

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: INVESTIGATION OF PRIMARY GRADE WRITING
INSTRUCTION

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This study was designed to gather information regarding the writing practices of primary grade teachers across the United States. Surveys were sent to a random sample of 300 first, second, and third grade teachers (100 at each grade level) asking them a variety of questions regarding their writing programs. Of these teachers, 178 responded to the survey (61% response rate).

Results showed that 72% of teachers employed a writing approach that combined traditional skill instruction with process writing, and that 65% of respondents utilized a commercial program during writing instruction. Statistically significant differences were found by grade for the types of writing activities students do throughout the year. In addition, parent-teacher communication regarding students' writing was found to be low,

and most teachers reported making personal changes to their writing programs due to recent No Child Left Behind legislation. Suggestions for future research and limitations are also addressed.

INVESTIGATION OF PRIMARY GRADE
WRITING INSTRUCTION

By

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DEDICATION

I'd like to dedicate this thesis to Steve Graham, for reminding me why I love doing research, for always keeping things light, for supporting me when I wasn't sure where to go next, and most importantly, for being the most incredible mentor anyone could hope to have. His constant humor and dedication to my professional development greatly contributed to the success of this project. Working with Steve over the past two years has truly been an honor and something for which I am eternally grateful.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In the last several decades, there has been an increased interest by researchers and the general public regarding writing development and instruction in schools (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985). Writing has become a critical component of school success. It is the primary means by which students demonstrate their knowledge in school (Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989). Students are frequently asked to complete assignments or tests that require written responses. Their performance on these activities and tests are evaluated, in part, by how well they construct their written responses.

Writing allows students to communicate ideas, opinions, and factual information to a wide range of individuals. Writing serves as a major means of communication in which personal thoughts are conveyed to others. For example, students can use journal writing to reflect on private experiences or write letters to friends or family members who may be absent from their daily lives. The popularity of technological advances, such as email and “instant messaging”, further necessitates proficiency with writing. These methods of communication encourage students to keep in touch with one another outside the classroom and allows them to gain and maintain friendships with others across time and distance.

Another benefit of writing is that it provides a tool for exploring subject matter content. For instance, written reports and classroom newsletters provide a vehicle for learning about content knowledge. Writing can serve as a mechanism for integrating knowledge across the curriculum. To illustrate, students might be asked to write while studying the Civil War or craft a poem that describes an art project. They can even

develop mathematical word problems that reflect information they learned when studying planets during a science lesson. Such connections allow for enhanced understanding of content area knowledge.

Writing can be used to explore and shape one's opinions. For example, students can be asked to think and write about controversial topics, sharing their completed compositions with each other. Finally, writing provides a forum for self-expression. To illustrate, students can create fictional stories or poems that are shared with peers or even a larger audience.

The ability to write effectively is not only a vital tool for success in school, but is an essential tool in the world of work. Many jobs today require the ability to write clearly and concisely. Persons who are not able to do so have a more restricted range of employment opportunities.

Concerns About Students' Writing Performance

Despite its importance, there is a strong concern that the writing abilities of American students are not adequate. Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that three of every four 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students demonstrated only partial mastery of the knowledge and writing skills needed at their respective grade level. Furthermore, only one quarter of students at each grade level were at or above the "proficient" level in writing (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003). These findings indicate that many students do not write well and are not performing at the level that is expected of them in today's school or society.

Concern about students' writing capabilities, based in part on data such as these, led to the creation of the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and

Colleges. The Commission was established in the Fall of 2002 by the College Board, a nonprofit organization of more than 4,300 schools and colleges, to address the growing concern that the writing abilities of students in the United States are inadequate. The Commission's report, *The Neglected "R"*, declared that writing education has not received enough attention and recommended that it be placed at the center of national educational reform movements. The report noted that every school district needs to have a writing plan in which writing is taught at all grade levels and in all subjects. The Commission stressed that writing reform should begin in the primary grades, as students are initially learning to write. It also recommended that these writing plans be incorporated into state standards for school achievement and that school personnel receive funding and professional development to help ensure student success in writing.

The Commission further indicated that more time needs to be allotted to writing instruction in schools. They noted that students spent very little time actually writing, and that it is important for state and local education agencies to develop strategies for increasing the amount of writing in schools. The Commission suggested that doubling the amount of time students actually spend writing would do more to improve student performance than any other instructional strategy.

If the commission goals are to be met, it is important to provide effective writing instruction right from the start, beginning in the early primary grades. Exposing young children to a variety of writing experiences should help to ensure that all children learn to write well. If children acquire the basis skills needed to compose text at an early age, they will be more proficient in writing and experience higher level of success as writing tasks become increasingly challenging. Furthermore, waiting until later grades to address

literacy problems that have their origin in the primary grades has not been particularly successful (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon, & Dolan, 1989).

What We Currently Know About Primary Grade Writing Instruction

An important step in determining if primary grade writing instruction is effective (e.g., encourages students to write, yields high levels of student understanding and achievement, explains the importance of writing) is to examine how writing is taught to young children. Unfortunately, our current knowledge of primary grade writing instruction is incomplete. Currently, there are only about a dozen published studies that address this topic. These investigations have primarily used one of three approaches to examine how writing is taught in the primary grades. The most popular approach involves classroom observation, and has been employed in eight studies (Bridge, Compton-Hall, & Cantrell, 1997; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Christenson, Thurow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Morrow, Tracey, Woo, & Pressley, 1999; Stahl, Pagnucco, & Suttles, 1996, Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998; Wray, Medwell, Fox, & Poulson, 2000). However, only three of these studies (Christenson et al., 1989; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Stahl et al., 1996) relied solely on observational methods for gathering data. These three investigations assessed the writing practices of primary grade teachers by observing the amount of time students spent on various writing tasks, the type and complexity of tasks they performed, and the extent to which students with and without disabilities exerted control over their writing experiences. The overall findings from these studies showed that students were spending very little time writing. For example, Christenson et al. (1989) reported that, on average, students spent only 25 minutes of their day writing. Even more worrisome, they found

that students with disabilities spent even less time composing. Thus, the students who needed the most instructional time seemed to be getting the least. Somewhat similarly, Fisher and Hiebert (1990) observed that students in schools that had adopted a skills-oriented approach to writing instruction were engaged in writing for only three hours a week.

The three purely observational studies also revealed that the complexity of writing tasks young students are exposed to is not very challenging and the level of control they exert over their experiences in writing is low. Students in the Christenson et al. (1989) study spent almost 60% or more of their writing time completing writing tasks that were simple and monotonous, and students rarely received feedback on these products. Students, especially those with disabilities, were given little opportunity to self-select writing topics, participate in teacher-student discussions during writing, or engage in experiences that required active academic responses. Fisher and Hiebert (1990) reported similar findings. Students who were exposed to a skills-oriented writing curriculum infrequently participated in tasks that were rated as having a high level of complexity. In addition, these students were observed to be exerting only a moderately high level of control over writing tasks, and they had limited experiences producing an individually generated written product. Stahl et al. (1996) found that students who were part of a traditional writing program were frequently observed completing worksheets and copying text—tasks that do not encourage high levels of independent thought or skill. In addition, these students wrote few stories, an activity that could have allowed them to exercise more ownership over their writing experiences.

Some of the studies examining the writing practices of primary grade teachers combined observation with teacher surveys or interviews. This approach was used in five studies (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Bridge et al., 1997; Wray et al., 2000; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998; Morrow et al., 1999). Results from these investigations provide additional insight into the instructional practices used in writing programs in the primary grades. For example, Bridge et al. (1997) provided a description of teachers who increasingly viewed writing as a process and not a product, implemented cross-curriculum writing through a variety of genres, and used student-teacher conferences during the writing period. In addition, these teachers recognized the importance of writing instruction at an early age and increased the amount of time their students spent writing.

Focusing on effective teachers of literacy, Wray et al. (2000) discovered that such teachers employ a wide range of interactive writing experiences for their students and encouraged students to think about the importance of audience while writing. These teachers also constantly monitored student progress and modeled the craft and processes of writing. Somewhat similarly, effective teachers in a study by Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) created a writing curriculum that blended whole-language instruction with a traditional skills approach, teaching writing as a process and providing daily writing experiences for their students. High-quality literary materials were also part of these teachers' programs, as were self-regulation among the students and proficient classroom management skills among the teachers. With more traditional teachers, Morrow et al. (1999) found classroom writing practices similar to those reported by Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) and Wray et al. (2000). The teachers who were interviewed and

observed in this study had students write daily, regularly conferenced with them regarding their writing, and encouraged them to publish their work. In addition, minilessons were implemented during writing instruction, and cross-curriculum writing experiences were common. Effective classroom management was also an important part of these teachers' writing programs.

While studies employing observations or observations and interview methods provide some evidence of what writing instruction looks like in the primary grades, they are limited in that they do not provide a representative picture of writing practices. It is unclear if the findings from these studies generalize to classrooms nationwide.

The final approach used to assess the content of writing programs in the primary grades addresses the problem of generalization by surveying teachers across school districts and states. Three nation-wide survey studies have been conducted to catalogue the kinds of activities teachers implement in their classrooms during writing instruction. First, Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) surveyed a national sample of effective primary grade literacy teachers and found that these teachers employed a variety of writing practices. Results revealed that teachers were using writing centers in their classrooms, teaching through a variety of instructional arrangements, and encouraging self-regulation and autonomy with their students during writing. These instructors also reported teaching writing as a process expecting that their students would plan and revise when writing. Second, Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000), surveyed the writing and reading practices of effective special education literacy teachers in the primary grades. They found that these special education teachers used many of the same practices employed by their effective regular education counterparts in the Pressley et al. (1996)

study. This included encouraging students to choose their writing topics, using multiple instructional groupings, and surrounding their students with a literacy rich environment. In addition, successful special education literacy teachers recognized the importance of viewing writing as a process and incorporated planning, drafting, and revising into writing instruction. Third, Graham, Harris, Fink-Chorzempa, and MacArthur (2003) randomly sampled primary teachers from across the United States. They found that teachers reported providing instruction in writing mechanics, revising skills, and text organization at least once a week. Furthermore, instructors indicated that they implemented mini-lessons, modeled the writing process, participated in student-teacher conferences, and retaught skills or strategies to weaker writers. These strategies were used to encourage development in struggling writers and to assist them in experiencing success during writing tasks.

While these three national surveys provide important information on writing instruction, they are incomplete. The studies by Pressley et al. (1996) and Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) mostly focused on reading, whereas the study by Graham et al. (2003) only asked teachers about writing practices that were likely to be adapted for struggling writers.

Statement of Problem

More needs to be done to expand research addressing primary grade teachers' writing instruction. Currently, there is not a comprehensive study of what primary grade teachers do when they teach writing, as Pressley et al. (1996) and Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) did not randomly sample regular education teachers from across the United States. Although Graham et al. (2003) did randomly sample teachers from across

the United States, they limited the types of practices they examined to those that could be easily adapted to writers of varying skill level. Thus, these studies do not provide a complete picture of writing practices nationwide. More information is needed to address the trends of current writing instruction across the country, the effects of recent educational legislation on writing programs, and what types of writing activities students are participating in. Comparisons of the types of activities and frequency with which students are writing across different grades (i.e., first, second, and third) are also needed to assess the variety of instruction in the primary grades. Research needs to be conducted that addresses all aspects of writing instruction, including how much time teachers spend teaching writing, what is taught, how writing is structured, the types of tasks students write about, how much time students spend writing, procedures for assessing writing, and so forth. Information gained from such a study would serve as an invaluable resource to schools, state boards of education, and the research community in informing decisions regarding writing instruction in the primary grades.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to gather information regarding the writing practices of primary grade teachers across the United States. First, second, and third grade teachers were randomly sampled and asked to respond to questions about their teaching practices for writing. This includes questions regarding their writing programs (e.g., their overall approach to writing), the types of students in their classrooms (e.g., race, ability, special education status), the amount of time students spend writing, the amount of time they devote to teaching specific writing skills (e.g., handwriting, spelling, grammar, planning, etc.), and the type of writing their students do (e.g., story writing, poems, completing

worksheets, etc.). Furthermore, participants will be asked how often they implement instruction on elements common to a process approach to writing (e.g., conferencing, publishing), the types of instruction and instructional support they provide during writing, the procedures they employ for assessing student writing (e.g., self-monitoring, portfolios), and the tasks they use to facilitate school-home connections in writing (e.g., homework, student-parent writing tasks, etc.). Finally, teachers were asked to identify alternative modes for composing that they use in their classrooms (e.g., oral dictation and computers) and how they include writing throughout the curriculum and across subject matter. Statistical analyses will be performed to track possible differences between first, second, and third grade teachers in these areas.

The following research questions were developed based on the rationale and purpose of this investigation, the lack of knowledge regarding writing programs on a national scale, and the importance of between grade differences in writing programs in the primary grades.

Research Questions

- 1) Do participants responding to the questionnaire differ from those who did not respond in terms of grade taught, location of school (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural), computer density (number of computers per student), school size, and annual expenditure for materials per pupil?
- 2) What are characteristics of the teachers, their students, and their writing programs as reported by those who responded to the questionnaire?
- 3) How much time during an average week do teachers who responded to the questionnaire spend teaching specific writing skills and processes and how much

time do their students spend writing? Is grade level related to time students spend composing and time teachers spend teaching writing?

- 4) What type of writing activities do teachers who responded to the questionnaire have their students do during the course of the academic year? Is grade level related to the types of writing activities reported by teachers?
- 5) How often do teachers who responded to the questionnaire incorporate specific instructional and assessment activities and techniques into their writing programs? Is grade level related to teachers' use of these activities?

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Creating an effective literacy curriculum for students in the primary grades is vital to promoting their success as developing readers and writers. Providing a broad range of meaningful and challenging writing experiences is an integral part of this program.

Observation has been used to examine classroom writing practices in eight studies (Bridge et al., 1997; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Christenson et al., 1989; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Morrow et al., 1999; Stahl et al., 1996; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998; Wray et al., 2000). In this section, I examine investigations that relied solely on observational methods (studies that used both observational methods and survey are reported in the next section).

Observational Studies

Christenson et al. (1989) investigated writing instruction offered to students with learning disabilities (LD) and other mild disabilities. Researchers observed a total of 122 students: 92 school-identified students classified as mildly handicapped (30 LD, 32 emotionally/ behaviorally disturbed- EBD, 30 educable mentally retarded- EMR) and 30 non-handicapped students (NH) for full-day sessions between November and May. One student identified as EMR came from a 4/5 split-grade classroom, 36 students were in grade 2, 38 in grade 3, and 47 in grade 4. All students were observed in 84 classrooms from 10 schools in suburban and urban school districts.

During the observations, researchers noted the type of writing task students completed and the nature of student response elicited. Paper-and-pencil tasks (i.e., worksheets) or teacher-directed tasks (i.e., students listening to lecture or involved in

teacher-student discussion) constituted the observed writing tasks, and academic responding time (ART) and academic engaged time (AET) were used to record student responses. Academic responding time occurred when students were observed reading silently or aloud, talking about academic tasks, writing, playing an academic game, or asking/answering questions. Students were academically engaged when they were observed attending to academic tasks or making an active academic response.

Across all academic subjects, the average amount of daily time spent involved in writing activities for the sample of students was 25 minutes. Students in all mildly handicapped groups wrote with much less frequency than subjects classified as NH (NH = 33mins; LD = 25mins; EBD = 24mins; EMR = 18mins). In addition, when time spent in writing activities across general and special education classrooms was compared, students with LD were observed to be spending more time with writing tasks than students with EBD and students with EMR (45mins, 15mins, and 30mins, respectively).

Results also showed that students spent almost 60% or more of their writing time with paper-and-pencil tasks. However, it was unclear what exactly these specific tasks entailed. In contrast, only 7-16% of students' writing time was spent listening to or participating in discussion with the teacher. These results show that students were participating in independent activities during writing instruction more often than they were interacting with peers or the teacher. Furthermore, non-handicapped students had higher rates of academic engaged time when compared to all other groups in the regular education classroom (NH = 74%, LD = 63%, EBD = 63%, EMR = 49%). Analyses with the special education students showed that children with learning disabilities were

observed to have higher rates of AET than students with EBD and students with EMR (LD = 83%, EBD = 76%, EMR = 64%).

When rates of academic responding time were noted, the results were similar to those found with academic engaged time. Students without disabilities had higher rates of ART in the regular education classroom than all other students (NH = 46%, LD = 34%, EBD = 39%, EMR = 32%). Also, the rate of academic responding time for students with LD was higher than students with EBD and students with EMR (LD = 49%, EBD = 40%, EMR = 41%). Christenson et al. (1989) found that students were observed to have much higher rates of academic engaged time than academic responding time. This finding supports the observation that students spent most of their time with paper-and-pencil tasks, not in teacher-directed activities, because most tasks classified as part of academic response time required the use of paper-and-pencil materials.

The Christenson et al. (1989) study is consistent with a common contention that current writing instruction is inadequate, especially for students with disabilities. Results showed that students who required the most assistance in writing (LD, EBD, EMR) were receiving the least instruction. In addition, students mostly participated in paper-and-pencil activities that did not elicit teacher-student discussions or interactions during writing instruction. These observations point to the need for improvements in the writing programs offered to students with and without disabilities in the primary grades, and the importance of actively including students in the writing curriculum.

Fisher and Hiebert (1990) conducted a study comparing the different approaches to writing instruction used by two schools in a suburban school district. School A implemented skills-oriented (SO) literacy instruction that consisted mainly of teacher-

directed instruction, ability or whole class groupings, worksheet activities, and assigned or self-selected reading tasks. School B implemented literature-based (LB) literacy instruction that included the use of whole and small class groups, student-selected reading and writing activities, student-led class discussions, and independent reading and writing sessions. Two second-grade classrooms from each school were observed for full day sessions during five consecutive days.

Results revealed that students in School B (LB instruction) spent significantly more time writing than students in School A (SO instruction). Over the five days of instruction, students in School B spent almost three times as much time writing than students in School A (9 hours per week versus 3 hours per week, respectively). In addition, literacy tasks accounted for 60% of the school day in School B, compared to 47% of the day in School A.

The researchers also assessed the cognitive complexity of the writing tasks students completed, where a score of 5 was the most complex task and a score of 1 was the least complex task. Results showed that students in School B participated in more tasks of higher complexity. Participants in School B were observed working on 268 writing tasks that received a score of 3, whereas students in School A engaged in only 55 tasks of this complexity. An even more drastic difference resulted when schools were compared on tasks scored as 4 on the complexity scale. Students in School B participated in 790 tasks with a complexity rating of 4, whereas School A students worked on only 48 activities at this level. Furthermore, students in School B were observed in 39 activities that were rated as a 5 on the complexity scale, while participants in School A did not engage in any tasks at this level.

Further, students in School B spent more time with writing activities that required an individual written product than participants in School A (23 and 15 minutes per day, respectively). An even larger difference between the two schools was observed when time spent in activities that did not require a written product (i.e., verbal discussions with teacher or peers before and after writing) was compared. Participants in School B were engaged in such tasks 32 minutes per day, whereas students in School A were observed participating in these activities for only 4 minutes each day.

A final analysis of the instruction implemented in the two schools assessed the extent to which students exerted control over their writing activities (i.e., choosing writing topics). Writing tasks were scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing no control (i.e., worksheets) and 5 representing a high level of control (i.e., individualized written text). Results showed that students in School A had a moderately high level of control (score of 3), whereas participants in School B had a high level of control (score of 5). Although students in School A were observed to be exerting some level of control over their writing activities, this control was still less intense than that of their counterparts in School B.

Results from the Fisher and Hiebert (1990) study showed that students in schools that adopted a literature-based curriculum had more opportunities to write, participated in many more activities of higher complexity, and were awarded higher levels of control over their writing activities than students in skills-oriented schools. In addition, participants in literature-based classrooms frequently discussed and shared their writing with peers and the classroom teacher. In contrast, students in classrooms that embraced the skills-oriented approach were passive participants during writing. Tasks in these

classrooms were relatively simple and did not allow for high levels of control by students. These findings, like those in the Christenson et al. (1989) study, stress the importance of creating a literacy curriculum that actively engages students and provides them with challenging activities and tasks.

Stahl et al. (1996) conducted a similar study to Fisher and Hiebert (1990) in which two different types of approaches to writing instruction were observed. Classrooms were identified through a written request to the school district asking for a school that implemented a traditional writing program and one that was moving toward a process approach to writing (whole language). The traditional school, School A, was older than School B and had a young staff. During conversations with the researchers, the principal of School A made it clear that he ran the school and expected teachers to follow his traditional approach to writing instruction which emphasized skills instruction. On the other hand, School B, which implemented the process approach, was a brand new school headed by a well-known principal. The staff of School B was hand picked by the principal based on their shared philosophy of whole language instruction. In addition, a district-wide mandate existed that required all teachers to use basal readers during literacy instruction.

Three first-grade classes in both schools (95 students) were observed for seven half-day sessions from January to May. During these observations, the types of writing activities students engaged in were recorded, and student writing samples were collected.

Results showed that the classrooms in each school were very different from one another. The teachers in School A (traditional approach) had students copy text from the board to correct grammatical errors, complete worksheets, and write in journals (either

using story starters or self-selected topics). However, journal writing in each of these classrooms was used as a tool for keeping students occupied during “down time” throughout the day, not as meaningful writing experiences. The teachers in School B (process approach) implemented a writing workshop each day and utilized journal writing as an important component of their writing program. Students were taught minilessons, wrote individual and class books, and chose their writing topics. In addition, all observed classrooms in School B had sessions where students shared their writing with the whole class.

When the approaches used in the different schools were compared, clear distinctions emerged. Students in School B spent much more overall time writing stories than did participants in School A (12% and 2%, respectively). In contrast, students in School A spent almost six times as much time completing worksheets (17% and 3%) and almost eight times as much time directly copying text (15% and 2%) than students in School B. However, the schools did not vary significantly in the amount of time they provided for journal writing (School A: 4% and School B: 3%). The important distinction to make regarding journal writing, though, was the intentions of such writing. As stated earlier, teachers in School A used journal writing to occupy time during the day, whereas teachers in School B viewed journal writing as an integral part of their writing curriculum.

Findings of the Stahl et al. (1996) study demonstrated apparent differences between a traditional and a process approach to writing instruction. Students in classrooms that focused on skills instruction completed more worksheets and copied text with a higher frequency than students in the process approach classrooms. Furthermore,

teachers using the process approach curriculum employed journal writing as a meaningful activity, whereas those implementing the traditional approach used this task as a means for passing time. Although differences existed between the two assessed writing approaches, Stahl et al. (1996) concluded that reading achievement, not instructional program, best predicted writing achievement. This finding lends support to the belief that an effective literacy program should consist of both reading and writing instruction.

The observational studies reviewed above (Christenson et al. 1989; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Stahl et al. 1996) provide valuable information regarding the various practices used by teachers implementing a skills based or whole language writing program. However, these classroom observations would be further strengthened if they were paired with teacher surveys or interviews. Studies that compared classroom observations with interviews or surveys of teachers are reviewed next.

Observational and Survey/Interview Studies

Comparing results of classroom observations with that of teacher surveys and interviews may provide a more in-depth look at the writing practices implemented in primary grade classrooms. The studies reviewed below (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Bridge, Compton-Hall, & Cantrell, 1997; Wray, Medwell, Fox, & Poulson, 2000; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998; Morrow, Tracey, Woo, & Pressley, 1999) paired observations with teacher surveys or interviews in order to create a wider research base from which to obtain this information.

Bridge and Hiebert (1985) conducted a study that combined classroom observations and teacher surveys. The observations were completed in two schools identified by school administrators as “typical” representations for their school district.

The schools served similar populations and were located in a middle-sized, south-central city. One classroom from grade one, three, and five were randomly selected in each school. The teachers were then asked to generate a list of the average ability language arts students in their class. The researchers randomly chose a boy and girl from each list of students. Full-day observations were conducted in each of these classrooms, three times during the Spring semester.

All first-, third-, and fifth-grade teachers in the observed school district were given a three-part survey assessing perceptions of their writing practices. The first questionnaire asked educators to rate various writing activities (i.e., stories, poems, reports, and so forth) by how frequently they occurred in their classroom. The second set of questions required teachers to comment on the adequacy of their undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs (if applicable) in reference to writing instruction. The final questionnaire asked teachers to rate the frequency in which they participated in a variety of personal writing activities (i.e., letters, lists, professional publications, etc.).

Results of the classroom observations indicated that in total, students were involved in some type of writing activity an average of 15% of the school day. However, third- and fifth-grade students in school A spent more time with writing activities than their same age peers in school B (17% and 13%, respectively). On the contrary, first-grade students in school B spent almost twice as much time with writing activities than did first-grade students in school A (13% and 7%, respectively). Overall, students in third grade spent the most time writing (20%), followed in succession by those in fifth grade (14%) and first grade (10%). Many of these writing opportunities occurred as an overlap with other academic subjects, not during a designated writing time or as a means to

increase proficiency in writing. Furthermore, across grades and school, the most common types of writing activities involved transcription (i.e., copying text, filling in blanks, completing worksheets, and so forth) (58%) and not crafting of text. However, these transcription activities did not occur as frequently in first grade (6%) as they did in third (32%) and fifth grade (19%) classrooms. Of the small amount of writing activities that took place in first grade, most involved the practice of handwriting skills (9%). Transcription (6%), paraphrasing (5%), crafting (.2%), and revision (0%) activities were observed as occurring less frequently in the first grade classrooms.

Additional data gathered from the first questionnaire also revealed differences in writing instruction amongst schools and grade levels. Teachers in school A spent more than twice the time devoted to writing instruction as their counterparts did in school B (13% and 6%, respectively). In addition, the fifth-grade teachers spent almost twice as much time in writing instruction (14%) than third- (7%) and first-grade (8%) teachers. Furthermore, as would be expected from the data in the earlier paragraph, most of the teachers' time in writing instruction was spent in transcription activities (68%).

When observational and survey results were compared, a high level of agreement regarding writing activities was found. Observations of teachers showed that they mostly employed transcription activities; this same finding was reported in the survey. In addition, handwriting skills were reported by first- and third-grade teachers as occurring often in their classrooms. Observations confirmed this pattern as well. One area of disagreement between observations and surveys involved story writing activities. On the initial survey, educators reported that they occasionally asked students to create original stories or write in response to a story starter. These practices were rarely observed in any

of the participating classrooms. It is important to note, however, that the lack of observed story writing may be due to the limited frequency of classroom observations.

The results of Bridge and Hiebert (1985) provide support for the use of surveys as a way of gauging classroom practices. Most teacher reports reflected writing practices that were actually carried out in the first-, third-, and fifth-grade classes. Writing activities involving transcription were the most common across grade and school, with handwriting also occurring frequently in first grade. However, an interesting disjunct between teachers' personal writing practices and those taught in the classroom resulted. Many participants reported writing letters often, but did not state that instruction involving letter writing occurred in their classrooms. Results from this study demonstrated instructional practices that favor product over process, as students rarely produced original text or wrote for a real audience.

Bridge et al. (1997) conducted a follow up study to the Bridge and Hiebert (1985) study in response to the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA). The KERA required that all students in assessed grades produce writing portfolios and written short-answer responses to open-ended test questions. Furthermore, the KERA focused on writing as a process, not as an individual skill to be taught in isolation. Because students' writing skills were a large part of this state's high stakes assessment, researchers were interested in possible changes made to literacy instruction as a result of the legislation. A combination teacher survey and classroom observation design was implemented in the same schools used by Bridge and Hiebert (1985). The equivalent of two full school days were spent observing each of the 12 classrooms during the fall semester. Two first-, third- and fourth-grade classrooms from each school were identified as typical by their

principals. Two target students were also identified in each class using the same method as Bridge and Hiebert (1985).

A modified version of the three-part survey used by Bridge and Hiebert (1985) was sent to all primary (kindergarten through third-grade) and upper-elementary (fourth- and fifth-grade) teachers in the school district in which observations were conducted. Supplemental questions were added to the first survey that requested information directly related to KERA. Students were responsible for completing open-ended questions for KERA, so teachers were asked how frequently their students participated in such writing activities. Furthermore, teachers were asked to provide additional information regarding any changes they had made in their writing instruction as a result of KERA.

Results of the classroom observation revealed that students spent twice as much time engaged in writing activities each day (29%) than those participating in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) (15%). Although students continued to spend much time in transcribing activities, crafting experiences were the most common activity (12%). In addition, increases in the amount of time children spent in revision activities from the original study to Bridge et al. (1997) were notable (.03% to 1.44%). The most remarkable result, though, was observed in first-grade. Students in these classrooms were participating in writing activities at a frequency almost three times as high as their counterparts in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) (10% and 25%, respectively). The majority of their writing time was spent composing text (13%) rather than in transcription (9%). Furthermore, even students at this level were participating in revising activities 3% of the time during each school day.

Observations of the types of writing instruction produced by teachers also yielded positive results. Participants were observed giving twice as much writing instruction as educators in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) (22% and 9%, respectively), with the majority of this time spent on teaching crafting (9%). Again, the most noteworthy changes occurred in the quality of first-grade writing instruction. Reflective of results above, teachers were observed spending about three times as much time on writing instruction, especially in terms of crafting, as compared to first-grade teachers in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) (8% and 23% respectively, for instruction; .3% and 13%, respectively, for crafting).

Comparisons of the observations and survey responses reflected high levels of agreement consistent with Bridge and Hiebert (1985). Teachers reported using fewer low-level transcription activities and more activities that involved text production. This claim was supported through classroom observations. An area of disagreement between observations and teacher survey responses related to copying others' texts verbatim, a transcription activity. Researchers noted a slight increase in this practice (from 6% to 7%) from the original study to Bridge et al. (1997), yet teachers reported decreases in the frequency of this activity.

In response to KERA, 122 teachers (59%) reported that many changes were, in fact, made to their writing curriculum. More than half these participants noted the use of student writing portfolios, the inclusion of a variety of genres, cross-curriculum writing, peer and student-teacher conferences, increased emphasis on writing as a process, recognition of younger students' writing abilities, and increases in time that students spent writing.

Results of Bridge et al. (1997) lend support to the shift in beliefs and expectations (in certain states) regarding writing instruction of students at various grades. Students, especially those in first-grade, were provided many opportunities for authentic writing experiences and were observed in activities that stressed process over product (i.e., revising of text). Data also showed that students were participating in fewer low-level transcription activities and were experimenting with a variety of writing forms (i.e., stories, letters, journals, and so forth). Overall results from this survey show drastic improvements in the writing instruction of elementary students, and demonstrate the positive changes that can result from mandated state-wide assessments.

Wray et al. (2000) conducted a comparison study in which they observed classroom practices and collected data via teacher survey. A total of 228 primary teachers recognized by their advisory staff as effective in literacy instruction and 71 primary teachers not recognized as effective were identified for the study. Both groups of educators had a mix of Key Stage 1 (ages 4-7) and Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) students (grade-level distinctions in the United Kingdom). Each participant completed a survey that assessed their teaching techniques, beliefs about literacy and literacy instruction, feelings about children's literacy needs, and professional development experiences in literacy. A sub-sample was then created from this original sample and consisted of 26 effective literacy teachers and 10 teachers not identified as effective. The classroom of each sub-sample educator was observed on two different occasions.

With regards to writing instruction, results of the classroom observations showed that younger students' writing experiences mostly involved low-level skills. They often participated in handwriting practice, sounding out spellings, copying words, and letter-

string activities. In comparison, students in Key Stage 2 had more opportunities for authentic writing experiences, peer editing sessions, and writing after performing research.

When practices of effective literacy instructors were compared with those of instructors not recognized as effective, the results varied greatly. Effective teachers offered a wider range of literacy activities and experiences than did those not so identified. In addition, students in classrooms with effective literacy instructors were given more interactive writing activities and wrote for an audience beyond the teacher. Effective literacy teachers also created a curriculum of brisk pace with multi-goal lessons, in which instruction in mechanics was embedded within that of composition. Furthermore, participants labeled as effective in literacy instruction were constantly monitoring student activity and progress regarding writing tasks through observation and student-teacher conferencing. These teachers also modeled the craft of writing, as well as the writing process.

Comparisons of observational data and that gained through teacher surveys revealed high levels of agreement. Many of the instructional behaviors observed in classrooms were reported by teachers on the questionnaire they completed. Participants claimed to teach Key Stage 1 students handwriting and letter-string skills and offer older students authentic writing experiences and peer editing experiences. Each of these assertions was supported through classroom observations. Observations also confirmed the effective teachers' claims regarding the provision of writing tasks in which children were to write for an audience other than the teacher.

Wray et al. (2000) showed how the writing practices of effective teachers differed from those not identified as effective. Variations include the provision of authentic writing experiences, variety of writing activities, instruction and modeling of the writing process, multi-goal lessons, and intensity of teacher observation and progress monitoring. These differences are important to note because they offer examples of what constitutes high-quality writing instruction and what can be done to improve instruction that is less effective.

Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) conducted a comparison study combining classroom observations and teacher interviews. Two groups of first-grade teachers were identified through nominations by their language arts supervisor: individuals viewed as outstanding in literacy instruction and those labeled as average literacy educators. The supervisors validated their decisions either by teacher enthusiasm, student reading and writing achievement at the end of the school year, observed teacher behavior, positive parent feedback, or the teacher's ability to successfully instruct students with varying backgrounds and abilities. One- to two-hour observations were completed twice a month from December to June in each of the identified teacher's classrooms.

The researchers also conducted two in-depth formal interviews with each participant (one in March and June) to gain insight regarding teachers' beliefs of literacy instruction and practices. The first interview was designed to clarify instructional practices documented through observation and to explore teachers' reasons for using specific pedagogies or activities. The second interview contained similar questions as the first but created an individualized literacy instruction model for each teacher based on classroom observations, collected artifacts, and informal teacher interviews. The

participants were asked to reflect on the model and critique it based on their beliefs regarding literacy instruction.

Upon the study's completion the researchers developed three different categories of teachers which were determined by the academic progress of students in each classroom. This progress was established by assessing reading level, writing level, and student engagement in classroom activities. Participants were assigned to either the high, middle, or low achievement group based on the overall progress of the majority of students in their class.

Despite these achievement group assignments, results showed that certain practices were found consistently across the majority of observed classrooms (at least 7 of 9). Teachers created a literacy program that blended whole-language activities and traditional skill instruction with the assistance of trade books. All participants also taught the writing process model and expected students to plan, draft, and revise while writing. In addition, students in each classroom had daily writing opportunities. Most educators (78%) utilized worksheets as part of their literacy instruction, and all but one administered a weekly spelling program. Furthermore, the classroom arrangements were comparable to that of a typical first-grade class (i.e., grouped desks, colorful decorations, and so forth). The majority of participants also provided opportunities for students to partake in independent or shared reading and writing. Finally, all teachers recognized the importance of positive feedback and parent involvement to literacy development.

Although commonalities existed across classrooms, many characteristics distinguished the high-achieving teachers from those comprising the remaining groups. These distinguished educators not only blended whole-language activities with traditional

skill instruction, they introduced their students to a wide variety of rich literacy experiences using high-quality literary materials. In addition, these teachers provided individualized instruction and review on a needed basis, and encouraged self-regulation among the students. Participants identified in the high-achieving group not only had a thorough knowledge of the purposes of their lessons, they were also able to implement multi-goal lessons that integrated reading and writing instruction successfully. Furthermore, these individuals used extensive scaffolding to promote students' literacy development, had high expectations for all students, and were skillful in classroom management.

Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) highlight the differences between outstanding and average first-grade literacy programs. Although certain characteristics, such as daily writing experiences, a balance of whole-language and traditional skill instruction, and parent involvement, were common in all classrooms, teachers in the high-achieving category demonstrated abilities that exceeded those in the lower groups. The participants identified as extremely effective in literacy instruction introduced their students to a wide range of reading and writing experiences accompanied by high-quality literary materials. In addition, individuals in this category had high expectation for all students, were masters of classroom management, and created a balanced blend of reading and writing instruction. These characteristics are important to note and may be helpful in creating effective literacy programs for the primary grades.

Morrow et al. (1999) combined classroom observations with interviews of first-grade teachers employed in three school districts in New Jersey. All participants held master's degrees and were identified as exemplary literacy instructors by their

supervisors and administrators. Teachers were chosen based on their ability to promote reading and writing success in a large percentage of their students; their ability to articulate sound teaching philosophy that matched classroom practices; positive comments from parents, administrators, or other teachers; and from direct classroom observations. Each teacher's classroom was observed eight times during its language-arts block and twice for a full day, averaging 25 hours of observation per classroom. During these observations, informal interviews were also completed with the teachers regarding personal philosophies and practical components of their literacy instruction.

With regards to writing, a wide variety of literary experiences were provided by the exemplary teachers. Students participated in daily writing activities such as journals or story writing, and regularly conferenced with peers or the teacher. The process of writing was discussed in these conferences, and students were expected to revise their writing. Produced texts were often published and made available for other students to read. Shared writing experiences were also observed, as was teacher modeling and positive reinforcement. Study participants were frequently seen implementing minilessons before, during, and after writing activities as well. The presence of a theme-based blended curriculum that integrated reading and writing together and across other subject areas was also a core component of the exemplary teachers' literacy programs. Furthermore, teachers implemented literacy instruction that was both planned and spontaneous. They followed pre-made plans, but still embraced natural teachable moments that arose in the classroom. Finally, this group of teachers had very effective classroom management skills that allowed them to monitor student progress and promote self-regulation during independent activities.

When data gathered from teacher interviews was compared with the classroom observations, high agreement was found. The participants claimed to design their literacy instruction based on themes, and to integrate this instruction across the curriculum. Behaviors noted during the observation sessions were found to be consistent with these statements. In addition, the teachers described their beliefs regarding the creation of a supportive and positive classroom environment. Evidence of these ideals (i.e., positive reinforcement, shared literacy experiences, etc.) was also observed during classroom visits.

By observing the classrooms of exemplary first-grade literacy instructors, Morrow et al. (1999) were able to document effective practices and activities for promoting reading and writing development in young children. Teachers in this study created a blended reading and writing curriculum based on themes that encompassed a combination of whole-language and traditional skill instruction. Students in these classrooms were provided with a variety of daily writing opportunities and received instruction regarding the writing process. In addition, the exemplary literacy teachers were highly skilled at classroom management and effectively combined planned and spontaneous instruction. The programs designed by these primary grade educators serve as models of outstanding literacy instruction for young students.

The studies reviewed demonstrate the benefit of comparing classroom observations with teacher surveys and interviews to validate practices and activities that are reflective of literacy instruction. Each of these comparisons resulted in high levels of agreement and provided valuable insight into the beliefs supporting current teaching practices in the primary grades. Commonalities of successful literacy programs include: a

variety of writing experiences through exposure to high-quality literary materials, a blended reading and writing curriculum, high levels of classroom management, and an instructional approach that merged whole-language activities with traditional skill instruction. These practices are part of a growing philosophy regarding the components of outstanding primary grade literacy instruction that views children as competent, active learning partners (Bridge et al., 1997; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998; Morrow et al., 1999).

Survey Studies

In addition to studies that compare the results of classroom observations with surveys and interviews of teacher practices, it is also important to look at those that gathered survey response data only (Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Graham, Harris, Fink-Chorzempa, and MacArthur, 2003). Such studies offer valuable information regarding the various practices implemented by primary grade teachers during literacy instruction, and help to create a larger set of data on these teachers' writing programs.

Pressley et al. (1996) conducted a nation-wide survey with primary grade teachers who were nominated as effective in promoting literacy by their reading supervisors. The supervisors were asked to rate personal confidence in their decisions and provide support for their evaluations through a variety of possible means: student achievement records; positive comments from parents, other teachers, or administrators regarding teacher's skills and effectiveness; conversations with the selected teacher in which sound teaching philosophy and practices were expressed by the nominee; or direct classroom observations. Of the original 135 teachers who received the initial survey, 83 responded

to both questionnaires (73% response rate). Twenty-three of the participants were kindergarten teachers, 34 were first-grade teachers, and 26 were second-grade teachers. These individuals represented all geographic regions of the United States and were employed in schools with populations characterizing the diversity of American school children in the 1990s.

The first questionnaire asked teachers to create lists of ten practices they believed were a vital part of their literary instruction. The participants were to generate separate lists for good readers, average readers, and weaker readers. The researchers categorized the 300 practices noted by the teachers and used them to create a second questionnaire designed to assess reading and writing instruction. The second round of the survey was sent to those participants who responded to the first questionnaire and included 436 questions. The survey used a variety of question types, ranging from open-ended responses to inquiries regarding the amount of time dedicated to a specific activity. In addition, some questions asked the participants to produce separate responses for good, average, and weak readers.

Results of the survey demonstrated the existence of a large overlap of literacy practices utilized by the teachers surveyed. Many (86%) reported using specific reading and writing centers in their classroom, and modeled their love of reading daily and of writing weekly. The teachers' responses also indicated that they employed a variety of instructional groups as part of their literacy program (i.e., small- and whole-group instruction, individual and paired reading and writing, and so forth). In addition, integrating reading and writing instruction across the curriculum was a common practice reported by teachers (93% and 88%, respectively).

Relative to writing instruction, the respondents indicated that they encourage self-regulation and autonomy among their students by encouraging self-selection of writing topics and allowing students to write at their own pace (96%). Teachers also reported that they provided more lower-order skill instruction to weaker students. Respondents claimed, though, that instruction was implemented without sacrificing these students' exposure to high-quality literary materials or higher-order skills experiences. In addition, the teachers listed a variety of writing experiences as major components of their overall literacy program. Story writing and written responses to readings were reported by 86% of teachers. Whereas first grade instructors cited shared writing activities (i.e., partner or group writing) as occurring several times a week in their classrooms, second grade teachers reported monthly shared writing sessions. In addition, 87% of teachers reported that students wrote in journals several times a week. Furthermore, 30% of participants cited the use of computers for writing and 53% reported the use of writing portfolios as additional methods for supporting writing in their classrooms.

Regarding the writing process, 76% of participants indicated that they promoted planning before writing and 60% encouraged revising during peer and student-teacher conferences. The results showed the frequency of these practices increased with advancing grade level. In addition, instruction in writing mechanics was reported by teachers of all grade levels, also increasing in intensity with advancing grade level.

The results of the Pressley et al. (1996) study demonstrated that effective teachers of literacy in the primary grades employ a wide variety of instructional practices to promote learning in their classrooms. The integration of reading and writing together and across the curriculum was an especially common occurrence, as was teacher modeling of

instruction and personal love of reading and writing. Furthermore, although the participants claimed to tailor their instruction to the individual needs of students, few differences in instruction for students of varying ability were reported. Students with below-average achievement received compensatory instruction that was embedded in the general literacy curriculum, not through a separate curriculum of lower quality.

Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) conducted a follow up study to Pressley et al. (1996). When reading supervisors in Pressley et al. (1996) were asked to identify effective teachers of literacy, they were also requested to separately nominate the most effective literacy instructor among the primary grade special education teachers in their school or district. Thirty-six special educators from various geographical areas were identified through this process. To compensate for the geographical regions not represented by this initial sample, requests were made of special education supervisors in the areas not accounted for to identify their most effective primary-level special education reading teacher. An additional 38 individuals were nominated, bringing the total to 74 teachers. Each teacher was administered an initial questionnaire asking them to generate lists of ten practices they believed essential to their literacy instruction. Separate lists were created for good, average, and weaker readers. The second questionnaire, which included 436 questions assessing reading and writing instruction, was sent to participants who returned their generated lists. Of the complete sample of 74 teachers, 33 responded to both questionnaires (45% response rate). The data from the special educators was collected during the Pressley et al. (1996) study, as these individuals were part of the larger sample included in that research.

Results of this study were similar to those found by Pressley et al. (1996). The special education teachers reported that they expressed their love of reading daily and of writing weekly, and created classroom environments that were rich in literacy. The most frequent instructional grouping reported was ability grouping, occurring slightly more than half of the instructional time. Small group (35%, 34%, and 30% of the time for students with mild, moderate, and severe reading problems, respectively) and individualized literacy instruction (27%, 31%, and 39% of the time for students with mild, moderate, and severe reading problems, respectively) were also quite common. In addition, the participants in this study also claimed to tailor instruction based on the individual needs of their students through assessment of personal learning styles.

Special education teachers in this study frequently reported high levels of parent communication (48% cited at least weekly communication) and involvement in the literacy curriculum. Participants indicated that they encouraged parents to offer support for reading and writing at home and to assist with student homework.

In reference to writing instruction, teachers reported that writing opportunities were frequent (occurring at least weekly) and encompassed a wide variety of experiences. Students wrote in journals almost daily and created independent and class books. Teachers also claimed that their class wrote in response to reading on a weekly basis, and that they promoted student self-regulation by allowing the students to choose writing topics. In addition, the participants stated that they published student work at least monthly, generated writing portfolios (73% of teachers), and created weekly guided and shared writing sessions that included teacher modeling.

Relative to the writing process, the special education teachers reported teaching planning, writing, and revising frequently. Eighty-seven percent of participants claimed to engage their students in planning and revising during writing. In addition, they claimed to enhance development of each phase through peer and student-teacher conferencing. Peer conferencing, though, was reported much less often than student-teacher conferencing (90% and 40%, respectively). Similar to teachers surveyed in the Pressley et al. (1996) study, these educators also stated that instruction in writing mechanics was an important component of their literacy curriculum. Student tracing or copying of letters and words was reported by 90% of participants, and 77% cited implementing punctuation instruction. Furthermore, spelling instruction and encouraging the use of invented spelling were noted as common practices employed by the special education teachers. The majority of participants (93%) claimed that students had weekly spelling tests on assigned words, and all but one special educator (97%) indicated their support of invented spelling.

The most important findings of Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) study were the similarities between practices used by effective primary grade special education teachers and those employed by effective primary grade general education teachers as observed in Pressley et al. (1996). Again, the value of creating a program that blends reading and writing instruction together and across the curriculum was highlighted. In addition, by developing a literacy curriculum that encompassed a variety of instructional approaches and simultaneous skill development, the participants were able to provide their special needs students with opportunities that mirrored those offered to their typical peers.

Graham et al. (2003) conducted a nation-wide survey to assess instructional adaptations teachers make for weaker writers. Of the original 220 primary grade teachers identified, 153 completed the survey that was mailed to them (70% response rate)

Each teacher was asked to respond to three surveys pertaining to their teaching experiences, especially those related to writing instruction for struggling writers. The first survey asked participants to identify how frequently specific writing practices and instructional procedures occurred for both average and weaker writers in their classrooms. These questions assessed the frequency of instruction in writing mechanics, teaching of the writing process, specific instructional activities, peer interactions during writing, and self-regulation opportunities. In addition, the participants were asked to note any additional strategies they used with weaker writers, the average time per week that students participated in writing and writing instruction, and if they were using a commercial program to teach writing. The other two surveys assessed teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing (Graham, Harris, Fink-Chorzempa, & MacArthur, 2001) and their beliefs about writing instruction (Graham, Harris, Fink-Chorzempa, & MacArthur, 2002).

Results from the first survey indicated that educators spent slightly more time each week teaching writing mechanics than students spent actually composing (four and three hours, respectively). In addition, participants indicated that these skills were taught more frequently to weaker writers. Seventy-five percent of teachers reported that writing process instruction (planning and revising strategies) occurred weekly in their classrooms, and 60% indicated that instruction in text organization occurred at least once a week. However, in contrast to average writers, struggling writers received additional

instruction in revising. Results of the first survey also indicated that the teachers commonly used four instructional activities. Modeling of the writing process, student-teacher conferences, and minilessons were reported as occurring weekly by 85% or more of the respondents. Reteaching strategies or skills was also cited as occurring at least once a week by 78% of participants. The latter three activities (student-teacher conferences, minilessons, and reteaching) were reported as occurring more frequently with weaker writers. Eighty percent of teachers also claimed that students shared writing with each other at least once a week. Furthermore, though peer assistance during writing occurred several times a week in most classrooms (71%), average writers were more likely to be found helping classmates than weaker writers. In regards to supporting self-regulation, the majority of respondents (75% or more) claimed that they encouraged students to use invented spelling, write at their own pace, and choose their own writing topics. However, teachers reported that weaker writers were more often encouraged to attempt invented spellings, whereas average writers were awarded more opportunities to select their own writing topic.

When teachers were asked to list additional adaptations provided for struggling writers, the most common responses involved one-on-one assistance (26%), strategies to enhance the writing process (23%) and improve writing mechanics (20%), and specific writing assignments (9%). One-on-one assistance was provided either by the classroom teacher, another educator, a volunteer, or a peer. It was not clear, however, what type of assistance was offered during these supplemental sessions. In regards to writing process difficulties, specifically in terms of planning, teachers encouraged struggling writers to create visual representations of their ideas (i.e., webs) or to verbalize their thoughts

before writing. Participants also indicated that they helped these students circumvent their difficulties with writing mechanics by allowing them to dictate text. Teachers further indicated that they changed writing assignments for weaker writers. These students wrote stories using a combination of text and pictures, were given a writing frame where some text was already created, or wrote responses to open-ended assignments. Although the majority of strategies listed by teachers involved providing assistance to struggling writers, adaptations that limited the decision-making ability or participation of these individuals (i.e., limiting self-selection of writing topics, writing at their own pace, helping peers, computer use) were not uncommon (17% of all adaptations).

The results of Graham et al. (2003) showed that the majority of teachers surveyed were conscious of student differences and made adaptations to assist struggling writers. Struggling writers received more individual instruction from teachers on certain aspects of writing and the writing process, and they were encouraged to use invented spellings. However, these students were less likely to provide writing assistance to peers and had fewer opportunities to choose their writing topics. It is important to note that some of the teachers interviewed utilized very few or no adaptations for weaker writers (40%). This finding raises concern for students who are struggling with writing and demonstrated an instructional inadequacy present in American classrooms.

The survey studies reviewed above provide valuable information regarding the practices and adaptations provided for struggling writers by primary grade teachers. Common components of effective regular and special education literacy curriculums (i.e., those that encourage students to write, produce high levels of student interest and achievement in writing, help students understand the importance of writing, etc.) include:

multiple exposure to a variety of writing experiences, cross-curriculum reading and writing instruction, integrated approaches to instruction, and teacher modeling of writing processes and the joy of writing. Despite the survey-only design of the studies reviewed above, the accuracy of self-reporting by teachers can be inferred as demonstrated in the observation-survey/interview articles discussed previously (Bridge et al., 1997; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Morrow et al., 1999; Wray et al., 2000).

Summarizing Instructional Activities Investigated in Professional Literature

The information presented in Tables 1 through 4 provides a listing of the types of activities and instructional practices examined in the observational, observational/survey, and survey studies reviewed earlier. This provides a visual summary of these elements across studies, as well as the frequency of such assessments.

Tables 1 and 2 specifically provide a summary of which studies assessed instruction in specific writing skills and processes for average and effective teachers. Across studies, investigators most often examined if teachers taught the following writing skills: handwriting, grammar, punctuation/ capitalization, and spelling. Studies also commonly assessed if teachers taught the writing process of planning, writing, and revising.

Tables 3 and 4 present the types of activities assessed by researchers in the reviewed studies for average and effective teachers. These practices are divided into six categories: instructional activities, working with peers, writers' independence, assessment, classroom management, and classroom organization. Common instructional activities assessed included teacher-student and peer conferences, teacher modeling

Table 1

Instruction in Specific Writing Skills and Processes Identified in Reviewed Studies for Average Teachers

	Bridge & Hiebert (1985)	Christenson Thurlow, Ysseldyke, McVicar (1989)	Stahl, Pagnucco, Suttles (1996)	Bridge Compton-Hall, Cantrell (1997)	Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Graham, Harris, Fink, MacArthur (2003)
Basic Writing Skills						
Handwriting	X	X		X		X
Grammar		X	X	X	X	X
Punctuation/ Capitalization			X			X
Spelling	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing Process						
Planning					X	X
Writing				X	X	X
Revising				X	X	X

Table 2

Instruction in Specific Writing Skills and Processes Identified in Reviewed Studies for Effective Teachers

	Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi (1996)	Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Morrow, Tracey, Woo, Pressley (1999)	Rankin-Erickson & Pressley (2000)	Wray, Medwell, Fox, Poulson (2000)
Basic Writing Skills	X			X	
Handwriting		X	X		X
Grammar	X		X	X	
Punctuation/ Capitalization	X	X	X	X	
Spelling					
Writing Process	X	X		X	X
Planning	X	X	X	X	X
Writing	X	X	X	X	X
Revising					

* Wray et al. (2000) also assessed writing curriculum content of average teachers but reported no specific components

Table 3

Types of Writing Activities Assessed in Reviewed Studies for Average Teachers

	Bridge and Hiebert (1985)	Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, McVicar (1989)	Stahl, Pagnucco, Suttles (1996)	Bridge, Compton-Hall, Cantrell (1997)	WhartonMcDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Graham,Harris, Fink,MacArthur (2003)
Instructional Activities						
Conferences:						
Teacher				X		X
Peer				X		X
Minilessons			X	X		X
Reteaching						X
Modeling:						
Joy of Writing						
Actual Writing				X		X
Computer						
Journals			X	X		
Stories	X			X		
Story Starters	X		X	X		
Pictorial Prompts				X		
Letters	X			X		
Books			X			
Worksheets	X	X	X		X	
Direct Copying	X		X			
Authentic Writing					X	
Multi-Goal Lessons						
Multi-Genre Writing				X		
Cross-Curriculum Writing				X		
Reading/ Writing Integration			X			
Whole Language/ Traditional Skill Blend				X	X	X

Table 3 (continued)

Types of Writing Activities Assessed in Reviewed Studies for Average Teachers

	Bridge and Hiebert (1985)	Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, McVicar (1989)	Stahl, Pagnucco, Suttles(1996)	Bridge, Compton-Hall, Cantrell (1997)	WhartonMcDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Graham,Harris, Fink,MacArthur (2003)
Working With Peers						
Conferences				X		X
Shared Writing	X			X	X	X
Publishing			X	X		
Writers' Independence						
Independent Writing			X	X	X	X
Writing at Own Pace						X
Topic Selection			X			X
Invented Spelling						X
Progress Monitoring						
Assessment						
Progress Monitoring						
Portfolios				X		
Classroom Management						
Classroom Management						
High Expectations for All						
Scaffolding						
Awareness of Lesson Purpose						
Classroom Organization						
Writing Centers			X			
Ability Grouping					X	
Whole Group Instruction			X		X	
Small Group Instruction			X		X	
One-on-One Instruction						X

Table 4

Types of Writing Activities Assessed in Reviewed Studies for Effective Teachers

	Fisher & Hiebert (1990)	Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi (1996)	Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Morrow, Tracey, Woo, Pressley (1999)	Rankin-Erickson & Pressley (2000)	Wray, Medwell, Fox, Poulson (2000)
Instructional Activities						
Conferences						
Teacher		X	X	X	X	X
Peer		X	X	X	X	X
Minilessons			X	X		
Reteaching						
Modeling						
Joy of Writing		X			X	
Actual Writing		X	X	X	X	X
Computer		X				
Journals		X	X	X	X	
Stories		X		X	X	
Story Starters						
Pictorial Prompts						
Letters			X			
Books					X	
Worksheets	X	X	X			
Direct Copying						
Authentic Writing			X			X
Multi-Goal Lessons			X			X
Multi-Genre Writing		X		X	X	
Cross-Curriculum Writing		X	X	X	X	
Reading/ Writing Integration		X	X	X	X	
Whole Language/ Traditional Skill Blend		X	X	X	X	X

Table 4 (continued)

Types of Writing Activities Assessed in Reviewed Studies for Effective Teachers

	Fisher & Hiebert (1990)	Pressley, Rankin, Yokoi (1996)	Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Hampston (1998)	Morrow, Tracey, Woo, Pressley (1999)	Rankin-Erickson & Pressley (2000)	Wray, Medwell, Fox, Poulson (2000)
Working With Peers						
Conferences		X	X	X	X	X
Shared Writing		X	X	X	X	X
Publishing	X	X		X	X	
Writers' Independence						
Independent Writing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing at Own Pace		X				
Topic Selection	X	X		X	X	
Invented Spelling						
Progress Monitoring			X	X		X
Assessment						
Progress Monitoring			X	X	X	X
Portfolios		X			X	
Classroom Management						
Classroom Management			X	X		
High Expectations for All			X			
Scaffolding		X	X	X	X	X
Awareness of Lesson Purpose		X	X		X	
Classroom Organization						
Writing Centers		X		X		
Ability Grouping	X		X		X	
Whole Group Instruction	X	X	X	X	X	X
Small Group Instruction	X	X	X	X	X	X
One-on-One Instruction		X	X	X	X	X

* Wray et al. (2000) also assessed instructional strategies used by average teachers but reported only direct copying

actual writing, and a writing program that blended whole language and traditional skill instruction. Practices assessed relative to students working with peers were peer conferences, shared writing (writing together or in a group), and publication of text. The researchers most often assessed writers' independence through activities in which students were writing independently, choosing their writing topics, or writing at their own pace. The methods employed by teachers to track student writing were also assessed by the researchers. Such practices included progress monitoring and the use of portfolios. In addition, the level of classroom management, including overall classroom management skill, the use of scaffolding, and teacher understanding of the purpose of their lessons, was assessed by researchers in the reviewed studies. Finally, the researchers assessed instructional practices that were associated with classroom organization techniques. The most common practices assessed were type of instructional grouping (whole, small, ability, one-on-one) and the implementation of writing centers.

Although Tables 1 through 4 encompass many components of writing instruction in the primary grades, certain practices were not commonly assessed in the reviewed studies. For instance, the use of computers or the reteaching of skills as instructional activities were assessed only once by different researchers (Pressley et al., 1996; Graham et al., 2003, respectively). In addition, the use of invented spelling as a method for encouraging writers' independence was first assessed by Graham et al. 2003. The assessment of teacher expectations for students was also assessed in only one study (Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998).

Summarizing Additional Instructional Activities Found in Writing Methods Books

In addition to conducting a thorough investigation of the current research regarding writing practices in the primary grades, I also gathered information from recent books on classroom writing instruction. These books included: *6 + 1 Traits of Writing* (Culham, 1995), *Directing the Writing Workshop* (Gillet & Beverly, 2001), *Teaching Narrative Writing* (Schaefer, 2001), *Teaching Expository Writing* (Mariconda, 2001), *Reading and Writing Informational Texts in the Primary Grades* (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003), and *The Writing Lab Approach* (Nelson, Bahr, & Van Meter, 2004). It was important to assess these books for their instructional content regarding writing in order to produce a questionnaire that would thoroughly address the variety of writing practices commonly used in the primary grades. I identified what writing concepts and practices were described in these books that were not included in Tables 1 through 4.

The results of this second investigation are summarized in Table 5. Overall, ten new items were added regarding how to teach writing based on information found in these books. No new additions, however, resulted relating to what distinct concepts should be taught during writing instruction. Although the book by Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2003) was assessed, this entry was not included in the table because it offered no new information regarding writing instruction.

Most additions were instructional activities described by the authors as components of effective writing programs. These included providing students with free writing sessions to write for enjoyment purposes (Nelson et al., 2004), having students listen to music while writing to increase fluency (Culham, 1995), and creating story charts or maps to guide students' writing (Schaefer, 2001). The most common addition

Table 5

Writing Concepts and Practices Found in Writing Methods Books

	6 + 1 Traits of Writing (Culham, 1995)	Directing the Writing Workshop (Gillet & Beverly, 2001)	Teaching Narrative Writing (Schaefer, 2001)	Teaching Expository Writing (Mariconda, 2001)	Reading and Writing Informational Texts in the Primary Grades (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003)	The Writing Lab Approach (Nelson, Bahr, & Van Meter, 2004)
Instructional Activities						
Book Reports		X				
Free Writing						X
Listening to Music	X					
Story Charts/ Maps			X			
Goal Based Instruction						X
Research-to-Practice Instruction						X
Writers' Independence						
Authors' Notebooks	X	X				X
Writing Rubrics			X	X		
Assessment						
Writing Rubrics			X	X		
Classroom Management						
Collaborative Team Building						X

was the use of authors' notebooks to promote writers' independence (Culham, 1995; Gillet & Beverly, 2001; Nelson et al., 2004). These notebooks are kept by the students to help organize their writing topics, drafts, and writing materials. In addition Schaefer (2001) and Mariconda (2001) suggest using writing rubrics to assess student writing and to provide students with these rubrics to serve as guides for their writing. Finally, Nelson et al. (2004) identified the use of collaborative team building among teachers, administrators, and other school personnel as a means for developing an effective writing program and maintaining classroom management.

Currently, we know that students across the nation, especially those in the primary grades, are spending very little time actually composing text (Christenson et al., 1989, Fisher & Hiebert, 1990). In general, young learners are not provided with writing opportunities on a consistent basis and are often involved in activities designed to fine-tune their skill in the mechanics of writing (i.e., grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.). Although the trend seems to be shifting from a "product" to a "process" approach (Bridge et al., 1997), many students are not exposed to a wide variety of writing experiences.

Effective writing instruction that involves the use of multiple approaches to class grouping, a wide variety of instructional practices, and combines skill instruction with planning, composing, and revising procedures has been found to yield high levels of student achievement in writing (Pressley et al., 1996; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998; Wray et al., 2000). Teachers who provide their students with lessons that have multiple instructional goals, offer peer- and teacher-conference sessions, and blend reading and writing across the curriculum have also been recognized as producing high levels of student success in writing (Morrow et al., 1999; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000).

Chapter III

Method

This study was designed to assess the writing practices of primary grade teachers. Information regarding the frequency and variety of writing practices used by teachers throughout the United States was collected via a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked participants to respond to items collecting information on demographic data and writing practices.

In this chapter, I first describe the processes used to select participants for this study. Second, descriptions of the participants are provided, followed by an explanation of the design of the survey instrument. Next, I explain the process for implementing the study, including procedures for administering the questionnaire and analyzing the data.

Participant Selection

A stratified random sampling procedure was used to select participants for this study. A total of 300 primary grade teachers were randomly identified from all primary grade teachers throughout the United States (100 in first, second, and third grades each) from a list compiled by Market Data Retrieval (2004). I anticipated a 60% return rate based on the previous study by Graham et al. (2003); thus, an initial sample of 300 participants with a 60% return rate would provide a sizable sample from which to draw conclusions.

Market Data Retrieval maintains an updated database of all teachers in the United States and provides information regarding school size, geographic location (i.e., rural, urban, suburban), grade level, number of computers per student, and the average materials expenditures available per child. To determine if there were any differences

between respondents and non-respondents on these variables, statistical analyses were conducted. For geographic location, number of computers per student, grade level, and average materials expenditure per student, chi-square analyses were computed. For school size, a one-way ANOVA was performed.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire items were created, in part, based on information gathered during the literature review in Chapter 2. Tables 1 and 2 were created to arrange this information into categories of activities and practices assessed in previous studies examining primary grade teachers' practices. The survey instrument is located in Appendix A. Some of the questions on the survey were created by myself and my advisor to measure the activities identified in Chapter 2. Other questions were taken directly from the survey created by Graham et al. (2003). Appendix B provides a reference indicating which questions were taken from the Graham et al. (2003) study. The combination of new questions based on information found in the current literature and previously established items allowed for the creation of a comprehensive questionnaire to investigate primary grade writing practices.

The 63-item questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section contained 11 questions and gathered information regarding teachers' gender, ethnicity, and educational status as well as their opinion on the quality of the preparation they received to teach writing. In addition, teachers were asked to indicate how many years they had taught, what grades they were teaching when they completed the survey, and what type of approach they used for writing instruction (e.g., process, traditional skills, a combination of both, etc.). This section also had questions relating to the demographic makeup of

students in participants' classrooms. These items included how many students were in the classroom, the racial composition of the class, and the ability level of the students in the class. A question pertaining to students' free and reduced lunch status (FARMS) was also included in this section in order to evaluate the socio-economic level of children in the teachers' classes.

The second section included four questions that asked participants' to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement via a 6-point-Likert-type scale, with scores ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The items assessed teachers' personal beliefs and preferences regarding writing and writing instruction and included "I like to write", "I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction", "I like to teach writing", and "I am effective at teaching writing".

Items in the third section of the questionnaire assessed the amount of time participants spent teaching various writing skills (i.e., handwriting, planning strategies, grammar and usage, etc.) each week and how many minutes their students engaged in writing each week. This section also contained questions about the types of instructional groupings teachers used while teaching writing (i.e., small group, whole group, individualized), and what commercial programs, if any, they used to teach various aspects of writing. In addition, participants were asked to check which listed writing activities their students completed or will complete during the school year. These included, but are not limited to, writing stories, creating comic strips, writing in journals, drawing a picture and writing something to go with it, and writing to persuade.

The fourth and final section consisted of 42 items that asked teachers to mark how often they implemented or their students participated in a particular activity. Two forms

of Likert-type scales were provided for responses to questions in this section. Thirty-six questions used a 7-point scale with responses at each point, ranging from never (1) to several times a day (7). Five questions (# 3, 9, 10, 27, 29) also used a 7-point scale, but only three points were labeled with responses, including never (1), half the time (4), and always (7). The final question (# 42) was an open-ended question.

Questions 1-11 in Section IV assessed the participants' use of various practices commonly included in a process approach to writing instruction. Examples of these items included asking teachers to indicate how often they read their own writing to their students, how often they encouraged students to use invented spellings, how often their students conferenced with peers about their writing, and how often their students published their writing. Items 12-29 assessed how often participants used certain instructional methods or supports when teaching writing. Examples of these items included asking teachers to indicate how often they taught students a variety of writing skills (i.e., spelling skills, strategies for revising, sentence construction skills, and so forth.) as well as incorporated various instructional techniques into their writing (i.e., implementing minilessons, creating writing centers, providing graphic organizers, using writing prompts, and so forth). Questions 30-33 inquired about the types of assessment techniques teachers used during writing instruction. These questions asked participants to indicate how often they monitored their students' progress during writing, as well as how often their students used writing portfolios, self-monitoring, and rubrics to evaluate their writing. Items 34-36 asked participants about strategies used to extend writing instruction to the home. These questions included how often teachers communicated with parents about their child's writing progress, how often students were asked to write at home with

parental help, and how often parents were asked to listen to something their child wrote at school. Questions 37 and 38 asked teachers to indicate how often students used alternative methods of composing. Participants were asked how often their students used computers during writing periods and how often they wrote by dictating text to another person. The next set of questions, 39-41, were designed to assess how often writing extended to other areas of the curriculum. These questions included how often students wrote in other content areas, used writing to support reading, and used reading to support writing. The last question in section four asked teachers if No Child Left Behind had influenced what they did during writing instruction. A follow-up question asked respondents who reported yes to this question to explain how the legislation had influenced their writing instruction.

The final component to the questionnaire was a statement at the end of section four. This item was designed to allow participants to include any additional information they wanted to share regarding their writing programs.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

Content validity was established for the instrument by conducting a survey of previous studies on classroom writing practices as well as examining current books on writing practices. Activities included in these studies and procedures discussed in the textbooks provided a comprehensive list of writing practices that primary grade teachers might potentially use to teach writing. Thus, the instrument surveys a broad and representative sample of primary grade writing activities.

Scale Reliability

The coefficient alpha for items in Section IV were established for items in the following clusters: participants' use of various practices commonly included in a process approach to writing instruction (items 1-11), how often participants used certain instructional methods or supports when teaching writing (items 12-29), the types of assessment techniques teachers used during writing instruction (items 30-33), the strategies used by participants to extend writing instruction to the home (items 34-36), and how often writing in the participants' classrooms extended to other areas of the curriculum (items 39-41). The coefficient alpha for process approach writing practices was .84; for instructional methods or supports it was .87; for assessment techniques it was .75; for strategies to extend writing to the home it was .74; and for writing in different curricular areas it was .83. A coefficient alpha was not computed for the cluster regarding students' use of alternative methods of composing because there was only two items in this cluster.

Field Test

The first draft of the questionnaire (Appendix C) was reviewed by four primary grade teachers to assess the time needed to complete it and the clarity of questions included in the survey. The teachers received two versions of the survey with a letter explaining that the survey was in its final stages of preparation and their professional input would be appreciated. For the first version of the survey, teachers were asked to complete the questions and record how long it took them to finish the survey. For the second version of the survey, located in Appendix D, teachers were asked to comment on the clarity of each question on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from not clear (1) to

very clear (5). In addition, reviewers were also asked to comment on the thoroughness of the questionnaire by identifying any relevant writing practices or concepts that were not already included in the survey.

Based on the responses provided by teachers who participated in the field test of the survey instrument, the following changes were made to the questionnaire: the statement “I do not like to teach writing” was modified to “I like to teach writing” (Section II, # 1); the item “Writing letters to another person” was added to the list of writing activities (Section III, # 5); the two Likert-type scales were altered to include seven points with “several times a month” added as a new choice (Section IV); the item “Circle how often you encourage students to use invented spellings” was changed to “Circle how often you encourage students to use invented spellings at any point during the writing process” (Section IV, # 10); the statement “Circle how often you reteach writing skills or strategies that were previously taught” was modified to “Circle how often you reteach writing skills or strategies that you previously taught” (Section IV, # 24); the item “Circle how often you monitor the writing progress of your students” was changed to “Circle how often you monitor the writing progress of your students in order to make decisions about writing instruction” (Section IV, # 30); the statement “Circle how often your students write by dictating their compositions to someone else” was altered to “Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to write by dictating their compositions to someone else” (Section IV, # 37); and the item “Circle how often students use computers during the writing period” was changed to “Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to use computers during the

writing period” (Section IV, # 38). Items that were changed based on the field test are indicated by an asterisk on the survey located in Appendix D.

Procedure

Conducting the Survey

In January 2005, envelopes containing a cover and consent letter, the questionnaire, and a return envelope were mailed to the 300 primary grade teachers identified through the list generated by Market Data Retrieval. In an attempt to increase the return rate of completed questionnaires, a \$2 bill was included in the envelopes as a “thank you” to teachers for their participation in the study. A follow-up phone call was made to teachers who did not return the questionnaire after three weeks. This phone call indicated that a second survey and cover letter was being mailed to them, asking them to please complete it. When the first two mailings did not yield a sufficient return rate, a third mailing was sent to participants who had not yet returned the completed questionnaire six weeks after the second mailing. A follow-up phone call was also made to these teachers, explaining to them that this would be the final mailing and to please complete the survey and return it.

Analysis

Research Question 1

Do participants who responded to the questionnaire differ from those who did not respond in terms of grade taught, location of school (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural), computer density (number of computers per student), school size, and annual expenditure for materials per pupil?

Using data supplied from Market Data Retrieval (2003) on the 300 teachers sent questionnaires, I examined if there was a difference between responders and nonresponders to determine if the responders were representative of the sample as a whole. These variables included: grade taught, location of school (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural), computer density (number of computers per student), school size, and annual expenditure for materials per pupil. For grade taught, location of school, computer density, and annual expenditures per pupil chi-square analysis was used to determine if there were differences between these two groups. For school size, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with responders versus nonresponders as the independent variable.

Research Question 2

What are characteristics of the teachers, their students, and their writing programs as reported by those who responded to the questionnaire?

Characteristics of the teachers. For the teachers who completed the questionnaire, I collected data on the grade(s) they taught at the time they completed the survey, their highest educational level, quality of their teacher certification program, years taught, gender, and ethnicity. For grade, gender, ethnicity, and highest educational level, percentages were calculated. For years spent teaching, and quality of preparation for teaching writing, the mean and standard deviation were obtained for each variable.

Data were also collected on teachers' attitudes toward writing and teaching writing, as well as their perceptions of their skills in managing the classroom during writing instruction. For these four variables, I obtained the mean and standard deviation. I conducted chi-square analyses to determine if there was a statistically significant

relationship between grade and teachers' attitudes regarding writing and writing instruction.

Characteristics of the students. Data on students included: number of students in a class; students' ethnicity; number of students receiving free or reduced lunch; the number of students receiving special education services; and number of students who are above-average, average, and below-average writers. For number of students in a class, means and standard deviations were derived. Percentages were calculated for the following information: students' ethnicity; number of students receiving free or reduced lunch; number of students receiving special education services; and the number of students noted as above-average, average, and below-average writers. To determine if there was a statistically significant difference for these student characteristics by grade, chi-square analyses were conducted.

Characteristics of the teachers' overall writing programs. Teachers were also asked to indicate the type of writing program they used: traditional, process, traditional and process, or other. Percentages for each description were calculated. In addition, means and standard deviations were calculated for the percent of time teachers used whole group, small group, or individualized instruction. Finally, the percentage of teachers who used a commercial program to teach a specific aspect of writing was tabulated. Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences present by grade for teachers' use of instructional groupings and commercial programs to teach writing.

Research Question 3

How much time during an average week do teachers who responded to the questionnaire spend teaching specific writing skills and processes and how much time do their students spend writing? Is grade level related to time students spend composing and time teachers spend teaching writing?

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the amount of time that students spent composing per week, as well as for the amount of time that teachers taught specific writing skills and processes during the week. To determine if there was a difference in these time measures by grade, chi-square analyses were conducted.

Research Question 4

What type of writing activities do teachers who responded to the questionnaire have their students do during the course of the academic year? Is grade level related to the types of writing activities reported by teachers?

For each of the listed writing activities the percentages of teachers who reported using that activity were calculated. Chi-square analyses were conducted with each writing activity to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between grade and use of the writing activity.

Research Question 5

How often do teachers who responded to the questionnaire incorporate specific instructional and assessment activities and techniques into their writing programs? Is grade level related to teachers' use of these activities?

Means and standard deviations for items 1 through 41 in Section IV of the questionnaire were calculated. To determine if the frequency of each of the activities

assessed in these questions was related to grade level, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted. The independent variable was grade, and the dependent variable was the teachers' response to the question. For any statistically significant difference, appropriate post-hoc analyses were conducted and effect sizes computed.

To control for Type I errors, the p -value was set at .01. Similar to the procedures used in Graham et al. (2003), this provided an adequate control for Type I errors, without over controlling for Type II errors.

Chapter IV

Results

In this chapter, I provide information about primary grade writing instruction gathered through a survey mailed to 300 first, second, and third grade teachers (100 at each grade) across the United States. Of the 300 surveys mailed, 178 (59%) were completed and returned. However, because six participants were dropped due to teaching a grade other than those represented in the survey (i.e, fourth), the survey (N= 294) yielded a 61% return rate.

The first section of this chapter provides information regarding respondents and non-respondents, including grades taught, annual expenditures for materials per pupil, as well as size, location, and type of school. The next section offers information about the teachers, their students, and the writing programs as reported by respondents. Gender, ethnicity, highest educational level attained, grades taught, quality of teacher certification program, and the number of years taught are given for respondents. The number of reported students who qualify for free and reduced meals and special education services is provided, in addition the ethnicity of students is tabulated. Finally, the writing approach used by teachers, their opinions regarding writing instruction, and the type of instructional groupings they use during writing is offered.

The third section of this chapter provides information about the amount of time teachers spend teaching specific writing skills and processes, as well as the amount of time students spend writing. The next section describes the writing activities that respondents reported their students do or will do throughout the academic year. The fifth section of this chapter reports information about the instructional and assessment

activities used by respondents' in their writing programs. These data are arranged into the following clusters: practices commonly used in a process approach to writing, use of instructional methods or supports during writing instruction, assessment techniques used during writing instruction, strategies used to extend writing instruction to the home, students' use of alternative methods for composing text, and occurrence of cross-curriculum writing. The final section of this chapter provides information about the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act on respondents' writing programs.

Research Question 1

Do participants responding to the questionnaire differ from those who did not respond in terms of grade taught, location of school (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural), computer density (number of computers per student), school size, and annual expenditures for materials per pupil?

In addition to providing the names of the 300 primary grade teachers, Market Data Retrieval (2004) also included information about grade level, location of the school (urban, suburban, rural), computer density (number of computers per student), school size, and the expenditures for materials spent per pupil. In order to determine if survey responders were representative of the sample as whole, information about responders and nonresponders was analyzed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between these groups. This process was completed prior to conducting analyses using data from the responders. Information regarding the comparison of responders and nonresponders on four of the five variables (grade taught, location of school, computer density, annual expenditures per pupil) provided by Market Data Retrieval is located in Table 6.

Table 6

Characteristics of Responders and Nonresponders

Variable	Responders		Nonresponders	
	N	%	N	%
Grade Taught				
First	58	32.6	42	36.2
Second	57	32.0	41	35.3
Third	63	35.4	33	28.4
Location				
Urban	39	22.3	33	28.7
Suburban	69	39.4	53	46.1
Rural	67	38.3	29	25.2
Computer Density ¹				
1-3	33	18.5	31	26.7
4-6	54	30.3	26	22.4
7-9	35	19.7	21	18.1
10-14	23	12.9	10	8.6
15-19	6	3.4	10	8.6
20-29	7	3.9	4	3.4
30+	7	3.9	6	5.2
Expenditures Per Pupil				
\$1-109.99	6	4.7	5	5.6
\$110-129.99	5	3.9	9	10.1
\$130-144.99	9	7.1	5	5.6
\$145-159.99	8	6.3	5	5.6
\$160-169.99	5	3.9	4	4.5
\$170-184.99	10	7.9	6	6.7
\$185-194.99	11	8.7	9	10.1
\$195-209.99	6	4.7	7	7.9
\$210-229.99	10	7.9	16	18.0
\$230-259.99	19	15.0	6	6.7
\$260-299.99	15	11.8	6	6.7
\$300+	23	18.1	11	12.4

¹ Computer density is designated as number of computers per student

Chi-square analyses revealed that there were no significant differences between responders and non-responders regarding grade taught, school location, computer density, and expenditures per student (all $ps > .06$). In addition, an analysis of variance indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between responders ($M = 386.56$, $SD = 241.75$) and nonresponders for size of school ($M = 420.14$, $SD = 243.89$). Consequently, there was a relatively high rate of survey completion, and responders and nonresponders did not differ on any of the available variables provided by Market Data Retrieval.

Research Question 2

What are characteristics of the teachers, their students, and their writing programs as reported by those who responded to the questionnaire?

Characteristics of the teachers. Of the 178 respondents, all but one provided information regarding their gender and ethnicity. Six males (3%) and 171 (96%) females completed the survey. In addition, 162 respondents (91%) reported that they were White, seven (4%) reported that they were Black, three (2%) marked that they were Hispanic, and three (2%) reported that they were Asian. Two respondents (1%) chose Other for their ethnicity.

Teachers were also asked to report how many years they had been teaching and what grade they taught at the time they completed the questionnaire. Of the 178 respondents, the average number of years spent teaching was 17 ($SD = 10$). In addition, 53 (30%) reported that they were teaching first grade, 50 (28%) that they were teaching second, 58 (33%) that they were third grade teachers, and 17 (10%) reported that they

taught multi-grades. However, it should be noted that in all subsequent statistical analyses involving grade, teachers who taught multiple grades were not included.

Of the 178 participants, 175 (98%) provided information about their highest educational level and the quality of their teacher certification program. Twenty-nine respondents (16%) reported that they had received their Bachelor's degree, 74 (42%) had their Bachelor's degree plus, 42 (24%) had their Master's degree, and 30 (17%) had their Master's degree plus.

One-hundred-sixty-three (92%) of the 178 respondents indicated that they attended a teacher certification program. The average rating that respondents gave their teacher certification program was 3.19 ($SD = 1.2$). This average score was equivalent to reporting that their teacher certification program was "adequate".

In addition, participants were asked to comment on their personal beliefs and preferences regarding writing and writing instruction (Table 7). Overall, teachers responded positively when asked if they liked to teach writing, if they effectively manage their classroom during writing instruction, if they are effective at teaching writing, and if they enjoy writing. On the 6-point-Likert-type scale with scores ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), the average response for each question was a 5 (moderately agree). Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if teachers' beliefs and preferences regarding writing and writing instruction differed by grade revealed no statistically significant differences for each variable.

Characteristics of the students. The average number of students per class as reported by the 178 respondents was 19.96 ($SD = 5.14$). An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if class size differed by grade. Results showed that class size was

Table 7

*Primary Grade Teachers' Beliefs and Preferences Regarding Writing and Writing**Instruction*

Survey Question	N	M	SD
I like to teach writing.	177	5.0	1.2
I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction.	177	5.1	.94
I like to write.	177	4.7	1.2
I am effective at teaching writing.	175	4.8	.97

statistically significant for grade ($F = 5.62$; $df = 2, 158$; $MSE = 116.75$, $p = .004$). Follow up analyses revealed that classes in grades two and three were larger than those in grade 1 (grade 2 vs. grade 1: $p = .003$; $ES = .57$) (grade 3 vs. grade 1: $p = .005$; $ES = .37$). Means and standard deviations for the number of students in class by grade are provided in Table 8.

Information regarding the number of students qualifying for FARMS and special education services, students' ethnicity, and the number of students rated as above average, average, and below average writers by their teachers was also gathered. Based on information provided by 113 (63%) respondents, results revealed that an average of 31% of students qualified for FARMS. Of the 98% of teachers who provided information about the ethnicity of their students, 75% were White, 11% were Hispanic, 10% were Black, 2% were Asian, and 2% were Other. When asked about the number special education students in their classes, 170 (96%) participants reported that an average of 10% of their students received special education services. In addition, participants were asked to rate their students as above average, average, and below average writers. Of the 177 (99%) respondents who provided information about the writing abilities of their students, an average of 15% of students were classified as above average writers, 67% were average, and 21% were below average. There was no statistically significant difference by grade for any of these measured variables.

Characteristics of writing programs. Participants were asked to comment on the instructional approach they use to teach writing (i.e., process, traditional skills, a combination of process and traditional skills) and their use of a commercial program to teach any aspect of writing. One-hundred-seventy-six teachers (99%) responded to the

Table 8

Number of Students in Class by Grade

Grade	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First	18.5	4.4
Second	21.1	4.4
Third	21.0	4.8

Note. $N=161$; Teachers who taught at multiple grade levels were not included in the analysis.

writing approach item, with 126 (72%) participants reporting that they used a “traditional skills approach combined with process writing”, 35 (20%) noting they employed a “process writing approach”, and 11 (6%) a “traditional skills approach”. In addition, four (2%) respondents responded “other” to this question and provided information to describe their approach to writing instruction. For example, two participants who responded “other” wrote “6 + 1 Traits”, one wrote “National Literacy Organization Balanced Literacy”, and one described their writing approach in detail.

Survey participants were also asked to respond to a question about their use of commercial programs to teach writing, handwriting, spelling, or any other aspect of composing text. Of the 176 (99%) teachers who responded to this question, 61 (34%) reported that they did not use a commercial approach to teach writing, and 115 (65%) reported that they did. Chi-square analysis determined that no statistically significant differences were present by grade for teachers’ use of commercial programs to teach writing.

A follow-up question asked participants to indicate what programs they used. Of the 115 respondents who indicated that they used a commercial program, 107 (93%) provided the name of one or more programs they used (Table 9). The most common commercial writing programs reportedly used by respondents were Zaner-Bloser (14.7%), Houghton-Mifflin (9.6%), McGraw-Hill (5.1%), and Rebecca Sitton Spelling (5.1%). A smaller percent of respondents reported using Handwriting Without Tears (2.8%), Scott Foresman (handwriting) (2.3%), and Rigby Spelling (1.1%). In addition, 30 additional commercial writing programs were listed only one time by respondents (i.e., Evan-Moor Traditional Manuscript, SRA spelling, Saxon Phonics, Write Source, etc.).

Table 9

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Commercial Writing Programs by Frequency

Commercial Writing Program	N	%
Zaner-Bloser	26	14.7
Houghton-Mifflin	17	9.6
McGraw-Hill	9	5.1
Rebecca Sitton Spelling	9	5.1
4 Square/ 4 Block	8	4.5
Harcourt Brace	8	4.5
Open Court	7	4.0
6 + 1 Traits	5	2.8
ABEKA	5	2.8
D'Nealian Handwriting	5	2.8
Handwriting Without Tears	5	2.8
Scholastic	5	2.8
Scott Foresman (handwriting)	4	2.3
Scott Foresman (English program)	4	2.3
Shurley Spelling/Grammar	4	2.3
Write Traits	4	2.3
Step Up to Writing	3	1.7
Writer's Workshop	3	1.7
Frank Schaffer	2	1.1
Peterson Handwriting	2	1.1
Project Read	2	1.1
Rigby Spelling	2	1.1
Scott Foresman (spelling)	2	1.1
Silver Burdett (textbooks)	2	1.1

Note. In addition to those listed in the table, 30 other commercial writing programs were listed once by respondents (i.e., Evan-Moor Traditional Manuscript, SRA spelling, Saxon Phonics, Write Source, etc.)

Teachers were also asked to report how often they use a variety of instructional groupings during writing instruction (Table 10). Of the 178 respondents, 96% of teachers indicated percentages for how much of their instructional time during writing involved whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individualized instruction. Overall, teachers reported using whole class groupings for slightly more than half (56%) of their instructional time during writing, and about a quarter each for small groups (23%) and individualized instruction (24%). Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if the type of instructional groupings teachers use during writing instruction varied significantly by grade. Results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference by grade for any of the instructional groupings.

Research Question 3

How much time during an average week do teachers who responded to the questionnaire spend teaching specific writing skills and processes and how much time do their students spend writing? Is grade level related to time students spend composing and time teachers spend teaching writing?

Participants were asked to report how many minutes their students spent writing during an average week. Of the 178 respondents, 166 (93%) indicated that their students spent about two hours writing each week ($M = 116.7$; $SD = 70.8$). In addition, teachers were also asked to report the amount of time they spent teaching a variety of specific writing skills (i.e., spelling, handwriting, revising, grammar and usage, as well as planning) during an average week (Table 11). Ninety-four percent (168) of participants responded that they spent an average of 75 minutes teaching spelling skills to their students, and 92% (164) reported that they taught handwriting skills for an average of 47

Table 10

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Instructional Groupings During Writing Instruction

Type of Instructional Grouping	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Whole Group	55.7	26.9
Small Group	22.8	20.1
Individualized	23.9	19.7

Note: N=172

Table 11

How Often Primary Grade Teachers Report Teaching Writing Skills (in Minutes)

Writing Skill	N	M	SD
Spelling	168	74.6	61.8
Handwriting	164	46.5	37.2
Revising	158	32.1	28.3
Grammar & Usage	169	79.4	76.7
Planning	153	38.3	35.0

minutes. In addition, 89% (158) of teachers indicated that they taught revising skills for an average of 32 minutes, and 95% (169) reported that they spent an average of 79 minutes teaching grammar and usage. Furthermore, 86% (153) of respondents reported that they taught planning strategies to their students for an average of 38 minutes per week. Chi-square analyses conducted to determine if there were between-grade differences for time students spent writing or time teachers spent teaching specific writing skills revealed no statistically significant differences for any of the variables.

Research Question 4

What type of writing activities do teachers who responded to the questionnaire have their students do during the course of the academic year? Is grade level related to the types of writing activities reported by teachers?

The most frequent writing activities employed by the responding teachers were: stories (96%), drawing a picture and writing something to go with it (95%), writing letters to another person (89%), journal writing (87%), and completing worksheets (86%). The least used writing activities were: writing plays (16%), comic strips (17%), biographies (28%), and autobiographies (29%). Table 12 provides a listing of the number of teachers who employed each of the identified writing activities. These are listed by frequency, with more frequent activities listed first and less frequent activities listed last.

In addition to the list provided on the survey, teachers were given the opportunity to include any additional writing activities that their students do over the course of the academic year. Twenty-three percent (40) of respondents provided additional activities that were not already on the survey (Table 13). The most common other writing activities provided by the participants were: content area writing in math and science (21.7%),

Table 12

Types of Writing Activities Students Do During the Academic Year by Frequency

Writing Activity	% Responded Yes
Stories	96.1
Drawing a Picture & Writing Something to go with it	94.9
Writing Letters to Another Person	88.8
Journal Writing	86.5
Completing Worksheets	86.0
Personal Narratives	79.8
Writing in Response to Material Read	78.1
Poems	75.3
Writing Summaries	65.7
Lists	65.2
Book Reports	62.4
Writing to Inform	59.0
Books	48.3
Copying Text	42.7
Writing to Persuade	36.0
Alphabet Books	33.7
Autobiographies	29.2
Biographies	28.1
Comic Strips	16.9
Plays	15.7

Note: N = 178

Table 13

Additional Writing Activities Provided by Respondents by Frequency

Writing Activity	N	%
Content Area Writing (Math & Science)	10	21.7
Descriptive Writing	5	10.8
Invitations/Thank You Notes	5	10.8
Compare/Contrast Writing	4	8.7
How To/Directions	4	8.7
Newspaper Articles	4	8.7
Research/Reports	3	4.7
Writing to a Prompt	3	4.7
Explanatory/Cause & Effect Writing	2	3.1
Note Taking	2	3.1
Reflection/Opinion	2	3.1
Writing Sentences	2	3.1

Note: In addition to those listed in the table, 13 other writing activities were listed once by respondents (i.e., phone messages, riddles, alliteration, dialogue, story problems, onomatopoeia, prayers, recipes, personal recounts, labels, cartoons, graphic organizers, and e-mailing letters to penpals in another state)

invitations and thank you notes (10.8%), descriptive writing (10.8%), newspaper articles (8.7%), instructions (8.7%), and compare and contrast writing (8.7%). The least common other writing activities provided by the respondents were: note taking (3.1%), reflection/opinion writing (3.1%), explanatory/ cause and effect writing (3.1%), and writing sentences (3.1%). In addition, 13 writing activities were listed only one time by respondents (i.e., phone messages, riddles, alliteration, dialogue, story problems, onomatopoeia, prayers, recipes, personal recounts, labels, cartoons, graphic organizers, and e-mailing letters to penpals in another state).

Chi-square analyses were conducted for each writing activity that was already provided on the survey to determine if there were statistically significant differences by grade level. Of the 20 writing activities listed, eight were found to be statistically significant by grade. These were: personal narratives, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 9.63, p = .008$; writing in response to material read, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 14.11, p = .001$; poems, $X^2(2, N = 160) = 10.25, p = .006$; writing summaries, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 48.12, p < .001$; writing to inform, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 27.61, p < .001$; writing to persuade, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 36.28, p < .001$; alphabet books, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 17.44, p < .001$; and biographies, $X^2(2, N = 161) = 18.38, p < .001$). Data by grade for each of these writing tasks is presented in Table 14.

For “personal narratives”, follow-up analyses revealed that third grade students were more likely to write personal narratives than those in second grade ($p = .003$; coefficient phi = .28) and those in first grade ($p = .005$; coefficient phi = .26). In addition, when follow-up analyses were conducted for “writing in response to material read”, students in grade three participated in this activity more than students in grade two

Table 14

Writing Activities with Statistically Significant Differences by Grade

Writing Activity	% Responded Yes First Grade	% Responded Yes Second Grade	% Responded Yes Third Grade
Personal Narratives	73.6	72.0	93.1
Writing in Response to Material Read	71.7	64.0	93.1
Poems	64.2	73.5	89.7
Writing Summaries	34.0	60.0	96.6
Writing to Inform	35.8	56.0	84.5
Writing to Persuade	13.2	30.0	67.2
Alphabet Books	54.7	32.0	17.2
Biographies	13.2	26.0	50.0

($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .36) and grade one ($p = .003$; coefficient phi = .28). Subsequent analyses for “poems” revealed that third grade students were more likely to write poems than were first grade students ($p = .001$; coefficient phi = .31). Similar to findings for “personal narratives” and “writing in response to material read”, students in third grade were more likely to write summaries than students in grade two ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .45) or grade one ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .66). Furthermore, second grade students were more likely to write summaries than first grade students ($p = .008$; coefficient phi = .26). When follow-up analyses were conducted for “writing to inform” results again indicated that third grade students were more likely to do this activity than were second ($p = .001$; coefficient phi = .31) or first grade students ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .50). Comparable to the findings above, students in third grade were more likely to write to persuade than were students in second ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .37) or first grade ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .55). However, when follow-up analyses were conducted for “alphabet books”, results revealed that students in first grade were more likely to do this writing activity than those in third grade ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .39). Finally, when subsequent analyses were computed for “biographies”, third grade students were more likely to write biographies than were second ($p = .009$; coefficient phi = .25) or first grade students ($p < .001$; coefficient phi = .39).

Research Question 5

How often do teachers who responded to the questionnaire incorporate specific instructional and assessment activities and techniques into their writing programs? Is grade level related to teachers’ use of these activities?

Participants were asked to respond to a variety of questions regarding their use of instructional and assessment activities to support writing instruction using a Likert-type scale with scores ranging from 0 (never) to several times a day (7). Data from these questions were clustered into six categories: teachers' use of writing activities commonly included in a process approach to writing instruction, instructional methods or supports used during writing instruction, use of assessment techniques while teaching writing, strategies used to extend writing instruction to the home, students' use of alternative methods of composing text during writing instruction, and use of cross-curriculum writing.

Writing Activities Commonly Included in a Process-Approach to Writing Instruction

Means and standard deviations for teachers' use of process-approach writing activities are presented in Table 15. These items are rank ordered from the highest to the lowest mean. The frequency with which participants employed each activity in this cluster is listed in the same order in Table 16.

Most teachers (70%) reported that they conferenced with their students about writing on at least a weekly basis. However, when asked how often students conference with their peers about writing, most respondents (70%) indicated that this activity occurred less frequently (at least monthly). In addition, the majority of teachers (78%) reported that students share their writing with peers at least several times a month and most (70%) indicated that students help their classmates with writing at least monthly. When teachers were asked to report how often their students engaged in planning before writing, most (70%) respondents indicated that their students participated in this activity at least weekly. However, teachers reported that their students engaged in revising less

Table 15

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Process-Approach Writing Activities

Writing Activity	N	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher Conferences	173	3.8	1.6
Planning	176	3.8	1.5
Share Writing with Peers	176	3.7	1.4
Revising	177	3.4	1.6
Helping Peers with Writing	174	3.2	2.0
Peer Conferences	174	3.1	1.9
Publishing	177	2.4	1.3
Teacher Reads own Writing	176	2.4	2.0

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day)

Table 16

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Process-Approach Writing Activities by Frequency and Percent

Writing Activity	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Teacher Conferences	3 (1.7)	19 (10.7)	14 (7.9)	23 (12.9)	52 (29.2)	39 (21.9)	19 (16.1)	4 (2.3)
Planning	1 (.6)	17 (9.6)	17 (9.6)	31 (17.4)	47 (26.4)	42 (23.6)	19 (16.1)	2 (1.1)
Share Writing with Peers	0	19 (10.7)	19 (10.7)	27 (15.2)	59 (33.1)	37 (20.8)	15 (8.5)	0
Revising	5 (2.8)	23 (12.9)	15 (8.4)	47 (26.4)	39 (22.0)	34 (19.1)	14 (7.9)	0
Helping Peers with Writing	19 (10.7)	26 (14.6)	19 (10.7)	31 (17.4)	28 (15.7)	23 (12.9)	23 (12.9)	5 (2.8)
Peer Conferences	21 (11.8)	29 (16.3)	18 (10.1)	22 (12.4)	39 (21.9)	26 (14.6)	15 (8.4)	4 (2.3)
Publishing	7 (4.0)	46 (25.8)	40 (22.5)	43 (24.2)	30 (16.9)	10 (5.6)	1 (.6)	0
Teacher Reads own Writing	34 (19.1)	46 (25.8)	15 (8.4)	31 (17.4)	19 (10.7)	13 (7.3)	18 (10.1)	0

often than they did planning, with the majority of participants (75%) reporting that their students revised their writing at least several times a month. In addition, participants were also asked to report how often their students published their writing. Results showed that students published their writing far less often than they planned for or revised it, with 26% of respondents indicating that this happened several times a year, 24% reporting that it occurred several times a month, and 23% indicating that students published their writing on a monthly basis. Finally, teachers reported how often they read their own writing to the students in their class. The majority of respondents indicated that this activity did not occur very frequently, with 80% reporting that it occurred at least several times a year.

In addition to the process-approach writing activities discussed above, participants were asked to respond to three questions in this cluster using a modified 7-point-Likert-type scale, with scores ranging from never (0) to always (7) and using 3.5 (half the time) as the midpoint. The items using the modified scale were: how often students select their own writing topics, how often they are allowed to complete writing assignments at their own pace, and how often they are encouraged to use invented spellings. Sixty-four percent of teachers reported that their students selected writing topics at least half the time, with only 1% indicating that their students were never given this opportunity. When asked if students completed writing assignments at their own pace, participants indicated that this occurred more frequently than students were allowed to select their writing topics. Most teachers (66%) reported that their students were allowed to complete writing assignments at their own pace more than half the time. Similarly, 80% of respondents indicated that they encouraged their students to use invented spellings more than half the

time, with 36% of these teachers reporting that their students were always encouraged to use invented spellings. Means and standard deviations for these items are provided in Table 17.

Instructional Methods or Supports Used During Writing Instruction

The second cluster of questions regards teachers' use of a variety of instructional methods or supports during writing instruction. Means and standard deviations for items in this cluster are presented in Table 18, and the frequency with which each item occurred is provided in Table 19.

Participants indicated how often they teach their students a range of basic writing skills (i.e., spelling, capitalization, grammar, etc.). All responders reported teaching spelling skills to their students on at least a weekly basis. Most teachers (56%) indicated that this occurred at least daily. Similarly, 90% of respondents reported that they taught capitalization skills at least weekly, and 60% of these teachers indicated that this instruction took place at least daily. When teachers were asked to report how often they taught grammar skills to the students in their class, most (63%) indicated that this occurred at least weekly, with the majority of teachers (56%) reporting that they taught grammar skills at least daily. In addition, most participants (90%) reported that they taught punctuation skills at least weekly, with the majority (56%) of punctuation instruction occurring on at least a daily basis. The majority of respondents (80%) also reported that they taught handwriting skills and sentence construction skills to their students at least weekly. In contrast to the findings discussed above, 80% of respondents indicated that they taught text organization skills on a monthly basis, much less often than the other writing skills listed.

Table 17

Average Scores for Process-Approach Writing Activities on Modified Likert-Type Scale

Writing Activity	N	M	SD
Invented Spellings	174	5.3	1.9
Writing at own Pace	176	4.8	1.6
Student Selection of Writing Topic	178	3.6	1.4

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to always (7) with a midpoint of 3.5 (half the time).

Table 18

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Instructional Writing Methods or Supports

Writing Activity/ Support	N	M	SD
Spelling Skills	177	5.4	.85
Capitalization Skills	177	5.3	1.4
Grammar Skills	177	5.3	1.1
Punctuation Skills	177	5.3	1.3
Handwriting Skills	175	4.6	1.6
Mini Lessons	176	4.6	1.5
Sentence Construction Skills	177	4.5	1.4
Model Writing Strategies	178	3.9	1.5
Writing Prompts	177	3.6	1.6
Reteach Skills	174	3.5	1.5
Text Organization Skills	174	3.5	1.5
Model Enjoyment or Love of Writing	174	3.4	1.9
Strategies for Planning	175	3.4	1.5
Strategies for Revising	177	3.2	1.6
Writing Centers	173	2.2	2.1
Writing Homework	175	2.2	2.0

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day).

Table 19

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Instructional Writing Methods or Supports by Frequency and Percent

Writing Activity/ Support	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Spelling Skills	0	0	0	0	34 (19.1)	44 (24.7)	92 (51.7)	7 (3.9)
Capitalization Skills	0	6 (3.4)	3 (1.7)	6 (3.4)	26 (14.6)	30 (16.9)	86 (47.2)	20 (11.2)
Grammar Skills	1 (.6)	1 (.6)	2 (1.1)	8 (4.5)	29 (16.3)	36 (20.2)	92 (51.7)	8 (4.5)
Punctuation Skills	0	3 (1.7)	4 (2.2)	8 (4.5)	26 (14.6)	32 (18.0)	87 (48.9)	17 (9.6)
Handwriting Skills	5 (2.8)	12 (6.8)	0	16 (9.0)	39 (21.9)	38 (21.3)	61 (34.3)	4 (2.2)
Mini Lessons	0	11 (6.2)	8 (4.5)	15 (8.4)	34 (19.1)	50 (28.1)	47 (26.4)	11 (6.2)
Sentence Construction Skills	0	7 (3.9)	10 (5.6)	22 (12.4)	40 (22.5)	49 (28.6)	44 (24.7)	5 (2.8)
Model Writing Strategies	3 (1.7)	12 (6.7)	18 (10.1)	29 (16.3)	47 (26.4)	38 (21.3)	30 (16.9)	1 (.6)
Writing Prompts	1 (.6)	25 (14.1)	18 (10.1)	35 (19.7)	43 (24.2)	31 (17.4)	23 (12.9)	1 (.6)
Reteach Skills	0	23 (12.9)	17 (9.6)	52 (29.3)	34 (19.1)	27 (15.2)	20 (11.3)	1 (.6)
Text Organization Skills	3 (1.7)	22 (12.4)	18 (10.1)	36 (20.2)	44 (24.8)	35 (19.7)	16 (9.0)	0
Model Enjoyment or Love of Writing	11 (6.2)	29 (16.3)	17 (9.6)	26 (14.6)	32 (18.0)	27 (15.2)	29 (16.3)	3 (1.7)
Strategies for Planning	5 (2.8)	22 (12.4)	22 (12.4)	33 (18.5)	45 (25.3)	36 (20.3)	12 (6.8)	0
Strategies for Revising	6 (3.3)	30 (16.9)	22 (12.4)	35 (19.7)	49 (27.5)	22 (12.4)	13 (7.3)	0
Writing Centers	60 (33.7)	23 (12.9)	10 (5.6)	22 (12.4)	28 (15.7)	14 (7.9)	16 (9.0)	0
Writing Homework	43 (24.2)	43 (24.2)	13 (7.3)	23 (12.9)	30 (16.9)	8 (4.5)	14 (7.9)	1 (.6)

In addition to questions pertaining to basic writing skills, participants were also asked to indicate how often they taught their students strategies for planning and revising during writing instruction. The majority of teachers (70%) reported that they taught these skills at least several times a month. These results are consistent with respondents' reports of how often their students engage in planning and revising during writing, as described above.

Teachers were also asked to report how often they provide mini-lessons to their students and how often they reteach writing skills or strategies that they had previously taught. Respondents indicated that they provided mini-lessons slightly more often than they retaught skills or strategies for writing. Most teachers (80%) reported providing mini-lessons to their students at least weekly, whereas the majority of teachers (76%) indicated that they retaught writing skills or strategies at least several times a month.

The survey respondents also reported how frequently they modeled writing strategies and their enjoyment or love of writing for their students. Not surprisingly, most teachers reported that they overtly modeled writing strategies slightly more often than they did their enjoyment of writing. The majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they modeled writing strategies for their students at least several times a month. In contrast, most teachers (75%) reported that they modeled their love or enjoyment of writing on at least a monthly basis.

The final items regarding instructional methods or supports used by teachers during writing instruction pertain to respondents' use of writing prompts, writing centers, and writing homework. The majority of teachers (85%) indicated that they used writing prompts with their students at least monthly, with 55% of these respondents reporting the

use of prompts at least weekly. However, participants indicated that they used writing centers and assigned students writing homework much less often than any other instructional method or support. Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that they never assigned their students writing homework, and 24% indicated that they did this only several times a year. In addition, only 9% of teachers reported assigning writing homework on at least a daily basis. Similarly, 34% of respondents indicated that their students never worked at writing centers, whereas only 9% indicated that this occurred daily.

In addition to the instructional methods and supports discussed above, two items from this cluster also used the modified Likert-type scale described previously. These questions ask teachers to report how often they used graphic organizers and lessons that had multiple instructional goals during writing instruction. The majority of teachers (57%) indicated that they used writing lessons with multiple goals more than half the time, with 17% reporting that they always did this. In addition, slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) reported that their students used a graphic organizer when writing more than half the time, with 15% indicated that their students always used graphic organizers. Means and standard deviations for these items are presented in Table 20.

Assessment Techniques Used During Writing Instruction

For this cluster of items, teachers were asked to indicate how frequently they monitored the writing progress of their students, encouraged their students to monitor their own writing progress, had students use rubrics to evaluate their writing, and used writing portfolios with their students.

Table 20

Average Scores for Instructional Methods or Supports on Modified Likert-Type Scale

Writing Activity	N	M	SD
Multi-Goal Lessons	173	4.4	1.7
Graphic Organizers	176	4.1	1.9

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to always (7) with a midpoint of 3.5 (half the time)

The majority of teachers (80%) reported that they monitor the writing progress of their students at least several times a month. In contrast, 80% of respondents indicated that they encouraged their students to monitor their own writing progress at least monthly. In addition, participants indicated that students in their classes used rubrics or writing portfolios as assessment techniques far less often than they did monitoring. Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that their students never used rubrics to evaluate their writing, with only 5% indicating that this occurred on a daily basis. Similarly, 31% of respondents indicated that their students never used writing portfolios, and only 10% reported that this occurred at least daily. The means and standard deviations for items in this cluster are listed in mean rank order in Table 21, and the frequency with which each item occurred is provided in Table 22.

Strategies Used to Extend Writing to the Home

Items in this cluster pertained to strategies that teachers were using to expand their classroom writing instruction to the students' home environments. Participants were asked to indicate how often they ask their students to write at home with parental help, asked parents to listen to something their child wrote at school, and communicated with parents about their child's writing progress.

Teachers consistently reported that items in this cluster occurred less frequently than items in previous clusters. Thirty-four percent of respondents indicated that they never asked students to write at home with parental help, and 26% reported that they did this several times a year. In addition, 29% of teachers reported that they never asked parents to listen to something their child wrote at school, and 34% indicated that they did this several times a year. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of teachers (65%)

Table 21

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Assessment Techniques During Writing Instruction

Assessment Technique	N	M	SD
Teacher Monitor Writing Progress	172	4.1	1.6
Student Monitor Writing Progress	176	3.9	2.0
Writing Portfolios	174	2.0	2.0
Student Use of Rubrics	175	1.9	1.8

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day).

Table 22

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Assessment Techniques During Writing Instruction by Frequency and Percent

Assessment Technique	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Teacher Monitor Writing Progress	1 (.6)	14 (7.9)	13 (7.3)	25 (14.0)	46 (25.8)	26 (14.6)	45 (25.3)	2 (1.1)
Student Monitor Writing Progress	8 (4.5)	24 (13.5)	16 (9.0)	17 (9.6)	30 (16.9)	23 (12.9)	53 (29.8)	5 (2.8)
Writing Portfolios	55 (30.9)	37 (20.8)	18 (10.1)	21 (11.8)	18 (10.1)	7 (3.9)	17 (9.6)	1 (.6)
Student Use of Rubrics	56 (31.5)	33 (18.5)	22 (12.4)	31 (17.4)	14 (7.9)	10 (5.6)	9 (5.1)	0

reported that they communicated with parents about their child's writing progress several times a year. It is important to note, though, that this particular finding is not surprising, as parent-teacher communication often occurs during school-wide conferences which are usually scheduled several times a year. However, what is surprising is that 7% of respondents indicated that they never communicated with parents about students' writing. The means and standard deviations for items in this cluster are listed in Table 23, and the frequency with which each item was reported is provided in Table 24.

Alternative Methods of Composing Used During Writing Instruction

Two survey items asked teachers to indicate how often they allowed one or more students in their classrooms to write by dictating their compositions to someone else or use the computer during the writing period.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (55%) indicated that they never allowed their students to write by dictation, with only 1% reporting that they allowed students in their class to do this during writing. In addition, 41% of respondents reported that they never allowed their students to use computers during the writing period. However, 11% of these teachers indicated that they did not have computers or lacked access to computers or related machinery (i.e., printer), and 3% reported that their students had a designated computer class or lab time outside of the regular classroom. The means and standard deviations for alternative modes of composing are provided in Table 25. In addition, the frequency with which these items were reported is presented in Table 26.

Table 23

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Activities to Extend Writing to the Home

Writing Activity	N	M	SD
Students Write at Home with Parental Help	172	1.7	1.8
Parents Listen to Students' Writing	172	1.6	1.6
Communicate with Parents About Students' Writing Progress	175	1.5	1.1

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day).

Table 24

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Activities to Extend Writing to the Home by Frequency and Percent

Writing Activity	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Students Write at Home with Parental Help	60 (33.8)	46 (25.9)	15 (8.4)	11 (6.2)	29 (16.3)	5 (2.8)	6 (3.4)	0
Parents Listen to Students' Writing	51 (28.7)	60 (33.7)	14 (7.9)	17 (9.6)	21 (11.8)	5 (2.8)	4 (2.2)	0
Communicate with Parents About Students' Writing Progress	13 (7.3)	115 (64.6)	21 (11.8)	10 (5.7)	14 (7.9)	1 (.6)	1 (.6)	0

Table 25

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Alternative Methods for Composing Text

Alternative Method	N	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Computers	175	1.6	2.0
Dictation	171	1.2	1.8

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7(several times a day).

Table 26

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Alternative Methods for Composing Text by Frequency and Percent

Alternative Method	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Computers	73 (41.0)	44 (24.7)	13 (7.3)	5 (2.8)	14 (7.9)	13 (7.3)	11 (6.2)	2 (1.1)
Dictation	97 (54.5)	25 (14.0)	12 (6.7)	10 (5.6)	9 (5.1)	10 (5.6)	8 (4.5)	0

Writing in Other Areas of the Curriculum

For the final cluster, survey participants were asked to indicate how often they extended writing to other areas of the instructional curriculum. Items in this cluster were: how often students used writing to support reading and reading to support writing, as well as how frequently students wrote in other content areas such as social studies, science, and math.

The majority of teachers (80%) indicated that students in their classes used writing to support reading on at least a monthly basis, with 14% reporting that this occurred slightly less often (several times a year). However, 3% of respondents reported that their students never used writing to support reading. Teachers also indicated that students used reading to support writing less often than they did writing to support reading. Most teachers (65%) reported that students used reading to support writing at least monthly, with an additional 23% indicating that this occurred several times a year. Furthermore, 7% reported that their students never used reading to support writing. When teachers were asked to report how often their students participated in cross-curriculum writing, 80% indicated that this occurred at least monthly. However, 17% of teachers reported that students wrote in other content areas several times a year and 2% reported that their students never did this. The means and standard deviations for items in this cluster are listed in Table 27 in mean rank order. The frequency with which respondents reported each item is provided in Table 28.

Table 27

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Cross-Curriculum Writing

Writing Activity	N	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cross-Curriculum Writing	176	3.6	1.7
Writing to Support Reading	175	3.6	1.7
Reading to Support Writing	169	2.9	1.8

Note: Teachers responded to each item using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day)

Table 28

Primary Grade Teachers' Use of Cross-Curriculum Writing by Frequency and Percent

Writing Activity	Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Cross-Curriculum Writing	3 (1.7)	30 (16.9)	15 (8.4)	32 (18.0)	39 (21.9)	33 (18.5)	19 (10.7)	5 (2.8)
Writing to Support Reading	5 (2.8)	24 (13.5)	15 (8.4)	32 (18.0)	32 (18.0)	47 (26.4)	17 (9.6)	3 (1.7)
Reading to Support Writing	13 (7.3)	41 (23.0)	16 (9.0)	38 (21.4)	23 (12.9)	25 (14.0)	11 (6.2)	2 (1.1)

An analysis of variance was conducted for each writing activity in the six clusters discussed above to determine if statistical differences existed by grade level. The dependent measure was teachers' rating on the Likert-scale for the item, whereas the independent variable was grade. Of the 41 writing activities described, nine were found to be statistically significant. These included: how often respondents taught handwriting skills, ($F = 9.78$; $df = 2, 155$; $MSE = 24.05$, $p < .001$); spelling skills, ($F = 4.99$; $df = 2, 157$; $MSE = 3.44$, $p = .008$); and capitalization skills, ($F = 5.12$; $df = 2, 157$; $MSE = 7.69$, $p = .007$); as well as the frequency with which participants retaught writing skills or strategies, ($F = 4.83$; $df = 2, 155$; $MSE = 10.13$, $p = .009$); had their students use graphic organizers when writing, ($F = 14.75$; $df = 2, 157$; $MSE = 45.65$, $p < .001$); monitored their students' writing progress, ($F = 9.84$; $df = 2, 154$; $MSE = 22.10$; $p < .001$); encouraged students to monitor their own writing progress, ($F = 4.85$; $df = 2, 156$; $MSE = 18.60$, $p = .009$); allowed students to use rubrics to evaluate their writing, ($F = 5.12$; $df = 2, 156$; $MSE = 15.23$, $p = .007$); and provided opportunities for their students to write in other content areas, ($F = 7.08$; $df = 2, 157$; $MSE = 18.56$, $p = .001$). Data by grade for each of these writing activities is provided in Table 29.

For "handwriting skills", follow-up analyses revealed that teachers in first ($p < .001$; $ES = .76$) and third grades ($p < .001$; $ES = .66$) were more likely to teach handwriting skills to their students than teachers in second grade. For spelling instruction, only first grade teachers ($p = .002$; $ES = .60$) were more likely to teach spelling skills than second grade teachers. In addition, respondents in first grade were more likely to teach capitalization skills to their students than were respondents in third grade ($p = .002$; $ES = .58$). When follow-up analyses were conducted for how often participants retaught

Table 29

Cluster Writing Activities with Statistically Significant Differences by Grade

Writing Activity	<u>Grade 1</u>			<u>Grade 2</u>			<u>Grade 3</u>		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Handwriting Skills	51	5.0	1.6	50	3.7	1.8	57	4.8	1.2
Spelling Skills	52	5.7	.8	50	5.2	.9	58	5.4	.8
Capitalization Skills	52	5.8	1.0	50	5.3	1.1	58	5.1	1.5
Reteaching Skills/Strategies	53	4.0	1.4	49	3.1	1.4	56	3.5	1.5
Graphic Organizers	52	3.5	1.6	50	3.8	1.8	58	5.2	1.8
Teacher Monitoring Writing Progress	53	4.5	1.6	50	3.3	1.6	54	4.4	1.2
Student Monitoring Writing Progress	52	4.2	2.1	50	3.3	1.8	57	4.4	2.0
Rubrics	53	1.4	1.8	49	1.7	1.6	57	2.4	1.8
Cross-Curriculum Writing	53	3.4	1.7	49	3.0	1.8	58	4.2	1.4

Note. Teachers responded to each item (except graphic organizers) using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (several times a day). Teachers responded to a question about graphic organizers using a 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to always (7) with a midpoint of 3.5 (half the time)

writing skills or strategies, findings indicated that first grade teachers were more likely to do this than were second grade teachers ($p = .002$; $ES = .60$). Subsequent analyses for the frequency with which students used graphic organizers when writing revealed teachers in third grade were more likely to use this organizational strategy than were those in first grade ($p < .001$; $ES = .90$). Similar to findings for “writing skills” teachers in both grades one ($p < .001$; $ES = .75$) and three ($p < .001$; $ES = .68$) reported that they were more likely to monitor the writing of their students than were second grade teachers. However, follow-up analyses conducted for the frequency with which respondents encouraged students to monitor their own writing progress revealed that third grade teachers were more likely to encourage their students to self-monitor their writing than were second grade teachers ($p = .003$; $ES = .57$). In addition, follow-up analyses for students’ use of rubrics to evaluate their writing revealed that third grade students were more likely to do this than first grade students ($p = .002$; $ES = .58$). Finally, students in grade three were more likely to write across the curriculum than were students in grade two ($p < .001$; $ES = .69$).

Influence of No Child Left Behind on Respondents’ Writing Programs

In addition to the information provided by respondents regarding their writing programs, teachers were also asked to report whether or not No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation influenced what they did during writing instruction. Of the 178 respondents, 30% (51) indicated that NCLB influenced their writing instruction in some way. A follow-up question asked participants to explain how the legislation affected their writing instruction. Of the 51 teachers who reported that No Child Left Behind influenced

what they did during writing instruction, 96% (49) included additional information to explain how their instruction was altered (Table 30).

More than half of the respondents (55%) indicated that they had made personal changes to their writing programs within the context of their classroom. The majority of these teachers (54%) reported that they had placed more emphasis on writing by having their students write more often. A smaller portion of these respondents (7%) indicated that they had independently adopted a commercial writing program to use in their classroom. Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that more emphasis had been placed on federal, state, or district standards for writing due to NCLB legislation, and 22% indicated that the school or district in which they taught had adopted a commercial program to use during writing instruction (i.e., 6 + 1 Traits). However, in contrast to the majority of responses, 16% of teachers reported that NCLB created time constraints on their instruction that forced them to limit the amount of time they taught writing and reduce the amount of writing by students. A small percent of teachers also indicated that they had higher expectations for students (4%) and felt more pressure to help them achieve (6%). In addition, two respondents provided explanations for the influence of No Child Left Behind that I was not able to categorize using the organizational system presented above (i.e., “Federal Funding”, “Since my awakening for inner peace, I have begun to teach children and not texts once again”).

Additional Information Provided by Respondents

The final component of the survey allowed respondents to provide any additional information they wanted to share regarding their writing programs. Of the 178 participants, 24% (43) offered extra information about their programs (Table 31). The

Table 30

Influence of NCLB on Primary Grade Teachers' Writing Programs by Frequency

Type of Change	N	%
Teacher-Level Changes to Writing Instruction	28	44.4
More Emphasis on Federal, State, or District Standards	12	19.0
District- or School-Wide Adoption of Commercial Writing Program	11	17.5
Time Constraints that Limit Writing	8	12.7
Pressure to Help Students Achieve	3	4.8
Greater Expectations for Students	2	3.2

Note. Two additional responses were provided that were not categorized based on the groups listed in the table ("Federal Funding", "Since my awakening for inner peace, I have begun to teach children and not texts once again").

Table 31

Extra Information Provided by Respondents by Frequency

Type of Information	N	%
Elaboration of Writing Program	24	54.5
Information About School	10	22.7
Dissatisfaction with Writing Program/Instruction	7	15.9
Concerns/Problems with Survey	3	6.8

majority of teachers (59%) provided elaborations of their writing programs (i.e., “We use the basic 4 Block writing set up”; “I really enjoy 6 Traits”). This information was reviewed to ensure that it did not change the type of writing approach that respondents’ had identified earlier in the survey. The review yielded no changes in the writing approach used by teachers. Participants (23%) also provided specific information about their school (i.e., “small private school, no more than 14 students in a class, k-6th”; “This is a Catholic school so the children are in church or religious instruction about 6 hours a week. I only mention this because we lose that time which public schools can use for teaching core subjects”). A smaller percentage of respondents (16%) expressed dissatisfaction with their current writing program or instruction (i.e., “We do not really have a writing program in place. I wish I had a better system besides journaling”; “Yes, we wish there was a good one out there to use”) and 7% (n = 3) stated concerns or problems they had with the survey instrument (i.e., “This was difficult for me to complete because of the grade level I teach”; “The answers are subjective and difficult to pinpoint a time frame accurately”).

Chapter V

Discussion

In the first section of this chapter, I restate the purpose of the study. Then, I summarize the results of the investigation, relating the findings to data from previous investigations. Finally, recommendations for future research and limitations of the study are presented.

Purpose

The purpose of this investigation was to gather information regarding the writing practices of primary grade teachers across the United States. To obtain this information, I sent 300 surveys to first, second, and third grade teachers (100 at each grade level) asking them a variety of questions regarding their writing programs. Participants were asked to respond to items about the types of students in their classrooms, the amount of time their students spent writing, the amount of time they devoted to teaching specific writing skills, and the types of writing their students did.

Teachers in this study were also asked how they implemented instruction on elements common to a process approach to writing, the types of instruction and instructional support they provided during writing, the procedures they employed for assessing students' writing, and the tasks they used to facilitate school-home connections in writing. In addition, participants were asked to identify alternative modes for composing they used in their classrooms, and how they included writing throughout the curriculum and across subject matter.

Summary of Findings

Characteristics of the teachers. The majority of survey respondents (94%) were white females who had earned credits beyond completing their Bachelor's degree (42%). Most teachers indicated that their teacher certification program was adequate, that they personally enjoyed writing and teaching writing, and that they were effective at teaching writing, as well as managing their classroom during writing instruction.

Characteristics of the students. The average number of students in the participants' classes was 20, with classes in second and third grade being larger than those in first grade. Similar to their teachers, most students were white (75%), and findings showed that 31% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Ten percent received special education services. Furthermore, teachers classified their students as mostly average writers, with 21% identified as below average writers, and only 15% classified as above average writers. These results support findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in which only one quarter of students in grades four, eight, and twelve were at or above the "proficient" level in writing (Persky et al., 2003). The results of the current investigation show that students are still not demonstrating high levels of success in writing.

Characteristics of writing programs. Most participants (72%) reported that they used a combined approach to writing instruction that blended traditional skills with process writing; a technique employed by effective literacy teachers in Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) and Wray et al. (2000). In addition, 65% of teachers utilized a commercial writing program to teach writing, with Zaner-Bloser and Houghton-Mifflin cited most frequently by respondents.

Teachers also indicated that most of their instruction in writing was delivered to their class as a whole (56% of the time), with less time spent in small groups (23% of the time) or one-on-one with students (24% of the time). These findings are similar to those in Pressley et al. (1996), in which teachers reported that about half of their total literacy instruction occurred with students as a whole group.

In the current investigation, teachers reported that students write for about two hours each week. This amount of writing was lower than expected, considering that similar results were found in Christenson et al. (1989), a study conducted 15 years ago with students with LD and other mild disabilities. Furthermore, students in more recent studies in primary grade classes were reported as writing for at least three hours a week (Bridge et al., 1997; Fisher & Hiebert, 1990; Graham et al. 2003). These findings demonstrate the relatively low frequency with which writing occurs in the primary grades, and further emphasizes the need for improved writing programs nationwide.

With regards to writing instruction, respondents indicated that they were teaching basic writing skills (i.e., spelling, handwriting, grammar and usage) more often on a weekly basis than process writing skills (i.e., planning and revising). Results show that participants were teaching spelling skills an average of 75 minutes a week, handwriting for 47 minutes, and grammar and usage skills for 79 minutes during an average week. In contrast, revising and planning were reportedly taught for 32 minutes and 38 minutes, respectively. These findings were consistent with questions I asked using Likert-type responses on how often respondents reported teaching each of the skills discussed above. Spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation skills were reported by most teachers as occurring on a daily basis, and revising and planning skills several times a month.

Although most teachers indicated that they used a combined approach to teach writing, these findings demonstrate that the majority of their instruction involved teaching basic skills.

Results of the current study also revealed that students were most likely to write stories, draw a picture and write something to go with it, write letters to another person, write in journals, and complete worksheets. These findings support previous research on primary grade writing instruction in which stories, letters, and journals were common activities completed by students (Bridge et al., 1997; Morrow et al., 1999; Pressley et al., 1996; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000). In addition, teachers in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) and Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) frequently used worksheets as part of their writing programs.

Teachers reported that their students participated in a variety of process-approach writing activities on a weekly (i.e., teacher-student conferences and planning) or monthly (i.e., peer conferences, helping classmates with writing, revising) basis. When these results were compared to those found in Graham et al. (2003), I found that teachers in the current study reported that their students were revising less often than those in the 2003 investigation. In addition, participants indicated that they read their own writing to students and that students published their writing only several times a year.

Participants also noted that their students were allowed to select their own writing topics at least half the time and complete writing assignments at their own pace and use invented spellings more than half the time. These indicators of writers' independence in the primary grades are consistent with those found in Graham et al. (2003). Also similar to results of Graham et al. (2003), participants in the current investigation reported that

they provided mini-lessons to their students on a weekly basis. However, they retaught skills or strategies for writing at least several times a month; much less often than was observed in Graham et al. (2003).

Teachers indicated that they modeled writing strategies for their students at least several times a month, and their enjoyment of writing monthly. In addition, writing prompts were reported as being used at least monthly. However, 34% of respondents indicated that their students never worked at writing centers; a common writing strategy employed by teachers nominated as effective in promoting literacy in Pressley et al. (1996). Furthermore, the majority of teachers in the current study reported that they never assigned their students writing homework, or only did so several times year.

This finding, in particular, reflects the low levels of parent participation reported by respondents with regards to writing instruction. Many indicated that they never asked students to write at home with parental help or asked parents to listen to something their child wrote at school. These results are surprising when compared to the importance that was placed on parent involvement by teachers in Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) and Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998).

The use of student writing portfolios, a major component of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 as described in Bridge et al. (1997), was not a common occurrence in the current investigation. Only 10% of teachers indicated that their students used writing portfolios daily, compared to 53% of participants in Pressley et al. (1996) who reported that writing portfolios were commonly used.

Respondents also reported that alternative methods for students' to compose text were rare. The majority of teachers indicated that they never allowed their students to

write by dictation or use computers during the writing period, despite the fact that computer use during writing was commonly reported by effective literacy teachers in Pressley et al. (1996). However, it is important to note that some teachers in the current study explained that they did not have access to computers or printers, preventing their students from using them during writing.

Finally, the majority of teachers reported that their students used writing to support reading and reading to support writing only on a monthly basis. In addition, similar results were found when participants indicated how often their students wrote in other content areas. These results are in stark contrast to those found in previous studies (Bridge et al., 1997; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985), in which respondents often indicated the use of cross-curriculum writing and a reading-writing blended approach as vital components of their literacy programs. In addition, teachers nominated as effective in teaching literacy commonly reported the use of writing across subject matter (Morrow et al., 1999; Pressley et al., 1996; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998), as did effective special education teachers (Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000). It seems that despite the importance placed on cross-curriculum writing by previous study participants, teachers in the current investigation were not employing these techniques frequently.

Grade Level Differences. When analyses were conducted to determine if grade level differences existed for the types of writing activities and assessments teachers reported applying in their classroom, a variety of statistically significant differences were found. Teachers were more likely to ask students in third grade to write personal narratives, write in response to material read, write summaries and biographies, and write to persuade or inform than were teachers in both second and first grade. In addition, third

grade students were more likely to monitor their own writing progress and partake in cross-curriculum writing than were second grade students. Finally, students in third grade were more likely to use graphic organizers and rubrics and write poems than were those in first grade. These findings are similar to those in Bridge and Hiebert (1985) in which students in third grade spent twice as much time participating in writing activities than did students in first grade.

Teachers also reported that students in first grade participated in a variety of writing activities more often than students in third or second grade. First grade students were more likely to complete alphabet books and receive instruction in capitalization than third grade students. In addition, first grade teachers were more likely to provide instruction in spelling and reteach writing skills or strategies they had previously taught than were second grade teachers. Finally, results indicated that teachers in third and first grade were more likely to teach handwriting skills and monitor their students' writing progress than were teachers in second grade.

The findings for grade level differences regarding writing instruction indicate that third grade writing instruction is different than writing instruction at first or second grade. Third grade teachers reported that their students participated in a variety of activities more often than did students in grade one or two. In addition, results show that writing programs at the first and second grade level were more similar to each other than they were to writing programs implemented at the third grade level.

Influence of No Child Left Behind. With regards to the influence that No Child Left Behind had on these primary grade teachers' writing instruction, many respondents (55%) indicated that they had made personal changes to their writing programs.

However, overall findings are inconsistent regarding the amount of time participants were teaching writing. Many teachers reported feeling increased pressure relative to federal, state, and district writing standards and therefore, were placing more emphasis on writing instruction. In contrast, some teachers indicated that they had less time to teach writing due to No Child Left Behind legislation. Based on the results of this investigation, it remains unclear as to how exactly NCLB influences the writing programs of primary grade teachers. One finding that is clear, however, is that this particular piece of federal legislation has influenced the way many teachers approach writing instruction in one way or another.

Strengths and Limitations

A major strength of this investigation was that it used a random sample of primary grade teachers, and that respondents were representative of the sample surveyed. In addition, I obtained a relatively high return rate (61%) in terms of respondents completing the survey. The survey also had strong content validity, as the questions were based on a thorough search of the research and instructional literature.

The primary limitation of this study is that its survey design relied on participants' self-report. Self-reporting can be an unreliable source of information, because it is unknown whether teachers' responses accurately describe what is occurring in their classrooms. However, as stated earlier, when classroom observations were paired with teacher surveys, relatively high levels of consistency resulted (Bridge et al., 1997; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Morrow et al., 1999; Wray et al., 2000). In addition, the question that asked teachers to describe their approach to writing instruction by checking one of four options (traditional skills approach combined with process writing, process writing

approach, traditional skills approach, other”) was too vague. Because I did not provide respondents with a definition of the “traditional skills approach” or “process writing approach”, it is possible that respondents were unclear what these approaches involved. Despite the lack of clarity for this item, however, teachers’ response to this question were consistent with the activities they reported using during writing instruction. Finally, it is important to note that differences in the findings of this investigation and previous writing studies may be due to methodological differences (i.e., who was sampled, or types of questions asked), rather than real differences in writing instruction.

Future Research

This study should be replicated to ensure reliability and validity of the survey instrument and to obtain a better understanding of the writing instruction of primary grade teachers across the nation. Second, to address the limitations of self-report data, future research needs to examine if teacher responses to the instrument used here are accurate. Because observations allow for the collection of information that may not be available through self-report, pairing this questionnaire with classroom observations would provide a better understanding of what is currently occurring during primary grade writing instruction nationwide, and would provide information on the validity of the instrument.

Finally, because this survey only asked teachers to respond to one question regarding the influence of No Child Left Behind on their writing programs, further investigations into the effects of this legislation on primary grade teachers’ writing instruction would provide those in the field of education with a deeper understanding of how NCLB has improved or impaired the teaching of writing. This is especially

important in light of the findings from investigation conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Persky et al., 2003) discussed earlier, and the state of student writing ability present in America today.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of what primary grade writing instruction currently looks like on a national scale. Results from the investigation suggest that most first, second, and third grade teachers (72%) were using a blended approach to writing instruction that combined traditional skills with process writing. In addition, the majority of participants (65%) were incorporating a commercial program to teach writing, usually Zaner-Bloser or Houghton-Mifflin. However, teachers reported that they were providing traditional basic skill instruction (i.e., handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage) more often than planning or revision skills. These results suggest that although primary grade students were participating in a variety of writing activities, especially writing stories and letters, they continued to spend a considerable amount of time learning the basic skills of writing. In addition, findings show that students in first, second, and third grade were writing for a relatively small amount of time per week (two hours), with no statistically significant differences by grade level.

This finding, in particular, is inconsistent with goals set forth by the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2002). The Commission suggested that more time needs to be allotted to writing instruction in schools, and that increasing the amount of time students write would do more to improve student performance than any other instructional strategy. Yet, the results of this study suggest that students were writing for only a small percentage of their academic day. Emphasis

on increasing the amount of time that primary grade students are engaged in writing activities needs to be brought to the forefront, if positive changes are to occur regarding students' writing performance.

This investigation also yielded findings showing that primary grade teachers and parents did not communicate about students' writing on a frequent basis. Participants rarely reported assigning students writing homework, and only discussed students' writing progress infrequently (several times a year). These results are disconcerting given the value placed by effective literacy teachers on parent participation in promoting effective writing (Rankin-Erickson and Pressley, 2000; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998). More focus needs to be placed on parent involvement in the writing programs of primary grade students, if deficits identified in the National Association of Educational Progress (Greenwald, Persky, Ambell, & Mazzeo, 1999) are to be alleviated.

Furthermore, teachers indicated only moderate levels of cross-curriculum writing as components of their writing programs. The use of writing to support reading, reading to support writing, and writing in other subject areas were cited as crucial aspects of effective writing programs in previous research (Morrow et al., 1999; Pressley et al., 1996; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Wharton-McDonald et al., 1998). More emphasis should be placed on providing a variety of cross-curriculum writing experiences for primary grade teachers in order to improve their overall writing ability and promote the importance of writing early in students' academic career.

Finally, the current study yielded mixed results regarding the influence of No Child Left Behind on the writing programs of primary grade teachers. The majority of teachers (55%) who provided information regarding the changes made to their writing

instruction based on this legislation indicated that they had made classroom-level adjustments (i.e., personal adoption of commercial writing program, more focus on writing). However, the influence of NCLB relative to the amount of time provided for writing instruction was inconsistent. As future research investigates this finding further, those in the field of education will gain a deeper understanding of how NCLB has changed the face of primary grade writing instruction throughout the United States.

APPENDIX A
Writing Survey Instrument

12. Check which of the following best describes your approach to writing instruction:

- traditional skills approach combined with process writing
 process writing approach
 traditional skills approach
 Other (describe briefly): _____

Section II: Please circle the appropriate response.

SD-Strongly Disagree
MD-Moderately Disagree
DS-Disagree Slightly
AS-Agree Slightly
MA-Moderately Agree
SA-Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. I like to teach writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 2. I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 3. I like to write. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 4. I am effective at teaching writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |

Section III: Please complete each question below

1. During an average week, how many minutes do your children spend writing? (**This does not include instruction. It does include time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing text that is paragraph length or longer**). _____

2. During an average week, how many minutes do you spend **teaching** each of the following?

_____ Spelling _____ Handwriting _____ Revising Strategies
 _____ Grammar and Usage _____ Planning Strategies

3. How much of your instructional time in writing involves **whole group instruction**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves **small group instruction or “cooperative” learning activities**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves **individualized instruction**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

4. Do you use a commercial program to teach writing, handwriting, spelling, or any other aspect of composing? _____ Yes _____ No
 What programs?

5. Please check which of the following writing activities your students will do this year.

_____ Stories _____ Personal Narratives _____ Journal Writing _____ Poems

_____ Lists _____ Book Reports _____ Books _____ Comic strips

_____ Plays _____ Alphabet Books _____ Completing Worksheets

_____ Copying Text _____ Drawing a picture and writing something to go with it

_____ Writing letters to another person _____ Autobiographies _____ Biographies

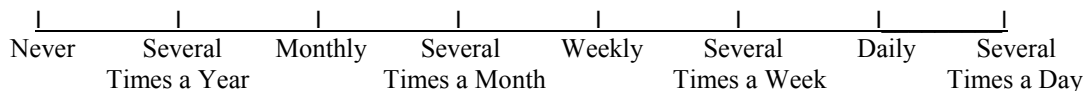
_____ Writing to persuade _____ Writing to inform _____ Writing summaries

_____ Writing in response to material read

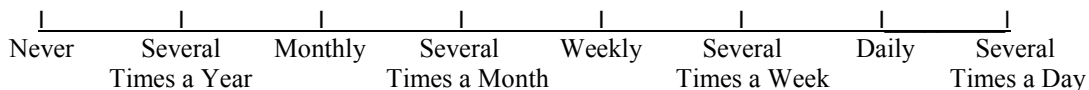
_____ Other types of writing (Please specify): _____

Section IV: Please complete the following questions.

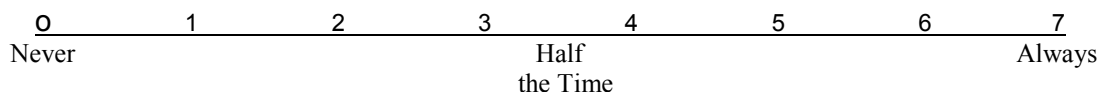
1. Circle how often **you conference** with students about their writing.



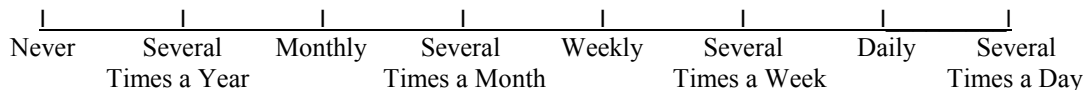
2. Circle how often **students conference with their peers** about their writing.



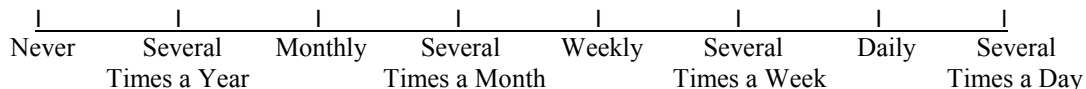
3. Circle how often **students select their own writing topics**.



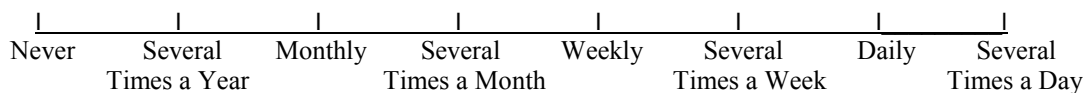
4. Circle how often your students engage in “**planning**” before writing.



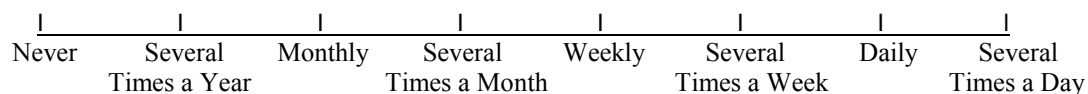
5. Circle how often your students “**revise**” their writing products.



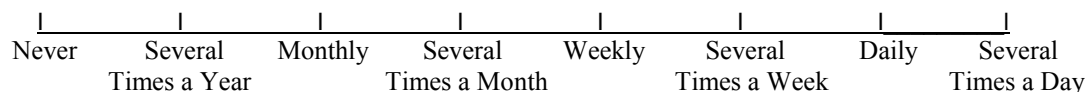
6. Circle how often **students share their writing** with their peers.



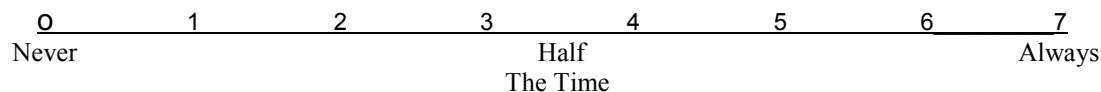
7. Circle how often your students “**publish**” their writing. (Publish means to print or write it so that it can be shared with others.)



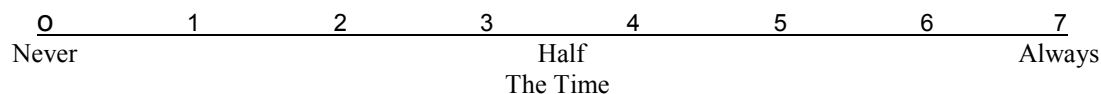
8. Circle how often your **students help their classmates** with their writing.



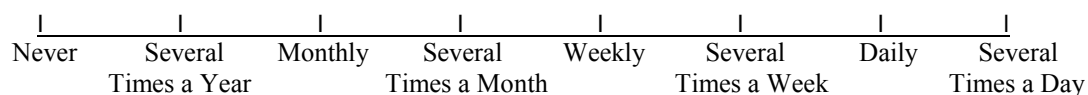
9. Circle how often students are allowed to **complete writing assignments at their own pace**.



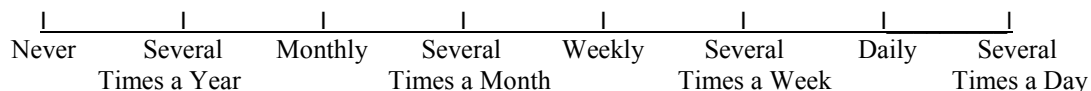
10. Circle how often you encourage students to use “**invented spellings**” at any point during the writing process.



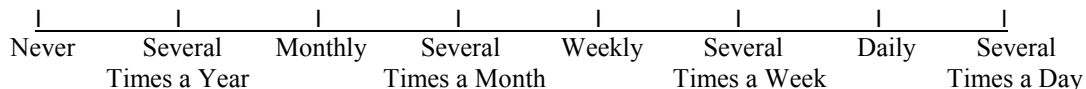
11. Circle how often **you read your own writing** to your students.



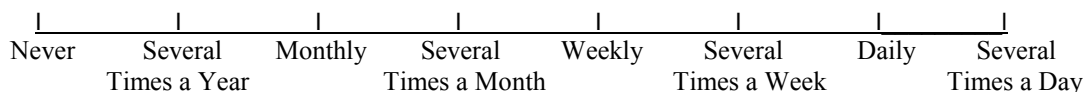
12. Circle how often you teach **sentence construction skills**.



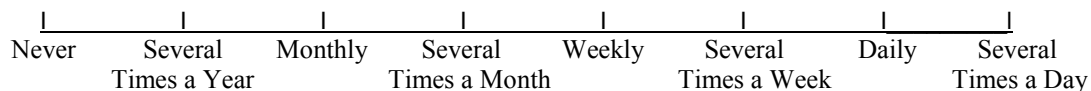
13. Circle how often you teach students about **ways of organizing text or how texts are organized**.



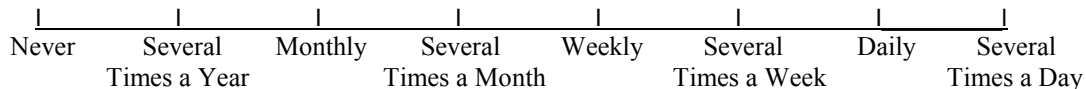
14. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for planning**.



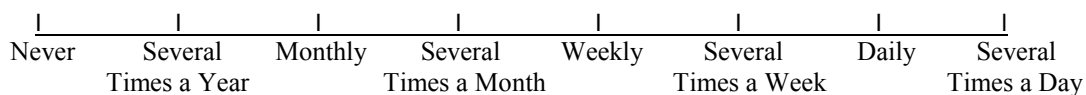
15. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for revising**.



16. Circle how often you teach students **handwriting skills**.



17. Circle how often you teach **spelling skills**.



18. Circle how often you teach **grammar skills**.

| | | | | | | |
 Never Several Monthly Several Weekly Several Daily Several
 Times a Year Times a Month Times a Week Times a Day

19. Circle how often you teach **punctuation skills**.

| | | | | | | |
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20. Circle how often you teach **capitalization skills**.

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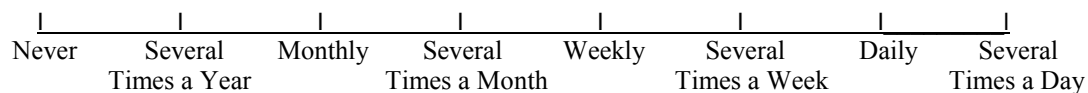
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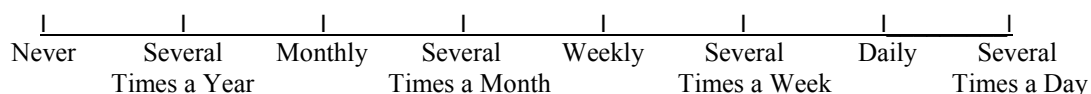
22. Circle how often you **overtly model writing strategies**.

| | | | | | | |
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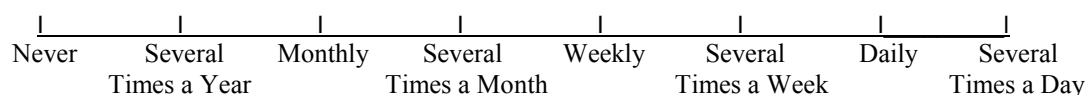
23. Circle how often you **model the enjoyment or love of writing** for students.



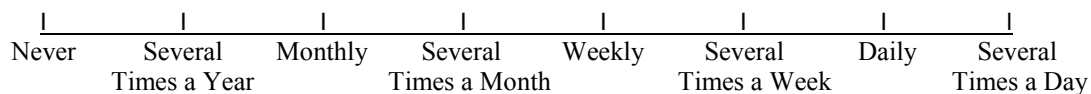
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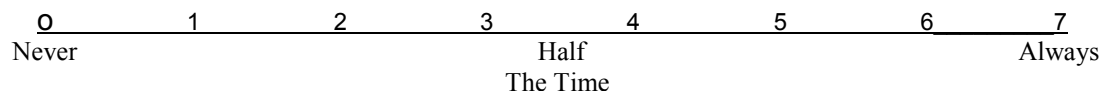
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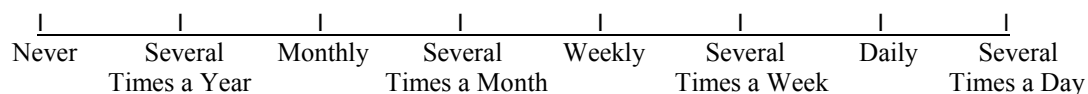
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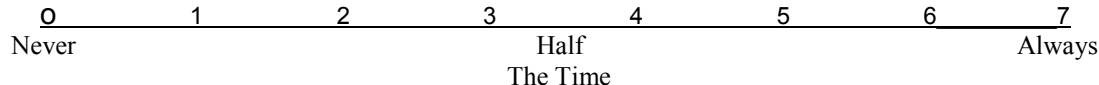
27. Circle how often your writing lessons have **multiple instructional goals**.



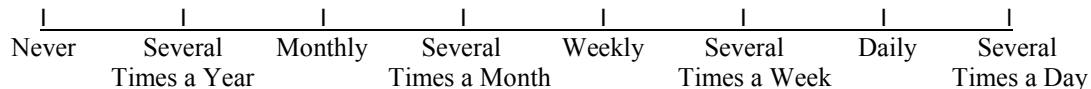
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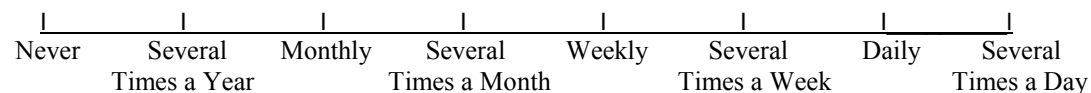
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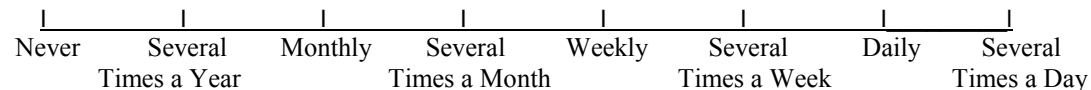
30. Circle how often **you monitor the writing progress** of your students in order to make decisions about writing instruction.



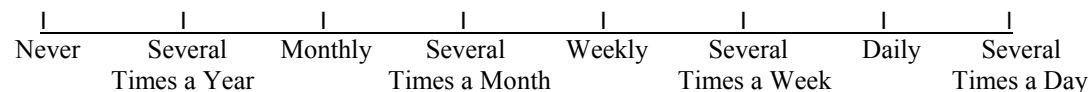
31. Circle how often you encourage **students to monitor their own writing progress**.



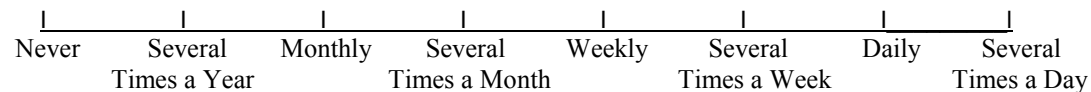
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34. Circle how often you ask students to **write at home with parental help**.



35. Circle how often you ask **parents to listen** to something their child wrote at school.

36. Circle how often you **communicate with parents** about their child's writing progress.

37. Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to write by **dictating** their compositions to someone else.

38. Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to use **computers** during the writing period.

39. Circle how often students use **writing to support reading** (e.g., write about something they read).

40. Circle how often students use **reading to support writing** (e.g., read to inform their writing).

41. Circle how often your students use **writing in other content areas** such as social studies, science, and math.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day

42. Has No Child Left Behind influenced what you do during writing instruction?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain how: _____

If you have any additional information about your writing program that you would like to share with us, please do so here.

APPENDIX B

Writing Survey with Asterisks Indicating Questions from Graham et al 2003

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- | | | | | | | |
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Section III: Please complete each question below

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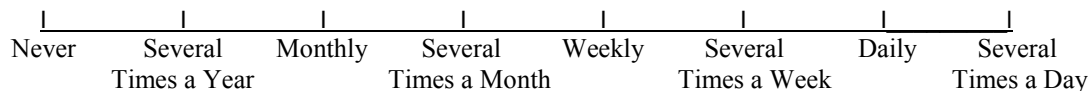
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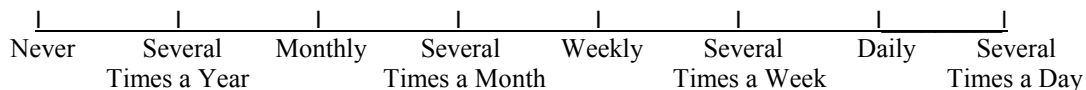
_____ Other types of writing (Please specify): _____

Section IV: Please complete the following questions.

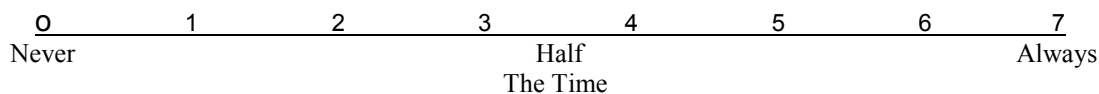
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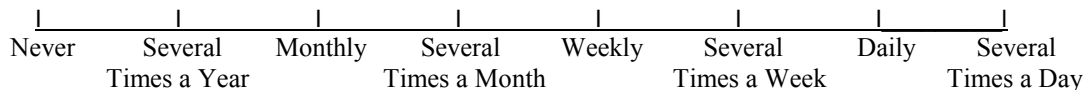
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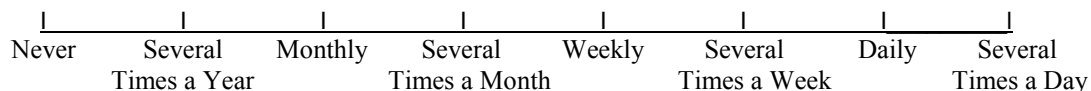
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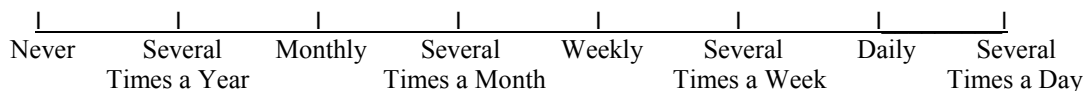
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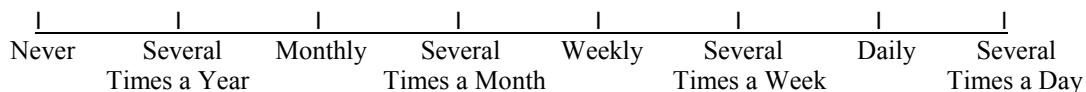
5. Circle how often your students **“revise”** their writing products.



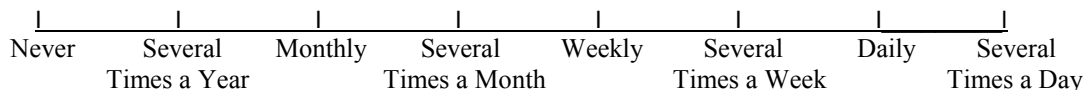
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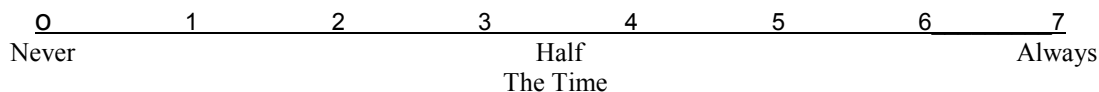
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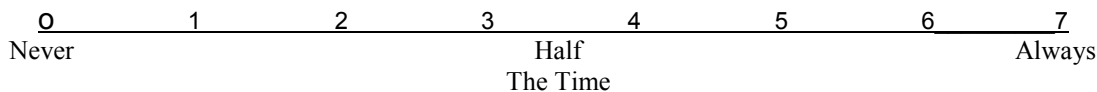
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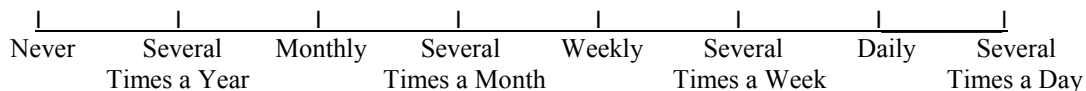
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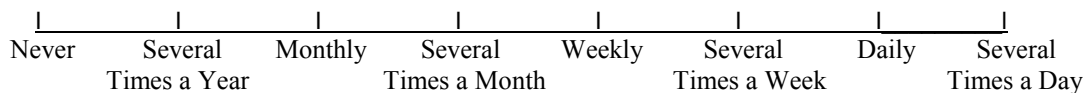
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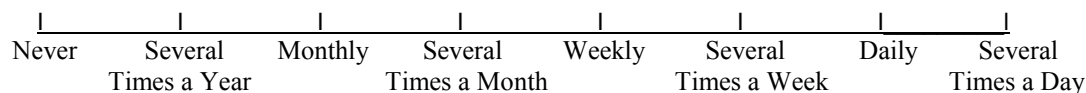
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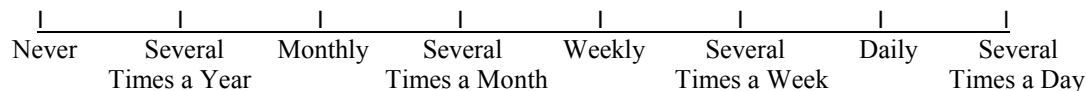
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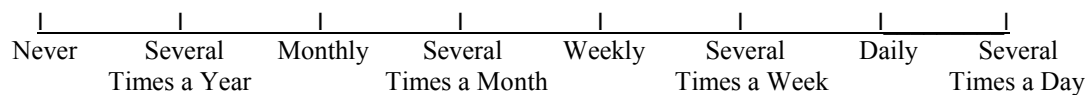
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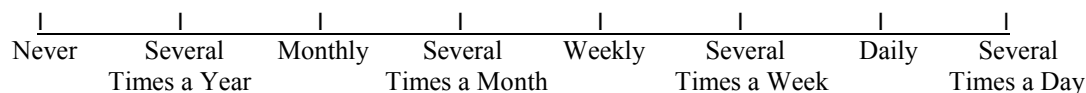
*19. Circle how often you teach **punctuation skills**.



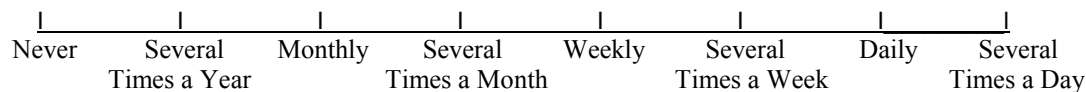
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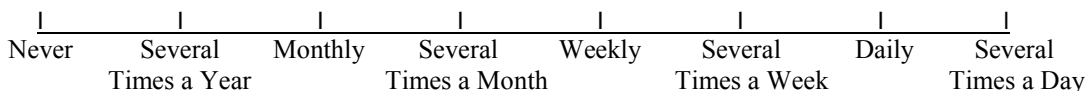
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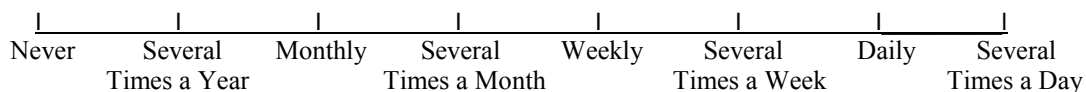
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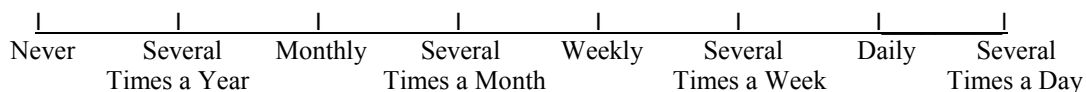
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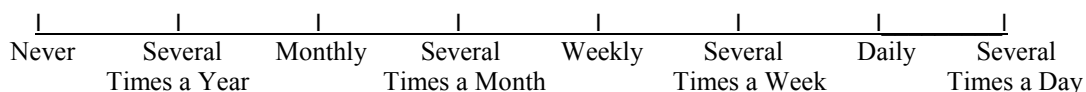
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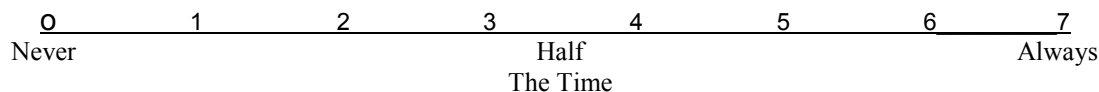
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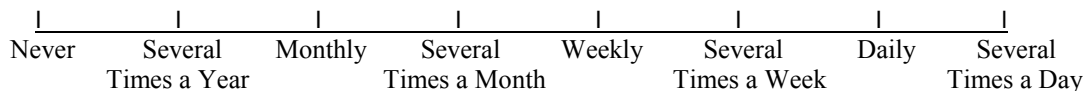
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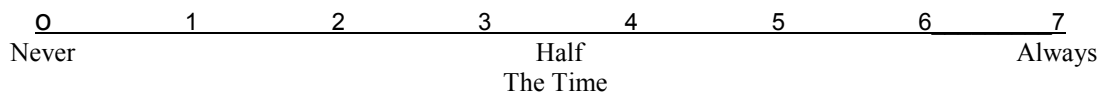
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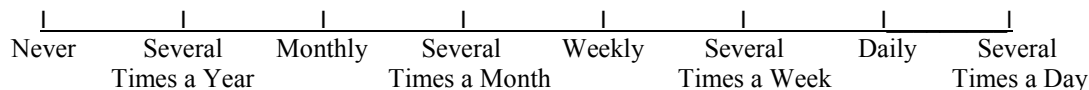
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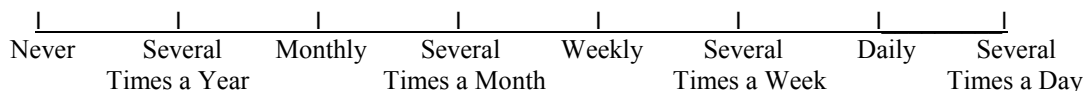
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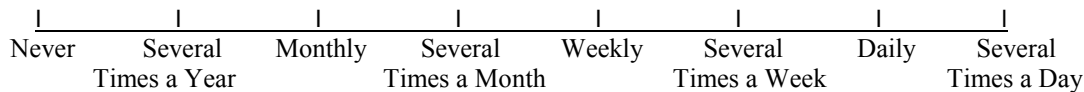
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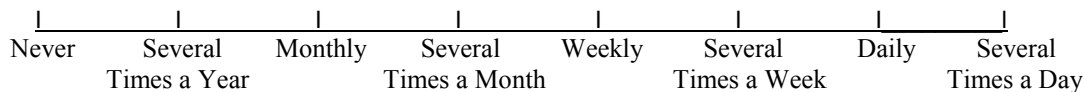
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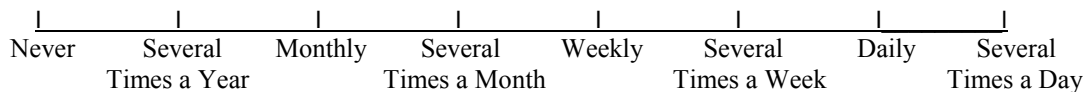
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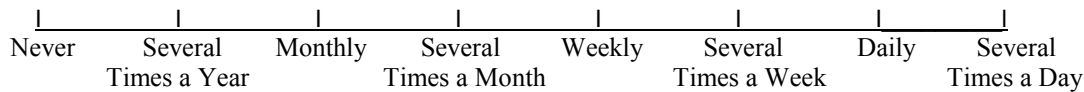
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42. Has No Child Left Behind influenced what you do during writing instruction?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please explain how: _____

If you have any additional information about your writing program that you would like to share with us, please do so here.

APPENDIX C

Draft Writing Survey Instrument for Field Test of Time to Complete

Section I: Please complete the following questions

1. Please circle your gender: male female
2. Please circle your ethnicity: Hispanic Black White Asian Other
3. Please circle your highest educational level:
 Bachelor's Bachelor's + Master's Master's + Doctorate
4. Please circle your evaluation of the **quality** of the preparation you received for teaching writing within your teacher certification program. If you did not attend a teacher certification program, check here. _____
 exceptional very good adequate poor inadequate
5. How many years have you taught? _____
6. What grade(s) do you currently teach? _____
7. How many children are in your classroom? _____
8. How many children in your classroom receive a free or reduced lunch? _____
 don't know _____
9. How many of the children in your classroom are: _____ Hispanic _____ White
 _____ Black _____ Asian _____ Other
10. How many of the children in your classroom receive special education services? _____
11. What is your assessment of the overall writing achievement level of all students in your classroom?

Write the number of students who fit within each classification. Write 0 if you have no students within a particular classification. The combination of your answers should total the number of students in your classroom.

_____ students are **above average** writers (writing more than 1 grade level above their current grade placement)

_____ students are **average** writers (writing at their grade level or within 1 grade level plus or minus their current grade placement)

_____ students are **below average** writers (writing more than 1 grade level below their current grade placement)

12. Check which of the following best describes your approach to writing instruction:

- traditional skills approach combined with process writing
 process writing approach
 traditional skills approach
 Other (describe briefly): _____

Section II: Please circle the appropriate response.

SD-Strongly Disagree
MD-Moderately Disagree
DS-Disagree Slightly
AS-Agree Slightly
MA-Moderately Agree
SA-Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. I do not like to teach writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 2. I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 3. I like to write. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 4. I am effective at teaching writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |

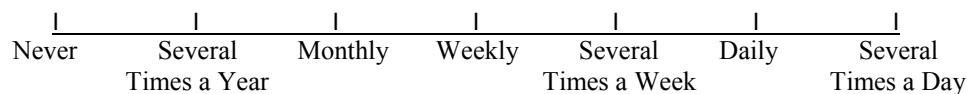
Section III: Please complete each question below

1. During an average week, how many minutes do your children spend writing (**This does not include instruction. It does include time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing text that is paragraph length or longer**)? _____

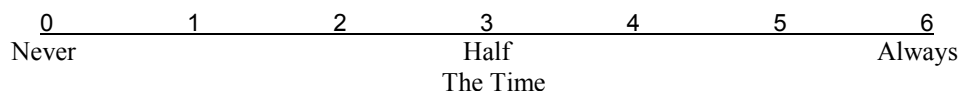
2. During an average week, how many minutes do you spend **teaching** each of the following?

_____ Spelling _____ Handwriting _____ Revising Strategies
 _____ Grammar and Usage _____ Planning Strategies

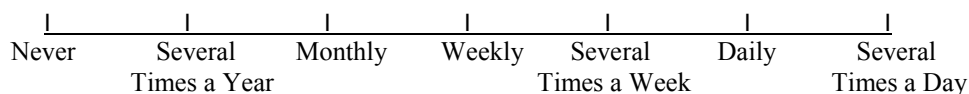
2. Circle how often students' **conference with their peers** about their writing.



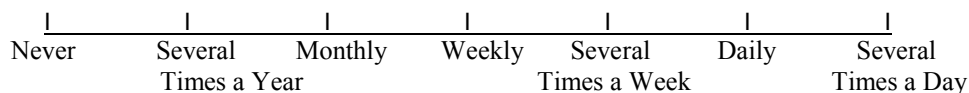
3. Circle how often **students' select their own writing topics**.



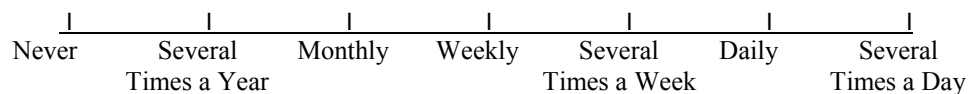
4. Circle how often your students engage in **“planning”** before writing.



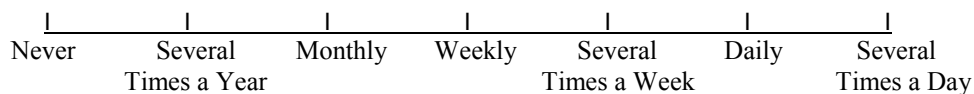
5. Circle how often your students **“revise”** their writing products.



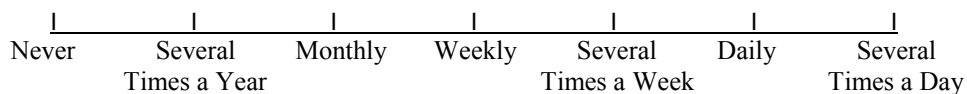
6. Circle how often **students share their writing** with their **peers**.



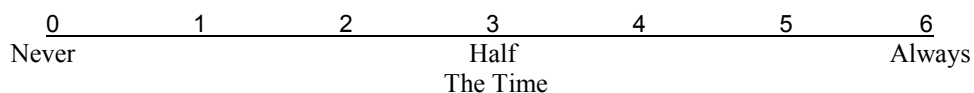
7. Circle how often your students **“publish”** their writing. (Publish means to print or write it so that it can be shared with others.)



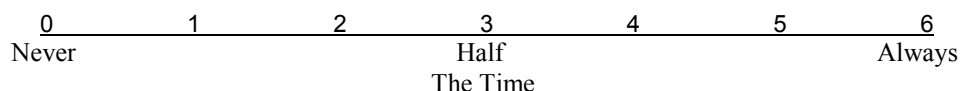
8. Circle how often your students **help their classmates** with their writing.



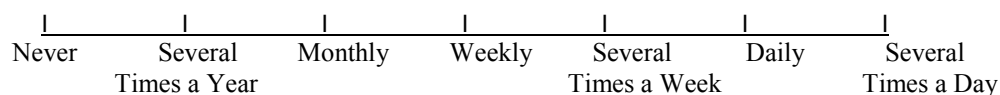
9. Circle how often students are allowed to complete writing assignments at their own pace.



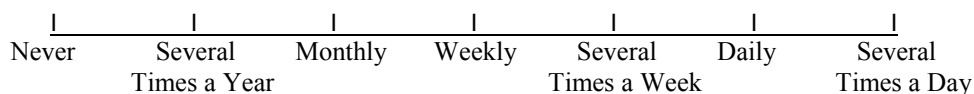
10. Circle how often you encourage students to use **invented spellings**.



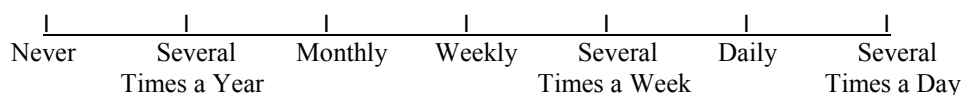
11. Circle how often **you read your own writing** to your students.



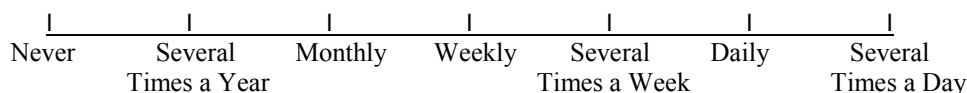
12. Circle how often you teach **sentence construction skills**.



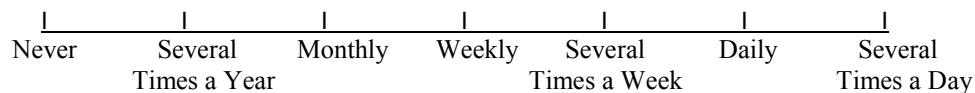
13. Circle how often you teach students about ways of organizing text or how texts are organized.



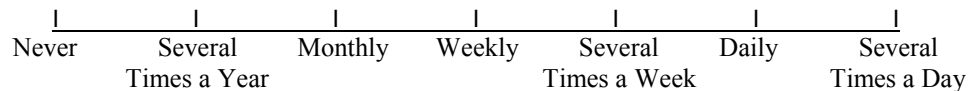
14. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for planning**.



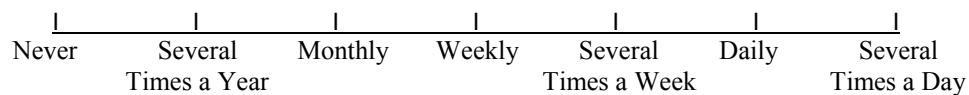
15. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for revising**.



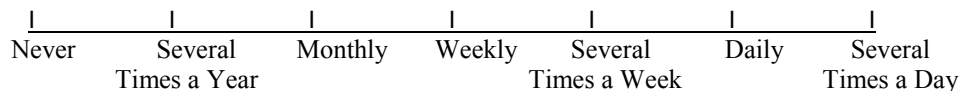
16. Circle how often you teach students **handwriting skills**.



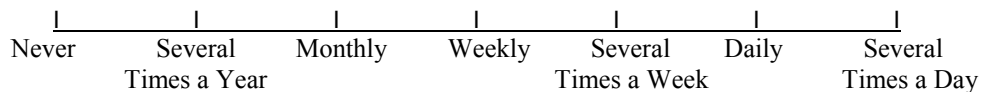
17. Circle how often you teach **spelling skills**.



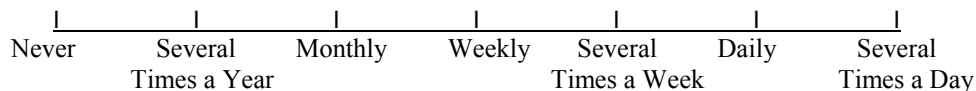
18. Circle how often you teach **grammar skills**.



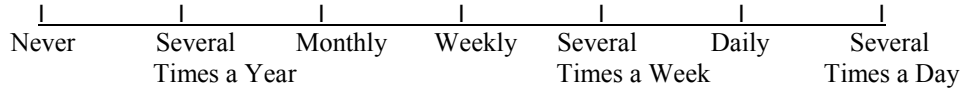
19. Circle how often you teach **punctuation skills**.



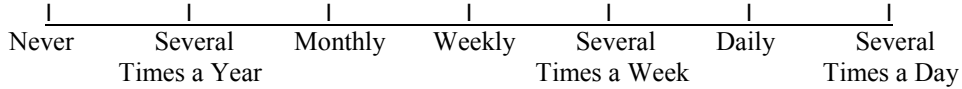
20. Circle how often you teach **capitalization skills**.



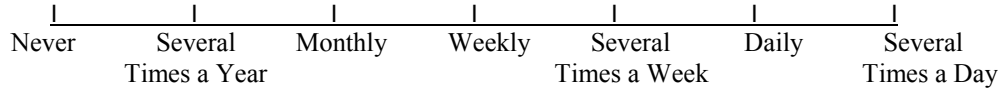
21. Circle how often you **provide mini-lessons** on writing skills or processes students need to know at this moment---skills, vocabulary, concepts, strategies, or whatever.



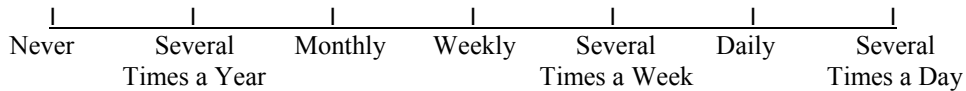
22. Circle how often you **overtly model writing strategies**.



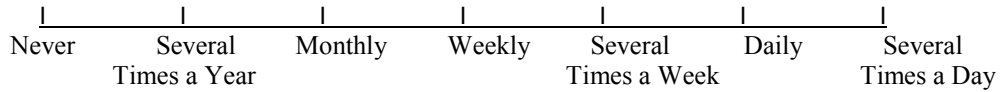
23. Circle how often you **model the enjoyment or love of writing** for students.



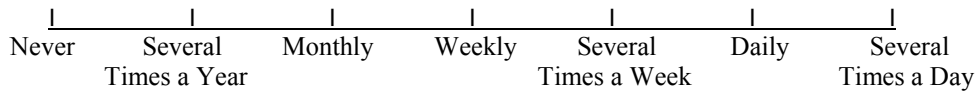
24. Circle how often you **reteach** writing skills or strategies that were previously taught.



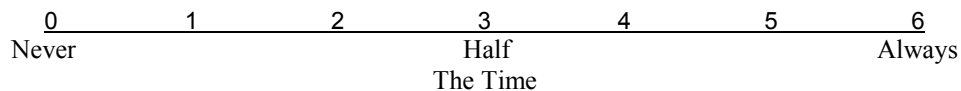
25. Circle how often you assign **writing homework** to students in your class.



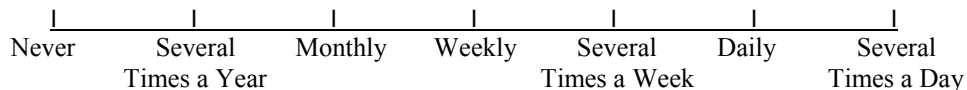
26. Circle how often your students work at **writing centers**.



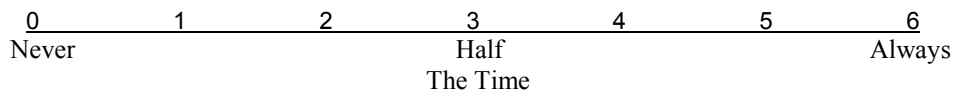
27. Circle how often your writing lessons have **multiple instructional goals**.



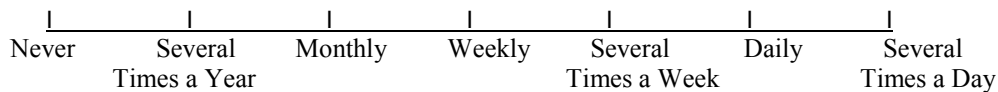
28. Circle how often you use a **writing prompt** (e.g., story starter, picture, physical object, etc.) to encourage student writing.



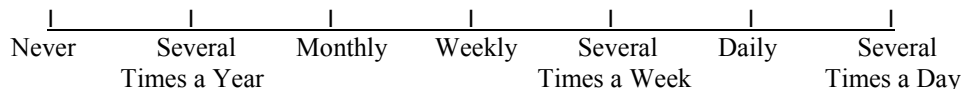
29. Circle how often your students use a **graphic organizer** (e.g., story map) when writing.



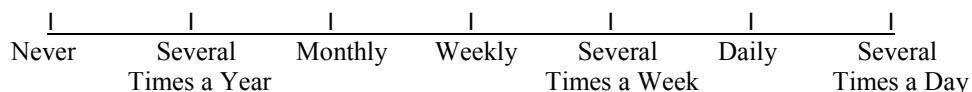
30. Circle how often **you monitor the writing progress** of your students.



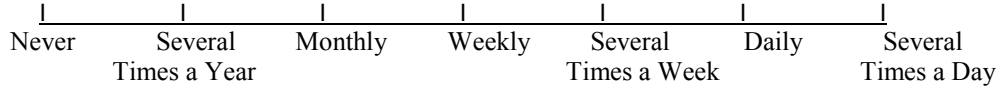
31. Circle how often you encourage **students to monitor their writing progress**.



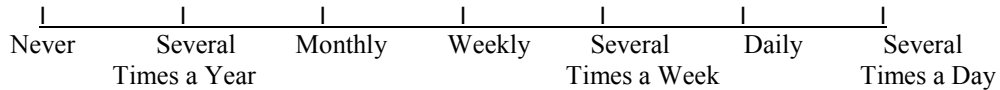
32. Circle how often students use **rubrics** to evaluate their writing.



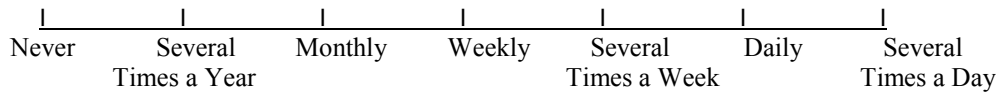
33. Circle how often students in your classroom use **writing portfolios** (add material to a portfolio, look at material already in it, and so forth).



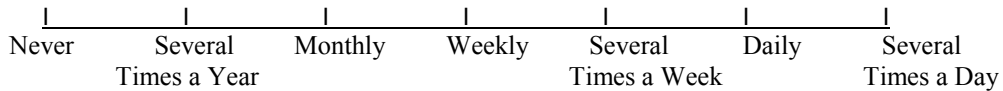
34. Circle how often you ask students to **write at home with parental help**.



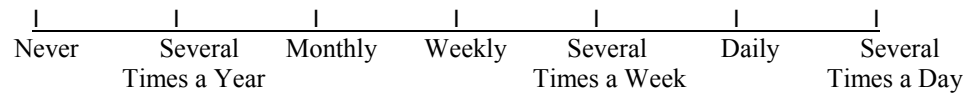
35. Circle how often you ask **parents to listen** to something their child wrote at school.



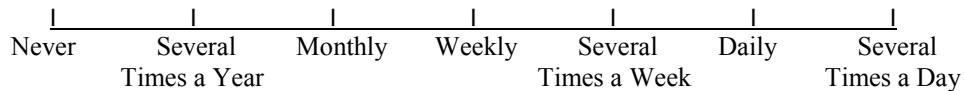
36. Circle how often you **communicate with parents** about their child's writing progress.



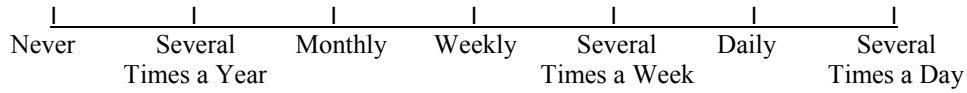
37. Circle how often your students write by **dictating** their compositions to someone else.



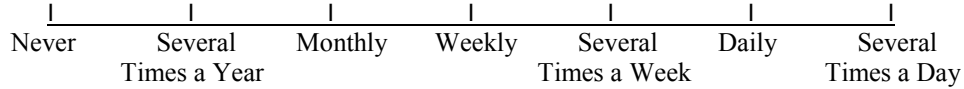
38. Circle how often students use **computers** during the writing period.



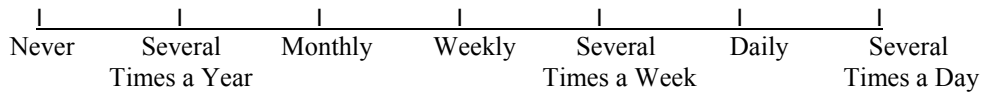
39. Circle how often students use **writing to support reading** (e.g., write about something they read).



40. Circle how often students use **reading to support writing** (e.g., read to inform their writing).



41. Circle how often your students use **writing in other content areas** such as social studies, science, and math.



42. Has No Child Left Behind influenced what you do during writing instruction?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain how: _____

If you have any additional information about your writing program that you would like to share with us, please do so here.

APPENDIX D

Draft Writing Survey Instrument for Field Test of Clarity and Thoroughness

Section I: Please complete the following questions

1. Please circle your gender: male female
2. Please circle your ethnicity: Hispanic Black White Asian Other
3. Please circle your highest educational level:
 Bachelor's Bachelor's + Master's Master's + Doctorate
4. Please circle your evaluation of the **quality** of the preparation you received for teaching writing within your teacher certification program. If you did not attend a teacher certification program, check here. _____
 exceptional very good adequate poor inadequate
5. How many years have you taught? _____
6. What grade(s) do you currently teach? _____
7. How many children are in your classroom? _____
8. How many children in your classroom receive a free or reduced lunch? _____
 don't know _____
9. How many of the children in your classroom are: _____ Hispanic _____ White
 _____ Black _____ Asian _____ Other
10. How many of the children in your classroom receive special education services? _____
11. What is your assessment of the overall writing achievement level of all students in your classroom?

Write the number of students who fit within each classification. Write 0 if you have no students within a particular classification. The combination of your answers should total the number of students in your classroom.

_____ students are **above average** writers (writing more than 1 grade level above their current grade placement)

_____ students are **average** writers (writing at their grade level or within 1 grade level plus or minus their current grade placement)

_____ students are **below average** writers (writing more than 1 grade level below their current grade placement)

12. Check which of the following best describes your approach to writing instruction:

- traditional skills approach combined with process writing
 process writing approach
 traditional skills approach
 Other (describe briefly): _____

Section II: Please circle the appropriate response.

SD-Strongly Disagree
MD-Moderately Disagree
DS-Disagree Slightly
AS-Agree Slightly
MA-Moderately Agree
SA-Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| *1. I do not like to teach writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 2. I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 3. I like to write. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 4. I am effective at teaching writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |

Section III: Please complete each question below

1. During an average week, how many minutes do your children spend writing (**This does not include instruction. It does include time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing text that is paragraph length or longer**)? _____

2. During an average week, how many minutes do you spend **teaching** each of the following?

_____ Spelling _____ Handwriting _____ Revising Strategies
 _____ Grammar and Usage _____ Planning Strategies

3. How much of your instructional time in writing involves **whole group instruction**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves **small group instruction or “cooperative” learning activities**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves **individualized instruction**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

4. Do you use a commercial program to teach writing, handwriting, spelling, or any other aspect of composing? _____ Yes _____ No

What programs?

*5. Please check which of the following writing activities your students will do this year.

_____ Stories _____ Personal Narratives _____ Journal Writing
 _____ Poems _____ Lists _____ Book Reports _____ Books
 _____ Plays _____ Alphabet Books _____ Completing Worksheets
 _____ Copying Text _____ Drawing a picture and writing something to go with it
 _____ Comic strips _____ Autobiographies _____ Biographies
 _____ Writing to persuade _____ Writing to inform _____ Writing summaries
 _____ Writing in response to material read
 _____ Other types of writing (Please specify): _____

***Section IV: Please complete the following questions.**

1. Circle how often **you conference** with students about their writing.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

2. Circle how often students' **conference with their peers** about their writing.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

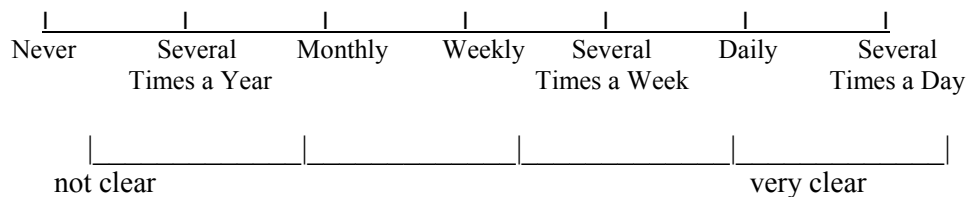
3. Circle how often **students' select their own writing topics**.

0 Never	1	2	3 Half The Time	4	5	6 Always
not clear				very clear		

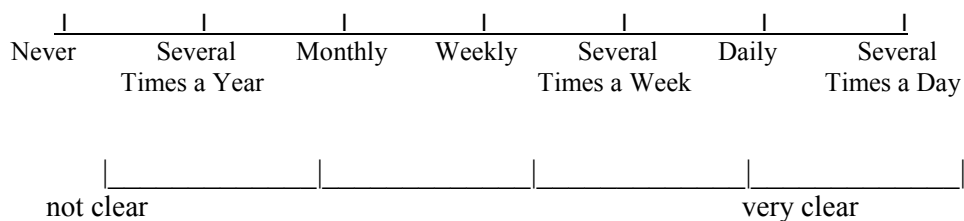
4. Circle how often your students engage in "**planning**" before writing.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

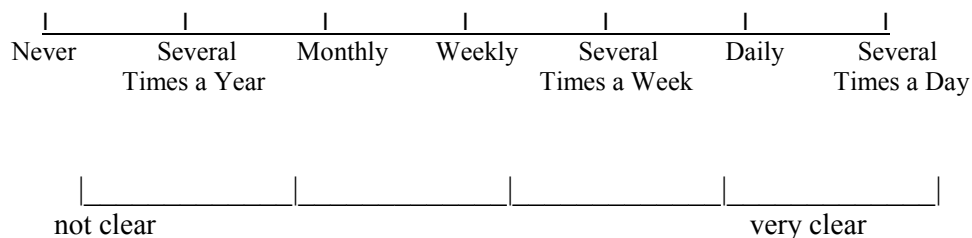
5. Circle how often your students “**revise**” their writing products.



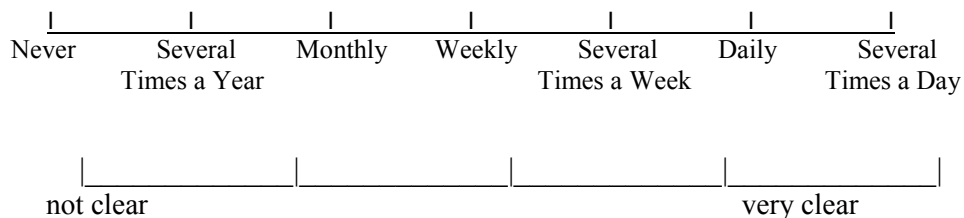
6. Circle how often **students share their writing** with their **peers**.



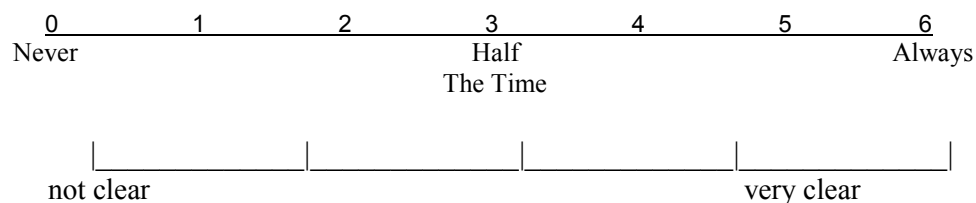
7. Circle how often your students “**publish**” their writing. (Publish means to print or write it so that it can be shared with others.)



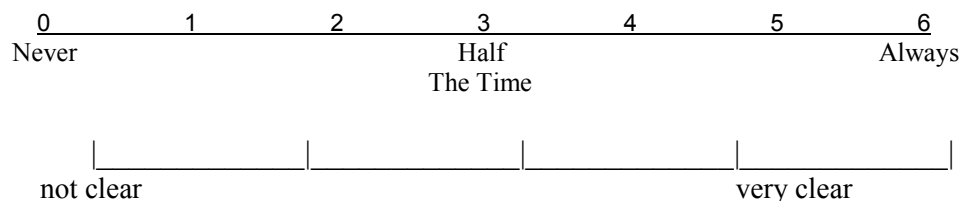
8. Circle how often your students **help their classmates** with their writing.



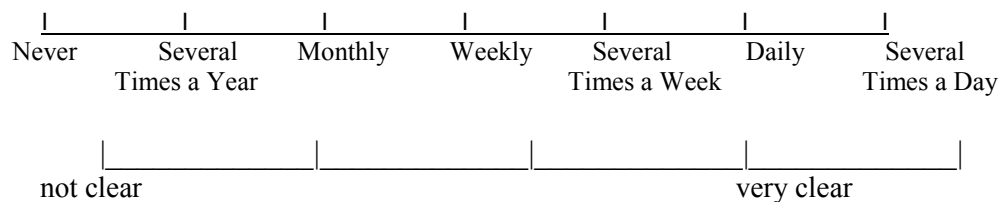
9. Circle how often students are allowed to complete writing assignments at their own pace.



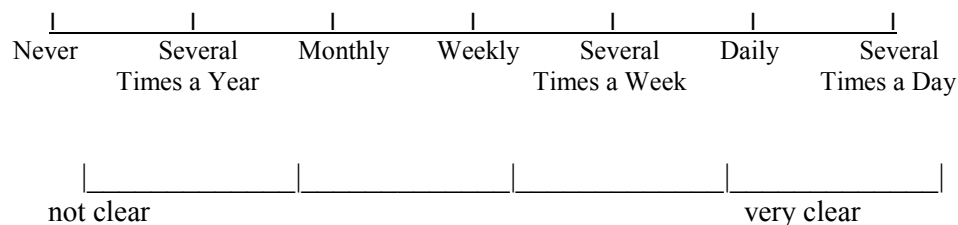
*10. Circle how often you encourage students to use **invented spellings**.



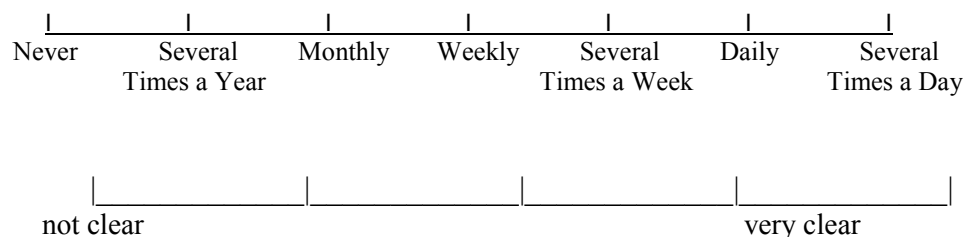
11. Circle how often **you read your own writing** to your students.



12. Circle how often you teach **sentence construction skills**.



13. Circle how often you teach students about ways of organizing text or how texts are organized.



14. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for planning**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

15. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for revising**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

16. Circle how often you teach students **handwriting skills**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

17. Circle how often you teach **spelling skills**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

18. Circle how often you teach **grammar skills**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

19. Circle how often you teach **punctuation skills**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

20. Circle how often you teach **capitalization skills**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

21. Circle how often you **provide mini-lessons** on writing skills or processes students need to know at this moment---skills, vocabulary, concepts, strategies, or whatever.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

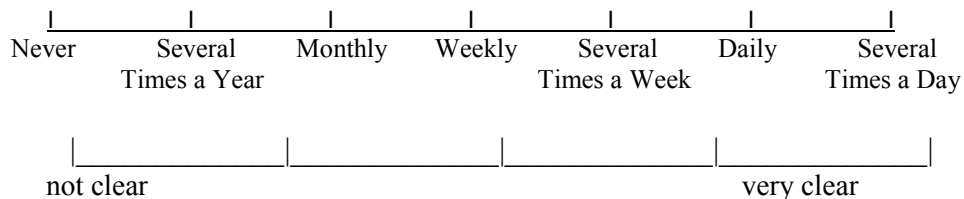
22. Circle how often you **overtly model writing strategies**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

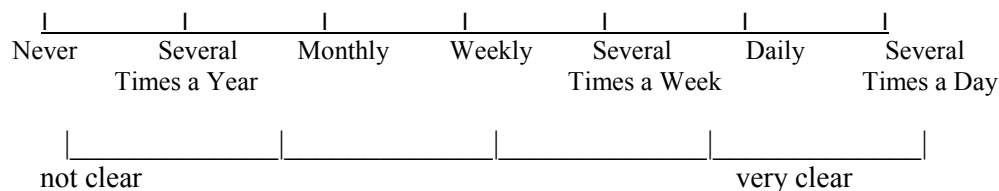
23. Circle how often you **model the enjoyment or love of writing** for students.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear				very clear		

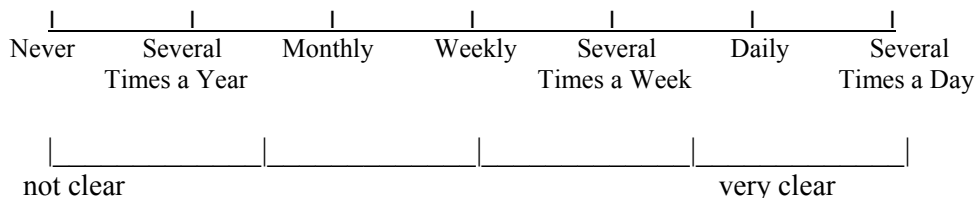
*24. Circle how often you **reteach** writing skills or strategies that were previously taught.



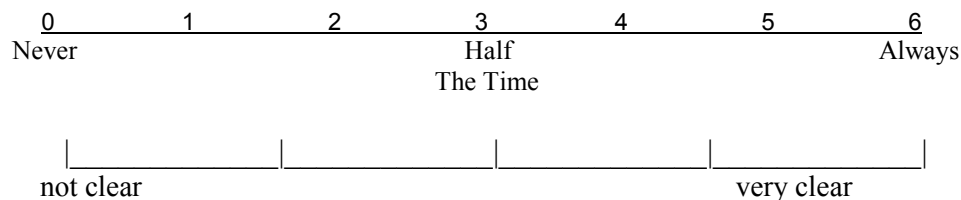
25. Circle how often you assign **writing homework** to students in your class.



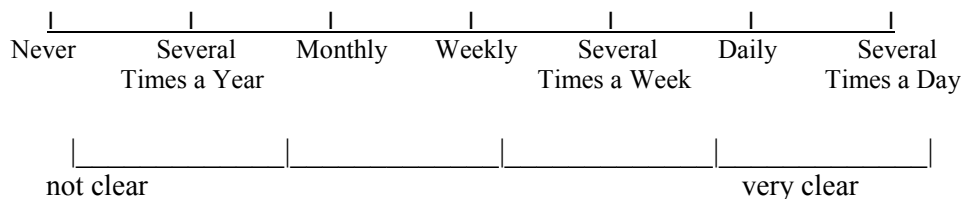
26. Circle how often your students work at **writing centers**.



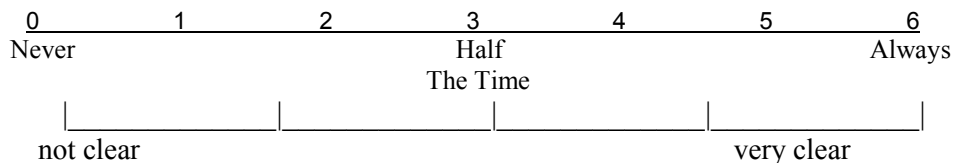
27. Circle how often your writing lessons have **multiple instructional goals**.



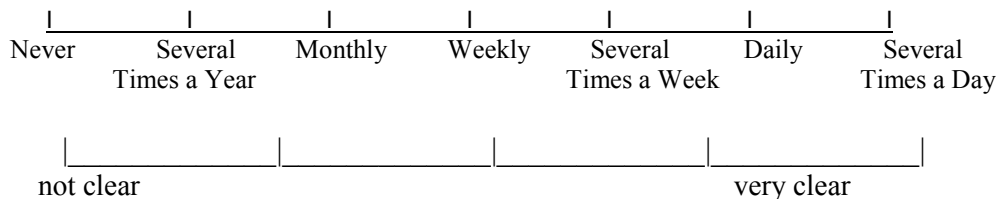
28. Circle how often you use a **writing prompt** (e.g., story starter, picture, physical object, etc.) to encourage student writing.



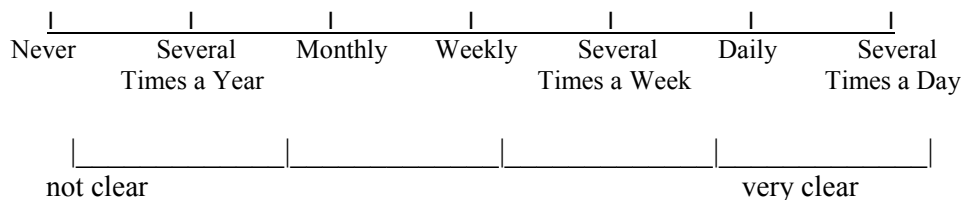
29. Circle how often your students use a **graphic organizer** (e.g., story map) when writing.



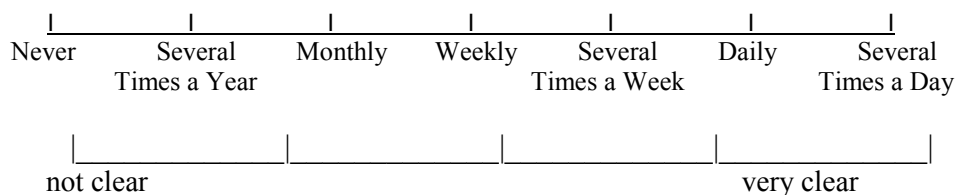
*30. Circle how often **you monitor the writing progress** of your students.



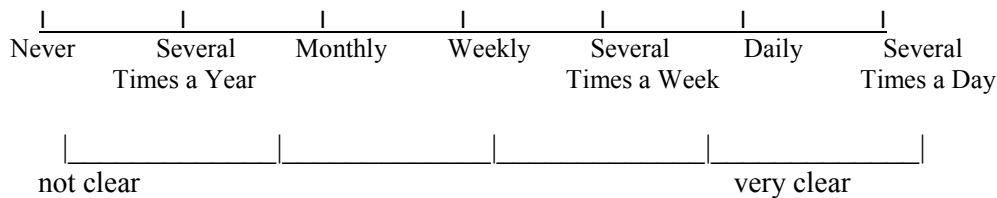
31. Circle how often you encourage **students to monitor their writing progress**.



32. Circle how often students use **rubrics** to evaluate their writing.



33. Circle how often students in your classroom use **writing portfolios** (add material to a portfolio, look at material already in it, and so forth).



34. Circle how often you ask students to **write at home with parental help**.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear			very clear			

35. Circle how often you ask **parents to listen** to something their child wrote at school.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear			very clear			

36. Circle how often you **communicate with parents** about their child's writing progress.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear			very clear			

*37. Circle how often your students write by **dictating** their compositions to someone else.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear			very clear			

*38. Circle how often students use **computers** during the writing period.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
not clear			very clear			

39. Circle how often students use **writing to support reading** (e.g., write about something they read).

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

40. Circle how often students use **reading to support writing** (e.g., read to inform their writing).

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

41. Circle how often your students use **writing in other content areas** such as social studies, science, and math.

Never	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
-----				-----		
not clear				very clear		

42. Has No Child Left Behind influenced what you do during writing instruction? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain how: _____

If you have any additional information about your writing program that you would like to share with us, please do so here.

Are there any relevant writing concepts or practices absent from this questionnaire that you think would be important to include?

Please comment on your interpretation of questions 30-31 in Section IV. What did you interpret “monitor writing progress” to mean? Is there any other terminology you would use to describe this process?

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