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Writing in physics: what we know and where we’re going DEDRA DEMAREE, CATHERINE GUBERNATIS, GORDON AUBRECHT, The 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 improve 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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