign a lot of writing, and I am always astonished at the LACK of student complaints about it either to me or on student evaluations. I think that if students understand the purpose of the writing assignments and if they find them interesting and meaningful, it works well. I assign weekly writing due before class discussions of a topic, so students can see how writing about a subject individually can enrich the collective discussion."
- "I frequently stress the importance of self-editing and proofreading. I find that it is all-too-often the case that students do neither. A disturbing majority of students do not have anything but a cursory understanding of the importance of referencing sources and the ways in which footnotes/endnotes can serve in clarifying a paper. I would prefer to assign research papers in my classes, but find that a ten-week quarter does not provide sufficient time for most students to successfully identify a topic and engage in anything but the most cursory of research. As a result, I tend to assign analysis papers in which they must synthesise information gleaned from critical sources and/or primary source material. Frequently they must assess the various aspects of an academic debate or address the application of disparate methodological inquiries."
- "I have found that most students already understand the basic mechanics of writing, but they often have to be pushed to utilize what they know. One skill that many lack is the ability to productively proofread and revise their work, often because they tend to write papers the night before with no time to do so."
- "I have found that undergraduate students have little to no knowledge of basic grammar. I spend too much time trying to re-teach this material. I think that business students need to do more writing and that is why I include so much of it in each of my classes."
- "I have never had any teaching assistants available to me/my students."
- "I look forward to having students use the Writing Center."
- "I spend a good deal of time talking to the students (and posting advice on my website) about the essentials of writing--how to discover the ideas for papers, how to put them together, how to revise the work."
- "I struggle most with thinking about how to encourage students to be creative while also making sure that they can write a solid essay. I think it's incredibly important to train students to formulate arguments supported by evidence, but those essays can often seem formulaic to students. Students love the creativity of different kinds of projects, but I worry that spending time on those projects means that they'll never learn to write a decent expository essay. I think that writing such essays is ultimately more important and useful than, for instance, constructing interesting fictional dialogues between historical actors."
- "I teach only writing courses."
- "I think students' writing skills are improving but I still see a tremendous discrepancy between students who write very well and those who do not. I also find that many students have difficulty writing papers that require analysis and application of course concepts. Finally, many students have a hard time structuring their written work especially with regard to proper citation."
- "I think the writing skills of students today have declined significantly. I don't know what has caused this. Perhaps it is just a result of the text messaging culture in which they have grown up."
- "I wonder what is going on in high school English classes. I was struck by how the students in my first-year seminar, who had come from a wide variety of high schools (e.g., inner-city public schools, suburban public schools, private schools, and boarding schools), tended to show the same type of common errors in writing. When I informally asked students about the kind of writing assignments they had in high school, very few students told me that they had to write a research paper. When I asked them what was the longest paper they had to write in high school, few had ever been assigned a paper that was longer than 5 pages. Many students showed consistent confusion about words (e.g., not knowing when to use their, there, or they're; misusing then and than) and one student had fundamental writing problems that included a lack of understanding of basic grammar and sentence construction. It is also an added challenge to teach a course that emphasizes writing when the students present a wide range of abilities and limited preparation for college-level writing. However, it is very rewarding to show students the first and last papers they wrote so that they can see for themselves the progress they have made."

- "I work very hard to frame writing assignments that make plagiarism or even the temptation to plagiarize unlikely."
- "I wouldn't be happy with any other method of evaluating their understanding of the material."
- "I'd like to have a TA, then I could assign more writing. Because my course does not have a lab, however, the chances of getting a TA are remote. We need all of our current TAs for lab courses. The solution is for the University to provide TAs for science courses that specialize in nurturing writing skills, especially scientific writing."
- "I'm thrilled that DU is finally taking a system-wide approach to improving student writing. The writing center has been great in helping some of my students work through particular issues in their essays and research papers. Also, I've been experimenting lately with exercises that will help students write 15-page research papers and have found that giving them a conceptual framework for organizing their material, setting due dates throughout the course for different sections of the paper, and providing timely feedback on their early drafts--all have been helpful in getting students to write well."
- "In most classes I hold tutorials on students written work. I give them a detailed question about a text and they meet with me in groups of 2-3 to read and discuss their polished finished paper. They read their paper out loud and we discuss it in a 50 minute session."
- "Innovations, even those based on a synthesis of the work of others, are always encouraged. The movement from description, to analysis, to explanation, and (albeit rarely) to prediction is encouraged and occasionally produced."
- "It takes too much time to grade given the many other demands of being a faculty member these days."
- "It would be helpful to know just exactly students have been given in terms of writing instruction."
- "more than a few short student papers appear to be written hastily in a stream of consciousness manner"
- "My experience has been that it is more important for students to get a lot of practice writing (and have it be a big part of the in-class discussions, exams, and final grade), but not as important to have me painstakingly correct all their errors. With respect to writing, I view my job as facilitator, providing loads of (forced) opportunities, and getting them into the mindset that they can't watch TV all night, slap together some unreflective, unclear piece of writing for class in 10 minutes, and expect to succeed. I think there is a link between having students have to do a lot of writing while in college, and coaxing them into more reflective attitudes about schoolwork and how they spend their time in general."
- "My students do a combination of short writings designed to develop their critical thinking/writing skills in a variety of ways: Questions and Answers on the materials, responded to the DB question, Annotated Maps, Article Evaluations, even Footnotes in some classes."
- "On the undergraduate level, students' writing tends to be pretty poor. I'm very pleased that we now have a writing center to send students to for help."
- "Scientific writing is very different than creative writing, and most students' scientific writing is hindered by excessive verbosity."
- "Student writing is crucial to a successful understanding of the material."
- "The next time, I will include more opportunities for revision."
- "The students I had in my economic policy class for which the type and quantity of writing required is above normal for undergrad classes I teach did really good work. Writing quality was of high standard."
- "The ten-week quarter makes it difficult for them to allow ideas to steep, to allow papers to grow and develop."
- "The variance in writing abilities among students is unbelievably huge."
- "The Writing Center is a great start, as is the revamped freshman sequence, and I can't wait to see how it affects the quality of their verbal argumentation."
- "too many students hand in poorly done rough drafts, with little depth of thought or attention to research/sources. Our communications center helps with organization and flow of writing, but not sloppy thinking!"
- "Using Blackboard is foolish and makes learning difficult."
- "We ask for small submissions at least once, sometimes twice a week, which are reviewed by our GTAs and returned with in-depth comments. Students are encouraged to revise their papers and resubmit them for additional comments. They do not receive a grade on these until the entire project, composed of 12 smaller parts is combined and submitted at the end of the quarter for a grade. We encourage each group to work together on the project and toward the end of the quarter

to designate an editor who begins to weave the various pieces of the project together. The students are given guidelines for the project as well as the grading sheet that is used to develop the final grade at the beginning of the quarter so they are aware of what we (there are 6 of us that teach this course) expect. Feel free to contact me if you would like more information. I am looking forward to improved writing from the students who take this required business core course in the future!"

"WE have no GRAs or other assistance for the classes that we teach in the Burns School. Therefore, professors will do all the grading on papers, tests, etc."

"We have too many social science and humanities courses where the standards and expectations are too low. We need more rigor, higher standards. And it all starts at the first year level!! The writing program will fail at DU unless everyone sets higher standards and expectations. The writing program should not be viewed as a panacea."

"Work 'em hard."

"Writing about mathematics is much more difficult than solving a series of homework problems. It is, however, what students are more likely to encounter in their careers. I feel that developing their ability to write about mathematics is extremely important."

"Writing is an essential component of my teaching because it helps students learn the material of the class and engage with the ideas. I try to have students read each others' writing and respond to each other in writing as well as in oral discussion."

"Writing is improved in direct relationship to the time spent by me working one on one with the student. And classes are too large to allow sufficiently for this critical activity."

"Written communication is very important in business. Writing about a subject is a great way to reinforce learning. Our students need to develop better skills and learn how to proof-read their work."

"Yes. We must raise the bar in terms of writing BEFORE students come to DU. We should not conduct remedial classes here."