

Abstract Submitted
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Writing in physics: what we know and where we're going DE-
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Ohio State University, LARS SCHWEIDENBACK, SCOTT FRANKLIN, LISA
HERMSEN, Rochester Institute of Technology — Members from both the Physics
and English departments at the Ohio State University and Rochester Institute of
Technology are involved in an ongoing study addressing issues related to writing
activities in the physics classroom. Historically writing in the disciplines is assumed
beneficial, but most published papers fail to show a clear link between writing and
improved conceptual understanding within a discipline. This study challenges this
assumption, and attempts to address specific questions to understand how writing
may be beneficial and which writing activities aid learning. Among the questions we
ask are: what are students thinking when they write? Does writing about content
help a student understand what they know? Does explicit writing instruction im-
prove physics content? Does writing about physics aid conceptual understanding?
This talk will describe what we have found thus far and give a preview of our current
projects.

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