

Developing Skills in Writing

From the moment we enter elementary school through our years at university, we are taught to write. Whether it is simply learning the letters of the alphabet or composing sonnets in Elizabethan English, nearly every year of our academic lives is filled with activities that encourage us to develop our composition skills.

At the same time, despite the seemingly high standards and importance of writing in the American education system, there is a lack of emphasis on the practical skills of writing. With the advent of digital forms of communication, writing remains as necessary a skill as ever before, and yet national standardized testing has revealed a decrease in the writing proficiency of grade school students in recent years.

Perhaps one of the core reasons for this drop - as well as the main reason for developing skills in writing - is the practical application of analytical reasoning. Despite the tendency for writing to be present in nearly every class, the skill of developing a critical voice is not developed nearly as deeply as it ought to be.

While English language standards may vary across school districts, some of the core concepts that students are expected to learn through Common Core include the ability to critically analyze and comment on text. Due to the tendency for the creative aspect of writing to be focused on instead, many students end up with an inferior ability to practically apply their skills once they reach higher education.

The importance of essay writing stems far beyond performance in college, however. It is also highly relevant in the work force, where learning to write concisely and well can be the difference between receiving promotion and getting fired. In addition, applications to both universities and jobs require the ability to articulate well, whether through cover letters, resumes, or proprietary applications.

Students who are able to grasp this skill at an early age may find themselves at an advantage when they begin to search for jobs, and are able to impress others with their level of eloquence and competency in communication. Furthermore, being able to work in teams and detail summaries of performances or skills used in a job are also highly valued as means of allowing others to understand an individual's work.

Writing may already be a ubiquitous skill in our education system, but its emphasis on specific skills is an often-overlooked aspect of the discipline. Rather than focusing on the more mundane or even the creative aspects of writing, developing skills in essay writing and analytical thinking can be highly beneficial to students looking to advance to higher education and the professional

work force. By learning to compose well, students are preparing themselves for continued success beyond school.

Bibliography

- Villalón, R., Mateos, M., & Cuevas, I. (2013). High school boys' and girls' writing conceptions and writing self-efficacy beliefs: What is their role in writing performance? *Educational Psychology, 35*(6), 653-674. doi:10.1080/01443410.2013.836157
- Jones, C. D. (2014). Effects of Writing Instruction on Kindergarten Students' Writing Achievement: An Experimental Study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 108*(1), 35-44. doi:10.1080/00220671.2013.836466