

# ***Formatting Matters: Context and Tools for Assessing Academic Document Design in the Classroom***

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of polished writing is paramount in the academic world, especially at an American university. However, after admittance, a student may struggle with the expectations of polished writing, including writing clearly, using rhetoric effectively, understanding research and citation conventions, and both visual and text formatting (Hyland, 2003). Recently, the Council of Writing Program Administrators (2014) has reemphasized the importance of conventions in their outcome statement for first year composition, specifically highlighting rhetorical knowledge, critical reading, and composing with a knowledge of conventions, “learn[ing] common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts” (CWPA, 2014:5).