

**Writing Matters: Making a Successful Transition  
from High School to Loyola College  
August 31, 2008**

**I. Where we're from: Expectations for writing in high school**

Spend a few minutes thinking about the kinds of writing you did in high school. First, list some memorable writing assignments/moments—these can be as formal as a senior research paper or as informal as a journal.

Next, write some thoughts about your previous experiences with writing in high school:

The **forms/genres**: How would you classify or describe the different kinds of writing you did in high school?

The **purposes** for writing: What were your different writing assignments for? What were you meant to get from them? What was your audience meant to get from them?

The **processes** of writing: How did you get from assignment to finished product? What process did you use? How long did it take? Did you write alone and in groups? Did you receive feedback from peers, teachers, and/or parents on drafts before texts were graded?

## **II. Where we are now: Current expectations for writing in college and in your intended major**

What are some of your current perceptions about writing in college? Think about your intended major, or, if you're undecided, about a subject area you're interested in. What perceptions do you have about writing in that discipline? What might it be like? What do you think college professors, or professionals in that field, will value in writing for that discipline?

## **III. Where we're going: Writing at Loyola College**

In small groups, look through a few sections of the writing handbook together. Jot down some notes to share with the rest of the group about what your sections suggest about expectations for writing in college; the forms, purposes and processes of writing in college; or any other important insights/information/advice the section offers. Every group member should be prepared to participate in the discussion.

**Group One:** Composing and Revising:

**Group Two:** Academic Writing

**Group Three:** Researching

**Group Four:** Writing Resources (LC-2—8), Writing in the First Year (LC-9—14)

**Group Five:** Department of Biology (LC-17—20), Department of Philosophy (LC-58—62)

**Group Six:** Department of Marketing (LC-100—102), Department of Engineering (LC-36—39)

**Group Seven:** Department of Economics (LC-85—89), Department of History (LC-48—50)

## **Writing Matters: Making a Successful Transition from High School to Loyola College**

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*

Knowing the information below can help you be prepared and successful as you encounter writing across the campus here at Loyola College. Use this knowledge as well as the writing resources available to you—the Loyola Writing Center and *A Writer's Reference (6e) with a Guide to All the Disciplines at Loyola College*—to make a successful transition from high school to college.

### **Did you know that. . .**

**. . . high school teachers are generalists, college professors are specialists.** For example, the professor teaching your college Introductory Biology class is not just a biologist but specializes in something such as molecular biology, genetics, evolutionary biology.

**. . . in college, principles of academic freedom encourage variation across sections of a course.** For example, in WR100, different instructors will use different books and have different essay assignments to achieve shared learning outcomes.

**. . . in their first-year, students have mostly introductory courses, some of which were not studied as separate courses in high school.** For example, instead of Social Studies you may have History, Political Science, and Sociology. Instead of English, you will have Effective Writing and Understanding Literature.

**. . . there are fewer tests and graded assignments in college courses than in high school.** Some courses may have only 3 or 4 major grades the entire semester, extra credit is rare, and extensions and retakes/revisions are often not allowed. Each assignment counts more so one mistake can have more effect on your course grade.

**. . . college requires more self-motivation and self-discipline than high school.** In college, students are responsible for her/his own learning and for taking the initiative when they need help, miss class, or have a special need.

**. . . the 5 paragraph theme is no longer adequate.** In college, students need to stretch their repertoire of writing to include lots of different forms depending on what's appropriate for the discipline, course, and assignment.

**. . . one of the keys to effective writing is effective reading.** In college, the reading is often much more challenging than in high school. If students don't adequately read, they may not be able to succeed on the writing assignment. Reading the assignment carefully is also critical.

**. . . in writing, problems with global issues of such as organization, clarity and coherence are typically connected to the writer's ideas and thesis.** As you struggle with the writing, you are really helping to learn the material and discover what you know and what you want to say.

**. . . when a writer struggles with new material, the skills and abilities they already have are compromised.** This means that when you are working with difficult content, your writing will probably have more errors in it. It is critical to edit carefully for correctness and style once you're done wrestling with the content, organization, and other global issues.

**. . . you don't do your best writing the night before an essay is due.** Students always say this, but in reality it isn't true. You might do your best first draft, but that draft will improve given time for getting feedback, revising and editing.

"A good essay is a vehicle for thought that moves from a clear point of departure, in a certain direction, toward a destination."

(Hjortshoj 45)

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New Student Fall Orientation  
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