

Teaching with the Loyola Writing Handbook

A Writer's Reference (6ed) with a Guide to All of the Disciplines at Loyola College

“A Jesuit education is a liberal education in the finest sense of the word: open to experience, inquiry and debate, assuming as its purview the entire sum of human knowledge, dedicated to using that knowledge for the greater good of society. The ability to write well will set you firmly on your way to this ideal.”

Father Brian Linnane, S.J.

Overview

Background

- This version builds directly on the groundbreaking work that Loyola did in the 80s and early 90s as a national leader in writing across the curriculum; fosters regional and national visibility for the Loyola as an academically-oriented institution, interested in promoting writing and learning across the curriculum.
- A useful resource for departments to set the rhetorical situation for writing and set expectations; to describe specific genres of writing; to offer heuristic guidance on how to engage and negotiate assignments; to address issues of academic research, argumentation and information literacy; to articulate evaluation criteria; and to offer resources for specific style conventions.
- A useful resource for non-majors and majors taking courses across the discipline on the forms of writing and intellectual work in different academic contexts.
- A means of encouraging students to see the similarities and differences of writing in different disciplines so they can develop discursive mobility more explicitly.
- A consistent writing resource for students across the curriculum and across their four years at Loyola (facilitated by no buy-back options from the book store)
- A guide that can assist faculty in learning the expectations for writing at Loyola within their own department and across the curriculum.

“The foundation for a successful undergraduate experience is proficiency in the written and spoken word. Students need language to grasp and express effectively feelings and ideas. To succeed in college, undergraduates should be able to write and speak with clarity, and to read and listen with comprehension. Language and thought are inextricably connected, and as undergraduates develop their linguistic skills, they hone the quality of their thinking and become intellectually and socially empowered.”

Ernest Boyer, *The Undergraduate Experience in America*

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Update

1. Loyola Writing Center

2. Students' response to the handbook: Surveyed all first-year students about the writing handbook and writing center in May of 2008, 222 students responded

Did you use the Loyola Writer's Reference handbook (either on your own or because directed by an instructor)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85.9%	189
No	14.1%	31
<i>answered question</i>		220
<i>skipped question</i>		4

If you did use the Loyola Writer's Reference, how often did you make use of the handbook?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
more than once a week	1.1%	2
once a week	9.7%	18
once every two weeks	18.8%	35
once a month	46.2%	86
once a semester	24.2%	45
Other (please specify)		10
<i>answered question</i>		186
<i>skipped question</i>		38

Did you use the Loyola Writer's Reference in more than one course?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66.5%	145
No	31.2%	68
Not sure	2.3%	5
Other (please specify)		4
<i>answered question</i>		218
<i>skipped question</i>		6

What sections of the Loyola Writer's Reference did you use? Check as many as apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Composing & Revising	16.6%	33
Academic Writing	17.6%	35
Sentence Style	10.6%	21
Word Choice	8.5%	17
Grammatical Sentences	15.6%	31
ESL Challenges	1.5%	3
Punctuation	23.6%	47

Mechanics	8.5%	17
Researching	24.1%	48
MLA	86.4%	172
APA and/or CMS	50.8%	101
Overview of Writing at Loyola College	8.5%	17

Did you use online resources to help with writing assignments?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.8%	89*
No	59.2%	129
If yes, please describe.		56
<i>answered question</i>		218
<i>skipped question</i>		6

*Most mentioned resources for online research and creating the bibliography.

What additional support or resources might be of interest to you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Mini-workshops on using the handbook.	11.7%	18
Opportunities to use the handbook in your classes.	40.9%	63
Additional handouts or web resources.	59.1%	91
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		154
<i>skipped question</i>		70

What questions or suggestions do you have about the Loyola Writer's Reference?

Answer Options	Response Count
	61
<i>answered question</i>	61
<i>skipped question</i>	163

Many students suggested more faculty use it across courses to make it more worthwhile and cost effective.

- It was helpful when I actually used it, but I think it's kind of a pointless buy because most of the time it sits in a drawer. Before classes it sounded like something I would use all the time, so maybe more it used more often in the writing classes for freshmen. Or, make it more optional sounding so people don't waste money.
- It was waaaaaaay too expensive for a book that doesn't even have a proper binding. Or any book in general.
- Either make the reference more prevalent in its usage, or make it non-requisite
- To be used in more classes. It wasn't very effective being used in just 2 of my classes.
- Although 3 of my first semester classes required it, we hardly, if ever, made use of the Writer's Reference. Use it more or let us save the \$65.
- Considering the price, give the students more reasons to have to use it. I only used it once, at the very end of my second semester, because it was the first time I had to write a paper in APA format.
- I don't think it was used often enough. It did not seem that necessary for any classes, and I personally only used it for citations.

How can faculty support students' use of the writing handbook to improve student writing and learning?

- ◆ Refer to your department's section in writing assignments.
- ◆ Refer students to relevant sections of *A Writer's Reference*, such as those on academic research, drafting, and revising.
- ◆ Include a statement such as this on your syllabus:
In this course, you are expected to use A Writer's Reference with a Guide to Writing in All the Disciplines for Students of Loyola College in completing formal writing assignments. You will be expected to use this handbook throughout your education at Loyola.

SECTION ONE: COMPOSITION/STYLE (Orange)

1) Composing: Invention, Drafting and Revising (pp. 1-54)

- The section on Composing and Revising gives several ways for students to assess the specific writing situation required by any assignment - that is, how to make a rhetorical analysis of the task, its purpose, genre, and audience.
- It deals explicitly with invention strategies, drafting with attention to the larger organization of the text, and gives useful advice on how to revise - a crucial part of the writing process that many students don't fully understand or practice.
- There is a short section which assists students in creating strong, well organized coherent paragraphs - the foundation of effective academic prose.
- It finishes with a short, focused presentation on document design, which includes how to incorporate visuals, and treats both academic and business formats.

2) Academic Writing (pp. 55-90)

The section on Academic Writing is new in this edition and is particularly relevant to the new handbook project. It has four sections which each treat useful topics and competences. It also includes sample papers.

- Writing about texts: This section addresses effective READING strategies: annotating, outlining, summarizing, and analyzing.
- Constructing Reasonable Arguments and Evaluating Arguments both address critical academic intellectual "moves" which students will use in many courses across departments -very specific and helpful.
- Writing in the disciplines: Department entries can make excellent use of this short section as an adjunct to their entries.

3) Sentence Style and Word Choice (pp. 91-160)

These two sections address specific issues of sentence style and diction. Parallelism, modifiers, mixed constructions, and sentence variety are under STYLE, while usage, wordiness, and active verbs are handled in WORD CHOICE.

SECTION TWO: CORRECTNESS (Blue) (pp. 161-314)

Basic sentence grammar, ESL challenges, punctuation, and mechanics are addressed in this section.

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH/ BASIC GRAMMAR (Green) (pp. 316-352)

This section covers the basic research process, including evaluating sources, managing information (questions of intellectual property and avoiding plagiarism). Directing students to this specific section will support the current Honor Policies at Loyola.

- MLA, APA, and CMS are included as primary citation styles. If a department has chosen a different style guide, it can address that in its entry. Again sample papers are included to give students models to work from.

SECTION FOUR: LOYOLA COLLEGE GUIDE (White) (pp. LC-1-108)