

# Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing

## Teaching Writing by Fostering Essential Habits of Mind

The concept of “college readiness” is increasingly important in discussions about students’ preparation for postsecondary education.

Until now, there has been no widespread articulation by high school and college faculty about what college readiness means. *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* provides this definition. It describes how successful writers think and compose and how teachers foster that success. The *Framework*, developed collaboratively by members of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Writing Project, outlines the 21st century rhetorical skills and habits of mind that are critical for students entering credit-bearing, college level writing courses. The *Framework* was reviewed by hundreds of high school and 2- and 4-year college writing instructors nationwide.

The responsibility for preparing students for college writing is shared by teachers, schools, students, and families. The new *Framework* emphasizes what teachers and schools can do to cultivate and reinforce the habits of mind and experiences that promote flexibility and rhetorical versatility. The ability to write well is basic to student success in college and beyond. Standardized writing curricula or assessment instruments that emphasize formulaic writing for nonauthentic audiences will not reinforce the habits of mind and the experiences necessary for success as students encounter the writing demands of postsecondary education.

To describe the habits of mind that are central to success in college and beyond, the *Framework* uses language and ideas from research in academic fields such as composition and rhetoric, writing across the curriculum, and English education that focus on the development of writing, reading, and analysis abilities inside and outside of school. Thus, it seeks to connect expectations across educational levels and institutions.

The habits include:

- Curiosity, the desire to know more about the world;
- Openness, the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world;
- Engagement, a sense of investment and involvement in learning;
- Creativity, the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas;
- Persistence, the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects;
- Responsibility, the ability to take ownership of one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others;
- Flexibility, the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands; and
- Metacognition, the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.

The central premise of the *Framework* is that teaching writing and learning to write are central to education and to the development of a literate citizenry. In addition, developing as a writer takes place over time as students encounter different contexts, tasks, audiences, and purposes. Students can become better writers when they have multiple opportunities to write in classes across the curriculum throughout their education—from elementary school through university. Those students who come to college writing with these habits of mind and these experiences will be well positioned to meet the writing challenges in the full spectrum of academic courses and later in their careers.

The *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* is available online at <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/collwritingframework>.

