

JACKSON:

What I see, in terms of the similarities, are that definitely looking for a central idea, a thesis statement, that seems to be pretty consistent. Students get that idea in high school-- you want to have a good thesis statement, have your introduction, a conclusion. Good organization, good solid points within the essay. I mean, I think those general things are pretty much the same.

I think when we get to college level writing, the types of writing that we expect really diversifies. In general, the sense that I get from high school is that it's more focused on literature, MLA format-- that's kind of the standard that everyone gets. And then students come to the college classroom, and realise, oh, MLA isn't the only documentation style, and everything isn't a literary analysis. So I think that, at this level, we're certainly looking for more critical thinking.

I think that sometimes in high school, the assignments are more shaped for the students, in that there's not as much of an opportunity for the individual voice to come through. It's more of, what did we read, or what did the instructor say, or what did someone else say? And so I think, for us at the college level, we're looking for students to get their own voice in place here.

And so we're looking for that. Helping students to understand that good writing isn't just good grammar, and so really getting students to think stylistically about the choices that they make, really thinking about purpose and audience, and the whole rhetorical context. I think that that's really key at the college level, because that pretty much shapes all the other decisions that writers make, once we put that in place. But I don't think that there's that much of an emphasis on it in high school, but I think by college, we're really looking at the purpose, and the audience, and style, and how all of that is determined, based on the different writing situation that you're in.