

Building Success through Writing!

at

Athens State University

The primary focus of *Building Success through Writing* is improving students' college-level writing. Athens State University has the opportunity to create a significantly different culture through the implementation of a plan that focuses on improving students' writing. As the literature and best practices review was completed, it became evident that supporting students in developing effective writing practices also produced stronger learners. Much of the research revealed that while students are learning to write they are also writing to learn (Emig, 1977). *Building Success through Writing* has the potential to create a stronger learning environment where students, through the improvement of their writing skills practices, also strengthen higher levels of learning to include analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Through a series of focus group conversations with faculty, a set of common expectations surfaced and became the watermark for successful college-level writing. ASU plans to improve these practices through a three-pronged approach that includes students, faculty and staff, and the institution as a whole.

The goal of *Building Success through Writing* is to provide a comprehensive approach to writing instruction across the institution that takes into account the varying degree of students' skills and abilities while providing faculty and staff with the training and tools necessary to address one of the most vital skills necessary for our graduates' future success. In addition to recognizing and developing effective practices to support writing as a tool for learning, ASU faculty will work to facilitate students as they grow as writers. The projected outcomes of this plan are to: 1) improve students' college-level writing skills and practices in a measurable way across the institution; 2) utilize systematic writing assessment tools and strategies by faculty; 3) create a campus climate that encourages and values writing as a core competency; and 4) provide training and tools to faculty and staff as they serve as facilitators of successful writing. These outcomes will be addressed through a variety of objectives grouped into three areas of concentration: Student Success, Faculty/Staff Success, and Institutional Success.

Successful implementation of this plan will result in our students' ability to: 1) formulate and support a thesis through accurate evidence and documentation; 2) research, collect, and assess scholarly information using standard practices within their major field of study; 3) present written information clearly, logically, and critically; and 4) create an audience-appropriate document that exhibits clarity and organization and serves the intended purpose.

The value added by the *Building Success through Writing* plan will depend largely on a comprehensive assessment effort for each of the three areas of concentration. Success at all three levels; students, faculty/staff, and the institution as a whole, will be measured through a variety of direct and indirect assessment methods. A Common Writing Rubric will be developed and utilized as an internal assessment instrument while the ETS® Proficiency Profile Test will serve as an external instrument to measure student writing proficiency. Several indirect measures of success will be used throughout the life of the plan to ensure both formative and summative success.

Questions about *Building Success through Writing* may be directed to:

Jackie Smith, Assistant Professor of Management, QEP Director, jackie.smith@athens.edu
Kevin Dupre, Associate Professor of English, QEP Co-Director, joseph.dupre@athens.edu