

WR Assessment Project

Spring 2022 Student Survey

Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is confidence that one can perform tasks in a specific domain effectively. Self-efficacy can be skill or domain dependent (for example, self-efficacy in writing and self-efficacy in mathematics may be different). However, self-efficacy can be developed over time through practice, self-evaluation, coaching, and reflection. Writing self-efficacy – confidence that one can perform writing tasks successfully – is a crucial factor in a students’ ability to communicate effectively through writing (Bruning 2012).

We sought to better understand writing self-efficacy in students completing composition courses in Spring 2022. Students rated their confidence using writing self-efficacy survey (Schmidt and Alexander 2012) with slight modifications.

How do students rate their own confidence in writing at the end of composition courses?



Figure 1. Student confidence ratings in a range of writing-related tasks. Student ratings of confidence were lower and more variable for two items (●) related to time management and writing anxiety.

Student ratings of their own confidence are relatively high for most items on the survey. For most items there were only small differences in ratings between students in different WR courses, and between students receiving high and lower course grades. However, two items on the survey stood out as having lower ratings:

“When I have a pressing deadline for a paper, I can **manage my time efficiently.**”

“I can write a paper without experiencing **overwhelming feelings of fear, distress or physical discomfort.**”

In contrast to other survey items, these questions related to time management and writing anxiety elicited lower ratings for both who received A and B grades and students who received C, D, and F grades. These were the only items that students who receive C, D or F grades rated as having notably lower confidence than students receiving A and B grades. Because time management and writing anxiety are barriers for student writing performance, and because students identify having less confidence in these skills, this finding represents an opportunity for student support domains of writing that instructors may not focus on in some courses.