

Rethinking Writing in the Age of AI

On March 9, 2023, WID, DALC, and DAWSON AI hosted a conversation about writing. Faced with the challenges and opportunities that AI has imposed on writing at the college level, we reflected on a few core ideas about writing itself. Below are some compelling questions and answers from this session.

What is writing?

Crystallization of thought	Thinking	A thinking process
Participation in a group, a society, a discipline	An artifact	A joy
Torture	Documenting, recording	A muscle
A transformative process	Dangerous	Taking something mysterious and making it linear
A way of synthesizing conversation	Communication and translation	Complex thoughts into simple thoughts
Uniqueness	Expression of identity and style	Opportunity

Why do you write?

Notes to one's self	Externalization	To immerse yourself in a different culture
Self-reflection	Critical thinking	Creativity
To organize thoughts	Making sense of the noise	To synthesize conversation
To learn	To accumulate knowledge	To understand

!? Why do we ask students to write?

To show proof of understanding	To show how they managed to learn	The closest thing to access to their minds
To show their thoughts	Efficient way to see if students understand stuff	To participate in a community
To express their identity	Express uniqueness	Discover their style

Can we broaden our definition of "writing"?

Oral societies that don't have writing are no less critical or thoughtful	Indigenous cultures: English is 2nd or 3rd language, writing is foreign, and isolating.	Photography students would rather get thoughts together by collecting imagery, drawing.
Visual based forms of communication to work out thoughts.	Plato: Writing is deficient. The only way to make someone communicate is to talk. Is to have person in front of you. (audience).	.